03

BAQER AMANATH KHANI AN ASTOUNDING VERSIFIER OF HYDERABAD E DECCAN

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Abstract:

Baqer Amanat Khani is one of the famous Urdu Versifiers of Hyderabad e Deccan who wrote poetry on Ahl Al-Bayt (family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him). He was bestowed with the title of Shayar e Millat Anis e Deccan. His father's name was Mir Zainul Abedien and mother's name was Bahar Unnisa Begum. He wrote many styles of poetry like Salaam, Marsia, Mukhammas, Noha, Manqabat, Naat, Sehre, Rubaiyat, Dua, Qasida. Some of his contemporaries were Captain Abbas Abedi, Shaheed yar Jung, Sayeed Shaheedi, Allama Sohail Afandi, Allama Najm affandi, Hilmi Afandi and Qayam Jafferi. This paper aims to explore few of the poetry styles of versifier Baqer Amanath Khani.

Keywords: Battle of Karbala, Noha, Marsiya, Nath, Dua, Alaihis Salam (Means 'peace be upon him' in Arabic)

Proem

The land of Hyderabad e Deccan has produced many versifiers and scholars in Urdu literary circles. Qutub Shahi Dynasty followed by the Asaf Jahi Dynasty and other Rule books in different eras changed but the fervour for poetry remains the same till now. Especially writing poetry on Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him and his family) and His Ahl Al Bay (People of the House of the Holy Prophet) is evergreen. The name of Baqer Amanath Khani is one among those popular versifiers. He was a Razvi Syed that means his ancestry connected with the eighth-great grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him. 'His ancestor Mir Mahi Razvi Khani used to serve in the shrine of Imam e Reza, the eight-great grandson of Prophet Mohammad. In 939 Century, he came to India and resided here. The grandson of Ali Mir Mahi Razvi Khani known as Mirak Moinuddin was given the title of Amanath Khan by emperor Shahjahan.' Thus, this title 'Amanath Khan' is still carried on in the family of versifier Baqer Amanath Khani'. (Sayeed 5)

His real name was Mir Mohammad Baqer Razvi. He went by the pen-name of Baqer and he was honoured and bestowed by the title of Shayar e Millat. He was born on Friday, 19th March, 1909 in Hyderabad and his date of death is18 February,1990. His father's name was Mir Zainul Abedien and mother's name was Bahar Unnisa Begum. He was attached to his mother and loved her dearly. His parents played a major part in developing his personality into a noble and gentle person. They concentrated a lot on his upbringing. He was tall, fair and had broad forehead and big eyes (Sayeed 49) He had two wives Razia Begum and Hussaini Begum. He had two daughters and four sons with Razia Begum and four sons and four daughters with Hussaini Begum. Some of his contemporaries were Captain Abbas Abedi, Shaheed yar Jung, Sayeed Shaheedi, Allama Sohail Afandi, Allama Najm affandi, Hilmi Afandi and Qayam Jafferi.

According to his grandson, Shahnawaz Amanath Khani s/o Mir Mohammad Sadiq Razvi Amanath Khani, he (Baquer Amanath Khani) was a polite, soft spoken and generous person. He went out of his way to help people. He was very much impressed by the poetry of Mir Baber Ali Anis and Asad Ullah Khan Ghalib. He wrote many styles of poetry like Salaam (A Lyrical Salutation), Marsia (an elegiac epic in Musaddas format, six lines of poetry), Mukhammas (five lines of poetry stanzas), Noha (A Lyrical dirge), Manqabat (a Sufi devotional poem, in praise of Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the cousin and Later Son-in-Law of Prophet Mohammad or any Sufi Saint), Naat (a poem written in praise of Prophet Mohammad), Sehre (a lyrical wedding poem, usually a sonnet with praise and blessings of family members), Rubaiyat (Quatrain, which is a complete poem), Dua (A prayer of invocation to God, in couplet format), Qasida (a panegyric ode written in praise or Madih of a famous personality).

