

A KALEIDOSCOPIIC STUDY OF ALI JAWEED MAQSOOD'S POETRY

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Abstract:

Ali Jaweed Maqsood a contemporary versifier depicted in his poetry the impediments faced by Hussain Ibne Ali (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) and the Ahl Al Bayt (the family of Prophet Mohammad) in 'The Battle of Karbala'. He was conversant with the themes of nostalgia, deprivation, reality, righteousness. His various forms of poetry have knitted a wreath of flowery sentences in the Madi'h or praise and also in the grief of Ahl al Bayt (the family of Prophet Mohammad). He was a diver in the ocean of Praise of Ahle bait (the family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) hence he was called Jaweed or eternal. He has written many styles of poetry namely Ghazal's, Nazms, Rubais, Manqabat, Qasida, Noha's, Marsia's and Salaams. The names of his books are Asri Marsia: "Sultan e Wafa" "Shabab e Shahadat (2001)", Asri Marsia: "Adam Al e Aba" "Paighambar Nisswa" (2004), Asri Marsia: "Abd Mabood Numa" "Khuda Khada Hai Bashar Ke Libas Mein" (2007), Asri Marsia: "Sharikatul Hussain" "Biz a'tul Hussain" (2011), and Khiraje Qalam (2013). Some of his contemporaries are Akhtar Zaidi, Sayeed Shaheedi, Mohammad Ali Kirmani, Kaif Kirmani, Rasheed Shaheedi and Mohammad Ali Wafa. This article aims to express the grief and circumstances depicted in the poetry of Ali Jaweed Maqsood in 'The battle of Karbala'.

Keywords: *Ahle Bait (family of Prophet Mohammad), Noha (lyrical dirge), Marsia (elegiac poem in six-lined or Musaddas format), Mukhammas (five lined band or stanza in poems)*

Prolegomenon

Ali Jaweed Maqsood is a unique contemporary versifier in the history of Urdu literature. His real name was Syed Sajjad Akbar Razvi and his takhallus (pen name) was Jaweed. In modern Persian Jaweed means 'eternal'. He was a diver in the ocean of Praise of Ahle bait (the family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) hence he was called Jaweed or eternal. He wrote a Manqabat on Abbas Ibne Ali (The younger step-brother of Hussain Ibne Ali, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad) and thus he was bestowed with the laqab or title Shayar Saqqah e Haram i.e., Poet of Abbas Ibne Ali (the younger stepbrother of Hussain Ibne Ali, whose title was Saqqah e Haram, the distributor or provider of water).

He was born in Hyderabad on 17th December 1947 and expired on 10th March 2013 and he lived for 65 years. His father's name was Syed Hamid Hussain Razvi who worked as a History teacher in a Government School till 1964 and mothers name was Nadir Jahan Begum. He had four siblings: three brothers and one sister. He was a Razvi Syed which means he was a descendent of Holy Prophet Mohammad-e-Mustafa's (peace be upon him) eighth son in progeny. He completed his Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree from Osmania University in 1965. The main theme under discussion in his Marsias, Salam's and Noha's is 'The battle of Karbala'.

He has written many styles of poetry namely Ghazal's (odes), Nazm (descriptive poetry or rhymed verse in prose style), Rubai (Quatrain), Manqabat (is a Sufi devotional poem in praise of Ali Ibne Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad), Qasida (Poetry in praise of a noble personality), Noha (a lyrical dirge), Marsia (elegiac poem in six lined or Musaddas format) and Salaam (a lyrical salutation). He has written ten Marsia's, numerous Noha's and Salam's. His personality matched his outer posture. He

was kind, affectionate, and fair in his dealings and had human insight. The names of his books are *Asri Marsia: "Sultan e Wafa" "Shabab e Shahadat (2001)"*, *Asri Marsia: "Adam Al e Aba" "Paighambar Nisswa" (2004)*, *Asri Marsia: "Abd Mabood Numa" "Khuda Khada Hai Bashar Ke Libas Mein" (2007)*, *Asri Marsia: "Sharikatul Hussain" "Biz a'tul Hussain" (2011)*, and *Khiraje Qalam (2013)*. Jaweed has self-expression in his cantos and opulence in his words. Some of his contemporaries are Akhtar Zaidi, Sayeed Shaheedi, Mohammad Ali Kirmani, Kaif Kirmani, Rasheed Shaheedi and Mohammad Ali Wafa.

