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Urdu and the Muslim Identity: Standardization of Urdu in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*

The standardization of modern Urdu and Hindi is the process by which they were given different identities. Here I look at this process only for Urdu. This was done by indexing linguistic symbols—scripts, allusions, idiom, rhetorical devices, formulaic expressions—with a civilizational or cultural identity. Such devices associated this single language with different religious and ethnic identities in the minds of their own users as well as others.

This is not to say that languages are never associated with identities. Classical Arabic, though used by Arab Muslims as well as Christians for formal functions, is mostly associated with Islam; Hebrew is associated with the Israeli as well as the Jewish identity; Sanskrit is associated with Hinduism; and Latin with the Roman Catholic Church.

The Muslim élite ruling India during the thirteenth century used Persian as the court language. However, when the British rulers replaced Persian with the vernacular languages of India—of which Urdu, called Hindustani by the British, was one—in 1834, the Muslim élite had already adopted a deliberately Persianized form of the language which functioned as an identity symbol for them (Rai 1984, 248–50). The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw Urdu become more closely associated with Islam as religious literature proliferated and the Pakistan Movement made it a symbol of Muslim identity (Rahman 2006). In the same way Hindi was separated from Urdu and identified "as the lan-

* I thank Dr. Hanif Khalil, Lecturer in Pashto, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, for assisting me in understanding the Pashto portions of the texts used in this article. I also thank Dr. Jawad Hamadani, Assistant Professor of Persian at the International Islamic University, Islamabad, for helping me with the translation of some Persian texts.

guage of the Hindus" during the same period (Dalmia 1997, 147–48).

The separation of Urdu from Hindi, which has been described in detail by Amrit Rai (1984, 226–84), is contingent upon the script (Devanagari for Hindi, Perso-Arabic for Urdu); lexicon (borrowings from Sanskrit for Hindi, Arabic and Persian for Urdu); and cultural references (Hindu history and beliefs for Hindi, Islamic history and ideology for Urdu). These language-planning processes led to the splitting of a language (Urdu-Hindi) into modern Persianized and Arabicized Urdu at one extreme and modern Sanskritized Hindi at the other. Between the two ends is a continuum that veers towards one end or the other according to the speaker, occasion and environment. In between, however, there is a widely understood spoken language which is called Urdu-Hindi here. This article looks at how the process of standardization, carried out primarily by Muslim intellectuals, associated modern Urdu with Islamic culture in South Asia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The same processes continued for both Urdu and Hindi in the twentieth century but they have not been considered in this article.

The Sanskritic-Vernacular Phase of the Ancestor of Urdu

For most of its history Urdu-Hindi has been full of words now associated with Sanskritic and vernacular roots. Let us look at the most ancient available texts. First, there are words in use at present in both Hindi and Urdu that are traceable to Sanskrit. Out of these, forty-three words of daily use are given by Amrit Rai (59–63). Among these are: *āj* (today), *tō* (so), *tẖā* (was), *tū* (you), *bāt* (word; saying), *pūčẖ* (ask), *ye* (this), *hāṭẖ* (hand).

These basic words of the language in their historical forms (*Apabhransa*) are given in texts dating back to the eighth century, i.e., about two centuries before the Muslims entered the plains of the Punjab from Afghanistan. These dates, however, are uncertain as the actual texts which are available now were probably transcribed by copyists from oral narratives.

Let us, therefore, look at a text written by a Muslim in the Perso-Arabic script about six hundred years ago. This is *Maṡnavī Kadam Rāʾō Padam Rāʾō* by Fakhru'd-Dīn Niẓāmī written between 825 and 839 AH/1430–1435 CE (Jālibī 1973, 16).[1] This is a lengthy text with 1032 *sheʿrs*. The

[1]The copy used by the author has no date. The date of the writing of this

language of this work is not Persianized or Arabicized. According to Jamil Jālibī: "Nearly twelve thousand words have been used and out of them only about one hundred and twenty-five are Arabic and Persian" (*ibid.*, 36).[2] The rest of the diction belongs to what Jālibī calls the Hindu tradition (Hindvi *rivāyat*) (*ibid.*, 37). However, the basic syntax of the language and part of the diction is still part of both Urdu and Hindi. However, it is closer to the Hindi end of the spectrum and, therefore, may be less intelligible to non-specialist speakers of Urdu than those of Hindi. The following words are still used in Hindi: *āshtī* (ease), *utāval* (quick, one who wants results quickly), *uttar* (answer), *akkẖar* (word), *bintī* (request), *patr* (paper), *prīt* (love), *purs* (man), *nār* (woman), *pūt* (son), *turat* (immediate), *jug* (world), *čamatkār* (miracle), *sabd* (word), *giān* (wisdom), *lab* (profit), *mās* (month, meat), *mūrakẖ* (foot, ignorant), *nar* (hell).

The first few lines are as follows:

Gusā'īn tuhīñ ēk duna jag adār
Barōbar duna jag tuhīñ daināhār
Akās unča pātāl dẖartī tūhīn
Jahāñ kučẖ nakō'ī tahāñ hai tuhīñ

(*ibid.*, 65)

O lord! You are the only support of both worlds
Correctly speaking You are the one who gives sustenance to both worlds
You are the heaven and the lower part of the world
Where there is no one; there you exist.

Out of these twenty-two words, six are not intelligible to non-specialist speakers of Urdu. Hindi speakers may, however, understand *ākās* (sky) as well as *pātāl* (lower part of the world). The verb *dēnā* (to give) in *dēnāhār* (one who gives) is intelligible to both Urdu- and Hindi-speakers but the suffix- *hār* is not used in modern Urdu in this meaning.

This sample of the language of the Deccan during the early part of the fifteenth century (1421–1435) as evidenced by *Kadam Rā'ō Padam Rā'ō* is far less intelligible and far more Sanskritized than the sentences of Urdu found attributed to the saints in their *malfūẓāt* and *taẕkiras* as quoted by many historians of Urdu (Ghanī 1929; Ghanī 1930; Shērānī [1930]). Thus, while it is not clear how people actually spoke, it can be

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work 1021/1612-13 is given by Blumhardt (1905, 2).

[2]All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the present author.

said with confidence that Urdu-Hindi was a far more Indian (Sanskritized) language from the fifteenth till the eighteenth centuries than it is now.

