

Premchand:

Urdū hindī aur hindustānī (1934)

Dhanpat Ray Shrivastava, who wrote under the pen-name 'Premchand', is the single most important figure in the development of a mature narrative style in both Hindi and Urdu. Premchand was born in 1880 near Benares, the son of a village postmaster; he was of the Kayasth caste, and he received the education in Urdu and Persian which qualifies the Kayasth for his traditional role as a record-keeper, scribe, or clerk. Premchand worked as a schoolmaster, then as an inspector of schools; around 1920 he began a literary career, first in Urdu, then changing to Hindi because of his awareness of the emergence of a growing readership whose literacy was in the Devanagari script.

Besides prose fiction, Premchand also wrote a substantial number of essays and journalistic pieces, whose language could be either Sanskritized or Persianized according to subject. His journalistic prose was sometimes marked by a certain banality of style, and English thought patterns often show through the veneer of Indian idiom.

The essay *Urdū hindī aur hindustānī* addresses the problem of an appropriate style of speech for promotion as a national language. Premchand followed the Gandhian ideal of a middle-of-the-road Hindustani vernacular, as against the more specialized style of Hindi and Urdu; but he did not always follow his own prescriptions for the avoidance of a heavily Sanskritized register.

The passage begins by presenting the views of those who favour a *laissez-faire* attitude to the separate development of Hindi and Urdu respectively. Premchand condones such a view when the languages are considered at the regional level, on a par with other vernaculars such as Bengali and Marathi; but he draws a distinction between this function of Hindi/Urdu and the function of a national language, which he says must be a compromise free from an excessive reliance on either Sanskrit or Perso-Arabic loanwords. His main argument is a practical one — that a national language must be accessible and widely comprehensible, and that pedantic etymological considerations have no place in this discussion. By totally ignoring the vital role played by cultural affinities in the choice of linguistic register, Premchand ingenuously arrives at the simplistic conclusion that 'Hindustani' should be adopted for the national role; and by a sleight of hand he recommends that the name of this language might just as well be 'Hindi'.

The text is taken from *Kuch vicār* (Allahabad: Sarasvati Press, 1965), pp.103–105. The best biography of Premchand is Robert Oscar Swan, *Munshi Premchand of Lamhi Village* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1969); for the political background see D.P. Sarin, *Influence of political movements on Hindi literature 1906–1947* (Chandigarh: Panjab University Publication Bureau, 1967), and *LCND*, chapter IV.

देश में ऐसे आदमियों की संख्या कम नहीं है जो उर्दू और हिंदी की अलग अलग और स्वतंत्र उन्नति और विकास के मार्ग में बाधक नहीं होना चाहते । उन्होंने यह मान लिया है कि आरम्भ में इन दोनों के स्वरूपों में चाहे जो कुछ एकता और समानता रही हो, लेकिन फिर भी इस समय दोनों की दोनों जिस रास्ते पर जा रही हैं, उसे देखते हुए इन दोनों में मेल और एकता होना असम्भव ही है । प्रत्येक भाषा की एक प्राकृतिक प्रवृत्ति होती है । उर्दू का फ़ारसी और अरबी के साथ स्वाभाविक सम्बंध है । और हिंदी का संस्कृत तथा प्राकृत के साथ उसी प्रकार का सम्बंध है । उनकी यह प्रवृत्ति हम किसी शक्ति से रोक नहीं सकते । फिर इन दोनों को आपस में मिलाने का प्रयत्न करके हम क्यों व्यर्थ इन दोनों को हानि पहुँचावें ?

