

SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUTH IN POETRY: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

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ABSTRACT

Young men and women have tremendous vitality and optimisms. If given the tools, they will gain unbridled self-confidence and mature into solid citizens, ready, willing and able to make meaningful contributions to society. Youth are the backbone of the social structure and an indicator of the society's ability to direct and utilize the present in forecasting future prospects. Youth are the driving force behind any development process aiming at social, religious, cultural or scientific progress. The poets have significantly addressed the youth in every language in order to inculcate and maintain activism amongst them.

Keywords: Poetry, poets, dynamism, activism, struggle.

Every poet irrespective of language has been witnessed to communicate with youth in one or the other way. But there arise the differences while dealing youth, because most of the poets have taken youth as the period of romantic excellence. I have tried to touch various poets of various languages in this paper. As poetry is directly or indirectly related to every aspect of life and emphasizes its ups & downs and pros & cons.

“زندگی اور شاعری کا آپس میں گہرا تعلق ہے۔ مگر یہ رشتہ ایک طرح سے داخلی ہے۔ یوں کہئے کہ زندگی اور شاعری ایک ہی شے کی دو مختلف ہیئتیں ہیں۔ زندگی ہمہ حقیقت ہے اور تخیل کا وہاں عمل دخل نہیں۔ شاعری ہمہ تخیل اور حقیقت وہاں کمیاب ہے۔”¹

It is but natural that every poet has put his/her efforts to address youth as per their understandings of things. Poetry stimulates a person's emotions and feelings and tries to inculcate the ideas, which a listener never had, arouse in his mind before.

“شاعری میں مسرت، غم، پریشانی، تفریح اور ترغیب کے جذبے کو بیدار کرنے کی پر اسرار قوت موجود ہے۔ اس کے ذریعے جذبات کی کوئی بھی صورت ابھاری جاسکتی ہے اور کوئی بھی واقع اس میں بیان ہوسکتا ہے جو تصور کے دائرے میں آسکتا ہے۔”²

¹ (Harold E. Toliver, Perspectives on Poetry, Page-5, in reference to Payami Shairi by Dr. Nusrat Andrabi, Iqbaliyat, published by Iqbal Institute, Vol. 9, Page- 98.).

² (W.H. Auden- The Modern Tradition (Poetry and Rite), Page 215-216, in reference to Payami Shairi by Dr. Nusrat Andrabi, Iqbaliyat, published by Iqbal Institute, Vol. 9, Page-104.).

The poetry with a message can be received by those who are intelligent and sensitive. And hence, they are the cream of society, from whom one can expect positive result.

In Arabic poetry a poet namely Zahir bin Abi Salma says:

ان مسفاة الشيخ لا حلم بعده
و ان الغنى بعد الفاهة يعلم³

He highlights the importance of youth by saying that certainly a person in his old age if deviated from straight path has not any chance to come on to the track. But, if the youth derails they can come to their lost track after repenting.

Another poet of Arabic language, Sahwal bin Adiya says

“و إذا المنر لم يد نس باللوم
و كل الرداد يرتديه جمعي⁴”

He gives ethical advices to youth by indicating towards the person who is morally fit and charactered, every cloth, which he wears, makes him more beautiful. Another stanza in Arabic signifies the essence of time, which is very much applicable to youth.

ثم قالت الوقت للناس و داعا
اننى انفس شئ فى الوجود
تزجع الاوراق والطينر جميعا
و انا من حيث أمضى لا أعود⁵

Here the youth should understand the address of time to the people in which it says good-bye! I am the great thing, the falling leaves and the migratory birds would return on the onset of spring but I am time, once I passed, never will I return. This is the great advice to youth which if understood would make them up to date with a changing circumstances.

Let us have a view on the rich Persian poetry starting from the fourth century after Hijrah (AH). In world-renowned Shah Nama of Firdousi two characters Rostum and Suhrab are considered to be the most powerful persons. While dramatizing the situation of Rostum, when he fights with a young man named Suhrab, who actually was his son, but Rostum is unknown about the fact.

³ (Diwane Zahir).

⁴ (Diwane Adiya).

⁵ (Dhikire Kamil Keelani from Majmooah Qasasul Arabiyah)

بدل گفت رستم که هرگز نهنگ
ندیدم که آید بدسیاں بجنگ⁶

Rustum felt in his heart while fighting with Suhrab, that he had never fought a powerful person like him.

کمر بند سیراب را چاره کرد

که از زین بجنباوند اندر نبرد⁷

Rustum strongly held the belt of Suhrab and felt that he was really powerful. Here it is obvious that Firdousi was trying to illustrate the energetic physique of Suhrab and hence tried to acknowledge the vitality amongst youth.

فروداشت دست از کمر بنداوی
شگفی فرو ماند از بنداوی⁸

Immediately Rustum took away his hand from the belt of Suhrab as it was very powerfully tight.

