

Reflecting Kashmiri Mysticism: A Poetic Translation

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Abstract:

Ghulam Rasool Taus Banahali, celebrated for his iconic song "Meray Watan Teri Jannat Main Aayen Gay Ik Din," is a distinguished figure in Kashmiri poetry. His literary prowess spans diverse genres, from insightful essays to enchanting translations of Kashmiri folk tales. Among his most esteemed works is the poetic translation of the eighth-century Kashmiri mystic Noor Ud Din Rishi's poetry, titled "Rishi Nama." This translation is a masterful blend of simplicity, fluency, and melody, preserving the essence of Kashmiri mysticism while exploring themes of worldly impermanence, piety, austerity, fate, and divine will. Banahali's contribution to Urdu literature is profound, enriching¹ the language with new mystical lexicons and cultural narratives. This article seeks to illuminate this artistic gem, showcasing Ghulam Rasool Taus Banahali's significant impact on Urdu literary traditions and his celebration of Kashmiri heritage. Keywords: Mysticism, poetic translation, Rishiat, Reshi Nama, Taus Banahali, Kashmiri poetry, Ghulam Rasool, Kashmiri culture, Noor Ud Din Rishi, folk narratives, literary innovation, Urdu literature.

Introduction

Nooruddin Reshi, also known by the honorific titles Sheikh-ul-Alam and Nund Reshi, was a distinguished Kashmiri Sufi saint from the latter part of the 14th century Hijri. He significantly contributed to the dissemination of Islam and the promotion of Islamic culture and civilization through his Sufi poetry in the Kashmiri language. His poetic works address themes such as the ephemerality and impermanence of the world, worship, asceticism, spiritual discipline, self-mortification, the supremacy of destiny, and the pursuit of divine approval. Furthermore, he was known for his critique of religious hypocrisy.

The term "Reshi" originates from the Sanskrit language, meaning "A Poet with a Vision." Prior to the advent of Islam in Kashmir, this term was applied to pious and virtuous individuals who eschewed worldly affairs, opting for a life of worship in forests and caves. Abdul Ahad Azad, in his work "Kashmiri Language and Poetry," defines a Reshi as follows:

"A Reshi is someone who abstains from women and children, does not harm any living being, does not trample plants, and prefers solitude."⁽¹⁾

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Nooruddin Reshi harmonized the Reshi tradition with the teachings of the Quran, Sunnah, and Shariah, adopting a method of Islamic propagation that was closely aligned with the local customs and psychological dispositions of the Kashmiri people.

****Ghulam Rasool Taus Banhali: Translator and Poet****

Ghulam Rasool Taus Banhali was born on November 28, 1933, in Banihal into a Pathan family and passed away on September 20, 2000, in Islamabad. He was a poet who composed works in both Kashmiri and Urdu, worked with the radio, and is notable for translating the poetry of Nooruddin Reshi as well as local folklore into Kashmiri. He began writing poetry at an early age and had a particular affinity for romantic epic poetry. His academic interests included English, history, Persian, and Urdu. According to Dr. Yousuf Bukhari:

"Taus Banhali is widely recognized as 'Radio.' His father's name was Abdul Ahad Khan, and his ancestral home was Khar Bair Khanpura in Banihal, Kashmir. He was born on November 28, 1933, in Khar Bair Khanpura, Banihal."(2)

His circle of close friends included prominent figures such as Mukhtar Siddiqui, Ahmad Shamim, Shafqat Tanvir Mirza, Izhar Kazmi, and Sheikh Taj Din.

Dr. Ghulam Hussain Azhar provides an insightful analysis regarding Taus Banhali's name:

"In a manner akin to the Kashmiri tradition, Taus Banhali's name was initially bestowed by his parents under the influence of centuries of subjugation, reflected in the name 'Ghulam Rasool' (Servant of the Prophet). However, as an act of defiance against this servitude, Ghulam Rasool rebranded himself as Taus Banhali. He held that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was sent to abolish servitude. The selection of 'Taus' reveals his aesthetic sensibility, while the suffix 'Banhali' signifies his profound connection to his native land. This pen name is a crucial key to understanding his true character, encapsulating the essence of Banihal's heritage within his identity."

