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Contribution of Ghalib in Urdu Literature

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Abstract

Writers' are many but only few are most prominent and have immensely touched one's heart with feelings of pain, pleasure, romance, hatred, aggression, welfare, security and everything happening around us. Urdu Literature is an ocean of beautiful expressions – this art has been bestowed to the famous Urdu poet of all time Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib. His times are of the mughals era, which then forced out by the Brits and then the Indian rebels in 1857(British Colonial rule). This article is a delightful appreciation on Ghalib's contributions towards Urdu poetry and literature, while, highlighting the shimmering reflections of his philosophy in his writings.

Keywords: Ghalib, Urdu Literature, Urdu Poetry, Sub-Continent

1. Introduction

Poetry has always been soothing to one's content and when one talks about the language of Urdu and its poetry then it's a thought of glowing and rich forms of poetry that to this day is read with love and passion. There has been generous contribution by the Urdu poets, without whom the poetry would not have been so inspiring and versatile. This poetic divine has been extended in this era too via their poetic philosophy and even today the poetries have mesmerized its readers and they enjoy reading it over and over again with the same interest.

As known that Urdu language had been derived from different languages, the Urdu poets have also excelled in languages such as Persian, Hindi and Arabic. Urdu has been and still has a heavy share to play in the Indo-Pak Sub-Continent and so does this share has been saved and continued through the writings of the poets, which are indeed a priceless gift for this generation and on.

For starters, Urdu poetry has been derived from the locale of Persia and Arabia and a series of such influential poetry and rhythmic versus have been lived up in Pakistan and India. This paper primarily focuses on the literary contribution of the best and the majestic Urdu poet 'Mirza Ghalib'. Gradually, this study has explored different phases of Ghalib's life through his poetry, which is yet so fascinating and evident that how Ghalib amalgamated Urdu Poetry and surroundings of his life into words, which bring questions, understandings, new imaginations, memories and answers to a reader.

He was born in Agra, India on 27th December, 1796 and belonging from the noble class Turkish ancestry. Not much can be briefed about his educational life and not much could be explored in this regard. He had one of the most esteemed and intellectual social gathering in Delhi. He got married when so young and had seven children but unfortunately none of them survived. The times and motions in his life was revealed through his poetry i.e. expression of pain. His companion i.e. Ghalib's wife was a complete opposite of his personality. As Ghalib was more open to life and life hearted while his companion was self-restraint. Like any other individual Ghalib had negative traits in his personality, which led to interest of gambling and drinking, which he was extremely fond of. As he had a carefree attitude in his life for instance, gambling was a crime in those times but Ghalib used to be not concerned and accepted that he is not a staunch Muslim. His character had a lot of impact on his poetry, such as

Zahid sharab peene de masjid mein beth kar,
Yaa woh jagha bata jahan Khuda nahin.

The best part of his poetry is that his feelings use to be apparent and true to life. The choices of words were spectacular to describe a particular moment in time. Similarly, later in his life, he had an affair with his fan but he didn't create any boundary of limitations to restrict his life.

Tu wo zaalim hai Jo Dil mein reh kar bhi mera na ban Saka "Ghalib"
Aur Dil wo kafir Jo mujh mein reh kar bhi tera hogaya

He didn't even earn a better living but headed a life on the welfare of his friends and financial support as in those times he wasn't famous for his work. He passed away on February 15th 1869 and after his demise he achieved much more fame and recognition. Ghalib had competition with the poet Zauq in the Bahadar Shah Zafar's times. Both the poets were inspired with the superiority of Meer Taqi Meer of the 18th century.

2. Literature Review

Ghalib wrote initially in Persian, while he became more famous for his ghazals written in Urdu. It is said by the various authors e.g. Sarfraz (1990) that he wrote most of his very popular magnum opus or ghazals

by the age of nineteen. His ghazals, unlike those of Meer Taqi Meer (1723-1810), contain Persian language in its highest dialect, and are therefore not easily empathized and appreciated by a vast majority of people despite of their tendencies toward Urdu poetry and literature. Before Ghalib, ghazal was primarily an expression of tormented and anguished love where the lover experiencing intense pain especially mental pain but he expressed philosophy in his Ghazals, the travails and ventures of life and many such subjects which include lament, melancholy, impoverishment, and other possible eventualities of life of a common person, thus vastly expanding the scope of ghazal.

