

Chapter 1

Dream and Reality

First of all whatever the circumstances, we should never be despondent. It is not always possible but that is the requirement for the job this manifesto seeks to accomplish. If anybody who loves to see Punjabi flourish finds the progress unsatisfactory, the reasons that come to my mind presently can be enumerated like general human weaknesses, burden of history and new distracting ideologies for the youth. In this respect, Pakistani Punjab is mired in apparently insurmountable difficulties. But as I have said that must not deter us. What to do, there is no escape as such are the jobs of those who dare to turn history's course. And history gives us calm and patience if we listen to it, for example:

'Early in 1839 nearly five hundred residents of Dacca in eastern Bengal petitioned the government in favour of Persian and against Bengali. The petitioners (of whom nearly two hundred were Hindus and most of the rest Muslims) used arguments practically identical to those of the British officials who had supported Persian in the recent inquiry: the Bengali script varied from place to place, one line of Persian could do the work of ten lines of Bengali, the awkward written style of Bengali read more slowly than that of Persian, people from one district could not understand the dialect of those from another, no previous government had ever kept records in Bengali, Persian had spread over a wide area and did not vary from place to place, people of all classes could understand Persian when read to them, and both Hindus and Muslims wanted to keep Persian.'

[Christopher R. King. *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth Century North India*. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994. Ch. 3 Government Language Policy, p. 58]

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The dream is an enviable future of Punjabi language. Lenin had said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement". Therefore, without a right theoretical position and then right struggle, the aim is not achievable. How to arrive at a position from where a right struggle is launched? There is no simple answer. It should be understood that a wrong approach will undermine any cause. And the basis of a wrong approach is the wrong understanding of reality. One

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aspect of Punjabi's reality is that Pakistani Punjabis are illiterate in their mother tongue and in Pakistan Punjabi language is **NOT** written. Further Pakistani Punjabis are not aware of this situation. Another aspect of this reality is that 1947 has been taken to be the Final which it is not.

With this clear understanding of the weak position of Punjabi in Pakistan and other problems faced by Punjabi language collectively, this manifesto seeks to pull forward Punjabi in Pakistan at a fast pace. We should continue to work for Punjabi in Persian script but the task of familiarization of the people with Gurmukhi script should begin and continue to be done in parallel. The other task is to bring back those who due to political reasons disowned Punjabi in India. The third job is of those families in Pakistan and India who, whatever the reasons, failed to pass their mother tongue to the next generation. In short we have to build whatever is required to strengthen the 'sovereignty of Punjabi language' where Punjabi is in use and to struggle to bring those Punjabis who somehow have left Punjabi behind under its umbrella, irrespective of their country and religion. A conscious effort to own and promote Punjabi will prove to be a mega project in itself. What it can contribute in building peace and civilization in our region, let others contemplate and contribute in this regard.

As far as my dream, it is everywhere in this manifesto. In trying to bring forth and make clear and understandable the reality of Punjabi's situation in Pakistan and India, my struggle is to give a loud and clear message of the unity of Punjabi language in the world. And what is the unity of a language except its script? I believe different regional flavours do not break the unity of a language. Anyhow, if the unity of Punjabi language (one script) had not been achieved before Partition, nobody could have claimed and of course nobody claimed it would not have been possible. But Partition tried to abolish even this question and, apparently, the matter stands closed. This is not acceptable.

Punjabi's reality is varied, scattered, and chaotic. Politics and religion have kept it out of focus of the people to whom it belonged. It has many aspects. I have brought forth more than expected aspects. As far as the word 'ideology' is understood normally, there is no ideology in this sense in this manifesto. There is truth for which at no place I spared myself. The narration may not always be systematized but I have tried to not let it become chaotic.

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Look at Punjabi's position before 1947 in Punjab. Ajay Bhardwaj: "Having an animated conversation about Urdu with four elderly men under a pilkhan tree in a

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village in Ludhiana some years ago, the third one remembered how, when Partition was announced, “all of us in Class III, studying lesson number 14 in Urdu, threw our Qua’ida in the air and said, ‘Urdu ud gaya, Urdu ud gaya’ (Urdu has flown away).”

[1]

[1] The Hindu, 15 August 2012

There is a related evidence of 1927 which should make further clear the position of Urdu. It is not about Muslims. If you have this evidence which covers 50 years (1927-1947), it is not unnatural to feel about the depressed position of Punjabi. But instead of being depressed, it is more important to understand things: ‘In 1927, the Shahid Sikh Missionary College was founded at Amritsar, under the auspices of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. Ganga Singh, well versed in the art of oratory and with perfect mastery

of Persian, Urdu and Punjabi languages, became its first principal.’ [2]

[2] <http://www.sikh-history.com/sikhhist/institutes/smisscol.html>

My point is to underline the fact of Urdu in Punjab that a Sikh principal of a Sikh Missionary (of religious priorities) college was ‘well versed in the art of oratory and with perfect mastery of Persian, Urdu and Punjabi languages.’ Imagine the linguistic situation in Punjab where Persian and Urdu were occupying the space pushing Punjabi to the background. And partition of Punjab had yet to come. Was not everything going against Punjabi?

Let us stay in East Punjab. I read the book ‘Yadaan Ganji Baar Diyaan’ by Dr. Harkreet Singh. I saw and read it in Persian (Shahmukhi) script on apnaorg.com website. The Gurmukhi edition seems to have been published in 1993 or after. The author writes: ‘I continued to think for a long time to write a book about Ganji Baar. Earlier I could not find time for this due to my responsibilities in the university. Later when I became free from the university and made up my mind to write the book, I came to know that no publisher accepts to publish a Punjabi book. And if you print it on your own, you do not find buyers of the book.’ [3]

[3] My translation from Punjabi in Persian script edition, published from Lahore – mam

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This is the present situation in the Punjab state of India which was created after a long struggle in the name of Punjab! Overall, something basic is missing. It is painful. In particular due to what happened after the British arrival in India, it is my deep conviction that 'Sarab' Punjab is in need of its own 'Renaissance'. Renaissance literally "rebirth" has been defined as 'the period in European civilization immediately following the Middle Ages (approximately from 5th to 15th century - mam) and conventionally held to have been characterized by a surge of interest in Classical scholarship and values.'

But has Punjab its own classical 'scholarship and values'? Perhaps' in its own way, it has more than what we can ever imagine. But we are passing through our own 'Dark Age' which started in India with the arrival of the British and in Punjab after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. When whatever right achievements in the civilizational sense are always under threat, the need of bigger minds who are able to look back at our past collectively and weave a pattern for our enlightened future is acutely felt. If so far Europeans have been studying and interpreting our history, obviously our 'Renaissance' is long overdue. Can anyone in his right state of mind disown his inheritance, his heritage? If the origin of the Hindu civilization and culture was Punjab, have we who own Punjab today nothing to do with this inheritance? Someone can come forth pointing out religion(s) alienating us from our inheritance. Not wasting time on this, we should ponder upon as to what prompted Europeans being Christians in taking interest in Vedic past of India and work on it?

