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Sir Sayyid, Maulana Azad and the uses of Urdu*

David Lelyveld**

I make a pact with you, Walt Whitman -
I have detested you long enough.
. . .
It was you that broke the new wood,
Now is a time for carving.
We have one sap and one root -
Let there be commerce between us.

Ezra Pound

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, independent India's first Minister of Education, probably didn't expect a warm welcome when he came to Aligarh Muslim University to address its convocation on the 20th February, 1949.[1] He understood that he had fences to mend and also that he would have to deliver some unpopular pronouncements about the university's future in the wake of Partition. For many years Azad had been a fierce critic of the Aligarh movement: first as a bastion of loyalty to British rule and later as a major force for the creation of Pakistan. In return, Azad claimed, he had even received death threats from what he called "the Aligarh party".[2] In the days of the Khilafat struggle, Azad had kept a wary distance from his allies, the Ali Brothers,

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not least, perhaps, because of their Aligarh formation.[3] But now Aligarh Muslim University was in good, reliable hands of a new vice-chancellor, Zakir Husain, a stalwart of the nationalist movement, who made the case that the well-being of Muslims in post-partition India was to a considerable extent bound up with the viability of Aligarh as a center of Muslim education.[4]

Maulana Azad's position as Minister of Education was remarkable in itself because of all the founding figures of independent India he was virtually unique as someone who had not been through the mill of colonial education, had not gone to one of those schools or colleges, had not made the "pilgrimage" to Europe. What English he had was self-taught — as an adult, according to one source, in a British prison. Yet by all accounts, he was a deeply erudite man. His own education, as reported through a series of orally transmitted autobiographical accounts, started in Mecca, where he was born, we are told, in 1888. His father was a prominent religious scholar, preacher and sufi pir, originally from an old Delhi ulama family. His mother was also from a prominent religious family, said to be from Medina. According to at least one account attributed to Azad, her language was Arabic, and she not did like people speaking Urdu in the house.[5]

Whether or not Azad's first language was really Arabic, he was from an early age deeply grounded in a rigorous Islamic education in Arabic. Persian came next, and what Urdu he learned was thanks to an older sister's stories and some help later on from his father and some of his father's devotees as well as a few printed books. After the family moved to India, perhaps when he was about ten years old, first to Calcutta, then to Bombay, then back to Calcutta, he was in a position to learn Urdu more thoroughly, if only in places where Urdu was one language among many and not the most prominent.[6] Along the way, he made a point of learning Turkish, some French, and finally English — picking his way through the dictionary as he read the English Bible alongside Persian and Urdu translations and then moving on to newspapers with the help of a dictionary. Clearly a man of prodigious talents, he went on to read widely in all these languages, and in the years before 1947, when he was president of the Indian National Congress, his English appears to have been good enough, with a little

help, to negotiate at the highest levels with the British authorities about the conditions for India's independence. But it was as a writer and orator in Urdu that Azad achieved his greatest prominence. Of course, it was in Urdu that he addressed the convocation at Aligarh in 1949.

At the outset of his address, Azad recalled that he had visited Aligarh for the first time some thirty-six years earlier, soon after starting his Urdu journal *Al-Hilāl*.[7] He was strongly opposed then to the "political inertia" initiated in 1888 by Aligarh's founder Sayyid Ahmad Khan (Sir Syed), who urged the Muslims of India to stay away from the Indian National Congress. But, Azad now declared, he had always admired Sir Syed's bold leadership in the fields of education and social reform as well as Hindu–Muslim good will. In the face of conservative Muslim resistance, the college at Aligarh was founded to promote European learning among Muslims, along with religious education, and to serve as "an intellectual and cultural center in harmony with the progressive spirit of the times." *Tahẕib al-akhlāq*, the journal that Sir Syed founded on his return from England in 1870, served as the basis for contemporary Urdu language and literature. Thanks to these initiatives, Azad said, Urdu is now capable of expressing the most subtle and difficult concepts, or in Azad's characteristic diction, "*daqīq sē daqīq muṭāḷib*".

Now that India is independent, Azad told the students, Aligarh University must adapt to new conditions. It should maintain its traditions of being open to all as well as promoting Islamic learning, but it must do so in the spirit of *umūmiyat*, universality.[8] And while continuing to study and advance the cause of Urdu literature, students at Aligarh should also participate in the development of Hindi. Muslims, he said, had just as much a right to claim Hindi as Hindus do, just as Hindus have a right to Urdu. Muslims have a history of cultivating multiple languages and literatures. The literature of Braj, for example, benefited from the contribution of Muslim writers and the patronage of Muslim rulers. Citing Gandhi's efforts to promote Hindustani such that "every Indian should know both the Urdu and Devanagri scripts", Azad called on Muslims to take the lead by learning both scripts. He also suggested that they'd better start studying Hindi literature.