بخندید سهراب گفت اے سوار
به زخم دلیران ننه پایدار⁹

With a slight push of Suhrab, Rustum felt his arm paining and Suhrab told him oh! You are unable to resist my powerful jerks. The above given stanza signifies that the youth is treasure of energy and vigour.

In the fifth century After Hijrah (AH), the quatrain of Umer Khayam mentions:

مے برکف من کہ دلم درتاب است
وین عمر گریز پامے چون سیماب است
بر خیز کہ بیداری دوست خواب است
دریاب کہ آتش جوانی آب است

My heart is restless so put wine on my hand; my age is dispersing after being teared into pieces. Awake because here, at this juncture of life awakening is actually to relax. Be assured that the vigorousness of youth would very soon calm down like water. Here the poet tries to explain that the youth is blessing and one must make good use of it.

⁶ (Shahnama of Firdousi)

⁷ (Ibid)

⁸ (Ibid)

⁹ (Ibid)

Likewise, in the 6th century the great poet Maulana Rumi also addresses the youth in his distinct way.

صد ہزاراں بار بہ بریدم امید
از کہ، از شمس این ذمن باور کنید
تو مرا پور مہ کن کز آفتاب
صبر دارم من ویا ماہی ز آب

Rumi names youth as sun and in relation to his Murshid (Guide) Shams Tabriz says that one must believe that the only ripe and resourceful period is the lightning sun or in other words period of youth. It is only in youth when a human being is capable to attain human qualities and then after he remains out of touch because of his physical weakness. Again Rumi says:

در جوانی توبہ کردن شیوئے پیغمبران
وقت پیری گرگ ظالم می شود پرہیزگار

Repentance in the period of youth is prophetic otherwise Jackal also is wiser in old age.

Sheikh Sadi the renowned poet of 7th century while addressing a 25 year old young man conveys that he had already spent his 50 years (day and night) still he is having several years in which he has to work hard:

ای کہ پنجاہ رفت و در خوابی
تاکی این باد کبر و آتش خشم
کہل گشتی و ہمچنان طفلی
مگر این پنج روزہ دریابی
شرم بادت کہ قطرہ آبی
شیخ گشتی و ہمچنان شابلی¹⁰

Further more, he questions him not to be proud as he is made from a drop of water, therefore he should be full of humility. An old man cannot act as child or youth these are the specific moments in the life of human being.

The great poet Hafiz Shirazi throws light on youth by naming it as the dream of return of youth and says:

نفس بعد صباح مشک فشان خوابد شد
عالم پیر دگر بارہ جوں خوابد شد¹¹

¹⁰ (Summane Zar, compiled by Prof. Zia Ahmad Bedayooni, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi, Page-282)

¹¹ (Diwane Khwaja Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi)

In a critical way he tries to convey that for every living thing youth can return but for human being it is impossible.

این نظاوں کہ کشید از غم ہجران بلبل
تاسرا پردہ گل نعرہ زنان خوابد شد¹²

The poet indicates towards the loot, which has occurred by stealing the youth of someone that compels him to cry and shout, and nothing can be achieved except repentance.

The Urdu poets other than Iqbal has many a times addressed youths through various dimensions. To give a brief account of it, let me start from the couplet of Faiz Ahmad Faiz:

تیرا شباب امانت ہے ساری دنیا کی
تو خار زار جہاں میں گلاب پیدا کر

(فیض)

It echoes the rhythm of iqbal's thought, who says:

دیارِ عشق میں اپنا مقام پیدا کر
نیا زمانہ نئے صبح و شام پیدا کر

He tries to insist youth that their youthfulness is the thing, which is committed to trust, to produce flowers from thorny bushes, i.e. he advise them to work hard for the betterment of society.

From the very beginning of Urdu poetry this was a thrust theme of creativity. Shah Hatim of Delhi, the most respected poet of the earliest time of Delhi School of Urdu poetry observes:

وہی ہے مرد جو بو روبرو تروار کے حاتم
وہی ہے مرد عالم میں کہ جس کے بیچ ہمت ہے
کہ منہ کے پھیرنے نا مرد پر شمشیر ہنستی ہے
کہ ہمت سے جہاں میں نام کو حاتم کے عزت ہے

Ghalib has the powerful expression in his poetry. He addresses the young to change the universe if it does not cooperate with you:

بیا کہ قاعدہ آسمان بگردر نیم

Hali, the harbinger of new age in Urdu literature often calls the young generation:

کچھ کر لو نوجوانوں اٹھتی جوانیاں ہیں

¹² (Ibid)

The poet tries to reiterate that losing youthfulness is an irreversible process, which cannot be regained, and one must spend his youth judiciously by utilizing his energetic efforts towards the development of human relation and brotherhood. As one remain unconscious about the passage of this precious span of life.

Firaq says:

رات بھی نیند بھی کہانی بھی ہائے کیا چیز ہے جوانی بھی (فراق)¹³

He appreciates the period of youth as a golden period.

