

A Glimpse into the Spirit of Elegy of Mir Baber Ali Anis

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Abstract

Mir Baber Ali Anis was an Urdu Versifier and he had the acronym Khuda e Sukhan' He was born in 1802 at Faizabad, Awadh, Uttar Pradesh and died on 10th December 1874 AD. Most of his time was spent in composing his poetry verses at home. He has written many genres of poetry. The present paper aims to analyse a few stanzas from the famous marsia (Elegy) of Mir Baber Ali Anis titled as "Aakhri Rukhsat e Imam Hussain"

Keywords: Marsia or Marsiya (an epic poem), Anis is also spelled as Anees, Razmiya Shaiiri (poetry depicting war), Alaihis Salaam (Peace be upon him), Sakina means tranquility, peace

Introduction

It is said that poetry will have a glimpse of the poet's character. Mir Baber Ali Anis had a character which was above the common people. He was full of piety, excellent manners along with a simple life style. He used to write poetry in both Urdu and Persian. His parents named him Mir Baber Ali Anis; he took the Pseudo-name Hazin then Anis and then people gave him the acronym 'Khuda e Sukhan' or creator of words. He was born in 1802 at Faizabad, Awadh, Uttar Pradesh and died on 10th December 1874 AD. His father Mir Khaliq has grasped from his childhood that He was a talented child. Mir Anis's initial education was at home under the supervision of his parents. His mother was an expert in Persian language and has

taught him the nuances of Persian language. His ancestors came from Iran. Poetry was entrenched in his family.

He had an impressive and enlightened personality. His presence brought positivity wherever he went. He had strong core values, empathy, emotional maturity and independence. He was in the habit of doing regular exercise. 'His favourite outdoor sports were Horse riding and Sword fighting. He had wheat coloured complexion, big eyes, very thin beard compared to his moustache. He always wore embroidered cap and circular shirt with white coloured pyjama. He was jovial and had five children, three sons and two daughters.' (Imam, 130)¹

He was a confident and self-reliant person. The way he used to recite his poetry on Mimber(pulpit) was very enthralling. His audience used to be in a trance, listening to his poetic verses. He knew very well that a versifier himself can do justice to his poetry recitation therefore he himself used to recite his poetry. (Imam,132)²

Usually, poetry is related with both Fasaahat (Eloquence or Fluency of Speech) and Balaghat (Conciseness). Mir Baber Ali Anis had both aspects Fasaahat and Balaghat in his poetry style. He used massive lexicology in his poetry stanzas to bring Fasaahat or eloquence to his style through Arabic, Persian, Urdu and Sanskrit lexicon. His Balaghat comprised of Ruh (soul) and Nafs (Psyche) and also Kalam ki Tafsil (emotions involved in his poetry). Therefore, even to this day his poetry has a direct impact on a person's mind and soul. (Imam, 138)³ He has written many styles of poetry like Marsias (Elegy), Salam's (Salutation), Rubai's (quatrain with specific rhyme scheme), Nath (Poetry in praise of Prophet Mohammad), Ghazals (Poetic expression), Noha (a lyrical dirge), Mukhammas (stanzaic poem of five lines stanzas) and Munajat (A poetic whispered prayer). The present paper aims to analyse a few stanzas from the famous marsia (Elegy) of Mir Baber Ali Anis titled as "Aakhri Rukhsat e Imam Hussain"

Poetry Analysis

The following Marsia portrays the feelings and the happenings of a father, Hussain Ibn Ali's life on the Day of Ashura on 10th Moharram 680 CE. The melancholy of Imam Hussain ibn Ali after the martyrdom of his young and chivalrous son, Ali Akbar in the Battle of Karbala. Mir Anis has written many marsias on Razmiya Shaiiri, poetry depicting war and its happenings. The following marsia is of one hundred and eighty-four stanzas in Musaddas format (six lines of poetry) with aaaabb style. We will be discussing in this paper selected few popular stanzas along with their translations.

Transliteration

Jab naujawan Pesar Shah e Deen se juda huwa

Roshan Qamar Sipahre Barein se juda huwa

Noor e nazar Imam e Mubeen se juda huwa

Laqte jigar Hussain o Hazeen se juda huwa

Dil dagh ho gaya dil o jaan o Batool ka

Ghar be chirag ho gaya Sibte Rasool ka (Hussain, pg. 187 stn.1)⁴

Translation

When the young son separated from the King of religion

Bright moon was separated from the Superior Soldier (Commander)

Light of the eye was separated from the Prominent Leader

Darling son was separated from Hussain the depressed

Batool's darling son's heart became stained (was broken)

