

Literary and classical history of Urdu

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Institut national
des langues
et civilisations orientales

Literary & Classical History of Urdu

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by

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History and origin of Urdu : some questions

- What is the origin of Urdu ? How did it start ? From where did the Urdu begin ?
- What was the first form of Urdu ? How did it take shape as a spoken language ?
- How does written form of Urdu came into shape ?
- What were the first written works in the Urdu language ?

Some different names of Urdu

Hindvi (13th-19th century)

Hindi (13th-19th century)

Musulmani zubaan (13th – 15th century)

Dehlavi (13th-14th century)

Rekhtah (13th-19th century)

Gujri (15th century)

Dakhini (15th-18th century)

Indostan (17th century)

Hindustani (18th-20th century)

Meaning & word origin of Urdu

- Urdu means “military camps” , “army” ?
- Urdu word originated from Altai region of Mongolia (Jaffar & Chand)
- Yousuf Khaas Hajib gave the meaning of Urdu as town or palace (1072).
- Mohammad Al-Kashgari wrote the meaning of Urdu as “the town where the king resides” (11th century, cited by Jaffar & Chand)
- For Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, first reference of Urdu was in the term “zaban-e-urdu-e mu’alla-e shahjanabad (the language of the exalted city / Court of Shahjanabad, Delhi)
- Till the 18th century, Urdu meant the “city of Delhi”.

Tracing the origins of Urdu - I
From 11th century till 13th century

- Prakarit was spoken in most part of India.
  - Several varieties of Parkarait all over India.
  - Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi find roots in Shourseni & Aphbransh
- After attack of Mahmud Ghaznavi during the first half of 12th century, varieties of Prakarit language have had an impact from these invasions.
- Usage of Khari Boli in Northern India from Delhi to East.
- Muslim invaders began to call the languages of India as Hindvi.
- The region of invasion was the northern India and particulary the Punjab region.
  - Impact of Punjab in the development of Urdu language (Shirani 1928)
- We may say that Urdu might have begun as koiné (kind of common language between invaders and local people). The main koiné was the Khari Boli (though its name came in 18th century), from which Hindi and Urdu offshooted.
- The Muslims began to employ heavily the words of Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the local language spoken near Delhi & Punjab region.

Tracing the origins of Urdu - II

- It has been said that prose was written as early as 1100 century but nothing is known about it and the statement seems incorrect.
- The first victorious Muslims of northern West India were from Turkey, Mongol and Aghanistan, but the language of administration and culture for them was Persian.
- It is perhaps for this reason that Persian remained language of administration till 1835.
- Many poets and writers who were employed in the court by the Muslim invaders were Iranian, Afghani or of Turkish and Arabic origin. They migrated to India during the war period.
- Like Iran, to develop the poetry, the first work started in the royal courts. The poets started to copy the literary traditions which were common in Iran.

Tracing the origins of Urdu – III

Literary genres

- Qaseedah – poetry written in the praise of king, nobleman, and also prophets and his companions
- Masnavi – poetry written on the bravery or on the tales of love. Stories borrowed from Quran, hadith with personal Sufi spiritual life
- Rubayi – Poetry with quatrins. Two line stanza in two parts. Various themes, from religion, to sufism etc.
- Marsiya – Poetry written in the praise and glory of Prophet's nephew Hassan who was killed along with his family members in 680 AD in Karbala (Iraq). Often written by Shia community.

Tracing the origins of Urdu - IV

- The new language which was called Hindvi was used by Sufi saints. We do not have any authentic material to verify the claim that they have written in the Urdu but it is very much possible that they have used the local vernacular language to communicate with the mass.
- Some Sufi representatives who wrote in a mixture of Urdu, Punjabi, Persian or with other local languages :
  - Moinuddin Chisti > 1142-1236 > born in Iran.
  - Bahauddin Zakria > 1170 – 1267 > born in Pakistan.
  - Shekh Farid ud din, Shakarganj > 1173-1266, born in Pakistan.

- Among the poets, the first poet to write in Hindvi was Masood Sad Salman (1046-1121). Born in Lahore.
  - Falsely implicated in an affair & sent to the prison. He wrote in Persian, Arabic and Hindvi. Only Persian works left.

