घुसना — *to sneak in*

The verb घुसना is so articulate as to be almost a one-word justification for learning Hindi. Its range of meanings, or rather its suggestions and attitudes, is a real challenge for lexicographers, whose various glosses can only hint at what घुसना has to say. Platts has the best shot at it:

> H گهسنا घुसना *ghusnā* [*ghus*° = Prk. घुस°, fr. S. घुष्=घृष्], v.n. To be thrust (in, -*meṅ*), be forced (in); —to thrust or push oneself (in), to enter forcibly; to rush (in); to pierce or penetrate (in or into);—to enter uninvited, unprivileged, or unwarranted (into or amongst, -*meṅ*), to intrude; to interfere, to meddle (in):—*ghus-ānā*, v.n. To come rushing (in, -meṅ); to thrust oneself (in): —*ghus-paṛnā* (-*me*ṅ), To thrust oneself (in);—to rush headlong or rashly (into a place or an affair):—*ghus-kar baiṭhnā*, v.n. To sit close together.

Platts also finds room for a handful of idioms, listed here and there under their own headwords (but now findable through the new miracle of the global search, unimaginable to Platts back in the book-bound 1880s!)

> *peṭ-meṅ ghusnā (-ke)* = *peṭ-meṅ paiṭhnā*, q.v.:—*peṭ-meṇ lenā*, v.t. *To gulp down; to endure, to have patience*

> *jā-ghusnā (-meṅ)*, To go and enter (into), to go (into); cf. the similar use of the French *venir*

> *dum-meṅ ghusnā (-kī)*, To creep under the tail (of, as pups under a bitch); to take refuge or protection (with); to dangle or run (after), to follow about, to cling (to, as a child to its mother's skirt)

> *ghar-ghusṛū,* or *ghar-ghusnā,* s.m.=*ghar-basā,* q.v.:—*ghar-gayā, or ghar-basā,* s.m. One who ruins or destroys a house

Dictionaries never grow old: they just become increasingly valuable as records of our linguistic heritage. Platts (and later, in its wake, OHED) records this sassy offshoot of घुसना –

> گهسكي घुसकी *ghuskī* [*ghus*°, fr. *ghusnā,* q.v.+ak, fr. S. कृ+*ī* = *S.* इका], s.f. A bold forward woman; a wanton or unchaste woman.

Bahri adds some examples of everyday Hindi phrases, involving more literal senses of घुसना :

> घुसना *ghus·nā* vi to enter; कमरे (गाँव, घर, सुरंग) में ~ -- (into) a room (village, house, tunnel); छाती में तलवाल घुस गई the sword pierced/entered (into) the chest; यह विचार तुम्हारे दिमाग़ में नहीं घुसता this idea does not enter (into) your brain. घुस आना to come in; घुस बैठना to enter and occupy: वह हमारे मकान में घुस बैठा he entered into our house and occupied it. [vt घुसेड़ना]

Thus meanings of घुसना hover around the essential core of *entering a place without legitimation or approval* — to force an entry through violent action, or guile, or brazen determination; and the outcome is that someone or something ends up in a place where he/she/it has no right to be.

The untranslatability of घुसना encourages use of the word in Hinglish — *Don't ghuso in here, yaar!* — often with the sense of 'to stick one's nose into something'.

Let's look at some internet headlines, to see how घुसना is being used today. Each one of the following headlines calls for a different verb in English translation: *to infiltrate, penetrate, breach, force entry, sneak,* and *trespass*. (NB: my translations here retain the perfective tense of the Hindi, though English headlines typically prefer the 'historic present' as in '10 terrorists infiltrate…')

> The तुम imperative *ghuso* here acts as a base form of the verb in Hinglish. In the same way, *dekho* (from British Indian army usage) was part of my childhood slang and meant 'a look', as in *C'mon, let's have a dekho!* A more persistent example is the English word *shampoo*, said to reflect a Hindi order in the हम्माम — चाँपो! *Massage!*

बिहार के रक्सौल के रास्ते देश में घुसे 10 आतंकी
10 terrorists infiltrated the country through Raxaul in Bihar.

शहर में घुसे जंगली जीव सेह से भयभीत हुए लोग
People were terrified by a wild porcupine that had strayed into the city.

ताला तोड़कर घुसे चोरों ने उड़ाए जेवरात व नगदी
Thieves who had forced entry by breaking a lock made off with jewelry and cash.

महिला बोगी में घुसे पुरुष यात्री, जंक्शन पर हंगामा
Male passengers sneaked into women's train compartment: outcry at junction.

भारतीय सीमा में दो जगहों पर घुसे चीनी सैनिक
Chinese soldiers breached the Indian border in two [different] places.

लद्दाख के चुमार में फिर घुसे ड्रैगन, 7 तंबू लगाकर जमाया डेरा *!*
The dragon [Chinese army] again trespassed into Ladakh's Chunar, pitched 7 tents and set up camp!

The example below has an ironic twist: here too the subject ended up in a place where he should not have been, although this time it was not intentional!

पाकिस्तान: घूस देकर जेल में घुसे पंजाब के जेल मंत्री
Pakistan: the Punjab rail minister found himself in jail after giving bribes.

This last example shows a contrast that Hindi (though not all its cognate languages) generally maintains between घुस- (the verb stem, with short '*u*') and घूस or घूँस (a feminine noun with long '*ū*', and meaning 'bribe'). This distinction runs back to the Sanskrit etymons of the two words: घुस < *घुस्स् 'thrust in, pierce' versus घूस / घूँस < *घूस्सा 'a present', as recorded in CDIAL. However, the noun घूस (with a long vowel) as a name for the rat known in English as 'bandicoot' is related to the Hindi verb घुसना (see OHED), and presumably relates to the bandicoot's unwelcome habit of ghuso-ing into the foundations of buildings (compare English fauna names

that describe characteristic actions of their species: roadrunner, wagtail, woodpecker, rattler); meanwhile the English word bandicoot comes from Telugu pandi-kokku, 'pig-rat'.

Most languages, in their demotic moments at least, are quick to exploit any salacious potential in verbs of physical action (think of the vulgar English expression *to screw,* and the similarly indelicate sense of भर देना in Hindi), and the 'penetrative' aspect of घुसना might seem likely to be a case in point; but surprisingly, such usages don't seem to be recorded…though I look forward to being educated by readers who know better. Just a single such reference justifies my noting this general absence: CDIAL tells us that in Phalūṛa (aka Palula, Pharura), a Dardic language from the linguistically diverse area of Chitral in northern Pakistan, the root *घुस्स् yields a word meaning 'copulate'. The citation reminds us to look far and wide for the full picture of the history of a word.

OHED guides us towards the meanings of the related transitive verb घुसाना with this succinct entry:

> घुसाना ghusānā [cf. H. *ghusnā*], v.t. 1. to cause to enter or to penetrate; to thrust or to force (into, में); to cram (in). 2. to insinuate, or to introduce (surreptitiously).

And finally, to complete the picture (and not just for the sake of *cramming* or *stuffing* yet more information into this article), here is Platts' entry for the related verbs घुसिड़ना and its causative घुसेड़ना –

> گھسیڑنا घुसेड़ना *ghuseṛnā* [caus. of *ghusiṛnā*, q.v.;—or caus. of *ghusnā*;—*ghuseṛ°* = *ghusel°* = *ghusāl°*; cf. *baiṭhālnā*], v.t. To force (into, -*meṅ*), to thrust (into), to cram, stuff (into); to run or stick (into); to pierce; to insert; to insinuate; to foist:—*ghuseṛ-denā*, v.t. intens. of and = *ghuseṛnā*.