

## “ChaharGulzar-i-Shujai of HarCharan Das”: An important Persian source on History of Awadh1

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1 . First reign from 26 December 1530 to 17 May 1540

1 From 1756 to 1806

**Abstract:** **Chahar Gulzar Shujai** is an infamous work in the history of Awadh in Persian language written by HarCharan Das. He dedicated this book to the (Nawab e Awadh) Shujaul Daulah 1754-1775. This book is till now remained as an unpublished manuscript. Har Charan Das was born about 1123 Hijri (1711-12) in Meerut (U.P.), after the invasion of Nadir Shah (1739) began to live in Delhi and few years later became employee under the supervision of Nawab Qasim Ali Khan. Har Charan Das abandoned Delhi with his seignior Qasim Ali Khan and walked towards Awadh and stayed in Faizabad permanently. After the death of Qasim Ali Khan entered in the service of his children Bakht-un-Nisa Khanom, Shafeeque Ali Khan and Husain Ali Khan.

**Key Words:** Chahar Gulzar Shujai, HarCharan Das, Awadh, Shujauddaula, Qasim Ali Khan

### **Introduction:**

As the title of the book depicted about the contents, the author divided this book into five chapters named *Chaman* means garden.

**First Chaman (Garden):** -is consisted to the religious history of Hindus in which displayed to the Mahesh and Vishnu.

**Second Chaman (Garden):** -is about Sat yug.

**Third Chaman (Garden):** -is comprised of Tirtayayug.

**Fourth Chaman (Garden):** -is included of Duaperyug.

**Fifth Chaman (Garden):** -The fifth chaman contains important historical information and divided into two sections. First one is about the Hindu Kings Judhishter to Ghaznavids, and second part is divided into nine chapters (Qisms)

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about Muslim sovereigns. The last chapter of this book in most valuable part comprises the history of the Mughals from Humayun<sup>2</sup> to Shah Alam<sup>3</sup>.

Har Charan Das the author of this work was son of Udai Rai and grandson of Mukund Rai, the family of Chaudhris and Qanoon Goyan of the Paragnas of Meerut. Because he mentioned about this:

"در همان ایام چودھری بالکشن ریواری کہ بسیار کم ظرف و ظالم بود از طرف میر کمال الدین اظلم خراب کنندہ عالم کہ پیشکار صرف خاص نائب روزافزون خان ناظر بود حاکم پرگنہ میرتہ شدہ و چودھری مذکور بہ موجب حکم حضور املاک و باغات قصبہ میرتہ از مشائخان وغیرہ موضع ملیانہ و رام پور پاوتی<sup>4</sup> استمرار قانونگویان کہ از عہد حضرت بابر بادشاہ استمرار بود و قوت ہزاران از مسلمان و ہنود و بر محاصل املاک و باغات و ملیانہ و رام پور پاوتی<sup>5</sup> بود آن ہمہ را ضبط ساخت<sup>6</sup>"

Harcharn Das provides information about his job, employment, and service, stating that he first became a servant to Mohammad Baqer Khan, who at that time was the superintendent of the royal stable at that time. After that, he joined the service of Yaqub Khan, who was the superintendent of the royal lamp house. When Yaqub Khan was relieved from his position as the superintendent of the lamp house and Abdul Subhan was assigned to that role, Har charn Das left this service and joined Mr. Ahmad Ali Khan, who was the superintendent of the royal mint. Later, he served Sheikh Abdul Bari, who was in charge of a division of two hundred cavalry and two hundred infantry, Harcharan das was appointed to the position of a clerk by the mentioned division<sup>7</sup>.

He further informs that he was employed in the service of Nawab Qasim Ali Khan in the first regional year of Alamgeer<sup>Th'ani</sup>(1754-1759)means Alamgeer Second. He also accompanied the service of the family members of Nawab Qasim Ali Khan i.e. Najeeb-un Nisa Khanum alias Bibi Khanum and wife of late Nawab Najmuddaula.