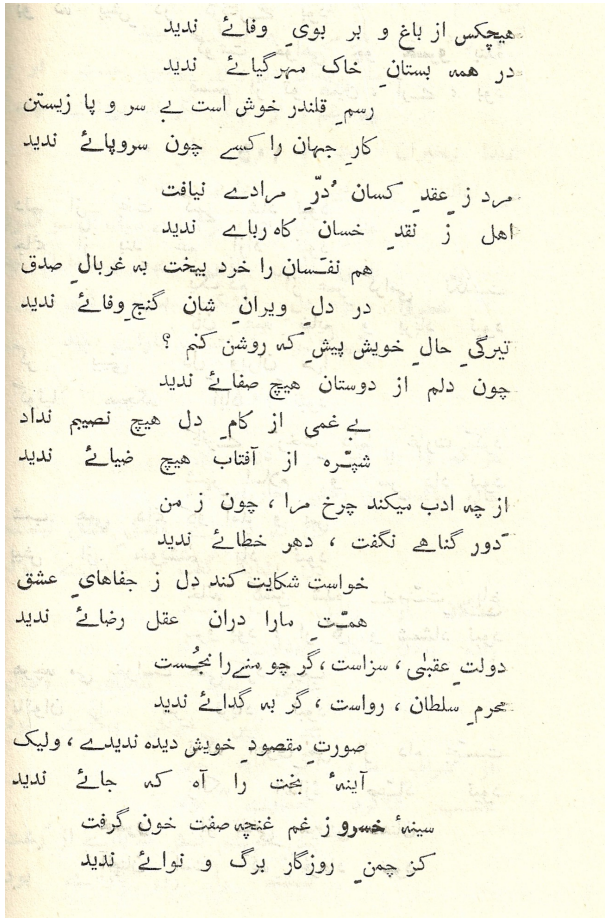
- The second and very famous poet was Amir Khusro (1253-1325). Born near Agra.
  - It is considered that he wrote in Urdu but we find very few authentic works of him in Urdu. Riddles are famous.
  - Musician and a great scholar of Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit.
  - In his Masnavi, he called Indian languages as Hindvi. And Urdu for him was Dehlavi.

Masnavi – Amir Khusro

مثنوی "نہ سپہر"

سندی و لاہوری و کشمیر و گر
دھور سمندری تلنگی و گجر
معبری و گوری و بنگال و اودھ
دہلی و پیرا منش، اندر ہمہ حد
ایں ہمہ ہندویست ز ایام کہن
عامہ بہ کارست بہ ہر گونہ سخن

Persian Poem – Amir Khusro



هیچکس از باغ و بر بوی وفائے ندید
در همہ بستان خاک مہرگیائے ندید

رسم قلندر خوش است بے سر و پا زیستن
کار جہان را کسے چون سروپائے ندید

مرد ز عقد کسان دُرّ مرادے نیافت
اہل ز نقد خسان کاہ ربائے ندید

ہم نفسان را خرد پیخت بہ غربال صدق
در دل ویران شان گنج وفائے ندید

تیرگی حال خویش پیش کہ روشن کنم ؟
چون دلم از دوستان ہیچ صفائے ندید

بے غمی از کام دل ہیچ نصیبم نداد
شپّرہ از آفتاب ہیچ ضیائے ندید

از چہ ادب میکند چرخ مرا ، چون ز من
دور گناہے نگفت ، دہر خطائے ندید

خواست شکایت کند دل ز جفاہای عشق
ہمّت مارا دران عقل رضائے ندید

دولت عقبیٰ ، سزاست ، گر چو منے را نجُست
محرم سلطان ، رواست ، گر بہ گدائے ندید

صورت مقصود خویش دیدہ ندیدے ، ولیک
آینۂ بخت را آہ کہ جائے ندید

سینۂ خسرو ز غم غنچہ صفت خون گرفت
کز چمن روزگار برگ و نوائے ندید

Tracing the origins of Urdu - V

- Gap of 132 years between Masood Sad Salman & Amir Khusro
  - Raises question about the fate of Urdu (Hindvi) literary works.
  - Shamsur Rahman Faruqi questions the gap and asks why noboby else took interest in writing in Hindvi ?