Taus Banhali is recognized for composing a poignant anthem dedicated to Kashmir, with the following lines:

Meray watan teri Jannat mein ayen gay ik din

Sitam shiyaron se tujh ko chhuraen gay ik din

"My homeland will one day enter your paradise;

We will liberate you from tyranny one day."

This anthem is rendered in both Kashmiri and Urdu, exemplifying his deep-seated love for Kashmir and his commitment to the Urdu language.

In 1949, Taus Banhali emigrated to Pakistan and subsequently joined Radio Rawalpindi in 1952. Prior to this, he had been affiliated with Radio Kashmir. During the 1965 Indo-Pakistani War, he was noted for his contributions to the Voice of Kashmir Radio and was an active participant in the Kashmir conflict.

Historically, Kashmiris have exhibited a deep-seated interest in the literary traditions of various languages. Historical evidence indicates that high Sanskrit literature was flourishing in Kashmir before the advent of Persian literature in the 14th century. Subsequently, Persian literature became highly esteemed in the region, which came to be known as a 'terrestrial paradise' or 'little Iran.' Many centuries later, Urdu was accorded official language status within the region.

Shamim Ahmad Shamim commented in 1975:

"From 1931 to 1947, the language most effectively and extensively employed for our struggles, protests, and dialogues, both within and outside the state, was Urdu. Urdu has also played a pivotal role in facilitating political dialogue and cultural exchange between Jammu and Kashmir. For maintaining political and intellectual links with remote regions such as Ladakh and Kargil, Urdu has been indispensable. While it is difficult to ascertain whether Urdu's status as an official language has been beneficial, it is undeniable that Urdu has served as a crucial medium of communication among the state's three regions, addressing many of our challenges."(4)

Taus Banhali made notable contributions to the preservation and dissemination of Sheikh Nooruddin's oeuvre by systematically compiling his works over an extensive period. He engaged in meticulous translation of the text, focusing on segments that had remained relatively uncorrupted by temporal distortions. Through rigorous scholarly research, Banhali ensured the fidelity of the original material, thereby safeguarding its integrity and facilitating its accessibility for contemporary and future audiences.

The publication of *Reshi Nama* in December 1980 by the National Institute of Folk Heritage in Islamabad, spanning 233 pages, represents a substantial scholarly contribution to both Kashmiri and Urdu literature. In this work, the translator, Taus Banhali, has elevated the translation to the level of creative artistry, thereby rendering a notable service to the literary traditions of both languages. The translation quickly garnered recognition due to Banhali's reputation as an accomplished poet himself. His meticulous approach ensured that the original message of Sheikh Nooruddin Reshi's poetry was preserved in its entirety, marking a distinctive feature of this translation.

According to a report in *Nawai Waqt* on the occasion of the book's launch:

"A simple yet prestigious event was held to unveil *Reshi Nama*, the Urdu translation of the widely acclaimed Kashmiri poetry of Sheikh-ul-Alam, a preeminent 14th-century Sufi poet, scholar, and missionary from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The ceremony was attended by numerous distinguished poets and writers who commended Ghulam Rasool Taus Banhali for his translation of Sheikh-ul-Alam's poetry into Urdu. The event's president, S.M. Rafiq, acknowledged that Mr. Taus Banhali's Urdu rendition of Nund Reshi's works constitutes a significant contribution to the literary heritage of both Kashmiri and Urdu. This achievement is highly esteemed within literary circles and among poetry enthusiasts."(5)

When a poet undertakes the translation of another poet's work, it can be posited that the translating poet perceives a convergence between their own conceptual framework and that of the original poet. This process involves reinterpreting the poetic work within the framework of their own language. Effective translation requires a profound observational insight, which is fundamental to high-quality creative work. This depth of observation and expansive reading allows for the emergence of ideas at a creative level.

