# Love, Passion and Reason: The Poet Fayzi and his *Nal-Daman*

MUZAFFAR ALAM and SANJAY SUBRAHMANYAM

## INTRODUCTION

One night in the late sixteenth century, the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) is said to have summoned his poet-laureate, Fayzi, to his presence. Fayzi had been at his own residence, sitting in a meditative frame of mind; and when the summons arrived, he naturally rushed to the court. But there was no great political crisis afoot. Instead, the emperor asked him why, as the poet-magician of the court, the flute of his pen did not produce a poetic fire and cast a new magic spell? In short, why, instead of addressing the staple question of love in general, did the poet not turn to the specifics of love as it happened in India (*dar Hend za 'eshq sar-gozasht-i ast*; Fayzi, 1987). The words of instruction that are put in Akbar's mouth by the poet are as follow, with not only the general theme, but the very specific example of a story that already had wide currency at that time:

*Now sāz fasāna-ye kohan rā,*
*'Eshq-e Nal o khubi-e Daman rā.*
Tell that old tale anew,
Of the love of Nal and the beauty of Daman.
(...)
*Sad naghma-ye dard dar sokhan riz*
*Dar sāghar-e now may-e kohan riz.*
Make a hundred songs of pain into poetry,
Fill the fresh goblet with an old wine.

Akbar suggested to the poet, moreover, that he should place all his arts at the service of this enterprise, of bringing alive a story in which love had reduced the lovers themselves into a burnt offering at the temple.

Of the two lovers' coquetry and submission (*nāz o niyāz*),
Carry gifts to the lovers' assembly.
See what love once was like in India (*dar Hend*),

the dagger-thrusts that drowned their hearts in blood.
How those who played with love in this land,
passed on with their hearts and livers shattered.
How they burnt themselves in fire,
How they became ashes in love's temple.

The present essay concerns the story of Nal and Daman, as set down in the late sixteenth century by Abu'l Fayz b. Mobārak, better known as Fayzi (also known at the end of his life as Fayyāzi). The text is in the verse-narrative form known as the *mathnavi*, and acquired great popularity among readers of Indian Persian, evidenced by numerous manuscripts in major collections both in India and abroad (11 in the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna, 13 at the Aligarh Muslim University Library, besides several in the Oriental and India Office Collections of the British Library, including the oldest extant manuscript dating to 1069/1658-59 [Fayzi, 1831, 1877, 1956, and 1982]). In a subsequent phase, and especially in the course of the nineteenth century (as Persian began to give way increasingly in northern India to Urdu), a number of authors also produced versions of the work in Urdu. These were not mere translations, however, but often represented significant transformations of the text of Fayzi, while still retaining a firm anchorage in Fayzi's masterpiece.

How did the story of Nal and Daman (or Nala and Damayanti), which we know both from the classical Indian tradition in Sanskrit and from the flourishing vernacular traditions of medieval India, come to pass into Persian at the Mughal court? (Shulman, 1994; idem, 2001, pp. 131-58; Wadley, 1999) In order to comprehend this, some broader historical trends need to be borne in mind, two salient aspects of which we have discussed elsewhere (Alam, 1998; idem, 2003). First, it should be noted that even if Persian had entered India as early as the tenth-eleventh centuries, still its dominance was not assured by the end of the fifteenth century, during the period of Afghan ascendancy in northern India. In both Delhi and the provinces, the main vernacular tongue of Hindavi had been given considerable encouragement by the Muslim sultans by this period, and we know that it was a contender as a language both of administration and culture at the time of the reign of the Lodis and Surs. After the rise of the Mughals, Persian was once more brought to the fore in the second half of the sixteenth century as a language of power and culture. As a result, the efflorescence of Hindavi in Northern India at least was stunted and its development delayed. Even the scriptures of Hindustan were translated into Persian in Akbar's time, and the relationship between Persian and Sanskrit was strengthened, bypassing

the vernaculars to an extent (e.g., the Sanskrit-Persian grammar of Krishna Das produced in Akbar's time). Stories that had been written in Hindavi and integrated into Indian Islam, such as the *Padmāvat* and *Madhumālati* were brought back into Persian under Mughal patronage, with a marked moment of advance under Jahāngir (Phukan, 1996). Clearly, a new form of Indo-Persian literary synthesis was underway, and the question naturally arises in this context of how the Persian *mathnavi* looked at the time of Akbar. Here, it is important to bring out the significant role played by Fayzi, in his attempt to bring 'secular' stories into Persian, of which the Nal-Daman narrative is an example. A contrasting case of a 'secular' tale with a distinctly Indic flavour that was more or less invented rather than inherited from the Sanskrit classical tradition is provided by the *Suz o godāz*, of Fayzi's contemporary Mohammad-Rezā Naw'i Khabushāni (Dawud and Coomaraswamy, 1912; Abidi, 1984; Sharma, forthcoming).

A second general issue relates to the relationship between the poetic domain and the interpretation of the political sphere. The fact that poetry may reflect as well as influence such political themes as 'tolerance' or 'bigotry' has long been recognised by historians of the Mughals. But Indian Persian poetry bears a far more complex relationship than this to the political domain. It may be argued that the older idea of equivocation (*ihām*) that was innovatively theorised by the fresh insights of Amir Khosrow of Delhi (d. 1325) in fact came to gain very wide applicability in Mughal times, being utilised on the one hand by Sufis, and on the other hand by writers of political treatises. This can equally be read from the *mathnavi*s of Fayzi, on which we shall say more below. If, on the one hand, the Mughal poet reflects the prevailing mood of Akbar's period, it is equally clear that the poet had a part in both making and representing political ideals.

Who was Fayzi? Why was the Nal-Daman text written, and what is its place in the relationship between the poet and his patron, the Mughal emperor Akbar? Some succinct details of a biographical and genealogical nature may not be out of place here (Rahman, in *EIr.*, IX, pp. 457-59; Ansari in *EI*, II, pp. 870-72; Hadi, 1978, pp. 81-145). Fayzi's great-grandfather Shaikh Musā had migrated from Yemen to Sind in 900/1494, married and settled there. His son, Shaikh Khezr, then moved to Hindustan proper, where he settled in Nagaur in western Rajasthan, where he established extensive contacts with the local *'olamā*. Khezr's son was the celebrated Shaikh Mobārak, born in Nagaur in 911/1505-06. Khezr himself died in Sind, where he had returned for a visit. After his mother's subsequent death, Mobārak moved first to Gujarat, but was advised there to move on to the more significant political centre of Agra,

where he arrived in 950/1543-44, married into a respectable family and made his own *madrasa*. Mobārak had eight sons and four daughters through several marriages. Three of these sons stand out: Abu'l Fayz, Abu'l Fazl and Abu'l Khayr, the first of whom was born in Agra in on 5 Sha'bān 954/24 September 1547.

Known successively by the poetic names of Fayzi and Fayzi Fayyāzi (the latter adopted in the closing years of his life), Abu'l Fayz was educated largely by his father. In 974/1566-67, Fayzi and Mobārak reached the court through the intercession of some influential persons, possibly Akbar's foster-brother Mirzā 'Aziz Koka. Fayzi was successively given the post of tutor to the Mughal princes Salim, Morād and Daniyāl, and soon became close to Akbar himself. In 981/1573-74, the second brother Abu'l-Fazl was brought into the court on the recommendation of Fayzi, and became a major influence as chronicler and ideologue of the second half of Akbar's reign. In 990/1581, Fayzi himself was made *sadr* (head of the state ecclesiastical department) of Agra, Kalpi and Kalinjar, and in 993/1585, he participated in the anti-Yusufzā'i expedition to the northwest frontier of the Mughal domains. In 997/1588, Fayzi was given the title of *malek al-sho'rā*, or poet-laureate (the third poet to hold this title in the Mughal court), and in the same year, he accompanied Akbar to Kashmir, cementing his close relationship with the ruler. In 999/1590-91, he was sent to Khandesh and Ahmadnagar as Mughal envoy, and wrote a series of reports from there, dealing with the political and cultural conditions there, as well as the contemporary situation in Iran (Fayzi, 1973; Alam and Subrahmanyam, 2001). A few years after his return from this extended visit to the Deccan, he fell ill with asthma in 1003/1594-95 and died on 10 Safar 1004/5 October 1595 at Lahore; he was perhaps buried at first in the Ram Bagh at Agra, but was later transferred to another family mausoleum, near Sikandra.

We possess fairly extensive details on the poet's intellectual biography as well. Fayzi knew not only Arabic and Persian, but also Sanskrit. Among his other teachers (besides his own father) was Khwāja Hosayn of Marv (d. 1571-72), from whom he is reported to have received instruction in poetry-writing. While not notably orthodox in his religious beliefs, Fayzi was a particular devotee of the Cheshti Sufi Khwāja Farid al-Din Ganj-e Shakar. Amongst his contemporaries, he also had good relations with another major religious figure, 'Abd al-Haqq Mohaddeth Dehlavi. By the close of his career, Fayzi had attained the somewhat lowly rank of 400 within the Mughal *mansabdāri* system, but would nevertheless seem to have been a man of some means, with a very large personal library of some 4,600 volumes.

Ranked first among the poets of his age by an admittedly prejudiced observer, his own brother, Shaikh Abu'l-Fazl, Fayzi was equally praised for his technical skills by Mulla 'Abd al- Qāder Badāyuni, otherwise not necessarily a great admirer of his. Badāyuni wrote: "In many separate branches of knowledge, such as poetry, the composition of enigmas, prosody, rhyme, history, philology, medicine and prose composition, Shaikh Fayzi had no equal in his time" ('Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, 1990, III, pp. 411-12). At the same time, Shaikh Mobārak's past associations with the Mahdavis (during the reign of Eslām Shah Sur), his supposed leanings towards Shi'ism, and his growing closeness to Akbar, all did not augur well for a relationship between him and his sons, and the more orthodox-minded savants at the court. Thus, the other side of Badāyuni's judgement of Fayzi: "All Jews, Christians, Hindus, and fire-worshippers, not to speak of Nizaris and Sabahis, held him in the very highest honour for his heresy, his enmity to the followers of Islam, his reviling of the very fundamental doctrines of our faith, his contemptuous abuse of the noble companions [of the Prophet] and those who came after them " ('Abd al-Qadir Badayuni, 1990, III, pp. 411-12). This is a view that must undoubtedly be taken with a very large pinch of salt, but the text of the *Nal-Daman* does confirm that Fayzi was religiously liberal and tolerant, and particularly open to Cheshti Sufi ideals and vocabulary.