Rasool's grandson's house was without lamp

Ali Akber the eldest son of Hussain ibn Ali (Hussain is the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) and Layla bint Abi Murra (Layla was the granddaughter of Urwah ibn Mas'ud a Thaqifi chieftain of Taif, who was one of the first people from his tribe to accept Islam). Ali Akber was eighteen years old in the battle of Karbala which occurred in 680 CE. He fought

bravely and fiercely with the army of Yazid ibn Muawiya and was martyred thirsty, famished by the spear of Murra ibn Munqidh. In the above stanza versifier Mir Anis portrays the moments when the chivalrous Ali Akber separated from his father, Hussain Ibn Ali. Batool in the fifth line is Fatima tuz Zehra, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him and the Paternal grandmother of Ali Akber. Rasool in the sixth line of the stanza is the name of Prophet Mohammad which means the messenger of Allah.

Transliteration

Barchi se tukde ho gaya laqte jigar ka dil

Khud Baap ne shida huwa dekha Pesar ka dil

Hota hai aabgena se nazuk Bashar ka dil

Pathar ka dil nahin hai' ye dil hai pidar ka dil

Ayub bhi agar ho toh dum bhar na kal padhe

Aansu thame toh mauh se kaleja nikal padhe (Hussain, pg.187 stn.2) ⁵

Translation

With a Spear was torn to pieces 'darling livers' (more than life's) heart

The father himself saw his son's pierced heart

A mirror happens to be more fragile than a human's heart

It is not a heart of stone, it is the heart of the Father

If he is even Prophet Ayub then he will not get any rest

If tears stop than liver comes out of mouth

Versifier Mir Anis describes the state of Ali Akbar; he says with a spear the liver of Ali Akbar was torn into pieces. His father, Hussain Ibn Ali witnessed the pierced liver of his son. A father's heart is symbolised by the versifier as a mirror and Hussain ibn Ali's heart was shattered into pieces seeing the plight of his young and gallant son Ali Akber, peace be upon him. The reference of Prophet Ayub is given in fifth line of the Musaddas (six lines stanza).

He (Prophet Ayub) was a messenger of Allah (s.w.t) and his life was one of adversity mixed with patience. He was a faithful servant of Allah not only when life was going well, but also his faith never faltered during difficult times that is what which makes him a remarkable Prophet. Versifier Mir Anis gives reference of Prophet Ayub and says he too who is talked of his patience would have been restless to see his young son in this plight. It would have been difficult for him to stop his tears and his heart would have been broken.

Transliteration

Piri mein aafat e gham e Aulad ‘Al-Amaan

Dil aur zakham e khanjar e bedad ‘Al-Amaan

Woh Izteraab e khater e nashad ‘Al-Amaan

Woh Ashkh wa shor aur woh faryad ‘Al-Amaan

Beta na ho toh zist ka phir kya maza raha

Jab ghar ujad gaya toh zamane mein kya raha (Hussain, pg.187 stn.3)⁶

Translation

In Old age the hardship of sorrow of the offspring, Lord protect me

Heart and the wound of Dagger of unpleasantness, Lord protect me

That restlessness and cheerlessness take into consideration, Lord protect me.

Those tears and wailing and the lamentation, Lord protect me

If Son is not there than what is the fun in life?

When home is destroyed than nothing remains in the world.

The Holy Quran describes the grief of a father through the profound and deeply moving story of Prophet Yaquub (Jacob), grieving the loss of his beloved son Yusuf (Joseph). He said, “I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you

do not know.” (Quran 12:86)⁷ Despite Yaquub’s family pleading with him to stop his persistent grief before it killed him, Yaquub refused to turn his agony into a grievance against his creator or his fellow men. Instead, he directed his pain exclusively to Allah (God). Similarly, Versifier Mir Anis depicts the grief of a father, Hussain Ibn Ali in the above stanza. Imam Hussain Ibn Ali laments that it is a calamity to bear the loss of a teenager in old age. My Heart and its wound have been pierced by a weapon. He implores lord to protect him as he is restless and sad. His lamentation is through wailing and tears. Hussain ibn Ali implores life becomes bleak when your son is not alive. If your home is destroyed than what remains in this world.

Transliteration

Bichda woh Lal jiska gawara na tha firaq

Farmate thay ke loot liya toh ne ay Iraq

Ay maut jald aa ke’ bus ab Zindagi hai shaq

Khanjar ki arzoo hai shahadat ka ishtiyaq

Barbad’ iss tarah koi aabaad ghar na ho

Kya Zindagi ka lutf jab aisa pisaar na ho (Hussain, pg.187 stn.5)⁸

Translation

That son was separated whose separation was intolerable

He (Hussain Ibn Ali) said that Iraq has looted him

Oh death, come quickly, now life is tearing me apart

I am longing for Martyrdom with a dagger

In this way any prosperous home should not be ruined

What is the fun of life when such a son is not there

Mir Anis has portrayed the melancholy of Hussain ibn Ali. He (Hussain ibn Ali) laments that, I have lost that son whose separation was unthinkable. He further says, O’ Iraq you have looted

me. In the third line of the Musaddas (Six lines paragraph) he implores death to come and grab him as now life is grievous/Unpleasant. Now I wish for a dagger to be pierced through me as I yearn for martyrdom. No full-fledged home should be desolate and ruined like this, what is the charm in life when such a son is not there.

