

**IMPACT OF HAFIZ ON OBAIDI'S GHAZAL
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Khawaja Hafiz has his fame in writing lyrical poetry. So far his lyrical poetry is concerned none can stand his rival. Many poets who came after him frankly accepted the superiority. Some of them tried to imitate his style of writing the poetry. Among them the name of Obaidullah Obaidi stands supreme, who composed the Ghazal in the same style, meter and rythme as used by Hafiz. The Diwan of Obaidi consists of eleven Ghazals in the same style as composed by Hafiz. Even in some of his Ghazals he only changed some words and repeated the same hemistich.

Before turning to the main topic of my discussion i.e. "Impact of Hafiz on Obaidi's ghazal", I would like to present a brief introduction of them.

Shamsud-Din Mohammad, popularly known as Hafiz Shirazi, was one of the greatest Persian poets of Iran who enriched Persian language and literature and left deep impact in the history of Persian literature by his fascinating style of writing the poetry. His exact date of birth is not known, yet it is presumed that he was born in about 726 A.H. in Shiraz. Hafiz acquired his early education in Madrasa and at the same time he used to work in a bakery. As it appears from the pages of history the Shiraz was a

centre of learning specially the atmosphere of the city was congenial for poetry. So it is obvious that Hafiz too indulged in the love of poetry and used to recite poetry which was lacking in meter, rhyme and other poetic technicalities. That's why very often he was a target of jokes and taunt. The young Hafiz became disheartened by the attitude of the people. Being aggrieved, one day he went to the shrine of Baba Kohi which was located on a mountain in Shiraz where he offered a special meditation by virtue of which he has been bestowed by spiritual power of compose poetry. And the next morning he versified this mystical rhyme.

Last night relieved me of my misery and in that dark night they gave me elixir of life.

Obaidi's full name was Obaidullah-al-Obaidi Suhrawardy. His grand father Sheikh Ruknuddin migrated to India from Suhraward, a city in Iran and settled in a village named Fathabad of Murshidabad. His father Sheikh Aminuddin moved from Fathabad to Daspur, a village under Chitwa block of Murshidabad, a district in West Bengal. He was appointed as the chief Qazi of Daspur. Here Obaidi was born on 14th September 1834. He received his early education from his father and elder sister. He learnt Persian in Daspur and for advance education went to Calcutta to one of his father's disciple and in 1853 he got admission in Madrasa Aliya, then an institute of higher learning which is now known as Calcutta Madrasa. During his stay in Calcutta he worked as an editor of a Persian news paper namely Durbin. With the help of his newspaper he disseminated the fragrance of education and kindle the light of knowledge.

In 1865 he was appointed as a Professor of Arabic Language and literature at Hoogly College presently known as Hoogly Mohsin College. In 1874 Obaidi was appointed as Superintendent of Madarsa Mohsiniya at (Dhaka), and remained in

his office till his last breath. Thus Obaidi passed his life with full success and breathed his last on 6th February 1885 at the age of fifty one.

Diwan of Obaidi consists of one hundred and eleven Odes, sixteen Panegyrics, twenty three Quatrains and seven Masnavies. After the thorough study of his diwan it appears that he has followed the style of innumerable great poets of Iran and India, such as Saadi, Hafiz, Jaami, Saeb Tabrezi, Naziri and Ghalib etc. But he was greatly influenced by Hafiz as he observes.

O, Obaidi! Adopt the style of Hafiz, because no master is as great as he.

There are eleven ghazals in the diwan of Obaidi in the imitation of Hafiz. In these ghazals Obaidi tried his best to pour the pure wine of Hafiz in the pitcher of his own style and thought. To what extent he was successful can be observed after the comparison of few of the verses of their ghazals.

O, Saaqi, bring the cup of wine, pour it into the cup and let it be in the motion, because in the beginning love seems to be easy, but difficulted arose later on.

O, Saaqi, bring the cup of wine, pour it into the cup and let it be in the motion, because a sip of (spiritual) wine could solve all the difficulties.

The first hemistich of both the ghazals are similar. And the next hemistich too is similar as far as the meaning is concerned, but the very point we notice in Hafiz is that he amplified san-ati tadhad (antithesis) and used two opposite words aasaan (easy) and mushkil (difficult), which is the cause of the exaltation of the beauty of the verse which is lacked in Obaidi.

By the musk fragrance was spread by the morning breeze unlocked curls of beloved because of that fragrance so many hearts started bleeding (restless).

Whereas Obaidi expresses his view thus.

When ever curly musk spread and open the knot because of that life nourishes fragrance so many knots of hearts get untied.

Second verse of both the ghazals are almost similar to one another. Obaidi almost turned the meaning of the verse of Hafiz by using the word girah gushadnad (untie the knot) in two different ways. Hafiz says that the beautiful fragrance spread in the air from the beloved's ringlet is the main cause of affliction of lovers' hearts. Where as Obaidi says that the very fragrance bring happiness to a group of lovers, means that the sign of gloom and loneliness disappear from the lovers.

