

Ramvilas Sharma: *Nirālā kī sāhitya sādhanā* (1972)

The poet Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' (1899–1961) is perhaps the most respected and original Hindi poet of the present century. He belonged to a quartet of poets (the other three being Mahadevi Varma, Jayashankar Prasad and Sumitranandan Pant) whose work constituted the 'reflectionist' style of poetry called *Chāyāvād*; but as his pen-name 'The odd one' implies, Nirala was an individualist not containable by any single school or style. Although his family was from U.P., he was born and raised in Bengal, and his early literary career began in Calcutta. Nirala was much influenced by Tagore, whose receipt of the Nobel prize in 1913 had such a positive impact on Indian writers well beyond the borders of Bengal.

The work of Nirala has attracted a large critical literature in Hindi, of which Ramvilas Sharma's two-volume study is probably the most comprehensive; its title, which equates literary creation with spiritual endeavour, is an indication both of the sentiments underlying much of Nirala's poetry and the reverence it inspires in its critics. The passage given here is taken from a chapter entitled *Bhāṣā aur rāṣṭra*, and deals with the 'national language' debate in which Nirala, as an eloquent but catholic champion of Hindi, was necessarily engaged.

The main argument in this passage centres on the ideal nature of a *rāṣṭrabhāṣā* — is it necessary for such a language to have a rich literature? In an argument diametrically opposed to that of M.P. Dwivedi (12), Nirala maintains that literary use of a language is distinct from its function as a means of spoken communication; and he goes on to defend the literature of Hindi against its critics who compare it unfavourably with that of other Indian languages. Nirala accepts the claims of Bengali to have a superior corpus of modern literature, but is critical of Tagore, Gandhi and others who are less than generous towards the heritage of Hindi and its future role. He suggests that Hindi writers have not been given the prominence they deserve (a point he was to make forcefully to political leaders such as Gandhi and Nehru elsewhere), and looks forward to a time when this situation will be amended.

The highly Sanskritized register of most literary criticism is tempered here by the inclusion of verbatim and indirect quotations from the arguments of the various camps. The citations from Nirala's various journal articles show some influence of his Bengali background; and his almost legendary outspokenness is apparent in his brusque criticisms of those whose views on the language question oppose his own.

The text is taken from *Nirālā kī sāhitya sādhanā*, vol. 2, (Delhi: Rajkamal Prakashan, 1972), pp. 65–66. Nirala's life and poetry is discussed *passim* in Karine Schomer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chhayavad age of Hindi poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); and in the succinct 'Afterword' in David Rubin, trans., *A season on the earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 123–144.

हिन्दी के विरोध में सबसे बड़ा तर्क यह था कि वह एक पिछड़ी हुई भाषा है, साहित्यिक समृद्धि में अन्य भाषाएँ उससे आगे बढ़ी हुई हैं, तब उसे राष्ट्रभाषा के पद पर क्यों बिठाया जाए। इस तर्क का आधार यह मिथ्या कल्पना थी कि राष्ट्रभाषा का व्यवहार मुख्यतः साहित्य के पठन-पाठन के लिए होगा। निराला का कहना था कि साहित्य का प्रश्न
 ५ राष्ट्रभाषा से जुड़ा हुआ है, फिर भी दोनों एक नहीं हैं। "साहित्य और भाषा का प्रश्न बहुत कुछ होते हुए भी बहुत कुछ अलग भी है।" कसौटी यह होनी चाहिए कि राष्ट्रभाषा सरल, सुबोध हो, "सबसे अधिक बोली तथा समझी जाती हो।"

