

Re: Mirza Ghalib – Trip Down Memory Lane

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shariq_tariq@xxxxxxxxxx wrote:

I posted this to soc.culture.pakistan some 10 years back when the hairline was not quite receding and the waistline was still not that out of control. God I am getting old...anyways enjoy

Here is yet another notable incident in the life of the great Ghalib. Have some translations down incase you have a have a problem in urdu comprehension

Background:

The friendly (or not so friendly) rivalry between Ghalib and Zauq is well known, and each took small shots at the other's expense. One day, as Zauq was travelling in a palenquin near Ghalib's area, he encountered Ghalib and his pals playing dice on the streets.

Ghalib was amused at how proudly the "royal poet" was travelling on the shoulders of two bearers. He said the follwing verse (as a taunt) loud enough so that Zauq could hear it:

Banaa hai shaah ka musahib, phire hai itraata
(how proudly the friend of the Emperor roams !!)

Zauq put the she'r to memory, and left that day without saying a word.

Later on, a musha'ira was to be held in the honour

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of Bahadurshah Zafar's coronation as King, and Zauq requested His Majesty to call Ghalib as a guest, since Zauq wanted to humiliate Ghalib in front of everyone, especially the King !

On the day of the mushai'ra, Zauq brought up the fact that Ghalib had uttered the above sneering remark to a royal member, which was not very polite. When the king asked Ghalib for an explanation, Ghalib replied that it was the "MAQTA" to a new ghazal that he had just written. Not to be so easily undermined, Zauq asked the king to let Ghalib begin the mushai'ra with this new ghazal. Now it was Ghalib's

turn to be shocked. However, Ghalib pretended to take a blank piece of paper from his pocket and read. He composed the following poem on the spot to save his face .

Har ek baat pe kehte ho tum ke "tu kyaa hai"
Tum hi kaho ke yeh andaaz-e-guftagu kyaa hai

Na shole meiN yeh kar shamma, na barq meiN yeh adaa
Koi bataao ke shokh-e-tand khu kyaa hai

Yeh rashk hai ke woh hota hai hum-sukhan tum se
Wagarna khauf-e-bad aamozi-e adoo kyaa hai

Chipak rahaa hai badan par lahoos se pairaahan
Hamaari je'b ko ab haajte rafoo kyaa hai

Jalaa hai jism jahaaN dil bhi jal gayaa hoga
Kuredte ho jo ab raakh, justjoo kyaa hai

RagoN meiN daudte phirne ke hum naheeN Qaayal
Jab aankh hi se na tapkaa to phir lahoos kyaa hai

Woh cheez jis ke liye hum ko hai behesht azeez
Siwaa-e- baada-e-gulfaam-e-mashkboo kyaa hai

PiyooN sharaab agar Khum bhi, dekh looN do chaar
Yeh sheesha -o- vaqr -o- kozah -o- saboo kyaa hai

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Rahi na taaqat–e–guftaar, aur agar ho bhi
To kis umeed se kahiye ke aarzoo kyaa hai

Banaa hai shaah ka musahib, phire hai itraata
Wagarna shehr meiN Ghalib ki aabroo kyaa hai

Shariq Mian,

I don't quite know the occasion which prompted you to post your message today. In any case, let me suggest a few amendments in the above ghazal. I am sure the errors are through typos :

"tum hi" = tumheeN
"kar shamma" = karishma
"tand khu" = tuNd~KHoo
"haajte" = haajat–e–
"mashkboo" = mushk~boo
"vaqr" = qadah
"kozah" = kooza(h)
"saboo" = suboo
"umeed se .." = umeed pe
"bana hai" = huwa hai
"shaah" = sheh

Also, in the eighth sher, the punctuation comma comes after "sharaab", and not after "bhi".

I too had seen this serial when it was telecast. But, frankly, I am convinced that Gulzar didn't do justice to Ghalib's character, nor to that of Zauq.

In this context, I had contributed a post to ALUP some years back. I am quoting it below, FWIIW :

It is true that Gulzar took a lot of liberties in this TV serial, which is surprising, considering Gulzar's avowed love for and familiarity with Urdu milieu and literature. Another surprise was the fact that the two actors who played the roles of Zauq and Ghalib (the late Shafi Inamdar and Naseeruddin Shah) could

surely have been expected to have a greater insight into the literary history and the behavioural mores of polite society of those days than what was being depicted in the serial. Fortunately for us, these aspects have been so well-documented in the biographies and memoirs of that period that it is not difficult for us to know that the serial had done a grave injustice to the major players on the literary stage of that era. I still recall the sickening facial gestures that Zauq is shown to make at the mushaira. Also, for that matter, the ghazal that Ghalib recites at the mushaira was also very inappropriate. It happens to be the first ghazal of his Diwan and, comparatively, not of that high literary merit which characterizes many others. (I am talking in the context of Ghalib's own high standards.) Not only Zauq. Even Ghalib has been portrayed in a very negative manner. Anybody seeing the serial would carry away an impression that Ghalib was a crusty, cantankerous person, forever displaying a morose and testy temperament. Nothing is farther from the truth. Ghalib was a member of the aristocracy (though not correspondingly rich). He was a most erudite scholar. As a person, he was urbane, hospitable and the epitome of the genteel ways of the nobility (ashraaf). He also had been gifted with a great sense of humour. His letters and the authentic anecdotes recorded at the time prove this, as has been testified to by all biographers and contemporaries, including Maulvi Mohammed Husain Azaad (author of Aab-e-Hayaat) who, in his zealous regard for his mentor Zauq, has not accorded that recognition to Ghalib's literary pre-eminence to which he is entitled. This is not, however, attributable to misplaced zeal alone. This was a more or less common belief amongst the people in the latter half of the 19th century and Azaad was, in a way, reflecting the popular impressions about Ghalib. It is difficult to account for the totally misleading image of Ghalib that has been portrayed in the serial. Surely, Gulzar knew better than that. Zauq himself was a person of exemplary politeness, and the pages of literary history are replete with instances of his gentlemanly conduct. Even when one concedes a certain amount of rivalry, it would be most unjust to attribute anything like bitter rivalry or spiteful behaviour to either of them.

Afzal

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