

TEACH YOURSELF PERSIAN THE SANSKRIT WAY
A Survey of Sanskrit Manuals for Learning Persian, AD 1364-1764*

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I

The interaction between the Islamic and Sanskrit traditions of learning involved translation of a number of representative works from Sanskrit into Arabic/Persian and vice versa from the eighth century onwards.¹ While we know the names of several works thus translated or adapted,² not much is known about the methodology of translation, nor how Muslims had learnt Sanskrit or Hindus and Jainas had learnt Arabic or Persian.

An exploration of the unpublished Sanskrit manuscript collections shows that there existed a class of works, whose aim was to teach Persian through the medium of Sanskrit, the most notable being Bihāri Kṛṣṇadāsa Mīśra's *Pāraśīprakāśa*, which was dedicated to Akbar. No doubt, Akbar's attempts at cultural synthesis, coupled with Todar Mal's introduction of Persian as the bureaucratic language, gave an impetus to the compilation of such handbooks, but these began to be composed much earlier.

There are some fifteen such manuals written during the four hundred years between AD 1364 and 1764. These contain mostly bilingual vocabularies in verse, in the style of traditional

* This is a revised version of a lecture delivered at the XIV All-India Persian Teachers' Conference, Aligarh 1994. This version was prepared in 1995 for *Shri Hazari Mull Banthia Felicitation Volume* which never appeared.

¹ Cf. Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, "Translation of Scientific Texts under Sawai Jai Singh," *Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Journal*, 41 (1998) 67-87.

² For a list of such works, see A. B. M. Habibullah, "Medieval Indo-Persian Literature relating to Hindu Science and Philosophy, 1000-1800 A.D. A Bibliographical Survey," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 14 (1938) 167-181.

Sanskrit lexica, though one or two provide grammatical rules as well.³ Some manuals offer vocabularies related to special areas of learning. Thus, for example, Vedāṅgarāya's *Saṃskṛta-pārasīka-padaprakāśa*, composed in the reign of Shah Jahan, aims to teach Islamic calendar and technical terms related to Islamic astronomy and astrology.

In the context of my study of exchanges between Hindu and Islamic scientific traditions, especially in the field of astronomy and mathematics, I have been investigating the mechanics of this exchange which include such manuals for learning Persian. In this paper, I propose to make a bibliographical survey of this new genre of writing but I shall not attempt here an analysis of the texts from the lexical and grammatical viewpoints.

II

The Jainas appear to have taken a leading role in the propagation of Persian through the medium of Sanskrit. Many of the early texts of this class were composed by them. This is not surprising. I have argued elsewhere⁴ that in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, banking and minting in the Gujarat-Rajasthan-Delhi region were controlled by the Jainas. Their cooperation was, therefore, sought by the early Sultans of Delhi for conducting their banking and minting operations. In fact, up to the time of Allauddin Khalji, the Sultans issued their coins in the existing designs with legends in Sanskrit and Devanāgarī script. Owing to these commercial and monetary reasons, the Jainas had better relations at the Delhi court. Even before the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, contacts existed between the Jainas and Muslims on the west coast of India, which area had a long history of maritime relations with the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.

Thus the Jainas came to play the role of mediators between the Islamic and Sanskrit traditions of learning in the early medieval period. To cite a prominent example, the Jaina banker Ṭhakkura Pherū,⁵ who was the assay master at the court of Allauddin Khalji and four of his

³ Cf. Claus Vogel, *Indian Lexicography*, Wiesbaden 1979 [Jan Gonda (ed), *A History of Indian Literature*, Volume V, Fasc. 4], pp. 380-381.

⁴ Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, "Thakkura Pheru and the Popularisation of Science in India in the Fourteenth Century" in: *Shri Bhanwar Lal Nahata Abhinandana Grantha*, Calcutta 1986, part 4; pp. 63-72.