Transliteration

Pyare na thay Hussain Alaihis Salam ke

Laii haram sarah mein behn haath tham ke

Tharra rahe thay paao' Shahe tashna kaam ke

Sar dosh par tha Zainab e aali mukhaam ke

Farmate thay behn Ali Akbar guzar gaye

Hum aise saqt jaan thay ke ab tak na mar gaye (Hussain, pg.188 stn.10)⁹

Translation

There were no loved ones of Hussain, peace be upon him

Holding his hand his sister brought him in the women's quarters

The feet were trembling of the thirsty king of Karbala

His head was on the shoulder of Zainab, who has the highly elevated status

He said sister Ali Akbar passed away

We were so tough soul that we haven't died yet

On the Day of Ashura (Muharram 10, 680 CE) in Karbala, Iraq all the male Companions and family members of Hussain Ibn Ali, youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad were martyred by the Umayyad Army. After the martyrdom of Chivalrous, Ali Akbar, Hussain Ibn Ali came into the tents to give condolence of his son to his family. His sister, Zainab Bint Ali took hold of his hand and brought him inside the tent. With grief his legs were shaking and his head was on the shoulder of his sister. With heartache he was lamenting sister, my beloved son has been

martyred and I am so hard hearted that this sorrow has not killed me. The verses of this stanza poetically signify Imam Hussain ibn Ali as the master of the world. He sacrificed his life, his Valiant son, Ali Akbar in the desert of Karbala to prevent the corruption of Islamic values and to guard the foundational principles of justice.

Transliteration

Pursa tumhe Shaheed ka dene ko aaye hain

Kis kis ke daag aaj jigar par uthaye hain

Petay hai qhak udaye hai aanson bahaye hain

Ye Hum tumhare lal ke khoon mein nahaye hain

Sar tha Hussain bekaso tanha ki goad mein

Bete ki jaan nikli hai Baba ki goad mein (Hussain, pg.188 stn. 11)¹⁰

Translation

I came to offer you my condolences for the Martyr

Whose stains are these which I received on my liver

I have beaten myself with grief, thrown sand at myself, and shed tears.

Look I am soaked in the blood of your son

His head was in the lap of Hussain, the lonely and forlorn

Sons last breath came out in the lap of his father

We give pursa or condolence to our loved ones to share their grief, offer spiritual support, and provide comfort during a time of profound loss. It is a cultural and religious tradition to give respect and show solidarity with the family. To express feelings and receive comfort. After the loss of his handsome and valiant son Ali Akbar, Imam Hussain Ibn Ali came to the tents of his womenfolk. His sister, Zainab bint Ali knew his loss and came forward to console him. He told his sister, I came to give you condolence of your nephew. Today, I have lost many of

my loved ones: family members and friends. I cried, beat head and wailed for their loss. I am oozing in their blood. Look, I am soaked in the blood of your son. (Zainab bint Ali has raised her nephew Ali Akbar as her own son) His head was in my lap when he breathed his last.

Transliteration

Dekha ye kahke Bali Sakina ko yaas se

Lipti woh daudkar Shah e gardon asas se

Taqat na thi kalam ki har chand pyas se

Boli who tashna kaam Shahe haq shinaas se

Kya iss bala ke bun se tahayya safar ka hai

Sadhqe gayi batao irada kidhar ka hai (Hussain, pg.190 stn.20)¹¹

Translation

After saying this He looked at little Sakina with despair

She ran and embraced the King of exalted foundation

She had no strength for words even though due to thirst

Said the thirsty one to the King who recognises the truth

Are you preparing for a journey from this 'calamity of forest'?

I will sacrifice myself for you, tell me what are your intentions?

After giving condolences to his sister Zainab and family members Imam Hussain ibn Ali looked at his young daughter Sakina bint Hussain. This is the most heart-wrenching and poignant moment in Islamic history. His emotions in this moment were a complex blend of agonizing fatherly love, protective anguish for his family, and resolute submission to the divine will. Sakina bint Hussain ran and embraced her father. Due to extreme thirst, she had no strength to speak but nevertheless she said, “Are you leaving us in this calamity? What are your intentions.?”