Harcharn Das served more than forty-nine years in the service of Qasim Ali Khan and his descendants. He was a praise singer (or eulogist) for Qasim Ali

2. First reign from 26 December 1530 to 17 May 1540

3 From 1756 to 1806

4 This village Pawati Post office Malliyanadistt. Meerut, U.P.

5 M.S. Chahar Gulzar Shujai. P.No, 55

6 M.S. ibd. P.No. 55

7 M.S. ibd. P.No, 62-63

Khan. He remembered him with great respect and mentions him with kind words in this book, for example:

الهي دولتِ حشمتِ فزون باد بهانصاحب بادِ دشمنِ نگون باد  
بهفيضش عالمي خورسند گشته کند او شاد غمگين دل شکسته  
رسد فيضي ازو بس عالمي را پناهي هست او بس عالمي را  
ز خویشانو اقربايان غريبان ز نوکرها قديمي و ز جديان  
بماند پرورش او بس کسان را بود فضلِ خدایش نگهدار  
بخر فيضرساني نيست کارش خدایش آفريد بهر همين کارش  
بلند اختر بلند هست طالع او از آن روزي که گشت مولدي او 8

The family of Nawab Qasim Ali Khan was so kind and careful for the author because he appraises them in several times in this book. But when circumstances changed and he had not have any employment Har Charan Dass devoted himself to the study of historical books and some famous biographical accounts of great Indian kings etc. The learned men of that time Ibrahim Ali Khan Alias Mirza Kharati son of Hikmat Maab Khan who was the royal Physician of Emperor Ahmed Shah,(1748-1754) gave access to his own library to HarCharanDass and HarCharanDass took this opportunity as a golden chance and borrow some important books from this library, like : *Tarikh-i-Farishta*, *Habib-us-siyar*, *Mirat-i-Alam* etc. and went through the *Shahnama*, *Rajawali*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Bhagvat Gita*, and other translation of Indian works, because he inform us:

"بهدرس و کتب و تواریخ بادشاهان سلف پرداختم و خان شفقت و مکرمت نشان ملجاي  
نیازمندان قدرشناس قدیمان ابراهیم علي خان عرف مرزا خیراتي بن حکمت باب خان که از  
حکماي عمده محمد شاه بادشاه بود و مرزا موصوف بهسبب قرابت قریبه از خان مغفور قاسم  
علي خان داشت و به آن سبب بهرفاقت خان موصوف رونق افزاي نواحی شرقیه یعنی بنگله  
فیض آباد شده و در علم ریاضی و فصیلت بهکیمای زمانه و بسیاری از تواریخ بادشاهان سلف  
و دیگر کتبها جمع نموده بهدرس آن شغل می داشتند بر احوال این ضعیف آگاهی یافته  
بسیاری از کتب تواریخ مثل تواریخ فرشته 9 و حبیب السیر 10 و مرآت عالم 11 و غیره برای  
مطالعه عنایت فرمودند و دیگر کتابهای شاهنامه 12 و راجولوی 13 و کتاب رامینا 14 و

8 M.S. Chahar Gulzar Shujai. P.No,65

9 .Another name of this book is Gushan e Ibrahimi written on 1612 AD.

10 .Habib al Siyar fi Afrad al Bashar by Khwand Meer.

11 .By Mohd. Bakhtawr Khan Intisharat e Idara e tahqeeqat, Pakistan, 1979.

12 .Hakeem Abul Qasmim Firdausi completed the book in 384 Hijri.

13 .Tareekhrajawli or Risala e Rajawli translated by WaliDehlavi in 1085 Hijri.

مهابهارته و شري بهاگوت 15 و جوگ باشست 16 که فیضي از هندوي در فارسي تصنيف کرده که نزد این عاصي بودند و دیگر از هر جا که بدست آمدند بهدرس آن همه پرداختم احوال سلف را از کتابهاي سلف دریافت کرده بخاطر آوردم که سرگذشت اجباري و بادشاهان و امرايان سلف آنچه از این کتابهاي دریافت شده و آنچه در این مدت عمر خود بههشتاد سال رسیده تا الا که سنة یکهزار (و) یکصد (و) نود (و) هجرت است بهچشم خود دیده از احوال بادشاهان و امرايان و صاحبان خود که از نمک آنها پرورش یافته و از احوال بزرگان خود و حالي که بر خود گذشته آن همه را یکجا نموده." 17

Hercham Das had a deep passion for the study of history and, at the age of eighty, he compiled this historical book. While he was engaged in writing it, the Bani Bahadur took offense at him, cutting off his allowance and financial support. As a result, he fell into financial hardship and struggled to make ends meet. After a few days, when Bani Bahadur became blind, he was forced to summon Hercham Das and reinstated his financial assistance, which was granted by the government of Shuja' al-Dawlah. Hercham Das came to Faizabad in the year 1127 Hijri.