Ali Jaweed Maqsood was influenced in his initial days by the poetry of three prominent poets of Urdu Literature namely: Mir Baber Ali Anis, Josh Malihabadi and Faiz Ahmed Faiz. He read their poetry extensively. Anis and Malihabadi influenced him by their 'laasaani pasmanzar' or unequalled background and Faiz Ahmed Faiz influenced him by his 'Paikar tarashi' or striking imagery. He was a nature poet and was quite famous in his College for "Azad Nazm" (unrhymed or free verse) in the 1970's. After this he started portraying inspired poetry in the form of Noha's (Lyrical dirge). His friend and Advocate A.K Ahmed said "His Nohas still kindle deep pathos and it is impossible to restrain one's tears when one hears." (Khiraje Qalam, 112)

Exploration of Language

Ali Jaweed Maqsood in the following band or stanza of Noha portrays the grief of Hussain Ibne Ali (The younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) during the battle of Karbala when one by one his friends and relatives started to embrace death fighting gallantly with the troublesome military of Yazid Ibne Mawviya (The cruel Umayyad despot), 'who demanded oath of fealty from Hussain Ibne Ali, on pain of death.' (Mohani, 5) Hussain Ibne Ali (The younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad) preferred death to paying allegiance to an unprincipled and disorderly dictator.

To avoid having to swear allegiance to a man who was heathen at heart, and whose immorality had destabilized the foundations of religion and ethics. Hussain Ibne Ali (The younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) removed himself along with his family from Madina to Mecca. On reaching Mecca, he found himself in greater peril, he came to know that the tyrant soldiers of the Umayyad King, Yazid Ibne Mawviya have disguised themselves in the clothes of Pilgrims to kill him and fearing the desecration of the holy precincts of the Kabaa by bloodshed, he converted his Haj into Umra and set out to Kufa for inviting all that is good and forbidding what is wrong, in compliance with the invitations of the capricious and disloyal inhabitants of that town who have send him letters of allegiance.

But on his way there, he was intercepted by a large army sent by Yazid Ibne Mawviya, and Hussain Ibne Ali (the younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) himself, along with his kinsmen and followers, seventy two in all, died fighting bravely on the field of Karbala, after suffering severe thirst, pangs of hunger and insults for three days consecutively in succession (Hussain *Etemaad* 6). Ali Jaweed Maqsood at various places illustrated the power of relationships and the authority these relationships have on our life. The trauma underwent by one relative when the other relative, friend and loved one parted from him and embraced death. Let us now see the lines of the Noha (a lyrical dirge)

Transliteration

Bichde habeeb jeene ki lazzat chali gayii
 Qasim gaye toh zaph ki taaqat chali gayii
 Root 'hejo tum toh qalb ki quwat chali gayii
 Akbar ke saath meri basarat chali gayii
 Abbas humko laashe jawan mil nahin rahii (Jaweed, Karbalawale 14)

When Habeeb parted (died) the flavor to live has gone (i.e., Life has become meaningless)

When Qasim went (expired) then my energy of restrain (i.e., self-control) has gone

When you turned away (to death) then the strength of my heart has gone

Along with Akbar (his death) my eyesight has gone

Abbas I can't find the corpse of the young man. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

Aristotle says, 'Without friends no one would choose to live, though he possessed all the goods.' (Pangle, 16) A best friend is a person who you value above other friends in your life, someone you call when you get good or bad news. With whom you try to share the trifles of life and towards whom you turn for help in need. Habib Ibn Mazahir al-Asadi was the childhood best friend of Hussain Ibne Ali (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) and he was the only friend whom Hussain Ibne Ali has called for help in 'the battle of Karbala.' Habib Ibne Mazahir was in charge of the left wing of Hussain Ibne Ali's Army. He was not only the Ashabi or companion of Prophet Mohammad, (peace be upon him) but also he was the companion of Ali Ibne Abi Talib (the cousin and later son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him). He was martyred at 75 years of age fighting valiantly with Hussain Ibne Ali against the forces of the tyrant king Yazid Ibne Mawviya led by his Governor Umr ibn Sa'ad.

