

## Balmukund Gupta: *Hindī meñ bindī* (1900)

The essayist and journal editor Balmukund Gupta (1865–1907) was in many ways a successor to Harishchandra, with whom he shared a Vaishya background and a schooling in Urdu. As with his older contemporary, much of the lasting interest of his work derives from the broadness of his upbringing: born in the Panjab, he spent much of his life in Calcutta; he translated Bengali and Sanskrit works into Hindi, and in the course of his career in journalism he broached a wide range of subjects from the serious to the frivolous. His views on language were often diametrically opposed to those of such establishment figures as Mahavirprasad Dwivedi (12) and the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (N.P.S.), the Society for the Promulgation of Nagari (i.e. Sanskritized Hindi in the Nagari script) set up in Benares in 1893.

A strong personality shows through Gupta's writing. On the one hand he is a forceful advocate of the use of Hindi, whose cause he championed in the Calcutta journal *Bhāratmitra* which he edited from 1899 to 1907; on the other, he is strongly critical of what he sees as the foolish attempts at the standardization of Hindi style made by Dwivedi and others. He writes with a passion that indicates a strong sense of mission.

Typical of Gupta's *Bhāratmitra* pieces on language is the short article '*Hindī meñ bindī*' which appeared in 1900. The very pithiness of the title is portentous of the acerbity which is to follow, when Gupta criticises the pronouncement of the N.P.S. regarding the use of diacritically marked Nagari characters to transliterate Persian and Arabic phonemes.

Gupta's provocative remarks begin with a mocking statement of the N.P.S.'s proposal to differentiate z and j graphically by the use of dotted characters. His contempt for this recommendation is matched only by his brazen dismissal of the very need for such a practice even in Persian. In the second paragraph he discusses the difficulties even writers of Urdu have in distinguishing the various /z/ forms, and points out that the use of a single dotted Nagari graph for /z/ is an oversimplified attempt at transliterating the extensive range of /z/ characters in the Persian script. The result of the N.P.S. policy, he maintains, would be an anarchic situation in which some people used dotted forms and some did not — a fairly accurate prediction of the present reality, through Gupta's vision of chaos proves to have been rather too apocalyptic.

In the final paragraph, Gupta draws attention to some earlier writers who had contracted the 'sickness' of using dotted Nagari characters, and discusses their use by people who are not literate in Urdu and whose solecisms in the use of the dotted forms betray this ignorance.

The essay is reprinted in Onkar Sarad (ed.), *Bālmukund Gupta ke śreṣṭh nibandh, ciṭṭhe aur khat* (Allahabad: Vividh Bharati Prakashan, 1976), pp. 22–24. For details of Gupta's output see R.S. McGregor, *Hindi literature in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1974) pp.88–89. For the background of the N.P.S., see *LCND*, chapter III.

काशी की नागरी-प्रचारिणी सभा हिन्दी में 'बिन्दी' चलाना चाहती है। यह 'बिन्दी' अक्षर के ऊपर नहीं, नीचे हुआ करेगी। ऐसी 'बिन्दी' लगाने का मतलब यह है कि उससे उर्दू शब्द हिन्दी में शुद्ध लिखे पढ़े जायें। हिन्दी में खाली 'ज' होता है और उर्दू में 'जीम', 'जाल', 'जे' और बड़ी 'जे', 'ज्वाद' और 'जोय'। 'जीम' के सिवा इन सब उर्दू अक्षरों का उच्चारण 'जे' के उच्चारण के तुल्य होता है। 'जे' का उच्चारण जिह्वा के ऊपर के दाँतों के साथ मिलने से होता है। नागरी-प्रचारिणी वाले चाहते हैं कि हिन्दी के 'ज' के नीचे एक बिन्दी लगाकर उर्दू की 'जे' का उच्चारण करें। हिन्दी में ऐसा उच्चारण नहीं है, क्योंकि वास्तव में 'जे' - 'जीम' ही का विकार है। वह फारसी वालों के कण्ठ की खराबी के सिवा और कुछ नहीं है। उस खराबी को नागरी-प्रचारिणी हिन्दी में भी धँसाना चाहती है। परन्तु इस धँसाने से क्या लाभ है, इसका पता ठीक नहीं लगता।

