

Literature as an Ethos with Reference To Select Kashmiri Romantic Literature

Mohd. Shams Uddoha Khan

Student, Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, India

Email: jaims5175@gmail.com

***Abstract-** Literature is a word used by most of us as a part of general convention, unaware of its actual as well as allegorical aspect. We, the humans, sometimes, are unable to grasp the true essence of literature. It is true that humans evolve literature and literature evolves human culture, history, behavior and sensibility. Both rely on each other and develop a symbiotic relationship. The treasure of literature has a vast record of human experiences, feelings and expressions. The paper aims to study literature through Kashmiri Romantic perspective. It aims to acknowledge the Romantic phase of literature in the valley, arraying and appreciating the humanistic values present in it.*

Keywords: literature, Kashmiri Romantic Literature, Humanistic Values.

Introduction

Since times immemorial, Literature has been subject to interrogation as to what it stands for. The term literature is derived from the Latin word 'litteratura', which stands for "writing formed with letters"(Online Etymology Dictionary), giving an idea that anything written or in print, encompassing dynamically myriad emotions and experiences of the common populace is literature. The historical notion of belles lettres, a French phrase, which means 'fine writing'—fiction, poetry, drama, essay—valued for its aesthetic qualities and originality of style and time, now stands diluted at crossroads as today it is "generally applied to lighter branches of literature" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). If so, then what literature is? Literature is a blend of two discreetly hooked elements. One, something that has been written and two, an artistic, aesthetic, imaginative, inspiring, socio-centric, and sensitive expression of a writer. Keeping in mind the latter view, we could say that any form of writing with elements such as mentioned above is literature, as it is an ace work which in turn can shake the fundamental structure of a society, change the social scenario and gift people eyes, eyes that are rational, critical and questioning, not only for their own sensual pleasure but for the entire human folk.

Literature has the potential to influence us, open our minds and change our thinking patterns, shape our ideas and mould our hearts and we overtake the established beliefs and traditions. It promotes a culture to imagine and feel the sufferings of others. It is the inner response of the literary artist. Literature is considered to be an art of arts. The multidimensional side of literature is evident by its nature of being a social reflector; it reflects the position of an

individual in society, exposes evils, oppressors and the oppressed alongside providing aesthetic pleasure in various forms.

According to Z. Khan literature perhaps "preserves and immortalizes hopes, aspirations and socio-cultural ethos" of the common folk. If one talks about ethos, there could be innumerable ways to shape it into a permanent reality. One could choose fiction while the other could stabilize ethos in verse. A good example of the latter is Kashmiri Romantic poetry, which could be seen as a reservoir that holds beautiful, sensitive and intuitive poetic compositions, filled with unbeatable exuberance, remarkable for its melody and spontaneity. The verses serve as a channel of discourse that showcases profound wanting of the heart and the spirit. The Romantic poets of Kashmir not only lived up to the traditional notion of beautifying nature with verse but went beyond that by intrinsically diffusing deep humanistic values within the scintillating romantic verses. The paragons of Kashmiri Romanticism include nonpareil names like HabbaKhatoon, Arnimal, Mahmood Gami, Rasul Mir, Ghulam Ahmad Mehjoor, Abdul AhadAzaad.

Literary writers make "literature a prism through which they project harsh realities of conflict." (M. S. Khan, 172) The conflict present inside the writer not only delineates his struggle but the audience besides him also associate themselves with the artist's inner expression.

Context of kashmiri Literature

The aforesaid stance can be substantiated when one attempts to understand the verse of Nightingale of Kashmir, HabbaKhatoon, the first Kashmiri poet who glamorized the pulchritudinous nature of Kashmir through her Lol which is "a short, melodious lyric, expressing a single complete mood" (Lone, 20)

*Vaendimaiaarabalan, yaarakunyiMelakhnaa,
Vaendimaiaaravalan, dubarayaaraMelakhnaa. "*

*(I will search for you in wandering Brooks, Praying that we meet again
I'll seek for you where the jasmines bloom, Don't tell me we won't meet again.)*

The pangs of Habba, the last Queen turned aesthetic figure, scrounged for her love Yusuf Shah Chak, all thanks to the false hospitality of the puissant Mughal Emperor, Akbar. Habba at another point says

*"Lajyphulaiandawanan, tsukanangoinyon,
Lajyphulaikwolo saran vwothoneryankhasowo,
Phojyosmanandevanan, tsukanangoinyon."*

(The distant meadows are in bloom, have you not had my call? Flowers bloom on mountain lakes, come let us ascend these meadows now the lilac blooms on the other hand, Have you not heard my call?)