Between Zuhr and Asr prayers, Habib Ibne Mazahir came to Hussain Ibne Ali and asked permission to go to the battlefield. He wanted to sacrifice his life for the cause of saving Islam. Hussain Ibne Ali tried to stop him by saying Habib your presence gives me comfort, stay back my friend. But as Habib persisted Hussain Ibne Ali eventually gave him permission to fight. He mounted Habib on his horse. Habib Ibne Mazahir rode towards the battlefield and fought bravely and killed many formidable adversaries. While fighting fiercely against a person from the tribe Banu Tamim named Badil Ibn Haraym Aqhfa'i, who struck him by his sword and later on Hasin Ibne Tamim also struck Habib on his head. How much a single brave soldier could fight against many unethical soldiers? He was over-powered by cruel forces of Yazid Ibne Mawviya and he was wounded badly and fell to the ground. Later his head was severed from his body by sword by a member of Banu Tamim. (Hasan, 247)

It is significant to know that we all mourn in a different way. Our account of patience combined with our character, and the scale of investment in the camaraderie, all along with the existing stresses influence our reaction to loss. Hussain Ibne Ali rushed to the place where Habib was lying and cried, 'O my dear friend Habib!' I will take you back and all my companions from God on 'The Day of Judgement.' In the above lines of the Noha (A lyrical dirge) the versifier Jaweed depicts the stream of consciousness of Hussain Ibne Ali. He in his thoughts laments to his younger step-brother Abbas Ibne Ali (Son of Ali Ibne Abi Talib) that when his closest and truest friend Habib Ibne Mazahir parted with him to death his flavour to live life has gone. He doesn't have any taste in life anymore. In the second line of the stanza the poet has portrayed skillfully, Hussain Ibne Ali's lamentation on the martyrdom of his nephew Qasim Ibne Hasan, whom he has raised since the age of three years after the martyrdom of his elder brother Hasan Ibne Ali (the elder grandson of Prophet Mohammad) through poison. Hussain Ibne Ali (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) loved Qasim a lot and considered Qasim as the apple of his eye. In his thoughts he laments to his younger brother Abbas Ibne Ali (Son of Ali Ibne Abi Talib, who was the cousin and son in law of Prophet Mohammad) that after the death of Qasim his self-restraint has vanished and he is unable to control his emotions of loss.

In the third line of the band or stanza, Hussain Ibne Ali further speaks in his conscious thoughts and says to his Brother Abbas Ibne Ali (the younger step-brother of Hussain Ibne Ali) that by losing you to death Abbas I have lost the strength of heart i.e., the inclination to live has left me or the reason of all human instinctive actions have left me. And finally, in the fourth line he says after the martyrdom of his eighteen years young and chivalrous son Akbar his eyesight has weakened and he is unable to see. Jaweed further portrays in the last line of the stanza or band that Hussain Ibne Ali (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) is imploring to his brother Abbas Ibne Ali in his conscious thoughts that 'he is unable find the corpse of his son'.

Jaweed has the talent of binding his words in the form of a beautiful rosary. The subsequent lines of the Noha or lyrical dirge are in Mukhammas format (five lines of poetry) and portray the scene of war and

the narration of the conscious thoughts of Hussain Ibne Ali (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) by the poet.

Transliteration

Asre Ashoor tha Shabbir thay tanhaaai thi
 Mahe Zahra pe ghata zulm ki jab chaaii thi
 Sheh ko jab nauke sinaa suaee zameen laaii thi
 Ghirte ghirte lab e zakhmi pe sada aayii thi
 Garm rethi pe mein girta hoon sambhalo Amma (Jaweed, Karbalawale 42)

They were the last hours of third prayer(Asr), on the tenth day of Moharram(Ashura)and Shabbir (also known as Hussain Ibne Ali) was alone

Whilst the moon of Zahra (i. e., Hussain Ibne Ali) was enveloped in the dense dark clouds of cruelty

When the point of sword brought the Sheh or King, Hussain Ibne Ali (from the horse) towards the earth

While falling came the cry on his wounded lips

I am falling on hot sand, hold me mother!(Translated by Fatima, Farhat).

The above lines of Noha are in Mukhammas format (five lines of poetry) and portray a gloomy sense of devastation. They portray melancholically the last hour of Hussain Ibne Ali's (the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) martyrdom. The reader can perceive the intensity of loneliness of Hussain Ibne Ali through the lines of poetry. Everyone among the adversaries was striving for his death and among these tyrants was the moon of Zahra (Zahra is the daughter of Prophet Mohammad) alone. At this moment the point of a tyrant's sword pushed Sheh (also known as Hussain Ibne Ali, the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) to the ground. Through parched and wounded lips he called his mother, Fatima Az-Zahra (the daughter of Prophet Mohammad) that he was falling from the horse on hot sand therefore come and hold me mother. It is human nature that at whatever age you are, the first thought which comes to a person in calamity is of mother. A person tries to seek the comfort of his/her mother and thus the poet superbly portrays the last wishes of Hussain Ibne Ali (The youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) who wants his mother to come and hold him in the last moments of his life.

