



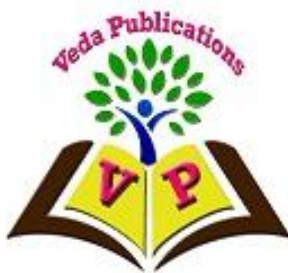
## MIRZA GHALIB'S HAZAARON KHWAISHEIN AISI IN THE LIGHT OF NEW CRITICISM THEORY

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### ABSTRACT



Mirza Ghalib defines eloquence and artistic brilliance, belonging to that timeless league of bards who have defied the ravages of time and have managed to rule the environs of history with their multitudinous talent. His numerous works, excluding divan and letters in Urdu and kulliyat of Persian poetry and prose, include *Taigh-e-Taiz*, *Qata-i-Burhan*, *Panj Ahang* and *Dastumbo*. This article explains Mirza Ghalib's 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi' Ghazal in the light of Criticism theory. Ghalib has the tendency to motivate his readers through romantic poetry. The readers are always intrigued by his work and thoughts he puts into his poetry. This poem similarly tells us about how we are never going to fulfill all of our desires, since they are endless. We complete one desire, the next one out there.

**Keywords:** *Ghalib, Seljuk Turks, British rule, Persian Literature, ghazal, salvation, lost love.*

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*Hazaaron khwahishen aisi ke har khwahish pe dam  
nikle*

*Bohat niklay mere armaan, lekin phir bhi kam nikle  
Daray kyon mera qaatil? kya rahega us ki gardan  
par?*

*Voh khoon, jo chashm-e-tar se umr bhar yoon dam-  
ba-dam nikle*

*Daray kyon mera qaatil? kya rahega us ki gardan  
par?*

*Voh khoon, jo chashm-e-tar se umr bhar yoon dam-  
ba-dam nikle.....*

#### ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Thousands of desires, each worth dying for...  
many of them I have realized...yet I yearn for more...  
Why should my killer (lover) be afraid? No one will  
hold her responsible  
for the blood which will continuously flow through  
my eyes all my life  
We have heard about the dismissal of Adam from  
Heaven,  
With a more humiliation, I am leaving the street on  
which you live...

Ghalib's family traced its ancestry back hundreds of years among the Seljuk Turks, whose fortunes rose and waned and rose again. In the mid-eighteenth century, his grandfather emigrated in like a medieval knight from Samarkand to the dying Mughal Empire—as a nobleman with fifty fighting men—and he received an estate large enough to support his troops in exchange for his fealty. Ghalib's father and uncle followed similar military careers, supplying their own troops for various Indian Nawabs and Rajahs. His father married well in Agra society, and on December 27, 1797, Mirza Asadullah Khan—Ghalib—was born. This precocious child grew up in a feudal household: one's station in life was determined by ancestry, nobility, social standing, and court intrigues. He early tasted the pleasures of the wellborn. Unfortunately, Ghalib's father was killed in combat when he was four, and he was sent to live in his uncle's household. The very next year, the British defeated the Mughal Empire, but allowed the Mughal king and his court to run internal affairs under the British Raj. In fact, the Mughal defeat marks Delhi's resurgence as a centre of Islamic culture. A long-running decline had reduced a city of

two million to 200,000, with whole areas ruined and deserted. The British suppressed lawlessness, and for the next fifty years, Delhi and the Mughal court attracted scholars, poets and artists from other parts of India. Delhi College was established, and both Islamic and English classics were emphasized. At age nine, Ghalib wrote his first Urdu verse. In the same year, his uncle died, and Ghalib's life was again in turmoil. At 5 thirteen, he was married to an eleven-year-old bride from a prominent Delhi family, and he moved in with them. His in-laws regarded him as an upstart intruder, and he spent much of his life justifying his worth to others and to himself. The protection of his father-in-law had its costs. He continued his literary studies with his Persian tutor. Early in manhood, Ghalib rejected Urdu verse to devote himself to the Persian language, and, with few exceptions, he wrote in Persian for the next thirty years. He regarded Persian as a superior literary language, suitable for his ambition: "to polish the mirror and show in it the face of meaning—this ... is a mighty work." Then, in 1826, his personal life suffered several blows: his only brother Yusuf went mad, and his father-in-law died. Ghalib's share of the substantial inheritance came into question because of a long and bitter dispute between two sons of his father-in-law, born of different mothers. Most of Ghalib's life was a struggle for an income; he employed his poetic skills at various courts, and he indulged in other aristocratic pursuits. In middle age, Ghalib was arrested on a gambling charge, and in 1847, he was imprisoned for running a gaming house. After his release, he was welcomed at court—as he had long wished to be. A little later, he resumed writing in Urdu. His ghazals gained a reputation at mushairas, or poetry contests, for erudition, though some called it obscurantism. Ghalib fared well in the 1850s, and he adopted the sons of his wife's nephew. In 1854, he received adequate stipends and court appointments. He had become a true Delhian, a respected figure in a great cultural center. Yet in the midst of this prosperity, Ghalib saw the political weakness of Indians in their own country. What could not be foreseen was the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857—showing the fragility of the British hold on the subcontinent. For four months, rebels took and held Delhi, killing all British inhabitants. Ghalib closed his



door and occupied himself with writing Dastambu, a diary of those troubled times. This account was generous to the British; Ghalib intended it to reestablish his career in a new era. The book was published in 1858, and amnesty came soon after. Ghalib's friend Hali reports this story: After the British retook Delhi, a certain Colonel Burn asked Ghalib "Well? You Muslim?" "Half," said Ghalib. "What does that mean?" asked the Colonel. "I drink wine, but I don't eat pork." In Dastambu, Ghalib tells the same story this way: "A free person does not hide the truth; I am 'half a Muslim,' free from the bonds of convention and every religion; and in the same way, I have freed myself from grief at the sting of men's tongues." In his last years, Ghalib wrote a new Persian dictionary, challenging many traditional etymologies of the old standard dictionary. He said, "You will find that what I have to say about the construction of Persian words and the flights of meaning in Persian verse is usually at variance with what the general run of people say; and I am in the right."

