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Contents

Book of the Month

From Hindi to Urdu

by

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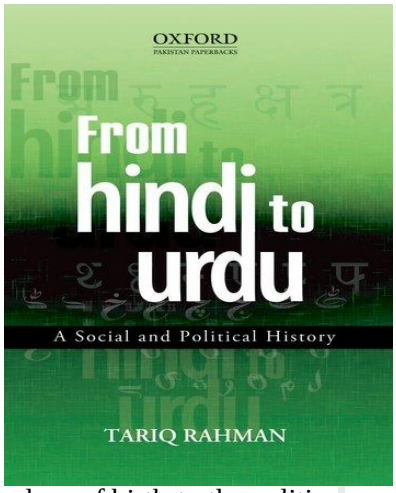


Description of the Book

This is the first social and political history of Urdu. It analyzes the historiography of the language-narratives about its names, linguistic ancestry, place of birth-to the politics of identity construction among the Hindus and Muslims of India during the last two centuries. More importantly, and for the first time, it provides a historical account of the use of Urdu in social domains such as employment, education, printing and publishing, radio, films and television etc. These accounts are connected with the expression of Hindu and Muslim identity politics during the last two centuries.

This is a history of the evolution of Urdu from a common language of Indian Hindus and Muslims from the fifteenth till the eighteenth centuries to its standardization into two languages: Persianised Urdu and Sanskritised Hindi. The writer looks at narratives of the names, theories of genealogy and places of origin of the language in relation to the political imperatives of the identity politics of Hindus and Muslims during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In short, the historiography is analyzed with reference to its political and ideological dimensions which is a new angle of analysis in the linguistic history of Urdu.

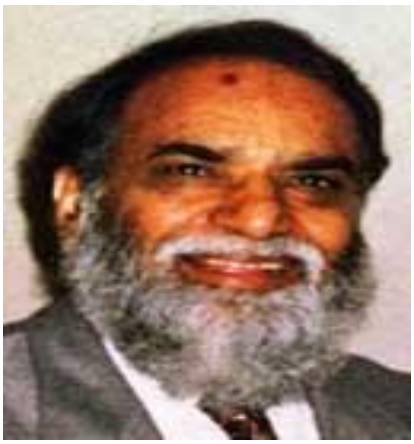
This is also the first history of the use of Urdu in social domains: employment in courts, administration, educational institutions, printing and publication, radio, films etc. The point is to provide a historical narrative of such used and, more importantly, to relate this to the identity construction which inevitably flowed from it. Thus, this social history of the language is also a political history.

AUTHOR DESCRIPTION

Tariq Rahman is Distinguished National Professor & Director, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He holds an MA (Political Science) from Peshawar University, MA (English Literature and History) -(1880-1920) from Sheffield University, PhD (English Literature) from Sheffield University and his M.Litt (Linguistics) from Strathclyde University.

Personality of the Month

Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood



Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmoodborn 1940, is a Pakistani nuclear engineer and a scholar on Islamic studies. Having spent a distinguished career in PAEC, he founded the Ummah Tameer-e-Nau (UTN) in 1999– a right-wing organization that was banned and sanctioned by the United States in 2001. Mehmood was among those who were listed and sanctioned by the al-Qaeda sanction committee in December 2001. Having been cleared by the FIA, he has been living in anonymity in Islamabad, authoring books on the relationship between Islam and science.

Life and Education

Mahmood was born in Amritsar, Punjab, British India to the Punjabi family. There are conflicting reports on concerning his date of birth; his personal admission noted the birth year as 1940, while the UN reports estimated as 1938. His father, Chaudhry Muhammad Sharif, was a local *Zamindar* (lit. feudal lord). His family emigrated from India to Pakistan in an events following the Religious violence in India in 1947; the family settled in Lahore, Punjab.

After graduating with distinctions from a local high school standing at top of his class, Mehmood was awarded scholarship and enrolled at the famed University to study electrical engineering. After spending a semester, he made a transfer to University of Engineering and Technology in Lahore, and graduated with bachelor's degree with honors in electrical engineering in 1960. His credentials led him to join the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) where he gained scholarship to study in the United Kingdom.