* * *

Over a century and a half prior to Azad's 1949 address to the students at Aligarh, the British colonial regime had engaged in a formidable enterprise seeking to identify, analyze and deploy a finite set of languages for the purposes of political and social control.[9] As "objects of official requisition", these languages, according to H.H. Wilson, Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, could be divided into two classes: first Urdu or Hindustani (two names for the same thing), and second, all the rest — that is, languages with clear geographical demarcations. Hindustani was in a class by itself by virtue of being "loosely spread, and at considerable intervals, over the surface" of India. Identified with "the Mohammadan conquerors" and "the Mohammadan courts", it was widely used "after a fashion" in government offices, the army and among merchants. Since the beginning of the 19th century, Wilson noted, British scholars had prepared grammars, dictionaries and other textbooks for the training of civilian and military officials. "Native Hindustani scholars", recruited as instructors, had prepared "useful works" that were printed and have remained popular.[10]

In a series of official decrees culminating in 1839, Persian lost its official status in the courts and government offices of British India. In the North-Western Provinces and some other areas the new official language was "Hindustani in Persian character".[11] In contrast to the other regional languages summoned into "official requisition", the adoption of Urdu made possible a great deal of continuity with Persian clerical skills with respect to script, format and terminology. That year, a newly appointed young clerk (naib munshi) in the Agra Collector's office named Sayyid Ahmad wrote a grammatical primer of the Urdu language to encourage East India Company officials (*ahālīyān-e sarkār kampanī*) to participate in the dissemination of the Urdu language widespread and to use it in administering justice to the people.[12] Sayyid Ahmad also prepared a handbook of office procedures and a guide to prepare candidates for the newly instituted examinations for the post of munsif (civil magistrate). Only the last of these was printed, but by that time Sayyid Ahmad had begun to publish other works on diverse topics, some in Persian and some in Urdu, outside of his official capacity. With his older brother in Delhi, he participated in the publication of a weekly Urdu newspaper. The Delhi press, owned by

the brothers, also published other work, including the first printed collection of Ghalib's poetry.[13]

* * *

All of these works were printed by lithography, a method which allowed books to be produced by traditional calligraphers and in a format that was close to the Persian manuscript tradition. Sayyid Ahmad's first major Urdu work, *Āṣār us-Ṣanādīd* (1847), an ambitious account of Delhi, was founded on earlier Persian prototypes, more an album (*Muraqqa'*), guidebook, gazetteer and biographical dictionary (*taẕkira*) than a historical narrative. Interspersed throughout with long extracts of poetry, mostly in Persian, the Urdu style is suffused with Persian language and rhetoric, not easily translatable into English and not, presumably, addressed primarily to a foreign audience.[14] After detailed and illustrated descriptions of the buildings of Delhi, *Āṣār us-Ṣanādīd* goes on to a brief description of the Urdu language, which is described as a result of bargaining and exchange, sauda sulaf, among speakers of diverse languages brought to a high level of literary expression by the great 18th century poets Mir and Sauda and by the general urdupan of the people of Delhi. Delhi is to Urdu, he writes, what Shiraz was to Persian. Others from outside Delhi — no doubt Sayyid Ahmad is thinking especially of Lucknow — have corrupted the language with excessive Persian words and constructions, but good Urdu is to be found in conversation among the *ahl-i zubān* of Delhi.[15]

A second version of Sayyid Ahmad's Delhi book came out seven years later with a significantly different account of Urdu, more carefully organized, less lively and conversational in style. It consists of eleven numbered paragraphs. The first paragraphs present a historical chronology keyed to various political regimes leading up to the time of Shah Jahan in the seventeenth century when Persian-speaking Muslims and Hindi-speaking Hindus created a mixed language associated with the army and the royal court, the *urdū-e mu'allā*. Gradually this language acquired a standard of culture, *tahzīb*, and regularity, *ārāstagī*, that eventually enabled the great poets Mir and Sauda to achieve a degree of clarity. Sayyid Ahmad identifies a similar achievement in prose with the writing of the Fort William College

munshi, Mir Amman and the Urdu translators of the Qur'ān, Abdul Qadir and Rafi ud-din. The later paragraphs present some features of Urdu poetry and word games.[16] Different as they are, both accounts of the Urdu language are notable for their emphasis on literary achievement and the absence of what might be called political claims for Urdu. The colonial intervention is visible in the idea that Urdu must be identified and described, but Urdu is taken as an already realized cultural achievement. It is one language among others, but it has its own standards, manifested mostly in poetry. The exception is the prose of Mir Amman, written under British auspices, and the late 18th-century translations of the Qur'an, which mark a development suggestive of the transformations in ideas of language that took place in Reformation Europe and connect a contemporary spoken language to the sacred text of Islam.[17]

