

HT Sunday

LitStream

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Politics and Poetry: A Case of Mahjoor and Azad

By Professor Mohammad Aslam



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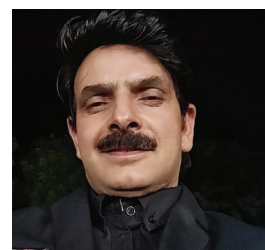
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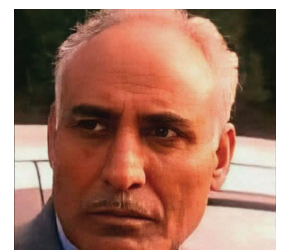
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HT Sunday – LitStream

A weekly supplement of Headlines Today dedicated to celebrating the literary spirit of Jammu and Kashmir. It showcases the works and contributions of eminent and emerging voices, with a discerning focus on fiction, criticism, translations, short stories, poetry and prose, feature writing capturing the vibrant pulse of the JK's literary landscape.

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Between Salvation and Damnation: Understanding Doctor Faustus

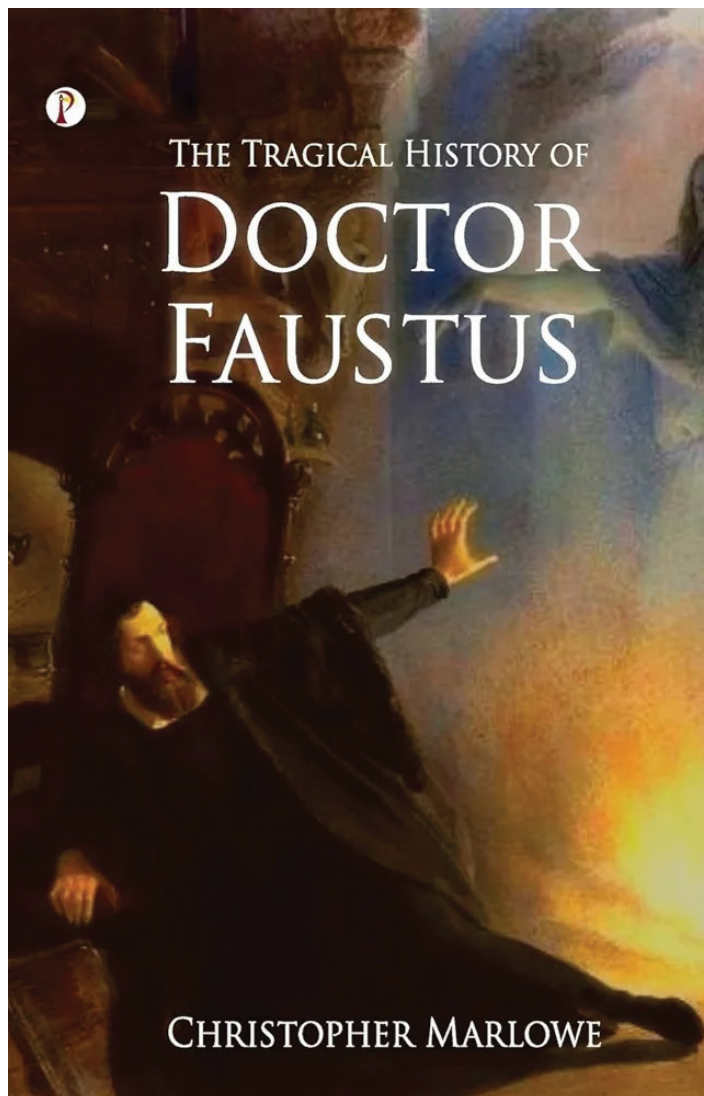
Nasir Ali

Christopher Marlowe's 1604 play *Doctor Faustus* traces the tragic fall of an ambitious German scholar, Faustus, from his heroic pursuit of knowledge to his collapse into self-indulgent mediocrity. The play also illustrates contrasts between European medieval and Renaissance values. Medieval values centered around Christianity, saints, and the relationship between human beings and divinity, while Renaissance values shifted toward humanistic ideas celebrating individualism and the scientific exploration of nature. Marlowe's play both reflects and questions this shift in values. It focuses on an ordinary man, rather than a king or noble, whose pursuit of knowledge at first seems admirable. However, Faustus's swelling pride leads to his downfall, as revealed by the chorus in the Prologue. Faustus's journey toward eventual damnation cautions against seeking avaricious, limitless personal power and knowledge because that pursuit, although tempting, has its limits.