In 1962, he went to attend the University of Manchester where he studied for double master's degree. First completing masters' program in control systems in 1965, then Mehmood received his another master's degree in nuclear engineering in 1969 from the Manchester University. While in Manchester, Mehmood was an expert on Manhattan Project and was reportedly in contacts

with South African scientists in discussing the jet-nozzle method for uranium-enrichment. However, it remains unclear how much interaction was taken place during that time.

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission

Mehmood joined the PAEC in 1968, joining the Nuclear Physics Division at the Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology working under dr. Naeem Ahmad Khan. His collaboration took place with Samar Mubarakmand, Hafeez Qureshi and was a vital member of the group before it got discontinued in 1970. Mahmood was one of the foremost experts on civilian reactor technology and was a senior engineer at the KANUPP I— the first commercial nuclear power plant of the country. He gained notability and publicity in the physics community for inventing the scientific instrument, the *SBM probe* to detect leaks in steam pipes, a problem that was affecting nuclear plants all over the world and is still used worldwide.

After witnessing the war with India which saw the unconditional surrender of Pakistan in 1971, Mahmood attended the winter seminar at Multan and delivered a speech on atomic science. On 20 January 1972, President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto approved the crash program under Munir Ahmad Khan for a sake of "national survivor." Though, he continued his work at the KANUPP I engineering division.

In the aftermath of surprise nuclear test conducted by India, Munir Ahmad appointed Mehmood as the director of the enrichment division at the PAEC where majority of the calculations were conducted by dr. Khalil Qureshi– a physical chemist. Mehmood analyzed the diffusion, gas-centrifuge, jet-nozzle and laser methods for the uranium-enrichment; recommending the gas-centrifuge method as economical. After submitting the report, Mehmood was asked to depart to the Netherlands to interview Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan on behalf of President Bhutto in 1974. In 1975, his proposal was approved and the work on uranium project started with Mahmood being its director, a move that irked more qualified but more difficult to manage Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan who had coveted the job for himself. His relations with dr. Khan remains extremely tense and the pairs disagreed with each other and developed differences at great height. In private meetings with Munir Ahmad, Mehmood often complained and pictured him as "egomaniac". In 1976, Mahmood was removed from the enrichment division as Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan had him ejected and moving the enrichment division at the ERL under military control.

Eventually, Munir Ahmad removed him from other classified works and posted him back at the KANUPP-I with no reason given. In 1980s, Munir Ahmad secured him a job as project manager for the construction of the Khushab-I where he served as chief engineer and aided with the designing the coolant systems. In 1998, he was promoted as a director of the nuclear power division and held that position until 1999.

After the reactor went critical in April 1998, Mahmood in an interview had said: "*This reactor (can produce enough plutonium for two to three nuclear weapons per year) Pakistan had "acquired the capability to produce.... boosted thermonuclear weapons and hydrogen bombs*." In 1998, Mahmood was honored with Sitara-e-Imtiaz in a colourful ceremony by the Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif.

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Radical politics and Ummah Tameer-e-Nau

Endorsing publicly the decision of nuclear tests by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1998, Mahmood began appearing in news channels as an outspoken opponent of Minister Sharif, as he vehemently opposed Pakistan becoming the signatory state of the NPT and CTBT. At country's popular news channels and newspapers, Mahmood gave numerous interviews, wrote articles, and lobbied against Prime Minister Sharif when learning that Prime Minister Sharif had been willing to be a signatory of anti-nuclear weapon treaties, prompting the government forcefully transferring Mahmood at the non-technical position in the PAEC.

Seeking premature retirement from PAEC in 1999, Mahmood moved towards publishing books and articles involving the relationship between Science and Islam. Mahmood founded the Ummah Tameer-e-Nau (UTN)– a rightwing organization– with his close associates. In 2000, he began attending the lectures and religious sessions with Dr. Israr Ahmed who would later influenced in his political views and philosophy. Through UTN, he steps in the more radical politics, and began visiting Afghanistan where he wanted to be focused on rebuilding educational institutions, hospitals, and relief work.

Mahmood-Hoodbhoy debates

He has written over fifteen books, the most well-known being "*The Mechanics of Doomsday and Life After Death*", which is an analysis of the events leading to doomsday in light of scientific theories and Quranic knowledge. However, his scientific arguments and theories have been challenged by some prominent scientists in Pakistan. His religiosity and eccentricity began troubling the Pakistan's Physics Society; his peers often quoted him as "a rather strange man".

