

## 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 harrassment 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.

The text is taken from *Tarjumān ul Qurān* (Lahore: Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons, 1947), pp.5–6, somewhat freely translated in Syed Abdul Latif, *The Tarjumān al-Qur’ān* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), pp. xxviii–xxix.

I.H. Azad Faruqi, *The Tarjuman al-Qur’an* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982) is a short critical study of the work’s background and contents.

اس خیال سے کہ مسودہ بہتر حالت میں مرتب ہو جائے اور اگر کسی دوسرے شخص کے حوالے کیا جائے تو تصحیح میں آسانی ہو، میں نے اردو ٹائپ رائٹر منگوا کر اسے ٹائپ کرانا شروع کر دیا تھا۔ چنانچہ دسمبر ۱۹۱۹ء میں نصف سے زیادہ حصہ ٹائپ ہو چکا تھا۔

۲۷ دسمبر ۱۹۱۹ء کو حکومت نے مجھے رہا کر دیا، اور اب طباعت و اشاعت کی تمام رکاوٹیں راہ سے دور ہو گئیں۔ لیکن یہ وہ وقت تھا کہ ملک میں ایک عام سیاسی حرکت کا مواد طیار ہو رہا تھا، اور جہاں تک مسلمانوں کا تعلق ہے، اہلال کی سیاسی دعوت کی صدائے بازگشت ہر گوشے سے بلند ہونے لگی تھی۔ میرے لئے ممکن نہ تھا کہ وقت کے تقاضے سے تداخل کرتا۔ نتیجہ یہ نکلا کہ رہا ہوتے ہی تحریکِ لاتعاون کی سرگرمیوں میں مشغول ہو گیا، اور عرصہ تک اس کی مہلت ہی نہیں ملی کہ کسی دوسری طرف نگاہ اٹھا سکتا۔

۱۰ لیکن ۱۹۲۱ء میں جب ملک کے ہر گوشے سے ترجمان القرآن کے لئے تقاضہ شروع ہوا تو مجھے اس کی اشاعت کے لئے آمادہ ہو جانا پڑا۔ چونکہ ٹائپ کی سہولتیں اس کے لئے موزوں نہیں سمجھی گئی تھی، اس لئے کتابت کا انتظام کیا گیا۔ پہلے متن کی کتابت کرائی گئی، پھر ترجمہ لکھوانا شروع کیا۔ نومبر ۱۹۲۱ء میں متن کی کتابت ختم ہو چکی تھی۔ ترجمہ کی کتابت شروع ہوئی تھی۔

۱۵ لیکن وقت کا فیصلہ اب بھی میرے خلاف تھا!

۲۰ ۱۹۲۱ء کے اواخر میں تحریکِ لاتعاون کی سرگرمیاں منہبائے عروج تک پہنچ گئی تھیں، اور اب ناگزیر تھا کہ حکومت بھی اپنے تمام وسائل کام میں لائے۔ ۲۰ نومبر کو سب سے پہلے حکومت بینکال نے قدم اٹھایا، اور ان تمام مجالس کو خلافِ قانون قرار دے دیا جو تحریک کی سرگرمیوں میں مشغول تھیں۔ اس اقدام نے کانگریس کو عدمِ متابعتِ قانون کے اجراء کا موقع دے دیا، اور ۱۰ دسمبر ۱۹۲۱ء کو بعض دیگر رفقائے بینکال کے ساتھ مجھے بھی گرفتار کر لیا گیا۔

۲۵ اس مرتبہ میری گرفتاری پریس کے انتظامات میں خلل نہیں ڈال سکتی تھی، کیونکہ کتاب مکمل موجود تھی، اور میں نے اس کا پورا انتظام کر لیا تھا کہ میری عدم موجودگی میں بھی کام بدستور جاری رہے۔ لیکن گرفتاری کے بعد جو واقعہ پیش آیا، وہ اس انسانہ کی آخری المناکی ہے۔ اس کی وجہ سے نہ صرف ترجمان القرآن اور تفسیر کی اشاعت رک گئی، بلکہ میری علمی زندگی کے دلولے اٹھ رہے ہو گئے!