यदि उर्दू और हिंदी दोनों अपने आपको अपने जन्म स्थान और प्रचार क्षेत्र तक ही परिमित रखें तो हमें इनकी प्राकृतिक वृद्धि और विकास के सम्बंध में कोई आपत्ति न हो । बँगला, मराठी, गुजराती, तमिल, तेलगु और कन्नड आदि प्रांतीय भाषाओं के सम्बंध में हमें किसी प्रकार की चिंता नहीं है । उन्हें अधिकार है कि वे अपने अंदर चाहे जितनी संस्कृत, अरबी या लैटिन आदि भरती चले । उन भाषाओं के लेखक आदि स्वयं ही इस बात का निर्णय कर सकते हैं ; परन्तु उर्दू और हिन्दी की बात इन सबसे अलग है । यहाँ तो दोनों ही भारतवर्ष की राष्ट्रीय भाषा कहलाने का दावा करती हैं । परंतु वे अपने व्यक्तिगत रूप में राष्ट्रीय आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति नहीं कर सकीं और इसीलिए संयुक्त रूप में स्वयं ही उनका संयोग और मेल आरम्भ हो गया । और दोनों का वह सम्मिलित स्वरूप उत्पन्न हो गया जिसे हम बहुत ठीक तौर पर हिंदुस्तानी ज़बान कहते हैं । वास्तविक बात तो यह है कि भारतवर्ष की राष्ट्रीय भाषा न तो वह उर्दू ही हो सकती है जो अरबी और फारसी के अप्रचलित तथा अपरिचित शब्दों के भार से लदी रहती है और न वह हिंदी ही हो सकती है जो संस्कृत के कठिन शब्दों से लदी हुई होती है । यदि इन दोनों भाषाओं के पक्षपाती और समर्थक आमने सामने खड़े हो कर अपनी साहित्यिक भाषाओं में बातें करें तो शायद एक दूसरे का कुछ भी मतलब न समझ सकें । हमारी राष्ट्रीय भाषा तो वही हो सकती है जिसका आधार सर्व-सामान्य बोधगम्यता हो - जिसे सब लोग सहज में समझ सकें । वह इस बात की क्यों परवाह करने लगी कि अमुक शब्द इसलिए छोड़ दिया जाना चाहिए कि वह फ़ारसी, अरबी अथवा संस्कृत का है ? वह तो केवल यह मानदंड अपने सामने रखती है कि जनसाधारण यह शब्द समझ सकते हैं या नहीं ? और जनसाधारण में हिंदू, मुसलमान, पंजाबी, बंगाली, महाराष्ट्रीय और गुजराती सभी सम्मिलित हैं । यदि कोई शब्द या मुहावरा या पारिभाषिक शब्द जनसाधारण में प्रचलित है तो फिर वह इस बात की परवाह नहीं करती कि वह कहाँ से निकला है और कहाँ से आया है । और यही हिंदुस्तानी है । और जिस प्रकार अँगरेजों की भाषा अँगरेजी, जापान की जापानी, ईरान की ईरानी और चीन की चीनी है, उसी प्रकार हिंदुस्तान की राष्ट्रीय भाषा को इसी तौर पर हिंदुस्तानी कहना केवल उचित ही नहीं, बल्कि आवश्यक भी है । और अगर इस देश को हिंदुस्तान न कह कर केवल हिंद कहें तो इसकी भाषा को हिंदी कह सकते हैं । लेकिन यहाँ की भाषा को उर्दू तो किसी प्रकार कहा ही नहीं जा सकता, जब तक हम हिंदुस्तान को उर्दूस्तान न कहने लगे, जो अब किसी प्रकार सम्भव ही नहीं है । प्राचीन काल के लोग यहाँ की भाषा को हिंदी ही कहते थे ।

1 *sāṅkhyā kam nahīn hai... bādhak nahīn honā cāhte*: the double negative is inelegant; for a similar lapse of style cf. the repetition of 9–10 in *donoh ko*.

2 *unnati aur vikās*: ‘progress and development’. Premchand shows in full measure the H propensity for pairing nouns (usually S loans) of similar or identical meaning: cf. 3 *ektā aur samāntā*, 4 *mel aur ektā*, 9 *janm sthān aur pracār kṣetra*, 10 *vṛddhi aur vikās*, 16 *sahyog aur mel*, 21 *pakṣapātī aur samarthak*, etc.; cf. the U convention of pairing PA words linked with the copular *o* (842).

5–6 *prākṛtik... svābhāvik*: both mean ‘natural’; both are calques from E.