Ghalib's life bridged several cultures, traditions, languages, and social strata. He is called the last of India's classical poets, and the first of the moderns. He was of Turkish descent, but an Indian poet. He was a court poet who often wrote in the courtly language of Persian, but he is best known for his couplets written in the popular local tongue of Urdu. He wrote at the end of the Mughal Empire and the beginning of British rule in India. His poetry spoke to Muslims and Hindus alike. His willingness to wrestle with modern doubts in his writing have caused some to call him an atheist, while his mystical love poetry makes him a favorite of Sufis.

'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi' is a ghazal by Mirza Ghalib. Ghazal is a poetic expression of both, pain of loss and separation and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. In this, Ghalib is talking about the philosophies of life, the inexplicable nature of never ending human desires, emotions of love which are intensified, separation and attainment of salvation or "nirvana". This couplet consists of twelve couplets and as the poem proceeds, the poet dredges deeper into the subject of love and self-mutilation and pain as a result of the impossibility of the union of lovers. Each couplet ends with the word 'nikle' which is

evident of the poet's use of Epistrophe (repetition of same word or words at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences). This seems to tie up variant subject matters of the couplets together as one complete whole.

The poem begins with the couplet "Hazaaron khwaishein aisi / ki har khwaishe pe dum nikle" which conveys a sense of dual nature of the desires in lives of humans, where there are two aspects, on one hand, every wish is worth dying for and on the other hand, they are endless in number and so can never be fulfilled. In the second couplet, the beloved has been compared to a slayer or murderer, who cannot be blamed for the dripping out blood from the eyes of the lover (both of which tends to be an exaggerated expression of comparison). 'Kaatil' is the metaphor used for beloved in this couplet who by being unresponsive, acts as the murderer of the poet/ lover. Ghalib makes brilliant use of Hyperbole in the following couplet, in which he draws a degree of comparison between himself and Adam as exaggeration. Ghalib says that the humiliation he faced while passing the lane of the beloved far more than what Adam faced while being expelled from the heaven. In the fourth couplet, the tone turns harsher and 'zaalim' is used as metaphor for the beloved here. Therefore, we can assume that there is a certain sense of internal rhyme in most of the couplets- bahut-be-aabru, Agar iss turra-e-purpech-o-kham ka pech-o-kham nikle, etc. Whereas in the fifth couplet when he makes an open declaration of intending to write love letters to the beloved on behalf of others, the poet employs parrhesia (use of bold expression where it is unexpected). With every couplet the emotions of the poem oscillates between the poet's feelings of love and hatred (out of the lamentation and loss) for the beloved. Apposition is used in the following couplet as the second statement adds meaning to the first "Hui is daur mein mansoob mujh se bada aashaami". The seventh couplet uses pun for the intended humour by suggesting that the one he was hoping to be praised from, for his strength, turned out to be a bigger victim of the same sword (love) "Wo hum se bhi zada khasta-e-tegh-e-sitam nikle". The next couplet conveys a sense of indifference towards life and death, while in love. Per contra the final line of



this couplet contains an oxymoron as we can see that it reflects ideas which are contrasting: "Usi ko dekhkar jeetey hain, jis kaafir pe dam nikle". In the ninth couplet, the poet employs an ironical symbol of arrow of cruelty or "teer-e-pursitam" which has to be drawn out of the heart of the beloved, and intends her to be dead in this act. It also has anaphora (repetition of the same word or set of words) as the word 'nikle' is repeated four times in its final line and 'dil' is repeated twice in the same line. In the next couplet, 'zaalim' again refers to the beloved metaphorically and shows the fear of finding his beloved inside the veil again. Ghalib in the next couplet uses his own name 'Ghalib' as a main figure in the poem and associates him with the unusual combination of spirituality and intoxication, perhaps a doorway to salvation. And the final couplet is same as the opening lines, followed by ellipses, leaving the trail of ideas open ended and thus adds up a sense of ambiguity to it.

The poem being highly embellished with several figures of speech convey entirely different literal and metaphorical meanings, this article reviews it from the point of view of the new critics. The ghazal encapsulates the contrasting feelings, related to the sense of loss and celebration of love at the same time. New critic reading of the couplets shows how brilliantly the poet has amalgamated the feeling of commemoration with a sense of despair of the lost love.

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#### BIONOTE

Mushtaq Ahmad is a research scholar in the Centre for Persian and Central Asian Studies, in the school of Language, Literature and Cultural Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He has completed his M.Phil dissertation on the topic "A CRITICAL STUDY OF TAZKIRAH-E-KALEMAT-E-SHOARA BY MOHD AFZAL SARKHUSH KASHMIRI" in 2015. Currently he is working on his Ph.d topic which is entitled as "Literary contribution of Abd- Al Rahman Jami with special study of his association with the Naqshbandi Sufi order and its impact on his works" in Jnu.

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