According to him, there might be two reasons :

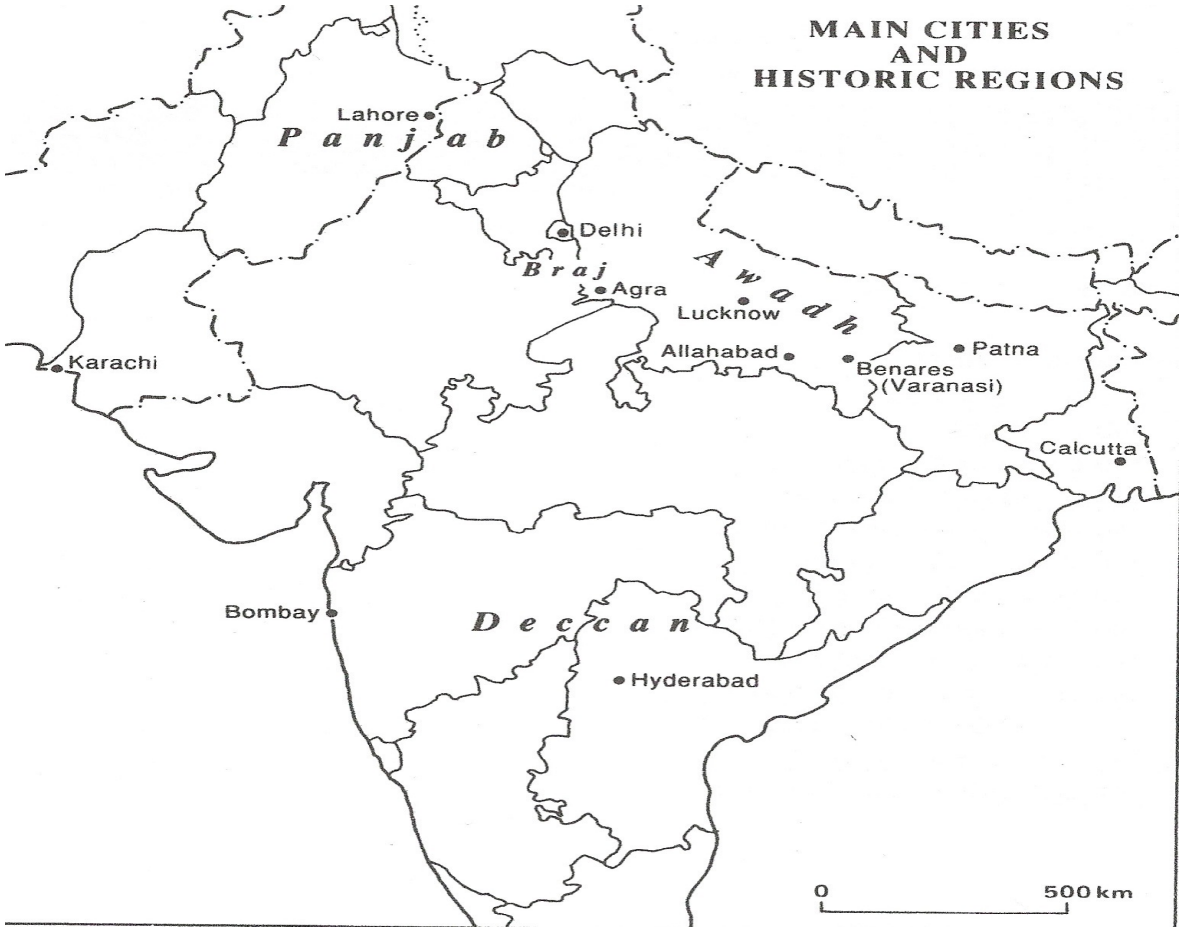
1) Hindvi failed to acquire status of a literary language. Perhaps Khusro thought that its usage might be limited for communicating with the masses. This might be also the reason why the works of Masud Salman did not get so much importance. It may be said that these works were temporal & no literary importance were attached to them.

