Abul Kalam Azad: *Tarjumān ul Qurān* (1930)

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958) was one of the most notable Muslim figures in the Independence movement. Born in Mecca, he was brought as an infant to Calcutta by his father, who ensured his training in the orthodox Islamic disciplines. As his chosen pen-name ‘Azad’ indicates, however, he rapidly struck out on his own. In 1912 he founded the Urdu weekly *al-Hilāl ‘The Crescent’*, whose pan-Islamic line soon brought him into conflict with the authorities in Calcutta. As a result of the temporary convergence of Muslim and Hindu political aspirations in the anti-British agitation of 1920, Azad came into close association with Gandhi, and soon became one of the most prominent members of the Congress party. After Independence, Azad was made Education Minister, an office which he held until his death in 1958, and which he used to establish such important institutions of Indian cultural life as the Sahitya Akademi.

Azad’s background meant that his natural medium of expression was Urdu rather than the English preferred by so many Congress leaders: and as a committed Muslim, as well as being a politician, he was particularly concerned with the explanation of Islam to his Indian co-religionists. His greatest achievement in this area was the *Tarjumān ul Qurān*, completed in 1930, in which he sought to provide an easily intelligible Urdu translation of the Quran, with a commentary.

The passage is taken from that part of the introduction which describes the setbacks Azad had to face in the production of the *Tarjumān ul Qurān* as a result of the measures taken against him by the authorities on account of his political activities. Besides recording the harassment suffered by so many nationalist intellectuals at the time (1919–21), the passage also highlights some of the intrinsic difficulties of Urdu book-production. Azad, having done his best while in detention to get the text of his manuscript into order by having it typed, describes how he was then diverted during his release by the immediate demands of his journal. His efforts to get the text of the book finally produced in calligraphy were then tragically frustrated by the seizure and destruction of all his papers. It was to be nine years before the work was finally published.

The style of the passage is governed by the considerable influence of English syntax and phrasal patterns characteristic of so much everyday Urdu prose over the last sixty years or so, although familiar English legal and political terms appear in the Persianized guise of their coined Urdu equivalents.


اس خیال سے کو مسودہ ہیں جنہاں سے مربوطہ مرتبہ مہاں اور گذشہ دوسرے شکنے کے
حران کا پاہہ تو نشین مبین کسی پر، مین سے ایروں ہوئے اور چاہے کہ اسے شاہپ کرا
مزروع کر دیا گیا۔ پہلی برس کو 1949 میں یہ نتیجہ سے زیادہ حضرت شاہپ کا گاہا
24 دسمبر 1949 کو حکومت سے گھیرے رہ گیا، اور اپنے ضعافت و اضافے کی سیاس
کا روحانی راد سے دور ہو گیا۔ مین سے دو وقت سماا جا کہا ہی کہ اس کے بارے
میں طریقہ کاری کا کہ پہنچا ہے۔ اور چنان ہو سکتا کہ یہ تشکیل ہوں ہے۔ اب اللال سے سیاسی دہشت کی صدایہ
بڑھا سے جلد دل ہو گیا تکہ پر آیا ہے۔ یہ ہیں مین نہ ہن مزروعہ کے نتے کے نتے
یہ فلک کرا۔ لوگ یہ خیال کہ ہی پر نہیں ہے کہ حضرت باہمہ کہ سرزمین میں مسئول پر گا، اور یہ
کہن اس کی سیاسی بھی دنیا میں کو کسی دوسرے طرف نہا ہے مذاہب ہما

لیکن 1941 میں جب مفل سے ملزم ہے تجھے انقلاب کے لئے تفاوت مزروعہ بھا
الیک گئے اسی اشعار کے سلہ کا ایک بھاگا پرنا۔ پہلے ہی بچے کہ پہچان کے سلہ لوک
بین ایسی ہی جنہاں اس کے ملازمت کا کل ہے اس کا بہت خوش ہے۔ یہ ہیں مین کی کتاب کے ہر
بھر ہے۔ ینکو کش مزروعہ بھا کا میں ہے۔ مین سے کہ یہ خیال ہے۔ یہ ہیں کیبت مزروعہ بھا
ہے۔

لیکن وقت کا فیصلہ اب کیہ میرے ظالم صحت

1949 کے اواخر میں حکومت کی سرزمین مشابہت کے مورج کا پہلی گھنہ، اور
اپ نہ آگیا جیسے حکومت بھی اپنی میں مسائل کام میں لئےکے 20 اگست کس سے سے پہلے حکومت
بھی اکثر ایس ہے وا، ار ان تمام حالات کی خاصت قانون قرار دے دیا جا کر ہی مزروعہ کی سرزمین میں
میں نظر ہے۔ سیاسی قانون کے ملازمت قانون کے اجبار کا موضع دے دیا اور ایک

2001 کو میں پہلی رات گھنہ کے سلہ کے سلہ میں جنگ کے سلہ کے سلہ میں جنگ کے سلہ کے
اس میں ویکی طالب علمی کے استعمال میں معتقادات دلیل سمجھی، یہ کہ کب مضمون
ہے۔ یہ کہ کب سمجھی، اور ان سے کہ کب ایک ایک کب کب مضمون موجود میں مضمون کی کتاب

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1. *is xiyāl se ki...* ‘with the idea that...’. As regularly in HU syntax, a long subordinate clause headed by *ki* is introduced by a demonstrative, hence the common Indian E ‘with this idea that...’.