The Great Rebellion of 1857, especially its terrible consequences for Sayyid Ahmad's city of Delhi, marks a sharp turning point not only in his conscious ideas about Urdu but also in what he did with it. In the immediate aftermath of 1857, he issued a series of publications, including *Āsbāb-e baġẖāwat-i Hind* (Causes of the Indian Revolt) and *An Account of the Loyal Mahomedans of India,* both of them in moveable type, which could accommodate both English and Urdu in the same format. Shortly afterwards, according to his biographer Altaf Husain Hali, Sayyid Ahmad drew on compensation and reward money that he received for siding with the British in 1857 to purchase a printing press from Rurki for the considerable sum of Rs. 8000.[18] Posted in Moradabad at the time, he undertook the project of writing a commentary on the Bible as a way of defending Islam but also reconciling Christians and Muslims in the wake of the violence of the rebellion. When he was transferred to Ghazipur in 1862, he took along this expensive equipment and hired a staff to assist him in his various projects, including an Englishman to prepare the English text and a Jew from Calcutta to help him with the Hebrew. *The Mahomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible,* came out in two parts over the next two years, but was never completed. Using separate type fonts that Sayyid Ahmad had acquired for this purpose, it was printed multilingually in English and Urdu, with a good deal of Arabic and even some Hebrew. That was not something that would have been easy to achieve with handwritten lithography.[19]

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's printing press went on to publish a myriad of works over the remainder of his life, starting with the proceedings and translated texts of the Scientific Society, which he founded in Ghazipur in 1864 and shifted to Aligarh the following year, when he was transferred there. The Scientific Society undertook an ambitious, if short-lived project to translate a broad range of historical, scientific and agricultural texts into Urdu. It also published a weekly journal, later known as the Aligarh Institute Gazette, much of it in bilingual columns of English and Urdu. Following Sayyid Ahmad's return from England in 1870, he launched the journal *Tahẕīb al-akhlāq*, also known as The Mohammedan Social Reformer, which consisted largely of essays, all in Urdu, many of them based on eighteenth-century English prototypes, such as Addison and Steele. Although Sayyid Ahmad always insisted that he did not know English, he had ways of arranging, probably through oral translations by others, to extract what he wanted from English texts,[20] just as significantly was his free use of a conversational style.[21]

Among Sayyid Ahmad's many other publications, probably most important was *Taṣānīf- i Aḥmadīyah*, his multi-volume commentary on the Qur'an. Contrary to the general practice of Urdu printing, these publications were printed in moveable type, which Sayyid Ahmad considered more appropriate to a modern enterprise than lithography because it relied more on the regularity of machine production as opposed to the individual skills of a calligrapher.[22]

As early as 1867, Sayyid Ahmad had promoted the idea of an Urdu medium university. During his trip to England, Sayyid Ahmad had become all the more convinced that it was necessary to transfer the knowledge of modern Europe into the Urdu language. "Those who are sincerely concerned about Hindustan," he wrote from England in 1870, "should know that its progress depends only on making available the entire spectrum of knowledge of the various sciences in their own language".[23] The central enterprise of what came to be known as the Aligarh movement was the college started there in 1875. Formally known as the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, the original plan was to have two sections, one conducted in English and one in Urdu.

Shortly before Sayyid Ahmad's journey to England, he encountered an unexpected obstacle to his enterprise: the demand that Urdu not only be replaced by Hindi, particularly the *devanāgari* writing system, but also with Sanskrit derived vocabulary.[24] On his journey from Banaras to Bombay, he noted and recorded what he perceived to be a pervasive use of Urdu and its close relationship in sentence structure and vocabulary to other Indian languages, such as Gujarati. The demand for Hindi remained a persistent irritation as he made his way to London and appears to be one reason, among others, for his shift of focus to the educational advancement of Muslims in particular.[25]