Harcham Das was a eulogist and great admirer of Nawab Shuja' al-Dawlah, and dedicated this book is on the name of, Shujauddawla because he writes:

"مزاج آن عالیجناب از باغهاي و چمنهاي رنگارنگ رغبت بسیار دارد و از آنجا که هر داستاني این کتاب کمتر از گلهاي و چمنهاي رنگارنگ نیست بنابراین را بهچهار گلزار شجاعي موسوم ساختم و هیچ چمن آن بر احوال جگهاي و راجههاي و بادشاهان هندوستان مقرر نمودم." 18

Harcham Das regarded this book as a testament for his sons, embedding within it numerous pieces of advice and guidance, as he states:

"این عاصی هرچرن داس مؤلف این کتاب چون این عاصی سراسر معاصی هرچرن داس از احوال پادشاهان و امرايان و دیگر احوالات زمانه بقید قلم آمده درآورده. بخاطر آورد که چندین

14 .Abdul Qadir Badauni started to translate The Ramayana in 995 Hijri and completed in 999 Hijri. Badauni dedicated this book to the Akbar. The book was also appreciated by him.

15 .By Bhagwan Biyas translated by Faizi in the period of Jalal al Din Mohd. Akbar.

16 .Yogbhashist a work brought by valmiki and translated by Nizamuddin Panipati in Persian in the period of Akbar.

17M.S. Chahar Gulzar Shujai. P.No,5-7

18Ibid. P.No,10

احوال خود نیز در این کتاب مندرج سازد که برای فرزندان ارجمند بطریق نصایح یادگار  
بماند".<sup>19</sup>

About the composition of the book *Chahar Gulzar Shuja'i*, Hercham Das says that:

"باعث تالیف این کتاب بر ضمیر صفوت پذیر سخنواران کامل پوشیده نماند که حضرت پادشاه عالم گیر ثانی مطابق سنه یک هزار و یک صد شصت و هفت هجری (1167ه) این ذره بی مقدار خاکسار هر چرن داس بن اودی رای بن مکند رای بن ساگر مال چودری و قانون گوی ، پرگنه میرته مضاف صوبه دارالخلافة شاه جهان آباد در دهلی آب خورد."<sup>20</sup>

"The reason for the composition of this book was not hidden from the pure and receptive minds of the complete eloquent scholars, that His Majesty, the Emperor Alamgir II, in the year 1167 Hijri (1753 CE), this insignificant humble servant, Hercham Das, son of Udi Rai, son of Makand Rai, son of Sagar Mal Chaudhary, Barrister of Law, in the district of Meerut, in the Capital terriotary city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi<sup>21</sup>".

Hasrcham Das explicitly mentions the sources he used for the composition of *Chahar Gulzar Shuja'i* in his book, as has been explained earlier in this article. Additionally, whenever he acquired information from any source, he included it in the aforementioned book. The author titled his work in honor of Nawab Shuja' al-Dawlah and divided it into two sections. One section was dedicated to the Hindu kings, and the other to the Muslim kings.

Hercham Das divided his book into five sections, or *chamans*. The first section deals with the history of *Mahishasura and Vishnu*; the second section discusses Sat Yuga; the third section focuses on Treta Yuga; the fourth section addresses Dwapara Yuga; and the fifth section pertains to Kal Yuga, the current age. In this last section, he covers the period from *Raja Jadhishter* to the kings of Delhi, up until the era of Shah Alam II.