'जे' - 'जाल' की खराबी उर्दू में यहाँ तक है कि बहुत लोग वर्षों शिक्षा पाने तथा लुगातों को कीड़ों की तरह चाट जाने पर भी 'जे' - 'जाल' का भेद ठीक-ठीक नहीं जान सकते। कितनी ही बार वह इस झगड़े में पड़ते हैं कि अमुक शब्द 'जाल' से है या 'जे' से। जब स्वयं उर्दू जानने वालों की यह खराबी है, तो नागरी-प्रचारिणी सभा हिन्दी को पराये काँटों में क्यों घसीटना चाहती है? लज्जत, 'जाल' से होती है, लाजिम 'जे' से और जरूर 'ज्वाद' से और जाहिर 'जोय' से। नागरी प्रचारिणी सभा के रूल से एक बिन्दी लगाने से सबका उच्चारण शुद्ध हो गया! परन्तु इसमें 'जाल', 'ज्वाद' और 'जोय' की क्या पहचान रही? यदि 'जाल' 'ज्वाद' 'जोय' का फर्क रखना मंजूर नहीं है, तो बिन्दी लगाने की जरूरत नहीं और यदि उन सब में भेद समझा जाता है, तो फिर 'जाल' 'ज्वाद' 'जोय' की कुछ पहचान रहनी चाहिये। नागरी-प्रचारिणी सभा वालों से हमारा यह प्रश्न है कि इस बिन्दी से उर्दू न जानने वालों का क्या उपकार होता है? वह कैसे जानेंगे कि किस शब्द के नीचे बिन्दी लगाना चाहिये? क्या आप लोग बिन्दी लगा-लगाकर उर्दू शब्दों का उनके लिये कोष तैयार कर देंगे? और हिन्दी पढ़े हुए उसे मियाँ मिट्ठू की तरह दिन-भर रटा करेंगे? यदि ऐसा होगा तब तो आप लोगों की हिन्दी खुदा के फजल से उर्दू से भी सरल हो जायगी और तीन महीने की जगह तीन-तीये नौ वर्ष में सीखी जायगी और यदि उर्दू न जानने वालों को 'बिन्दी' न आवेगी तो आप लोगों की हिन्दी में लबड़-धौधौ मच जायगी। कोई 'बिन्दी' लगावेगा, कोई नहीं लगावेगा।

बिन्दी की बीमारी नागरी-प्रचारिणी सभा के जन्म के पहले भी लोगों में हो चुकी है। बृन्दावन-निवासी पण्डित राधाचारणजी गोस्वामी ने नागरीदासजी-कृत 'इश्क चमन' छापा था। उसमें उन्होंने उर्दू शब्दों में खूब बिन्दी की भरमार की थी, यहाँ तक कि जिन शब्दों के नीचे बिन्दी नहीं लगानी चाहिये, उनके नीचे भी उन्होंने 'बिन्दी' लगा दी थी। स्वर्गवासी पण्डित प्रतापनारायण मिश्र उसे पढ़ते-पढ़ते लोट-पोट हो गये थे और कहा था कि "यह 'बिन्दी' की बीमारी हिन्दी वालों को अच्छी लगी! यह उनको दूर तक खराब करेगी।" नागरी-प्रचारिणी सभा ही के मेम्बरों में एक बहुत बड़े आदमी हैं, जो अंग्रेजी-हिन्दी के बड़े पण्डित हैं। वह वकील शब्द में 'बड़ा काफ' बोलते थे। वह यह समझते थे कि 'बड़ा काफ' बोलने ही से उर्दू हो जाती है। हमने उनको समझाया कि साहब! वकील 'छोटे काफ' से ही है, बड़े से नहीं। इसी तरह बिन्दी की बीमारी में पड़कर उर्दू न जानने वालों को बड़ी ठोकरें खानी पड़ती हैं।

Despite his palpable prejudice against the PA heritage of U, Gupta's own language in this passage is relatively eclectic in its borrowings. The phonetic background to his arguments can be summarized as follows: (a) Standard U has two graphically distinct phonemes, *q* and *k*, whereas H effectively has only *k*, from which *q* can be graphically differentiated only by a diacritic. (b) Similarly, U has two strongly distinct phonemes *j* and *z*, the latter represented by the four graphemes *zāl*, *ze*, *zvad* and *zoe* plus a semi-distinct *ž* (*že*); H effectively has only *j*, with *z* differentiated only by a diacritic. Gupta argues against the alleged necessity of distinguishing graphically the semi-distinct *z* and *q* in H; but his argument wrongly assumes that the purpose of the diacritic marks is to distinguish PA graphemes, whereas in fact it distinguishes U phonemes (511, 512).