In 1988, Mehmood was invited through an invitation at the University of Islamabad to deliver a lecture on science. During his lecture at the university's "*Physics Hall*", he and several other academcians have debated on his book. While debating, a well known Pakistani nuclear physicist Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy and Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood had an acrimonious public debate in 1988 at the University of Islamabad's Physics Hall. Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy had severely criticised Mr. Bashiruddin Mahmood's theories and the notion of Islamic science in general, calling it *ludicrous science.* Bashiruddin Mahmood protested that Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy misrepresented his views, quoting: *This is crossing all limits of decency,*he wrote. *But should one expect any honesty or decency from anti-Islamic sources?*

Literature and Cosmology

In his writings and speeches, Mahmood has advocated for nuclear sharing with other Islamic nations which he believed would give rise to Muslim dominance in the world. He has also written a Tafseer of the Quran in English.

Mahmood is reported to be fascinated "with the role sunspots played in triggering the French and Russian Revolutions, World War II and assorted anti-colonial uprisings." According to his book "Cosmology and Human Destiny", Mahmood argued that sunspots have influenced major human events, including the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and World War II. He concluded that governments across the world "are already being subjected to great emotional aggression under the catalytic effect of the abnormally high sunspot activity under which they are most likely to adapt aggression as the natural solution for their problems".

In this book which was first published in 1998, he predicts that the period from 2007 to 2014 would be of great turmoil and destruction in the world. Other books written by him include a biography of the Islamic prophet Muhammad titled "First and the Last", while his other books are focused more on the relation between Islam and science like Miraculous Quran, Life After Death and Doomsday, and Kitab-e-Zindagi (in Urdu).

One passage of the book reportedly states: "At the international level, terrorism will rule; and in this scenario use of mass destruction weapons cannot be ruled out. Millions, by 2020, may die through mass destruction weapons, hunger, disease, street violence, terrorist attacks, and suicide."

Mahmood's lifelong friend, Parliamentarian Farhatullah Babar, who is currently serving as a spokesperson of President of Pakistan, while talking to media, said: Mahmood predicted in Cosmology and Human Destiny that "the year 2002 was likely to be a year of maximum sunspot activity. It means upheaval, particularly on the South Asia, with the possibility of nuclear exchanges".

Mahmood has published papers concerning djinni, which are described in the Qur'an as beings made of fire. He has proposed that djinni could be tapped to solve the energy crisis. I think that if we develop our souls, we can develop communication with them, Mr. Bashiruddin Mahmood said about djinni in The Wall Street Journal in an interview in 1988. Every new idea has its opponents, he added. But there is no reason for this controversy over Islam and science because there is no conflict between Islam and science.

New York Times comments

The New York Times has described Mahmood as "an autodidact intellectual with grand aspirations," and noted that "his fellow scientists at PAEC began to wonder if Mahmood was mentally sound." Mahmood made it clear that he believed Pakistan's bomb was "the property of the whole Ummah," referring to the worldwide Muslim community. "This guy was our ultimate nightmare," an American intelligence official told the Times in late 2001. He has also been awarded Gold Medal by the Pakistan Academy of Sciences.

Bibliography

- *1980*; Doomsday and Life After Death
- *1982*; The Miraculous Qur'an: A Challenge to Science and Mathematics
- *1984*; The Greatest Success
- *1985*; The Life of Book: A Scientific interpretation of Quran
- *1986*; Muhammad: The First & the Last
- *1988*; A New Book of the Children Rhymes
- *1989*; Judgement day and Life After Death
- *1994*; The Holy Quran and Dirac equations
- *1995*; The Miraculous Qur'an – A Discovery Concerning Its Arrangements into Chapter and Parts
- *1996*; The Challenge of Reality
- *1998*; Cosmology and Human Destiny: Impact of Sunpots on Earthly events; Our Past and Future
- *2005* A Tafseer of the Holy Quran. (English version) (2005)
- *2006* There is no God, but Allah
- *2006* Kitab-e-Zindagi Tafseer (Urdu version)
- *2010* Muhammad – The Prophet of Mankind

Awards and honours

- Sitara-e-Imtiaz (1998).
- Gold medal, Pakistan Academy of Sciences.

