Introduction

ṣad jalvah rū bah rū hai jo mizhgāñ uṭhā'īye
tāqat kahāñ kih dīd kā iḥsāñ uṭhā'īye

There are a hundred splendors, face-to-face, if you'd just lift your eyelids
Where is that strength to lift the vision's favor?

ĠHĀLIB

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The peer-reviewed *Journal of Urdu Studies* sets the stage for new conversations on Urdu and its attendant cultures across regions and eras. Oriented towards redressing the widely perceived chasm between area and disciplinary studies, the journal is deliberately heterogenous in the methodological, generational, and geographic subject-positions of its authorship. This inclusive stance also renders the journal acutely sensitive to issues of marginalization—whether they stem from nationalist and colonial biases or from prejudices based on gender, sexuality, and religion. It is my hope that this invigorating blend of diverse methodologies and disciplines will open new vistas on the aesthetic calibration and cultural dynamism of Urdu's many worlds.

The journal's conception and execution would not have been possible without the encouragement and critical feedback of Asad Q. Ahmed, Kamran Asdar Ali, Munis Faruqi, Ateeb Gul, Kathy van Vliet, the Berkeley Urdu Initiative, the South Asia Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and the Gurmani Center of Literature and Languages at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

Five valued supporters of the journal, Asif Farrukhi, Mujtaba Hussain, Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Shamim Hanfi, and Saleem Kidwai, have passed away since the journal's inception in 2020. All five of them enriched Urdu studies tremendously. The present issue (2.1) and the following one (2.2) are dedicated to these scholars and thus begin with tributes to them written by their close friends and students, who are themselves charting the present course of Urdu studies.

Daisy Rockwell has generously designed the image for the journal's cover. Liz Gobbo brilliantly copyedited the manuscript and asked questions of authors and editors that have only enriched the journal. The journal's Executive Editors Asiya Alam, Gregory Max Bruce, Pasha Khan, and Tahira Naqvi dedicated numerous hours to ensure the journal meets the highest academic standards. I must single out Gregory Max Bruce for his infectious love of Urdu and for being instrumental at every stage of the journal's exciting journey.

Sincerely,

Syed Akbar Hyder

Editor-in-Chief