## FAYZI TELLS THE TALE

When Fayzi was commissioned to present a Persian version of the Indian story of Nal and Daman, the resources before him were both ample and somewhat restricted. The poet conceived of the story as one of five *mathnavis* that he planned to write, but of which he completed only two before his premature death, namely the *Nal-Daman* (completed in Safar 1003/Oct.-Nov. 1594, a year before his death), and the *Markaz-e adwār*, which he was finishing in the last weeks of his life. The three other texts, namely *Solaymān va Belqis*, the *Haft keshvar*, and the *Akbar-nāma*, were never completed, though the first had certainly been begun as early as 996/1588 (Desai, 1963, pp. 25-27). The last project is a particularly intriguing one, for one may well wonder how precisely the poet would have adapted the *mathnavi* form to the ends of writing an account of the reign of Akbar. In embarking on this vast programme, Fayzi's ambition was quite clearly to make a statement that would extent beyond India to Iran and to the Persian-speaking world more generally, of which he believed himself to be a part. It is thus no coincidence that the formal model for *Nal-Daman* comes from Nezāmi's *Layli o Majnun*, in terms of the metrical scheme utilized as well as a number of other features;

similarly, the *Markaz-e adwār* was to correspond to Nezāmi's *Makhzan al-asrār*. But Fayzi also departed from received models, whether in his choice of metaphors, or in his capacity to draw on Indian cultural resources, as well as in terms of his own particular predilections, which took him in directions that separated him both from his Indian and Persian forbears. It has often been supposed that this is the first 'Indian' story composed in Persian *mathnavi* tradition. But this is not strictly true, with the misunderstanding perhaps arising from Badāyuni's description of the *mathnavi*. Amongst earlier texts, there is a short *mathnavi* on an Indian theme by Hasan Sejzi Dehlavi, in the fourteenth century (Siddiqi, 1979); and to an extent even Amir Khosrow's *Dewāl Rāni Khezr Khāni* can be classified as a predecessor to Fayzi's text. The major difference may be that Amir Khosrow was not drawing upon a major existing tradition; he was practically the first to write the Dewal Rani story, and thus had neither the same sorts of constraints nor the same options before him.

Existing scholarship has, in our view, been less than just to Fayzi's ambitious enterprise. The most recent histories of Persian literature in the Mughal court deal with the *mathnavi* rather summarily if they deal with it at all; since some of this scholarship is concerned with the problem of 'imitation' in the Mughal-Safavid poetic relationship, the *Nal-Daman* text clearly is of limited relevance to it (Losensky, 1998; Hasan, 1952). Scholars dealing with Fayzi as a poet have preferred to concentrate on his *divān*, and have for the most part given relatively short shrift to the *mathnavi* and its contents (Kirmani, 1985, pp. 26-35; Fayzi, 1967, 1983). On those relatively rare occasions when the *mathnavi* has attracted scholarly attention for its own sake, the main focus has been on the poetic quality of Fayzi as related to aesthetics and rhetorical traditions; some attempts have also been made to judge the 'Indianness' of the metaphors used in the text (Fayzi, 1987, editor's intro., pp. 1-94). The major departure from this, and indeed the single most significant work on the *Nal-Daman mathnavi*, comes from the pen of the late textual scholar and epigraphist Z.A. Desai, in a series of essays deriving from his earlier doctoral dissertation on the text (Desai, 1958, pp. 43-56; idem, 1958a, I, pp. 81-96; II, pp. 183-98). Besides the rhetorical and poetical aspects, Desai's main concern has been to identify the sources used by Fayzi, since his version seems to differ in some respects from the 'original' story in the *Mahābhārata*; the conclusion after extensive comparisons (including with a 17th-century version from Gujarat) remains somewhat ambivalent. Fayzi certainly knew the *Mahābhārata* of Vyasa, and had participated in the enterprise to edit the Persian version produced at Akbar's court under the direction of Mir Ghiyāth al-Din 'Ali Naqib Khan

Qazvini, sometimes entitled the *Razm-nāma*. Thus, any departure from this received version must be seen as deliberate, rather than based on ignorance or carelessness.

A particular consequence of Desai's approach (followed by some later writers as well), which aims at comparing the *Mahābhārata* story with Fayzi's version, is the near-inevitable conclusion that Fayzi may be a good poet but that he is a poor story-teller. He is thus charged with having 'missed' key elements, sacrificed character development for poetic effect, and introduced elements of incoherence into the story. What are the so-called 'defects' in Fayzi according to these authors? First, in his text the love between Nal and Daman begins without any proper explanation; no external reason is given for the fact that this love arises in their hearts. Second, on hearing of the beauty of Daman, the gods in the Ur-text start out to her *svayamvara* ceremony and meet Nal on the way. In Fayzi, the gods appear suddenly, without being introduced to the reader. Third, the reasons for Nal's decline and his misfortunes are linked in the Ur-text to the malevolent element Kali and Kali's influence (as also the rivalry between Kali and Nal), while this explanation is left out in Fayzi. A number of other such elements can be added to this. The perseverance and bravery of Daman when she is abandoned is not extensively brought out in the Fayzi text. Fayzi's Daman thus allegedly does not have the powerful character of the earlier version (perhaps because he sees her as the beloved, *ma'shuq*, and not the lover, *'āsheq*).

Such a method by which a later version is constantly measured against an Ur-text is familiar to us from a number of contexts, and no doubt has its own merits. Our attempt here, however, will largely be to assess the text on Fayzi's own terms, to see what he is in fact trying to achieve by his version. We will argue that Fayzi's purpose is in fact quite different from that of earlier writers, namely to suggest that love (*'eshq*), especially love among kings, can be meaningful only when it is tempered. When love becomes excessive, it can only lead to disaster, for this is the inevitable consequence of the neglect of the intellect (*'aql*) and of notions of equilibrium that are crucial both for kingship and social order. This can be seen as the development in an Indo-Persian context of the heritage of reflection from a far earlier Hellenic milieu concerning frenzy and *hubris*, which lead ineluctably to destruction; and we are aware that both Fayzi and Abu'l-Fazl drew often upon such Hellenic materials for philosophical reflection. But it is also interesting to note that the schema in Fayzi's case is not wholly deterministic; one can still pull back from the brink and return to a state of equilibrium.

The story proper begins only after a very extensive set of prefatory remarks: praise of God (*hamd*), followed by a very long two-part praise

of the Prophet (*na't*), and then praise of the emperor Akbar (Fayzi, 1987). It enters into the *mise en scène* that we have already rehearsed at the outset: Akbar's summoning of Fayzi, his suggestion of the theme, the poet's mix of interest and trepidation at the enterprise that was before him. Indeed, Fayzi reports that he found the task particularly challenging: How could he produce a poem that would both reduce its readers to tears and bring fresh life to them, cause them to suffer by bringing alive old wounds, while renewing them at the same time? How could he reduce pain itself to tears, making the ache in the heart itself ache? This was surely asking too much, the poet-laureate thought, and scarcely the sort of thing that one could simply pick up a pen and write. Yet, there was no option left to the poet, for how could he refuse the demands of an emperor whose orders (*farmān*) reached up to the very sky, and to whom the stars themselves submitted and bowed down? The poet hence agreed to take on the task. His model was clear from the start, namely the great Persian poet Nezāmi Ganjavi (*c.* 1141-1209).

> When the ebb and flow of this verse reach Laylā,
> She'll transform her anklets into chains.
> When this magic is heard by Majnun,
> He'll even forget Laylā herself.
> Let me arrange a new fire-temple.
> Let me tell of the love of idol and Brahmin (*bot o barhaman*).

This is a key set of terms that will recur time and again in the text, and which perhaps require some explanation. The role of the 'idol' (*bot* < Buddha, but also *sanam*), is a complex one in the Indo-Persian poetry of the time. The lover is usually portrayed in terms of this metaphor as the worshipper of the idol, in a powerful device that plays with the idea of religious infidelity; an alternative mode is to present the beloved as an infidel (*kāfer*). Once the metaphor of the 'idol' has been worked into the structure of a poem, a series of other possibilities opens up, namely the references to the beloved's residence as a temple or idol-house and to rivalry in terms of iconoclasm (the smashing of other idols etc). The drive is very clearly to turn what is an eminently negative lexical item in an orthodox vocabulary on its head, and the role of the poet is both to provoke and to invert. To be an 'idol' in Persian poetry is thus no bad thing, whatever the use religious orthodoxy puts the same term to; but the consciousness that another (negative) use of the term exists is also necessary to give the term its full piquancy. In his own use of metaphors impregnated with 'Indian' local colour, Fayzi does not stop at the *bot* and *sanam*, but goes much further. The play between the Indian world of the

Brahmin and his sacred thread (*zonnār*), and the classical Persian world of Laylā and Majnun is thus clear from the start, as indeed is the relationship between the linguistic worlds and registers that are to be played with.

Let me combine the melody (*āhang*) of the Indian voice,
With the sound of instruments from Pahlavi and Dari.
Let me take my suffering's candle
And ignite it at the fire-temples of Fars.
We shall take our thoughts to the Iranians,
And offer this fire to them in gift.