2. *tāip karānā:* ‘to get it typed’.

4. *rihā kar diyā:* ‘released’. *rihā karnā* is an established HU legal term, like many of the words and phrases used in this passage.

5. *ye vaqt vo thā ki...:* ‘this was the time when...’.

5. *harakat:* ‘movement, action’, a looser term than the related A loan *8 tahrīk* which is regularly used in modern U as a translation of E ‘movement’ in the political sense.

6. *mavād:* normally meaning ‘material’ in U, as in 27 below. Here the term is rather vague in sense, perhaps ‘basis’.

6. *taiyār:* the spelling with *toe* in place of the usual *te* is a careful Arabicism, still sometimes used in U.

6. *jahān tak musalmānōn kā ta‘alluq thā:* lit. ‘so far as the Muslims’ connexion went’, i.e. ‘so far as the Muslims were concerned’. This very common use of *ta‘alluq* after *jahān tak* is an example of the way in which so many U constructions have a one-to-one equivalence with an E construction, thus representing a particular type of loan-translation.


7. *buland hōne:* ‘to be raised’. *P buland* is regularly used in U as a grander equivalent of HU *ūnhā*.

8. *natiţā ye niklā ki...:* the standard U equivalent of E ‘the result was that...’.


9. *nigāh:* lit. ‘gaze’, a P loan, equivalent in this phrase-verb to HU *ānkha uṭhānā*.

11. *tāip kī chāpāli:* ‘printing in type’, as opposed to 12 *kitābat* ‘calligraphy’, which is still the preferred method of reproduction for U books in India and Pakistan.

12. *matān:* ‘text’, i.e. the A text of the Quran, as opposed to the U translation and commentary.

16. *avāxīr:* ‘last days’, a specialized broken plural (734d) of *āxīr*. The antonym is *avāil* ‘first days’, p. of *avval*.

16. *muntahā-e ‘urūj:* ‘its highest point’, lit. ‘the height of its zenith’. The ease with which the izafat can be used to link near-synonyms often leads to redundant hyperbole of this kind in U.

17. *kām mēn īnā:* ‘to employ, to deploy’, a common HU phrase-verb.

17. *hukūmat-e bangāl:* ‘the government of Bengal’. The U terminology of political institutions abounds in izafat phrases of this type, e.g. the pre-1947 *hukūmat-e hind* ‘Government of India’, *qaisar-e hind* ‘Emperor of India’, etc.

18. *xilāf-e gānnūn:* ‘against the law, illegal’, another izafat phrase, this time from the copious repertoire of legal terminology.

19. *‘adām-mutabā‘at-e gānnūn:* ‘non-compliance with the law’, whose first element, the A *‘adām* ‘non-existence, lack’, also appears in the common U compound 22 *‘adām-maujūdāgī* ‘absence’. The prevalence of izafat phrases, often composed of strings of barely comprehensible A nouns, in U legalese was a major target for attack by the nineteenth century protagonists of H (?).

20. *ba‘z dīgar rufa đa-e bangāl:* ‘some other colleagues from Bengal’. The frequent use of such hyper-Persianisms in this type of written U style lends some justification to the criticisms laid against it from the H side: here *bangāl ke kuch aur rafiq(oh)* really would do just as well.

21. *pres:* a common HU loan from E, replaced in formal U by 27 *matba‘*, from A.

ba-dastūr: a P prep. phrase (843).

tafsīr: the technical term for a commentary on the Quran. Commentaries on other texts, e.g. the Divān of Ghalib, are termed tašrīh in U.

īlmī: like the noun īlm, this adj. embraces a wide range of senses in U, from 'scientific' to 'intellectual' or 'scholarly', as here.

mere bar-xilāf: 'against me', equivalent to mere xilāf, but incorporating the P prep. bar (843).

muqaddamā calānā: 'to issue a suit', a phrase-verb standard in U legalese.

talāšī: 'search' in the legal sense, vs. the more general talāš.

jo log āe the, un meh koi āisā āsā āisā na thā jo...: an illustration of the loose parataxis so characteristic of the HU relative-clause construction, vs. E 'none of those who came was...'.

jo cīz bhi: 'even the slightest thing'.

uthā le gae: 'they removed and carried away'. Here uthā is an independent abs., while le and gae are linked components of the familiar modal compound le jānā.

kāpiyān: 'copy-books', often used in HU as the equivalent of E 'exercise-books', but here presumably 'copies', i.e. the litho-forms prepared by writing in Indian ink on specially prepared transparent paper by calligraphers for the subsequent printing of U books by lithography, until its later replacement by photo-offset printing.


milā dīn: lit. 'joined', i.e. 'shoved into'.