He wrote thirty-four Marsias, forty-six Musaddas, five Mukhammas, five hundred and sixty-three Salaams, four hundred and ninety-five Qasidas, Nath and Manqabat, one hundred and eighty-nine Rubaiyat and one hundred and eighty-three Qataat, seven hundred and forty-five Qataat e Tariq and two hundred and forty-four Ghazals and Nazams. This calculation is till 31st December 1988. Afterwards till his death, he added some more poetry in different styles.(Sayeed, 88). His poetry collections can be found namely as 'Marasi ke Majmooaay' 'Amanath Sukhan', 'Amanath Gham', 'Zinda Nishanath', 'Tarjuman e Gham'," Lala Sabz', 'Tasbih Khakh e Shifa'. (Ali, 15)

Poesy Scrutiny

The following lines of Noha (a lyrical dirge) written by versifier Baqer Amanath Khani portray the last will of Abbas Ibn Ali (Younger brother of Hussain Ibn Ali) before he transcended from the present life towards an eternal life. To understand the poetry lines better let us talk briefly about Abbas Ibn Ali; he was the brave, avid, gallant, loyal, and virtuous son of Ali Ibn Abi Talib (cousin and son In Law of Prophet Mohammad) and Bibi Ummul-Baneen (also known as Fatima Kalabiya). He was not only the Alamdar or Standard Bearer of Hussain ibn Ali's army in the battle of Karbala but also, he was the Saqqa e Haram, the one who fetches water for the ladies and children of Karbala.

On the tenth day of Moharram when everyone was going to the battle to fight, Abbas Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salaam asked permission several times to go into the battlefield to fight the oppressors. He was told by his elder brother and Master, Hussain Ibn Ali (the younger grandson of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him) that you are the commander of my army Abbas. How can you go first and fight? Imam Hussain Ibn Ali's objective was to rectify and re-awaken Islam and not to score a victory on the battlefield. Just then Bibi Sakina Bintul Hussain his three-year-old niece came out holding a dried mashk (a leather water bag). She walked up to her uncle Al- Abbas Ibn Ali and said, thirst is killing me oh! Uncle. Abbas Ibn Ali went to his brother Hussain Ibn Ali and requested permission to go get water for Sakina. Imam Hussain Ibn Ali gave him permission to go and get water for Sakina and the children but permission to fight was not given to him. It is recorded that 90,000 opponent armed forces were present in the battleground.

They all had heard about the bravery and heroism of Hazrat Abbas Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salam. A cry rose in the battleground "Abbas is coming". Yazid's soldiers started hiding behind one another. A few courageous ones who dared to come near Hazrat Abbas were soon put to death by a spear. Hazrat e Abbas reached on the bank of river Furaat. He filled the dry Mashk (water bag) and took water in his palm and said 'How can I drink you when the children of Hussain Ibn Ali are thirsty?' He himself was thirsty since second Moharram till tenth Moharram. Even the horse of Abbas Ibn Ali was so faithful that he refused to drink water from the river. Abbas Ibn Ali placed the Mashk on his 'Alam' (Flag) and started back towards the Khema-gah (Tents). The commander of Yazid's army Umar ibn sa'ad shouted, 'We shall be doomed if the water reaches Hussain's camp; stop Abbas in his tracks!'

A soldier climbed a tree and as Hazrat e Abbas was riding past the tree he(soldier) struck his (Hazrat e Abbas's) shoulder and his right arm fell to the ground. He immediately transferred the Alam to his left

hand. Another soldier crept behind Hazrat Abbas (peace be upon him) and struck him on the left shoulder. His left arm and the Alam with mashk were falling down. He immediately gripped the mashk with his teeth. His one and only objective now was to get the water for Bibi Sakina (peace be upon her). Fighting with his feet he urged the horse to get him to Imam Hussain's camp as quickly as possible.

Alas! an arrow was shot. It went flying across the desert and hit the mashk. Suddenly the wind had fallen and gloomy clouds emerged with the powdery and, drooped low over the field of battle on the horizon. The water began to pour out and with the water all the hopes of Hazrat Abbas (peace be upon him) poured on to the sands of Karbala to be buried forever in the thirsty desert. Hazrat Abbas now did not want to go back and face Bibi Sakina. With his feet, he signalled the horse to turn back. The enemy surrounded him from all sides. An arrow came flying and struck his eye. Abbas fell from the horse! Imagine someone falling from a horse and not having his arms to support him. As he fell, he cried out 'My salaams to you Ya Mawla!'

