

## RETROSPECTION ON CAPTAIN MIR ABBAS ALI ABEDI'S POETRY

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**Abstract:**

*Captain Mir Abbas Ali Abedi is a popular Urdu poet of Hyderabad e Deccan. His poetry is aesthetic in nature and his sole aim in writing poetry was to portray Ahle Bayt e Athar (The pure and pious family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) and give his best in poetry till the rim of his artistic satisfaction. He was bestowed with the laquab or title Shayar e Abuturab i. e., Poet of Abuturab (Abuturab is the title of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Cousin and Later Son in Law of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him). He has written Rubaiyat (Quatrain, which is a complete poem, with aaba rhyming pattern.), Salam (a lyrical salutation or respectful ceremonial greeting), Noha (a short lyrical dirge or lament), Soz (an impassioned style of poetry) and Marsia's (elegiac poems in Musaddas format i.e., six lines of stanzas). His books on poetry are Nade Ali, Yaade Ali, Ya Hussain, Ya Sakina Ya Abbas and Ya Sahebuz Akheeruz Zaman. By nature he had a friendly disposition and was helpful to people around him and was honest in his dealings with one and all. Some of his contemporaries were Sayeed Shaheedi, Sajid Razvi, Qayam Jaffery, Syed Ali Murtuza Abedi alias Tabah and Mir Abul Qasim Moosavi. This paper aims to study the different shades of poetry of Captain Mir Abbas Ali Abedi.*

**Keywords:** *Ahle bait e Athar (The pure and pious family of Prophet Mohammad), Manqabat, Rubai, Salam, Marsia (in Musaddas format i.e., six lines verses)*

**Introduction**

Captain Mir Abbas Ali Abedi was one of the talented and optimistic Modern Urdu Poets of Hyderabad e Deccan. His poetry depicts love and awe of Ahle Bait e Athar. (The pure and pious family of Prophet Mohammad, peace by upon him) He was the owner of an admirable temperament and was tall, fair and striking. He has been in the Army of Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur (the last Nizam of the Princely State of Hyderabad and Berar) and held the post of Lieutenant Colonel. He was popularly known as Captain Mir Abbas Ali Abedi in the circle of his friends and relatives. As he has written many beautiful Manqabat on Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Brother and later Son-In-Law of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) therefore he was bestowed with the laquab or title Shayar-e-Abuturab. (Abuturab means Father of the soil; this title was bestowed to Ali Ibn Abi Talib.)

He was born in 1919 and expired on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1999. His father's name was Hakim Mir Mohammad Hussain Abedi Shirazi and he was an Advocate by profession and mother's name was Shaher Bano. He had four sons namely, Syed Zain ul Abedien Abedi, Syed Hussain Abedi, Syed Aun Abedi and (Late) Syed Mahdi Hasan Abedi and two daughters, Sayeed Fatima and Shaher Bano Fatima. His books on poetry are *Nade Ali, Yaade Ali, Ya Hussain, Ya Sakina Ya Abbas and Ya Sahebuz Akheeruz Zaman*. He has written Rubaiyat (Quatrain, which is a complete poem, with aaba rhyming pattern.), Salam (a lyrical salutation or respectful ceremonial greeting), Noha (a short lyrical dirge or lament), Soz (an impassioned style of poetry) and Marsia's (elegiac poems in Musaddas format i.e., six lines of stanzas). He was taught the rules and regulations of poetry by Syed Najmuddin Turabi Alias Ustad Anjum who was one of the well-known poets. Some of his contemporaries were Sayeed Shaheedi, Sajid Razvi, Qayam Jaffery, Syed Ali Murtuza Abedi alias Tabah and Mir Abul Qasim Moosavi.

His poetry was loved and admired by one and all. He was engulfed in the praise and passion of Ahle Bayt e Athar (the pure and pious family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him). He used to write and recite his poetry with lot of devotion and fervor and had melodious voice and he used his voice in the Madi'h or praise of Ahle Bait. His first Manqabat was published in the year 1959 and it was written on the wedding of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Cousin and later Son in Law of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) and Fatima Zehra (the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) known as *Aqd e Ali Wa Zehra*. It was praised and admired much by all.