It is not uncommon for poets to encounter difficulties in articulating their thoughts or in achieving full emotional and conceptual maturity. However, encountering these sensations in the form of another language can reveal that their own imaginative constructs are represented in a tangible form. This realization often motivates the poet to undertake the translation of the literary piece, regardless of whether their own thoughts are fully formed or systematically organized. In such cases, translation serves as a means of communicating and rendering complex ideas that may not yet be fully crystallized.

Translation encompasses various forms, with literary and scholarly translations holding particular significance due to their inherent complexities. Among the challenges associated with poetic translation, three principal perspectives can be identified:

1. Linguistic Fidelity: Ensuring that the translation accurately reflects the nuances and stylistic elements of the original text while adapting it to the target language.
2. Cultural Context: Preserving the cultural and contextual elements intrinsic to the original work while making them accessible to readers of the target language.
3. Creative Interpretation: Balancing fidelity to the source text with the need for creative adaptation to convey the original's artistic and emotional impact in the target language.

These considerations underscore the intricate nature of literary translation and highlight the importance of both linguistic skill and artistic sensitivity in achieving a successful translation.

1. The Possibility of Translating Poetry into Prose.
2. The Impossibility of Translating Poetry into Prose.
3. The Necessity of Translating Poetry into Poetry:

The translation of poetry is often regarded as one of the most challenging tasks in the field of translation studies. Dr. Khaliq Anjum underscores this complexity, noting that poetry translation is frequently considered an exceptionally difficult, and at times, nearly impossible endeavor. Dr. Samuel Johnson famously declared that "poetry cannot be translated," while Victor Hugo dismissed the idea of poetic translation as "meaningless and impossible." Despite these formidable challenges, prominent Western literary figures such as Horace, Cicero, Luther, Dryden, Pope, Shelley, and Coleridge have engaged in poetic translation and produced significant works in this domain.(6)

In examining Taus Banhali's translation of Sheikh Nooruddin Reshi's poetry, it is evident that Banhali adhered to the principle of translating poetry into poetry. This choice reflects Banhali's dual role as a poet and translator, and his deep engagement with the Sufi themes of Reshi's work. By maintaining the poetic form, Banhali has effectively preserved the rhythmic, metrical, and emotive aspects of the original text, ensuring that the nuanced expressions of Sufi thought are conveyed with authenticity.

Jor jam lala ambars

Mukhta niyunam buka kya ha dozhay

Mahath zholamu wayi loot laras

Ya ras diziem andamz aras vonuai (7)

Meri punji mere moti aise chor ke hath lage

Jis ne muthiyan bhar bhar dono hathon khazane loot liye

Loot chala batmar to ab main kahan karun is ka picha

Qabristan ki tanhai mein yaar ko dekhne aa jana (8)

The works of the 14th-century Kashmiri poet Sheikh Nooruddin Reshi, despite their historical and literary significance, have not entirely escaped the ravages of time. The original texts have been partially obscured by the inclusion of works from his disciples and the mystical poetry of

Lala Arifa. Taus Banhali's scholarly endeavor to recover and present the authentic text of Reshi's poetry involved a rigorous methodological approach. In his publication *Reshi Nama*, Banhali has provided a dual-page format where the original Kashmiri text is juxtaposed with its Urdu translation. This approach facilitates both comprehension and comparative analysis by allowing readers to directly observe the translation decisions and the specific Urdu equivalents used for Kashmiri terms.