And why Muslims being Muslims gathered, preserved and worked upon the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilization? '. . . We have underestimated the importance of 800 years of Islamic society and culture in Spain between the 8th and 15th centuries. The contribution of Muslim Spain to the preservation of classical learning during the Dark Ages, and to the first flowerings of the Renaissance, has long been recognized. . . . Not only did Muslim Spain gather and preserve the intellectual content of ancient Greek and Roman civilization, it also interpreted and expanded upon that civilization, and made a vital contribution of its own in so many fields of human endeavour.' [4]

[4] HRH, The Prince of Wales, Islam And The West:
<http://www.twf.org/Library/Renaissance.html>

If the above observation can be said to be generally Islamic, a specifically about Islam in Spain is: 'The scholasticism of medieval Catholic Europe, focussed entirely as it

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was upon ancient authority, was unable to inform scientific inquiry until the revolutionary libraries of Islam were made available to the Catholic world. All western advances in civil engineering, mathematics, chemistry, medicine and astronomy were founded upon the medieval sciences of Islam, which were themselves built upon the classical traditions lost to the west during the Germanic destruction of the Roman Empire. . . . (There was a) massive contribution of medieval Islamic learning upon the history of western science, and upon the Renaissance itself.' [5]

[5] The ISLAMIC FOUNDATION OF THE RENAISSANCE, Hugh Bibbs, B.A. Bowen Island, Canada 1999: <http://www.medievalhistory.net/scientia.htm>

Remaining in the Punjab with our heritage, 'Taxila illustrates the different stages in the development of a city on the Indus that was alternately influenced by Persia, Greece and Central Asia and which, from the 5th century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D., was an important Buddhist centre of learning.' [6]

[6] <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/139>.

Taxila, Sanskrit Takshashila, ancient city of north-western Pakistan, the ruins of which are about 22 miles (35 km) northwest of Rawalpindi. Buddhist literature mentions it as the capital of the kingdom of Gandhara and as a great centre of learning. Gandhara is also mentioned as province, of the Persian king Darius I in the 5th century BCE. When Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 BCE, Ambhi (Omphis), the ruler of Taxila, surrendered the city and placed his resources at Alexander's disposal. Greek historians accompanying the Macedonian conqueror described Taxila as "wealthy, prosperous, and well governed." [7]

[7] <http://www.britannica.com/place/Taxila>

'As a visitor, when you step into Taxila, you are taken to an altogether different world that was alive during 5th century. Here you come face-to-face with Lord Buddha, Alexander of Macedonia, Emperor Asoka and Emperor Kanishka. Taxila was conquered by Alexander in 327 BC and later on came under the rule of the Mauryan dynasty (c. 321–185 BCE). Under the king Asoka (c. 265–238 BCE; also given as c. 273–232 BCE), the city touched its peak in terms of development. In the next 200 years, Taxila became a center of great learning. The city was very popular for the university at Taxila, a renowned center of education in ancient India. Now the university's ruins are located at a distance of twenty miles from the modern city of Rawalpindi.' [8]

[8] Facts about An Ancient City: Taxila by Ramandeep Kaur June 26, 2013
<http://www.mapsofindia.com/my-india/history/facts-about-an-ancient-city-taxila>

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From Taxila let us try to see and make a sense of the larger picture. ‘Linguistic similarities between Indian and European languages were recognized by the earliest European scholars. In the late eighteenth century, it was observed that Sanskrit, Iranian, and most European languages share many common words and grammatical structures. Early linguists classified Vedic Sanskrit and the majority of European tongues in the same “family of Indo-European languages.”’ [9]

Many European scholars immediately bought in to the “Indo-European hypothesis”. [10] ‘The first part of the sub-continent to develop was the region of the lower Indus. The chief centres of this progress were Harappa and Mohenjo daro. The Indus civilization as it is called spans a period of about 1000 years (2500 B.C. to 1500 B.C.). The civilization, when already in decadence, was swept away by Aryan invaders from the north-west. The obliteration occurred a little before 1500 B.C.’ The race of light-skinned Aryans pushed the dark-skinned natives, called Dravidians, into the south.

This roughly has been the view about Aryans and Indus civilization, which I have quoted from my book

‘The Pakistan Problem’ where it was quoted from ‘The Oxford History of India’, First Edition 1958, (1967 Reprint) p. 28. And from about 1500 to about 500 B.C. has been called the Vedic period or Vedic age. This was the period in Indian history during which the Vedas, the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, were composed. During the early part of the Vedic period, the Indo-Aryans had settled into northern India, bringing with them their specific religious traditions.

As is obvious, the origin of this view is European. From where the Aryans originated? They were the nomads who had settled in the rich and fertile plain of Hungary. Around 2500 B.C., as the theory explained, the pressure of population urged them to move to the west, south, and those who moved to the east, began by about 1500 B.C. to filter through the Hindu Kush into India.

Now this theory is being rejected as ‘in the 1990s, a new wave of scientific evidence, coming partly from satellite photos, geological study, archaeological digs, and other anthropological finds began to seriously discredit the old myth. Once the rubble of false assumptions was cleared away, a far more simple scientific picture of the origins of ancient north Indian civilization began to emerge.’ [11]

‘An (Aryan) invasion of India from the outside around 1,500 B. C. did not occur. Recent scholarship does not deny that the people in India had relations with other Indo-European people in Asia and Europe. There was a belt stretching from India to the Mediterranean inhabited by a people who spoke related languages, known as the Indo-

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European languages. Sanskrit is the oldest known language in this family and may appropriately be called as the Mother of Indo-European languages. English is an Indo-European language. Some people equate Sanskrit with Hindi language and the Devanagari script. Sanskrit language originally did not have its own script. It was written in a variety of local scripts. The writing of Sanskrit in the Devanagari script is a later development.' [12]

[12] Dr. MADAN LAL GOEL:

<http://uwf.edu/lgoel/documents/amythofaryaninvasionsfindia.pfd>

Accordingly, we have now Indus-Saraswati Valley Civilization instead of the earlier conceived Indus civilization. 'The Indus-Saraswati Valley Civilizations spread over more than 250,000 square miles, and included over 1600 sites. Most of the villages and cities were laid out on an exact north-south grid on sites west of the river, and were built with kiln-fired brick of uniform size. Sites have been found dating from 6,500-7,000 BC.' [13] This region is practically whole of Pakistan, Indian Gujarat, Indian Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, in the north touching sub-Himalayan range, parts of Afghanistan in the west. The most conspicuous are Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.