The journals, societies, schools and colleges that Sayyid Ahmad initiated were organized around donations and membership subscriptions. Although the main aim was to establish a measure of autonomy apart from the colonial power, these enterprises accepted private support from British officials and eventually government funding. A major feature of these organizations was the public meeting, which consisted mostly of orations by Sayyid Ahmad and others. Hali devotes a section of his biography of Sayyid Ahmad Khan to "public speaking" — the word is transliterated — and public meetings (*majmu`a-i `ām*). A "speech" or "lecture" — again he uses the English words — has far more influence, he says, than the written word because people read individually in different settings and therefore have different responses, whereas "the effect of a speech [here, however, he uses the word *taqrīr*] falls upon the whole gathering collectively and simultaneously". Without mentioning the traditions of religious oratory, Hali claims that Sayyid Ahmad was the first person in Hindustan to introduce public speaking in a language other than English. (By Hindustan he probably means the region between Punjab and Bengal.) Although there were some great Bengali orators, so far as he has heard, they all spoke in English. For Hali, who describes his own first experience of hearing Sayyid Ahmad speak in Lahore, in 1874, to an audience said to number over 10,000 to raise funds for the Aligarh College, such oratory was a vivid, new experience. "Although public speeches now seem to be everyday things, Sir Sayyid's introduction of speechmaking was completely new to ordinary Hindustanis".[26]

Much as Sayyid Ahmad Khan did to advance the cause of Urdu and to extend the repertoire of its uses, he ultimately became

discouraged. By 1881, he had abandoned the hope for the whole project of translation and vernacular education on the grounds that the language of the rulers, in this case English, would prevail and that the only hope for Indians was to adapt to the dominant culture of the British. Only through English could they attain higher positions in the government or participate in international trade.[27] The following year he went even further, testifying to the Hunter Education Commission that Urdu was inherently unfit for modern knowledge because it was almost impossible to avoid exaggeration and figurative language. "As long as our community does not by means of English education, become familiar with the exactness of thought and unlearn the looseness of expression, our language cannot be the means of high mental and moral training."[28] Finally, in an article published just days before his death in 1898, Sayyid Ahmad Khan responded to the revival of the "old, dead matter" of the campaign to replace Urdu with Hindi as an official language for the courts in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. Since there is a larger number of Urdu publications, he claimed, and the use of Urdu is widespread in the private lives of Hindus, especially Kayasths, as well as Muslims, the introduction of Hindi would be disruptive. Technical legal terms are largely confined to specialists, not the general public. In any case, he argued, as education spreads, the language of the courts would eventually be English.[29]

* * *

According to some of the contradictory accounts of Maulana Azad's early years, 1898, the year of Sir Syed's death was about the same time that his family settled in Calcutta. He might have been about ten years old at the time. He is said to have remembered seeing a journal with the news of Sir Syed's death, including a picture of the great man.[30] Whether or not any of this is accurate, a case can be made that Sayyid Ahmad Khan played a large role in laying the ground work for Azad's later work, especially with respect to Urdu. Sayyid Ahmad had participated prominently in the introduction of printing and the publication of books, journals and newspapers; the official role of Urdu in the judicial and civil administration of large parts of India; the active public sphere of organizations and public meetings; and the use of Urdu as a medium of instruction in new kinds of educational institutions. He had also played a role in discourses about language

and languages, the place of Urdu in relation to Hindi and of both of them in relation to the hegemonic status of English. He had also played an important role in developing new genres of Urdu writing, such as the essay, with an altered lexicon and sentence structure.

In some respects, Sir Syed and Maulana Azad, though coming from opposite ends of the 19th century, shared a similar background. Both identified with Delhi, even though Azad only came to live there in the last decade of his life — as Minister of Education. Both men made much of their ancestors' links to the Mughal court, though in Azad's case some of those links were antagonistic. Both also claimed spiritual and intellectual descent from the great 18th century Delhi theologian, Shah Wali Ullah, and both were great admirers of the Delhi poet Mirza Ghalib.[31] The education that Maulana Azad received from and under the direction of his father was in many respects a similar, though more rigorous version of what Sir Syed had received nearly a century before. In 1903, Azad's name appears in print as Abul Kalam Muhiuddin Ahmad Sahib Azad Dehlvi.[32] If, as Sir Syed had declared, Delhi was the Shiraz of Urdu, then identifying with it may make a claim to linguistic authenticity as one of the *ahl-i zubān*. For all their differences, then, you might say that they spoke the same language.

