

Kausar Niazi:

Urdū zabān kī ahammiyat (1972)

Although officially fostered as the national language of Pakistan, Urdu is spoken as a mother tongue by less than 10% of its citizens: so while some of this passage's contents have been outdated by subsequent political changes, most of its themes are still very much live issues, notably its picture of the implicit rivalry between Urdu and the English of the elite on the one hand, or between Urdu and local languages like Sindhi on the other.

Born in Mianwali (1934), one of the remoter western districts of the Panjab, and consequently speaking Siraiiki as his native language, Maulana Kausar Niazi first became known as a powerful preacher (*ḫatīb*) in Urdu, which is almost universally used for sermons in Pakistan. The reputation thus established drew him to the notice of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (d. 1979), the wealthy Sindhi landlord who, as leader of the People's Party of Pakistan (P.P.P.), dominated Pakistani politics during the years following the secession of Bangladesh in 1971. The heady enthusiasm of the early days of the Bhutto period is reflected in the tone of this passage, taken from the conclusion of an address delivered on the occasion of the centennial celebrations of Oriental College in Lahore, at a time when Kausar Niazi was Minister of Information and Bhutto had yet to exchange the presidency of the country for its premiership.

The first paragraph begins by referring to a preceding translation of a speech made in English by Jinnah in 1948, in which he assured the inhabitants of East Pakistan that Bengali would be given equal status with Urdu. Bhutto's recently announced formula for the solution of the language-problems of the surviving western half of Pakistan is then described, with passing reference to the fierce Sindhi-Urdu language-riots that had prompted it. The second paragraph pays fulsome tribute to the way in which Bhutto had followed the example of Jinnah in deliberately abandoning English in favour of Urdu for his public speeches. The address concludes with a resounding cry for national unity under the new leader.

The style has the oratorical ring to be expected from one of Pakistan's most celebrated public speakers: although included in a collection of articles, the author himself describes this essay as really being more of a speech. The copious use of Perso-Arabic neologisms so characteristic of the formal Urdu learnt by most Pakistanis not at home, but at school and in college, is here put to excellent rhetorical effect: and the concluding sentences of both paragraphs are particularly effective.

The text is taken from '*Barr-e saḡīr kī islāmī saqāfat meḥ urdū zabān kī ahammiyat*', included in the published collection *Andāz-e bayān* (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1975), pp. 182-3.

Some of the issues raised are examined from a different perspective in C. Shackle, 'Language, dialect, and local identity in northern Pakistan', in W.P. Zingel, ed., *Pakistan in its Fourth Decade* (Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 1983), pp. 175-187.

قائدِ عظیم نے جو کچھ ارشاد فرمایا اس پر ان کے بعد آنے والوں نے عمل نہیں کیا۔ اور اس کا نتیجہ ہم سب نے دیکھ لیا ہے۔ ان کے بعد جو بیس برس تک زبان کے مسئلہ پر لوگ جھگڑے کھڑے کرتے رہے۔ اب قائدِ عوام جناب ذوالفقار علی بھٹو کی رہنمائی میں عوامی حکومت نے فیصلہ کیا ہے کہ پاکستان کی سرکاری زبان اور اس کے ساتھ ہی تمام صوبوں کی سرکاری اور رابطے کی زبان اردو ہوگی۔ یہ بھی واضح کر دیا گیا ہے کہ قائدِ عظیم کے فرمان کی روشنی میں ہر انتظامی یونٹ اپنی صوبائی زبان کا تعین کرنے میں آزاد ہے۔ وہ علاقائی ادب و ثقافت کو نشوونما دینے کا بھی کامل اختیار رکھتا ہے۔ قومی اور صوبائی زبانیں ایک ساتھ قدم بقدم آگے بڑھیں گی۔ مگر اس طرح کہ نہ اردو کی مرکزی حیثیت مجروح ہوگی، اور نہ علاقائی زبانوں کے حقوق پامال ہوں گے۔ اس فیصلے پر کچھ وقت تو سنگمہ آرائی ہوئی۔ یار لوگ برس برس کے تعصبات کی وجہ سے کھل کھیلے۔ سندھی اور اردو کے نام پر بھائی نے بھائی کا خون بہایا۔ حالانکہ یہ زبانیں ہی نہیں، ہر زبان نفرت کی نہیں، محبت کی پیغام بر ہوتی ہے۔ خدا کا شکر ہے کہ اب آنکھوں سے تعصب کی پٹی کھل چکی ہے۔ سالوں سے منبوی زبان کا مسئلہ حل ہو چکا ہے۔ اور پاکستانی قوم لسانی اور ثقافتی لحاظ سے اپنی منزل کا تعین کرنے کے بعد پوری ہوش مندی سے سرگرم سفر ہے۔