He was brutally injured, sopping in his own blood, hands severed, blood dripping from head due to the mace which was crushed on his head by a tyrant and an arrow pierced in his left eye. When his brother Hussain Ibn Ali, heard the last cry of his brother Abbas Ibn Ali, he reached at the site along with his son, Ali Akber, Alaihis Salam.

When Hussain Ibn Ali reached Abbas's side and saw his brother lying on the ground covered with blood and both his arms severed, his self-restraint was lost. With grief his spine was bent and he was unable to stand straight. Abbas, my dear brother, what will I do without you? He placed Abbas Ibn Ali's head on his lap. Abbas said Master, when I came in this world, I saw your face first, now again before leaving this world I would like to see your face but an arrow is pierced in my eye. Hussain Ibn Ali carefully removed the arrow and with his cloak cleaned the blood. Abbas gazed at his Master's face for the last time. Hussain Ibn Ali said to Abbas Ibn Ali brother throughout your life you have called me Master. It is my wish that you call me brother. Abbas Ibn Ali for the first and last time called Hussain Ibn Ali his brother. He requested Hussain Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salam not to take his body to the tents as he cannot face his three-year-old niece, Sakina. She was awaiting him anxiously, awaiting that her uncle would bring water for her.

The beautifully written lines of Noha (a lyrical dirge) by versifier Baqer Amanathkhani touch the heart of the reader and listener.

Transliteration

Le Jaiiye Khaime Mein' Ye Mashko Alam Maula,
Darya pe huwe mere' Shane bhi qalam Maula
Hai Waqt mera Aakhir' Jald Aaiiye ya Sarwar
Ta Dekhlon Aankhon se' Hazrat ke Khadam Maula
Dikhlayi nahin deta' ab aankh se khadim ke
Hain aankh mein paiwasta' Ek teer e sitam Maula
Raiti pe gira hoon mein' Narghe mein ghira hoon mein

Ruk ruk ke nikalta hai ab seene se dum Maula Kehta tha yahi rokar' saqqaye haram Baqer Hain Mashq e Sakina ka' Abbas ko gham Maula(Sayeed 189-190)

Take away to the tent this water bag and Flag, Master
At the river my arms were severed Master
My time is up come fast oh Sarwar! (Also known as Hussain Ibne Ali)
So that I can see with my eyes the majesty's footsteps Master
Your servant is unable to see through his eyes now
An arrow of injustice is clinging to my eye Master

I have fallen on sand and I am encircled by a throng Now slowly the breath is coming out of the chest Master Water-carrier of women cried and said Baqer Sakina's water bag causes grief to Abbas Master (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

In the first line of the Noha, poet depicts Abbas telling his brother, Hussain Ibn Ali to take the Mashq (water bag) and Alam (flag) to the tents and in the second line he informs him that both his arms have been severed. Third line portrays the anxiousness of waiting by Abbas. He says these are my last moments before dying therefore come fast Sarwar (also known as Hussain Ibn Ali) In fourth line the versifier portrays the reason for anxiety of waiting is because for the last time he wants to see the face of his brother. In fifth and sixth lines, the versifier portrays that Abbas Ibn Ali is telling to his brother that he is unable to see him because an arrow has pierced his eye. In the seventh and eighth lines, the versifier portrays Abbas Ibn Ali saying to his brother that he has fallen on the sand of the desert and is surrounded by a mob. Slowly his breath is stopping through his chest. In the ninth and tenth lines, the versifier says to himself, Baqer the water-bearer that is Abbas Ibn Ali told to his brother that he was grief-stricken as he could not provide water to his little niece Sakina.