But the relationship was more specific and direct than one of shared background. As a very young man, Azad was deeply attracted to Sir Syed's writings. He is quoted as saying that he held on to every single word like a disciple taking in the discourse of a spiritual guide. Since this enthusiastic interest represented a considerable departure from the ideas of his father, a strong defender of *taqlīd*, that is the authority of established religious interpretations, Azad read in his bed secretly and late into the night. But somehow supplied with ample money for books, Azad not only visited local bookshops but asked for publications from Lahore and Aligarh including collections of *Tahẕīb al-akhlāq*, essays and lectures, the commentary on the Qur'an. He was particularly attracted to the fact that these works were printed by typography rather than lithography, so he made great efforts to get the original editions, including Sayyid Ahmad's account of his travels to Europe that had been published in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*. He also purchased the works of other Aligarh writers and waited anxiously for delivery of the newly published biography of his hero by Altaf Husain Hali. This

was published in 1901, when Azad was supposedly about thirteen years old.[33]

In addition to being drawn to Sir Syed's exercise of rational, independent judgment and open endorsement of contemporary European natural sciences, Azad was attracted as well by the relatively unadorned, conversational style of Sir Syed's prose and the mechanical regularity of the typography that Sir Syed used for most of his publications. He was also drawn into the intellectual disputations Sir Syed had stimulated. Azad's father was a popular and compelling preacher, but now he had another example of oratory in the printed texts of Sir Syed's "lectures". Azad emulated these examples by sending in articles to various Urdu publications in different parts of India, often defending Sir Syed from his critics.[34]

The young Azad also travelled to far flung places like Lahore and Bombay to attend the conferences of the major Muslim organizations of the time, where he participated as a speaker. One of these organizations was the Anjuman-i Taraqqi Urdu, a branch of the Muhammadan Educational Conference, devoted, as its name indicates, to the development of Urdu, partly in response to the increasing prominence of Hindi. One of the major tasks of the Anjuman was to translate works from other languages into Urdu, and the young Azad, perhaps just fifteen years old, enthusiastically offered his services as a translator of Arabic and Persian works to the Anjuman's secretary Maulana Shiblī Nu'mānī, a close associate of Sir Syed and former Aligarh professor of Arabic, though often a critical voice in the movement[35]

The same year that Azad connected with Shibli and the Anjuman, he started his own journal, *Lisān us-Ṣidq*, which was intended to continue what had been started with *Tahẕīb al-akhlāq* in establishing an intellectual discourse in Urdu. He departed from Sir Syed, however — or rather returned to Sir Syed's earlier ideas — in his strong advocacy of translation as a way of raising the capacity of Urdu as a language for technical and abstract ideas and as the future national language (*mulki zubān*). He noted that Sir Syed gave up on the translation project after his journey to England and instead concentrated his efforts on establishing the Aligarh College to promote English

education among Muslims. That may have been a wise strategy at the time, but it is no longer necessary. He also responded to Shibli's critique of a translation project on the grounds that, unlike the Abbasid Caliphate, the Urdu reading community doesn't have the resources to promote such an enterprise. On the contrary, Azad argued, the availability of printing and the spread of education has created a sufficient audience for the publication of books to be a viable economic enterprise, which need not rely on government support.[36]

Azad's prose during this early period partakes of Sir Syed's free sentence structure and willingness to use English words. But Azad had another influence that was probably of equal importance to his language: his access to contemporary Arabic journalism and other modern publications. His argument for the viability of translation emphasizes the publishing enterprises of Cairo and Beirut. He also praises the publication of an Arabic encyclopedia and proposes a similar effort for Urdu. In another article, he makes the point that there are Arabic translations and books about Sir Syed himself, an example of the wide exchange of knowledge that he wanted to promote.[37]

In the years that followed, while Maulana Azad turned against Sayyid Ahmad and the "Aligarh Party", the influence of his early allegiance remained, partly by way of this very opposition, but also more positively in the projects that he undertook and the ways he sought to carry them through. His journal, *Al-Ḥilāl*, started in 1912, vociferously distanced itself from Sir Syed's political and religious ideas and used a language meant to display his total command of the Arabic lexicon. But the journal's format bears the mark of his earlier attraction to the Aligarh publications. For example, Azad strongly advocated the use of typography over lithography, machine production over individual craft, using the same sort of naskh typeface that Sayyid Ahmad had employed a half century earlier, though considerably improved in clarity.[38] Azad's Tarjumañ ul-Qur'añ may owe something to Sir Syed's own commentary.[39]

* * *

In his speech at Aligarh in 1949, Maulana Azad denied any necessary congruence between linguistic and religious identities — Urdu as Muslim, Hindi as Hindu — but he also made no claim that Hindi

and Urdu are a single language or that they should converge into one, the national language of India, or that one or the other was already, in fact, the national language. In the decade before partition, there had been a concerted effort by the Indian National Congress, All-India Radio and other institutions to promote a unified Hindustani, but it had died with Partition.[40] Azad had supported this idea of Hindustani, though his actual literary and oratorical practice made few compromises with Hindi. Now, implying instead a concept of Urdu as a language in itself represented a retreat from any idea of a unified national language that would partake of Urdu's linguistic idiom and literary achievement.