[13] On the title page of 'Origins of Vedic Civilization': Kenneth Chandler, Ph.D.: sanskrit.safire.com/pdf/ORIGINS.PDF

Now Saraswati has come in. What is it? 'The Rig Veda mentions the Indus river quite often, and it mentions the Saraswati no less than 60 times. Its reference to the Saraswati as a "mighty river flowing from the mountains to the sea" shows that the Rig Vedic tradition must have been in existence long before 3,000 BC when the Saraswati ceased to be a "mighty river" and became a seasonal trickle. Frawley and Rajaram drew the conclusion that the Rig Veda must have been composed long before 3,000 BC.' [14]

Rajaram writes that the "Saraswati described in the Rig Veda belongs to a date long before 3,000 BC." He concludes that, "All this shows that the Rig Veda must have been in existence no later than 3,500 BC."20 He thus places the beginning of the Vedic tradition "long before 3,000 BC" and its end before 2,000 BC. The Mahabharata, the great epic of classical Sanskrit, describes the Saraswati as a seasonal river. Since the Saraswati dried up by 1900 BC, the Mahabharata would have to be dated at least before 1,900 BC. Since it was still a seasonal river in 3,000, Rajaram and Frawley put the date of the Mahabharata in 3,000 BC. [15]

Evidence from French SPOT satellite and the Indo-French field study have changed this conception of history. By showing that the Saraswati ceased to be a mighty river

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long before 3,000 BC, they showed that the Rig Vedic civilization must have begun long before the Saraswati became a seasonal trickle sometime long before 3,000 BC. If the Rig Vedic tradition began before 3,500 BC, this would date it earlier the civilizations of Egypt, Harappa, or Mesopotamia. [16]

Professor Dinesh Agrawal of Penn State University reviewed the evidence from a variety of sources and estimated the dates as follows: • Rig Vedic Age - 7000-4000 BC • End of Rig Vedic Age - 3750 BC • End of Ramayana-Mahabharat Period - 3000 BC • Development of Saraswati-Indus Civilization - 3000-2200 BC • Decline of Indus and Saraswati Civilization - 2200-1900 BC • Period of chaos and migration - 2000-1500 BC • Period of evolution of syncretic Hindu culture - 1400-250 BC [17]

[9,10,11,14-17] ‘Origins of Vedic Civilization’: Kenneth Chandler, Ph.D. pp.: 3,5,5,16-19 respectively: sanskrit.safire.com/pdf/ORIGINS.PDF

In any case, remaining cautious about theories but paying attention to them at the same time, I believe Punjab is a heavyweight in the world as far as its civilizational inheritance is concerned. But we have to put our act together to inherit it. It will happen. It is only a matter of time. Getting out of the wilderness is our task today. The thinking which keeps us in the wilderness cannot be right.

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And if a participant of Indian Punjab in a discussion forum (February 06, 2013) writes that sadly due to Punjabis replacing their mother tongue Punjabi by Urdu in Pakistan, Punjabi has fallen from 11th most spoken in the world to either 22nd or 35th depending upon which list you look at and then mentions three websites to look at, although not factual but it is really depressing. And earlier (January 19, 2012) admitting that “selling one Punjabi book is like forcing an elephant thru the eye of a needle ... yet Punjabis will pay and buy 100s of English books!!” And further: “I think we talk about loving our literature, but in practice we never commit! This is why Punjabi literature is not as heard of internationally as Urdu, Hindi or Bengali.” [18]

[18] Roop Dhillon: <http://www.apnaorg.com/dorum/>

With the present barren Pakistani Punjab as far as Punjabi is concerned and this perception about Punjabi in Indian Punjab portrays an overall depressing state of affairs of Punjabi. This in spite of the fact the Indian Punjab is a Punjabi Suba or State. I believe the Akali leadership is obligated to explain this state of affairs of the Punjabi language in their state. As far as Punjabi’s falling from 11th to 22nd or 35th position, the good news is that fortunately things cannot happen that way. It is not possible for any people to have one language today and tomorrow they get up with another language. Punjabis of Pakistan living mostly in Punjab (West Punjab or Pakistani Punjab) have

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not changed their mother tongue Punjabi with Urdu. But it does not mean that Punjabi has not been damaged in Pakistan. The British replaced Persian with Urdu after they conquered Punjab from the Sikhs in 1849. And after partition, Urdu was made to look a sort of 'queen' of the languages of Pakistan; its becoming the so-called 'National Language' was, perhaps, a foregone conclusion for the Urdu Party or the vanguard of the All India Muslim League who were by and large Urdu-speaking and from the then U.P. (United Provinces), now Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) of India.

Coming back to Pakistani Punjab and the time is few years after Partition: 'At last Faqir's (Faqir Mohammad Faqir) efforts bore fruit. In the first week of July 1951 the first Punjabi meeting was held. The invitees were distinguished men of letters, distinguished, of course, in Urdu. Among them were Maulana Abdul Majeed Salik, Feroze Uddin, Dr. Mohammad Din Taseer, Abdul Majeed Bhatti, Ustad Karam Amritsari, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, Mian Alias and others. Abid Ali Abid, the host, was also among the participants and Faqir, the indefatigable activist of the Punjabi language, listened keenly as Maulana Salik, the president, gave his speech. He says he was surprised that Salik fully agreed with him but this was hardly surprising because opponents of the idea would hardly have bothered to participate in the meeting. At the end of the deliberations the participants agreed to establish the Pak Punjabi League with Salik as president and Faqir as secretary. Both of them were also entrusted with the task of the publication of a monthly called *Punjabi* which first saw the light of day in September 1951. The purpose of this magazine was to induce the Urdu-using intellectuals of the Punjab to write in Punjabi. And, indeed, to a certain extent the magazine did succeed in making eminent literary figures, such as Ghulam Rasul Mehr, Zafar Ali Khan, Shorish Kashrniri, Hameed Nizami, Sufi Ghulam Mustafa Tabassum, Waqar Ambalvi, Qateel Shifai, Syed Murtaza Jilani, Dr. Mohammad Baqar, Dr. Abdus Salam Khurshid, write in Punjabi.' [19]

[19] Tariq Rahman: The Learning of Punjabi by Punjabi Muslims: A Historical Account: *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2, July-December 2001

I believe that the above piece of even an Urdu ideologue in Pakistan Tariq Rahman who cannot be sympathetic to Punjabi can be helpful. Many conclusions can be drawn from this but I restrict myself to 'Pak Punjabi League' which had primarily drawn my attention. Plainly speaking, historical circumstances brought Punjabi Muslims to such a situation that their being Muslims made them disqualified to own their language. How could have they understood this? How could have they understood that Punjabi was their heritage when they had been deprived of all attributes to see the ground on which they stood. There had been so many negative influences on them from other lands that it was impossible for them to see the simple facts of their lives as they really

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were. After, all this had happened, any Punjabi lover could do nothing but beg Punjabi in ‘charity’. But there was nobody who had Punjabi in his pocket and give it to Faqir Mohammad Faqir.

‘At the end of the deliberations the participants agreed to establish the Pak Punjabi League with Salik as president and Faqir as secretary’, explains the influences and captive minds. Those who had assembled had been so deeply influenced by Jinnah’s politics of separation and division that their Punjabi had to become ‘Pak Punjabi’. And without the label ‘League’, they felt lonely like children away from their mother. Begging Punjabi from the Muslim League which had practically destroyed every chance of its ever becoming a flourishing language indicates the simplicity of Punjabi lovers. And if the lovers of Punjabi themselves had Muslim League in them, it makes me unable to express myself in words here on this! Therefore, I refer the matter to Baba Farid Sahib’s Court: *‘Fareed, the farmer plants acacia trees, and wishes for grapes. He is spinning wool, but he wishes to wear silk.’*

Without understanding the complexities and difficulties, it will not be possible to find the way forward.