While the *Maṡnavī* was written in the Deccan and the setting was Hindu, we have another text written in the extreme northwest of the Subcontinent and here the setting was Muslim. Indeed, it was intended to be a religious text by its author. This is *Khairu'l-Bayān* written by Bāyazīd Anṣārī (931/1526-27–980 or 989/1572 or 1581) between 1560–1570 and it also has words now associated with Hindi (Anṣārī 1570). The manuscript of the book from which the published version used here has been printed is at the University of Tübingen and is dated 1021/1611-12. However, as Akhund Darvīza (d. 1048/1638-9) has denounced Bāyazīd's work for heresy in his own book *Makhzanu'l-Islam*[3] which was written, at least in its original form, sometime in the late sixteenth century and finally revised by his son ʿAbdu'l-Karīm in its present form in 1024/1615 (Blumhardt 1905, 2), it is certain that *Khairu'l-Bayān* was in circulation and was taken seriously enough to cause so much anxiety among the ulama of the period.

The present version of *Khairu'l-Bayān* has only sixteen lines by the author in the language called "Hindi," some consisting of only two words. This is probably the first writing of Urdu in the Pashto-speaking area now in Pakistan (Rahman 2008). These words are found only in the first four pages, where Arabic, Persian and Pashto are found in equal portions. The Persian portion, however, gets reduced later while the Arabic and Pashto remain till the end. However, the Pashto version is longer than the Arabic version so that it is not an exact translation. In short, the book as it stands today, can hardly be called a book in four languages, but that is precisely what the author (Anṣārī 1570, 296–97) and his critics call it. The first four lines which begin the book are in Arabic followed by Persian, Pashto and then "Hindi." One of the "Hindi" words "*akkẖar*" used in these lines and some others like it are now associated with Hindi but they were in use in this specimen of the ancestor of Urdu in the present North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan.

If we remember that 438 years have passed since the writing of *Khairu'l-Bayān* it is amazing that it is still intelligible to those of us who know Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Siraiki, etc. Moreover, Bāyazīd must have chosen Hindi because it was an important language outside the Pashto-

[3]The denunciation of Bayāzīd Anṣārī is both in Persian and Pashto (Darvīza 1615, 122–27, 128–38).

speaking world he was living in. As Jālibī has opined, Bāyazīd must have wanted to influence people in the plains of India (1975, 58), and this could only make sense on the assumption that Hindi was the language most commonly understood there as, indeed, its descendants Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi are even now. It appears as if Bāyazīd's followers also conformed to his writing fashion in more than one language. A poet called Arzānī who was "intelligent" and a master of correct language (*faṣīḥ zubān būd*) also wrote poetry in "Afghānī, Farsī, Hindī, and ʿArabī" like Bāyazīd Anṣārī (Darvīza 1613, 149).[4]

Besides these lines in the ancestor of Urdu-Hindi in *Khairu'l-Bayān*, at least one couplet in the same language is attributed to Bāyazīd by ʿAlī Muḥammad Mukhliṣ (1610-11–1664-65), who is said to have been one of his followers. This occurs in Mukhliṣ's own collection of Pashto verse. He introduces it in Persian as a "couplet of Bāyazīd in the Hindvi language."

Saччā bōl Bāyazīd kā jō bēnāve kōī
Čū marnē paher pahlē vī par na marē sōī
(Mukhliṣ n.d., 581)

The true saying of Bāyazīd he who recites
At the time of death he does not go on the path of annihilation

Mukhliṣ's work—at least this poetic collection—is only in Pashto but he lived in India for the latter part of his life and possibly that is why words like *ānand* (pleasure, joy, happiness)—used even now in modern Hindi—are found in his Pashto. All the samples of the ancestor of Urdu-Hindi given above are intelligible for the modern reader.

As mentioned earlier, words like *akkhar* (word), *kāran* (reason), *jīb* (tongue) are still used in some varieties of Hindi and Punjabi. Most of the other words are easily intelligible to present-day speakers of Urdu and Hindi as well as Punjabi.

About sixty-five years after *Khairu'l-Bayān* Mullā Vajhī wrote his book *Sab Ras* (1045/1635-36) in Urdu-Hindi prose. Like *Khairu'l-Bayān,* it too is quite intelligible to the contemporary reader. And, in common with the works of that period, it has words of Sanskritic origin as well as others which are now obsolete. Among those still current in Hindi some are: *japnā* (to remember, to count), *čitarnā* (to make pictures), *čintā* (worry), *čẖandān* (tactics), *sarjanhār* (Creator)

An idea of its intelligibility can be formed by reading the following

[4]The copy used by the author has no date. The date of the writing of this work 1021/1612-13 is given by Blumhardt (1905, 2).

lines.

> *Ēk shahr tẖa us shahr kā nāʾoñ Sīstāñ is Sīstāñ kē bādshāh kī nāʾoñ ʿAql dīn-ō-duniyā kā tamām kām us tē čaltā us kē ḥukm bāj ẕara kīñ naīn hiltā.*
>
> (Vajhī 1635, 16)

> There was a city. Its name was Sistan. The name of its king was ʿAqal. All activities spiritual and secular were carried out under his orders. Without his orders not a thing moved.

Mullā Vajhī's other book *Quṭub Mushtarī*, written in 1610, also has a number of Sanskrit words (Rai 1984, 215).

Coming now to *Karbal Kaṯẖā* by Saiyid Faẓl ʿAlī Faẓlī (b. 1710-11) written in 1145/1732-33 and revised in 1748 in North India. Here, one finds a great change from the texts we have been considering so far. For one thing, there is far more Arabic and Persian in the book, probably because it is a religious work containing stories about the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE and meant to be narrated to a Muslim audience. For another, it appears that the movement for the Persianization and Arabicization (Muslimization as it turned out later) had already started.

> *Rivāyat hai ke jab kishtī-e Hazrat-e Nūḥ talātum-e amvāj-e tūfān sē zēr-o-zabar hōnē lagī Hazrat-e Nūḥ nē kahā: "Yā Ilāhī! vaʿda tērā barḥaq hai, ammā na jānuñ mujẖ sē kyā kẖatā vāqeʿ hūʾī?"*
>
> (Faẓlī 1733, 42)

> The story is that when the boat of the Prophet Noah started rocking because of the agitation of the waves, he said: "O God! Your promise is true but I do not know what fault I have committed?"

Out of the thirty-four words given in these four lines, thirteen of the underlined words are of Arabic and two are of Persian origin. Of these at least six are unfamiliar to ordinary speakers of Urdu. However, words of Hindi derived from Sanskrit are there—twenty-eight words are listed by Rai (1984, 237)—as they are in other writings of this period.