⁵ On his life and work, see Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, *Ṭhakkura Pherū's Rāyaṅaparikkhā: A Medieval Prakrit Text on Gemmology*, Aligarh 1984, Introduction.

successors, disseminated a number of ideas from Islamic sources in his several writings in Apabhraṃśa. Thus, in his work on gemmology, he discusses gems imported from Persia and their prices; in his manual on assaying, he talks of the Persian technique of purifying gold; in his treatise on mathematics, he teaches how to convert dates from the Hijrī era to the Vikrama era and the other way round, and so on.

This interaction continued with greater vigour under Sultān Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq in the second half of the fourteenth century. It is well known that Fīrūz collected some 1300 Sanskrit texts from the Jvālāmukhī temple during his campaigns in the Himalayan foothills and got some of these translated into Persian, in particular the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* by Varāhamihira.⁶ At least two Jaina monks, Mahendra Sūri and his pupil Malayendu Sūri were at the court of Fīrūz and they must have helped in the translation of the Sanskrit texts. They were also responsible for the reverse transmission of knowledge, viz. from the Persian into Sanskrit. In 1370 Mahendra Sūri wrote, on the basis of Arabic and Persian sources, the first ever manual in Sanskrit on the astrolabe entitled *Yantrarāja*. In the same decade, Malayendu Sūri wrote a commentary on this work.⁷

Several Jaina Ācāryas are also said to have mastered Persian and composed poems in this language. Thus Jinaprabha Sūri, a contemporary of Sultan Muhammad Tughluq (1325-51),⁸ composed a hymn entitled *Rṣabhajinastavana* in Persian language, but employing Prakrit and Sanskrit metres.⁹ This kind of virtuosity in versification was emulated by many later writers, such as Vikramasimha to be discussed below.

⁶ Cf. S. Farrukh Jalali and S. M. Razaullah Ansari, "Persian Translation of Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsaṃhitā," *Studies in History of Medicine and Science*, Vol. 9 (1985), pp. 161-169. See also Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, "Palaeographic Notes," *Aligarh Journal of Oriental Studies*, Vol. 3 (1986), pp. 125-140.

⁷ The text and the commentary were edited by Kṛṣṇaśaṅkara Keśavarāma Raikva, Bombay 1936.

⁸ For legends connecting this Sūri with the Sultān, see Jina Vijaya Muni (ed), *Kharataragaccha-Bṛhadgurvāvalī*, Bombay 1956, pp. 94-96.

⁹ This hymn, together with an anonymous Sanskrit *avacūri*, was published by Jina Vijaya Muni in *Jaina Sāhitya Saṃśodhaka*, Poona, vol. 3 (1921). I have not been able to see this journal. They were reprinted in *Aneka-Jaina-Pūrvācārya-viracitaḥ Stotrasamuccayaḥ*, ed. Caturavijaya Muni, Nirnaya Sagar Press, Bombay 1928, pp. 247-251. Again the hymn was reprinted with a short introduction and an English translation by Banarsi Das Jain, "The Persian of Jain Hymns" in: Vishva Bandhu (ed), *Siddha-Bhāratī*, Hoshiarpur 1950, part 1, pp. 47-49.

III

1. The earliest known Sanskrit manual for learning Persian is the *Yavananāmamālā* composed in 1364 by Vidyānilaya who appears to be a Jaina. Three manuscripts are said to be available of this text in some private Jaina manuscript collections.¹⁰

2. Fortunately more information is forthcoming about the next work, the *Śabdavilāsa* or *Pārasīnāmamālā* produced a year later, i.e. in 1365, in Gujarat. It was composed by Salakṣa of Prāgvāṭa-gotra, who was a minister of King Haribhrama of Ilāvaraṇa or Ilādurganagara (modern Idar).¹¹ Salakṣa informs us that he also wrote other works like *Sūktilatā*, *Alaṃkāracaya*, *Vāgdevatāstavana*, a *bhāṣya* on the *Sūryaśataka*, *Chandovṛtti*, and a poetical work called *Citrārṇava*.