This is an integral part of Fayzi's conception of matters, for his audience is not only within India, but embraces the larger Persian-speaking world, including Safavid Iran. At the very end of the poem, he returns to this theme, speaking of how he has brought together the patterns of Ganja (native place of Nezāmi), with the ideas of Delhi, and erected an idol-house which is still accessible to the intelligent reader who is not immersed in matters Indian. This is his idea then of a new style, where the best of India and Iran will be combined to fresh effect.

This breath is not for petty people,
And this flask too dear for bargain-hunters.
This liquor will go to the head,
For it's distilled from Indian sugar.

What then is the central theme so far as Fayzi is concerned? As briefly noted above, it is love (*'eshq*), a fact that he makes clear in the opening sections of the text proper. Some ten pages are devoted to this theme, before we enter into the narrative proper (Fayzi, 1987, pp. 143-54). To develop this theme, he uses a series of deft oppositions, including a particularly crucial initial one between *'eshq* and *'aql*. Though Fayzi is an avowed partisan of the intellect, he notes that at least initially he will suppress his own inclinations, placing his foot on the head of intellect in order to declaim a sermon in praise of love.

Love shimmers like a thousand flames,
While intellect is like a thousand damp cotton-pieces,
O intellect! You may have a thousand lives,
But for now, remain silent.
In love's presence, stand up and pay respect.
Love is an emperor without weapons.

Love is a king even in the midst of ruins.
Its buried treasures may be found deep in the desert.
Its wealth may be found even in an empty hand.
Passion is its fighting-force,
Tears are the guardians of its court.

And so the poet concludes, pressing the paradox to its logical end:

A hundred seditions may arise while love is seated,
A hundred victories concealed in defeat here.
(...)
On the soil of annihilation stands its throne,
The dark of night is its lamp of fortune.
(...)
To thrive here is the same as ruination,
While failure here is success itself.

Having developed his first contrast between *'eshq* and *'aql*, Fayzi now moves to a new opposition, that between *'eshq* and *hosn* (beauty). Love is vulnerable and ever-seeking, whereas beauty is distant, refuses to engage, and is altogether remarkable for its indifference. Beauty fires arrows, and love is wounded; beauty is the flame and love the moth. Yet when *'eshq* attains its height, it is no mean force either; it can melt iron, and even beauty becomes prepared, however reluctantly, to praise it. At this moment, love and beauty can be one. Eventually, the roles of captor and captured are reversed; beauty comes to be captured by love, and the two come together like wine in a glass or melody on the string. Not only this: the place of *'eshq*, writes Fayzi, is all the more marked in India, a land that seems to have a particular gift or aptitude in his view for love.

This fire is aflame in Hind,
For it's here that the sun really blazes.
I've heard of love in 'Arab and 'Ajam
But in Hind I'll tell of what I've seen.
I'll draw you such a picture in this book
That you'll feel you've seen what you hear.

In Hind, writes Fayzi, insisting once more on his point, both moth and flame are burnt, and it is not as if one is burnt in the other as is so often the case elsewhere. The old distinction between *ma'shuq* and *'āsheq*, beloved and lover, partly dissolves in this context. And once more

Fayzi's latent patriotism (in the old-fashioned sense of the term) for Hind rises to the fore.

This wine is not for the common gathering.
This intoxication is in Hind, and Hind alone.

The comparison with other places in the world such as the Arab lands, Iran and even Armenia (referring to the cases of Majnun, Khosrow, Parviz and Farhād) can hence only be unfavourable to them, as Hind alone is the place where Fayzi finds all virtues relating to the real meaning and content of love. This is applicable not only to love in the abstract, but to certain rather concrete elements within the play of love; for the Indian beloved (idols in the plural here, *sanamān*) too has some very special qualities.

Their bloodshot eyes, both daggers and salt-merchants,
How can the intellect dare face up to them?

This takes us to the third of the contrasts which Fayzi employs to construct his secondary level of frames, and which appear to be the key to the construction of the text as a whole. This is the oppositional relationship and tension between *'eshq* and *jonun* (or frenzy), that excessive state to which love can lead. For, if love is a tree, frenzy represents the flowers and fruit that grow on it. Now, in the normal state of things, writes Fayzi, only the intellect can control love. But when love bares itself and stretches out its arms, such is its power that the intellect falls tumbling into its grave. Love then becomes completely out of control, recognising neither the emperor nor the dervish. Yet, even so all hope is not lost. When one moves from profane love (*'eshq-e majāzi*) to true love (*'eshq-e haqiqi*), one can still try and carry the river of love to its true destination, namely the Sea of Divine Love. This temporal love is then like a sort of interim step, a purgatory before entering into reality. Here, Fayzi moves effortlessly into a Sufi vocabulary, exhorting his reader to search for true beauty, namely that which is beyond and which is eternal, rather than that which one finds on this earth. He states that he too is a *'āsheq*, but only in that other sense, namely as a Sufi who is searching for the other Reality. We are hence left with an ambiguous feeling. Is Fayzi in favour of *'eshq*, as one might think from a first reading, or actually reticent about it? Is his method not one of praising love as a deft tactic, only to reinstate the place of the intellect? These issues emerge more clearly as we pass from this extended first section to the narrative itself.

## ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE DECCAN

Fayzi, like his brother Abu'l Fazl, was something of a traveller, though neither one actually set foot outside India so far as we know. The most famous of Fayzi's travels was in the capacity of Mughal ambassador to the Deccan, where his task was to browbeat a variety of subordinate or inferior rulers into accepting their 'proper' place in the Mughal-centred world (Alam and Subrahmanyam, 2001). It is thus appropriate that the story of Nal and Daman does not take place in the heartland of Hindustan but farther to the south, in an area that the poet knew from first-hand experience. The narrative proper begins as follows:

*Dibāchanegār-e hosn-e āfāq*
*Dastānzan-e dāstān-e 'oshshāq*
*Mastāna ba khāma-ye fosunsāz*
*Zin guna ba khun negārad in rāz.*

The painter of the face of universal beauty,
The singer of lovers' tales,
Intoxicated, with a magical pen,
Thus writes secrets out in blood.

The poem then continues, throwing in some geographical detail to allow the reader to situate and contextualise the tale:

That in the country of Hind was a king,
A handsome black-eyed man,
A ruler with a huge army,
The land of Ujjain was his capital.
He was a king known as Nal and amongst kings,
He was proverbial for courtesy (*mardomi*) like the pupil in the eye.
A wise king, and awe-inspiring,
Sage and brimful with reason.

Nal's qualities are now listed out: he was brave, generous, lion-like in battle, but was also an incomparable host in wine-filled evenings. The world at large benefited from his justice (*dād*), while, at the same time, his intellect had resolved problems of fate (*bakht*) in the world. In sum, the image of Nal that we have from Fayzi is not altogether dissimilar from the manner in which he might present his own patron, Akbar, in other contexts. The resemblance does not stop there. Just as Akbar was celebrated for his fondness for the elephants in his stable, which he

reputedly knew individually by name and appearance, Nal here (as in the *Mahābhārata*) is noted for his fondness for and expert knowledge of horses.

Nal is famed besides for his boundless wealth, and his court is full of wise courtiers and advisers. It was their habit to tell him stories as part of the daily court-routine, in which two of the major themes treated were inevitably those of love and beauty. Everything so far is perfectly normal, as it might be in the Mughal court; the minor detail that the king prefers not to read but rather to have things read out to him, confirms his resemblance to the poet's model, namely Akbar. Fayzi suggests that Nal had heard so many stories of love over the years that he was somewhat fearful of having the same happen to him and fall prey to the malady. Yet, when the time came, he could not prevent it. One day, all of a sudden, Nal is possessed by love. His sentiments are confused and inexplicable. He wonders what has happened as he is at first unable to diagnose his own problem, the symptoms of which are anxiety and a sense of helplessness. Something seems to have happened to him in his sleep. Yet, how could this have transpired? How could bandits have stolen into his treasury in spite of all the guards (in the form of the intellect) that have busily been patrolling all around? Nal has a sense that some sentiment of commotion (*fetna*) has been introduced into his blood, as if his house has been set on fire, as if he has been stabbed by a dagger, or as if he has been given a debilitating drug of some sort. After reflecting for a while, he wonders if this is an attack of *'eshq* (Fayzi, 1987, p. 163). He then addresses his courtiers, urging them through their wisdom to discover a remedy for the state in which he finds himself. Daman has not even appeared so far in the story, nor is there the least mention of her. Simply, spontaneously, like a self-generating 'sleeper' virus whose time has come to corrupt the hard disk of the royal interior, *'eshq* has appeared in the ruler's heart. Here then is a specific characteristic of the story as Fayzi tells it. No images, words or external stimuli are needed. The potential for *'eshq* lies full-blown, as it were, in everyone's interior; it is only a question of when it comes out.

The chief minister, greatly alarmed, calls in a major physician, asking him to diagnose the malady. The doctor takes Nal's hand, and also calls for some of the usual pathological samples that are employed in the Greek (*Yunāni*) medicine of Fayzi's time. The poem continues:

Nal said: "O foolish doctor!
Don't diagnose my illness like this.
Haven't you heard of the heart's fevers?
What's the use of lancing the vein of frenzy?

Look to my turbulent heart,
And throw that urine-sample in the fire.
My heart's phial is filled with blood,
Inspect it and ask why it's so."

The doctor is totally nonplussed by this demand, and reports his own discomfiture and incompetence in the matter to the minister. The king whose intellect had reached the very sky, the doctor declares, is now a victim of the fire of youth. It is clear that '*eshq* is at work, he states, and this has now gone beyond the normal course of love to attain the turbulence of frenzy (*jonun*). The only remedy can be in finding a beautiful young woman. The minister approaches the king, and tries to confirm the diagnosis that has been offered. Nal is still lucid enough to offer him advice. Though a great hunter, he states, he has himself somehow been entrapped and wounded. It is hence decided that an interim solution will be for the courtiers to gather and recount various sorts of stories of love to him, in the hope that a solution will somehow emerge from this discursive engagement. A group of the closest courtiers is constituted, and each of them offers him a tale from one or the other place. This has no visible effect on Nal, however. At length, one courtier states that rather than recount a story from the past, he will offer him something from the present time. If a solution is to be found, it cannot be in terms of the old, but of contemporary events. His tale hence concerns the land of the Deccan, a notable source of commotion (*fetnakhiz*), where a great turbulence has arisen in recent times.