Maulana Azad's address at Aligarh came in the midst of the crucial constitutional debates about language policies for independent India. Already the battle for Hindustani combining Hindi and Urdu and empowering both writing systems had been lost in the preliminary deliberations of the Congress party. When the matter came up before the Constituent Assembly, Azad was appointed to the Drafting Committee to determine the final wording of the relevant constitutional provisions. In the face of unrelenting hostility to Urdu and any compromise with Urdu in the form of Hindustani or recognition of Urdu script, Azad resigned. On 14 September, he arose to give his summation of the language provisions of the constitution, speaking in what the Constituent Assembly records as "Hindustani" and reports in English translation. All the other speakers of the day, including the uncompromising supporters of a purified Hindi, Raghu Vira and Ravi Shankar Shukla, spoke in English.[41]

Azad began by saying that he shared Gandhiji's belief that English should be replaced as the language of official business as soon as possible. Now, however, he accepted that in most cases it would take at least fifteen years to reach that goal. For over twenty-five years, he had argued that the goal should be to let the common frame of Hindi and Urdu grow and develop without official restraints and open to whatever speakers and writers might choose to do with it. Only a language which is open to change, that has amplitude and flexibility — *wus`at aur lacak* — could be a language for the whole country. And Azad made clear that ultimately that language is in fact Urdu, whatever it may be called — a language "born and bred and brought up in

India", "the mother-tongue of millions of Hindus and Muslims", that continues to be the "medium of expression between different provinces", a living language, not the artificially constructed one that was being imposed on the country.

As a concession to such views, the Constitution included Urdu on its Eighth Schedule of recognized languages — along with Sanskrit. This is the only mention of Urdu in the document. And there is a single mention of Hindustani in Article 351: Directive for development of the Hindi language:

> It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.[42]

What was left to Urdu, at least in India, was its status as a minority right, a right to government supported educational facilities, for example, and one that was almost immediately ignored, leaving most of Urdu education to private religious institutions. As Minister of Education, Maulana Azad had only limited opportunity to intervene on behalf of Urdu, since education was mostly in the hands of the separate states. And deeply demoralized, Azad was not inspired to continue what had been his major contribution to Urdu, his own use of it as a great writer. He had once argued that Urdu did not need government sponsorship to succeed in the world of print capitalism, and he probably shared Sir Syed's notion that the language belonged ultimately to a relatively small, cultivated section of the population, the *ahl-i zubān*. On the other hand, he also wanted a language that was open to wide influences and free of what he called narrow-minded purism. Perhaps Hindi could eventually be such a language. But what Azad certainly did not want is what Sir Syed conceded in his later years and has persisted throughout the years since independence: the enduring domination of English.

Notes

[1] "Address to the Aligarh Muslim University, 1949", *Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Selected Speeches and Writings,* ed. Syed Shahabuddin (Gurgaon: Hope India Publications, 2007), pp. 130–141; a partial text of the Urdu original, with some significant differences, is available in Aẕād kī taqrīreṉ (Dihlī: Nayu Taj Āfis, 1964), pp. 204–11. I have not found a full Urdu text. C.M. Naim has suggested to me that Azad may well have given the address without a written text. The Urdu may have been someone's effort to transcribe what he said, while the English would have been an official publication prepared at the Ministry of Education.

[2]Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom: The Complete Version* (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 1988), p. 8.

[3] Ian Henderson Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad, an Intellectual and Religious Biography*, Gail Minault, and Christian W. Troll, eds (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 267; Gail Minault, The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 42; *'Abdurrazzāq Malīhḥbādī. Zīkr-i Āzād: Maulaṉā Abulkalaṁ Āzād kī rifaqat men aṛtīs sal¯* (Dihlī: Ejūkeshnal Pablishing Hā'uṣ, 2006), pp. 134–35, 248.

[4] For Zakir Husain's statement, see *Aligarh Megzīn: Aligarh Number* (1953–54 to 1954–55), p. 4.