The Loals of the grande dame Czarina of Kashmiri Romantic poesy dared to luminously baptize and gesticulate her lover, a conspicuous role reversal in the era when colleens were only acknowledged as objects of love and desire. She lent her voice to the humdrum drudgery of quotidian esse, no wonder her lyrics gained vogue in the Valley. Dr Mustaq 'Muntazir' says with regards to HabbaKhatoon's majestic verses

"HabbaKhatoon's poetry signifies a perennial human need of search for mutual affection and interpersonal togetherness. This shift of prospective oriented Kashmiri mind towards human concerns interests, aspirations, hopes as well as failures, frustrations and struggles. In HabbaKhatoon's poetry we feel for the first time that man is not merely a moral agent of responsibilities and duties, he is entitled to seeking a measure of love and happiness."(Zargar, 42-43)

Walweisgatchav van tay, Lookavbarihaskantay

Tee booztamisaadantay, Walomyaniroshaymadno

(Let us go, friend, to the woods, People poison his ears against me, Naively, he listens to them! Come, come my upset lover.)

HabbaKhatoon's poetry is a canvas that depicts different phases of human experience. Even her life was subject to brutal torture and mortification in her first marriage. Her empyrean poesy set forth three stages she had been through viz: childhood as Zoon, marriage with Aziz Lone and the Queen of Yusuf Shah Chak. She summarizes her encounter with different people as

"Rangaerangaethurriemkraalanbaany, byonbyonkornakhnakoosh

kenhdraayihaelikaelikenhjaanaanyi, chhavmyaenidanai posh"

(The Lord has made diversified vessels, each with different adornments Some are misshaped some are fine, O my pomegranate blossoms)

Another flamboyant icon in Kashmiri Romantic Poetry is, the talented creator of extraordinarily vigorous and nostalgic heartfelt verses, Rasul Mir, a renowned emblematic poet who vouchsafed the tender, ardent and idyllic poems, is weighed as a standout romantic lyricist of the Valley of Kashmir.

Ha YaarehMukhtieHarehGandthoo Be Haatay Loo,

MattehMainehMahRukhsaarWuchhath Be Gatteh Loo.

(O My Friend! necklace of mine I yearn to adorn you around my neck, O My Fri! In dark night I yearn to see your moon like a Face.)

GudHoovthamDidaarAdehKiyazehKhothutRoi

VuenKatehWuchchathDobaarehVanij Meh Fateh Loo.

(After showing a glimpse, why hide your face from me? Mystery heart is about to burst, where shall I see you again?)

Mir was cogent in burgeoning his special way of composing verse; the choice and combination of words he manoeuvred, made his poems supreme. He is prominently referred to and named as 'Keats of Kashmir' for his unprecedented modus operandi and significant knowledge about human instinct and conduct. His poetry is a live manifestation of value-centric elements. One of the most astonishing contours of his verse has been his sensational depiction of the features his beloved possesses, evident from the fact that his lines stand as a crystal-clear canvas outlining delightful features like eyes, lips, neck, nose, hands, figure, groin, torso, caprices, hair etc.

GasehVesyeeLale Chum Dooray

Meh Chu MoorayLalvunNaar

(O! Friend, fetch my dear who is far-off from me, Fiery flames of love are blazing me.)

AayehKueklahMaidaanDooray, SohChehParaan Allah hu

SohChehLej Mitch WaalwashDooray, Meh Chu MoorayLalvunNaar

(From faraway lands Cuckoo (bird) rolled in, In dhikr, it is reciting, Allah Hu It is snared in a raveledmesh, Fiery flames of love are blazing at me.)

Wordsworth in his famous 'Poetic Diction' proposed "language near to the language of men" apt for poetry as it was for prose. Same did the Wordsworth of Kashmir, as remarked by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor. The harbinger of renaissance in Kashmiri verse, Mehjoor took poetry out of the periphery of the ornate and solemn literary coterie and chalked up with the themes intrinsic to the common folk. His successful attempt to glorify extravagant beauty, considered ordinary by all, made him have his eternal spot. He additionally inscribed the magnificence of human tie-ups and fervour it inaugurates.

Poshivunyibaagichposhigwondäriye, Greeskoornaazneenswondäriye

SworgüchHeemaälyKaafuchpariye, Greeskoornaazneenswondäriye

(Bouquet from beauty's everlasting garden, Heemal of Heaven or a Caucasian fairy — O peasant girl, what a beautiful beauty!)

The poem, GreesKoor or A Peasant Girl, sing the praises of a prosaic young peasant girl, sketched out from a romantic point and calls attention to the rustic, sober and honest-to-goodness way of life as compared to the routine led by the ladies of the impeccable elite class.