2) Not a single Sufi employed Hindvi as literary language. Persian dominated the literary circle.

Tracing the origins of Urdu – VI
Moving to Deccan

- Literary composition in Urdu flourished in Deccan before it really began in the North India.
- Early forms of Urdu was introduced by the soldiers of Ala ud Din Khilji who became Sultan in 1296.
- Emperor Muhammad Tughlaq founded Daulatabad in the Deccan in 1326.
- In 1337, his officer Zafar Khan, revolted and founded Bahmani dynasty. This revolt resulted in alignment with Delhi and hence with the language of the court, Persian.
- Urdu developped in Deccan but it was influenced by local vernaculars, Gujarati & Marathi. Urdu was popularly named as Dakhni.

Urdu in 13th & 14th century

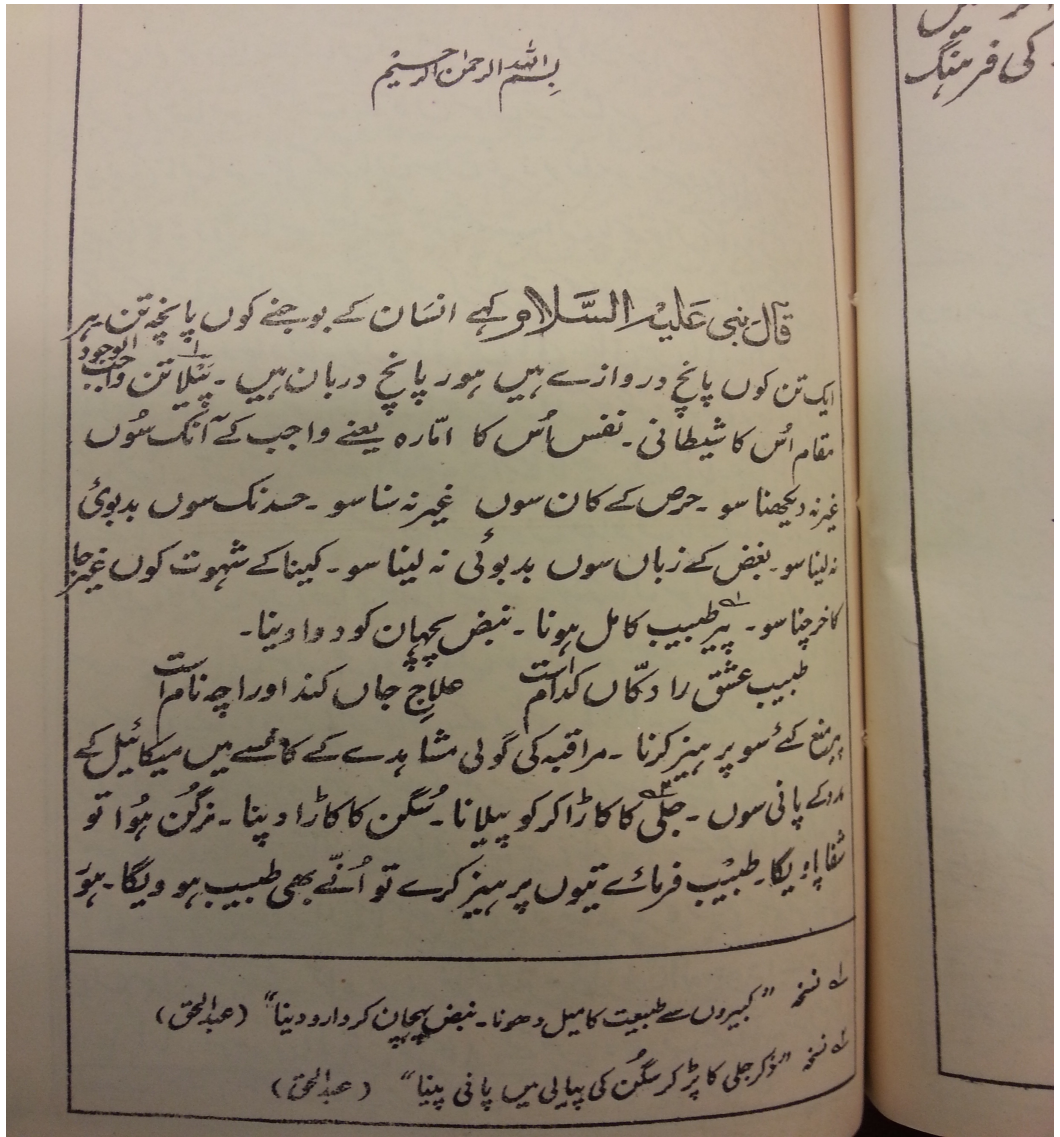


Tracing the origins of Urdu – VII

From 14th century to 17th century