The *Śabdavilāsa* is divided into two sections called *Devakāṇḍa* and *Manuṣyakāṇḍa*, and consists of 557 stanzas spread over 21 sections. Salakṣa justifies the compilation of a lexicon of foreign terms by claiming, quite rightly, that proficiency in several languages leads to high honour at royal courts.¹² As examples, he cites the case of Varāhamihira, who popularised Greek astronomy and astrology through his works, and one Pratāpabhaṭṭa who spoke and wrote in the Arabic language.¹³

¹⁰ Cf. Hari Damodar Velankar, *Jinaratnaśoḥa: An Alphabetical Register of Jain Works and Authors*, Vol. I: Works, Poona 1944, p. 318.

¹¹ Umakanta P. Shah, “Śabda-vilāsa or Pārasīnāmamālā of Mantrī Salakṣa of Gujarat,” *Vimarśa: A Half Yearly Bulletin of Rashtriya Sanskrit Samsthan*, Tirupati, Vol. I, No. 1 (1972); English section, pp. 31-36. According to Shah, a manuscript of this work is preserved in the Śrī Nītivijaya Jaina Pustakālaya, Cambay. Two incomplete MSS are at the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad; see note 13 below.

¹² Shah, op. cit., p. 31:

sarvabhāṣāsu kauśalyam ke necchanti narottamāḥ /
yato vijñātasampat prāpyate rājasamsadi //3//

¹³ Ibid., p. 31:

sacchrotriyo brahmaidāṇi vareṇyo vareṇyavāco 'yam api prapañca /
niścitya caivam giram ārabūṇi sa pratāpabhaṭṭo 'likhad apy avocat //

This Pratāpabhaṭṭa must be one of the earliest foreign language specialists of medieval India but unfortunately nothing else is known about him. MS no. 8311 at the L. D. Institute of Indology of Ahmedabad, is catalogued as the *Yavananāmamālā* by Pratāpabhaṭṭa but, on closer examination, I find that it contains two incomplete copies of Salakṣa's *Śabdavilāsa*.

Salakṣa's son Mahīpa was also a minister and, more important still, a lexicographer of repute. He was the author of *Śabdaratnākara* (also known as *Mahīpakōśa*) and *Anekārthatilaka*.¹⁴

3. The next work in the series is the *Pārasībhāṣānuśāsana*, composed by Vikramasiṃha. He was a Jaina, belonging to the Prāgvāṭa clan. He was the son of Madanapāla Ṭhakkura, grandson of Jājaga and pupil of Ānanda Sūri. Unfortunately none of these persons can be identified in relation to a definite chronology. Banarsi Das Jain, who edited this work, places its composition before 1554.¹⁵ This work contains about one thousand Persian terms and their Sanskrit equivalents, arranged in five chapters devoted successively to *jāti*, *dravya*, *guṇa*, *kriyā*, and miscellaneous. Vikramasiṃha has considerable mastery over versification. In the opening verse, each of the four feet was composed in a different language, namely Sanskrit, Mahārāṣṭrī, Śaurasenī and Māgadhī. The second verse is in Persian but composed in the *Śārdūlavikrīḍita* metre.

4. Under the Mughals and especially from Akbar onwards, the intellectual exchanges between the two cultural groups became more pronounced. That Akbar established a *Maktabkhāna* or the bureau of translation for rendering Sanskrit classics into Persian and vice versa is too well known a fact to need reiteration here.¹⁶ The monarch also sponsored the composition of a Sanskrit manual for learning Persian under the title *Pārasī(ka)prakāśa*¹⁷ by Bihāri Kṛṣṇadāsa Mīśra, who was probably a Śākadvīpīya Brahmin and a sun-worshipper.¹⁸

Kṛṣṇadāsa begins his work with an invocation to the divine sun:

¹⁴ Cf. Vogel, op. cit., pp. 351-352.

¹⁵ Vikramasiṃha's *Pārasībhāṣānuśāsana*, ed. Banarsi Das Jain, Lahore 1945, which is not accessible to me. My account is based on Banarsi Das Jain, "Pārasībhāṣānuśāsana of Vikramasiṃha" in: Mohd. Shafī (ed), *Woolner Commemoration Volume*, Lahore 1940, pp. 119-122.

¹⁶ Cf. Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, New Delhi 1975, Ch. 6: Translation Bureau of Akbar, pp. 202-222.