Author, Syed Ali Hussain says in his article titled 'Hyderabad Farqunda Buniyad ke Marsiya Goh Shohra' that versifier Baquer Amanat Khani was one of the best versifiers of Hyderabad e Deccan. He wrote unique marsias on AhlAl-Bayt and also through poetic verses portrayed the importance of marsias in the lives of Prophets and Ahl Al-Bayt'. (Ali Hussain, 14)

In the Event of Karbala, on one side was the army of Yazid Ibn Muawiya who were tyrants and they presented very bad examples of materialistic greed and they wanted to tarnish the name of Islam. And on the other hand, were men and women who were righteous and pious. They followed Hussain Ibn Ali, the youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad. Apart from Prophets kith and kin they were also some women present in the battle of Karbala along with Hussain Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salam who did not belong to the family of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him but at some point, of time served his household and had learnt the ways of living a simple, pious life from the family of Prophet Mohammad. Among these women the first name which reverberates in our minds is of Fizza (Abid Hussain, 184).

Baqer Amanath Khani has portrayed in his marsia titled *Kanees e Zehra* about Bibi Fizza (the black Abyssinian slave of Bibi Fatima Zehra, daughter of Prophet Mohammad). Bibi Fizza (peace be upon her) was a Black Princess. She was from Habash. Habesha people are known today as Abyssinian, Ethiopian, and Eritrean. At the age of eleven years, the young princess Fizza was kidnapped and was intended for sale on the slave market. Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him bought her and set her free. Fizza in Arabic means silver. Fizza was as black coloured as Kaaba and her character was of a cherub, pure, untainted, lovely and virtuous.

She was raised in the household of Prophet Mohammad. There she became a Hafiz e Quran; she memorised the inner intricate meanings of Quran taught to her by Ahl Al-Bayt. Bibi Fatima Zehra (peace be upon her) considered her as her own daughter. She was deeply compliant to Bibi Fatima Zehra (the daughter of Prophet Mohammad, peace be upon him). Both Hasnain (Hasan and Hussain, the grandsons of Prophet Mohammad) were raised in her lap. They loved her and respected her. She used to be peaceful in the company of her mistress Bibi Fatima Zehra. (Daughter of Prophet Mohammad). Bibi Fatima Zehra shared work with Fizza. One day she used to work and the next day it was Fizza's turn. The following stanza of marsia speaks about the status of Bibi Fizza:

Jisko Zehra ki kaneezi mein mayassar huwa chyan
Jisse manoos thay sibtain e Rasool ul Saqalain
Jis ki ankhon mein hai Fatima ke Noorulain
Jiske Aaghosh mein Khushboo e Hasan aur Hussain
Muskurate huwe do Guncha dahan khele hain
Jiski godi mein Hasan aur Hussain Khaile hain (Amanathkhani 22)

Who availed satisfaction under Zehra's servitude?
With whom both Hasan and Hussain, grandsons of Prophet Mohammad were affectionate
In whose eyes were Fatima's twinkle of the eyes (she always looked after Fatima's children)
In whose lap is the fragrance of Hasan and Hussain
Two Smiling faces like rose-buds have played
In her lap both Hasan and Hussain have played (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

The versifier portrays in the first line that she (Bibi Fizza) was happy to be a slave of Bibi Fatima Zehra and herself opted to be in her house and left her status of being a princess. The second line portrays, both the grandsons of Prophet Mohammad were close to her. In the third line the versifier depicts that, she used to take care of them and they were always in front of her eyes, the twinkling light of Fatima Zehra. In the fourth line he says, they were raised in her lap therefore their fragrance was in her mind. The fifth and sixth line portrays, the smiling rosebuds played in her lap. That is Hasan and Hussain both played in her lap.

She (Fizza) was along with Hussain Ibn Ali (The youngest grandson of Prophet Mohammad) and his family in the battle of Karbala. She witnessed Shabbir's (also known as Hussain Ibn Ali) youngest infant son Abdullah's thirst.