Dr. Khaliq Anjum posits:

"For the translation of poetry, it is imperative that the translator be a poet. In such cases, the translator's inherent poetic sensibility will inevitably influence the translation, regardless of their efforts to maintain objectivity. When a translator is also a poet, the translation has the potential to surpass the original in terms of poetic quality. Conversely, if the translator is not a poet, the translation is likely to fall short of the original's artistic merit. The translator's attempts to emulate the esteemed author may result in a work that is ultimately reduced to their own level of proficiency." (9)

This assertion highlights the crucial role of the translator's poetic skill in ensuring the preservation of the original text's artistic and emotional essence. Taus Banhali's dual expertise as both a poet and translator significantly contributes to the fidelity and quality of his translation, thereby maintaining the integrity of Sheikh Nooruddin Reshi's work while making it accessible to Urdu-speaking audiences. Banhali's methodical approach—placing the original Kashmiri text alongside its translation—serves as an effective tool for scholarly analysis, allowing for direct comparison and a deeper understanding of the translation's accuracy and nuance.

Muzaffar Ali Syed, in his work "Fundamentals of Translation Theory," elaborates on these characteristics:

"Creative translation can be described as an unpredictable phenomenon that defies precise forecasting. Although exact word-for-word correspondence across languages is rare, creative translators are not only adept at identifying such correspondences where they exist but also at generating them through imaginative means where none were apparent. Thus, creative translation navigates a dialectical tension between freedom and constraint. When this dialectic is resolved at a high level of adaptation and congruence, it provides a measure of the art and effectiveness of the translation." (10)

Taus Banhali's work illustrates the principles of creative translation by merging lexical precision with imaginative adaptation. His translation not only preserves the essence and depth of Sheikh Nooruddin Reshi's original poetry but also demonstrates a sophisticated handling of linguistic and cultural nuances. This method allows the translated text to resonate with Urdu readers while retaining the integrity of the source material.

Dhyan nahin is gyan ka jis ko
Is moorkh ko kya kahiye
Din aur raat ka farq baradar
(11) Yaksaan hai andhe ke liye

Somewhere, Hindi and Persian words have also been combined:

Gyaan irfaan jise hai hasil
(12) Us ke haath raha maidan

In the context of Hindi words, another example is as follows:"

Thar thar kanpoon is pulia se paar main kaise utrunga
Jis pullia ke neeche behta hai angaron ka darya
Keniiyon par pat jhar utare dheemi bahe jeevan ganga
Main thak haar ke palk jhapakte neend mein gum ho jaoonga (13)

Chhe jungle jab chhaan liye tab ja ke chhatti hiss jaag uthi
Hooke wird se dasht nawardi ki yeh musafat tay kar li
Ishq ke tapte angaron par apna kaleja bhoon liya
Haan mujh ko mashooq se ishq hai chahta hoon sohbat us ki (14)

In examining the text above, it is evident that the original text is concise and comprehensive, whereas the translation tends to be more verbose. In Kashmiri, the original text is as follows:

Shewan zyathnth shashkal wur arm
Prakat hozam poh na syeth
Ishqna nara wanj bozimy
(15) Chhum ishq mashooq heman syeth
Same like:

Praan praan palun mowthum
Lekhaan lekhaan zolum dil
Zikre syethi khudaye toothum
(16) Fikre syethay raw chum shil
Padhne likhne se kya hota padhe ye jab na huye aamil
Padhne aur likhne se bhala taskeen kahan hoti haasil
Haan jab zikr ko apnaya to mehr us ka mehsoos hua
Zikr se sahib ko paya aur fikr se thehre sahib-e-dil (17)

At times, we observe in Taus Banhali's work such conciseness that the translation is even more succinct than the original text. For instance, a poem consisting of ten lines is translated into seven lines without compromising the understanding of its meaning and themes. Conciseness can be detrimental when it leads to a reduction in meaning or hinders communication. However, this is not the case here:

Dono jahan kuch logon ko bakhshay
Kuch mehroom zia bhi gaye
Kuch logon ko mil gaye heere
Muft mein kuch chandhiya bhi gaye
Koi achanak talab hua aur kuch soye darya bhi gaye
Kuch to behak chale kuch faslon ko tiddi dal laga bhi gaye
Kuch aise the so do zian mein apni dukan badha bhi gaye (18)

This translation effectively revives the concepts of Nuruddin Rishi, which were originally present in Kashmiri poetry. When these concepts were rendered into Urdu, a notable phenomenon occurred, involving the transfer of purely mystical experiences. Translating poetry based on romantic experiences is inherently complex; however, rendering Sufi experiences and spiritual insights into a poetic form without compromising their essence is a task of a purely literary nature. Taus Banhali has succeeded in this literary endeavor.