A magical idol, a charming idol,
Has destroyed patience the world over.
A flower-like face, lovely, Daman by name,
Her tresses have cast a net on the garden.
Her intoxicated eyes like an Indian idol's temple,
The very idols of Hind worship her.
Hundreds of Brahmins are bathed in their blood,
When she visits the temple, idols shatter.
Her palace has set Somnath aflame,
The idols of her time have rent their sacred threads.

The praise continues verse after verse, with the same bitter-sweet vocabulary where the iconoclasm of the past (Mahmud of Ghazna's raids on Somnath had clearly not been forgotten in the Mughal court) is brilliantly redeployed to a quite different end. For this Deccani princess is the very epitome of physical beauty; when she speaks, it is at once

sweet and salty, and her mouth and teeth are no less to the poet than a pistachio-nut filled with almonds. The contrast with the normal fair beauty of the Iranian *mathnavi*'s heroine is also clear; for the Indian princess is both dark and beautiful, and thus both salty and sweet "as if in sugar-candy one had thrown in some brackish salt", with the salt perhaps being that dark variety common in India. This dark beauty has so far been protected from the public gaze, and only her mirror knows her image well. Yet, rumours of Daman have begun to spread far and wide, so that she is known now over the seven climes. All sorts of kings are thus ready to marry her. Nal listens to this elaborate description with rapt attention. At length, he lets out a heartfelt groan, as if he now understands the real reason for his sickness. This princess must be the reason for his state, it is her tresses that have troubled him, her arrows that have entered his heart, though he has had no contact, direct or indirect, with Daman. But the knowledge that his love now has a concrete object with a geographical location does not provide any answer to the malady. Rather, the knowledge is like oil on a fire, which makes it burn all the more fiercely. Nal grumbles and reproaches the story-teller for having opened his wound even deeper. But, in spite of all this, he wants to know even more, to worsen his own situation even further as it were. The friend and courtier now come out with further details concerning Daman, notably the circumstances attending her birth.

So it turns out that there was a king at a place called Bidar in the Deccan, further south from Ujjain. However, his wife was barren, and he was really quite despondent as a result. But he could not marry again, for he did not dare to share his bed with two women. This would be like having two kings on a throne or two moons in the sky. All sorts of other solutions were hence sought, but all to no avail. At length, someone told the king that there was another king living in his lands, having renounced the world and become a *faqir*. This man was bereft of all worldly possessions but still had the mighty power of his asceticism. The king decided to meet him, and ask for his advice and perhaps a boon. The king went barefoot to see the ascetic monarch who was living in a desert clime (the parallel with Akbar's visits to the shrine of the Sufi saint Mu'in al-Din Cheshti at Ajmer could not have been missed by readers at the Mughal court). The dervish, who was endowed with all sorts of wisdom, gave the king the following advice (Fayzi, 1987, p. 178).

Know that of Divine Power
Kingship is a majestic shadow.
It's a pillar that holds up the sky,
And this shadow is safe in your light.

May you keep your high place,
Yet sit on your throne humbly.

Having uttered these words of a rather general nature, in order to begin his advice, the royal sage reflected for a while on the nature of power and its place in the world, as well as the dependence of kings on saints and ascetics. He then went on:

When you prepare to enter the field of battle,
Humble yourself, for victory comes from within.
If you break someone's heart,
That will be your own defeat.

Then follows a verse on the need for generosity, which is also taken to be a key attribute of kingship.

Today, when your wine is in ferment,
Don't forget those whose lips are dry.
When you're lost in the pleasures of the feast,
Throw a drop or two on the ground.

This is explained through the metaphor of the king as a sort of inn-keeper, ministering to the people (*khalq*).

Your land is like an inviting table,
The seated people are your guests.
Be ever prepared to throw a feast,
Strive constantly as a host to please.

Framed within the text, and placed in the mouth of this royal sage, is a condensed version of Fayzi's views of kingship, in which the king must give, indeed give more than what God has given him. For, unless the king gives with generosity, the shower of wealth from above will not favour him either. But the attributes of a king go beyond this, and extend outside simple material giving to a real empathy with his subjects.

Keep your hands ever open, and also your heart,
And thus open the seals of both treasures.

But the crucial point is to follow. In all this feasting, and generosity, in the midst of this seeming hedonism, the king should never lose his equilibrium. Thus, while being intoxicated (*mast*), and dancing on the

roof, the ruler should make sure that his foot does not slip and bring him tumbling down.

When you beat the drum from the rooftops,
Remember that dawn brings remorse.
Sing in such harmony with others,
That your song brings them no grief.

This seems likely to be a reflection of the characterstic Akbari motif of universal peace (*solh-e koll*), a recipe for a sort of social harmony mediated by royal power, of which we also find powerful reflections in the writings of others in Akbar's court, notably Fayzi's own brother, Shaikh Abu'l Fazl. In this passage of royal advice, the ruler must combine harmony with firmness, never hesitating to intervene when he feels there that an offence (*jorm*) is being committed. For the key quality for a king is neither his genealogy, nor his wealth, but his justice; it is thus that he may hope to be perceived favourably by the people at large. The king does not become great by impeding the caravan's passage or seeking to tax it, but rather by helping it on its way with his generosity.

When conversing, listen to others.
When acting, seek the middle path.

These passages can be linked to others, regarding the idea of balance and harmony *tawāzon* and *e'tedāl*), often contrasted in the literature on statecraft (*akhlāq*) to other notions such as excess (*efrāt*) and shortfall (*tafrit*). The ideal ruler then must understand that to have power is a reflection of his own good fortune, and hence make it his duty to be governed constantly by his intellect (*kherad*, a notion very close to that of *'aql*).

When you're at home, be aware of the outside,
That bazaar-gossip about you may reach your ears.

Rather than a simple dependence on a small coterie of advisers, the king must have a broader awareness of his public image and of reflections on his kingship on the part of the people at large. For isolation is the bane of kings, and even of courtiers. The message here begins to assume portentous dimensions. For the royal sage's advice comes within a second frame; this whole episode is being narrated to a sick Nal by one of his own courtiers who is trying to cheer him up. The irony that this advice will be disregarded in the future by Nal is one that must not be

lost on the reader. The section closes with a last passage concerning the real end of kingship, namely to be remembered in favourable terms by the subjects over whom one has ruled.

> May your acts be such that when you've departed,
> The world sounds the bugle of mourning.

These words were both sweet and bitter to the king, says Fayzi, as all such advice must be. Having said this, the royal sage, who had (even without words) by now understood the real reason for the other king's presence before him, gave him two oranges and an apple, hinting that these souvenirs (*tohfa ba yādgār*) would yield him two sons and a daughter. With a few last words of advice, they then took leave of each other. The king returned to his palace and, the following year, a son was born to his queen, by which means the problem of the succession was solved. A second son was born the next year; and when the third year was almost completed, a daughter was born, presumably from the apple rather than the oranges. Now, since this daughter was incredibly beautiful, the king took her at once to see the dervish once more, and seek his blessings. The royal sage was pleased to see the lovely baby girl, and spoke some words on her future. He also read her horoscope (*fāl*), and gave her the name of Daman (Fayzi, 1987, p. 183). This, explained the courtier to Nal, was the same girl whose fame had spread far and wide, causing commotion the world over. His advice to Nal then was that he too should attempt to capture her hand, even though a vast number of competitors and rival royal suitors existed in the enterprise.

## THE COURSE OF LOVE

A new section of the text now begins, devoted to the condition of Nal, once his love-sickness has been thoroughly diagnosed. To begin with, Nal blames love itself, and berates it for having made him its victim. Why can't he simply be left alone, instead of being besieged in his own house? The tone changes in a second phase. He realises that love is not such an unmitigated evil after all. In a part-ironic but part-sincere fashion, Nal congratulates love for having taken over his life, and having brought spring to his garden, as it were. Then, in a third phase, Nal addresses an imaginary Daman, whom he has only heard of.

> O candle of mine, where are you?
> O destroyer of my house, where are you?
> Sight unseen, you plunged a sword in my breast,

O heartless one! You didn't even regret it.
Who strikes a king like me with a sword?
Who fires an arrow at a moon like me?
Your wound in my heart has rendered me ill,
From the very first day, the blood keeps flowing.

These verses take the familiar tack of blaming the beloved, who is seen as heartless, but who must nevertheless be asked for mercy. This suffering is, however, not to be in vain. For Nal is convinced that his destiny is now forever intertwined with that of Daman, even if the contrast is between his own miserable state and the indifference and (imagined) mirth of Daman.

These are not just boasts from my tongue,
For I'm a Veda-reciting Brahmin,
So far, I've depended on my idols,
But now I worship you, not them.

This is the usual trope of the idol, but literalised beyond the usual limits. There is thus never an attempt in the text to transform Nal's identity, or to present him as anything else other than an idol-worshipper (*botparast*). In fact, one may even say that the poet takes a certain pleasure in playing constantly with metaphors relating to idols, Brahmins and temples, which lend themselves to a parallel with the relationship between lover and beloved. At the same time, in Fayzi's view, the problems of kingship are universal, and have nothing to do with whether the king is a Muslim or not. The advice given by the royal sage could be the advice given by a Sufi to a Mughal ruler, and the problems of finding both social balance and empathy with the ruled are universal problems that call for universal solutions, expressed naturally in the vocabulary of Persian poetry.