Chapter five of this book, which is the most significant and essential part of this history, is divided into two sections. The first section is titled *Safha* (Page), and the second section is titled *Qism* (Part). The final section of this book focuses on

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. P.No,51

<sup>20</sup> M.S. *Chahar Gulzar Shujai*. P.No,2

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.P.No,2

the history of the Timurids of India and is considered a crucial part of the work. The author also provides detailed accounts of the local rulers, governors, and others, including figures such as Qasim Ali Khan, NawabShuja' al-Dawlah, NawabAsaf al-Dawlah, NawabSiraj al-Dawlah, Nawab Ahmad Shah Bahadur, Mohammad Shah bin Jahandar Shah, Aliwardi Khan, the Nazim of Bengal, Abu al-Mansur Safdar Jung, Nawab Mohammad Khan Bangash, NawabSaadullah Khan, Nawab Mohammad Ali Khan Rohilla, AsadYar Khan, Shafiq Ali Khan, NawabSaidullah Khan, Nawab Hafiz Rahmat Khan Rohilla, Sardar Khan, Dundi Khan Rohilla, the ruler of Bans Bareilly, and the Hindu Rajahs from Yudhishtir to Khawandi Rao, son of Malhar Rao Maratha, Suraj Mal Jat, Jawahar Singh, Ratan Singh, Raja Ji Singh, among other notable figures. The author also includes information about cities, towns, and villages in India, as well as the architecture of India, such as the fortresses of Kalinjar, Shahjahanabad, Dholatabad, Aurangabad, Faizabad, Allahabad, and others.

One distinctive feature of this book is that the author incorporates verses from the poets of previous generations alongside his historical writing and occasionally composes his own poetry. This adds to the significance of the history and provides readers with a sense of attachment and enjoyment. Although his poetry does not reach the literary or cultural stature of prominent poets, it is not inferior to that of his contemporaries. For example, he has composed beautiful verses on the instability of the world:

ز هوشنگ جم تا بهاسفندیار	کجائید شاهان جم اقتدار
کجا رفت شاپور بهرام کو	فریدون کیخسرو جام کو
سلیمان کجا او فرعون کجا	کجا رفت دارا سکندر کجا
کجا رفت هلاکو و نادر کجا	کجا رفت تیمور بابر کجا
کہ فوجش ہمہ بود جو ابر	کجا رفت احمد خانی باشاہ
ز آصفجہ قمرالدین عالی بشر	کجا رفت امرای عالی قدر
کجا جعفری خان فیاض زمان	ز بیرم و سعدالله خان اسد خان
نمانده شجاعی قلی ظفرجنگ	نماند است منصور علی صفرجنگ
کسی را نہ بگذاشت دوران	نمانده نجم الدولہ شد شہید
قردان فیاض بی انتہا	کجا رفت قاسم علی خان سخا

برفت آویختن و من در فگار  
 همین نام نیکی نمانده نشان  
 ز روز قیامت نو اندیشه کن  
 نمی‌روید از تخم به‌دیار نیک  
 در این آسیا کشته بر یک  
 مباش ایمن از بازی روزگار  
 بصد گونه مگر است دروی  
 گدا از چه امرا چه از شاه  
 خدا را شناس همین است بس  
 اگر دل باو بندی آنبست بسی  
 که تا بهره‌یابی تو این عمر را  
 که در وقت مفلسی نماند کسی  
 همه دوستان‌اند یک زهره  
 ز دشمن دوستان‌ها شدند 22

که همراه او آدم این دیار  
 کجا رفت حاتم و نوشیروان  
 نگوی کن نیکوی پیشه کن  
 نکن بد که بدبینی از بار نیک  
 امیدی مدارید ازو هردون  
 مکن نکته بر عمر ناپایدار  
 فریب است مگر است کاری  
 تهیدست آمد نهیدست رفت  
 نرفت است بال و زر همراه  
 بخرد است حق نیست دایم کسی  
 به‌بادش بکن صرف این عمر  
 بدیدیم یاران و خویشان بسی  
 چو داری تو از مال زر بهره  
 چو مفلس شدی همه دشمن شدند

When Harcharn Das discusses contemporary cultural information, he meticulously records all the details, both minor and significant, and presents them in written form, providing separate explanations and clarity. For example, in the case of the wedding of Aqa Ali Khan, the young son of Qasim Ali Khan, the information he gathered is both fascinating and readable. He describes all the customs and rituals of Indian weddings, detailing everything from the food, charity offerings, and decorations to the joyous canopy, games, and other related festivities from start to finish.