آپ جانتے ہیں کہ پیپلز پارٹی نے انتخابی مہم کے دوران جس زبان کو اپنایا وہ اردو زبان تھی۔ صدرِ پاکستان نے ملک کے ہر حصے میں اردو زبان کو ہی اپنے خیالات کے اظہار کا ذریعہ بنایا۔ اور ان کی اہم تقاریر سب کی سب اسی زبان میں ہوتی رہیں۔ بلکہ آپ کو یاد ہوگا کہ جس روز انہوں نے ٹوٹے ہوئے جہاز کی ناخدائی قبول کر کے پاکستان کی از سر نو تعمیر کے عزم کا اظہار کیا تھا، تو اپنی پہلی تقریر میں اس چیز پر بڑے تأسف کا اظہار کیا تھا۔ وہ اردو کے بجائے انگریزی میں تقریر کر رہے ہیں۔ اور اس کی ضرورت بھی واضح کر دی تھی۔ صدارت کی ذمہ داریاں سنبھالنے کے بعد انہوں نے جتنی عوامی تقاریر کی ہیں، وہ سب اردو ہی میں ہیں۔ آپ کو یہ بھی معلوم ہے کہ قائدِ عظیم کی مادری زبان گجراتی تھی، اور انہوں نے تمام عسر کام انگریزی زبان میں کیا۔ لیکن جب وہ تخریبِ پاکستان کے لئے اٹھے تو انہوں نے اردو زبان سیکھنا اور اس میں تقریر کرنا شروع کر دیا تھا۔ اصل میں جتنا بڑا کوئی رہتا ہے اتنا زیادہ وہ اپنی قوم کے جذبات اور احساسات کو سمجھتا ہے۔ اور ان جذبات اور احساسات کے مطابق اپنے کو ڈھالنے کی کوشش کرتا ہے۔ ہمارا فرض یہ ہے کہ ہم صدر جناب ذوالفقار علی بھٹو کی قائم کی ہوئی روشنی میں اپنے عمل کا تعین کریں، تاکہ ہماری قوم اور ہمارا ملک بھی ترقی کرے اور ان کے سہارے انفرادی زندگی بھی کامیاب اور بامراد ہو۔

پاکستان پائندہ باد !