Fayzi's mastery is evident here in his capacity to move from the register of advice and abstract political reflection to virtuoso love-poetry, such as the verses when Nal contrasts his own state with that of Daman (we must admit that our flat translation does not come close to the flavour of the original).

Without you, I weep tears of blood,
And how do you respond?
Without you, my eyelashes are in the dust,
While you sleep on a coquette's bed.
Without you, my eyes drip blood,

While you smile in the flower-garden.

Thus far, however, the asymmetric nature of the relationship between the beloved and lover is stressed, though there are hints that the pain may be on both sides. Nal suggests this himself in a line towards the end of the section.

Those who speak of love,
Say it arises on both sides.

This is of course perfectly prescient, for Fayzi informs us soon enough that meanwhile in the Deccan, Daman is undergoing the same pangs and torments. On the very night that love entered Nal's heart, Daman too became restless while lying on her bed. It turns out that the beloved and the lover are in fact sharing a more or less symmetric moment.

The burning of desire and heartache,
Is like the same wine poured at once in two glasses.
Like the same note sounded from two different keys,
The same intoxication in two different spots.
The torment that love induced in the lover,
the beloved welcomed as her guest.
The bell the lover tolled in grief,
Echoed in the beloved's heart.

In her suffering and perplexity, Daman asks herself in turn what the reason for this unease and suffering could be. Whose sorrow and lamentation is causing her heart to melt? The relationship thus has a causal direction. In the first place, love enters Nal's heart while he is unaware. His suffering begins, with the laments that we have listed. It is this lamentation, based on a sort of spontaneous combustion, that then causes Daman to suffer. Thus, even if their suffering is symmetric (or at least more so than we might have suspected), it is clear that in this section the woman's love is to an extent derivative. This is in contrast to other versions, and reflects Fayzi's own mild preference for a story in which the male character dominates. Daman has been seized, as it were, by Nal's love, as we see in the following verse (that forms part of Daman's reflection).

Whose love now walks with me?
In whose grasp has my wrist fallen?

Daman, no less than Nal, is able soon enough to find out who is responsible for her state, and who is playing on the strings of her heart. Having discovered his identity, she then makes an imaginary portrait (*naqsh*) of her lover, by way of consolation. This portrait she keeps in her private chambers, and explains it away to her slaves and companions by saying that it is an idol that she worships. But the whole palace has become alarmed, thinking that she has fallen ill and has to be cured. Daman's friends and servants take it upon themselves to go and explain matters to the queen, her mother, and her obsession with the portrait thus comes to the attention of her parents. The king calls in his confidants and ministers and begins to discuss the matter. What could he do in order to solve the problem and the potential scandal that might result? The royal family (*dudmān-e shāhi*) was particularly vulnerable to rumours that might spread. On the other hand, if he were brutally to suppress the love, he would be criticised by his people as well. These discussions in the palace go on for some time, and no quick decision can be arrived at. The king and queen attempt to bring their daughter around, but their sage advice is to no avail. Daman protests that it is not her fault; it is Nal who is the cause of all her problems. She for her part declares that she is so innocent that she had not even stepped outside the palace, and so it was surely he who should be seen as responsible.

Meanwhile, Nal is seated in his garden disconsolate, when one day he sees some exotic and beautiful birds. He manages to trap one of them in a net with the help of a slave, and finds out that it is from Sri Lanka (Sarandip). The trapped bird is brought before Nal in a cage, and when it appears begins to speak with the voice of a small child.

O broken-hearted and dejected one,
Your own bird is caught in a lovely net.
My wings are already like a cage,
So why close the doors of this other prison ?
Here I cry in one cage,
And over it you've placed yet another.
I too have an idol, my life's very breath,
I've been left here, and she's flown away.
I'm burning in fire from separation,
The freedom of one is the cage of the other.

These pathetic lines of the captured bird draw parallels between its own fate and that of Nal. The bird pleads moreover with the king not to treat it as any hunter would; if he is released, he will surely be able to

serve Nal in one or the other way. To this Nal replies in tones of wonder mixed with scepticism. For how could this small bird ever be of any use to him? The bird replies that he is no ordinary creature. He knows a thousand stories, and has seen myriad things. The frenzy of lovers is not unknown to him, and he is well acquainted with the tricks employed by the beloved as well. The bird is an accomplished conversationalist and poet, and besides is even highly literate, to the point of being able to read the words of both humans and even gods (*pari*, literally 'fairies'). Here then is an offer to intercede with Daman. All Nal has to do is to put his thoughts down in a secret letter (*khatt*), accompanied by an oral message (*payghām*) that the bird himself would carry. Nal now takes the bird to the edge of a nearby stream, draws out a pen and writes a 'letter of separation' (*ferāq-nāma*), in which each word drips with pain. The letter begins as follows:

> From Nal to Daman.
> O idol more beautiful than those from China!
> Who's broken a thousand times into Somnath.

It then continues with a mixture of direct praise and praise-through-blame, extolling her beauty, but also reproaching her for having spread commotion and confusion through the entire world on account of her unbearable beauty. After a score of verses in this vein, the letter goes on to declare Nal's love for her, love that has him lying drunk from her liquor, weak to the point of having been reduced to a hair in thinness. The only way of curing him would be to meet her. But rather than such a solution, it appears to him that matters are going from bad to worse, and that his suffering is growing with every passing moment. These elaborate verses are once more a sort of virtuoso performance on Fayzi's part, as he develops a theme by repeatedly using the same alliterative structures. Beyond the despair and the lamentation, there eventually emerges a concrete proposition. For Nal tells Daman, he is no ordinary man, and what he desires is union with her. If he has written this letter in blood, it is in the hope she will respond. The letter then closes as follows:

> This letter that tells the tale of love's sorrow
> Is also a bouquet of the spring of love.
> This letter which carries the secret of my heart
> Is Nal's supplication to Daman.
> The fresh song that travels here,
> Carries a hundred heartaches in each cry.

Those who can grasp the point of words
Can make a book from each letter.
Hark to the sound of this bell,
And my excuses for this long-windedness.

Having completed the letter with this rather prosaic anti-climax, Nal sprinkles some amber on it by way of perfume. He then gives additional oral instructions to the bird, on how he is to salute Daman, and what precisely he is to say to her. There is no real need to reply to the letter he adds, for a meeting alone would suffice. Having said this, Nal then blows on the ink with his heavy sighs, ties the letter up with strings and knots that parallel his accumulated travails, and places it under the bird's wing. The bird now sets out with this secret letter (*nāma-ye rāz*), which is equally a love-letter (*nāma-ye 'eshq*). Flying over mountains and deserts, the bird is soon accompanied on his way by many others. Presently, he reaches Daman's palace and sits down on a corner of the roof. First, he inspects the living apartments in order to have a first glimpse of her in a garden. Then, he descends slowly near her, still accompanied by the other birds. Daman is soon attracted by these birds, with their magical quality. She therefore throws a piece of her headcloth at them, in an attempt to catch at least one of the birds. But the messenger-bird keeps retreating, drawing Daman into a corner. It is only when they reach an edge of the garden, far both from the other birds and Daman's companions, that the bird begins to speak, using those poetic words which he has mastered so well. He is no ordinary bird, he declares, but love itself, as well as a messenger of love. This secret is tied under his wing. Having delivered this first morsel, he leaps up onto Daman's hand. His seductive talk now continues, but he also makes it clear that the letter comes from none other than Nal, "the cypress-tree of the spring of youth."

Daman falls to the ground, intoxicated by these words. When she recovers, she signals to her companions to move away, so that she can speak to the bird alone under a real cypress-tree. Presently, she opens the letter and begins to read it. Each word in it strikes her as fiery, capable of melting the intellect. Still, she reads it from beginning to end, enchanted by both the words and the verses it contains. Daman at once begins to compose a letter in response. This letter commences as follows, rather differently from Nal's missive.

I begin my letter in the name of God,
The one who has lit the lamp of purpose,

and continues with several lines in praise of the Almighty. After these lines of introduction, the letter addresses Nal directly, as the "emperor of the age" (*shahanshah-e zamāna*).

Salutations to Nal from Daman,
From my eyes a message to your heart.

The letter she has received, Daman writes, is not only itself full of frenzied passion (*jonun*), but has also called up the same passion in her. Her state is thus no better than his, to the point that she has made his portrait and constantly gazes upon it. Torn between hope and fear, she is now being reviled by all those around her. Her parents are much distressed, and her lovesick cries have sown confusion in her surroundings. Daman declares that she would gladly fly and join him, but that this is impossible in the present circumstance. In fact, she is closed within the four walls of her house, in seclusion (*pardaneshin*). He, on the other hand, is free, so that the initiative to a large extent must vest with him. The letter alternates between moments of despair and hope and exhilaration. Daman notes, for example, that her horoscope is a fine one, and so things can only turn out well. She concludes with the statement that she is prepared to meet him, and is indeed most eager to do so. All in all, this letter is rather less elaborate than that sent by Nal, perhaps something less of a literary *tour de force*. Once it has been completed, Daman seals it with her eyes, and perfumes it with her tresses. Then, taking a piece of her tresses, she ties the letter up and once more gives it to the bird. The letter is hence carried once more by this 'bird of love' (*tāyer-e 'eshq*).

Now, this exchange of letters can hardly be kept a secret for long. Daman's father, learning of it, calls in the astrologers and asks for their advice. Brahmins are sent out to spread the good news that Daman's marriage is to be fixed. Only royal suitors, with a good family and character, are to apply. The time and date are stated when these suitors are to appear. When this news spread, all the rulers of the world decide to come and try their luck; even some of the Indian gods (*parizād*) think they should try their hand, and seduce Daman who is to go about with a flower-garland in her hand, looking for a suitable suitor amongst those who have assembled. This sort of festival, Fayzi notes, is common enough in India, and goes by the name of *saimbar* (that is, Sanskrit *svayaṃvara* "marriage by the choice of the bride"). All the preparations are thus made, and Nal too decides to make his way there.