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Pran Nevile Sahib who belonged to the Walled City and Nisbat Road of pre-Partition Lahore and now lives in Gurgaon, Haryana, India participated in the recently held Lahore Literary Festival (21-23 February, 2014) is now 92 years old. Xari Jalil reported about him in the Dawn of February 27, 2014: ‘Lahore was also once the core of several excellent Urdu publications, including ‘Zamindaar’, ‘Adab-i-Lateef’, and ‘Humayun’. In his school days, Nevile says they spoke Punjabi but read and wrote in Urdu. But he refuses to believe that Punjabi today is an endangered language. “The text of Gurmukhi is being used after 1966 when (Indian) Punjab became a province. Before that Gurmukhi was just used for **Gutka paper** or for Sikh Holy Scriptures. All our folk tales, including Heer Ranjha, have been written in other scripts such as Urdu and Hindi,” he said. But as for the language, he says, it is as dynamic as ever both spoken and written, and if anyone thinks Lahore will lose its native language, they will find that Lahore can never lose an important part of its essence.’

I happened to read it but could not understand ‘Gutka paper’ (emphasis above mine). I emailed to Pran Sahib who replied: Dear Mr Manzoor, There is no such thing as Gutka paper. The word paper has been mistakenly put. The name ‘Gutka’ is given to small prayer book containing teachings of Sikh gurus. Best Wishes Pran Nevile (Mar 3, 2014).

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First it should be known that the literary festivals are a new thing in Pakistan. And what are they? In fact the word 'literary' is their thought out and considered cover for Urdu, nothing else. And behind these festivals is the Urdu Party in Pakistan. They are trying to keep Urdu alive which is on its death bed. These facts are not generally known in Pakistan, and in particular to Punjabis and Sindhis who are in fact the most concerned parties.

Anyhow, Pran Nevile's telling us that they spoke Punjabi but read and wrote in Urdu is very important evidence. But he is not right in not believing that Punjabi today is an endangered language. I do not mean that Punjabi is necessarily an endangered language. But Pran Nevile is not right because Punjabi language does not seem to be under his focus. In Pakistan's context, it is like Najam Sethi speaking similarly about the future of Punjabi language.

About Gurmukhi script Pran Nevile does not seem to be sympathetic. 'All our folk tales, including Heer Ranjha, have been written in other scripts such as Urdu and Hindi.' This is not right. Heer Ranjha was written in Persian script. And why to say that Waris Shah wrote his Heer in Urdu script when the name Urdu itself was a later development? And as it is not known to me which folk tales of Punjab were written in Devanagari (Hindi) script, I leave the matter here.

Further, the statement that 'the text of Gurmukhi is being used after 1966 when (Indian) Punjab became a province. Before that Gurmukhi was just used for Gutka or for Sikh Holy Scriptures' does not seem to be right.

How Pran Nevile Sahib could say that when 'Pinjar' is a 1950 Punjabi novel written by Amrita Pritam? Her (Amrita's) two most outstanding literary works are the Waris Shah poem, penned in winter after the bloody month of August in 1947, and her novel *Pinjar*, which appeared in the early fifties. [20]

[20] Nirupama Dutt The Tribune 20-2-2005

And daily Ajit newspaper from Jalandhar in Punjabi which has the claim today of being the World's No. 1

Punjabi Newspaper and 'Punjab di Awaz', was started as an Urdu language weekly in 1941 from Shaheed Sikh Missionary College Amritsar. In November 1942, it became daily newspaper and began printing from Lahore. After independence it moved to Jalandhar and in 1955, its name was changed to *Ajit Patrika* and language changed from Urdu to Punjabi. Later in 1957, its name was changed back to *Ajit*.

[21]

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[21] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajit_\(newspaper\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajit_(newspaper)) 26-6-2015

And we go further back. 'It was through the efforts of Bhai Veer Singh (1872-1957), a noted Punjabi poet and novelist, that Khalsa Samachar, a weekly, was started in 1899. Known for its conservative outlook, substantive financial standing and well-reasoned articles, the magazine gave a new direction to Punjabi journalism, enriching both language and prose in the process. No wonder it is the longest surviving magazine in Punjabi today.' Did Pran Nevile not know Bhai Vir Singh and his works? [22]

[22] History of Punjabi Journalism *Mrinal Chatterjee* <http://pressinstitute.in/history-of-punjabijournalism/>

And did Pran Nevile not know Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan in Delhi too which 'has been regularly running the Punjabi weekly Khalsa Samachar founded by Bhai Vir Singh in 1899. Special issues of the Khalsa Samachar are brought out on occasions such as the birth and death anniversaries of Bhai Sahib Bhai Vir Singh. The Khalsa Samachar completed its centenary in 1999.' [23]

[23] http://www.bvsss.org/khalsa_samachar.html

At the moment, I can only explain it as the manifestation of the mental and physical separation between Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs in post-Partition Punjab.

But as for the language, he says, it is as dynamic as ever both spoken and written, and if anyone thinks Lahore will lose its native language, they will find that Lahore can never lose an important part of its essence. It is good of him saying this. But how to reconcile with this the fact that all Lahore is illiterate in Punjabi?

In any case the words of Pran Nevile the writer of "Lahore, a sentimental journey" (1993) and other books are important. He is not an ordinary Punjabi. If we find him not correct somewhere, the importance of his words does not decrease, because there is history and Punjabyat both in what he speaks.

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Sajjan Lahore was a Punjabi newspaper published from Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. It was the first Punjabi daily newspaper to be published in Pakistan. Its first issue appeared on 3 February 1989. It continued till 30 September 1990. It was discontinued after that because of financial constraints caused by a lack of advertising revenue from the government and the private sector. It was a venture of Punjabi Promotion Trust. Hussain Naqi was its managing editor, Qaisar Nazir Khawar was its deputy managing

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editor, whereas Zafrayab Ahmed was its editor. Zafaryab Ahmed died on 25 February 2006. A number of Punjabi lovers worked in it voluntarily not only in editorial team but also in administrative setup. [24]

[24] Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Taken on 5-3-2014

Presently, practically, there is no Punjabi newspaper in Pakistan. Clearly there is no market of Punjabi written word in West Punjab. The print and electronic media is occupied by Urdu. The present state of affairs speaks loudly of the post-Partition Punjabi scenario in Pakistan. And Urdu is officially the ‘national language’ of Pakistan, but practically English is mostly used.

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So these are some of the aspects of the reality of Punjabi in India and Pakistan. The third largest language of the subcontinent after Hindi and Bengali, the 9th or at the most 10th largest language in the world does not deserve this fate. Whatever others did, Punjabis were definitely sinners:

‘Out of Punjab’s total population, including that of British-administered Punjab and the Punjab princely states, of almost 34 million, 10 million had to flee hearth and home to save their lives. That meant that nearly 30 percent of Punjab’s population was forced into flight. At the end of the day, the first case of massive ethnic cleansing was achieved because virtually no Hindu and Sikh was left in Pakistani Punjab and no Muslim in Indian Punjab. Anywhere between 500,000 to 800,000 Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, men, women, the old and children were killed, and 90,000 women were abducted, oftentimes raped.’ (Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad)

All these issues are directly connected with the future of Punjabi language. Ultimately, to straighten the understanding of our history, the initiators of these crimes have to be identified. But why the others did never demand accountability? Did not those who built political careers after 1947 east or west of Wagah behave equally like satisfied participants as if what happened was natural? The logic of this frame of mind was that the Partition and therefore its consequences were final. Whether said or unsaid, therefore the partitions of Punjabi, Hindi and Sindhi languages were to stay. And therefore, a fake of Hindi, had to be the ‘National language’ of Pakistan. And that Punjabis, Sindhis, Pashtuns and Balochis had to live with this fake. And all this because the prejudices of the distorted minds of the few could not be challenged by the peoples of the region.

