

## REKHTA: UNRAVELING THE BEAUTY OF URDU POETRY

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### **Abstract**

*The confluence of local Indian vernaculars with the foreign languages resulted in a bunch of very closely related speech to Urdu, Hindi and Khariboli. Persio- Arabic traditions unveiled new literary trends. Malfoozats or religious maxims gave pave for Urdu poetry. Verse remarkably set many standards and has served as the foundation for many forms of Urdu poetry. Against the background of multiplicity of types of Urdu poetry, Rekhta was indiscriminately used by Urdu poets. Amazingly, Rekhta asserts its purity of Indian extraction. Indian and Persian poetic elements intermingled with each other and ventured into the intricacies of the Indian philosophical moodsand provide aesthetic delight. Rekhta was used by poets like Sheikh Bahauddin Bajan, Rahim Khan Khanan and many more with commendable ease. However, it is to that literary giant, Amir Khusrau's poetry that nurtured this popular literary form.*

**Keywords:-** Arabic traditions, Rekhta, Persian, Hindavi

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### Introduction

The invasion of Turks, Persian conquests and the trade relation with South Asia gave pave for heavy influx of Persian, Turkish and Arabic vocabulary that intermingled with the Indian local vernaculars. No wonder then, it was difficult to determine, the mellowing of Indian vernaculars with the foreign languages evolve in centuries, likewise it is not feasible to verify precisely what the various countries and languages have contributed to give a clear and specific form to Urdu. A surprising fact, that the healthy synthesis of languages at different level of consciousness yielded a common language namely *Hindavi* (Khariboli, BrajBhasha). Rekhta a poetical form of Urdu was developed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century India.

**Origin of Rekhta:** For the sake of convenience, I will call *Rekhta* initially cultivated in the religious *Khanqahs* (religious seminary). The spontaneous and unconscious use of mixed literary language of the Sufis that blend Persian words with that *Hindavi* resulted in a mixed dialect. As a language *Hindavi*, one could easily assume, have developed in the writings of the Sufis. The sayings *Malfoozats* (religious maxims) were the discourses, recorded by the disciples or the visitors, spontaneously delivered by the Sufis. In India from the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the earliest writings of *Urdu Hindavi* works carry historical evidences. The sayings, of Sufi saint Shaikh Fariduddin Masud GanjShakar (1173-1266) are accounted in *Jawahir-e- Faridi*, in a mixed dialect, directed on the purity of soul and submission to God.

*Ishqkaraaz ye neyaarahai, jasmadad peer kenacharahai*  
*Tan kedhoney se diljohoteypaak, Pesh-o- roanbiyakehoteykhaaq*  
*Khaaqmalney se jokhudapaaye, gaibaeilbhivaasla ho jaaye*

(Strange are the mysteries of divine love and nothing helps except the help of divine guide. If heart could become pure by washing the body, pigs would enjoy precedence over divine seers If one could get to God by applying mud to the body, cattle would as well attain divinity<sup>1</sup>)

The slow march of Urdu *Hindavi* work was the conscious effort to disseminate the message of Islam in local language with the inclusion and fusion of various dialects. The other sources of *Hindavi* is *Suroor-us- Sudur* of Hamiduddin Nagori (d.1275), the contribution of the Sufis was of much worth, few to mention here is Sharfuddin Bu Ali Qalandar (d. 1323), Shaikh Sirajuddin (d. 1355) and many more that are credited with the development of language. What is attested in the works of the Sufis flourished in a fully-fledged language. Commonly the lingua franca of north India. Derived from the Persian word, *Rekhta* means *Scattered, Interspersed, Mixed, or Poured*. Further it defines as the words of a language that consciously mixes with the other languages. One could say that the poetry of *Rekhta* influenced the growth of the language we now speak – a mix of many dialects and languages<sup>2</sup>. Mir the poet, has spoken of four types of *Rekhta* i) Persian and Urdu line alternating. ii) the same line partly in Persian and partly in Urdu iii) Use of Persian Verbs, Prepositions and Conjunctions and iv) the use of suitable Persian phrases. The poem of *Rekhta*, is the most excellent example of a conversation connecting civilizations and two different cultures which cut across man made barriers and enables two persons to express their emotions and feeling poetically. *Rekhta* was developed by Amir Khusrau<sup>3</sup>. The cross over poet, Amir Khusrau, (1253-1325) educated in Philosophy, Persian and Quran, grew familiarity with the local languages and developed a cultural fraternity. His poetry present an influential image of secular thinking. The language he used later developed into *Hindustani*. Commonly known as the *Tuti- yi- Hind* (Parrot of India) for his poetic eloquence and fluency in Persian; Amir Khusrau stood as a major cultural icon in the history of Indian civilization for almost seven hundred years. As the beloved disciple of Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, Khusrau's composition ranges from *Qawwali* to *Khayal*. His composed poems in *Rekhta* (alternate lines of Persian and Braj Bhasha) is best example of the use of the cosmopolitan Persian and the *Dehati Zabaan* of northern India.