¹⁷ First published by Mannālāla Śarmā in a lithographed edition from Varanasi in Samvat 1923 (AD 1866-67). Later on, it was published in Germany by A. Weber, *Über den Pārasīprakāśa des Kṛṣṇadāsa*, Berlin 1887; *Über den zweiten, grammatischen Pārasīprakāśa des Kṛṣṇadāsa*, Berlin 1889; Vibhūtībhūṣaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya (ed), *Pārasīkaprakāśa* by Bihāri Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Mīśra, Varanasi 1965. See also Vogel, op. cit., p. 380; Madhukar M. Patkar, *History of Sanskrit Lexicography*, New Delhi 1981, pp. 135-136.

¹⁸ According to Weber, op. cit., p. 13, he is the same Kṛṣṇadāsamiśra who wrote a work called *Magavyakti* on the Śākadvīpīya Brahmins.

śrīsūryāya namo vidhāya vidhivat sandhāya cittam ravau
divyānām iva pārasīkavacasām kurve prakāśam navam /
samrāt śāhajalaladīndrasadasi prājñapramodapradam
bāhyadhvāntam ivāpahantu paṭhatām pūṣāntarastham tamaḥ //

Likewise the vocabulary also commences with Persian terms denoting the sun.

This is the first text to provide a systematic grammar of the Persian language. There are two sections in this work. The first contains a bilingual vocabulary (*kośa-prakarāṇa*) in 269 stanzas spread over 22 *vargas*. The second section teaches grammar (*vyākaraṇa-prakarāṇa*) through 398 *sūtras*. The various grammatical topics dealt with in this section are as follows: *saṃkhyāśabda*, *sarvanāma*, *avyaya*, *strīpratyaya*, *kāraka*, *samāsa*, *taddhita*, *ākhyāta* and *kr̥tya*.

Kṛṣṇadāsa says that he did not study Persian scientifically but picked it up just by listening.

apaṭhitvā tu tac chāstram śrutvaivemaḥ karomy aham /
nyūnātiriktatām atra kṣantum arhanti tadvidaḥ //7//

In spite of this disclaimer, his analysis of the Persian nominal and verbal forms into the appropriate bases and affixes is impressive and deserves a thorough study. The *Pārasīprakāśa* was published from Berlin in 1887 by the famous Indologist Albrecht Weber. In this century, the Sanskrit University of Varanasi brought it out again in 1965 under the editorship of a remarkable scholar Vibhūtibhūṣaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, who read both languages well, with several valuable appendices.

5. Akbar's son and successor Jahangir encouraged an Assamese scholar named Kavi Karṇapūra to write another manual. Accordingly Karṇapūra composed the *Samskṛta-pārasīka-pada-prakāśa* in 528 stanzas.¹⁹ Like the previous manual by Kṛṣṇadāsa, this one is also divided

¹⁹ Edited by Hariharanātha Yogin, on the basis of a single manuscript from Nepal dated Nepali Samvat 810 (= AD 1690), and published by Kashi Gorakhsatilla in VS 2009/AD 1952. See also Devīdatta Śarmā, "Samskṛtapārasīkapadaprakāśa: ek viśleṣaṇātmak Paricaya" in: Rādhāvallabha Tripāṭhī (ed), *Samskṛta Sāhitya ko Islām Paramparā kā Yogadāna*, Sagar 1986, pp. 189-200. In his edition of the *Pārasīkaprakāśa*, Appendix II, pp. 106-112, Vibhūtibhūṣaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya quotes several grammatical rules of Karṇapūra.

into two sections: vocabulary (324 stanzas) and grammar (204 stanzas). Karṇapūra's exposition of Persian grammar in simple verses is extremely lucid in comparison to Kṛṣṇadāsa's.