The next section of the text describes Nal's march towards Bidar, the place where the wedding is to be held (Fayzi, 1987, p. 221). He sets

out from Ujjain, scattering coins and pearls all along the way, and accompanied by thousands of elephants. These verses carry the same flavour as if the poet were describing the advance of the victorious Mughal armies from one spot to another.

> Hundreds of way-stations were gilded with carpets,
> Hundreds of caravans were laden with Chinese silks,
> With wine and savouries in sack after sack,
> And perfumes from China and Tartary.

Beautiful women in the party are carried on elephants, but concealed behind silken veils. Fast Arab horses accompany the procession too, which is compared to springtime itself on the move. Nal thus rapidly reaches the town of Bidar, and settles his camp there. Other princes are there too, a huge throng of them. Daman for her part is looking impatiently out of the window of her palace, in order to catch a glimpse of Nal amongst her many suitors. But even if she has an imaginary portrait, she is still trembling with fear, thinking that she might just make a mistaken choice and have to live with it. The tension mounts. A test remains to be passed, having to do with the pagan gods who have shown up at the competition.

> Nal stood there intoxicated (*madhush*),
> Under a rose-tree's shadow, restless like fermenting wine.
> She came and looked at both sides of the throng,
> Where it seemed the moon and stars had come out.
> In great desire, she glanced at Nal,
> Handsome and graceful beyond compare.
> At that spot were two or three gods,
> Tricksters and sons of devils,
> Who, hearing of Daman's beauty,
> Had their own eyes on her.
> A beauty that had drawn gods,
> And cast a spell on magicians.

These Indian gods (*pari-nezhādān*, which Iranian readers should not mistakenly understand – we must insist – to be mere 'fairies') have the secret desire to acquire Daman for themselves, and have been waiting for this day. They also know that she and Nal are secretly in correspondence, and that she is going to seek him out. So, they transform themselves in such a way that each of them looks identical to Nal. How is she to find out which of them is the real Nal? Daman hence prays to the real God (as

distinct from these false ones): "O God (*Yā Rabb*), reveal the secret of this mystery to me, and show me what is real." A divine beam of light appears, accompanied by a voice which says: "Know that there are three signs of the gods (*pari*). They never blink, their feet do not touch the ground, and their bodies cast no shadow." Armed with this knowledge, Daman is now easily able to recognise the real Nal. Smiling, she approaches and garlands him, while the others lose hope. The two are thus united at last, and Fayzi devotes several dozen verses to this happy outcome, using a series of metaphors gathered largely from nature, but still remarkable for their unusual eroticism within the context of contemporary Persian poetry.

Venus and the Moon embraced each other,
A bouquet of a hundred stars on her shoulder.
For a moment, exchanging glances,
Two flower-buds kissed.
For a moment, raising their glances,
They cast off the rose-leaves of modesty,
Showing their beauty, unabashed,
Entwined like two trees, branch to branch.
When the treasure was on the palm,
The key entered the pearl's lock;
The pond's purity was discovered
And the fountain within began to gush.
As if spring had caught fire,
And raindrops had begun to fall.
(…)
Pearl-seeds borne by raindrops,
Came down and filled the oyster.

We see here that Fayzi has deftly used the Indian gods of the story without deviating from the monotheism that his audience expects from him. Rather like his near-exact contemporary, the Portuguese poet Luís de Camões, whose *Lusíadas* also contain a large dose of pagan gods as a conceit within an essentially Christian framework, Fayzi allows the *pari-nezhād* a place, but also contains them rather than permitting them full play.

## EXILE AND RETURN

The marriage having been celebrated, the bride and groom return to the city of Ujjain, the capital-city over which Nal rules. But Nal's problems

have just begun. The main reason for this, in Fayzi's view, stems from his being a victim of the frenzy of passion (*shuresh-e jonun*), that excess which means that he cannot find the right balance between love and the exercise of reason. Indeed, the poet tells us, one can never count on the vagaries of fortune and the age, which vary constantly; their wine changes colour all the time, and life itself is no more than a gambling-house (*qemār-khāna*). If at times, you are riding high, at other moments, you may fall into the depths. The part of the story that follows exemplifies this.

Now, on his return, Nal, who until then has been counted amongst the great rulers of his time, becomes completely lost to pleasure (*nashāt*). It is as if his good fortune has been exhausted in this earlier enterprise of finding Daman, as he comes now to be possessed by the frenzy of passion (*sawdā-ye jonun*). In his life, love and frenzy come to form an alliance against the intellect. The result of this is that he loses all sense of equilibrium, and that balance (*e'tedāl*), which is the essential quality of the good ruler in Fayzi's vocabulary. This is the moment when his younger brother decides to take advantage of him. He hence proposes a game of chess to him, telling him that he needs to allow a breath of fresh air to enter his mind. But this is only an excuse, the brother's real plans being rather more sinister. Nal, who is already a prisoner of *jonun*, falls into this whirlpool as its unsuspecting victim. But in a crucial sense, he is himself responsible for falling into this trap, as he has laid his own bed and then is obliged to lie on it. In the game, at first, Nal wins, and hence grows over-confident. Losses now begin one after the other. His courtiers try to advise him not to play on, but their intellect (*kharad*) is all in vain. Having lost all his goods and treasure, Nal is presently left with only his kingdom, and soon that too is gone. Further, he is completely unaware of the criticism of the people (*khalq*) at his comportment, which is not only self-destructive but detrimental to their welfare. Fayzi concludes:

When '*eshq* and *jonun* join together,
Sorrow becomes a storm of misfortunes.

Nal is obliged to abandon his kingdom and his town. All of a sudden, the world has turned upside down. Yet, none of his erstwhile courtiers and friends come forward to support him, disgusted perhaps at his earlier disregard for their advice. Only Daman is left at his side in this moment of immense difficulty. Having lost everything, Nal and Daman are obliged to walk into the wilderness. His delicate feet, which are unused to this treatment, soon become blistered and bruised. The royal couple, used to strolling in gardens, is now obliged to tramp the jungles of the

region, as the age itself has turned against the king. The section ends then with Nal and Daman in exile, the transformation from palace to wilderness having occurred with astonishing rapidity in the course of a few dozen verses (Fayzi, 1987, p. 237).

The sections that follow carry the narrative along, without the same extensive conceptual reflection that has characterised the preceding parts. To begin with, we find Nal and Daman in the jungle, suffering the pangs of real hunger for perhaps the first time in their lives, and bitterly asking how they had come to attain this state. On the third day of their exile, Nal sees a bird in the forest which seems to be the answer to their hunger. He takes off the single cloth (*pirahan*) he is wearing, and tries to throw it on the bird as an improvised net. But the bird flies off with the cloth, after having addressed some reproaches to the king and leaving Nal completely naked. The royal couple is left with only grass to eat, and they soon become emaciated from this unaccustomed food. Nal goes on grumbling and lamenting, comparing the difference between his erstwhile state and the one in which he finds himself. This is the springtime of his love (*bahār-e 'eshq*), he declares with bitter irony, but also showing a certain lucidity in relation to his own condition. In a subsequent section, Nal attempts to catch a couple of fish on the banks of a river, but this too turns out badly. The fish, which are apparently in their death-throes from other causes, practically land in the royal couple's laps. Nal takes them and hands them over to Daman and goes off to bathe himself in preparation for his meal. But the moment he departs, the fish come back to life, leap out of Daman's hands and back into the river. On his return, Nal is astonished to find the fish gone, and he begins to suspect Daman of having herself eaten both. The poet thus presents Nal now with all his flaws, which adversity brings out ever more strongly. Not only is he incompetent as a hunter, he is also an inveterate grumbler, and now it turns out that he is suspicious too. This leads us to a turning point in the story, for Nal has begun to think of leaving Daman. He suggests that she should return to her parents' house, a proposal that she resists. Fayzi reflects here briefly on where love can lead.

When love crosses the bound into intoxication,
It begins to tyrannise everyone.
Love becomes a tyrannical Sultan,
Who sets fire to justice itself.

Nal persists in his views. He points out to Daman that she is used to a life of leisure and comfort, whereas life in the jungle is its exact opposite.

He, for his part, is condemned to this life in the jungle, but she is not. He cannot bear to live with her any more in these conditions. His every effort is to persuade her then to return to her earlier life, so that one day they may be reunited, if ever his fortune changes for the better. To these constant remarks, Daman eventually responds, in terms of the need for faith (*wafā'*) between lovers, under all possible circumstances. Her response is a strong one, which goes so far as to accuse him of bad conduct (*bad-raweshi*) in making such a proposal. Further, she remarks that even if *'eshq* and *jonun* have come to be mixed up in him, he should resist going to such extents and even now try to exercise some degree of self-control. Even the frenzy of passion cannot excuse one from saying that one's lover should go away. After all, are they lovers or enemies?

But even if Nal accepts this argument for a time, his inner turmoil cannot allow him to rest. So, one night while Daman is sleeping, he cuts her cloth in half, wraps himself in it and leaves silently. When she awakes, Nal is not to be found anywhere, and even his footprints cannot be traced. Daman now addresses bitter reproaches to him (Fayzi, 1987, p. 247).

O lover! What has happened?
Why have you turned against yourself?
You've gone without a word,
Thinking nothing of my loneliness.
You've left me on the bed to die,
Abandoned me sleeping in the dust,
I have laments and tears as companions,
My heart's blood flows from my eyes.
What wise men have said is true:
There is a method in madness.
You've abandoned the path of faith,
And invented a new form of love.
You've broken love's magic spell,
And robbed love's passion of its dignity.
Love and passion existed before you,
But you've transformed the face of love.