۳۰ گرفتاری کے بعد جب حکومت نے محسوس کیا کہ میرے برخلاف مقدمہ چلانے کے لئے کافی مواد موجود نہیں ہے، تو اسے مواد کی جستجو ہوئی، اور اس لئے تیسری مرتبہ میرے مکان اور مطبع کی تلاشی لی گئی۔ تلاشی کے لئے جو لوگ آئے تھے، ان میں کوئی شخص ایسا نہ تھا جو اردو یا عربی و فارسی کی استعداد رکھتا ہو۔ جو چیز بھی ان زبانوں میں لکھی ہوئی ملی، انہوں نے خیال کیا اس میں کوئی نہ کوئی بات حکومت کے خلاف ضرور ہوگی۔ نتیجہ یہ نکلا کہ قلمی مسودات کا تمام ذخیرہ اٹھا لے گئے، حتیٰ کہ ترجمان القرآن کی تمام لکھی ہوئی کتابیں بھی توڑ مروڑ کر مسودات کے ڈھیر میں ملا دیں!

- 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 musalmānoḥ 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.
- 6 *da'vat*: here in its original A sense of 'call to action', rather than the usual modern HU sense of 'invitation, party'.
- 6-7 *sadā-e bāz-gašt*: 'call for its return', an izafat phrase (841).
- 7 *buland hone*: 'to be raised'. *P buland* is regularly used in U as a grander equivalent of HU *ūncā*.
- 8 *natijā ye niklā ki...*: the standard U equivalent of E 'the result was that...':
- 8 *tahrīk-e lā-ta'āvun*: a straightforward PA calque from the E 'Non-cooperation Movement', the great anti-British campaign mounted by Gandhi in 1920.
- 9 *nigāh*: lit. 'gaze', a P loan, equivalent in this phrase-verb to HU *ānkh uṭhānā*.
- 11 *tāip kī chapāi*: '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 *matan*: 'text', i.e. the A text of the Quran, as opposed to the U translation and commentary.
- 16 *avāxir*: 'last days', a specialized broken plural (734d) of *āxir*. 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 meḥ lānā*: '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 qānūn*: 'against the law, illegal', another izafat phrase: this time from the copious repertoire of legal terminology.
- 19 *'adam-mutāba'at-e qānūn*: 'non-compliance with the law', whose first element, the A *'adam* 'non-existence, lack', also appears in the common U compound 22 *'adam-maujūdagī* '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 (7).
- 20 *ba'z dīgar rufaḡā-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 rafīq(oḥ)* really would do just as well.
- 21 *pres*: a common HU loan from E, replaced in formal U by 27 *matba'*, from A.
- 21 *xalal dālnā*: 'to cause an upset', a common U phrase-verb.

- 22 *ba-dastūr*: a P prepn. phrase (843).
- 24 *tafsīr*: the technical term for a commentary on the Quran. Commentaries on other texts, e.g. the *Divān* of Ghalib, are termed *taśrīh* in U.
- 24 *'ilmī*: like the noun *'ilm*, this adj. embraces a wide range of senses in U, from 'scientific' to 'intellectual' or 'scholarly', as here.
- 26 *mere bar-xilāf*: 'against me', equivalent to *mere xilāf*, but incorporating the P prepn. *bar* (843).
- 26 *muqaddamā calānā*: 'to issue a suit', a phrase-verb standard in U legalese.
- 28 *talāšī*: 'search' in the legal sense, vs. the more general *talāš*.
- 28 *jo log āe the, un meḥ koī aisā šaxs aisā 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...'.  
 29 *jo cīz bhī*: 'even the slightest thing'.
- 30 *uṭhā le gae*: 'they removed and carried away'. Here *uṭhā* is an independent abs., while *le* and *gae* are linked components of the familiar modal compound *le jānā*.
- 31 *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.
- 31 *toṛ maroṛ-kar*: 'forcibly, rudely', lit. 'breaking and twisting', a common jingle-compound (524).
- 31 *milā dīn*: lit. 'joined', i.e. 'shoved into'.