1 *kāśī*: 'the resplendent' — this is the classical name, preferred in religious contexts, for the town otherwise known as *vārāṇasī* (whose MIA form *banāras* (E 'Benares') is now out of fashion in Sanskritized H, though common in current speech).

1 *calānā*: 'bring into use, introduce': cf. the increasingly disparaging 2 *lagānā* 'impose', 9 *dhānsānā* 'to stick in'.

1 *akṣar ke ūpar nahīn, nice huā karegī*: 'will not be above the character [as *anusvār*, the only S convention to use the dot] but below it'. The use of *huā karnā*, implying 'regular occurrence', has a sarcastic edge: 'is to be regularly placed below the character, [if you please!]'.  
4 *barī je*: adj. designations of this kind are essential in H when two or more U morphemes are assimilated to a single one in H; cf. 34 '*barā kāf*' and 35 '*choṭā kāf*' for *qāf* and *kāf* respectively.

5 *jihvā ke ūpar ke dāntōn ke sāth milne se*: 'by the tongue meeting the upper teeth' — *ūpar ke* is an adj. phrase qualifying *dāntōn* which, like *jihvā ke*, qualifies *milne se*.

6 *nāgarī-pracārīṇī vāle*: 'the N.P.S. people' — a deliberately curt and unflattering reference. Cf. 8 *phārsī vāloṅ*.

7 *hindī meṅ aisā uccāraṅ nahīn hai*: this begs the question entirely, since it allows of no differentiation between H and S phonologies.

7 '*je*' – '*jīm*' *kā hī vikār hai*: here and in the following sentence the author betrays the depth of his prejudice, in which non-S phonemes are dismissed as aberrations. Note the separation of subject *je* by punctuation, a clumsy device which careful drafting would have made unnecessary.

12 *kīroṅ kī tarah*: HU has not needed the help of E in arriving at the image of the 'book-worm', a literal and voracious reality in the libraries of tropical countries.

13 *amuk śabd 'jāl' se hai yā 'je' se*: 'so and such a word is [spelt] with *zāl* or *ze*'. There is no convenient HU equivalent for E 'to spell'.

14 *parāye kāntōn meṅ ghasīṅnā*: 'to drag amongst someone else's thorns', i.e. to involve unnecessarily in the predicaments of others. 'N.P.S.' is subject, 'H' is object.

16 *nāgarī pracārīṇī sabhā ke rūl se*: a delightfully unselfconscious borrowing of E 'rule', given the concentration in this passage on the implications of word origins (922).

18 *jarūrat*: a nicely incorporated example supporting Gupta's thesis that diacritical marks are redundant in transcribing PA words into Nagari.

20 *is bindī se urdū na jānne vāloṅ kā kyā upkār hai?*: this rhetorical question has a straightforward answer, namely that the dot distinguishes *z* from *j* in loanwords.

21 *vah kaise jāneṅge ki kis śabd ke nice bindī lagānā cāhiye?*: a legitimate answer to this would be, 'By the same minimal degree of knowledge of etymological spelling conventions that is necessary for the correct differentiation of e.g. *ś* and *ṣ* in S words used in H'. Gupta's implication that this knowledge depends on actual literacy in PA is an overstatement.

21 *bindī lagā-lagākar*: 'by constantly applying the dot' (542a).

22 *miyān miṭṭhū*: 'Mr Sweet-talker', pet name for a parrot (E 'Pretty Polly')

23 *hindī khudā ke phajal urdū se bhī saral ho jāegī*: 'by God's grace H will become even easier than U' — '*saral*' is of course sarcastic, with an additional irony in the specifically U *khudā ke phajal*.

24 *tīn tīye nau*: 'three times three, nine'.

26 *koī 'bindī' lagāvegā, koī nahīn lagāvegā*: an accurate prediction, but one whose outcome causes no more confusion than does e.g. the use of intervocalic -v- as a variant form for -y- (or zero) in e.g. *lagāvegā*.

28 *nāgarīdās-kr̥t 'īšk caman'*: 'Nagaridas' was the pen-name of Savantsingh (1699–1764), Rajah of the Rajput state of Kishangarh; he relinquished the throne in 1757 to live a life of devotion to Radha (or 'Nagari', 'the urbane one'). He wrote much Braj Bhāṣā verse, but used P for his poem '*īṣq caman* or '*Garden of Love*'.

32 *yah bindī kī bīmārī hindī vāloṅ ko acchī lagī*: 'the H-vālās have got a really good dose of this 'dot' disease!'.

35 *sāhab!*: a good example of a technically honorific expression being used for precisely the opposite effect.