As the play begins, Doctor Faustus is in his study, rejecting medieval scholarship: he has grown dissatisfied with the limits of traditional forms of knowledge and wants to learn more. Feeling that he knows all that human understanding might offer, he wants to explore magic to control nature and gain knowledge, wealth, and political power. Although Faustus's unhindered pursuit of knowledge and power will become corrosive, Marlowe imbues a certain magnificence to his quest.

In the play's inciting incident, Faustus uses magical marks and chants to summon Mephistophilis, who will become his guide and source of power and understanding. Faustus tells him that he wishes to sell his soul to Lucifer, if Mephistophilis will serve him for twenty-four years. This event marks the beginning of Faustus's quest to seize personal power. Mephistophilis warns him of "ten thousand hells" that await him, yet Faustus presses on, exhibiting his characteristic blindness and pride—fatal flaws—that propel him into darkness. Faustus's internal conflict is revealed; once he sells his soul, a desire to repent inevitably will plague him as his fear of hell grows. His deal with Lucifer creates a conflict symbolized by the good and bad angels on his shoulders who urge him in opposing directions, a representation of his divided will.

The rising action comprises Faustus's study of dark magic and his initial conversations with Mephistophilis. He teaches Faustus about the nature of the world but refuses to reveal who made the universe. With access to knowledge of higher things denied him, Faustus is cut off from God, the creator of the universe according to Christian understanding, perhaps Marlowe's reminder that greatness only comes



through God. Meanwhile, Wagner, Faustus's servant, uses his master's books to learn how to summon devils and work magic; he convinces a clown named Robin to serve him and embarks on his own misadventures. Wagner and the clown offer common and absurd counterpoints to events, and the clown's absurd behavior initially contrasts with Faustus's grandeur. As the play continues, however, Faustus's behavior comes to resemble that of the clown.

As the play moves towards its climax, Faustus's internal conflict, a growing fear that he should repent, leads to personal paralysis. His good and bad angels, representing this inner indecision, symbolize his uncertainty about giving his soul away. In the climax, Faustus nevertheless seals the pact—a deal signed with blood—that promises his soul to Lucifer. Faustus's interests diminish as he acquires new powers—a stark departure from his ambitious pursuits at the onset of events. As his heroic ambitions degrade, he resembles a clown more and more, and his world becomes inverted: Lucifer replaces God, and blasphemy replaces piety. In short, as Faustus gains absolute power, he is corrupted and paradoxically falls into mediocrity, resorting to

trickery and petty scheming.

Throughout the falling action, Faustus continues sinking into absurdity as he travels the world to perform magic for various rulers. For example, he voyages to the pope's court in Rome and plays tricks, such as making himself invisible, disrupting a banquet, and boxing the pope's ears. He becomes notorious in Europe, and is eventually invited to Charles V's court in Germany, where he entertains the monarch. Nothing of substance emerges from Faustus's magic. He casts simple charms and becomes pathetic. Faustus's pursuit of knowledge and personal power has led him to become an entertainer for those who hold actual power.

As the play reaches its resolution, Faustus fails to achieve what he wanted, true power and knowledge. As the twenty-four years come to a close, he dreads his impending death. Marlowe compresses time, underscoring the fact that Faustus's life is quickly slipping away, and Faustus summons Helen of Troy, scholars pray for him, and, on his final night, he begs for mercy, although it is unclear as to whether he truly repents. He concludes that any sinner will be damned, overlooking passages of the New Testament that speak to the hope

of repentance, and Marlowe emphasizes this fact in the final scene. Faustus spends his final moments believing that certain sins cannot be forgiven, and the play concludes with a suggestion that it is too late. At midnight a host of devils carry Faustus's soul to hell. Scholars find his limbs and decide to hold a funeral for him.