Karbala mein darr e khaima pe raha isska qayam Nazre Sibte nabi mein hai bada isska maqam Karke rukhsat chale maidan ki janeb jo Imam Saath behno ke kiya issko bhi agha ne salaam Mahwe matam huwii khaimo mein Azeezon ki safein Thein isi ki toh qayadat mein kaneezo ki safein (Amanathkhani 22)

In Karbala her stay was on the door of the tent (of Hussain Ibn Ali)
In the eyes of the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (i.e., Hussain Ibn Ali) her rank is high
After bidding farewell, the Imam moved towards the Battlefield
While saluting his sisters Agha (Master Hussain Ibn Ali) saluted her too
Great mourning ensued amongst relative's arrays in the tents (of Hussain Ibn Ali)
And in her leadership were the rows of slave-girls (who were saluting the Master)
..... (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

The first line of poetry verse depicts that she (Fizza) was stationed near the door of Hussain Ibn Ali's tent seeing every move of the Battle of Karbala. Her Master, Hussain Ibn Ali respected her a lot as his mother Fatima Zehra has raised her since she was eleven years of age. She (Fizza) was a witness when Hussain Ibn Ali came to bid his last farewell to his family along with his sisters Zainab and Umme Kulsum and daughter Ruqaiyya. He also bade his last farewell to her as well. She was leading and standing along with other slaves in a row to bid her last farewell to Maula Hussain Ibn Ali, Alaihis Salam.

Hussain Ibn Ali fought the battle like a ferocious lion and was martyred and decapitated in the

Battle of Karbala on tenth October 680 CE (It was 10th Moharram in the year 61 AH of the Islamic Calendar) by Yazid ibn Muawiya's army, along with most of his family members, companions, including his six months old son, Abdullah Ali Al-Asghar.

After the martyrdom of Hussain Ibn Ali, on the orders of Umar Ibn Sa'ad commander of Yazid's army, the tents were ransacked and burned and all the belongings of Hussain Ibn Ali were looted and his womenfolk and children along with the sole surviving male member, the ailing son of Hussain Ibn Ali, Imam Zain Al-Abedien were taken as prisoners.

They were first taken to Kufa, Iraq where oppressor Yazid's Governor Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad resided. It was now the turn of Zainab Bint Ali to carry the mission of her slain brother Hussain ibn Ali. Her main task was to carry the message of Karbala without any lapses or negligence. She has to eradicate the effects of the false propaganda of the Umayyads against the Ahl Al-Bayt and make the truth clear. This was by no means an easy task but Zainab had the training of her mother and the bravery of her father to face all odds. She exposed the Umayyads publicly by addressing people in her sermons. The people of Kufa hearing her speech burst into tears. "Historians say that never in history people had witnessed such a large number of people mourning and crying people, men and women at one place." (Khan, 62) It was the beginning of a silent revolution. Ubayd Allah Ibn Ziyad was anxious to have the prisoners out of Kufa as soon as possible. It was agreed that they be taken to Shaam (Syria) where the accursed Yazid ibn Muawiya resided.

The Caravan of distressed children, bereaved women and Ailing son of Hussain Ibn Ali, Al Sajjad (also known as Zain Al-Abedien) and the heads of the slain men reached Shaam (Syria) and they were brought before Yazid ibn Muawiya as captives. First the identity of each head was given to him. Then he asked who is the woman who is behind the slave girls. They said it is Zainab bint Ali. He ordered his men to remove the slave girls standing before Zainab bint Ali. Many tyrants went to move the slave girls. Because of the fear of Shimr ibn Dhi'l -Jawshan everyone moved away from Zainab except Fizza her loyal servant. The versifier very emphatically portrayed it in his verses of marsia which is as follows:

Bola Zalim ke nazar aati nahin hai woh Mujhe Inn kaneezo ko hata badh ke zara sammne se Kaii be deen hatane ke liye unko badhe Sab kaneeze toh hateen Shimr ke darke maare Samne se toh magar Pusht qameeda na hatein Habishi nasl ki bus ek ye Fizza na hatein (Amanat Khani 34)

The oppressor said that I am unable to see her

Go and remove these slaves from in front of her

Many infidels came forward to remove them.