भरतपुर हिंदी साहित्य सम्मेलन में रवीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर ने कहा कि हिंदी को राष्ट्रभाषा बनाना हो तो साहित्य की श्रीवृद्धि करो। हिंदी प्रान्तों में ही अंग्रेज़ी पढ़े-लिखे लोग हिंदी की
 १० उपेक्षा करते हुए पूछते थे - हिंदी में है क्या? उत्तर भारत में मद्रास से शिक्षित युवकों का एक दल यात्रा करने आया। उसमें एक युवक ने कहा कि हिंदी में ऊंचे साहित्य का अभाव है। इन्दौर साहित्य सम्मेलन में बँगला की समृद्धि के मुकाबले हिंदी की दरिद्रता का उल्लेख महात्मा गांधी ने किया।

हिंदी साहित्य की दरिद्रता के इस निरंतर उल्लेख से निराला का क्षुब्ध होना स्वाभाविक
 १५ था। यह उल्लेख अप्रासंगिक था क्योंकि राष्ट्रभाषा का उपयोग मूलतः विभिन्न प्रदेशों की जनता के बीच संपर्क भाषा के रूप में होना था। अंग्रेज़ी को न हटा पाने पर अपनी असफलता पर पर्दा डालने के लिए यह एक अच्छा बहाना था। विश्वज्ञान प्राप्त करने के लिए अंग्रेज़ी को राजभाषा और शिक्षा का माध्यम बनाए रहना चाहिए - यह निष्कर्ष भी हिंदी की दरिद्रता से अपने आप निकलता था। निराला ने बड़े धैर्य से और अनेक बार इस तर्क का
 २० उत्तर दिया।

"विचित्रा" वाले बँगला लेख के प्रसंग में उन्होंने लिखा, "भारतवर्ष के लिए एक साधारण और चलित भाषा का निर्वाचन करते समय यह देखने की आवश्यकता नहीं है कि भारत की प्रधान भाषाओं में साहित्यिक उत्कर्ष किसका बड़ा है। इस विषय में हिंदी किसी प्रान्तीय भाषा से पीछे नहीं है। यद्यपि हम मानते हैं कि बँगला साहित्य कई दृष्टियों से औरों की
 २५ अपेक्षा उत्कृष्ट है, परंतु प्राचीन हिंदी साहित्य का मुकाबला बँगला नहीं कर सकती। ब्रजभाषा का प्रभाव वैष्णव कवियों पर काफ़ी पड़ा है। बँगला में एक रवीन्द्रनाथ हैं, हिंदी में तुलसीदास, सूर, कबीर तीन हैं।" . . .

वैसे तो भारत के हर प्रदेश पर अंग्रेज़ी भाषा का रोब-दाब था, किंतु अन्य प्रदेशों के अंग्रेज़ी पढ़े-लिखे लोग जहाँ अपने साहित्य से परिचित थे, उस पर गर्व करते थे, वहाँ हिंदी प्रदेश के
 ३० अंग्रेज़ी पढ़े-लिखे लोग हिंदी भाषा और साहित्य को उपेक्षा की दृष्टि से देखते थे, हिंदी के प्रति अपने अज्ञान पर उनके मन में ज़रा भी ग्लानि न थी। बँगला, मराठी आदि भाषाओं के साहित्य को विद्वानों ने समृद्ध किया "पर हमारे यहाँ के उच्च शिक्षा प्राप्त विद्वान् हिंदी को देखकर नाक-भौं सिकोड़ते हैं। पिता-पुत्र में पत्र-लेखन का अंग्रेज़ी माध्यम है। यह साहित्यिक चरित्र के पतन की हद है। यहाँ विद्या नहीं, अविद्या का साम्राज्य है।" "यहाँ के
 ३५ अंग्रेज़ी पढ़े लोग करते कुछ नहीं, सिर्फ लंबी-चौड़ी बातें करते हैं। अन्य प्रान्तवालों की तरह वे भी कहते हैं, हिंदी में है क्या!"