6. Jahangir's successor Shah Jahan commissioned yet another manual, but of a quite different kind. I have shown elsewhere that Akbar instituted the custom of appointing Hindus as royal astrologers with the title Jotik Roy and that this custom was continued by his successors. I have also shown that one Nīlakaṇṭha from Benares, who was the author of a very popular Sanskrit work dealing with Islamic astrology entitled *Tājika-nīlakaṇṭhī*, was the Jotik Roy at Akbar's court. Jahangir had two royal astrologers: Keśava and Paramānanda.²⁰

Similarly Shah Jahan appointed Śrīmālajit as his royal astrologer, but gave him the grander title Vedāṅgarāya. In 1643 this Vedāṅgarāya composed at Argalāpura (modern Agra) a Sanskrit manual to learn Persian which is variously called as *Samskṛta-pārasīka-pada-prakāśa*, *Samskṛta-pārasīka-racanā-bheda-kautuka*, *Samskṛta-pārasīka-racanā*, *Pārasī(ka)-prakāśa*, etc.²¹ Unlike the other manuals of this class, this one teaches special vocabulary related to Islamic astronomy and astrology. Thus he states in the first verse:²²

natvā śrībhuvaneśvarīm hariharau lambodaraṃ ca dvijān
śrīmacchāhajihāmahīndraparamaprītiprasādāptaye /
brūte samskṛtapārasīkaracanābheda-pradaṃ kautukaṃ
jyotiḥśāstrapadopayogi saralaṃ vedāṅgarāyaḥ sudhīḥ //

It also teaches how to convert dates in Hijrī era into dates of Śaka era and vice versa.²³ Vedāṅgarāya claims that his work will teach Persian to those who know Sanskrit, Sanskrit to those who know Persian, and both to those who know neither:

²⁰ See Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, "Astronomical Instruments in Mughal Miniatures," *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*, 16-17 (1992) 235-276.

²¹ This text is not yet published; for manuscripts see David Pingree, *Census of Exact Sciences in Sanskrit*, Series A, Volume 4, Philadelphia 1981, pp. 421-422. See also Vogel, op. cit., pp. 380-381; Patkar, op. cit., p. 145.

²² MS no. 1005/1888-92 of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

²³ Cf. S. R. Sarma, "Conversion of a Śaka date to Hijrī date" and "Conversion of a Hijrī date to Śaka date" in: B. V. Subbarayappa and K. V. Sarma (ed), *Indian Astronomy: A Source-Book*, Bombay 1985, pp. 60-61; idem, "Islamic Calendar and Indian Eras" in: G. Kuppuram and K. Kumuda Mani (ed), *History of Science and Technology in India*, Delhi 1990, vol. II, pp. 433-441. See also V. S. Bendrey, *Tarikh-i-Ilahi*, second edition, Aligarh 1972.

saṃskṛtoktividī pārasījñatā pārasīvidī ca saṃskṛtajñatā /

taddvayāvidī ca taddvayajñatā jāyate 'tra tad adhīyatām idam //2//

7. Obviously this vocabulary of astronomical and astrological terms was quite popular. So much so, within sixteen years of its composition, i.e. in 1659, a shorter paraphrase in 104 stanzas was prepared by Vrajabhūṣaṇānanda under the title *Phārasīvinoda*.²⁴

8. Sometime before 1649 a Jaina writer composed a work entitled *Toruṣkīnāmamālā*. Unfortunately the first folio is missing in the only extant manuscript of this work.²⁵ Consequently we do not know the name of the author. The colophon at the end of the work merely states that the author was a Jaina and the son of Minister Soma.²⁶ The father of the minister Salakṣa, mentioned above, was also Soma²⁷ but the present work by the Somamantrīśvarātmaja in 177 stanzas appears to be different from Salakṣa's much larger *Śabdavilāsa* which consists of 557 stanzas. The manuscript was copied in 1649 by Mahimāsamudra at Samālakṣhāṇaḍerā.

9. Again some time around 1676 Shivaji ordered the compilation of the *Rājavyavahārakośa* by Raghunātha Paṇḍita. This work, also known as *Rājakośanighaṇṭu*, or simply *Rājakośa*, contains administrative and other terminology in Persian and Arabic together with Sanskrit equivalents. It was divided into the following ten sections: *Rājavarga*, *Kāryasthāna°*, *Bhogyā°*, *Śāstra°*, *Caturaṅga°*, *Sāmanta°*, *Durga°*, *Lekhana°*, *Janapada°*, *Paṇya°*.²⁸

10. A similar work containing Persian vocabulary related to administration and royal correspondence was compiled at the instance of Sawai Madhava Singh about the year 1764 by Dalapatirāya under the title *Yavanaparipāṭy-anukrama* or *Patrapraśasti*. The first six of the seven chapters of this work contain model documents of various kinds. The final chapter entitled

²⁴ I have seen MS no. 166 of A.1883-84 from the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.