All the slaves moved away because of Shimr's fear

But from in front (of Zainab) the old lady did not move away (whose back was bend)

From the Abyssinian race just this Fizza didn't move away(Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

The family of Hussain Ibn Ali with his 24 years old son, Zainul Abedien were standing with their hands tied and imprisoned in shackles. Yazid accursed was sitting on his throne. He was misbehaving with the Ahl Al-Bayt in his court. To protect Bibi Zainab (The granddaughter of Prophet Mohammad) Fizza stood in front of her. Yazid, the unscrupulous boomed out, pointing in the direction of the lady who had been curtained off by the aged maid, who is the one who is trying to seek shelter behind the old woman? The commander of Yazid's army Umar Ibn sa'ad rose to his feet and bowed agreeably and said, Your Majesty, she is Zainab, the daughter of Ali Ibn Abi Talib and Fatima Bint Mohammad and the old woman standing in front of her is Fizza, the Abyssinian princess, who takes pride in calling herself the slave of Fatima and Zainab. The doomed Yazid shouted in rage, 'I shall not let anyone protect my prisoners before me', He ordered Shimr Ibn Dhi'l-Jawshan, who was standing guard over the prisoners, to whip and throw aside Fizza, so that he can have full view of Zainab Bint Ali.

When Bibi Fizza saw Shimr ibn Dhi'l-Jawshan advance towards her, she turned towards the Abyssinian slaves, who were standing behind and guarding Yazid Ibn Muawiya's throne with bare swords as his bodyguards and gave a daring speech. She said, 'O brothers from my native land, what has happened to your genealogical and communal feelings that you mutely watch an elderly woman from your country being ill-treated in this manner?' Can't you offer protection with your drawn swords to your aged princess from the lashes of this oppressor Shimr who has tortured us throughout the march from Karbala till Damascus. Hearing the words of Bibi Fizza some of the slaves stepped forward and spoke to Yazid, 'Your Majesty, ask Shimr to hold his hands and not to use the lash on our princess Fizza. If he does anything to her, today blood will flow like water in your court.'

Yazid was stunned at this outrage of his slaves. Drunk though he was, he had sense enough to realise that they were serious and meant what they said. He panicked at the sight of the bare swords glittering in the light of the chandeliers. He immediately commanded to Shimr, 'Stay wherever you are Shimr, and do not move an inch, otherwise I will have your head chopped off.' Then he turned towards his slaves with a cynical smile and said, 'My virtuous comrades, I know you are all so dedicated and faithful to me, and always prepared to defend and guard me. I shall not allow anything to be done to touch your sense of honour.' Yazid knew that the scene created by the slaves had humiliated him in the eyes of his courtiers and even foreign envoys.

The following lines of the Musaddas portray the soliloquy coupled with anguish of Zainab Bint Ali in the court of Yazid:

Dekha Zainab ne jo ye haal kaha wa jaddah Nikle Fizza ke tarafdaar use dii hai panah Meri Imdad ko ata nahin koi bhi aah Aap nana hai mere isse ye sab hai aagah Kaise ye hain ke, inhe aapka ahsas nahin Fizza ka paas hai, Zainab ka magar paas nahin (Amanathkhani 35)

Zainab saw this condition and said oh grand-father

Fizza's supporters came up and gave her shelter

To my aid no one comes Aah!

You are my grandfather, they all are aware of it

How are they that they do not have your realization

They have regard for Fizza but not for Zainab (Translated by Fatima, Farhat)

When Yazid's bodyguards came forward to shelter Fizza from the tyrant Shimr Dhi'l Jawshan, Zainab saw this state and complained to her grandfather, Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) that people support and shelter Fizza but no one comes to help me. Though they know very well that you are my grandfather, What kind of people are these that they do not have your regard and realisation? They have regard for Fizza but not for Zainab.

Conclusion

Zameer tokta hai har gunah par Baqer

Khuda Kare ke mein isski bhi guftagu Samjhon (Sayeed 1)

Conscience prevents on every sin, Bager

God willing, I should understand his conversation too

The versifier Baqer says that his consciousness stops him on his every mistake. He implores God that he should understand the language of his conscience and should not do mistakes. He breathed his last on 18 February,1990 and was laid to rest in a graveyard of Hyderabad Known as Daire Mir Momin. Numerous poets of Hyderabad tribute their Qataat (couplets) in the memory of Baqer Amanath Khani. Some of them are Sayeed Shaheedi, Sajid Razvi, Allama Syed Akhtar Zaidi etc., He is survived by his everlasting poetry, family members and numerous admirers of his poetry.

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