

Altaf Husain Hali: *Muqaddimâ* (1893)

In both his life and his writings, Hali (1837–1914) symbolizes the transition of the Urdu literary tradition from its courtly past to the more serious and dominantly middle-class preoccupations of the past hundred years (*UL*, pp. 100–3). Born in Panipat (now in Haryana), Hali came as a young tutor to Delhi where he became close to Ghalib (3) in his last years, before moving to Lahore as a reviser of Urdu textbooks for the British. His return to Delhi brought him into association with Sir Sayyid (4), under the influence of whose reformist ideals the bulk of Hali's work was produced, notably his hugely popular epic poem, the *Musaddas* (1879).

Hali is best known for his poetry, largely composed in the 'natural' style he developed under the influence of English poetic ideals in conscious opposition to the elaborate artifice of classical Urdu poetry. He was also, however, a prose-writer of great distinction, and the author of important biographies of both Ghalib and Sir Sayyid. If the lucid organization of his prose style never quite matches Ghalib's throwaway elegance, it is much superior in fluency to Sir Sayyid's rough-hewn idiom and in ease of comprehension to the inflated writing of all too many of his Urdu contemporaries and successors.

The passage is taken from the lengthy introduction composed as a preface to the verse-collection of Hali's *Dīvān* (1893). Still the most outstanding piece of sustained literary criticism in Urdu, this has achieved separate status under the title *Muqaddimâ šī'r o šā'irī* or '*Introduction: on Poetry*', and has as its central theme Hali's advocacy of his 'natural' style as the only possible medium for the serious and relevant poetry which he considered to be demanded by the circumstances of his time.

Summing up the mixed origins of Urdu with Hali's usual clarity and balance, the first paragraph ends with a memorable image, whose vivid use of everyday 'Hindi' words is both so characteristic of the simplifications entailed by Hali's literary ideals and in such contrast to the Persianized register of Urdu literary criticism apparent from the rest of the passage.

In the second paragraph, Hali — who was naturally very much a Delhi man — attacks the excessive linguistic purism so often associated with the Urdu preciosi of Lucknow. In the third, the same specific target serves to demonstrate Hali's usual good sense in the endless debate as to the 'correct' pronunciation of Arabic loan-words in Urdu, and to illustrate the technicalities of expression involved in any discussion of distinctions of vowel-quality in all languages written in the Arabic script.

The text is based on the edition of Vahid Quraishi, *Muqaddimâ šī'r o šā'irī* (Lahore: Maktaba Jadid, 1953), pp. 199–200.

The main arguments of the *Muqaddimâ* are usefully summarized in A. Bausani, 'Altāf Husain Hālī's ideas on ghazal' in F. Tauer, ed., *Charisteria Orientalia* (Prague: N.C.A.V., 1956), pp. 38–55.

اُردو پر قدرت حاصل کرنے کے لئے صرف دہلی یا لکھنؤ کی زبان کا تکیہ ہی کافی نہیں ہے بلکہ یہ بھی ضرور ہے کہ عربی اور فارسی میں کم سے کم متوسط درجہ کی لیاقت اور نیز ہندی بھاشا میں فی الجملہ دستگاہ بہم پہنچائی جائے۔ اردو زبان کی بنیاد جیسا کہ معلوم ہے ہندی بھاشا پر رکھی گئی ہے۔ اس کے تمام افعال اور تمام حروف اور غالب حصہ اسما کا ہندی سے ماخوذ ہے۔ اور اردو شاعری کی بنا فارسی شاعری پر جو عربی شاعری سے مستفاد ہے قائم ہوئی ہے۔ نیز اردو زبان میں بہت بڑا حصہ اسما کا عربی اور فارسی سے ماخوذ ہے۔ پس اردو زبان کا شاعر جو ہندی بھاشا کو مطلق نہیں جانتا اور محض عربی و فارسی کے تان سے گاڑی چلاتا ہے وہ گویا اپنی گاڑی بجز پہیوں کے منزل مقصود تک پہنچانی چاہتا ہے۔ اور جو عربی فارسی سے نابلد ہے اور صرف ہندی بھاشا یا محض مادری زبان کے بھروسے پر اس بوجھ کا متحمل ہوتا ہے وہ ایک ایسی گاڑی ٹھیلتا ہے جس میں بیل نہیں جوتے گئے۔