Critical Analysis of Faustus

Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is one of the most celebrated plays of the Elizabethan era and a defining text of Renaissance tragedy. Written around 1592, it dramatizes the story of a scholar, Dr. Faustus, who trades his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge, power, and worldly pleasures. At its heart, the play explores the tension between Renaissance humanism and medieval morality, ambition and damnation, free will and predestination. Through its rich symbolism, thematic complexity, and Marlowe's powerful blank verse, *Doctor Faustus* remains a timeless meditation on the dangers of overreaching ambition and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

Renaissance Spirit and Human Ambition

The character of Faustus embodies the Renaissance spirit of curiosity and thirst for knowledge. The sixteenth century was marked by rapid advancements in science, discovery, and philosophy. Scholars sought to move beyond the limitations imposed by medieval theology and embrace human potential. Faustus, however, becomes an exaggerated figure of this intellectual ambition. Dissatisfied with conventional disciplines like medicine, law, and theology, he turns to necromancy, believing that magic will grant him ultimate power and control over the natural and supernatural worlds. His decision reflects the Renaissance desire to transcend human limitations, yet Marlowe warns that such unchecked ambition carries destructive consequences.

Faustus' hunger for knowledge is admirable in one sense but also tragic, because he fails to use it for meaningful purposes. Instead of seeking wisdom or enlightenment, he squanders his powers on frivolous displays—conjuring up illusions, entertaining noblemen, and playing practical jokes. Marlowe thus critiques the misuse of human potential: the tragedy lies not merely in Faustus' damnation but in the waste of extraordinary talent.

The Morality Play Tradition

Although rooted in Renaissance themes, *Doctor Faustus* also draws heavily on the medieval morality play tradition. The presence of the Good Angel and Evil Angel, the personifications of the Seven Deadly Sins, and the recurring conflict between repentance and temptation reflect this medieval framework. The play stages the moral struggle of a single soul caught between salvation and dam-

nation, dramatizing the eternal battle between God and the devil.

Yet Marlowe departs from the morality play's straightforward didacticism. Traditional morality plays often ended with the protagonist's repentance and redemption, offering moral reassurance to the audience. Faustus, however, never repents fully despite numerous opportunities. His tragedy lies in his inability—or refusal—to embrace divine grace. Even in his final moments, though he cries for salvation, he cannot truly surrender his pride and ego. Marlowe, therefore, combines medieval moral warnings with Renaissance psychological complexity, creating a more nuanced and ambiguous portrait of sin and damnation.

Free Will vs. Predestination

One of the most debated aspects of *Doctor Faustus* is its treatment of free will and predestination. The play raises the question: is Faustus damned because of his own choices, or is he a victim of an inexorable fate? On one hand, Faustus repeatedly makes conscious decisions to reject repentance and embrace the devil's promises. The Good Angel constantly reminds him of God's mercy, but Faustus chooses otherwise. On the other hand, Faustus himself often claims that his fate is sealed and that he has no hope of salvation.

This tension reflects the theological debates of Marlowe's time, particularly those influenced by Calvinist doctrine, which emphasized predestination. The play does not resolve this conflict neatly, leaving the audience to grapple with the unsettling possibility that damnation might be inevitable once a soul has turned too far from God. At the same time, the repeated offers of repentance suggest that Faustus retains agency, but his pride prevents him from exercising it. Thus, Marlowe presents human freedom as fragile, easily corrupted by ambition and desire.

Mephistopheles, the devil's representative, is one of the most compelling characters in the play. Unlike a mere tempter, he is depicted as deeply tragic in his own right. When Faustus first summons him, Mephistopheles confesses that his presence is not the result of Faustus' power but of his own damnation—he is drawn by the name of God blasphemed. His speeches about hell are some of the play's most haunting moments, especially when he declares: "Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it." Through Mephistopheles, Marlowe suggests that damnation is not only a future punishment but a present condition—a psychological and spiritual state of separation from God.