After his retirement he continued working for the Nizam of Hyderabad as a palace officer for twenty two years at Falaknuma and Cheeran Palace. He also worked as an administrator in the graveyard of Daire Mir Momin and used to help momineen (people with faith) in various facets of tadfi'en or funeral services. He used to involve himself in various religious activities especially in the month of Moharram (Mourning season of Hussain Ibn Ali) in the Bargah (congregation hall) of Abbas Ibn Ali (the younger brother of Hussain Ibn Ali) and Aza Khana e Zehra (congregation hall named after Prophet Mohammad's daughter Fatima Zehra).

### Perusal of Stanzas

When it comes to poetry writing Captain Abbas Abedi is one of those poets who justify his characters with realistic and sensible touches. His poetry is richly textured and explores in-depth connections of human-psyche touching various emotions like; love in relationships, grief, depression, nostalgia and emotional touches of joy and happiness.

To understand the poetic lines of Captain Abbas Abedi's Manqabat titled *Aqd e Ali Wa Zehra* let us have a brief insight about the preface of that era. While growing in the home of Prophet Mohammad and Khatija the most pious parents, Fatima Az-Zehra, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad was endowed with excellent morals and was perfected in faith and piety. And after the demise of his beloved wife Khatija, Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him, the messenger of God, gave maximum concentration on the training and nurturing of his daughter Fatima Az-Zehra. With his upbringing she became the description of divine morality and goodness. She was the archetype of loveliness, sophistication, radiance and style. By her devout compliance and service to God, Fatima Az-Zehra rose to highest rank in the eyes of God.

In 'Nazlul Abrar' the following titles were given to her by her noble father Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him as: *Al-Batool* [The Chaste], *Sayyedatun Nisa* [The Leader of the Women], *Afzalul Nisa* [The Highest Amongst Women], *Khairun Nisa* [The Best Amongst Women], *Al-Siddiqua* [The Utmost Truthful], *Al-Mubarakah* [The blessed one], *At-Tahirah* [The virtuous or pure], *Az-Zehra* [The Splendid], *Az-Zakiyyah* [The chaste], *Umme Abiha* [The Mother of Her Father]...and many more. (Shabbir, 87)

In nature and behavior she bore a striking likeness and resemblance to her father, Mohammad e Mustafa, peace be upon him. If Prophet Mohammad represented to be a model for all men in Islam she as his offspring represented 'the chosen Leader of women of the world' in Islam. In the book Bihar Al-Anwar, Volume ten, Ibn Abbas narrated that Prophet Mohammad said: "Surely my daughter Fatima is: The Mistress of all women from the beginning to the end. She is part of me, and the light of my eyes, she is the flower of my heart, and is my soul, (Fatima) is a human Huri, who whenever she stands in prayers in the presence of Her Lord (Exalted is His Name), her light illuminates the skies for the angels, like stars shine to people on Earth. (Ordoni, 101)

When Fatima Az-Zehra was old enough to be married many prosperous alliances came to her. Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his progeny) did not respond to these alliances as he was waiting for the guidance of Allah, the Almighty. After the battle of Badr, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Cousin of Prophet Mohammad) made his suit. Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) asked him to wait as he wanted to know the opinion of his daughter Fatima Az-Zehra. In the meantime, Prophet Mohammad also received the divine revelation that Allah, the Almighty, the Omnipotent approved the marriage of Fatima Az-Zehra with Ali Ibn Abi Talib. Khwarzini narrates and so does Abdul Mo'eed in the book 'Manaqib' that

an Angel by the name of 'Zarzakeil' was sent from the Heavens by the command of Allah, The Almighty bearing the message: "O Apostle! The Most Honourable Lord commands you in the matter of the marriage of Fatima, to join her Noor (light) with the Noor (light) of Ali" (Shabbir, 90-91).

He then took the proposal of his cousin Ali Ibn Abi Talib to his daughter Fatima Az-Zehra (peace be upon her) and told her of his (i.e., Ali Ibn Abi Talib's) praiseworthy traits and characteristics. "Fatima Az-Zehra there upon bowed her head in modesty, Umm Salamah (wife of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) narrates: 'The face of Fatimah bloomed with joy and her silence was so suggestive and conspicuous that the Holy Prophet stood up reciting *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is most merciful)'. Fatimah's silence is her acceptance" (Wofis 40; Tusi *Al Amali* 113).