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Such politics have paid them well. Ajay Bhardwaj, a Delhi-based documentary filmmaker, wrote (The Hindu, 15 August 2012): ‘Such is the influence of national boundaries in imposing constricting visions that Punjabi Muslims and west Punjab have been rendered completely invisible in the conceptualisation of the Punjabi self by this brand of politics in east Punjab.’

Ajay Bhardwaj wrote: ‘In all these years, the same east Punjabi political class has shown little interest in articulating any expression of regret for the killings of Muslims during Partition. As for the idea of a reconciliation which would help recover the self-banished as the other in 1947, that has never been part of any political agenda. This gives rise to a significant question. If this is how the State’s political leadership has envisioned Punjab, how is it any different from the Hindutva politics of Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan? Often, the justification of this silence stems from a positioning based on playing the blame game. It is a political stance that has been used by the likes of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi to invoke Newton’s third law of motion during the killings of Muslim minorities in his State in 2002.’ [25]

[25] The Hindu, 15 August 2012

If this can be said about East Punjab, I can assure the reader in particular from the other side that in the west Punjab, it is just the mirror image of the east.

Now see the mirror image of this in Pakistan and west Punjab. Replacing in the above piece east by **west**; Muslims by **Hindus and Sikhs**; States’s by **Province’s**; Hindutva by **Pakistan ideology**; Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan by **Urdu, Muslim, Pakistan**, we get the mirror image:

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In all these years, the same west Punjabi political class has shown little interest in articulating any expression of regret for the killings of Hindus and Sikhs during Partition. As for the idea of a reconciliation which would help recover the self-banished as the other in 1947, that has never been part of any political agenda. This gives rise to a significant question. If this is how the Province’s political leadership has envisioned Punjab, how is it any different from the Pakistan ideology politics of Urdu, Muslim, Pakistan? Often, the justification of this silence stems from a positioning based on playing the blame game.

What is complicated in understanding that without straightening history honestly those who have their own linear interpretation of 1947 perpetuate 1947? Is perpetuating 1947 BJP’s vision for India? Ajay Bhardwaj, wrote: ‘In the year of the Gujarat killings, the Rashtriya Sawayamsevek Sangh (RSS) held a massive function in the heart of Amritsar to honour its cadres who had actively participated in the genocide of Muslims in 1947, ostensibly to protect the Hindus and Sikhs in east Punjab. At this Shaurya Smriti Samman function, (honouring the memory of valour), the RSS made

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an audacious attempt to appropriate iconic Punjabi revolutionaries of the anti-imperialist movement like Shaheed Udham Singh and Kartar Singh Sarabha.’ [26]

[26] The Hindu, 15 August 2012

In no way they can explain honestly the killings of Muslims except that they followed Jinnah and Muslim League who had initiated the killings of Hindus and Sikhs! Therefore they have to manufacture the lie of protecting the Hindus and Sikhs in east Punjab!

Is it the similar inclination and attitude that Parkash Singh Badil is contented and comfortable by saying “Everybody knows that Sikhism is a separate religion like Christianity and Islam. Though I don’t think we need to amend the Constitution, it is a recognised fact that the Sikhs have a separate identity”? [27]

[27] Ruchika M Khanna: The Tribune, Chandigarh, December 19, 2014

‘Separate identity’, it is Jinnah’s language. But Jinnah had disowned India and made Muslims disown their homes where they had lived for hundreds of years. Jinnah made Muslims reject the greatness of India which time and again had knocked on their doors. How Badal Sahib or any Sikh leader can justify speaking Jinnah’s language? If not already on that way, this language can mean on the way to Jinnah’s way. Why to insist separateness? What is its need? And then, with this state of mind, how to explain Maharaja Ranjit Singh? How to explain the aspirations of Master Tara Singh’s parents and his own life? How to explain Punjabiyyat, the yet intact thinly thread? How to explain pain and anguish in the hearts of millions at the separation in 1947? If Badal Sahib’s ‘separateness’ is final and has to stay, there was no meaning of the pain and anguish of those millions. By saying this, does not Badi sahib contradict Sikh history itself?

Political edifices erected on the dead bodies of the innocents, east or west of Wagah with as if conniving silences on both sides will not withstand the impacts of a truthful challenge whenever materialized. And why such a challenge will not materialize sooner than later? Is there anybody on this earth who is in the position to honestly refute this?

Further his saying this, is religion, not wisdom. And religion without wisdom taking care of it is a disaster. It is the same story all over the world. No religion is immune from it. No nation, developed or underdeveloped, is immune from it. The wisdom is

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not to do things or if possible not let things happen that you need wrong notions and trends for your survival, as 'separateness' in this case. And if others provoke and you cannot take them to task, which you should be able to do, instead of saying wrong things, the weapon of silence, at least, is always with you. By saying 'I don't think we need to amend the Constitution', is a 'sitting on the fence' type statement of Badil Sahib.

Preaching separateness from Hindus by a Sikh or a Muslim is a sin in every sense. And preaching separateness from Sikhs or Muslims by a Hindu is definitely a bigger sin. This is our reality. Those who could not understand this were stupid if not criminals and those who do not understand this today are more stupid if not criminals.

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The 'Academy of the Punjab in North America' giving reasons of its quarterly magazine 'Sanjh' says, "so that due to Punjabi's two separate scripts the increasing gap in the vocabulary may be prevented." This part of the statement takes for granted 'Punjabi's two separate scripts'. Instead, why it does not look an abnormality? And then, why it is not questioned? I have argued elsewhere that nobody could say that this abnormality of two scripts would not have disappeared had there been no geographical partition of the Punjab.

Obviously, there was an overdose of religion by Jinnah and Muslim League to their flocks as they marched towards 1947. And the effects are still there. And if someone had come out of this overdose or was immune from the very beginning, there was never an alternative narrative for him to pursue. The self-defeating and only alternative was being anti-Partition and consequently anti-Pakistan. These were genuine human difficulties and as yet we are not out of them. Therefore any society or any people who happen to find themselves in a wilderness of history must not be viewed unsympathetically.

Another point, it is one of the basic understandings in this manifesto that Punjabis in Pakistan are illiterate in Punjabi language. If this is correct, where written Punjabi language in Persian or what they call Shahmukhi script exists in Pakistan or in particular west Punjab? Obviously nowhere, except amongst 'the small cadre of Punjabi activists and writers, who have been struggling against all odds to promote Punjabi language'. But their efforts would have been definitely bearing fruit by now if they had set their minds to start popularizing Gurmukhi script in Pakistan. Given the

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circumstances of being religiously overdosed, perhaps, it is too much asking them. But the position has not changed and sooner we understand and start working accordingly the better for Punjabi. We do it today or tomorrow, this is an inescapable duty of Muslim Punjab.