“سنة بیست و هشتم جلوسی محمد شاه مطابق سنة یک‌هزار (و) یکصد (و) پنجاه (و) هفت هجرت صبیبه مغل علی خان برادرزاده نجم‌الدوله بهادر به‌آقا علی خان پسر خورد قاسم علی خان منصوب شد و از هردو طرف در سرانجام شادی پرداختند چون مزاج قاسم علی خان بسیار عمده بود سواي و فراغ‌دلی کاری نداشت نحوست و بخل و تنگ چشمی هرگز پیرامون آن عالی‌منش نمی‌گردید طعامی به‌فراغت تیار کنانید و ضیافت نواب حفیظ‌الدین خان بهادر و نواب محمد سعید خان بهادر و نواب نجم‌الدوله بهادر و نواب مرید

خان و حکمت علي خان و ظهيرالدوله و قزلباش خان و لطف علي خان و اميرالامرا فيروز جنگ بهادر و ديگر امرايان و اقربايان و آشنايان و خویش و بيگانه به قسمي نمود که به فراغت تمام بمعنه نوکران و لواحقان به هریک طعام گوناگون رسید و از قسم رقصنده ها و سرایندها مثل طوایف و بهاند و نتوه و نتني و کشميري و مطرب و غيره از فرقة اهل نشاط هيچ يکي در شاهجهان آباد باقیمانده بود که در آن شادي نيامده و طياري ساچق از آرایش و آتشبازي و جوکهره نقل و ميوه و خوان لوزيات و پارچه پوشاکي و قند و عطر و پهلایل و هارهاي گل و برگ تنبول به قسمي شده بود که از حويلي خواص خان مکان بودن قاسم علي خان تا حويلي مغل علي خان همه رسته بازار گلزار شده بود که راه آمد شد از کثرت آن برايندگان و روندگان تنگ شده بود و از روز شادي بيش از هفت روز توپخانه نواخته و خلعت هاي فاخره از زري و بادله به کيشن چند و تيچ راي و اين عاصي هرچرن داس و به ديگران بعضي از مصاحبان و غيره به اکثري دوشاله و شالو به خدمتگاران و چوبداران و پياده هاي و فرقة شاگرد پيشه في نفر ده روپيه و به هریکي به قدر شخصيت هرکس عنایت فرمود و بعد آن فراغ عقد نکاح قريب بيست دوپته زري بيش قيمتي و يکهزار روپيه نقد به طوایفان و بهانده و غيره رقصنده ها و سرایندها انعام مبارکباد شادي شد و مغل علي خان سواي جهيز یک دايي خورد همراه دختر خود داد که به گفتن خورد ليکن بلاي بزرگ بود:

شد شادي بخير خوبي انجام خورسند شدند مردم ز انعام  
 آن همت شوکت و دليري جز خان که آنسرد دليري  
 آن خان که پيش همتي وي شرمنده شده است حاتم طي  
 جز فيض نه بود کار او را جز لطف نه بود شعار او را  
 در فيض رساني و اشفاق مثلش نه شنیده شد در آفاق  
 داناي قدرشناس هرکس بيناي جوهرشناس هرکس  
 شجاع بهادر و مبارز از رستم زياده روز آزر  
 در غيرت بود يگانه دوران چون او دگري نشد 23 دوران

Unfortunately, the details of Harcharn Das's life are not mentioned in any book except for some information he himself provided in this work. The renowned scholars Elliott and Dawson, among others, have drawn extensively from this book in their own writings, where they have recounted the events Harcharn Das described in detail:

Chahar Gulzar Shujai serves as a significant historical source on eighteenth-century India. During this period, numerous historical accounts were commissioned at the behest of the British, often reflecting their perspectives and interests. However, this particular work was authored independently, driven by the author's own initiative. As a result, the historical narratives presented in the text are considered to be impartial and objective.

Unfortunately, this valuable work remains unpublished, and only a limited number of manuscripts are known to exist in select libraries. These include:

1. Manuscript No.453/pel/18 — University of Punjab, Lahore
2. Manuscript No. 1732— British Museum, London.

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