THE ROLE OF INTERNET TECHNOLOGY IN ENHANCING RESEARCH SKILLS

Internet Technology and Information Exchange

Given the ease of access to information provided by the internet, modern researchers can interact faster with each other. This rapid interaction enhances research skills as learning ensues online. It facilitates information exchange at the speed of light. Fiber optic cables or thin flexible glass fibers that transmit light signals facilitate telecommunication between individuals across continents. The nature and flow of information have significantly changed.

I illustrate the difference between the nature of information flow before and now in Table 1 especially in the Asia and Africa. This change in the mode of information exchange through internet technology favors contemporary researchers and enhances their research skills.

Table 1. Comparison of information flows before and after the introduction of internet technology.

Before	**Now**
Outdated references in the library	Recent literature accessible online
Manually accessible library collections	Libraries or databases accessible online
Slow exchange of information	Fast exchange of information
Publication of scientific articles takes years	Publication takes a few months
Paid subscription journals	Open access journals; creative commons

As I pointed out earlier in my post titled “Open Access Journals and Blogs: New Trends in Publishing Research Results,” the ease and speed by which researchers can publish their research articles in open access journals changes the way information gets shared worldwide. Spector et al. (2012) of Google recognized this saying that peer-reviewed paper as the dominant dissemination method is under threat. Just like the printed newspaper or the telegram, Internet

technology can change their commercial viability. The internet changes the way people transact business. Not keeping up with the trend will leave non-adapting organizations or businesses behind the backend of obsoletes.

Enhanced Research Skills Offered by Internet Technology

Accessing thousands of articles available online allows beginning researchers to develop their trade and keep themselves updated in their field of specialization. When I started off doing research in the late 1990s, I have to content myself with what is available in the institution's collection of scientific journals. Now, the following online databases help me write more sensible project reports, at a much faster pace:

Google Scholar

I did not realize the importance of Google Scholar until a month ago, after undergoing training in research pedagogy, even though I learned about it a few years back. What I like most in this search engine is that aside from being able to access journal articles (mostly abstracts) for free, it saves you the pain of manually typing your bibliography. Once you access the articles relevant to your study, you can just click whichever format you want your bibliography or literature to appear. You can choose from MLA, APA, and Chicago Manual of Style. It's just a matter of copying and pasting the entries into your favorite word processor. Nonetheless, I use BibTex instead as I like to use Lyx, a front-end to the LaTeX typesetting system, as my favorite document processor.

While many authors critique the limitations of Google Scholar as a source of peer-reviewed literature (Jacsó, 2005; Bakkalbasi et al., 2006; Falagas et al., 2008; Meho and Yang, 2007), there is a general recognition that Google Scholar can be an excellent tool for information discovery and retrieval. Scopus works the same way, but I got no opportunity to explore this likewise free database. The website says it's the world's largest database of abstracts and citations of peer-reviewed literature.

Directory of Open Access Journals

I came across this directory of open access journals a few years back. As I teach the research subject, I usually refer students to DOAJ, but they complain that they can access only a few relevant articles for their study. The collection of scientific articles in the directory appears limited compared to Google Scholar, but it offers full papers for free. However, in many cases, you need to learn Latin American languages to understand what's going on south of the equator. As more scientists make available their research in open access journals, the database collection will be a good source of scientific information.

The Web Log as Quick Mode of Publication

While peer-review of articles for publication has its merits, the ease of publication offered by blogs has its advantages in the age of information technology. Putnam (2011) discussed the pros and cons of this approach. Her main concern pertains to the quality of articles published online. But as more researchers give premium to the speed by which information gets delivered, the order of information exchange soon may just be sharing information through blogs. You get the information you need in a matter of hours. This mode of information sharing becomes more relevant in matters of life and death such as cure to cancer or averting impending disasters that require timely information.

If there are questions about the reliability and soundness of information, such as the case of a NASA scientist who refused to answer another scientist's critique of a bacteria that can survive in arsenic, comments in the blog serve as peer review. As scientists interact in the comments section, the issue gets clarified.

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