

# The Rubaiyat translated by FitzGerald refracted in an Urdu translation

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The Art of translation is a diamond carving task which needs much proficiency and austerity during the process of translation. Translation put a great impact on the literature throughout the world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century especially in Indian sub-continent. The significance and relevance of the texts and the poetries of different languages has been transferred in other languages. In translation basically the translator, transmutes the picture in one language and portrays it with the words of other language. The efficiency of these translators does not change the real aura and expressions of the original one.

As it is rightly said by German Philosopher Alexander von Humboldt "All translation seems to me to be simply an attempt to solve an insoluble problem".<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that the productiveness and the merits of the actual original text or poetry cannot be done by the same expressions and creativity. Translation is not only necessary to convert different languages but also it allows us to communicate the different cultures and literatures around the world. Different philosophers, poets and scholars and their literary treasures have been introduced by the help of translation across the world. Most prominent poets like Omar Khayyam, Kali Das , Alama Iqbal, FitzGerald etc, all their works and ideologies might not be disclose to the world if translations of their works were not unveil to the world. The following couplet of Khayyam is given for reference:

گویند کسان بہشت با حورخوش است  
من می گویم کہ آب انگورخوش است  
این نقد بگیرد دست از آن نسیہ بدار  
کاوازدہل شنیدن از دورخوش است

The translation of Edward FitzGerald goes as:

'How sweet is Mortal Sovranty! –  
think some:  
Others- How blest the Paradise to come!'  
Ah, take the cash in hand and waive the Rest;  
Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Savory, Theodore; The Art of Translation; Jonathan cape thirty Bedford square London; 1968, p. 75

<sup>2</sup> FitzGerald, Edward; Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, WORDSWORTH CLASSICS, 1859, p. 42

The lines which I have indicated to you are actually one of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam most eminent Persian scholar and philosopher of 11<sup>th</sup> century of Persia. His works covers a vast spectrum of subjects in poetry. There are some scholars who actually translated Khayyam's Rubaiyat both in the West and the East. But the contribution of FitzGerald on the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam is an eloquent translation which ties with the romantic Victorian era as well. Edward FitzGerald translated The Rubaiyat of Khayyam in English and introduced it to the West. Omar Khayyam becomes a more name in the west rather than East after FitzGerald's translation of the Rubaiyat into English since 1859.

FitzGerald translation of the Rubaiyat caused a literary revolution in the South Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Some notable Poets and scholars have translated Khayyam's Rubaiyat in Urdu language like *Khumkadaye -e- Khayyam* by Qizilbash Delhavi, the *Rubaiyat -e- Omar Khayyam* by Mahesh Prasad Molvi Fazal and others. They do not refer to FitzGerald's English translation in their works. But Khayyam -ul- Hind Prof. Waqif in his Urdu translation entitled *Rubaiyat -e- Omar Khayyam* has consulted FitzGerald's English translation.

Sayed Yaqub -ul- Hasan Waqif was born at Sambhal in India on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1904. He was a meritorious scholar at early nineties. After completing his education, he worked as a dialogue and story writer in Indian movies like a historical epic and romantic films like *Humayun Sanjog*, *Dr. Madhurika*, *Teen Sau Din Ke Baad*, etc. were his chief contribution to Indian film industry. Prof Waqif put a great effort in popularising Urdu language and poetry through the film industry as well. During the partition, Prof Waqif faced financial hardships and was not able to continue his job in film Industry. But after some years of his appointment as a lecturer in Urdu at Punjab University Camp College, and Dyal Singh College, both in Delhi ease his financial situation.

Prof Waqif a personality of calm temperament and humorist, and he had an attractive mode of presentation. He had won lot of applauds in Literary gatherings and Mushairas as well. He has translated only 37 quatrains into Urdu from FitzGerald's English translation which is fairly refracted in his work.

A salient feature of Prof Waqif's Urdu translation is that each and every word of it is easily understood by Urdu and Hindi readers. Language and expression of Prof Waqif's translation is very simple, easy to grasp the actual meaning of quatrain. Majority of Indians were not acquainted with the FitzGerald's translation and his ideas before the publication of Prof Waqif's translation. The fact is that he was an Urdu poet and he knows the real aura and essence of FitzGerald's translation. He eventually translated the ideas and expression of FitzGerald which strengthen the native poets and scholars to affiliate with a new art of excellence. When we read Prof Waqif's Urdu translation of some English Quatrains of FitzGerald, we come to know that he contextualise the quatrains in his own way of expression. Most of his quatrains are simple in



expression and close to the original text of Khayyam rather than FitzGerald. The following translation of Prof Waqif ratifies the above statement:

بوی سحر تو پکارا یہ پیرمی خانہ  
ارے وہ مست کہاں ہے سدا کا دیوانہ  
بلانا اس کو کہ جلدی سے اس کا جام بہری  
مبادا- موت نہ بہر ڈالے اس کا پیمان<sup>3</sup>

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky  
I heard a voice within the Tavern cry,  
Awake, my Little Ones, and Fill the Cup  
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry.

The translation of the above Rubaiyat by Prof Waqif and FitzGerald appear very close in expressions and meaning. But the art of translation has different demands and expectations. In the above quatrains both the writers express their concerns regarding temporality of life. The expression of "Filling the cup" in both the source text and the translation allude to the message of *Carpe Diem*.

But in the next quatrain,

اب ختم کر اے بلبل شیدا نالے  
افراط گل و مل ہے۔ بہرے ہیں تہالے  
کہتا ہے کوی مجھ سے بہی۔ نادان! پیکر  
جو عمر کہ کہو بیتہا ہے۔ بہر سے پالے<sup>4</sup>

Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose,  
And Jamshyd's Sev'n ring'd Cup  
Where no one knows;  
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,  
And still a Garden by the Water blows.<sup>5</sup>

Here in the above translation, both the poet- translators adopt the carpe diem theory to convey the idea embedded in the original text. Prof Waqif simply translates the quatrain by using the figure of speech in terms of flower and wine. On the other hand, FitzGerald presents this quatrain by using historical examples to show the temporality of the world. But the idea is better expanded and explained by FitzGerald who tells his readers that natural phenomenon over lasts human achievements, however great they may be.

The dichotomy between nature's creation and artificial things has been treated by FitzGerald in the poem. The poet illustrates this quatrain by using the example of artificial paradise which was built by Shaddad. The lost paradise of Iram's account is mentioned in Sura number 89 in al Fajr, in the holy Quran.

<sup>3</sup> Prof, Waqif; Rubaiyat – e- Omar Khayyam, Moswara Book Depot. Delhi, 1960, p. 8

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.12

<sup>5</sup> FitzGerald, Edward; Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, WORDSWORTH CLASSICS, 1859, p.

The poet in the same quatrain is using another example of the Persian King Jamshyd's Seven Ringed Cup. It was a divine cup through which the King was able to see the affairs of his kingdom. In third and fourth line of this quatrain, the poet expresses the idea of immortality of nature by providing the examples of process of wine production from vine. Water flows and a garden comes into existence since centuries till date. When we compare both the poet translators with respect to this quatrain, we find the very essence of FitzGerald missing in Urdu translation.

To conclude: Therefore, it may be safely concluded that Prof Waqif has done a commendable job in rendering the poetry of FitzGerald into Urdu. Although his translation is characterized by certain limitations yet he has been able to transfer. Translation is art and the translation of poetry requires more skill and Prof Waqif should be complemented for his effort.

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