- The first and foremost Hindvi writer was **Shekh Ain Ud Din Ganj ul ilm (1306-1393).** Born in Delhi but shifted to Daulatabad. He wrote mainly in Persian but believed to be the author of several Dakhani tracts on the duties of religion.
- Hindvi writer whose work survived is Shaikh Bahauddin Bajan (1388-1506)
- Khaja Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz (1321-1422) wrote two short porse works :
  - Miraj ul Ashiqin
  - Hidayat Nama

Miraj ul Ashiquin, 1398



بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

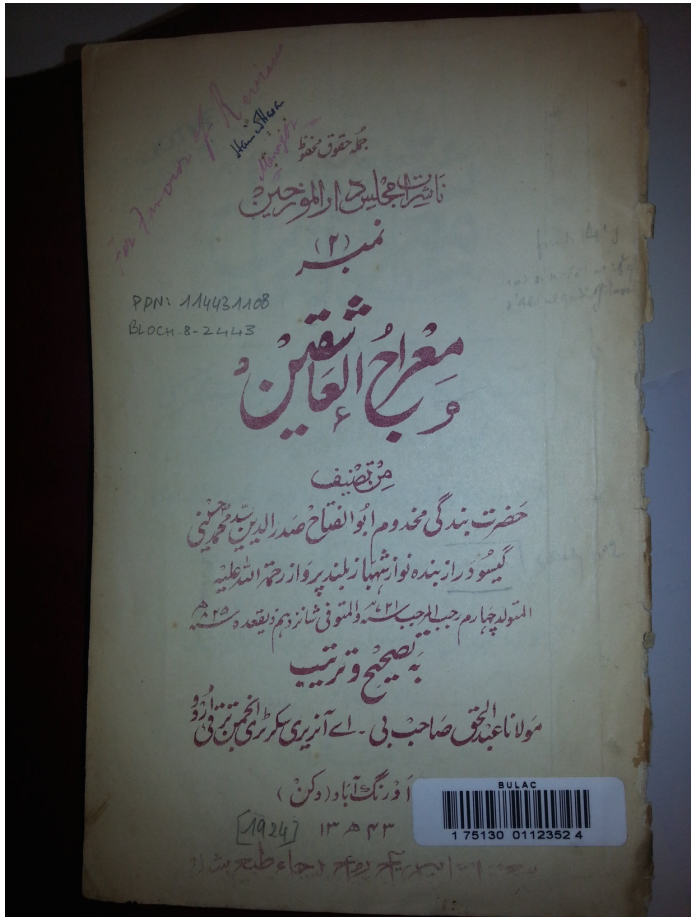
قال نبی علیہ السلام کہ انسان کے بوجھنے کوں پانچ تن ہر
ایک تن کوں پانچ دروازے ہیں ہور پانچ دربان ہیں۔ پہلا تن واجب الوجود
مقام اُس کا شیطانی۔ نفس اُس کا امارہ یعنے واجب کے آنک سوں
غیر نہ دیکھنا سو۔ حرص کے کان سوں غیر نہ سنا سو۔ حسد نک سوں بدبوئی
نہ لینا سو۔ بغض کے زبان سوں بدبوئی نہ لینا سو۔ کینا کے شہوت کوں غیر جا
کا خرچنا سو۔ پیر طبیب کامل ہونا۔ نبض پہچان کو دوا دینا۔