In the book *Uyoon Akhbaar al-Ridha* by Shaikh Al-Sadooq it is written that Prophet Mohammad called Ali Ibn Abi Talib (his cousin and later son in Law) and he conveyed to him that Angel Gabriel has descendant and gave "Glad Tidings" that in the Heavens: "The Honorable the Exalted God has ordered the callers to call out, 'Verily, today is the banquet of Ali Ibn Abi-Talib. All Bear witness that I marry off (the Blessed Lady) Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, to Ali Ibn Abi Talib. I am pleased with this. These two are one from the other.' (Sadooq, *Uyoon Akhbaar al-Ridha* Vol: 1 Ch. 21) Thus, after two months of battle of Badr (war in 624 CE in the Hejaz region of western Arabia) i.e., two years after Hijrat (the migration of Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Yathrib now known as Madina), Fatima Zehra, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad e Mustafa and Ali Ibn Abi Talib were married.

The following lines of the Manqabat (a Sufi devotional poem, in praise of Ali Ibn Abi Talib the cousin and later son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad), portrays the joy of the poet while depicting the wedding of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Cousin and later son in law of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) with Fatima Az-Zahra (daughter of Holy Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him.)

#### **Transliteration**

*Aaj Sher e Khuda ki Shaadi hai*

*Aaj Mushkil Kusha ki Shaadi Hai*

*Woh Jo Shahzadi e Do' Aalam Hai*

*Oss Kaneez e Khuda Ki Shaadi Hai*

*Abedi Had Hai Kya Masarrat ki*

*Aaj Nafse Khuda Ki Shaadi Hai* (Abedi, *Nade Ali* 39-40)

Today is the wedding of 'Tiger of God'. ('Sher e Khuda' was the title of Ali Ibn Abi Talib)

Today is the wedding of the one who removes difficulties.

She, (Fatima Az-Zehra, daughter of Prophet Mohammad) who is the princess of both the worlds

Today is the wedding of that servant of Allah. (God)

Abedi there is no limit of happiness.

Today is the wedding of essence of God. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

Captain Abbas Abedi very beautifully portrays the Manqabat of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Fatima Az-Zehra's wedding. He articulates today is the wedding of the 'Tiger of God' or Sher e Khuda. Today is the wedding of the one who helps everyone in difficulties. He praises Fatima Az-Zehra and says she is the princess of both the worlds and also she is the slave of Allah. He (poet) addresses to himself and says today is the happiest moment for him as it is the wedding of the essence of Allah, the Almighty. And he further goes on in this Manqabat saying; let us praise the family of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) in this moment of happiness. This is not an ordinary wedding as it is the wedding of Fatima Az-Zehra, Prophets Daughter. Both the worlds i.e., the earth and the heaven are illuminated as it is the wedding of 'the Light of God'. The inhabitants of heaven are full of praise of Almighty Allah (God) as on the heavens it is the wedding of Fatima Az-Zehra. All the attendants of the marriage are pious people.

He conveys in his beautiful Manqabat that we Momin (people of faith) have brought our hearts as a

gift on this wonderful occasion of marriage. As this is the wedding of the leader of righteous people. So that by our actions we make our Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) happy as the wedding of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Fatima Az-Zehra is the intention of Almighty Allah (God). In the book 'Firdous-ul-Akhbar' Dailami quotes from Abdullah Ibn Masood that the Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him said "Verily, Allah the Honourable has ordered me to marry Fatima to Ali." (Shabbir 91) Thus in all in its fundamental nature, we will be celebrating the intention of God.

At the core if we see any work of art the revolving question is about thought process of the poet, how he imagines and senses and perceives things. Captain Abbas Abedi has used numerous tools to portray this thoughts and feelings in a realistic manner. They might be gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice. The following Rubai (quatrain and shortest complete poem in Urdu) portrays the positive traits of Fatima Az-Zehra, daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him.

### **Transliteration**

*Jowhar e Noor e Mohammad e Mustafa Hai Fatima*

*Madar e Hasnain; Marziye Khuda Hai Fatima*

*Hyder e Karrar Hain Mushkil Kusha e Do Jahan*

*Hyder e Karrar Ki Mushkil Kusha Hai Fatima (Abedi, Nade Ali 9)*

Fatima is the Precious stone or visible essence of Prophet Mohammad's light (Noor).

She (Fatima) is the Mother of Hasnain, and the will of God.

Hyder e Karrar is the remover of difficulties of the two worlds.