Through his flowery and flowing words Jaweed sketches a scene in front of the eyes of the reader, full of magical realism as if the reader is present at the time of the calamity. The following lines of the Noha of Jaweed portray the lamentation of Fatima Az-Zahra (mother of Hussain Ibne Ali and daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) at the time before the martyrdom of Hussain Ibne Ali.

Transliteration

Narghe mein sitamgaron ke ghash hai mera dilbar
 Khanjar liye aata hai idhar shimr e Sitamgar
 Runn mein nikal aayii hai udhar Zainab e muztar
 Qaimoa mein nabi zadiyon ki aah o fuga'n hai
 Shabbir hai tanha mera Abbas kahan hai (Jaweed, Karbalawale 31)

My unconscious sweetheart has been besieged by the tyrants

The oppressor Shimr is bringing here a short curved sword (shaped as letter 'J')

Being restless, Zainab has come out into the battlefield

In the tents the cries and wails of the daughters of Prophet Mohammad can be heard

Shabbir (also known as Hussain Ibne Ali, youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) is alone, where is My Abbas?(Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

It is a Shia-Muslims belief that Fatima Az-Zahra (the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) was present in the battle of Karbala when her son Hussain Ibne Ali has called her in the last hour

of his martyrdom. The poet portrays the grief and lamentation of a mother, Fatima Az-Zahra when she sees her son, Hussain Ibne Ali (The youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) circled and overwhelmed by the tyrants of Yazid Ibne Mawviya's (The cruel unethical despot of Umayyad Dynasty) army. It is her Soliloquy, my son is in the circle of tyrants and the cruelest Shimr e Dhi'l-Jawshan is bringing a short blunt sword of 'J' shape to behead him. Hussain Ibne Ali's sister Zainab has come out of her tent restlessly seeing her brother's plight and all the women folk of the family of Prophet Mohammad are crying and wailing. And in the last line of the Noha she questions and laments, My son Shabbir is all alone and at this moment where is his brave and chivalrous brother Abbas Ibne Ali (who was already martyred by the forces of Yazid Ibne Mawviya)

The next lines of verses of marsia depicted by Jaweed are in the Musaddas format i. e., genre of six lines (also known as sestain or Misra). Jaweed had a knack of portraying the happenings so realistically in his marsia's that a scene is sketched in front of the reader as if, the catastrophe is happening in front of the reader's eyes. In the following Misra or sestain of Musaddas Jaweed focuses mainly on the surprise of the sub-ordinates of Ubayd Allah Ibn e Ziad's (Umayyad Governor of Basra, Kufa and Khurasan under the reign of Yazid Ibne Mawviya) army. They were unable to fathom and understand as to how a man after being tortured so much could have so much confidence and will power and patience in him as was shown by Zain UlAbedien. (The eldest son of Hussain Ibne Ali)

Transliteration

Hairan thi duniya ye wahi bol raha hai
 Woh Jiska pidar dasht mein be go'r pada hai
 Natiq hai wahi jis ke gale tauq gada hai
 Pairon se laho shaam talak jiska baha hai
 Be parda rasan basta harem jiske khade hain
 Faulad ke haaton mein kade jiske pade hain (Jaweed *Asri Marsia* 25)

*The world was surprised that he is the same one, who is saying this
 There in the desert whose father is lying down graveless?
 Is he the same spokesman in whose neck, Collar (Shackle) is lying?
 From whose feet till Sham (Syria) blood has been oozing all the way
 Whose women folk are standing unveiled and roped?
 Who has bracelets of steel (shackles) lying in his hands (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)*

After beheading the Prophet's youngest grandson, Hussain Ibne Ali and having trampled the sacred bodies of the martyrs under their horse's hooves, the brutal host, Umar Ibne Saad, Commander of Ubayd Allah Ibne Ziad's Army (Umayyad Governor of Basra, Kufa and Khurasan under the reign of Yazid Ibne Mawviya) and his tyrannous army burnt Hussain Ibne Ali's tents. Of the gallant band of martyrs, of Hussain Ibne Ali's Army the only individual that survived the massacre was his eldest son, Ali Ibne Hussain alias Zain UlAbedien. His severe illness at the time, disabled him from combating, and his absolute obedience of his father's last word restrained him from attempting to do so. Thus his life was spared.