طبیب عشق را دکّاں کدام است علاجِ جاں کند اورا چہ نام است

ہر منع کے سو پرہیز کرنا۔ مراقبہ کی گولی مشاہدے کے کاسے میں میکائیل کے
مہ کے پانی سوں۔ جلی کا کاڑا کر کو پیلانا۔ سگن کا کاڑا دینا۔ نرگن ہوا تو
شفا پاویگا۔ طبیب فرمائے تیوں پرہیز کرے تو اُنے بھی طبیب ہو ویگا۔ ہو

لہ نسخہ "کبیروں سے طبیعت کا میل دھونا۔ نبض پہچان کر دارو دینا" (عبدالحق)

لہ نسخہ "ذکر جلی کا پڑ کر سگن کی پیالی میں پانی پینا" (عبدالحق)



جملہ حقوق محفوظ

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معراج العاشقین

مرتبہ تصنیف

حضرت بندگی مخدوم ابوالفتاح صدرالدین سید محمد حسینی
گیسو دراز بندہ نواز شہباز بلند پرواز رحمۃ اللہ علیہ
المتولد چہارم رجب المرجب ۷۲۱ھ والمتوفی شانزدہم ذیقعدہ ۸۲۵ھ

بہ تصحیح و ترتیب

مولانا عبدالحق صاحب بی۔ اے آنریری سکرٹری انجمن ترقی اردو

اورنگ آباد (دکن)

۱۳۴۳ھ [1924]

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Kadam Rao, Padam Rao
1421-1434

- First known Urdu literary product from Deccan
- Long masnavi of more than 400 lines.
- No Sufi influence, the poem is incomplete.
- Only one known copy is preserved in the Library of Karachi, Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu, Pakistan

کدم راو پدَم راو

کدم راو آکھے زن دِنہَ آدھر ؟ کہ دھن پات سُن بات یک چِتّ دَھر

سُنیا تھا کہ ناری دھرے بہت چھند سو میں آج دیٹھا تِری چھند پند

وہی چھند جب میں دیٹھا جگّ میں اُسی دیل تھی ہوں پڑیا دگّ میں

سُنیا تھا جو کن پر دیٹھا آج انک نہ راھا تنھیں دیکھتیں نین بنک

سُجات ایک ناگن کُجات ایک سانپ اسنگت دیٹھے کھیلتیں لانپ جھانپ

جو کرتار مُجکوں کیا ہوئے راؤ اسنگت کے کیوں دیکھ سگّوں آنیاو

کھڑگ کاڑ دوکھا تہایا تکھار اُسی ٹھار کھورَس کیا شب تہار

کئ نھاس ناگن پران آپ لے پران آپ لے کر گئ پونچ دے

Other works between 14th & 17th century - I

- Shekh Baha Ud din, Bajan (1388-1504). Religious teacher. He wrote in mixed Hindvi.
- Shah Miran Ji, Shamsul ushshaq (1407-1498), one of the Bijapur Saints, wrote and preach in Urdu.
    - Shahadat ul Haqiqat > a poem of 1126 lines, in which he tells why he preached & wrote in Urdu. It is the language for him which all would understand.
- Shah Burhan al-Din Janam (1477—1599) Son of Shah Miran ji. He wrote many verse and prose, which he called Hindi or Gujarai, meaning by the latter term Dakhni tinged with Gujarati words and phrases.
- Shah Miran ji Khudanuma (d. 1659). He wrote in 1600 a prose work called Sharh i Sharh i Tamhid. It is considered as one of the earliest examples of Urdu prose.

Other works between 14th & 17th century - II

- Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah (1580-1611), sultan and founder of the city of Hyderabad
  - Prolific writer in Persian and Dakhini, first literary writer of Urdu probably.
  - Manuscript « Kulliyat »
- Mullah Wajhi, Vajhi (no known dates of birth), famous author of the Masnavi Qutb-o-Musbtari (1609) and the first prose work in Urdu Sab Ras (1635) a prose allegory on Sufism
- Ghavvasi
  - author of Qissa-e-Saif-ul-Mulak-o-Badi-ul-Jamal (1616-1624?) and Tuti Nama (1639)
- Ibn-e-Nishati
  - author of Phul Ban (1655). His poem brought him popularity

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