Fatima is the remover of difficulties of Hyder e Karrar. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

In the above lines Fatima is the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, Hasnain is the plural form of the grandsons of Prophet Mohammad i.e., Hasan and Hussain, Hyder e Karrar translates itself as Impetuous Lion is the name of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the cousin and later Son in Law of Prophet Mohammad.

In the above lines of verses of poetry, versifier Captain Abbas Abedi very wonderfully portrays the significant position and rank of Fatima Az-Zehra, the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. He says she is the precious stone of Prophet Mohammad's light. In other words she is the heart of his soul. In the second line of the quatrain or Rubai he depicts that not only she is the mother of Hasnain (plural form of the grandsons of Prophet Mohammad i.e., Hasan and Hussain), but also she is the will of God. He further says if Hyder e Karrar (son in law of Prophet Mohammad) is the remover of difficulties of the two worlds than she Fatima (daughter of Prophet Mohammad) is the remover of difficulties of Hyder e Karrar.

For the successful running of any relationship the essential pre-requisites are nurturing, caring, work and commitment in the relationship. The poet quite skillfully portrayed the relationship of Fatima Az-Zehra and Ali Ibn Abi Talib i.e., if he was removing the difficulties of both the worlds than she too as his kufu or equal was removing his difficulties. In other words the poet portrays the superior character of Fatima (daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) and says she was not only a good wife but also an excellent mother, daughter and the leader of the women of the world as she was the will of God.

In all the lines of his poetry Captain Abbas Abedi has portrayed the personalities of Ahl Al-Bayt (family of Prophet Mohammad) in a realistic, poetic and remarkable way so that the reader is overwhelmed and is in awe with their superior status. In the following lines of the Salam (A Lyrical Salutation) he praises Kulsum bint Ali (the youngest granddaughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him).

### **Transliteration**

*Noor e Nazre Ahmed e Mukhtar Hai Kulsum*

*Laqte Jigar e Hyder e Karrar hai Kulsum*

*Zainab ki tarah Majlis e Matam ki Bina ki*



*Shabbir ke Maqsad ki Madadgaar hai Kulsum (Abedi Ya Hussain 54)*

Kulsum is the light of Ahmed e Mukhtar's eyes  
 She is the darling of Hyder e Karrar or the valiant lion  
 In the manner of Zainab she too was the founder of Mourning of Hussain Ibn Ali  
 Kulsum is the helper of Shabbir's intention. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

In the above lines Ahmed e Mukhtar is the name of Prophet Mohammad the chosen one, Hyder e Karrar is the title of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, Son in law of Prophet Mohammad. Zainab is the eldest granddaughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him and Shabbir means the pious, beautiful Lion and it is the other name of Hussain Ibn Ali, the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him.

Poet in the above lines of the Salaam praises Kulsum Bint Ali (peace be upon her) and says she was not only the light of her grandfather Prophet Mohammad's eyes but also darling and loved daughter of her father Ali Ibn Abi Talib. 'She was married to her paternal cousin Mohammad, son of Jaffer Ibn Abi Talib.' (Aza e Zainab 198) She resembled her paternal grandmother Fatima Bint Asad and was among the pioneers along with Zainab Bint Ali to start the tradition of Azadari or mourning for Hussain Ibn Ali. If her elder sister Zainab Bint Ali was the helper in promoting Hussain Ibn Ali's message she was the helper of Zainab. She was quiet eloquent in her speech and wording. She was also a poetess. If her younger brother Abbas Ibn Ali (Son of Ali Ibn Abi Talib) was brave and chivalrous, she as his sister was fakhr or pride of Abbas Ibn Ali. She was patient in heaviest hardships and tortures on her and her family. She was imprisoned along with her family members and was in severe and distressing hardships. But always she held back her tears because for her carrying the message of her brother's martyrdom to masses was more important than her own grievance of losing her brother and family members. But after her mission was over she cried throughout her life. She along with her sister Zainab Bint Ali tried to spread the last message of her brother Hussain Ibn Ali to save Islam.

**Conclusion**

Captain Abbas Abedi portrayed deep, opulent and realistic characters in his poetry. Especially, the emotional portrayal about the aftermath of the battle of Karbala is outstanding. His poetry is widely read in Majalis (mourning gatherings) of Hussain Ibn Ali (Youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad). This pacesetter in the world of poets of Ahl Al-Bayt (family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) left this mortal world on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1999. He is buried in a graveyard known as Daire Mir Momin. He is not only survived by his children but also by his outstanding and evergreen poetry.

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