In the Deccan, Ṣanʿatī's *Qiṣṣa Bēnaẓīr* written in 1055/1645 makes two things clear: that while scholars prided themselves upon their competence in Persian, the common people found it easier to understand Deccani; and, that Sanskrit words were removed probably because of their difficulty. Thus the author says:

> *Usē fārsī bōlnā ẕauq tẖā*
> *Valē kē ʿazīzāñ kō yūñ ẕauq tẖā*
> *Ke Dakẖnī zubāñ sūñ usē bōlnā*

Jo sīpī tē mōtī naman rōlnā

(1645, 26)

He was fond of speaking in Persian
but his loved ones had a taste for Deccani
so now he is to speak in the Deccani language
and roll out shells as if they were pearls

Further the poet tells us that he used less Sanskrit words so that with less Persian and Sanskrit his work would be accessible to people who knew only Deccani well (*ibid.*). However, there are preambles in Arabic and, since the story is ostensibly about Tamīm Anṣārī, a figure from early Muslim history, there are words relating to Islam and, hence, of Arabic origin. Even so, words of Hindi like *gagan* and *pāt* are also used.

Another early writer of Urdu, this time from the north, called Muḥammad Afẓal Gōpāl (d. 1035/1625) wrote a love story in the Indian tradition, as it is a love story in the voice of a woman, in his famous *Bikaṭ Kahānī*.

Akram Rohtakī Quṭbī's *Tērāh Māsā*, copied in 1143/1730-31 (the date given on the Punjab University manuscript used by the present author), is in Persianized Urdu but does have words later declared obsolete.

Ačānak tōp kī čūn raʿd garjā
Kaṛak uskī jō sun kar jīv larjā

(Quṭbī 1731, n.p.)

Suddenly like a cannon the cloud roared
listening to its thunder the heart trembled

During this time, *raʿd*, the Arabic word for cloud, was used in Persian; *larjā* is the Hindi pronunciation of the Persian *larzā*, used even now in Urdu. In short, despite the trend toward the Persianization of diction from the seventeenth century onwards in Deccani and North Indian Hindi as used by Muslim writers, words and pronunciation patterns of ordinary Hindi had not become as unacceptable as they did later. Even more importantly, the local tradition of using the woman's voice, as well as allusions to the seasons of India, is maintained. These, as we know, were also tabooed later. However, because of the Persianization of diction, Jalibī praises it as being more refined than its contemporary Muqīmī's *Čandar Badan-o-Mahyār* or Ghavvāṣī's *Saifu' l-Mulūk Badīʿu l-Jamāl* (1625) (Jālibī 1975, 67).

Yet another example from the same period is the *Maṡnavī Vafāt-nāma Ḥaẓrat Fāṭima* of Ismāʿīl Amrōhvī (1054?–1123) written in 1105/1693-94. It is notable because it is by a Muslim and is a religious text. Here too there is more Perso-Arabic diction than in other writings of the

period but words like *sansār* (world) and *thar* (place), etc., also exist (Amrōhvī 1693, 103).

Muslimization of Urdu-Hindi

At least some poets of Urdu-Hindi in this early period, both Muslims and Hindus, knew Sanskrit and the local Indian languages. For instance, among others, Aḥmad Gujratī who is called a "*Shāʿir-e Hindī*" is an expert on Sanskrit and Bhasha (local language) (*dar ʿilm Sanskrit-o-Bẖaka yad-e ṭūlā dāsht*) (Čāndpūrī 1754-55, 18). Sanskrit and the local languages were not tabooed as they came to be later.

However, the ancestor of Urdu and Hindi does pass through two distinct phases of identity. Jālibī calls the use of Sanskritic words and allusions to indigenous (Hindu) culture the "Hinduʾī tradition" (1973, 37). The opposing trend may, therefore, be called the "Muslim tradition" or linguistic "Muslimization."

The Muslimization of Urdu is my term for the excessive use of Persian and Arabic words in the ancestor of modern Urdu and Hindi—a language which may be called Urdu-Hindi and which used to be called Hindi, Hindvi, Gujrati, Dakani and Hindustani—between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The movement made the following changes in the identity of the language:

1. Sanskritic words were purged out.
2. Words of local dialects were also purged out.
3. In place of the above, Persian and Arabic words were substituted.
4. Allusions, metaphors and symbols would be predominantly to Iranian and Islamic cultures.
5. Allusions to the Indian landscape were replaced by references to an idealized and conventionalized Iranian landscape.
6. The amorous conventions of Indian poetry—such as the woman expressing love for the man—were replaced by Iranian conventions (i.e., a man expressing love for a beloved of indeterminate gender).

It is this new Muslimized language that became an identity symbol of the élite (*ashrāf*) community of North India.

During the process of Muslimization the excellence of literary practitioners was measured with reference to the presence of Persian and Arabic diction in their work; deviation from actual local pronunciation

in orthography was taboo; and the use of Persian literary allusions, similes, metaphors and idiomatic phrases (the rose and the nightingale of Islamic, élitist culture rather than Hindu, mass culture were imperative.

Aspects of this process of standardization seem to have been inspired or patronized by Navāb Amīr Khān, the minister of the Mughal king, Muḥammad Shāh, in Delhi. A contemporary account, the *Siyāru'-l Muta'khkhirīn*, describes the nobleman as follows:

> He composed with great elegance and much facility, both in Persian and Hindostany poetry, of ten uttering extempore verses; but no man ever equaled him in the talent of saying bon mots, and in rejoining by a repartee. He possessed the art of narration in such a high degree, that people charmed with his story, kept it hanging at their ears as a fragrant flower, whose perfume they wished to enjoy for ever.
>
> (Khan 1789, 3:279)

This Amīr Khān is said to have delighted in the company of learned people and patronized poets of Urdu thus contributing to its refinement.

Faẓlī, the author of *Karbal Kat̲hā*, is also said to have been part of this group and his language is much influenced by Arabic and Persian. Others whose attempts at standardizing the Persianized style of Urdu-Hindi—in effect separating the literary and official styles of both languages—that are available are: Sirāju'd-Dīn ʿAlī Khān Ārzū (1099–1169/1688–1756 or 1757, Shaikh Ẕuhūru'd-Dīn Ḥātim (1699–1786), Shaikh Imām Baksh Nāsikh (d. 1838) and Inshā'u'l-Lāh Khān Inshā' (1752–1818).