There are many explanations for Punjabi's present state of affairs. Perhaps none is satisfactory. Perhaps, we will never be able to diagnose the matter correctly in one go. I believe I have discussed every possible aspect, some here, some there, in this manifesto. But there is always the feeling that something has not been said, that something is missing in the explanation. What gives me heart-felt satisfaction is a single word explanation: 'Intervention'. The more I think about the state of affairs of Punjabi, the more meaningful this word becomes to me. The Muslim, the British, the Urdu Party, and the Hindi Party interventions stunted Punjabi's growth. If intervention should seem to somebody to explain less satisfactorily, he should say, 'more intervention'. From Mahmud Ghaznavi to this day, intervention in Punjab and therefore in the affairs of Punjabi language has never stopped.

Obviously this situation is not of our choice. This is how history has shaped things in the region. If nations and communities suffered and became marginalized, the fate of their languages could not have been otherwise. So far, Punjabi language has lived in adversity. Perhaps it is right to say that by and large all known history of Punjabi language is a story of its adversity. In spite of this perpetual adversity, whatever we have today is an unconsolidated language spoken and written in India, and spoken but not written in Pakistan. But generally intellectuals make people believe that it is written in India in Gurmukhi script and in Pakistan in Shahmukhi script.

I find it a universal practice by writers to convey the status of Punjabi as, for example: In Pakistan, Punjabi is generally written using the Shahmukhī script, created from a modification of the Persian Nasta'liq script. In India, Punjabi is rendered in the Gurmukhī script. [28] Another example: In India Punjabi is written with the Gurmukhi alphabet, while in Pakistan it is written with a version of the Urdu alphabet known as Shahmukhi. [29] And yet another example: One of the more interesting facts about the Punjabi language is that where it is numerically the most widely spoken, in Pakistani Punjab, it is hardly written at all. Punjabi is most often written in East Punjab in the Gurmukhi script. It is also possible to write the language in the Persian script often referred to as Shahmukhi in this context. [30] The last explanation seems to be the nearest to reality.

[28] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punjabi_language

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[29] <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/punjabi.htm>

[30] Advanced Center for Technical Development of Punjabi Language, Literature and Culture, PunjabiUniversity, Patiala (www.learnpunjabi.org)

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Now the term *Shahmukhi*: Whosoever created this name and who made it current did not do any service to Punjabi language. Saying Persian script would have sufficed which is historically correct. Then, *Shahmukhi* means from king's mouth. Which king was associated with Punjabi? It creates a sense of normalcy about the Punjabi language when the fact is that its situation is not normal. I do not know when, why and by whom the term *Shahmukhi* was created. Naturally, I am uneasy with this situation and would like to know more and be definite about this.

Equalizing things with India is part of the culture in Pakistan. And there are individuals in Pakistan who do closed-door activities for promotion of Punjabi in Persian script which they call *Shahmukhi*. I do not know if Baba Bulley Shah or Waris Shah, for example, themselves gave any name to the Persian script they used. Whatever the status of the Punjabi language is today in India and Pakistan is due to the fact that the people of the land continued to speak it and men of higher intellect were not impressed by the dominating language/ languages of the time and expressed themselves in Punjabi. Within this generality, there is the specific and special contribution of Guru Nanak Sahib and his followers. The Gurmukhi script is an all-time gift, although Muslim Punjabis have yet to appreciate this.

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Further, collectively, the concept of Oneness of Punjabi if exists is very weak. Moreover barriers of religions exist. In this state of affairs of the language, opportunists emerge with their new claims. I recently read someone claiming that *Seraiky* has been fighting and resisting oppression since 1818, after the fall of Multan to the Sikhs. This is not history but demagoguery. They will have no place to stand if the fight for Punjabi begins in earnest. I know anybody can speak like that in Pakistan because Sikhs have no defenders here. And anybody clever enough can invent history according to his wishes. These are difficulties in the path of Punjabi language today. After independence, as India had to be consolidated and integrated by merging more than 500 Princely States, similarly Oneness of Punjabi language with its Gurmukhi script has to be established by defeating all contrary tendencies.

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But as connection with our past should never be broken, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi languages and Urdu non-language should remain available to students who want to study them. In case of Urdu, it will be historically right that students begin with the knowledge of its being a non-language and that it is for connecting with history that it is being offered.

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In Pakistan, in particular (West) Punjab, Punjabi is spoken but English and Urdu are occupying all the spaces fulfilling our needs of 'written word' today. We have to understand once again, even if already understood individually or in limited circles, our overall situation to create a genuine peoples' awareness to establish the sovereignty of Punjabi language over all the 'territories' which once belonged to Punjabi but have been lost to a degree or totally anywhere in Pakistan and India. For example those families who switched from Punjabi to Urdu or Hindi have to be won back. What shape this work will take we will only know while doing it. Obviously unnecessary controversies have to be fought back.

Punjabi has never been taught in Pakistan and so obviously in Pakistani Punjab. I believe the tragedy of Punjabi Muslims as far as their language is concerned is deep and is only known to the concerned and conscious individuals. If this is the case of Punjabi Muslims, in no way Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus can be considered to be out of this tragic situation. As Punjabi language is not divisible, its problems cannot be divided as land was divided in 1947. The more the lack of awareness, in the same proportion there is a more setback for Punjabi language. In other words any setback to the sovereignty of Punjabi language anywhere in its territory is a setback for all Punjabis. Wherever this fact is not appreciated, it is tantamount to a dilution of Punjabi's sovereignty.

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There is no doubt that Urdu has been making inroads into the territory of the Punjabi language in Pakistan since 1947. I say this from my own observations without any supporting data. What was not happening near post-Partition times is happening now - more parents start with Urdu with their children now than before. This trend has gone into the villages and lower classes also. I believe this is post-partition phenomenon. I believe one aspect of speaking Urdu with children is a sign of more care, love and affection shown by parents for their children thereby raising themselves and their children to a higher cultural pedestal indicating the actuality of or aspirations for better economic conditions. It is a departure from the past, say 1940s and even after. Sitting

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together with children, parents speak Punjabi with each other but Urdu with their children. They feel no qualms about such a situation.

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We have to understand why it happened what happened and change the course of history to make Punjabi stand where it should stand. With humility but with a sense of focused purpose, I find myself in the prison of history as I try to present my case to Punjabis that they take a little pause in their lives, that they look back at their past, that they imagine with me about those who were our ancestors. We have to understand what they did or did not do. We have to understand what they could do and could not do. Overall we have to understand the whole historical process. I feel cautiously satisfied and optimistic in presenting this manifesto. I pray that this will make all Punjabis – in East Punjab (India), West Punjab (Pakistan), elsewhere in both India and Pakistan, and around the globe – more concerned and forward-looking with a mission. But with this come the heavy responsibilities – historically unprecedented and unique in human affairs.

I believe this manifesto is a sort of discovery, at least for the Punjabi Muslims, which could not have been known earlier due to historical reasons. And without Punjabi Muslims discovering what, one wishes, they should have discovered earlier, we are in the situation the sum total of which can be described as a ‘state of alienation and non-peace’. Yes, the question de-alienation and Peace and establishing the sovereignty of Punjabi language seem to me to be intertwined.