Ironically, Mephistopheles often warns Faustus against making his pact, telling him the horrors of hell, but Faustus remains blinded by ambition. This irony underlines Faustus' tragic blindness: even the

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Never Say Goodbye



Translator: Dr Basharat Khan

When the sun's warm rays begin to pierce through the frozen slabs of the snow-covered peaks of Pahalgam in the fragrant air of spring, the cold waterfalls cascading down the heights become a source of life-giving water for the parched, lush valley below. The tourists arriving from all corners of the world feel these mountains like nature's solar refrigerator, quenching their thirst.

It was on these very snow-capped hills of Pahalgam that Sajad and Sajida, after three years together, were about to part. A shadow of autumn loomed over their spring. The warm tears of their separation were increasing the flow of the river's current. The college students danced joyfully in the pleasant air, as if they were moonlit creatures of paradise and nightingales of a free garden. But Sajad and Sajida sat by the riverbank, trembling with the pain of the approaching storm. In the midst of all the happiness around them, Sajida's lips whispered a verse in sorrowful tones, like a heartbroken poet:

"The winds are icy, the air is cold,
It's just we, the forsaken, with
these sad poses."

"Why did love come into our lives like a beautiful dream...?" Sajida said, resting her head on Sajad's shoulder, weeping in a hopeless voice. "Why does fate force us to endure the painful sorrow of separation?"

Sajad, overcome with emotion, spoke passionately:

"Love... love... its truth can only affect the one who has known the beauty of this world. Our parents are mentally enslaved to societal norms. They see marriage as a social ritual, not the union of two hearts. They are blindly advancing their family tradition under the false veil of pride, killing our innocent hopes."

The three years they spent together felt like three centuries. They lost themselves in the sweet memories of their college days. Their first meeting had been in the college library on the very first day. At first, they simply exchanged silent glances, but in a few months, their distance turned into closeness, and they began to understand each other in their own special way. In addition to studying together, they started participating in seminars and attending classes together. Within two years, they had understood each other's emotions and feelings deeply, and by the third year, the final year of their graduation, they began dreaming of tying their love in the bond of marriage after receiving their degrees.

But those dreams seemed like a mirage when one day, Sajad's mother told him that his father had decided to marry him off. Hearing this, Sajad's head began to spin. "Without asking me, they've decided my marriage?" he said emotionally.



Dr Reyaz Tawheedi Kashmiri



"The winds are icy, the air is cold,
It's just we, the forsaken, with
these sad poses."

"And yes, is the girl educated or uneducated...?"

"Uneducated, uneducated! She hasn't studied at all," his father said, entering the room. "I know you're not earning yet, but there's no need to worry. I still have fifteen years before my retirement."

His father's outdated thoughts struck Sajad like a hammer on the head.

"Father! It's not about earning. I have dreams, desires... I will marry, but I will marry an educated girl of my choice," Sajad said, lowering his head.

"Your dreams... your desires... we have nothing to do with them," his father said in a threatening tone. "I've already arranged your marriage with a relative. If you refuse, what respect will I have in society?"

"Father! Marriage is a matter of life; it's about the coming generation," Sajad tried to reason with his family, but to no avail. After a few days, his father, for the sake of his false pride, sacrificed Sajad's emotions and desires and fixed the wedding date.

On that day, by the riverbank in the beautiful valley of Pahalgam, Sajad was breaking inside, telling Sajida about the cruel end of their love. In a dazed state, they both walked across the bridge over the river. It seemed as though flames were rising from the snowy mountains of Pahalgam, and the river surged with melting snow, causing the bridge to collapse. They both were swept away by the fast-moving water, and the raging storm tossed them to opposite banks.

After Sajad's marriage, Sajida's marriage was also arranged in another city. Ten years later, Sajad completed his PhD and was appointed as a lecturer in the same college from where he had graduated. When he reached the college office to join, he was surprised to see Sajida there. She had joined on the same day. After submitting their joining reports, they both sat under the same tree where, during their graduation days, they used to sit on the grass, dreaming about their beautiful future during their free moments.

"Sajad, how are you?" Sajida

broke the silence. "You never tried to meet me in all these years."

"Why would I try to meet you?" Sajad replied coldly. "I always end up crying over my fate. What about you? How many children do you have?"