Shaikh Ḥātim, who was also one of the protégés of Navāb Amīr Khān, was one of the major figures of the movement for the Muslimization of Urdu. In the preface of his Persian book *Dīvān Zādāh*, completed in 1169/1756), he gives his linguistic views as follows:

> *Lisān-e 'Arabī-o-zubān-e Fārsī ke qarību'l-fahm-o-kaśīru'l-isteʿmāl bāshad va rōzmarra'-e Dehlī ke mīrzāyān-e Hind-o-faṣīḥān-e rind dar muḥāvara dārand manẓūr dāshta zubān-e har diyār tā ba Hindvī ke ān rā bh̲ākh̲a gōyand mauqūf karda maḥẓ rōzmarra'-e ke ʿām fahm-o-khāṣ pasand būd ikhtiyār namūda.*
>
> (1756, 40)
>
> [Words from] the Arabic and Persian languages which are intelligible and commonly used [should be used]. And the daily usage of the gentlemen of India and the correct users of language and their idiom is acceptable. And the language of various localities which is called *bh̲āka* [the common language] should be stopped. And only what is used in daily life

> and is popularly liked and also liked by the connoisseurs of language should be used.

The spellings prescribed by Ḥātim do not correspond to the pronunciation of these words in India. Rather, the orthography has to correspond to the original Arabic or Persian orthography (see *ibid.*).

In short, Ḥātim wanted the restoration of the original spellings of Arabic and Persian words. He also specifically mentioned some words of Hindi which were to be eschewed, such as *nain* (eye), *jag* (world), *nit* (over), and others, such as *mār* (hit) and *muā* (dead), to be considered contemptible.

Urdu poetry progressed through the practice of *mushāʿiras* and Ustādā-Shāgirdī. Correctness was a fad or obsession and a marker of identity (Faruqi 1999, 144–45, 148). However, Faruqi's argument that Shaikh Ḥātim may not be solely responsible for removing Sanskrit words (*ibid.*, 154) is correct, as many people contributed to such movements some of whom will be mentioned below.

Amir Khusrau's Linguistic Theories

Amīr Khusrau gave some of his linguistic theories in the preface to the *Dīvān Ghurratu'l-Kamāl* written in the thirteenth century. Khusrau exalts the Arabic script and literature above all others but only for religious reasons. Otherwise, from the strictly poetic point of view, he considers Persian poetry superior (1293, 24–25). This view is part of the language ideology of medieval Indian Muslims who categorized reality in a hierarchical manner: the language of cities is superior to that of rural areas; written language is superior to spoken; the language of certain élites is superior to that of ordinary people, etc. But Khusrau also adds that while those brought up in India, especially in Delhi, can speak any language and even contribute to its literature, those of other places lack this facility (see *ibid.,* 28).

This view is heard even now among Urdu-speakers who claim that they can speak any language correctly while speakers of other languages cannot speak Hindi correctly. But along with this is the excessive significance which Urdu-speakers gave to pronunciation, idiom and diction in Urdu. The idea of this being cultural capital was taken to such absurd lengths that it was used as a weapon to humiliate those who did not conform to these prescriptive norms of correctness. The number of "correct" speakers was reduced to some families (see Inshāʾ's views below) and some exemplars were elevated above all

others. Mīr Mustaḥsan Khalīq, a poet of Urdu, was praised by Shaikh Nāsikh, one of the experts on good Urdu, as a person whose family spoke the most "correct" Urdu (Āzād [1907?], 314). The relevance of these linguistic views is that they formed part of the language ideology which informed Muslim linguists who transferred these ideas to Urdu when it was standardized as an icon of Muslim identity as we shall see below. One of these views might have been the linguistic superiority of Delhi.

Arzu's Contribution

Sirāju'd-Dīn ʿAlī Khān Ārzū (1099–1169/1687–1756 or 1757), known for his linguistic work on Persian and Urdu, was one of the pioneers of the reform movement which created modern Persianized Urdu. Ārzū wrote a treatise on Persian linguistics called *Muṡmir* in which he emphasizes the existing linguistic ideology, viz., the variety of Persian spoken in the cities is more correct (*faṣīḥ*) than that of the rural areas (see Ārzū n.d., 13). He also points out that all the classical poets were associated with a certain city and spoke the language of that city (*ibid.*).

Ārzū's views about correctness in language are found in both his *Muṡmir* and *Navādiru'l-Alfāẓ* (1165/1751). The latter was written to improve and correct an existing "Hindi" dictionary, *Gharāʾibu'l-Lughāt* by ʿAbdu'l-Vāsiʿ Hāñsvī. In short, taking both the *Gharāʾib* and *Navādir*, we get a glimpse into Urdu-Hindi before it was standardized into Urdu and Hindi.

The point which strikes a reader is that Ārzū calls the language of Gwalior the most correct Hindi compared to any other region. However, elsewhere he also refers to the language of the cities of Shāhjahānābād (Delhi) and Akbarābād (Agra) as a desirable standard. Let us take the two claims one by one.

The assertion that the "Hindi" of Gwalior is the best is repeated several times. For instance, explaining the word *jēli* (hoe to separate grain from chaff) he says: "and in the Hindi used in Gwalior which is the best Hindi" (Ārzū 1751, 186–87); explaining the meaning of *kanḍal* (circle; also a game in which the players sit in a circle) he says: "but in the language of Gwalior, which is the most correct variety of Hindi, this is called *čīl jẖapaṯṯā*" (*ibid.*, 348); explaining *gāñdaṛ* he says: "but *gāñdaṛ* in the language of the people of Gwalior and Akbarābād, which is the most correct out of the varieties of Hindi, is called grass" (*ibid.*, 362); and explaining the meaning of *īvārā* (pen to enclose animals): "and in the language of Brij and Gwalior, which are the most correct, it is called

kẖarak" (*ibid.*, 48).

The language of Gwalior, as well as that of Agra, which Ārzū praises is Brij Bhasha. This is the language of "the Central Dōāb and the country immediately to its South from near Delhi to, say, Etawah, its headquarters being round the town of Mathura [Muttra]" (Grierson 1927, 1:162). On the map of Uttar Pradesh (UP) the districts of Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, Mahamaya Nagar, Mathura, Agra, Firozabad, Etah, Mainpuri, Badaon, Bareilly, Tarai parganas of Naini Tal fall into Brij areas. It is also spoken in Gurgaon, Bharatpur and Karauli, and Madhaya Pradesh, and in Gwalior and surrounding areas. In Rajasthan, however, it slowly merges into Rajasthani (Grierson 1916, IX, 69). This language had much oral literature and a high reputation before Khari Boli, which was standardized as Hindustani later, became ascendant.

Ārzū's praise for Brij Bhasha probably owes to the fact that he was born in Agra (Akbarābād) and brought up in Gwalior. His mother's family came from Gwalior and his teacher was Mīr Ghulām ʿAlī Aḥsan Gavāliyarī. It was only in the beginning of the reign of Farrukh Siyar that he went to Delhi (Qāsmī and Maẓhar 2001, 70).