The dark night and the fear of wave and surrounded amidst whirlpool. How can beware of our condition, who walks slowly (touble free) on the shore.

To submerge in deep love of beloved provides a prodigious pleasure, those who walks slowly on the shore are unaware of the importance of said spiritual love.

Meaning of these verses are totally different to one another. The verse of Hafiz contains folded meanings and is full of various interpretations. In my humble opinion this is one of the finest and the most fascinating verses of Khawaja Hafiz of Shiraz. It is not an easy task for any poet to confine such a wide spiritual meaning in a verse. The sight of 'turbulent sea' and quiet sea shore are symbolism, not found in Obaidi. Sea, because of having no limitation in its own is a symbol of wordly miseries.

The line "shabi tareek, w beemi moj, w girdabiyi chuneen hnil" actually indicates spiritual world whereas sahil indicates materialistic world. When a Godly person traverses the path of mysticism their spiritual rank reaches to a great height but the people indulged in worldly lust "sabksaaraan sahlha" are unable to understand the very point that a Gnostic in spite of beings surrounded in difficulties in contented and pleased.

The verses of Obaidi is totally devoid of above mentioned spiritual meanings. These are the trick and art which make Hafiz supreme from all his imitators.

In this brief article it is not possible to analyse all the verses of Obaidi composed in the style of Hafiz yet it can be safely said that this poet Bengal has shown innovation in the style of Hafiz.

The following verses may be quoted:

If that Turkish beloved will conquer my heart, I shall grant Samarqand and Bukharain lieu of the black mole of her face.

See how beautifully Obaidi has presented the following verse in Indian style.

If that Indian beloved will conquer my heart, I shall offer all my belongings of my both worlds (this world and Hereafter) in lieu of her attractive eyes.

The term Turk Shirazi (Turkish beloved) is suitable in Iranian poetical environment as it has same historical back ground. Obaidi while imitating Hafiz very wisely adopted new terminology i.e. (hindui kaafir) or Indian beloved which was very appreciated by poets and intellectuals of later generations.

And likewise other verse of Hafiz.

O, cupbearer, give me the remaining wine because you will not find it in the paradise, the bank of Ruknabad and pleasure garden of Mussala.

While imitating this verse Obaidi has decorated the words with fresh meaning and latest thought.

O, cup bearer (beloved) let me quenched the thirst of (drinking) wine with the help of my lips because I will not get (Ruby like) sugar eating (lip) in paradise.

Here in this verse Obaidi has excelled Hafiz in more ways than one, because the theme of Hafiz is confine to a certain limitation but obaidi's verse is full of beauty and charm. Obaidi expresses universal human feeling very delicately and in attractive manner. This sort of verse exhibits the hidden poetical ability of Obaidi.

Let us analyse the other verses of both the poets. Although in respect of meaning verses are close to each other but so far the poetic charm and beauty is concerned Hafiz got edge over Obaidi.

Hafiz Says:

Talk about wine and song don't seek the mystery of the world because none had been or will be able to solve the problems of this world by any measure of wisdom.

In comparison of this verse Obaidi says:

Don't seek the mystery of this spherical globe if you are wise person because even Ptolemy (a great philosopher) too had not been able to solve this problem.

Attention should be given here in this verse under discussion that how a skillfully. Obaidi just setting a few words imitated the entire hemistich of Hafiz. But in my observation the thoughts and ideas expressed by Hafiz is universally acceptable and is not

confined to a particular areas whereas Obaidi's verse appears to be of a very ordinary nature and is confine to a particular person.

Another verse of Hafiz is sighted in example:

O, Hafiz you composed the ghazal, nay you have threaded pearls, come and recite it happily so that the heaven may shower the pearls on your poem.

Obaidi writes thus:

Obaidi perhaps you have composed this ghazal in the style of Hafiz, so that the heaven may shower the peart on your poem.

(There are several verses in the poetic collection of Obaidi which have been composed in the imitation of Hafiz and all those indicate the very point that this great bard of Bengal in spite of his best efforts fail to produce Ghazal like that of Hafiz. As he himself admits:

O, Obaidi, to compose a verse like that the Hafiz of Shiraz (for you) is as difficult as the work of embroidery and knitting rush mat.

Obaidi, following the footsteps of Hafiz composed the following verse in the style of Hafiz and sent it to Fars so that the poet of Fars can enjoy the beauty of his poetry. The couplet runs as:

Obaidi, you are sending the sugar cube of Bengal to Iran, the parrot (poet) of Shiraz will enhoj with it.

The above verse was composed by Obaidi in the style of Hafiz which reads as:

All the Indian Parrots (Poets / Intellectuals) will be sugar eater from this sugar cube (Ghazal of Hafiz) which is reaching to Bengal.

With this discussion we infer that Obaidi not only successfully emulated the style of Hafiz but also showed his poetic talent and ability and it can be said that Obaidi was "Hafiz of Bengal" in the 19th century.