*Zihaal-e miskeenmakuntagafful, Duraye-e- nainabanayebatiya*

*Kitaab-e- hijrannadaram-ay-jaan, Ne lehokahelagayechatiya*

(Do not overlook my misery, by blandishing your eyes and weaving tales)

My patience is over-brimmed, O Sweet heart! Why do you not take me to your bosom? Without exaggeration, Khusrau is the pioneer of *Khariboli*, we find trace of *Rekhta* in his poem with Sufi themes:

*Man kuntoMaula, Fa Ali-un-Maula*

(Whoever accepts me as a master, Ali is his master too)

*Khusrauaisipeetkar, jaiseyhindujoyey*

*Pootkarayeikarnay, jaljalkoylahoyey*

(What love need to do is; Put your soul and heart to work, As Hindus always do, in their karma, they even burn themselves as offerings to their Gods.)

As a matter of fact, *Rekhta* was cultivated in North India by the Sufi saints of Deccan. It is however the Mughals to whom the earliest firmly datable *Rekhta* can be attributed and its author is none other than Emperor Babur. His Turkish *Diwan* preserved in a manuscript dated from 1529, includes a couplets partly in *Khari Boli* Hindi and partly in Persian and partly in Turkish

*Muj-ka-na-huakujhavas-i- manak-o- moti*

*Faqrehliga bus bulgisidurpani-o- roti*

(I have no desire for gem and pearls For poor people, sufficient are water and bread <sup>4</sup>.)

As *Rekhta* acquired a status in the Urdu literary circle, many poets attributed a commendable shape to it. Abdur-Rahim khan- Khanan's inimitable charming *dohast* that suited the mood of every period. He was a gifted multi lingual poet who could speak Turkish, Persian, Hindavi, Arabic, Sanskrit and Portuguese with fluency. Poet of par excellence, Khan was the patron of many rising poets, like Ban, Harinath, Alaqli, Kesavdas, Gang, and Madanwho enjoyed his guidance.His disciple Gang paid homage to the generous nature of Khan in these words:

*SeekhokahanNawabjuaisidainidein?*

*Jyujyukaroonchakarojaatei so neechnain*

(Master! From where you pick up the habit of giving alms? As the hands goes up to give, the eyes go downwards as though automatically<sup>6</sup>)

Khan replied with the brilliancy of mixed dialect-

*Deinhaar koi aurhai ,bhejat so din-rayien.*

*Log bharam hum par dharey, jaatey so neechnain*

(Donor is someone else (God), incessantly thriving His bounty. People mistook me as the benefactor, fills me with remorse)

Both the *dohas*, genuinely, appear to be vernacular reiteration of the many Persian words praising the Khan's munificence.

Sheikh Jamaluddin Kamboh Dehlavi, a Sufi saint of 15<sup>th</sup> century, had mesmerized people by his poetry. Bestowed with the title of *Khusrau-e-Sani* (Equal to Khusrau), Kamboh is credited with writing several important works on mysticism and metaphysical symbolism

*Rang hi rang, Khushboo hi Khushboo*

*Gardish-e-sagar-e-khayalhai*

(Color everywhere, perfume all-encompassing A moment of thought, an imagination)

One could easily find the appropriate use of Persian phrases in the given couplet that conform Mir's fourth division of *Rekhta*, namely the use of Persian phrases within a Hindi line.

**Conclusion:** There is evidence of widening the domain of *Rekhta* by the poets as well as the religious poets. At the point, there are several poems common to the poets they are Mian Mustafa Gujarati, Bahram Saqqa, Bukhari Mashadi, Ishqui Khan, Mir Baksh, Allama Faizi, Jani, Nasir Ali Sirhindi, Mu'aiyid Beg and many more. It is not difficult to imagine the rising craze of *Rekhta* in medieval period by embedding *Hindavi* dialect in Persian. This poetical form was not for propaganda of self but was a natural evolution from the profound involvement of self with the mystic environment. Hence, *Hindavi* was a more convenient language to utter the feelings of a heart filled with divine love. Understandably, *Rekhta* assimilated in diction, style and mannerism with that of Indian pattern and yielded rich poetry that surpassed time and cultural borders.

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