But, apart from the dialect of Gwalior which is repeatedly called the best or "most correct" form of "Hindi," Ārzū also refers to the language of certain exalted parts of Muslim urban centers of power (i.e., Urdu) as standards. The examples are as follows: "But one does not know where the word *čẖanael* (woman who oggles at men surreptitiously) comes from for we, who are the inhabitants of the Exalted City, have not heard it" (1751, 214); explaining *dibā* (flesh which protrudes from the camel's mouth during the rutting season) he says: "but the word in question is not known in the City of the King and the languages of Agra and Delhi" (*ibid.*, 249) and elsewhere *rajwāṛā* "in this meaning is the idiom of Delhi, indeed of the inhabitants of the exalted quarter of the City" (*ibid.*, 261); "but *gazak* in the idiom of the inhabitants of the City…" (*ibid.*, 371); "but *nakẖtōrā* in the usage of the City etc. …" (*ibid.*, 430); "but *haṛapẖnā* is not the language of the City and the people of the City. Maybe it is the language of the towns and rural pockets" (*ibid.*, 441–42).

In all these examples there is a language—meaning a variety of the "Hindi" language—of the Exalted City (Urdū-e Muʿallā) which is held up as a model of excellence. This is specifically associated with Delhi and Agra and with rule (*bādshāhī*). The speakers of this language are called "*ahl-e Shahr*" (the inhabitants of the City) or "*ahl-e Urdū*" which probably means the same thing, i.e., inhabitants of the exalted quarters of imperial centers like Delhi and Agra. This is the part of the city where the Muslim gentry, aristocracy and workmen associated with royalty

used to live. Inshā', as we will see, described this in detail. It is the language of this part of the City—the Muslimized idiom of the *ashrāf*—which Ārzū calls the "language of Urdu." By Urdu he means "part of the City" and not a language—which is called Hindi—though Saiyid ʿAbdu'l-Lāh claims that Ārzū is the first writer who does use the term Urdu for a language (in Ārzū 1751, 28–29). This interpretation is possible if Ārzū's abbreviated references to the "zubān-e Urdū" (language of the city) are taken to mean "the Urdu language." However, the point is that Ārzū does have a standard in mind and it is the language of an élitist Muslim minority living in parts of imperial cities.

Let us now take Ārzū's condemnation of the ordinary peoples' language which he calls "wrong" or "ignorant" or "vulgar"—in the sense of belonging to the common people—or being from a rural backwater. Examples abound but a few will be sufficient: "but *haraval* (one who leads a military unit) is the mistake of the common people and the peasants of India" (1751, 441); "Moreover, it is called *mutakkā* (pillow) and this is one of the mistakes of the people of India" (*ibid.*, 403); "but *kalābā* (carrier of water) is the language of the ignorant and the common people of India" (*ibid.*, 338). He also explains that the people of India cannot pronounce *qāf* (*ibid.*, 356); or *jīm* (*ibid.*, 174) or several other phonemes borrowed from Arabic and Persian.

If we connect this purist attitude of Ārzū with his general praise for the language of the cities, and especially the centers of royal power, it becomes clear that he aspires for linguistic purity and this, in practice, means taking the Muslimized idiom of imperial Mughal cities as the new standard. The Hindi of Gwalior, while being the best variety of Hindi, is not the model which Ārzū will follow. Instead, he will adopt the minority language of an élitist group, which happens to be Muslim, to function as the identity symbol of *ashrāf* Muslims like himself who will switch over from Persian to Persianized Urdu in the near future.

Insha's Contribution

Inshā' Allāh Khān Inshā' (1752–1818), known mostly as a poet, was the pioneering sociolinguistic historian of Urdu. His pathbreaking Persian work *Daryā-e Laṭāfat* (1802) was printed by Maulvī Masīḥu'd-Dīn Kākōrvī in Murshidābād in 1848. The book has two parts, the first and major part, by Inshā', deals with the notion of correctness (*faṣāḥat*) in Urdu along with the first grammar of the language written by a native speaker. The second and minor part, by Mirzā Qatīl, deals with figures

of speech, rhetoric and prosody. The book was edited by ʿAbdu'l-Ḥaq in Aurangabad under the auspices of the Anjuman-e Taraqqī-e Urdū in May 1916. Then, in 1935, Brajmōhan Datātriya Kaifī translated it into Urdu.

Inshāʾ built his whole linguistic theory around the notion of *faṣāḥat*, which is based upon a hierarchical, medieval (and colonial) world-view. The assumption is that the phenomenal world is a fixed and given entity with an essential nature or quality. Thus values and hierarchies within things, including languages, are an immutable given and intrinsic to their nature. Thus some languages—like some people, religions, races, etc.—are inferior or superior to others. The modern idea that human beings in groups or collectivities ascribe values and determine societal hierarchies which are, therefore, neither unchangeable, nor objective, nor intrinsic was not known to Inshāʾ and his contemporaries. Indeed, his British contemporaries also did not countenance such a constructionist and relativist view. They would, of course, have argued for the superiority of Europe and of English while Inshāʾ argued for the superiority of Urdu over other Indian languages. But both parties would have agreed with the basic assumption that value (superiority or inferiority) resides in the essential nature of a thing and is not given to it by observers.

Inshāʾ developed his notion of *faṣāḥat* on this basic assumption—that there are superior forms of language. He then argued that the standard of correctness lies in the practice of some families of Shaḥjahānābād (Delhi).

The language of Shāhjahānābād is that which people associated with the royal court, the courtiers, beloveds, Muslim handicraftsmen, the functionaries of rich and fashionable people—even their very sweepers—speak. Wherever these people go their children are called Dillī-*vālās* and their *moḥalla* is known as the *moḥalla* of the Delhites (Inshāʾ 1802, 102).

This definition is given so late in the book because Inshāʾ was preparing the ground for it in the first hundred pages. First, he excluded the Hindus on the grounds that refined people knew very well that the Hindus learned "the art of conversation and the etiquette of partaking food and wearing clothes from the Muslims" (*ibid*., 35). Then he goes on to eliminate the working classes of Delhi and such localities as that of Mughalpūra and the Saiyids of Bārah. The working classes, he says, speak Urdu mixed with other languages.

Mughalpūra and other localities are rejected because their Urdu is mixed with Punjabi, and the Saiyids of Bārah, who belonged to a pow-

erful family, are excluded on the grounds that they came from outside Delhi and were too proud to learn the correct Urdu idiom. Next Inshā' eliminates all outsiders settled in Delhi, be they from Kashmir, Punjab or the small towns of UP. In the end he is left with a few families with courtly connections and gentlemanly status (*ashrāf*). In short, correctness in Urdu is based upon the membership of an exclusive club that was Muslim, not of working-class status, and belonged to Delhi.