"Sajad, a lot has changed in these ten years," Sajida said, tears filling her eyes. "The man I married was into business, and I wanted higher education, but he wasn't ready for that. There was always fighting at home, and fate separated us in just a few months. Now, it's just loneliness and me!"

The college students planned a trip to Pahalgam the next day. The staff sent Sajad and Sajida along with the students. When they reached Pahalgam, they sat at the same spot by the river where they had sat ten years ago. The air was pleasant, the flowers were blooming, and butterflies were fluttering around them. The bridge was still broken. Their eyes were fixed on the bridge, perhaps thinking that it had broken because of their separation and had been waiting for ten years to be rebuilt by them. Hand in hand, they began walking towards the bridge. Spring in Pahalgam began to show its charm again, and the winds greeted them with the scent of roses, just as they had been waiting for years. The radio played a ghazal:

"The narrow world of my imagination is brightened by your image,
You think I'm still living in longing for you."

(Translated In English From Urdu Short Story) by Dr Basharat Khan. He can be reached at chogalwriter76@gmail.com

Short Story Performance



Translator: Imran Yousuf

Fortune had eventually knocked at his door. After a long time he was offered a role. A role to perform on the stage of the grand Tagore Hall. He had been a handsome and a brilliant artist but seven tough and rough years of unemployment had burnt the oil of his veins and sucked up the marrow of his bones. His once beautiful curls were now a frustrated mess unable to cover his scalp properly. Wrinkles on the forehead and varicose veins of his throat had started to gain prominence. Puffing on cigarette butts had wrecked havoc on his face; the sunken cheeks had consumed all

the charm and glow.

When curtains were raised and he stepped on the stage, he forgot every memorized line which he had to utter in his performance. All his carefully memorized lines just vanished like thin air. He found himself thoroughly bedazed; his head completely blank.

He was lost in his own miseries. His miseries took over his imagination. All he could think about was the five thousand rupees that he would be paid for the Performance. What shall I do with that money, he thought. What shall I buy and how much?

His daughter-Shanu- her feet-fair, comely- how they blushed in embarrassment through so many holes of her worn out canvas shoes. Wouldn't she like to play with all those kids outside? Throw snow balls at them. Make a snowman. Wouldn't she! But what will she wear?

Ah! These thoughts. His face turned a faint shade. Pallid yellow.

The shirt of his son Sahil, how old was it? Two years? Three



Raja Yousuf (Kashmiri)

years? Didn't he burn it on his Kangri? What remains of it now? A neck with a few shreds hanging down like leeches on a beggar.

Red. Bleeding red. His face turned red.

The roof. How it leaked! How many vessels were enough to collect that dripping water? Fortunately this year heavy snowfall came to the rescue and Chilai Kalan froze everything on the roof. Only Icicles hung up there like ugly chandeliers. Snow turned to freezing ice and the drip-page stopped.

Then there was Mother. Medicines for her blood pressure. Lali's thyroid. She needs a Doctor. And medicines. And...

At every thought his face changed colors. Each misery bought its own hue.

He looked everywhere. Right, left, above, below. All he could see was haze, fog and smoke. For a while he rested his head on his knees and then suddenly looked towards the roof of the stage. Within a fleeting moment tears rolled down his cheeks. Bitter, cold tears. Drop by drop they fell on the stage. In two minutes of performance, two thousand expressions passed through his face.

The sound of camera phones clicking pictures were echoing; videographers and cameramen were capturing his every single expression with intensity. Spectators were clapping and shouting and whistling in astonishment. Another artist came on the stage, held his arm and got him off the stage.

His face with a hundred mercurial expressions on the stage had stolen the show. Soon enough the video of his performance had gone viral on social media and within no time he had received thousands of 'likes' and 'comments'.

What expressions! Award winning performance. "Who told you to get on the stage,

You could not utter a single dialogue

You devastated the whole play" Furious Director

Before leaving, the infuriated Director of the show put a note of 100 rupees in his hand.

Thousands of his dreams thawed and flooded his unfulfilled wishes as if Kolahoi glacier had melted with a single spark.

One single ray of the Sun had melted the snow on the roof and icicles below it.