زبان کے متعلق ایک اور بات لحاظ کے قابل ہے۔ نیچرل شاعری کے لئے جیسا کہ ظاہر ہے ہماری موجودہ زبان کافی نہیں ہے۔ اس لئے ضرور ہے کہ اس میں وسعت پیدا کی جائے۔ پس اہل لکھنؤ جو زبان کے دائرے کو روز بروز زیادہ تنگ کرتے جاتے ہیں، یہ امر مقننائے وقت کے بالکل خلاف ہے۔ لکھنؤ میں ایک صاحب نے ۱۸۹۰ء میں ایک رسالہ شحر و سخن کے متعلق لکھا ہے اس میں کچھ اوپر پچاس لفظ ایسے لکھے ہیں جن کو خود صاحب رسالہ اور اہل لکھنؤ واجب الترتک خیال کرتے ہیں۔ بعض ان میں سے خاص لکھنؤ کے ساتھ مختص ہیں۔ اہل دہلی کبھی اُس طرح نہیں بولتے جیسے ”اندھیارا“ ”اندھیرے“ کی جگہ۔ ”اجیالا“ ”اُجالے“ کی جگہ۔ ”کیونکر سے“ ”کیونکر“ کی جگہ۔ ایسے الفاظ کا ترک کرنا ہم بھی نہایت مناسب سمجھتے ہیں۔ کیونکہ اس سے لکھنؤ اور دہلی کی زبان میں مطابقت پیدا ہوتی ہے۔ اگر اہل لکھنؤ ایسے الفاظ ترک کرنے پر آمادہ ہوں تو ہم بہت سے الفاظ حاضر کر سکتے ہیں۔ ایسے الفاظ ترک کرنے سے زبان کی وسعت میں بھی کچھ ایسا فرق نہیں آتا۔

اسی رسالہ میں بعض ایسے الفاظ کو واجب الترتک قرار دیا ہے جو اصل زبان کی گریمر یا قیاس لغوی کے خلاف برتے اور بولے جاتے ہیں۔ جیسے ”موسم“ بفتح سین، یا ”میت“ بفتح یاء، یا ”نشا“ بروزن ”وفا“ کہ عربی گریمر یا لغت کے موافق ”موسم“ بروزن ”مسجد“ اور ”میت“ بکسرۃ یاء، اور ”نشأۃ“ بروزن ”وحدت“ ہے لیکن فی الحقیقت یہ ایک غلطی ہے جو اکثر ہمارے عربی دانوں کو ’علم لسان‘ کی نادانقیت سے پیش آتی ہے۔ ان کو یہ معلوم نہیں کہ ایک زبان کے الفاظ دوسری زبان میں منتقل ہو کر کبھی اپنی اصلی صورت پر قائم نہیں رہ سکتے۔ اَلَا مَاشَاءَ اللّٰہُ۔

1 *sirf...*, *balki...*: the re-emphasis of this implicit PA contrast by the characteristic HU enclitics ... *hī*..., ... *bhī*... is to be noted (542b + 846).

1 *dillī yā lakhnāū kī zabān*: the nineteenth century debate between these nicely prescribed two urban standards of correct U usage still has a certain life.

2 *kam se kam mutavassit darje kī liyāqat*: a phrase nicely implying both Hali's views on the need to down-play PA elements in U and his famous personal modesty.

2-4 *hindī bhāṣā*: as so often in U usage, this implies the non-PA 'Hindi' component of U, rather than the modern sense of 'the Hindi language'.

4 *a'āl*: the adaptations of inherited A grammatical terminology to the very different norms of U are outlined in the final note to **10** below.

7 *mutlaq nahīn*: the A adj. *mutlaq* 'absolute' functions in U exactly like the P adv. *hargiz* 'ever' as a strong negative reinforcer.

8 *ke tān*: 'under the pull of', a typically Hali-ish coinage from HU *tānnā* 'to pull', which deliberately sets up the demoticizing vocabulary involved in the expansion of his bullock-cart image.

11 *necral*: this E loan is to be understood in the context not only of Hali's own passionate advocacy of a 'natural' U poetic style, but also of the attacks levelled by traditionalists against his mentor Sir Sayyid, whose attempts to re-interpret Islam in the light of Victorian natural science led his followers to be described as *necarī*, a coinage then much more opprobrious in U than 'naturist' ever was in E.