But here Inshā' runs into a difficulty. He himself lived in Lucknow and his patron, Navāb Sa'ādat Yār Khān, the ruler of Awadh, was from that city and not from Delhi. He therefore praises the correctness of the Urdu of Lucknow in the same elevated language which he earlier used for the language of Delhi. Then he explains that one does not have to be born in Delhi to be correct in Urdu. Indeed, the best Urdu-speakers (*fuṣaḥā*) of that city have migrated to Lucknow. Since the ruler (his patron) encouraged acquisition of knowledge and the arts, it was in Lucknow that the best form of Urdu flourished (*ibid*., 97–98). Using this stratagem he achieves what he started out with—that correctness resides in the language of the *ashrāf* of Delhi—but also placates the hurt egos of Lakẖnavīs and especially the Navāb.

Inshā''s linguistic theory is related to power. First, the hierarchical and value-laden evaluation of languages or linguistic practices in itself confirms the differentiation in society initially created by the powerful. Secondly, Inshā' clearly states that figures with temporal authority can create linguistic innovations. For instance, the use of the word *rangtara* for *sangtara* by Muḥammad Shāh is such a neologism. Inshā' believes that whatever form of language is acceptable to rulers is ipso facto "correct" (*ibid.*, 66). Indeed, Delhi's language is correct precisely because it was the capital of the Mughal Empire for so long.

Given such views about correctness, Inshā' also believes in purging the language of coarse or inharmonious words. Not all of these words are from Hindi, though some, such as *sarījan, pī,* and *pītam*, undoubtedly are. Indeed, some words are considered unreasonable (*nāma'qūl*) simply because they belong to a bygone age (*manē* for "*mēñ*" for "in" and "*darmiyān*" "in between"; *dasā* for "seen" or "that which was seen"; *satī* for "*sē,*" etc.). Inshā' is also in favor of abandoning all words coming from the peripheral areas where Brij Bhasha or (in Lucknow) Awadhi, is spoken (*ibid.*, 62–63). He condemns such words as being unsuitable for Urdu.

Although some of Inshā''s ideas do not conform to traditional purist views about Urdu—for instance he argues that foreign words should be pronounced according to the phonological rules of Urdu rather than the

language they are borrowed from (*ibid.*, 164)—his influence as an upholder of élitist language affected Urdu writers in the nineteenth century.

Other Linguistic Reformers

The other major figure who is referred to in this process of the Muslimization of Urdu is the poet Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-e Janāñ (1701–1780). Jān-e Janāñ was a poet of Persian and was also reputed to be a mystic (*sūfī*). According to Anvar Sadīd, who has written on the literary movements in Urdu, Jān-e Janāñ carried out the linguistic reforms as a religious and political duty (1985, 203). For him it was a religious and political necessity to have the same linguistic tradition operating in both Persian and Urdu (*ibid.*). He was, of course, familiar with both Persian and Arabic and was a master of the Muslim mystical religious tradition. In his hands Urdu poetry developed some of the features that are associated with the *ghazal*.

Jān-e Janāñ uses Persianized diction, Iranian literary allusions and Islamic cultural symbols. In the following *sheʿr*

> *Čalī ab gul kē hāt͟hōñ sē luṭā kar kārvāñ apnā*
> *na čh͟ōṛā hāʾē bulbul nē čaman mēñ kuč͟h nishāñ apnā*
>
> She has departed after getting her caravan robbed by the flower
> Alas! The nightingale has left not a single sign of herself in the garden.
>
> (in Āzād [1907], 224)

Gul (flower) and *bulbul* (nightingale) are well-known symbols of beauty and love in classical Persian poetry, whereas it is the *kōel* (cuckoo) which is celebrated in Indian poetry. This *sheʿr*, therefore, is an early example of the fashion which became established in the *ghazal* tradition as we know it today.

Another classical poet Mirzā Rafīʿ Saudā is credited by Āzād for having introduced Persian idiom in the local language (*bhasha*) and, thus, having "purified" it (*ibid.*, 133). Another figure of this movement, Shaikh Imām Baksh Nāsikh (d. 1838) spent his childhood in Faiẓābād and his adult life in Lucknow during a period when the Urdu-based Shīʿa Muslim civilization of Lucknow was rising. His role in standardizing Urdu has been appreciated by Ghālib, who, according to Ṣafīr Bilgrāmī, said: "Sir, if you ask me, it is Lucknow which transformed utterance into elegant language, and in Lucknow it was Nāsikh who did

it" (qtd. in Jāvēd 1987, 42–43).

Indeed, Nāsikh and his pupils—Mīr ʿAlī Rashk, Baḥr, Barq, and Ābād—are all known for giving precedence to language over meaning. He often translated from Persian into Urdu and carried the Persianization of Urdu to an extreme. According to Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād, Nāsikh

> studied books of Persian from Ḥāfiẓ Vāriś ʿAlī Lakẖnavī and also studied textbooks by the ulema of Firaṅgī Maḥal. Although he did not have a scholarly command of Arabic, according to the requirements of traditional knowledge and the company of his peers, he had full understanding of the requirements of poetry.
>
> ([1907?], 282)

Āzād also says that he was rightly called *nāsikh* (one who abrogates) because he cancelled out, or brought to an end, the ancient style of poetry (*ṭarz-e qadīm*) (*ibid*., 289). Anvar Sadīd goes to the extent of considering Nāsikh responsible for the trend of purging out even well-known words of the local languages (*prakrits*) and substituting for them difficult and elevated words of Persian and Arabic (1985, 211). However, Rashīd Ḥasan Khān, in his introduction to the selection of Nāsikh's poetry, while agreeing that Nāsikh did use difficult Arabic words, does not find any deliberate prejudice in his work against words of local or Sanskritic origin (1996, 34). Moreover he claims that the students of Nāsikh and not the poet himself carried out most of the linguistic purges which are attributed to him. Nāsikh did, however, make Lucknow a center of the ongoing standardization of Urdu (*ibid*., 70–109).