Transliteration

Farmaya shah ne haan safar e nagazeer hai

Aao gale milo ke ye sohbat akheer hai

Ab aarzoo e Qarb e Khuda e Qadeer hai

Tanha hai hum Sipah muqalef kaseer hai

Tay ho ye marhala joh Inayat Khuda kare

Jiska na koi dost ho Bibi woh kya kare? (Hussain, pg.190 stn.21)¹²

Translation

Shah (also known as Hussain Ibn Ali) said yes, it is a foregone journey.

Come and embrace me because this is our last association

Now my only wish is to be near to Allah the Powerful

I am alone and the opposite soldiers are numerous

This situation will be dealt, if God will grace me.

What will a man do, Oh daughter! If he has no friend

Hussain Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salaam was alone with no one to support him; fatigued, parched and wounded he came to his tent to bid the final farewell or Rukhsat to the women folk. His four years daughter, Sakina ran to him and he took her in his lap and said to her ‘Yes, my dear child, I am going to a journey of no return. Come and embrace me and say your last farewell to me as we will not meet again’. He further says that he wants to be near his almighty God and the present situation is out of his hands as he is alone and the adversaries outnumber him in thousands. This situation will be dealt rightly if God will help him as he has no friends here.

Transliteration

Jaana hai duur shabko joh aana na ho idhar

Zid karke roiiyo na hame chahti ho gar

Pahle pahal hai aaj shab e furqat e pidar

Soa rahiyo Maa ki chati pe gurbat se rakhke sar

Rahat ke din guzar gaye ye fasl aur hai

Ab yuon basar karo joh yateemo ka taur hai (Hussain, pg.191 stn.28)¹³

Translation

I have to go far away and if night falls and I won't come back

Don't you cry stubbornly if you love me

Today, for the first time it is separation from father

Keep your head on the bosom of your mother and sleep quietly

The days of comfort are over; this is another harvest.

Now live like the ways in which the orphans live

The Holy Quran: “*He it is Who sent down Sakinah(tranquility) into the hearts of the believers...*” (Surah Al-Fath,48:4)¹⁴

The Profound, strong bond between Imam Hussain ibn Ali and his youngest daughter, Sakina bint Hussain is one of the most poignant chronicles in Islamic history. Imam Hussain ibn Ali deeply cherished her, often stating, “A house without Sakina would not be worth living in” To him a devout believer of God, she was the Physical manifestation of tranquility in a tempestuous world. In this stanza Mir Anis portrays *the* last painful farewell of Hussain Ibne Ali with his four years daughter, Sakina Bint Hussain in the Battle of Karbala. He embraces and comforts his weeping daughter and explains to her, when night falls and I am unable to come back. Do not cry and wail. Sleep on the bosom of your mother as your father’s chest will not be available. (Little Sakina bint Hussain was habituated to sleep on her father’s chest) This will be the first time that you will be separated from your father. He further says,

the days of comfort are over and this is a new era. From now onwards you have to lead the life of an orphan.

Transliteration

Nanhe se haat jaud ke boli woh tashna kaam

Batlaiye mujhe ke yateemi hai kiska naam

Aankhon se khoon baha ke ye kahne lage Imam

Khul jayega ye dard o alam tumpe taba sham

Bibi na pooch o kuch ye Musibat Azeem hai

Marjaye Jiska baap woh baccha yateem hai (Hussain, Pg.191 stn 29)¹⁵

Translation

Folding her little hands said the thirsty one

Tell me what is the meaning of being orphan

Shedding blood from his eyes replied the Leader

This pain and knowledge will be revealed to you in the evening.

Do not ask daughter it is a very painful calamity

When a child's father dies than that child is called an orphan

The little four years daughter of Hussain Ibn Ali (Alaihis Salam) asked him what is the meaning of "Yateem". Shedding tears of extreme grief the Imam Hussain Ibne Ali replied, "Daughter when a father of a small girl/boy dies they are called Yateem. He further said this knowledge will be revealed to you after my martyrdom. As having spiritual powers, he could see the treatment about to be meted to her by the Ummayyad forces of Yazeed.

In Islam, orphans are treated with profound compassion, respect and kindness but after her father, Imam e Hussain Ibne Ali was martyred, Sakina faced cruelty from the Umayyad forces of Yazeed, she received immense physical and psychological abuse. Her ear lobes

were bleeding as her ear-studs were snatched brutally, she was beaten, chained and marched along with her family members from Karbala to Kufa and finally to Damascus.

Conclusion

Thus, this marsia emphasizes the mourning of a father, Hussain on the tragic death of his young and chivalrous son. It vividly captures the psychological and emotional deep reactions of a father while giving condolences to his family members about the martyrdom of his son, Ali Akbar and vivid picturisation of his last farewell with his daughter, Sakina bint Hussain.

Conflict of Interest: The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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