²⁵ MS no. 8115 of the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad.

²⁶ f6v: *iti śrījainadharmmīya-śrīsomamantrīśvarātmaja-viracite yavana-bhāṣāyāṃ toruṣkīnāmamālā samāptā*.

²⁷ Cf. Shah, op. cit., p. 35: *śrīmān somabhavaḥ salakṣasacivo ...*

²⁸ Published from Shivaji Press, Poona 1880; also published in *Śivacaritrapradīpa* (in Marathi), Bharat Itihasa Samsodhak Mandal, Poona 1925. Cf. Patkar, op. cit., pp. 148-150. See also P. K. Gode, *Studies in Indian Cultural History*, Vol. I, Hoshiarpur 1961; Vol. II, Poona 1960; Vol. III, Poona 1969, where he frequently cites from this work.

Rājanītinirūpaṇaśataka provides a bilingual vocabulary in Persian and Sanskrit. Often long definitions of Persian terms are also given.²⁹

11. Sawai Madho Singh also caused, about the year 1764, the composition of a Persian dictionary with meanings, this time not in Sanskrit, but in the vernacular under the title: *Pārasīprakāśakośabhāṣā* by Hīrālāla Kāyastha. A unique manuscript of this text is now in the Khas Mohur Collection (no. 1902) of the Sawai Mansingh II Museum and Library at Jaipur.³⁰

12-13. The same collection at Jaipur contains two other works of this nature but of uncertain date. These are *Pārasīnāmamālā* by Vikramasiṃha Mahanta (no. 5327) and *Pārasīprakāśakośa* by Divākara, s.o. Śiva (no. 5497).³¹

14-15. Finally, at the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad, there exist two anonymous and undated manuals: *Phārasīkośa* (No. 8406) and *Phārasīdhāturūpāvalī* (No. 4644).

IV

Now we may make a few observations about the nature of these compositions. All these works invariably attempt to teach Persian in the same manner as Sanskrit was taught. Traditionally a Sanskrit pupil is first made to memorize a lexicon and at the same time the tables of declension and conjugation. The lexicon which he learnt by heart was the *Amarakośa*. It is a synonymic dictionary, where the words are arranged subject-wise in three sections. The first section deals with words related to heaven, the sky, its quarters, time, and so on. The second section contains words connected with the earth, towns, mountains, animals, humans, castes, professions etc. The third section contains adjectives, homonyms, indeclinables and the like. This lexicon as well as the other similar lexicons in Sanskrit are all composed in verse form.

Now the Persian-Sanskrit vocabularies also have adopted the same form. They are all composed in verse form and the vocabulary is arranged quite often in the same successive groups

²⁹ Cf. M. M. Patkar, "Yavanaparipāṇī-Anukrama or Patrapraśasti (A Treatise by Dalapatirāya on Forms of Royal Letters and Orders)," *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 14 (1938), pp. 53-157; idem, *History of Sanskrit Lexicography*, pp. 160-162; Gopal Narayan Bahura, *Literary Heritage of the Rulers of Amber and Jaipur*, Jaipur 1976, pp. 415-420.

³⁰ Bahura, op. cit., p. 170.