[5] For biographical information, I have relied on Douglas, Abul Kalam Azad, an Intellectual and Religious Biography and *Abulkalām Āzād, Āzād kī kahānī ḵẖūd Āzād kī zabānī. Bah ravāyat Maliḥābādī* (Dehlī: Maktabah ashā'at al-qurān, 1965). On how Azad learned English, see Malīḥābādī, *Zīkr-i Āzād*, pp. 128–9; Douglas, pp. 54, 151. Aijaz Ahmad makes a strong case for doubting the accuracy and authenticity of Malīḥābādī's text; Aijaz Ahmad, "Azad's Careers: Roads Taken and not Taken", in his *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia* (London: Verso, 2000), pp. 78–80. This essay goes into greater detail about the confusing and contrary accounts of Azad's early years; see for example the note about when Azad learned English, p. 336, n. 36.

[6] Aijaz Ahmad, ibid., says that Azad was only two years old when his family returned to India because this is what Humayun Kabir indicates in *India Wins Freedom*, p. 2. The date given in Kabir's book, however, could be a misunderstanding on his part or a misprint. And it is quite

possible that the date of Azad's birth could have been significantly earlier than 1888 and that his knowledge or memory of what his age was at significant points in his early life was inexact.

[7] Azad is said to have visited the Aligarh College in January 1915 as part of a delegation of ulama who had undertaken to assess the quality of its instruction in Theology. His verdict was quite positive. S.K. Bhatnagar, *History of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh* (Bombay: Sir Syed Hall, Aligarh Muslim University, Asia Publishing House, 1969), pp. 307–08. Unfortunately no primary source is offered for this information.

[8] The English (p. 137) text departs from the Urdu (p. 297), loc. cit., endnote 1. Urdu: "... *ta`1īm kī nau`īyat meṉ `umūmiyat hōnī cāhiyē*." English: "... the education for a secular and democratic state must be secular". A better translation would be, "education in its nature must be universal".

[9] See my article, "Colonial Knowledge and the Fate of Hindustani", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp. 665–682. For a perceptive study of the role of the colonial state with respect to Indian languages, particularly Marathi, see Veena Naregal, Language Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

[10] H.H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms ... of British India, from the Arabic, Persian, Hindustani and Other Languages: Compiled and Published Under the Authority of ... the Court of Directors of the East-India Company* (London: W.H. Allen & Co, 1855), pp. xix, xxiv.

[11] Douglas Dewar, *A Hand-Book to the English Pre-Mutiny Records in the Government Record Rooms of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh* (Allahabad: Printed by the superintendent, Government Press, United Provinces, 1920), p. 7.

[12] Sayyid Aḥmad Khaṉ,. *Qavā'īd-i ṣarf o naḥv-i zabañ-i Urdū*, ed. Abu Salman Shahjahanpuri (Karācī: Idārah-yi Taṣnīf o Taḥqīq-i Pākistān, 1990), p. 15.

[13] For further details, see my "Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Public Sphere: Urdu Print and Oratory in Nineteenth century India", in Agnieszka Kuczkiewicz-Fras, ed. *Islamicate Traditions in South Asia: Themes from Culture and History* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2013).

[14] Ibid. See also C.M. Naim, "Syed Ahmad and His Two Books Called

'Asar-al-Sanadid'", *Modern Asian Studies*, 45, pp. 669–708. For a fuller examination of the history of printing of Urdu and Hindi in the nineteenth century, see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India.* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007).

[15] See my "Sauda sulaf: Urdu in two versions of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Asaru's-Sanadid", Annual of Urdu Studies* (2011), pp. 21–38.

[16] Ibid.

[17] See Mehr Afshan Farooqi, "Quranic translations and the development of Urdu prose", in Francesca Orsini, ed. *Before the Divide: Hindi and Urdu Literary Culture* (Hyderabad: Orient Black Swan, 2010), pp. 222–49; cf. Naregal, Language Politics, pp. 39–40.

[18] Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥāli, *Ḥayāt-i Javīd*, reprint ed. (Lahore: `Ishrat Publishing House, 1965) [1901], pp. 118, 130. Rurki was a center for iron manufactures. See also Iftikhar `Ālam Khan, *Sir Sayyid aur Scientific Society* (Delhi: Maktaba Jami`a, 2000), p. 15.

[19] See my *"Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Public Sphere"*.

[20] Muhammad Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 342–3.

[21] C. Shackle, and Rupert Snell. *Hindi and Urdu since 1800: A Common Reader* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990), p. 99.

[22] Ibid. See also Sayyid Ahmad's comments about the typography as opposed to calligraphy in *Proceedings No. I of the Scientific Society, Ghazeepore* (1864), p. 28.