Daman now wanders about disconsolate in the forest for a time. She encounters a huge snake, which attempts to kill and eat her, but she is saved by a passing traveller. But Daman herself wishes now to die and is looking for a wolf or a lion to eat her up. Presently, she reaches the edge of a river and meditates on her bad fortune. It would have been far better if the dervish had not granted her father a boon, she ruminates, and that

she had not been born. But then, on the river, she sees some benevolent spirits dressed in white (*safidpushān*), who tell her not to despair. Advancing somewhat further on her way, she encounters an army, whose general asks her to come along with him to his capital city. Daman accepts the offer. But as the army goes on into the forest, it is attacked by wild elephants and destroyed. Only a few Brahmins and Daman are saved from this disaster. They take care of her, and she eventually reaches the kingdom to which the army belongs. Here, Daman is well-received by the king and queen and appointed as companion to their daughter.

As for Nal, he begins to feel guilty almost immediately after abandoning Daman. He decides that one day he will make it all up to her and admit his faults if ever he has the occasion. While still wandering in the jungle, one day he hears a familiar voice call out to him. A huge snake is burning in the middle of the forest, and pleads with him to help. The snake has bitten a Brahmin the previous day and is paying the price for it. Nal protests that he cannot help the snake, which is far too heavy. The snake then reduces its size to that of a finger and Nal pulls him out of the fire with ease. The snake declares that he will help him in exchange for the aid he has received. Nal is told to count from one to ten; on the count of ten, the snake bites him all of a sudden, and Nal becomes completely black in colour. Nal protests at this injustice. What sort of help was this? The snake assures him that this is indeed a form of help. Nal should take the skin the snake had just shed and whenever he would burn half of it, he would come back to his initial form. Meanwhile, he advises Nal to go to the city of a king called Rutbarn and take on employment there under the name of Bahuk Darvesh. Nal could serve him in his stables, and the king would help him improve his skills in gambling. Bahuk-Nal now makes his way to the city, where Rutbarn's agents interrogate him closely and decide eventually that he has several useful talents. The king is pleased to acquire a servant who not only can look after the horses, but also cooks in a splendid fashion.

So, during the day, Nal works for the king. But at night, he spends most of his time weeping, while remembering his lost Daman. His companions ask him what the trouble is, and he confides a truncated version of his story to a few of them. Meanwhile, Daman's parents are on the lookout for her, knowing she has been exiled from the city of Ujjain. The king hence sends out his Brahmin-agents to get information of his daughter from all the passing caravans, promising them great rewards. One of these Brahmins, a certain Sadev, eventually arrives in the town where Daman now resides. At this time, a Vedic recital is going on in one of the temples, and he spots Daman there. The two meet, and

Daman enquires anxiously after her parents and their kingdom. Word of this encounter reaches the queen of that city, who asks Daman who she really is, supplementing this with information from Sadev. A convenient coincidence emerges. It turns out that the queen is Daman's maternal aunt, and so she is naturally overjoyed to discover her niece's true identity. Daman is sent back to Bidar, her native place. But despite the renewed splendid treatment she has received of late, Daman becomes disconsolate once more in the palace of her parents. She hence calls for her wet-nurse (*dāya*), and asks for her help in finding Nal once again. The king and queen are informed, and they decide to send out their trusty Brahmin-agents once more on spying missions to look out for the most miserable, lovesick man they can find.

One of these Brahmins, called Parnad, eventually reaches the town where Rutbarn is king. He at once spots the conspicuously lovesick Bahuk-Nal, and he begins to suspect that he might be the man he is looking for. But Bahuk insists that he is no more than the stable-master of Rutbarn, expert in the business of horses. Parnad goes back and recounts the story to Daman, especially the details concerning horses. She now calls in the cunning Brahmin, Sadev, and asks him to go and announce a second *svayaṃvara* to Rutbarn, while hinting that his chances are really quite good in the affair. Sadev protests that Rutbarn lives too far away, and cannot come to Bidar in a short time. But Daman points out that if Bahuk is really Nal, he will manage the horses in such a way that they will be able to get there with amazing speed. Sadev now carries out this commission. He calls in Bahuk and asks him to arrange the passage, explaining the reasons for the haste. When Bahuk/Nal hears this, his heart sinks and his head begins to swim. Perhaps Daman has thought him faithless, and so she wants to marry again, he ruminates. But upon reflection, he wonders if this is not simply a ruse on Daman's part to call him back. He hence agrees to accompany the king and selects two very thin horses from the stable. The king protests, and proposes two other horses that look sturdier. But the king's horses have hardly begun the journey when they fall to the ground. So, he accepts Bahuk's superior advice, and they set out on the horses that had initially been selected.

The horses now begin to gallop at lightning speed. The king is so impressed at the ground they are covering that he asks Bahuk/Nal to reveal his tricks of the trade, including how to distinguish good horses from bad. Bahuk now unveils a good number of his secrets, and the king is so grateful that he volunteers some of his own secret skills in exchange. One of these is to count the leaves and twigs on a tree at a single glance. This skill is tested by them on the way, and the king also teaches Bahuk number of other gambling (*qemārdāni*) tricks. Bahuk is

saddened to have to learn these skills, which pertain after all to the sphere of trickery and illusion. Still, realism prevails, and Bahuk realizes that if he is to win back his kingdom, this is really the only solution. Rutbarn and Bahuk now enter the city of Bidar. But they are astonished to see that there is no sign of a *svayaṃvara* to be seen. When Daman's father hears that Rutbarn has arrived in his town, he too is surprised and hastens to receive him. But when he enquires why he had come, Rutbarn is more than a little embarrassed. He makes some lame excuses, to the effect that he had simply come to renew their friendship, excuses that do not quite satisfy the king of Bidar. Still, he decides not to press the matter for the time being.

Daman for her part sends one of her friends to examine Bahuk/Nal more closely and subject him to a first set of tests. The friend raises the subject of Nal in conversation, and Bahuk denies all knowledge of him. But when the subject of *'eshq* is raised, Bahuk begins to weep bitterly. The friend runs back to report this to Daman, who decides she will try one more test. Now, she knows that Nal alone is capable of making food without water or fire, and so sends a cooking-pot to him to see if Bahuk too can do the same. Sure enough, the black Bahuk too turns out to have the same skills as the royal Nal. Daman is now sure in her identification. She calls her brothers and reveals the truth to them; the brothers at once go to meet Nal and embrace him despite his strange appearance. When Daman reports her rediscovery of Nal to her mother, however, the mother proves rather more sceptical. The mother wants to make sure that it is really Nal, but also that Nal has not changed his mind about her daughter. Nal is hence invited into the palace, and Daman is instructed to interrogate him. When she begins to ask him who he is, and why he has come there, the questions and answers assume the form of riddles. At the end of this interrogation, which is a shorter and modified version of that in the classical Sanskrit text (Shulman, 2001, pp. 137-42), Daman relents and her mother too agrees that the man before them is really Nal. Now, Nal recalls the snake's slough and the promise associated with it. He takes out a portion of the snake's skin and burns it, and when smoke starts to billow, the snake emerges full-blown. Nal now reads out a spell in which he has been instructed, and the snake advances and pulls off the black colour from his exterior, as if it were another slough. The lovers are reunited at last, and it is like spring once more. Rutbarn learns of the whole episode, and comes forward to proffer his excuses for having treated Nal as his servant. But Nal and Daman tell him they are in fact deeply in his debt; friendly relations are re-established, and in the next few days, Nal and Rutbarn exchange further notes on their relative skills.

After a few days, Nal and Daman return to Ujjain with goods and wealth from the latter's father. Nal now calls for his brother, and suggests an amicable reconciliation. The younger brother replies with disdain, but eventually agrees to another gambling match. This time, Nal with his new-found skills wins with ease, and the brother begins to fear that he will be treated as badly as he has treated Nal. But Nal generously forgives him, and allows him to stay on in the kingdom, even giving back his old prebend (*eqtā'-e qadim*). Nal is now re-established as the king, and proceeds to rule in all his glory. Thus, things are brought onto an even keel once more. But this time, Fayzi insists, there is not only enjoyment but also sagacity (*hushyāri*). It is thus possible at the end of all his travails for Nal to combine the qualities of love and desire (*showq*) with the "essence of an awakened intellect" (*jowhar-e 'aql o hush*). A perfectly equilibriated form of kingship is thus attained.

## FAYZI'S INNOVATION

Unlike the Sanskrit original, Fayzi's version of the story does not end here. Years after he has regained his throne, one day in the autumn (*khazān*) Nal notices that everything has dried up in the garden. No nightingale is to be heard, and all the flowers are gone. Nal begins to meditate and realises the transient nature of the life he is living. He hence calls his oldest son, and tells him that the throne is his from that day on. The son begins to weep on hearing this, and the other notables (*a'yān*) also begin loudly to lament, asking Nal to stay on. But Nal refuses their demands, saying that such transitions are inevitable in the world, with the passage of time. He insists on placing his son on the throne and gives him advice (*nasihat*) in the form of an aphorism: "May your hands be associated with generosity and your heart with justice, as long as you live." (Fayzi, 1987, p. 300)

Nal then bows to all his intimates, and departs from the city to take up residence in the wilderness. His health begins to deteriorate quickly, and so he calls for Daman, his beloved, who is still beautiful despite her advancing age. Now is the time for him to make amends. So he expresses regret for all the unhappiness he has caused her in the past and says that he is preparing to leave the earth, with nothing but her love amongst his possessions. But she replies that this is once more nothing but unfaithfulness (*biwafā'i*) on his part. How can he begin to talk of separation once more, when they were one life in two bodies? She will not be a burden to him in the afterlife, Daman declares, and will take care of herself. If he were to leave her this time, she would not consider leaving him. Nal now begins here to move the tenor of the discussion

from the notion of bodily love to that of true love, which is to be akin to the Sufi notion of union. The body is only a veil, and what awaits them is another level of reality. So saying, he closes his eyes and dies. Daman begins to weep. Then, she gathers together all the dried flowers of the forest, and makes up a bier of sandalwood. She declares aloud her intention to accompany his caravan, while seated on a palanquin of fire (*hawdaj-e ātashin*). She then transforms herself spontaneously into flame, while seated on the same pyre as Nal.