5 *pravṛtti*: ‘tendency, leaning, predilection’ — the word suggests ‘motion towards’, and is thus well chosen to describe the tendency of H and U to look to S and AP respectively for a supply of loanwords.

6 *aur hindī kā sāṅskṛt tathā prākṛt ke sāth*: this phrase demonstrates the distinction between the two words for ‘and’: *aur* is a true cj. with a wide range of functions, while *tathā* simply compounds syntactically parallel nouns within the phrase.

9 *janm sthān aur pracār kṣetra tak hī parimit rakheṅ*: the function of *tak* is restrictive here.

10 *hameṅ... koī āpatti na ho*: ‘we would have no objection’: the subj. suggests that this is hypothetical, and that in fact an objection is about to be raised.

12 *cāhe jitnī sāṅskṛt... bhartī caleṅ*: ‘go on absorbing as much S... as they like’.

14 *yahān to*: as so often, *yahān* has a general demonstrative sense, ‘as regards this situation’, rather than a specifically spacial reference.

15 *rāṣṭrīy bhāṣā*: adj. *rāṣṭrīy* suggests a rather less official status and technical implication than does the nominal compound *rāṣṭra bhāṣā*. The distinction can be imitated in E by exploiting the distinction of upper and lower case letters in ‘national language’ and ‘National Language’ respectively.

16 *unkā sahyog aur mel ārambh ho gayā*: this is a misrepresentation of the actual process, since Hindustani is not a product of a growing together of H and U, but rather the natural state of the vernacular unmodified by the H and U camps.

18 *bhāratvarṣ kī rāṣṭrīy bhāṣā... :* the situation described here as unthinkable has become the status quo in Pakistan and India respectively in the half-century since Premchand was writing.

20 *ladī rahtī hai*: compare this construction with the semantically similar ext. ptc. construction of 21 *ladī huī hotī hai*.

21 *āmne sāmne*: ‘face to face’: *āmne* is a phonetic imitation of *sāmne*, ‘opposite’, but unlike most ‘echo-words’ holds first position in the phrase; cf. *ās-pās*, E ‘dingle-dangle’.

23 *jiskā ādhār sarv-sāmāny bodhgamyatā ho – jise sab log sahaj meṅ samajh sakeṅ*: ‘whose basis should be universal comprehensibility — which everybody could easily understand’. Though here deliberately and somewhat playfully underlining the message of the sentence, this use of a second register to gloss a first is a fairly common feature of H prose. Note how the change of register from formal to simple is here accompanied by a change of syntax from simple to complex (i.e. from adj. clause with simple verb to subject-object clause with adverbially qualified modal verb).

24 *kyoṅ parvāh karne lagī*: the perfect tense expresses a hypothetical situation, as in a conditional sentence. (The f. subject of the verb is *rāṣṭrīy bhāṣā*.)

27 *hindū, musalmān, panjābī, bangālī... :* in the context of a discussion of HU language register, the designations ‘Hindu’ and ‘Muslim’ form natural categories alongside those of the regions.

28 *mahārāṣṭrīy*: the S name for and etymon of ‘Marathi’. The federal state of ‘Maharashtra’ did not exist in Premchand’s time, though the term itself has long been used to designate the cultural area.

29 *kahān se niklā hai aur kahān se āyā hai*: *nikalnā* relates to origin or etymology, *ānā* to subsequent areas of usage.

30 *jis prakār aᅅgrezōᅅ kī bhāᅅā aᅅgrezī . . .*: with characteristic ingenuousness, Premchand proposes a wildly simplistic interpretation of the world's linguistic situation in order to make a rhetorical point. The fact that the language of Iran is called *fārsī*, not *irānī*, is conveniently overlooked.

33 *agar is deᅅ ko . . . keval hind kaheᅅ to iskī bhāᅅā ko hindī kah sakte haiᅅ*: the seriousness of Premchand's argument degenerates even further with this sentence, which begs the question in an astonishingly brazen manner anticipating the gross misrepresentation of the final sentence of the passage.

36 *prācīn kāl*: 'ancient times', here meaning the late medieval period; the commonplace telescoping of historical time in Indian tradition often results in relatively recent dates having great antiquity attributed to them.