Professor Akram has articulated his thoughts on this matter as follows:

"Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi, in his time, wielded the sword of blatant truth against the hypocrisy, greed for wealth and power, self-indulgence, superficiality, and oppression of his era. Taus Banhali, the Rishi of the twentieth century, has polished the rusted sword of Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi, honing it with the sharpness of Urdu, so that it can cut through the wounds inflicted by the hypocritical and tyrannical society of the present day and heal its ailing body. By merging with the spirit of Sheikh Nuruddin, Taus Banhali has molded his poetry into the Urdu framework and illuminated his thoughts." (19)

Since its inception, Urdu poetry has been replete with Sufi thoughts and experiences, expressed both in poetry and prose. The relationships between the spiritual guide and disciple, and between the servant and the Divine, are often portrayed in a purely romantic manner. Translating the poetry of Nuruddin Rishi into Urdu has the advantage of enriching Urdu's lexicon with the terminology of the local dialects of the fourteenth century. During that time, the Kashmiri script was heavily influenced by Sanskrit, but Nuruddin Rishi chose to express his thoughts in the local dialect "Pali." An active Sufi promotes his ideas in a manner that is closest to the lifestyle, temperament, habits, and culture of the common people. When a translator successfully conveys this cultural nuance, the purpose of the translation is fulfilled.

The poetry of Nund Rishi, composed six hundred years ago in the Kashmiri language, has been made accessible to the Urdu-speaking audience through Taus Banhali's efforts. Today's Kashmiri language is undoubtedly more developed than that of Nund Rishi's time. The addition of archaic words has made this Urdu translation a guide for those who speak and understand Kashmiri. This translation provides access to Nund Rishi's language and thoughts. Taus Banhali, proficient in both Kashmiri and Urdu, was a poet, associated with radio, and a literary figure, thus the appropriate use of words came naturally to him. Shamim Ahmed Shamim, a writer of both Kashmiri and Urdu, has highlighted the spontaneity and fluency of this translated work in his comments:

"One day, upon waking, I discovered Taus, also known as Ghulam Rasool, standing by my bedside holding a book. His demeanor was that of profound remorse and regret.

'What is this?' I inquired with a hint of irritation.

'It's a book,' he responded, clearly embarrassed.

'Whose book is it?' I asked, my annoyance intensifying.

'It's mine,' he admitted, layering his regret with remorse. I wondered, isn't merely living enough of a burden without adding the weight of a book?

'Sir, it just happened,' he confessed, acknowledging his unintentional transgression. He was right; a good book is not meticulously crafted, it simply comes into existence, much like an inadvertent sin... Now, reflecting on how Taus has so beautifully translated Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi's poetry into verse, I feel somewhat deceived. He collaborated with me on everything,

yet accomplished this task on his own. Then it dawns on me, the burden of a cross cannot be shared. Each individual must bear their own cross.”(20)

We must express our gratitude to Taus Banhali for vividly bringing to life the serene and oppressed beauty of Kashmir through the prism of a revered saint. While we may not comprehend the Kashmiri language, reading the Urdu translation of "Rishi Nama" evokes the sensation of traversing this terrestrial paradise, immersing ourselves in its springs, rivers, gardens, shrines, chinars, and saffron fields.

The translation is rendered with such clarity and simplicity that it epitomizes the ease of an effortlessly composed poem. Taus has transcended a mere literal translation to convey the profound essence of Nund Rishi's philosophical thoughts. The original text's depth of emotion and spiritual fervor is equally manifest in the translation. The quintessence of Rishi's poetry is meticulously preserved in this work. Taus has judiciously selected words and maintained contextual appropriateness, enveloping the translation in the same mystical aura that permeates Rishi's poetry.