[23] Syed Ahmed Khan, *A Voyage to Modernism,* tr. Mushirul Hasan and Nishat Zaidi (Delhi: Primus Books, 2011), p. 185.

[24] Christopher R. King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in the Nineteenth Century North India.* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 128–29. See also my *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 97–99.

[25] Syed Ahmed Khan, *A Voyage to Modernism*, pp. 82–4; *Ḥāli, Ḥayāt-i Javīd*, pp. 141–2. For a fuller discussion see *Iftikẖār 'Alām Kẖān, Sar Sayyid Aḥmad Kẖān aur Jadīdiyat* (Delhi: Educational Publishing

House, 2013), especially pp. 122–68.

[26] Hāli, *Ḥayāt-i Javīd*, pp. 193, 640–51; see my "Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Public Sphere".

[27] Sayyid Ahmad Khan, "Hamāri ta`alīm aur hamāri zubān", *Tahẕīb al-aḵẖlāq*, 1298 H. [1881] in Muḥammad Ismā'īl Pānīpatī, ed. *Maqalāt-i Sar Sayyid,* (Lāhaur: Majlis-i Taraqqī-yi Adab, 1962), vol. 8, pp. 34–41.

[28] See my *Aligarh's First Generation*, pp. 206–7.

[29] *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 19 March, 1898, in *'Abbās, Aṣgẖar, Sar Sayyid kī ṣaḥāfat*. (Dillī: Anjumana Taraqqī-yi Urdū, Hind, 1975), pp. 283–6.

[30] *Āzād kī kahānī*, p. 228.

[31] Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad*, pp. 55, 197.

[32] "Report Anjuman-i Taraqqi-i Urdu", May 1903, in Shiblī Nu'mānī. *Bāqiyāt-i Shiblī* (Lāhaur: Majlis-i taraqqī-yi adab, 1965), p. 63.

[33] *Āzād kī kahānī*, pp. 229–34; but note Aijaz Ahmad's critique of this source (above note 5).

[34] Ibid. pp. 252–312. The chronology of these accounts is not clear.

[35] Ibid, pp. 281–2.

[36] Abū Salmān Shāhjahānpūrī. *Urdū kī taraqqī meṇ Maulānā Āzād kā ḥissah: Urdū zabān kī taraqqī meṇ Maulānā Abulkalām Āzād kī kẖiḍmāt, un ke afkār aur 'ilmī ifādāt kā ta'āruf.* (Naī Dihlī: Anjuman Taraqqī-yi Urdū, Hind, 1988), pp. 66–79. These pages largely consist of quotations from *Lisān us-Ṣidq*, August–September, 1904, and April–May, 1905.

[37] "*Mumalīk Islāmiyā aur Sayyid Aḥmad Khāni Khayalāt", Wakīl (Amritsar), 1904, in Āzād, Armagẖaṇ-i Āzād: Maulānā Abulkalaṁ Āzād kā kalām aur un ke ibtidā'ī maẕạmīn,* ed. Abū Salmaṉ Shāhjahānpūrī (Karācī: Maktabah al-Shāhid, 1972), pp. 232–37.

[38] Shāhjahānpūrī. *Urdū kī taraqqī meṉ Maulānā Āzād kā ḥissah*, pp. 87–94; see the notice on the front page of many issues of the revived *Al-Ḥilal,* reprint ed. (Lakhna'ū : Uttar Pradesh Urdū Akādmī, 1988), jild 7 (1927).

[39] Douglas, *Abul Kalam Azad*, pp. 155, 214 (fn. 52).

[40] I have examined aspects of these developments in "The Fate of Hindustani: Colonial Knowledge and the Project of a National Language", in C. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer, eds. *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), and "Talking the National Language: Hindi/Urdu/Hindustani in Indian Broadcasting and Cinema", in Sujata Patel, ed. *Thinking Social Science in India: Essays in Honor of Alice Thorner* (New Delhi: Sage, 2002), pp. 355–66.

[41] Constituent Assembly Debates (Proceedings) — Volume IX (Wednesday, the 14th September, 1949). *http://164.100.47.132/LssNew/constituent/vol9p34.html* [Accessed November 11, 2013]. Cf. *Āzād kī taqrīreṉ*, pp. 282–87.

[42] Constitutional Provisions: Official Language Related Part-17 of the Constitution of India, राजभाषा विभाग (Department of Official Language) *http://www.rajbhasha.nic.in/GOLPContent.aspx?t=enconst*.