Tsè ta khwojabaayanchhaabaraabriye, Tsègulanseetdilbariye

khwojabaayitròparithdaari ta bariye, Greeskoornaazneenswondäriye

(You too are equal to ladies of affluence You beatify us with embellishments of flowers the affluent ladies languish with closed doors and windows)

Mehjoor was an artist who utilized the literary dye and metamorphosed its essence towards patriotism, love of the land, freedom, liberty, communal harmony and solidarity against the orthodox religious dogmatism. He advocated the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity which was to him

one of the paramount proposition underlying the Kashmiri culture. He has carried out the primordial convention initiated by Lal Ded and Sheikh UlAlam (r.a.).

*Shiv chuy thali thalirozan
Mo zan Hindu ta Musalman
Truk ay chuk pan panunprazanav,
Soy chaysahibaszanizyan.*

*(Shiv lives in every, every place; Do not divide Hindu from Musalman. Use your senses, recognize yourself; That's the true way to find the Almighty.)
(Lal Ded)*

*akismaleismajihindyan,
timandiyeetravithikyaaee
Musalmanamkyaweyhindyan,
karbandantoshekhudayi.*

*(All are from Adam, why such hate amongst you why people are divided God doesn't differentiate between Muslim and Hindus.)
(Sheikh UlAlam(r.a.))*

*Niya:etravivma:etha:vivpa:niva:n
Pozmuhabbatba:gra:avivpa:niva:n*

*(Leave the differences, share fondness amongst yourselves Distribute true love amongst yourselves)
(Mehjoor)*

*Dodhchhumuslimhyundchhushakarsafsaf,
Dodh ta bayeshakarralaevivpanavaen.*

*(Muslims like milk and Hindus are like sugar, let us mix the two amongst ourselves (to create a harmonious society))
(Mehjoor)*

Mehjoor's predilection for his motherland, watan, was undeniably divine, full of metaphorical language, harbouring a profuse overflow of realms of nature like fountains, rivulets, streams, gardens, hills, mountains, waterfalls, orchards, trees, flowers, animals, birds, meadows and grasslands.

*Bulbul wananchuposhan, Gulshanwatanchusouny
Sonuywatanchugulshan, Gulshanwatanchusonuy*

(The Nightingale says to the flower, Our Land is a Garden)

The verses of Shayer-e-Kashmir, Mehjoor, were unflinching as Mehjoor was himself. His poem 'Vwolo ha Bagwannonavbaharukshaanpaadakar' lionized his collar. What he wrote was to call out his people(bagwaan) to nurture their spring garden, pledging personal responsibility to rise up against the unjust oppression. He urged the multitude of Kashmir to unfasten their curtained senses and be au courant of the covetous aristocratic scene.

Hakoomatmaalodolatnaazonematbèyishahanshaähi
Yi soruychhuysénishpaanastsuamicheezaanpäadaakar

(Wealth and pride and comfort, luxury and authority, Kingship and governance – all these are yours! Wake up, sleeper, know these as yours!)

However, it cannot be said that Mehjoor's pen was only to make people realise the significance of their Motherland or to stir them up to go against the unjust. His ink has equally celebrated the longing for love, expressing desire to meet one's beloved again; pain of separation and distance through Mehjoor's perspective can be seen as:

Az Roz Saane Dilbar Myane, Boz NundbanedilbarMyane
Satharoz tau wilizarboz tau, ShilipadmaniDilbarMyane

(Listen O loveliest, Sweetheart of mine, Stay here for today And hear the plaint of this virtuous beauty, My god of beauty, O my Loveliest)

The aforementioned texts could be classified as Great literature. They are revered, renowned and remembered even after uncountable years of existence. Great literature surpasses the ravages of time. It makes posterity realize the inner conflict that used to be present in the ink of the writer. As ink is unquestionably connected to the heart of the writer reciprocating the elements observed and absorbed from the outer world. The humanistic values engraved in the work of art cannot be side-lined as they cavernously influence the reader's psyche. It tends to inspire "the horizontal and multilateral attitudes of catholicity, pluralism, liberalism, tolerance, mutual appreciation and respect for spiritual fellowship, inter-religious and intra-religious brotherhood, mutual interaction, and love." (Zargar, 49-50) Among all of literature "poetry is finer and more philosophical; for poetry expresses the universal," approach, said Aristotle. Gradually new forms of literature have emerged alongside older ones. Now literature doesn't only lie in written text but is widely sung and synchronized. Many poems in Kashmiri are carolled with immense pleasure. Literature is a bridging bond between writers and readers. It creates a counter narrative against the actual evil narrative and makes it become timeless and classical. We can sum up that literature helps the human brain evolve into a humanistic mind. It facilitates to see others' problems as ours and serves as a universal fresh look as the sky is not the limit.

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