- 1 *picharī huī bhāṣā*: 'language which has fallen behind', the ext. ptc. being used as pre-modifier (541).
- 2 *anya bhāṣāēh*: the reference is mainly to Bengali, which was quick to develop a modern literature on the E model through its early contact with the British in Calcutta; and to U, which unlike H had an unbroken line of literary development since Mughal times.
- 6 *bahut kuch*: 'to a large extent'.
- 8 *ṭhākur*: the proper Indian spelling, so preferable to the commonplace H usage which transliterates E 'Tagore' as *ṭaigor*. The -v- of *ravindranāth*, the name by which Tagore is usually known in Bengal, appears as -b- in Bengali, which has no v grapheme.
- 8 *hindī ko rāṣṭrabhāṣā banānā ho*: the impersonal sense of this inf. construction is best translated by a passive — 'if H is to be made the national language'.
- 9 *hindī prāntoñ meñ hī*: *hī* is here not restrictive ('only'), but emphatic: 'in the very H provinces themselves'.
- 10 *hindī meñ hai kyā?*: 'What does H have?', i.e. 'Does H have anything?' — a rhetorical question achieved by transposition.
- 11 *yātrā karne āyā*: because the main context of travel in India has always been pilgrimage, a sense of religious or educational purpose tinges the word *yātrā* and gives it a more emotive sense than E 'journey, travel'.
- 12 *ullekh mahātmā gāndhī ne kiyā*: withholding the logical subject until late in the sentence gives it emphasis, equivalent to E usage with a passive verb — 'was alluded to by Mahatma Gandhi'.
- 15 *rāṣṭrabhāṣā kā upyog... sampark bhāṣā ke rūp meñ honā thā*: a modest aim whose limitations would not be acceptable to all supporters of H.
- 18 *rājbhāṣā*: 'state language', i.e. the language of government and administration, as opposed to *rāṣṭrabhāṣā* 'National Language'.
- 18 *banāe rahnā cāhie*: 'should be maintained'; obl. ptc. *banāe* is invariable in this construction.
- 18 — *yah niṣkarṣ*: this picks up the postulate of the initial main clause in a typical paratactic construction.
- 19 *baṛe dhairya se aur anek bār*: 'with great patience and on numerous occasions': this linking of two adv. phrases with a cj. is for emphatic rhetorical effect, but is unusual in HU and perhaps reflects E usage.
- 21 *vicitrā*: the title of a Bengali periodical.
- 22 *calit bhāṣā*: the meaning of *calit* as 'current' is more common in Bengali than in H, which tends to maintain the S sense 'unsteady'.
- 22 *nirvācan karte samay*: 'while choosing': this ptc. construction with *samay*, lit. 'at the time of .-ing', is especially common in the rhetoric of written and spoken debate.
- 23 *sāhityik utkarṣ kiskā barā hai*: 'the literary prosperity of which one is greatest', i.e. 'which one has the richest literature'.
- 26 *ek ravindranāth haiñ*: 'there is only Rabindranath'. This is a wild exaggeration, as Bengali has a considerable medieval literature as well as a uniquely developed nineteenth century literature (much of which is widely read in H translation also).
- 27 *tulsidās, sūr, kabīr*: the traditional triumvirate of the H literary 'greats', covering respectively the main devotional schools of *rām bhakti*, *kr̥ṣṇa bhakti* and the *nirguṇ bhakti* of the Sant poets.
- 32 *ucc śikṣā prāpt vidvān*: 'highly educated scholars'.
- 33 *nāk-bhaññ sikorte haiñ*: lit. 'pucker their noses and eyebrows', i.e. 'turn up their noses'.
- 33 *āngrezī mādhyañ hai*: the word order emphasizes 'English', as opposed to any other language possible in the context.

35 *āngrezī parhe log*: 'people who can read E', i.e. those literate in E — a contraction of the more usual 28 *āngrezī parhe-likhe log*.

35 *karte kuch nahīn, sirf lambī-caurī bāteñ karte haiñ*: the inversion of object and ptc. in the first clause is for emphasis — 'they don't actually *do* anything, they just speak fine words'.