But it does not mean that there was no other way to Peace earlier or there is no other way to Peace today. But you always need men to harness possibilities offered by history. If it did not happen, it means that the breed of men who came to the forefront had other priorities. The state of non-peace was not a problem for them. On the contrary, they thrived in the state of non-peace. Bhutto and Musharraf played this game to its limits. But nobody understood this in Pakistan. Ordinarily if someone did not thrive or thrived less, he too thought that he would thrive in the state of non-peace. In fact Peace was never their agenda. No one in Pakistan was serious about Peace. No one in Pakistan ever strived for Peace. Of course, naives can see things which do not exist!

On the one hand the culture was not helpful for Peace and on the other those who were in the forefront too had no urge for Peace. No Peace Party ever emerged in Pakistan. Respecting the peoples of the region from the core of my heart, I declare with confidence but humility that I am the Peace Party. But, as I am not naïve, I do not

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preach Peace to those who want to fight. Let them fight. How otherwise the earth will get rid of its unnecessary burden? Therefore I am the Peace Party-in-waiting. If Peace never became the agenda of those who ever came to wield power in Pakistan, it means we, as a society, could not discover our true reality. Naturally, the era continued to belong to those who clouded our imaginations. I hope this manifesto will prove to be the watershed and the turning point for the peoples of the region generally and for Muslim Punjab specifically.

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As in the case of Sindhi and Hindi, it is more which cannot be said here than what can be said. Because it depends on the state of minds of the people who have to become ultimately the engines of change. And in the case of Punjabi, it is comparatively more difficult to define its present status. Because unlike Hindi and Sindhi, it got divided into two big blocks. Additionally, Hindus of Punjab, to what extent I do not know, unfortunately, abandoned their language in favour of Hindi. But like Hindus of Punjab, no Sindhi willingly abandoned his language. On the contrary those who went to India who could have been lost there, are in a continuous struggle to keep their language alive. In case of Hindi, the partition is across the scripts. But Urdu block is not very big in India. And if the Indian Hindi Party takes the view that the spread of Urdu as far as exists in Pakistan is Hindi's territory, then the division will look agonizing. But what an irony that all efforts of Urdu Party to push forward Urdu at the cost of other languages anywhere and especially in Pakistan are going ultimately in Hindi's favour. Those who tried to make a language out of mere a script, as if by a sleight of hand, were foolishly serving Hindi's cause. Opposing Hindi verbally but promoting it practically, have not they tried to make Pakistan a Hindiized State at the cost of the real languages of the region? And they did this in a fraudulent way over a very long time, by telling lies, by using religion, and by hiding behind the Persian script. It is impossible to find words to describe the enormity of their madness.

When properly understood and comprehended, peoples of Pakistan will feel ashamed of themselves. They will be still more ashamed when they will discover how long they remained under the spell of these magicians.

Although defeated in India and former East Pakistan, Urdu Party's behavior has always been like that of a villain in a Hindi movie who will be ever villainous until death at the hands of the hero. Therefore it seems imminent that the Urdu Party in Pakistan will have to swallow the 'bitter fruit' of Hindi in Devanagari script in place of their present 'Urdu' in Persian script. And towards this end, history is marching silently and gracefully. That will be the end of 'Urdu' - a more than two centuries' *phadda* in this region.

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Let us look at Bengali language for historical comparison and broadening our view. In his memoirs Hamidul Haq Chowdhury writes that his father's (b. 1851) education was limited to Bengali and little Persian. "He could read Arabic scriptures without understanding the meaning. He was reputed to have an extremely fine hand in writing Bengali. People from distant places used to come to him for practice in Bengali manuscript writing." [31] He writes that a Bengali Pundit used to teach him elementary Bengali at home which was mostly confined to the learning of the alphabet and construction of simple words. [32] And that "after 1857 the Muslim Mullahs declared non-cooperation with all systems of education established by the East India Company and the British administration. English education was declared *haram* (forbidden) for the Muslims. So the only education they had was Arabic. Bengali had yet to be established as literary language. This state of affairs continued up to 1880 or 1890." [33] He appeared for Matric Examination in 1919. In college, for Intermediate Science course he found that "even in Science there was one paper on Bengali with 100 marks which was compulsory up to the Intermediate Class. My subjects were Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics beside the compulsory subjects of the I.S.C. Course viz. English and Bengali." [34]

[31-34] Memoirs: Hamidul Haq Chowdhury: pp. 9,13,8,27 respectively

This was the place of Bengali in 1919. And in 1962-64, I was student of F.Sc. (same as Chowdhury's I. Sc.) in Lyallpur (now Faisalabad) and my subjects were Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics beside the compulsory subjects of English and Urdu. Not only that it was so in 1962-64, Urdu had started occupying the place around 1850 which was to occupy by Punjabi in the education British were introducing in Punjab. As mentioned earlier, it is unbelievable that Urdu Party of that time in India (U.P. etc.) was not complicit in that.

The question is, had Bengalis struggled for that while Punjabis did not? The question of struggle does not arise at every stage. If there was no struggle at certain point in time, it means struggle was not possible. It should be understood that the fundamental to any struggle is the idea and commitment of its leaders. In the turmoil of history disorientation of any people has been a normal phenomenon. Many factors combine to make any struggle possible. Therefore it is the flow of history which was beyond the control of societies and people which must be understood. But presently various factors are combining and launching of an unprecedented struggle for Punjabi should be under consideration of all those who are really sincere to see Punjabi crowned and seated on the throne.

When Chowdhury's father was born, the British had been in Bengal for about a century and they had occupied Punjab just two years ago (1849). Chowdhury mentions Arabic,

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Persian, and Bengali in Bengal. There is no mention of Urdu. The reason is that Urdu Party at the time of British occupation of Bengal did not exist. In a sense Urdu was yet in its infancy. But at the time of occupation of Punjab, Urdu Party was in the position to wield its influence on the British

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Before British occupation, the situation in Punjab seems to be equivalent to Bengal under occupation. It was Persian as official language, Arabic as language of religion, and Punjabi as language of the people and of Sikh religion. Now British bring Urdu to Punjab. And our path was changed.

Had not the British around 1850 brought Urdu to Punjab, Allama Iqbal and Faiz Ahmad Faiz, for example, would have been poets of Punjabi language. In this way, how many talented individuals belonging to Punjab must have worked in Urdu without realizing that their mother tongue Punjabi was being neglected and damaged? Imagine Punjabi's loss! Imagine due to such historical background, even the biggest abnormalities of today are considered just normal. When we are discussing question of Punjabi in Pakistan or Pakistani Punjab, normally, our people cannot think of historical Punjab. Therefore there is need to inculcate a collective consciousness about Punjabi language. For that what the peoples of Pakistan generally and Pakistani Punjab particularly need to be told and taught is about the state of Punjabi language in India generally and Indian Punjab particularly and vice versa. As for both sides, the other side is almost blank, therefore on both sides, there is work to be done for the self as well as for the other side. Perhaps this will be a unique case in the world. As the Punjabis in Pakistan need and have to adopt Gurmukhi script, our seeking help from East Punjab will be just appropriate. I do not find it unusual or amazing that in the near future, we have a big class, say, in Lahore and our teacher is delivering his lecture from, say, Amritsar to teach us Gurmukhi script and updating us in other aspects of Punjabi language. Imagine the task Punjabiyat is likely to create. Even if we take 2001 as the base, 67.3 per cent literacy of Sikhs in Indian Punjab is equivalent to approximately 77 million Punjabis [35] in Pakistan today who should be literate in Punjabi and therefore need to be taught how to read and, where and when possible, write their mother tongue in Gurmukhi script. This is really a potential revolution in any sense of the word.