One of the sources describing the linguistic reform movement is *Jalva-e Khiẓr* (1884). Its author, Farzand Aḥmad Safīr Bilgrāmī, aspired to write a history of Urdu poetry like Azad's *Āb-e Ḥayāt*, and to achieve this he chose the extended metaphor of committees. The focus is the refinement of Urdu diction and there are eight committees for this purpose. The first was under Shaikh Ḥātim, the second Mīr Taqī Mīr, the third Jurʾat, the fourth Muṣḥafī, the fifth Inshāʾ, the sixth Mīr Ḥasan, the seventh Shāh Naṣīr and the eighth Ẕauq and Mōmin. There were also sub-committees under students of the last two and Ghālib (1884, 273). Of course there were no formal committees of this kind but the metaphor is useful for categorizing the major figures who participated in what was seen as the refinement of the language. A number of lists are given which suggest that the major change was of fashion, i.e., the old-fashioned word or expression was replaced by a new one. In many cases only the grammatical gender was changed (in *tāsīr kiyā* (affected), for

instance, the last word which refers to the gender of the verb "did" became *kī*, i.e., feminine). However, well-known words of Hindi origin, which are still used in modern Hindi and especially in popular songs, were declared obsolete. Among these are: *nain* (eyes), *darshan* (vision), *sarījan* (friend, deity), *jag* (word), *mas, mōhan* (darling), *dārū* (medicine/alcohol), *sansār* (world), *piyā* (beloved), *pītam* (beloved), *mukẖ* (face), *man* (dear), etc. (*ibid.*, 73–74). However, Mīr Dard, Mirzā Muḥammad Rafīʿ Saudā (1706–1781), etc., did throw out some "typical words of Hindi" (*ṭẖēṭẖ Hindī alfāẓ*) from their poetic work (*ibid.*, 91).

Even so, it should be clarified here that this movement for purging the existing "Hindi" language of words was not seen as Muslimization at that time nor do the historians of Urdu use this term. As mentioned earlier, if one examines the lists of words rendered obsolete by this movement of linguistic purification one finds that most words were discarded simply because they were old-fashioned, rustic or grammatically mixed (one morpheme from Arabic, another from Hindi or Persian or some such combination). Thus Khālid Ḥasan Qādrī's glossary of four thousand obsolete words includes words which are not of Sanskritic origin but fell from grace for other reasons (2004). Other lists of obsolete words are provided by Shauq Nīmvī, Abrā Ḥusnī and Khurshīd Lakẖnavī, among others (Balōč 2008, 219–25). Most of the words and expressions in these lists are not of Sanskritic or local language (*bhāshā*) origin but are simply old-fashioned (*āʾē hai* (comes), *jāʾē haē* (goes), *līǰō* (take), *dīǰō* (give)) or of the wrong Persian construction (*khandā jabīñ* is obsolete and in its place *khandah jabīñ* is allowed, i.e., the *hē* < ہ > is to replace the *alif* < ا >) (*ibid.*, 121). The fact that speakers of Urdu actually use the *alif* is of no account for the purists. The practitioners of the movement considered it linguistic reform and that is how the Urdu historians describe it even now.

The Institution of Poetic Apprenticeship

Several factors make it a movement that changed the identity of Urdu and, in effect, Muslimized it. Among these is the fact that Urdu was disseminated all over urban India by the institutions of *shāgirdī* and *ustādī* (apprenticeship and mentorship). Poets became disciples or students of established practitioners or teachers, who corrected their poems according to the established criterion of *faṣāḥat* and *balāghat* (correctness and eloquence) (*ibid.*, 57–77). Prosody was one aspect of this correction but the focus was always diction. Obsolete words and

expressions had to be eschewed and one had to be careful about the accepted idiom among one's seniors, and also because the novice poet had to recite his poems publicly in a *mushāʿira* dominated by Muslim *asātiẕa*. This left little or no room for the use of local and Hindu references, except in the poetic form of *dōhā*. Thus, the movement for linguistic reform which was not consciously meant to communalize Urdu actually ended up doing just that.

Discursive Pattern and Identity

As mentioned above, what changed the identity of Urdu from a composite language of Hindus and Muslims to a language of urban Muslims is not only the expurgation of certain words. Much more significant was the fact that the overall discourse became oriented to Muslim culture. Thus the themes, cultural references, formulaic utterances, salutations, religious allusions, and the overall atmosphere came from Islam in North India. This is something which made it difficult for Hindus—at least those who wanted their literary products to function in an overall Hindu and Indian oeuvre—to continue writing in Urdu. This fact is not usually acknowledged by Muslim scholars—something which Giān Čand Jain complains about (2005, 200–215)—but judging from the praise some of the greatest modern-day scholars of Urdu have lavished on the Muslimization of discourse it appears to have been considered a welcome development. Indeed, writing at present Muʿīnu'd-Dīn ʿAqīl says that Mirzā Maẓhar Jān-e Jānāñ's achievement was to prevent the domination of the influences of Hindi (*Hindī aṡarāt kō Urdū adab mēñ ghālib ānē sē rōknā tḫā*) and that the movement brought Urdu closer to Persian and Muslim cultural values (2008, 58).

Let us now turn to the views of two influential scholars of Urdu, Jamil Jālibī and Ḥāfiẓ Maḥmūd Shērānī. The former was the chairman of the National Language Authority which reprinted Shērānī's *Panjāb Mēñ Urdū* (1928) in 2006. Their views support the official narrative of the Pakistani state, which regards Urdu as one of the major identity symbols of Pakistani Muslims.

Jālibī believes that Urdu has a distinctive Muslim character. He does not deny the Indic base of Urdu, but he calls the Muslimization of literary themes and the Persianization of the language improvements. In his *Tārīkh-e Adab-e Urdū* (1975) he writes:

> In the beginning both in Gujrat and the Deccan it [Urdu] accepted pure Hindvi effects but when the way for advancement is not visible and the

> creative mind finds impediments in its expression, then it is obvious it would advance towards the side where it sees the way.
>
> (1975, 193)

According to him, this Persianization was a *fiṭrī ʿamal* (natural act) and any other course of action was impossible. He holds that if the poetry of Bijapur, in contrast to that of Golcanda, sounds alien to us, it is because of the Persianization of the latter. Thus the poetry of Nuṣratī is not known and Valī's is. As a proof he cites the poet Shafīq, the author of *Čamanistān-e Shuʿarā* (1761), who said of Nuṣratī: "*alfāẓash ba-ṭāur Dakẖniyān bar zubān-hā girāñ mī āyed*" (His words are felt to be heavy on the tongue like those of the Deccanites) (*ibid.*, 351).

The trend towards Persianization of prosody is considered an improvement. In 1336/1917-18 Ṣafdar Mirzāpūrī complains that the fashion for writing *ghazals* without the guidance of some expert poet has increased and approves of the idea of reform (1918, 17). A Hindu historian of Urdu first asserts that it was only when Urdu started "wearing the apparel of Persian" that it separated from Hindi—an argument given with much greater scholarly authority by Amrit Rai (1984) later—but then goes on to praise the language "reform" movement (Lāl 1920, 80).