Parbat ki choti par chadh kar

Aasp sawari karte ho

Kitni nakhwat se paani par

Tum bahron mein utarte ho (21)

Andher karodtra vakh nate

Neibar kardil kunde?

Antah mak ka sukh nate

Chhoen wothh baithih kunde (22)

Man ke bal na gaye aur pech o taab se chutkara na mila

Tan ki sajaawat par kis kaaran, haasil is tazeen se kya?

Andar ki sab mail hai baaki khet mein hal jote bhi nahin

Jhulse khet mein yonhi dane bowoge to kya hoga? (23)

Kalih buthah wasanam naala moth haneemah

Garshun amala teh kyaah chon naav

Zhathh gitte ashdar wasanam

Kausar myaen amal teh kyaah meyon naav (24)

Aakhir aamna saamna hoga aaye ga woh sakht maqaam

Jab aamaal ko poocha jaaye ga le le kar mera naam

Roz-e-jaza ki hashr ghadi bas meri aankhen barsengi

Mujh badnaam ke ye aamaal hain kya hoga mera anjaam (25)

When discussing themes, it is evident that contemporary relevance is also depicted. Nand Rishi's exposure of human nature's hypocrisy, deceit, and greed remains as pertinent today as it was in his time. His poetry addresses universal truths that resonate with the present-day reader, underscoring its timeless significance.

Nund Rishi critiqued social vices such as the pursuit of wealth and power, self-indulgence, and false religious pretenses. Taus Banihali has successfully translated these themes into Urdu poetry, breathing new life into Rishi's concepts. The same intensity and authenticity present in Rishi's original work are retained in Banihali's translation.

Banihali's translation remains faithful not only on a linguistic level but also in terms of thought and thematic representation. He has rendered Rishi's ideas in a way that makes them comprehensible and impactful for the Urdu-speaking audience. This achievement illustrates that a great translator's responsibility extends beyond mere word-for-word translation; it involves accurately conveying the original message and emotions.

He manh moth chhakh muhas

Sout chhakh laekith wani

Nafs chuy phirwan do haptan

Pat chhe gand mathar laani (26)

Hawas ka andha pan hai, hirs hai tujh par taari

Dhan ki dhun mein magan hai tu jaise byopari

Nafs tujhe dauraye din bhar aage peeche

Patti aankhon par hai, aqal pe parda bhaari (27)

This translation adeptly conveys Nand Rishi's philosophies in a manner that simplifies the understanding of mystical concepts, while simultaneously showcasing the translator's distinctive lexical choices. The translation process begins with the crucial step of text selection, which reflects the translator's interests and expertise. It is imperative for the translator to be thoroughly acquainted with the background, specific context, vocabulary, and other related elements of the text they choose to translate. Taus Banahali demonstrates a profound understanding of all these prerequisites.

In the examples below, the congruence between the original text and its translation illustrates how Taus Banahali has faithfully preserved the essence of Nand Rishi's original work, rendering it in an accessible and comprehensible manner:

Phawle wadhkh dah phalay budane

Daulat bartal nih pooni zaat

Khudaye divutane na ko nasrah gune

(28) Neki karne chhuni kyaat

Beej agar neki ka boye ek ke das daane mil jaayein

Neki karte kuch nahin ghattata, nahin hai neki mein nuqsan

Aisi ghar aayi daulat ko faqat muqaddar wale paayein

(29) Kaun aisi khoobi hai tujh mein kahan ka hai aisa ganwaan

In this example, the word "گنوان" (lose) and similarly many other words like "مورکھ" (fool), "گیان" (knowledge), "پلّیا" (bridge), and "جیون" (life) are integral parts of the Hindi lexicon. Kashmiri language originates from Sanskrit, which is why Taus Banahali has frequently used words with Sanskrit roots to maintain the fidelity of meaning. Since Kashmiri and Urdu share

a profound connection, these words do not seem foreign. Dr. Yusuf Bukhari elucidates this relationship as follows:

"Many languages of India owe their existence to Sanskrit and are products of Shuraseni Prakrit, which later evolved into Shuraseni Apabhramsa, fostering numerous regional languages, including Punjabi, Urdu, and Kashmiri. Given that Punjabi and Urdu are closely related, we can assert that Urdu and Kashmiri also share a close relationship due to their common Shuraseni Apabhramsa ancestry." (30)

When we examine the translation without referring to the original text, it becomes apparent that Nand Rishi's thoughts and the themes of Rishiyat have been effectively conveyed in the translation. The levels of communication and understanding are adequately achieved. However, at certain points, the poetic meters are not meticulously maintained, and the translation leans towards prose. There are instances where the verses are lengthy, yet the balance of meter is not compromised:

Aql ke andhe ek nikamme shakhs ko takht nasheen dekha

Is kam aql ka to shaki ab kya kahiye kaisa zeerak tha

Rakht ko teh karne wale zeerak ko dekh ke kehna pada

Ilm to chakar hai daulat ka aql se beshak bakht bada

Ek tamasha yeh bhi dekha palki mein ek andha jaaye

Aur ek chashm-e-baseerat wala us andhe ko phire uthaye

Kare sawari ek sipara yaad nahin jis andhe ko

Aur aalam-e-hairan o pareshan bhaat ko katar se saag na paaye

Ilm to chakar hai qismat ka aql se beshak bakht bada (31)

In the excerpted verses provided, both forms are present: some lines are tightly constructed and adhere to the poetic meter, while others prioritize conveying the message over maintaining strict meter. This variation indicates that the translation, while preserving some of the poetic rhythm, occasionally shifts towards prose for the sake of clarity.

Taus Banihali's translation represents a significant contribution to Urdu literature. It serves as a crucial means of preserving the Sufi thoughts originally presented in Kashmiri. This preservation is particularly valuable given the context of the literary heritage of Kashmir.

On March 12, 1922, Allama Iqbal wrote to the Kashmiri poet Mehjoor Kashmiri from Lahore:

"It is lamentable that the literature of Kashmir has been devastated. The causes of this destruction include the neglect of the Sikh rulers, the current (Dogra) administration, and the indifference of the Muslims of Kashmir. Is it not possible for the educated Muslims of the Kashmir Valley to establish a society for the search and preservation of the existing literature?" (32)

In the domain of individual endeavors aimed at preserving Kashmiri literature, Taus Banihali's translations, particularly of Kashmiri Sufi poetry and folktales, stand out as significant contributions. These translations have not only facilitated the introduction of Kashmiri intellectual and cultural perspectives to Urdu-speaking audiences but have also brought to light elements of Kashmiri culture embedded within these narratives.

Translation is an intricate process that transcends the mere conversion of linguistic units from one language to another; it embodies a broader cultural exchange. This exchange entails not only the expansion of the vocabulary of the target language but also the enhancement of its expressive capacity. The efficacy of this process hinges on two primary aspects: firstly, the lexical richness of the language into which translation is made must be adequate to encapsulate the thematic and conceptual nuances of the original text; secondly, the translation process itself contributes to the augmentation of the target language's lexicon. Taus Banihali's work serves as a paradigm of this process. His translations facilitate a deeper understanding of the philosophical and spiritual insights of Sheikh-ul-Alam Nund Rishi, while also showcasing the use of Sanskrit-derived terms in Kashmiri poetry and their Urdu counterparts. This dual function of preserving and expanding linguistic and cultural knowledge underscores the scholarly value of Banihali's translations as a pivotal academic endeavor in the field of comparative literature and cultural studies.

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32. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, "Letter to Mehjoor Kashmiri," in *Kulliyat-e-Makateeb-e-Iqbal* compiled by Syed Muzaffar Hussain Barni (Jhelum: Book Corner, February 2016), pp. 377, 338.