[35] According to CIA World Factbook, Pakistans's population (July 2014 est.) is 196,174, 380; 48 % Punjabi language and 10 % Seraiki. But the right approach is to bind them together as Punjabi. Now 58 % of the total population is 113,781,140 and its 67.3 % is 76,574,707 or about 77 million.

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Unusual problems need unusual solutions. Let us train our minds to consider Punjabi as a sacred language. It should give you tremendous power to concentrate. We should struggle that Punjabi diaspora connect themselves with each other and Punjabis back home in India or Pakistan. Muslim Punjabis have to take initiative. Because they are juniors in Punjabi language. In a class room or online, they should start thinking of learning Gurmukhi script from their Sikh or Hindu counterparts. Remember we are not learning a new language. Simply we need to learn how at least to first read our language. For this volunteer students as well as volunteer teachers are required. To be honest, it is primarily the duty of Muslim Punjabis to find, request, and convince their would-be teachers to give time to them. But at the same time if somebody is prepared to become a volunteer teacher, he should not wait for a student or more to approach him. He should struggle to find his student(s). After all this is a task history has asked us to start with deepest feelings for and commitment to Punjabi language. And there is nothing undoable in this.

The present state of affairs must change. Punjab's outlook has to change. Punjab has to throw away history's unnecessary baggage and clear the way for Punjabi.

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Now coming once more to defining Punjabi's status, I believe no conscientious Punjabi is satisfied with our past performance and present status-quo. But what can be the statement which truly reflects the present reality? Or how to state Punjabi's present status? As there does not exist solely one position from where Punjabi's present shape can be seen and stated objectively, therefore, the case should be examined from all angles for making a collective statement.

Can we say that it was not that we had something in our possession which had been snatched away from us physically? Perhaps it was like that the hurricanes of history splintered and scattered our common and collective possession of being a people leaving us disorientated and alienating us from ourselves and from each other and hence from our language. History snatched Punjabi's youth. Since about one thousand years the plant of Punjabi has not received full sunlight which affected its growth. It remained under the shades of Persian, Arabic, English and Urdu and should I say Hindi too? During all this period there were always religious factors. But when these factors were used as props for British imperialism, our Punjabi got partitioned. It was perhaps the greatest setback for Punjabi. Even if we cannot know or can only know partially of hows and whys of the process, the end results are in front of us. Punjabi is divided and it is not there where it should be. I believe time will come when Punjabi will sit on the throne with crown on her head and Darbar Hall packed to the capacity with cheering and enthusiastic Punjabis. To that day I look forward. What a day it will be!

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Why should not we dream when this is the condition of what was ours, with us and inside us, without which a moment of our ancestors' lives cannot be imagined? What was the embodiment and representative of their centuries' struggle for life and therefore of their sorrows, pains, and happiness; their beauty and wisdom; their songs and prayers; their self-respect and pride; their failings, and their outpourings at births and deaths?

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How strange that we in Pakistan or West Punjab have to explain that we speak Punjabi! State institutions and media make it look like that. It is said that if in Moghul era someone from Iran visited Delhi, to him it looked just another Iranian city. Who looks at the rural reality, because cities are normally the signboards of the dominant culture?

Under the title 'Status of Punjabi in Pakistan', clarifying the issue Safir Rammah writes: "In the villages, markets and majority of the rural and urban homes of West Punjab, the use of Punjabi language in conversations is as robust as ever. Most of the market-based popular media, outside the realm of state controlled radio and TV, is in Punjabi. Punjabis have become used to the contradiction of talking and listening in Punjabi while reading and writing in Urdu or English. Even Punjabis living in the Diaspora shift from a telephone conversation with their parents in Punjabi to writing them letters and cards in Urdu without noticing the obvious change of language from one form of communication to the other. **The small cadre of Punjabi activists and writers, who have been struggling against all odds to promote Punjabi language, literature and culture, have so far generally based their case on emotional appeals to save their beloved mother tongue and culture**" (emphasis mine – mam). [36]

[36] <http://www.apnaorg.com/articles/safir/psn.html> PAKISTAN STUDIES NEWS, Newsletter of

American Institute of Pakistan Studies, Fall 2002, Volume V, Issue 1, New Series No. 9, University of Pennsylvania

It is not the 1947 geographical partition of India and therefore of the Punjab that has partitioned Punjabi. There is a long historical process before that during which Punjabi Muslims did not adopt Gurmukhi script for hundreds of years. After 1947 Partition, I am witness to never finding any trace of it in Pakistan. I found no elder ever regretting being away from Gurmukhi although expressing nostalgia of good old days when they were living in peace with those who used the Gurmukhi script. In our village life we were not aware that we speak Punjabi language. In our consciousness, the written word belonged to Urdu. For us it was as if Punjabi did not exist although the spoken language was Punjabi. The child will enter school and begin with Urdu, although school teachers will speak Punjabi with students. I am talking of my school days i.e. early 1950s. It was and I believe still is a strange situation. Just as in childhood we are not aware of

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presence of simple facts of life around us or as normally we are not aware that we breathe in the air, such seems to be the situation of Punjabi Muslims generally, illiterate or literate, as far as their language is concerned.

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Under the title ‘Background of 500 Years’, this is what I wrote sometime before 1992: “We can safely say that in the making of Nanak there was a background of almost 500 years (annexation of the Punjab by Mahmud of Ghazni 1020, while birth of Nanak 1469) of Muslim influence on the people he was born in. Apart from straight-away submission or hostility, it seems that, it was, in the person of Nanak, the main ideological response to Muslim domination by the Hindus of the Punjab. **Therefore, to an extent the aspirations of our forefathers have contributed in the making of Nanak.** (Emphasis mine only here, not in the original book)

“In any people, in any society, men are born who seek truth. They are men of ideas. These men preached religion according to their beliefs and understanding. From the point of view of local people of India (or Punjab); the Muslims were a success story in the field of arms. Not only that, in the field of ideas, religion, and philosophy, there were men, not necessarily associated with the ruling families, of towering Characters. They explained everything to the people. They were, no doubt, formidable men. So whether arms or ideology, the Muslims in India remained on the offensive.

“But this whole thrust of Muslims was insufficient to convert the population of India, or even of Punjab, to Islam. There must be many factors, responsible for this lack of massive conversion, for instance: shear weight of numbers of Hindus in comparison to Muslims, depth of Hindu religion, lack of spirit of Islamisation and time span available to Muslim domination before the spell of their superiority was broken and adjustments made by the Hindus etc.

“The logic seems to be that due to the combination of these and other circumstances the Hindus, collectively, were in a position neither to convert nor to throw off the yoke. A mid-way must have looked logical and necessary which may mean to keep options open. Hence the great Nanak of the Punjab who emerged as a viable and comprehensive answer from the Punjab to Muslim supremacy in India.” [37]

[37] The Pakistan Problem, 1993, Lahore: Manzoor Ahmed Manzoor, pp. 164-65 ■