The vile soldiers of Umar Ibne Saad (the Commander of Ubayd Allah Ibne Ziad's Army) after pillaging the bereaved women and children of their few possessions made them captives, while the mangled corpses of the martyrs were left unburied on the burning sands. The captives were then mounted on the bare backs of camels, with Zain UlAbedien (the eldest son of Hussain Ibne Ali, grandson of Prophet Mohammad) at their head, and accompanied by the severed heads of the martyrs mounted on spears; they were led through the crowded streets of Kufa, to the court of Yazid's Governor, Ubayd Allah Ibne Ziad. The latter, having expressed his satisfaction at the performance of his subordinates, ordered the prisoners to be

taken to Damascus. At length, subsequent to a toilsome journey, this caravan of widows, orphans and severed heads, pelted at and insulted by the decadent masses of the cities and townships through which they passed, and, forced onwards with the spears and whips of their merciless captors, finally arrived in the court of the hideous and brutal oppressor Yazid Ibne Mawviya.

The captives as well as the heads of the martyrs were then presented before the cruel despot Yazid Ibne Mawviya, who touched Hussain Ibne Ali's lips with a stick and heaped verbal abuses upon that honorable head. After that, turning towards the captives, he inquired the names of each of them, and absurdly voiced pleasure at what had befallen them. When Zain UlAbedien (the eldest son of Hussain Ibne Ali, grandson of Prophet Mohammad) remonstrated with him, he threatened to put him to the sword. At which the latter, with his characteristic courage, challenged him, saying "I am not afraid of being killed; nay, in those that have been slain before me I have an example worthy of emulation. (Mohani, 6)

Here in the above Musaddas Jaweed portrays the surprise of the captors of Zain UlAbedien. (the eldest son of Hussain Ibne Ali, grandson of Prophet Mohammad) They were surprised at his boldness. Was this the young man on whom we have heaped insults and treated him so badly. Was this the same person, whose father was lying brutally martyred on the plains of 'Karbala' shroudless and tomb less and we did not even allow him and gave him time to bury his father. He was all the way shackled with heavy steel collar and with heavy fetters in hands and feet, and blood was oozing from his feet as he has been made to walk several thousand miles on thorny desert. They wondered at the braveness and boldness of Zain UlAbedien (the eldest son of Hussain Ibne Ali) and thought to themselves as to how bold was he that after so many traumas he could be so steady and firm in his wordings and thinking.

Conclusion

Jaweed's poetry is so intense, overwhelming and overpowering that it marks the page through his depiction of flowing words and poignant verses. The following are the lines of a profound and deep Noha.

Har nasl badal jayegi, badlega ye aalam
 Insaan badal jayenge, badlenge ye mausam
 Shayar na rahenge na qatiib aur na aalim
 Har haal mein hoga shahe mazloom ka matam
 Mausam kabhi badlega na pyaso ki aza ka
 Gham Hazrat e Abbas ka Jaweed rahega (Jaweed *Asri Marsiye: Sultan e Wafa* 23)

*Every breed will be replaced, and this world will be transformed
 Humans will be replaced, and the seasons will change
 Poets, scribes and scholars will perish
 At any rate the mourning of 'King of the Oppressed' or Hussain Ibne Ali will continue
 Mourning season of the Thirsty people (of Karbala) will never change
 Sorrow of His Eminence Abbas will be eternal. (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)*

In the above striking Musaddas (six lined verses) of Marsia, Jaweed says that generations will be replaced and the world might transform and change ethnically and culturally, people might die and seasons might change, versifiers, writers and researchers will expire. But the mourning season of Hussain Ibne Ali (The youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) will carry on as it is destined to continue by the grace of Almighty Allah (God). This mourning season of the thirsty and parched people of Karbala, the loved ones of Hussain Ibne Ali, his Ansaar (friends) and Akhroba (family members) will never change and woe and bereavement of reverent Abbas Ibne Ali will be everlasting and incessant.

This artistic and most outstanding luminary, Ali Jaweed Maqsood left this world for eternal dwelling on 10th march 2013 and he has been rested in peace in a graveyard of Hyderabad known as *Daire*

Mir Momin. He is survived by his wives Sayyeda Razvi, Amina Marzia and one son Syed Anees Raza Razvi and two daughters Kounain Fatima and Samana Sughra and numerous admirers of his poetry. His poetry is considered as one of the most exceptional pieces of Urdu Literature and he is measured as one amid the finest modern versifiers.

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