> The lover was drunk with the last cup of wine,
> While his idol held the cup in her hand.
> (...)
> They sat in each other's fire,
> And grew hotter than the pyre itself.
> (...)
> The idol was burnt from love of the Brahman,
> Its body now charred like its burnt-out life.
> If the moth was afire on this evening of sorrow,
> The candle too burnt from top to toe.

Fayzi now draws his text to a close. So long as Nal was alive, he states, everything went well in the kingdom. He took care of his people, and offered them every comfort. So, his death was marked by a general mourning, as if the Last Judgement had come. The temples became dark, the divine conch fell silent. This brings us to a last section, where the poet offers us a series of general reflections on the story, in terms of abstractions rather than the concrete plot. In formal terms, these closing passages could be read in various ways, of which one might be to see it within the Persian tradition of the lament (*marthiya*).

> O Fayyazi, go beyond this world,
> And plant your flag in the next one.
> This imaginary sphere is a board,
> the sign of destruction, like colour effaced.
> The world's existence is a mere illusion,
> Its roots to be traced in nothingness.
> Both new and old are of no importance,
> So attach yourself to nothing here.

The verses are also filled with advice, on how to deal with the transient world, while knowing full well that it is illusion. The section then leads to the epilogue (*khātema*), where Fayzi mentions the year of

composition, and also offers us some explicit comparisons between his work and that of his illustrious predecessors, including Nezāmi Ganjavi. The specificity of his Indian metaphors and usages are brought out, as is the fact that the text was completed in the thirty-ninth regnal year of Akbar. And so we conclude with him:

O Fayyazi, on the making of this charm,
How long will you continue to speak ?
Far better to draw it to a close,
Before you pass yourself into the realm of story.
O, burnt heart, end this tale now.
Stop this story of love, stop.

## CONCLUSION

Fayzi's *Nal-Daman*, with its powerful innovations and mastery of technique seems to have exercised much fascination already in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The hallmarks of his treatment came to be his insistence on the delicate line that had to be trod between love and excess (or frenzy), with the intellect being the only means of preventing the one from degenerating into the other. In relationship to kingship, the text also offered the advice of a poet sage, no ordinary poet, but one who claims to be amongst the philosophers of his time. All this was tied up with a brilliant closing section, in which the Indo-Persian poet's fascination with the *sati* was combined with the earlier themes, to allow a closure where a return to an explicitly Sufi flavour was possible (Khabushāni, 1912). The later influence of Fayzi's *Nal-Daman* can be seen in such texts as Munshi Lal Bhagwant Rai 'Rahat' Kakorwi's *Nal-Daman Hindi*, written in Northern India and published in 1859, thus immediately after the important political events of 1857-58 (Bhagwant Rai, 1859/1869). Bhagwant Rai actually starts his *mathnavi* as follows (with 'Hindi' in his version to mean 'Urdu', not only in script but in its heavily Persianised diction):

Seeing the demand for Hindi in our times,
The desire came upon me one day,
That Nal's love which was famous in this world
Should be brought into the Hindi tongue.
Though it has all been told in Persian
Yet it's been done at tedious length.
Why not recount it all in brief,
That each reader might grasp the point ?

The Urdu version does indeed 'recount it all in brief,' reducing the 4000 verses of the original to less than half that number. The influence of Fayzi on Bhagwant Rai is evident, both in terms of the organisation of the story and the presence of some key episodes that were Fayzi's own innovations. The Urdu poet, probably a Kayastha from the area around Lucknow, had no Akbar to patronise him, and so took his text to a series of patrons in his own community. The patronage of the Mughal court had passed in symbolic fashion to that of the merchant (*sawdāgar*), but a good part of Fayzi's message still retained an interest for nineteenth-century readers.

There has been much debate over the years concerning the translation of texts from Sanskrit into Persian at the court of Muslim sultans, whether the *Tuti-nāma* and other cycles of stories, or esoteric and philosophical texts. It is certain that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such projects of 'translation' (with the word being used in the widest possible meaning) gained a massive momentum under the Mughals, for reasons that are of a complex nature. The major Sanskrit epic texts were rendered into Persian now, and were at times also drawn upon by chroniclers to provide a history of India in the period before the Muslim rule. In some instances, it would appear that these Persian versions enjoyed a great deal of legitimacy even amongst Hindu readers (this is the case with the translation of the *Mahābhārata*), while in others the Persian versions languished for long in obscurity (e.g., Ghiyāth al-Din 'Ali Naqib Khan Qazvini, 1979). Within this broad context, the case of *Nal-Daman* is a particular one. The text did not have any particularly weighty religious connotation and seems to have been absorbed into the Persian tradition by Fayzi as a relatively secular theme upon which he could develop a series of reflections and arguments of his own, concerning royal power, the nature of love, and the place of the intellect in managing the affairs of the world. What is of interest is the power of the poet's intervention, which – if it is partly related to his prestige and that of the Mughal court – is also largely the consequence of the literary and thematic appeal that his text carried. For many of the literati of northern India then, the story of Nal and Daman (or Nala and Damayanti), would never be the same again after Fayzi had remoulded it to his own ends.

## REFERENCES

Tamizuddin Arzan, ed., *Nal Daman*, Calcutta, 1831; as *Nal Daman-e Fārsi az rashhāt-e qalam-e Abu'l Faiz Fayzi*, Lucknow, 1877; as *Dāstān-e Nal ó*

*Daman*, Tehran, 1335 Sh./1956; *Nal'i Daman*, Moscow, 1982; ed. M. Taiyab Siddiqi as *Mathnavi Nal-Daman-i Fayzi*, Patna, 1987.

'Abd al-Qāder Badāyuni, *Montakhab al-tawārikh*, tr. G.S.A. Ranking, W.H. Lowe and T.W. Haig, 3 vols., rpt., New Delhi, 1990.

S.A.H. Abidi, "Nau'i Khabushani," in Sharif Husain Qasemi, ed., *Hindustani Farsi Adab: Research and Literary Articles of S.A.H. Abidi*, Delhi, 1984, pp. 105-20.

Ahmad Sarāvi, *Nal Daman*, ed. Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdullah, Karachi, 1978.

Muzaffar Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics," *Modern Asian Studies* 32/2, 1998, pp. 317-49.

Idem, "The Culture and Politics of Persian in pre-Colonial Hindustan," in Sheldon Pollock, ed., *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, Berkeley, 2003.

Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Place in the Sun: Travels with Faizî in the Deccan, 1591-93," in François Grimal, ed., *Les sources et le temps/Sources and Time: A Colloquium*, Pondicherry, 2001, pp. 265-307.

A.S. Bazmee Ansari, "Fayḍi", in *EI* II, pp. 870-72.

Bhagwant Rai, Kakorwi "Rahat" *Nal-Daman Hindi*, Delhi, 1859, rpt. 1869.

Z.A. Desai, "The Story of Nala-Damayanti as Told by Faidi and Its Comparison with the Original Sanskrit Version" (in 2 Parts), *Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda* 8/1, 1958a, pp. 81-96; 8/2, 1958a, pp. 183-98 (Desai 1958a).

Idem, "Nal Daman of Faidi," *Indo-Iranica* 11/4, 1958b, pp. 43-56.

Idem, "Life and Works of Faidi," *Indo-Iranica* 16/3, 1963, pp. 1-35.

Abu'l-Fayz b. Mobārak Fayzi, *Kolliyyāt-e Fayzi*, ed. A.D. Arshad, Lahore, 1967, rpt. 1983, pp. 1-20.

Idem, *Enshā-ye Fayzi*, ed. A.D. Arshad, Lahore, 1973. J.H.S. Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature hindoui et hindoustani* vol. I, Paris, 1839.

Mir Ghiyāth al-Din 'Ali Naqib Khan Qazvini, tr., *Mahabharat*, ed. S.M. Rezā Jalāli Nā'ini and N.S. Shukla, Tehran, 1979 (1358 Shamsi).

Nabi Hādi, *Mughalon kē malek al-sho'arā* (in Urdu), Allahabad, 1978, pp. 81-145.

Hadi Hasan, *Mughal Poetry: Its Cultural and Historical Value*, Madras, 1952.

Waris Kirmani, "The Significance of Faidi's Poetry and Its Background," *Indo-Iranica* 38/3-4, 1985, pp. 26-35.

Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighāni: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, Costa Mesa, California, 1998.

Mohammad-Rezā Naw'i Khabushāni, *Suz o godāz*, tr. Mirza Y. Dawud and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy as *Burning and Melting: Being the Sūz-u-Gudāz of Muhammad Rizā Nau'i of Khabūshān*, London, 1912.

Shantanu Phukan, "'None Mad as a Hindu Woman': Contesting Communal Readings of Padmavat," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 16/1, 1996, pp. 41-54.

Munibur Rahman, "Fayżi, Abu'l-Fayż," in *EIr* IX, pp. 457-59.

Sunil Sharma, "Novelty, Tradition and Mughal Politics in Nau'i's *Suz o Godaz*," in *Prof. Hashmat Moayyad Festschrift*, forthcoming.

David Shulman, "On Being Human in the Sanskrit Epic: The Riddle of Nala," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 22, 1994, pp. 1-29.

Idem, *The Wisdom of Poets: Studies in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit*, Delhi, 2001.

Muhammad Shakil Ahmad Siddiqi, *Amir Hasan Sejzi Dehlavi: Hayāt aur adabi khedmāt*, Lakhnau, 1979.

Susan S. Wadley, "A *bhakti* rendition of Nala-Damayanti: Todarmal's 'Nectar of Nal's life'," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 3/1, 1999, pp. 26-56.