12 *vus'at*: 'breadth, expansion', an A loan-word nicely serving both to underline Hali's argument in favour of allowing due weight to its 'H element' and to introduce his gradually built-up case against nice Arabicisms in U.

13 *tang karte jāte haiṅ*: 'keep on restricting', a characteristically Delhi-centred expression of resentment at the continuing pretensions of precious Lucknow 'authorities' to determine correct U usage in the light of artificially upheld PA norms.

14 *muqtazā-e vaqt*: 'the demands of the time', a phrase very typical of urgent perceptions of Sir Sayyid and his disciples.

15 *šī'r o sūxan* 'poetry', lit. 'verse & word', a PA copular phrase (842) very common in U.

15 *kuch ūpar pacās*: the obvious rendering 'somewhat over 50' provides a nice instance of the ways in which E phrasal syntax may sometimes happen to coincide with HU patterns.

16 *sāhib-e risālā*: 'the gentleman who wrote the essay', ironically picking up 14 *ek sāhib* at the same time as illustrating a typical U use of the P izafat-phrase format (841).

16 *vājibut-tark*: 'to be eschewed', cf. 18 *tark karnā* 'to eschew'. Such A possessive phrases (741) beginning with *vājib* are often formally comparable with the PA prep. phrases (844) beginning with *qābil-e* which so often indicate U calques from E '-able', e.g. *qābil-e bardāšt* = 'tolerable'. As often in U, however, the A formation is stricter in implication, e.g. *vājibul-qatl* 'deserving of execution'.

16 *ba'ze*: the familiar A *ba'z* 'some' is extended with the P indefinite suf. *-e*, cf. common phrase *ba-qaul-e šaxs-e* 'in someone's words'.

17 When writers on correct U usage move outside the formally studied areas of A and P grammar, they tend to rely simply on feel, as in the support given here by Hali to the standard Delhi forms *andherā* 'darkness', *ujālā* 'light, dawn', *kyonkar* 'how?', vs. Lucknow *andhiyārā*, *ujiyālā*, *kyonkar se*. Cognate forms of the first two pairs are listed in the *CDIAL*, under 386 *andhakāra-* and 1673 * *ujjvālaka-*: these show how, as quite often, the HU area is split down the middle, with 'Delhi' forms resembling those of western NIA languages and 'Lucknow' forms those of the eastern languages.

19 *ham bhī*: the editorial 'we' is much more natural in HU than in modern E usage.

24 *graimar*: long established from elementary E classes as a fully naturalized f. noun in U, where it is much more commonly used than the grander PA copular phrase *sarf o nahv* f.

24–26 Hali's sensible support for the U pronunciations *mausam* 'weather', *mayyat* 'corpse', *našā* 'development', vs. A *mausim*, *mayyit*, *naš'at*, has to be somewhat cumbrously expressed, given the nature of the A script.

The three short vowels *a i u* are indicated by the signs called *fath(â)*, *kasrâ*, *zammâ* in A (= P *zabar*, *zer*, *peš*): hence 24 *ba-fath-e sîn* 'with an "a" on the "s"', 26 *ba-kasrâ-e yâ* 'with an "i" under the "y"'.

An easier way to indicate the pronunciation of A words is by referring to their *vazn*, the pattern according to which they are formed by root-modification through the insertion of vowels: hence 25 *bar-vazn-e 'vafâ'* 'on the pattern of 'vafâ', i.e. -a-â-, *bar-vazn-e 'masjid'* 'on the pattern of 'masjid', i.e. -a-i-, 26 *bar-vazn-e 'vahdat'* 'on the pattern of 'vahdat', i.e. -a--at, indicating the pronunciation of the *tâ marbûtâ* (711) as -t.

27 *'ilm-e lisân*: 'science of language, philology', an *izafat* phrase replaced in modern U by the coinage *lisâniyât* f. 'linguistics' (733).

29 *illâ mās'allâh*: 'except as God pleases', an A formula (743) conventionally used to disclaim any power of the human mind to fathom the mysteries of divine omnipotence. Passage I concludes with a similar P tag.