In keeping with the conventions of the classical ghazal, in most of Ghalib's verses, the identity and the gender of the beloved are not precisely determined or established or not fixed or known in advance. The beloved could be a beautiful woman, or a beautiful boy, or even God. According to critic/poet/writer, Faruqi (1989), the convention of having the "idea" of a lover or beloved instead of an actual lover/beloved in Ghalib's magnum opus freed the poet-protagonist-lover from the calls for "realism". Love poetry in Urdu literature from the last tail of the seventeenth century onwards consists mostly of "poems about love" and not "love poems" in the Western sense of the term and Ghalib's poetry is a fine exemplification of this. Ghalib also excels in deeply introverted and philosophical verses. Ghalib always tried to convert his everyday feelings and occurrence into the momentous events.

Ghalib was mostly inclined toward philosophical dictions and hence, he was considered as the first philosophical poet in Urdu literature. Ghalib (1796-1869) like Fani (1879-1941) and Asghar (1884 - 1938) but unlike Hasrat (1875-1951) and Dagh (1831-1905) was a philosophical poet who expressed his poetry through the reflection of philosophy of life. he was also like philosophical poets who were rummy by nature and always discovered new path to express themselves. Ghalib Clearly admitted that he knows the reward of piety and orison but somehow he says, his heart still is not tended toward them.

Ghalib also had a graet ego, with a unprovoked style often aimed at himself with his heart's discontent. There is a elusive queasiness, a vein of mercurial displeasure that runs deeply throughout his poetry. Mirroring his personality Ghalib's poetry is immensely rocky and filled with slopes and inclines, peaks and has an extreme state of hard knocks. Ghalib poetry can best be classed around four central figures:

- 1- The difficult, almost indecipherable poems in Bedil style.
- 2- The verses that create a kind of linguistic magic out of words, here he seems to follow the Nasikh style.
- 3- The verses that work like arrows and pave the way for agonic feel with poetic meaning, creativity, thought and choice of words: theses were done in the style of Mir Taqi Mir.
- 4- The expressive and emotive style which is so to speak as the thematic style of Momin.

It is notable, as stressed by Sarfraz (1990) that from 1809 to 1821, Ghalib was highly influenced by Persian language, from 1821 to 1827, he paid less attention to his Urdu poetry and highly influenced by Naziri (1560-1614), a Persian poet, from 1827 to 1847 Ghalib continued his efforts in Persian poetry but he wrote some of his best ghazals during this period. From 1847 to 1857 Ghalib was associated with King Bhahadur Shah Zafar's court and he paid more accentuations to Urdu writings. This period observes a mature style, an extremely careful choice of words, and symbolizes with the style of Zauq (1789-1854). While from 1857 to 1868, the simplicity in his writing is remained continued and we find a great sense of wit.

3. Conclusion

Philosophy of Urdu literature has been expressed by exceptional individuals. Mirza Ghalib is one of the famous individuals and in fact one of the greatest poets, who has exalted the Urdu literature as a whole and in specific Urdu poetry. His Urdu poetry can be defined as a combination of absolute expression of

intellectualism, philosophical and futurist state of mind. He has been associated with Urdu language as a contemporary poet. He crossed the leading poets of his times and became the literate legacy and founded modern trends to Urdu writing and that is he still dominates the Urdu Literature Legacy (Asrar, 2010).

There were two sides of Urdu Literature and poetry visible from his poetry – one was his own ambivalence personality, which was a cause of his own upbringing and second was his independent strength that had a lot of contribution in his poetry that was not confined to the society's traditions and was more realistic and an open extent of Urdu poetry. True to life were his writings as in the early years of his poetry, which solely depicts his psychological input as being deprived of a normal family life and being dependent on his maternal grandparents' socio-economic wise. He had gone through a lot in his life, which was clearly depicted through his verses. Urdu Philosophy has had a new meaning as Ghalib introduced a mark of brilliance in urdu poetry that is the everlasting fashion of writing style.

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