- 1 *qāid-e a'zam*: lit. 'The Great Leader', the title by which Jinnah is usually referred to in Pakistan, where the usual E spelling is 'Quaid-e Azam'.
- 1 *iršād farmāyā*: 'directed'. A doubly honorific phrase-verb, composed of A *iršād* 'direction, guidance', and the P-derived verb *farmānā* 'to order, to command' which is frequently used as an honorific replacement for *kahnā* or *karnā* in formal U in imitation of the corresponding P *farmūdan*.
- 1 *un ke ba'd āne-vāloñ ne*: 'those who came after him', a typical use of the inf. ptc. where E would use a relative clause.
- 2 *bīs baras tak*: i.e. until 1968, the year which marked the collapse of the authoritarian regime of Ayub Khan, which had tried to enforce the use of U at the expense of the local languages.
- 3 *qāid-e 'avām janāb zulfiqār 'alī bhutto*: Bhutto assumed the title of 'The People's Leader' as part of his attempt to represent himself as the natural successor to the Quaid-e Azam. While A *janāb* has long been used in P and U as a polite term of address, e.g. *janāb-e man* 'my dear sir', its modern use before names appears to be an imitation of E 'Mr.', like the H use of S *śrī*.
- 4 *'avāmī hukūmat*: i.e. the 'people's government' of Bhutto's P.P.P.
- 5 *tamām sūboñ kī*: 'of all the provinces'. The four provinces of Pakistan and their principal local languages are: Panjab (Panjabi), Sind (Sindhi), N.W.F.P. (Pashto), and Baluchistan (Baluchi).
- 5 *rābite kī zabān*: 'link language', to be used for communication with central government and between the provinces.
- 5 *ye bhī vāzih kar diyā gayā hai*: 'it has also been declared'. The E impersonal passive is often thus imitated in contemporary HU.
- 6 *intizāmī yūniṭ*: 'organizational unit', combining a modern coinage of A origin (but calqued on E) with a straight E loan.
- 7 *'ilāqāī*: 'local', another calque from E common in Pakistani U.
- 7 *kāmil ixtiyār rakhtā hai*: 'has complete authority'. While HU have of course no direct equivalent of E 'to have', *rakhnā* is increasingly employed to fill the gap in such phrasal loans.
- 8 *qadam ba-qadam*: a P prepn. phrase (843).
- 10 *hangāmā-ārāī*: 'unrest', a P-type compound (823) of *hangāmā* 'riot, disturbance' with the pres. stem *ārā-* 'arranging'.
- 10 *baras-hā baras*: 'years and years', incorporating the P p. *-hā* (831b).
- 10 *khul khelnā*: lit. 'to play openly', but with the usual idiomatic sense of 'to come out into the open (with something nasty)'.
- 10 *sindhī aur urdū*: the reference is to the language-riots which had just occurred in Karachi and other parts of Sind between the Sindhi-speaking 'sons of the soil', and the U-speaking immigrants — known as *muhājir* 'refugees' — who have since 1947–48 formed a substantial but only partially assimilated minority in Sind.
- 11 *hālāñki ye zabāneñ hī nahīñ*: 'although these are not just languages', i.e. they are really symbols of ethnicity.
- 12 *paiḡām-bar*: 'message-bearer', vs. the parallel *paiḡām-bar* 'Prophet'.
- 13 *sāloñ se multavī zabān kā masalā*: an example of the fondness for long pre-modifiers in formal U (541).
- 13 *lisāñī aur saqāfatī lihāz se*: 'linguistically and culturally'. When used as a ppn. after a noun *ke lihāz se* has the sense of 'in respect of', but after an adj. *lihāz se* in modern U is hardly more than an adv. marker, like E '-ly'.
- 14 *sar-garm-e safar*: 'actively embarked on its journey', an izafat phrase (841) used to round off the paragraph with suitable grandiloquence.
- 15 *intixābī muhim*: 'election campaign', a straight calque from E.
- 16 *sadr-e pākistān*: 'the President of Pakistan', a standard izafat phrase.

18 *ṭūṭe hue jahāz kī nāxudāi*: ‘the captaincy of the broken vessel’, a reference to the breakaway of Bangladesh. P *nāxudā* ‘ship’s captain’ is a very high-flown word in U, where terms of E or other European origin continue to designate commissioned officers (9).

18 *az sar-e nau*: a P prepn. phrase (843).

19 *‘avāmi taqārīr*: ‘speeches to the people’.

22 Jinnah was born into the Khoja Ismaili community, the followers of the Agha Khan. Formerly concentrated in Gujarat, many Ismailis still have Gujarati or Kacchī (‘Cutchi’), a Sindhi dialect strongly influenced by Gujarati, as their home language. The unstated parallel with the equally Anglicized Bhutto and his Sindhi background would be obvious to the audience.

22 *kām angrezī zabān meṅ kiyā*: an exact reproduction of ‘worked in E’.

23 *tahrīk-e pākistān*: ‘the Pakistan Movement’, another calque from E.

23 The immense biographical literature devoted to Jinnah records many affectionate anecdotes about his difficulties in mastering U quite late in life, e.g. his humble acceptance of his driver’s correction of his Anglicized pronunciation of *t* as *ṭ*.

26 *sadr . . . bhuṭṭo kī qāim kī huī raušnī meṅ*: another example of the sort of long pre-modifier favoured in formal U, cf. 13 above.

27 *hamāri qaum aur hamārā mulk bhī*: ‘both our nation and our country’. Since *qaum* has the double connotation of ‘nation, people’ and ‘religious community’, it is often difficult to decide on the most suitable E rendering: the fusion of the two ideas is, however, of course very much a part of the contemporary South Asian context.

29 *pākistān pāindā bād*: ‘may Pakistan endure!’, a P phrase (834) from the Pakistan national anthem, frequently invoked on public occasions.