Likewise Shaad says:

کیوں اے فلک جو ہم سے جوانی جدا ہوئی اک خود بہ خود دل میں خوشی تھی وہ کیا ہوئی (شاد)¹⁴

It is critical exegis of the disinterested youth.

Josh discloses the romantic way of explanation by saying:

یہی تو ہے دستور محکم، انہیں ہے قائم ہے نظم عال م یہی تو ہے راز خلد آدم نگاہ میری شباب تیرا (جوش)¹⁵

Sahir Ludhyanvi says:

جواں ہوں میں جوانی لغزشوں کا ایک طوفان ہے میری باتوں میں رنگِ پارسائی ہو نہیں سکتا ا (ساحر لدھیانوی)¹⁶

Here the poet tries to explain the extreme influence of emotions in youth.

Tilok Chand Mehroom gives the emotional touch to it by saying:

¹³ (Master Couplets of Urdu poetry by K.C. Nanda, (published by A. Sterling), Page-414)

¹⁴ (Ibid)

¹⁵ (Ibid)

¹⁶ (Ibid)

اے ہم نفس نہ پوچھ جوانی کا ماجرا
موج نسیم تھی ادھر آئی ادھر گئی¹⁷

He discloses the youth as such a breeze which when appeared and lost cannot be felt by anyone. This is a turbulent phase of life that unconsciously leaves from the life of a person.

Ahsan Danish says:

جب جوانی کی دھوپ ڈھلتی ہے
خود سری سر جکا کے چلتی ہے¹⁸

Here he regrets for the departed youth and says this is the only objective for life now. That means he does not bear to see the youth declining because he feels that youth is the only excellence of life.

There are instances in Urdu Poetry where the poets have given the lessons on action, revolution and morality as well.

Asgar says:

یہاں کوتاہی ذوقِ عمل ہے خود گرفتاری
جہاں بازو سمیٹتے ہیں وہیں صیاد ہوتا ہے

(اصغر)¹⁹

Slackening of the spirit action causes, self at rest where you find your wings of flight, there the hunter lurks.

Akbar Ilahabadi says:

جب میں کہتا ہوں کہ یا اللہ میرا حال دیکھ
حکم ہوتا ہے کہ اپنا نامہ اعمال دیکھ

(اکبر الہ آبادی)²⁰

Help me God, in this state, whenever I pray straight comes the answer, “your own deeds survey”.

To comment upon the revolutionary ideas it is worth to quote this statement:

¹⁷ (Ibid)

¹⁸ (Ibid)

¹⁹ (Master Couplets of Urdu poetry by K.C. Nanda, (published by A. Sterling), Page-14)

²⁰ (Ibid)

“And it is because of his revolutionary poetry that he was awarded the title of “Shair-e Inqilab” (The poet of Revolution). There is no denying fact that Josh Saheb was the greatest Poet after Allama Iqbal. He was instinctively and naturally the echo of the voice of Iqbal. As Allama Iqbal had the great passion for freedom. So had Josh Saheb. The feeling for freedom was so intense in his heart that once he came out with his verse:

I give forth the feeling of awakening to slumber
I offer a sword to the nation”²¹

Not only in Urdu Iqbal enjoys the most sublime position in literature of most developed languages of the world. His basic philosophy rests on *Khudi* (Self), which is apparent in the manifestation of visible things. The visible embodiments take shape by rigorous action and struggle. *Khudi*, is not visible, but it comes into living manifestations like Pyramids, Masjide Qurtaba, Taj Mahal etc. So the Self is dependent on action and action comes from the energy of young generation. It is clear that *Khudi* resides and flows in the veins and blood of youth. The ideal superman (*Marde Mumin*) emerges from the youth, for which Iqbal has been aspiring throughout his life.

اے سوار امشب دوران بیا
اے فروغ دیدہ امکان بیا²²

Iqbal laments very much the evolving outlook of youth, hijacked by the materialistic concept, of Europe, destitute of spiritualism that is born of true religion and real love of God. Iqbal's dynamic philosophy strives in formulation and development of the latent forces inherent in man, which will inturn produce saviors of a misguided world. The view capturing man as no better than a mechanism is at the bottom of degeneracy of humanity in general and youth in particular. The materialistic proclivities of the western thought has led to formulation of modern democracy, which as predicted by Iqbal represents nothing but the oppression of the poor by the rich. In his deliberations to the Muslim youth, his poems breathe sincerity. On one side he breaks the shackles of western materialism and on the other side the eastern seclusion.

*Shafaq naheen maghribi ufaq par yejoye khoon hay yejoye khoon bain
Talooy fardaa ka muntazir rah ki dosh o imroz hay zamaanaa*

That on the western horizon is no dawn, it's stream of blood, a stream of blood.
Today and yesterday are now pale legend, await tomorrow; pouring flood.

²¹ (Modern Urdu Poets by Yunus Ahmar, Page-3)

²² ملاحظہ ہو اقبال کے ابتدائی افکار 1949 صفحہ 50