Shērānī, an indefatigable research scholar of Urdu and considered a pioneer of research on the language, says that the Hindi prosody (*ʿurūẓ*) was used up to the seventeenth century. After Qulī Quṭb Shāh (988–1020/1581-82–1611-12) there is evidence of Persian influence. Shērānī goes on to say:

> In these days there is opposition from some circles to this trend [Persianization]. It is attacked as being foreign and short sighted. But we think that our elders in their search for novelty were right, for the results we see are greatly useful and profitable.
>
> (1966, 200)

Moreover, Shērānī presents the thesis that Urdu should have "Muslim emotions." He feels that the language called Urdu is distinctive and separate from other languages because it has (a) *Musalmānī jaẓbāt-o-khayālāt* (Muslim emotions and ideas), (b) *ʿArabī-o-Fārsī alfāẓ*, i.e., (Arabic and Persian words), and (c) its grammatical rules follow a certain order (*ibid.*, 174).

However, he does not explain the last point. Moreover, he also leaves out one other point, viz.,—the script should be Perso-Arabic. All the examples he provides are in this script. Most often his examples come from Persian sources where the original writer simply says "*ba zubān-ē Hindī farmūdand* (so and so said in Hindi).

The point is clear that some of the pioneering scholars of Urdu of the twentieth century believe that the discursive elements of Urdu should belong to the urban, middle-class culture of North Indian Islam. All their talk of Muslim "emotions," "values" and cultural references inevitably created a certain literary culture in which it was not possible for a writer to choose a non-Muslim cultural style of expression. This explains why Muḥammad Ḥusain Āzād's famous *Āb-e Ḥayāt* ignores both Hindu poets and women—the dice were loaded against them as Urdu had been standardized from the eighteenth century onwards as an identity symbol of *ashrāf*, North Indian Muslim males.

There were attempts to reverse the trend of Muslimization during the period of the Urdu-Hindi controversy by those who strove for Muslim-Hindu unity. Vaḥīdu'd-Dīn Salīm, a minor literary and academic figure in Hyderabad, was one of these people. He said, among other things, that Hindi words, allusions to Hindu mythology and culture and references to India rather than Persia should be added to Urdu in order not to alienate our "Hindu brethren" (n.d., 6–8). More famously, Sir Saiyid, one of the pioneering champions of Urdu during the Urdu-Hindi controversy, deplored the tendency of using the idiom and diction of Persian. He said these two things made "the *Urdū-pan* [Urdu-ness] disappear" (Khan 1847, 427). However, since linguistic symbols feed into narratives of identity, the trend toward Muslimization continued with the result that Urdu is now seen as solely a Muslim language.

Social Implications of Muslimizaton

One major tradition of Urdu linguistics is its preoccupation with "correctness" (*faṣāḥat*) and this is seen through the criterion of what I call Muslimization. This trend has ideological associations and implications for identity, self-definition and, ultimately, politics. The notion of correctness makes it possible to create a certain aristocracy of the "owners of the language" (*ahl-e zubān*). This serves the purpose of making the language an exclusive preserve of an élitist group distinguished from others by birth, upbringing and education in the norms of the "correct" language. By the same token it is a device that excludes others; the less than perfect speakers; the "others." These "others" can, of course, learn Urdu, but they will always fall short of the perfection of the *ahl-e zubān*. Who the *ahl-e zubān* were is contested and that is exactly what Inshā' tries to do: he distinguishes them from the "others." In short, the notion of "correctness" assigns Urdu the kind of value that makes it a

rare and valued commodity. This is best explained with reference to Bourdieu's concept of "linguistic capital," according to which the constitution of a linguistic market creates the conditions for an objective competition in and through which the legitimate competence can function as linguistic capital, producing a profit of distinction on the occasion of each social exchange (1982, 55).

This capital is "capital" only as long as its value is recognized in the society in which it operates. In this case it was so recognized and, lacking political power, the *ahl-e zubān* jealously guarded the purity of their usages so as to keep the value of this capital intact. There are many anecdotal incidents, especially of the poet Jōsh Malīḥābādī (1898–1982) who often rebuked people for not speaking Urdu according to the usages he considered correct. And so intact is this capital even today that actors have to learn these usages, especially the pronunciation, if they have to perform credibly in Hindi movies in India. For, even though the movies are called "Hindi," they have scenes depicting the élitist Urdu culture for which the notions of "correctness" advocated by the *ahl-e zubān* are still relevant. The famous singer Lata Mangeshkar says:

> One evening we were all strolling around the Gateway of India. I remember, in the course of our conversation, I used the word "paigham" [*paighām*] without the Urdu guttural "g." Even before I could complete the sentence, Korangkarji interrupted with "listen, let me tell you something—if you want to make a career out of singing Hindi songs, then you must be careful about pronunciation…."
>
> (Bhimani 1995, 135)

Even now, as the present author found in his visit to Mumbai in March 2007, a number of actors and actresses hire experts in Urdu to correct their pronunciation. In short, the ideological position the references of Urdu adopted about "correctness" was intimately linked with the emerging élitist identity in India. This identity had to fall back on the salient cultural symbol of language in proportion to its weakening in political and economic power.

Conclusion

The standardization of Urdu in the late eighteenth century made modern Urdu highly Persianized and Arabized. There were two aspects of this standardization: the removal of certain words of colloquial, indigenous or Indic origin and their replacement by Persian and Arabic

words. This was called the linguistic reform movement but it did not purge only Indic words. Indeed, it removed many more words used in the composite language of the time which were merely old-fashioned or considered unrefined, even if they were originally borrowed from Persian and Arabic and then naturalized into Urdu-Hindi. The second, and by far the more important trend was to create a discourse which favored Muslim ways of thinking, feeling and describing reality. These discursive imperatives drew upon Muslim cultural values and used Islamic cultural references in such a manner that they became literary imperatives, reinforced by the tradition of poetic apprenticeship imposed upon all literary practitioners. Later on other imperatives, such as the necessity of aligning one's self to the antagonistic and hegemonic Muslim or Hindu identities during the freedom movement of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries took over. Thus, Urdu and Hindi kept drawing apart, indeed so much so that today their formal, high literary registers are mutually unintelligible. Yet, the common peoples' language in the streets of Delhi and Karachi is mutually intelligible. This has many implications for peace and well-being for Pakistanis and Indians so that this exercise in linguistic history is not merely academic but can also have practical applications in the making of a new and peaceful South Asia. ❑

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