³¹ Ibid, p. 58.

as in the *Amarakośa*. Generally a Persian word (in the nominative) is followed by the Sanskrit equivalent (either in the nominative or more often in the locative), but for the sake of the metre, the reverse pattern is also employed. Again for metrical reasons, many filling words are inserted. For the same reason, Persian words which generally end in consonants are treated like Sanskrit substantives of *a*-stem. Thus Bihāri Kṛṣṇadāsa begins his vocabulary in the following manner:

*śrīsūrya ukta āphtābo 'lāmanūro 'pi kathyate /
nairyara ājamaś cāpi tavako bhuvaneṣu ca //*

“The divine sun is called *āftāb* and also *ālam nūr*, and again *nayyir 'azam; tabaq* [signifies] the worlds.” Another example:

*ajñāne syāt tu nādānī dānāyī tadviparyaye /
rūpe syāt sūrataḥ śabdeṣv āvājah parikīrtitaḥ //*

“For ignorance let [the word be] *nādānī; dānāyī* in the contrary [sense]; for shape let [the word] be *sūrat*; for sounds *āvāz* is said to be [the equivalent].”

Or this is how Vedāngarāya teaches the names of the Islamic lunar months:

*muharam sapharaś cānyo ravil avalas tathākhiraḥ /
jāmādil avvalas tadvaj jāmādil ākhiraḥ smṛtaḥ //
rajaba-śāvāna-ramajānāḥ savvālo jilakādi ca /
jilahijja ime māsāḥ kṣapeśodayataḥ sadā //*

“*Muharram, Safar, Rabi-ul-awwal*, likewise *Rabi-ul-ākhir, Jamād-ul-awwal*, similarly *Jamād-ul-akhir; Rajab, Shābān, Ramajān, Shawāl, Zilkanda* and *Zilhijja*. These [lunar] months [commence] always from the rise of the moon.”

Besides the vocabulary, some texts attempt to teach the grammar of Persian as well. We have said that the first grammar lessons a pupil gets in Sanskrit are the tables of declensions and conjugations. The same pattern is also followed in teaching Persian. Thus the *Pārasīdhāturūpāvalī* begins with the conjugation of the root *śud* (= Sanskrit *bhū*, “to be”) in the present tense, with Sanskrit equivalents, in the following manner:

*mī śavad bhavati
mī śavand bhavanti prathamapuruṣaḥ*

mī śavī *bhavasi*
mī śaved *bhavatha* *madhyamapurusaḥ*
mī śavam *bhavāmi*
mī śavem *bhavāmaḥ* *uttamapurusaḥ*

We have seen that Akbar's courtier Bihāri Kṛṣṇadāsa devotes half of his work to grammar which he composed in the traditional *sūtra* style and that Jahangir's protégé Karṇapūra also devotes nearly half of his manual to grammar which, like the lexical part, was composed in verse. This is not the place to discuss their methodology.³² Suffice it to say that by adopting the pattern of a highly complex Sanskrit grammar, they appear to make Persian more difficult than it is. Another problem is the difficulty in reproducing the exact phonetic values of the Persian consonants in Devanāgarī script. Some scribes devised special symbols to represent the Persian *khe* and *fe* but these have not been consistently used in copying the manuscripts.

It is quite obvious that this genre of works fulfilled more the intellectual curiosity on the part of the Sanskrit-using elite rather than the practical needs of the beginner. The large number of Hindus, in particular the Kāyasthas, who distinguished themselves through their mastery over Persian may have, on the other hand, learnt this language directly as the Muslims did. In his translation of the *Āī'n-i Akbarī*,³³ H. Blochmann observes thus: "Todal Mal's order, and Akbar's generous policy of allowing Hindus to compete for the highest honours ... explain two facts, *first*, that before the end of the 18th century the Hindus had almost become the Persian teachers of the Muhammadans; *secondly*, that a new dialect could arise in upper India, the *Urdū* which, without the Hindus as receiving medium, never could have been called into existence."³⁴

³² Cf. Walter Slaje, "Der Pārasīprakāśa: Über das indische Modell für Kṛṣṇadāsas Persische Grammatik aus der Mogulzeit," in: Walter Slaje und Christian Zinko (hrsg), *Akten des Metzger-Symposium 1991*, Graz 1992, pp. 243-273.

³³ Vol. I, third revised edition, New Delhi 1977, pp. 377-78

³⁴ See also S. M. Abdullah, "Hindus and the Study of Persian" in: Vishva Bandhu (ed), *Siddha-Bhāratī*, Hoshiarpur 1950, Part II, pp. 311-312.