The Roof had started to leak again. The dripping water had overflowed the muddy vessels.

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Politics and Poetry: A Case of Mahjoor and Azad



Professor Mohammad Aslam

Literature has, more often than not, played a pivotal role in bringing about social change, as writers are more sensitive to the issues concerning their society. Literature and society are closely related to each other. As part and parcel of their environment, writers convey their ideas through literary pieces, be they poems, dramas, short stories, or novels. For instance, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1984) is a critique of the political happenings in the erstwhile USSR. His oft-quoted line "Some are more equal than others," is a scathing criticism of the so-called socialism that advocated equality among the citizens, both political and economic. Shelly wrote 'Song to the Men of England' as a reaction to the Peterloo massacre, showcasing his strong condemnation of the pathetic condition of the working class in England and their exploitation by the capitalists. He likens the capitalist to drones and labourers to bees and sings:

**Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay ye low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?
Wherefore feed and clothe and save
From the cradle to the grave
Those ungrateful drones who would
Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?
Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil?
Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
Or what is it ye buy so dear
With your pain and with your fear?
The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.
Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap:
Find wealth—let no imposter heap:
Weave robes—let not the idle wear:
Forge arms—in your defence to bear.
Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells—
In hall ye deck another dwells.
Why shake the chains ye wrought?
Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.
With plough and spade and hoe and loom
Trace your grave and build your tomb
And weave your winding-sheet—till fair
England be your Sepulchre.
In 'Ode to the West Wind', Shelley cries out:**



**Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained
and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift,
and proud.**

It is now believed that Shakespeare wrote his plays—tragedies and historical plays—in response to the prevailing political situation in his country. Thus, King Lear and Hamlet aren't the products of Shakespeare's imagination, but a realistic portrayal of intrigues and corrupt practices taking place in the Palace. Charles Dickens wrote *A Tale of Two Cities* to expose the twin kingdoms—France and England—and their cruel practices, which eventually resulted in overthrowing their respective rulers through a revolution. Pablo Neruda's (he was often referred to as the Picasso of poetry) poems stemmed directly from his Communist ideology and in response to political events like the Spanish War, World War II and the Cold War. In his political work, he addressed the struggle of the masses and condemned the exploiting corporators and dictators. He was exiled, but his poetry was, many a time, printed and distributed by soldiers for wider circulation among people beyond intellectuals. Similarly, Langston Hughes (a Black American) wrote about the joys and hardships of Black Americans and fought for racial equality in the USA. 'Harlem' and 'I' are his politically charged poems, making him a central figure in fighting for social justice. The famed English poet WB Yeats also spoke against the Spanish War and World War II that were around the corner. In one of his poems entitled 'Politics', he says:

And there's a politician



**That has read and thought,
And maybe what they say is true
Of war and war's alarms,
But O that I were young again
And held her in my arms.**

There is no denying the fact that, more than any other genre, poetry has been used as an expressive tool for serving a political cause the world over, Kashmir being no exception. Internationally famed poet of the Subcontinent, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, is a well-known poet who suffered all types of oppression for his political ideology. In the 1930s and 1940s of the 20th century, Kashmiri poets (not many, though) used poetry as an instrument for raising awareness among the masses—especially labourers, working class and the poor—about their rights and the way landlords and the rich exploited them for their vested interest. Two of our great poets of the era were Abdul Ahad Azad and Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor (hereafter, Azad and Mahjoor, respectively, as they had their *nom de plume*). Mahjoor was older to Azad, but significantly different from the former in that he was greatly influenced by Marxism and found Socialism a panacea for all evils that beset the artisans and labourers of Kashmir.

Moreover, Azad was the first Kashmiri to write a voluminous history of Kashmiri language and poetry, which was posthumously published by the J&K Academy of Art and Culture. Azad died very young and didn't get any recognition during his lifetime, while Mahjoor became a household name both in his life and after. In his lifetime, Mehmood Shehri, a street singer in Srinagar, made him famous in the valley, whereas Azad, due to his simplicity and shyness, remained largely in oblivion during his lifetime. Mahjoor didn't take any cud-

gels with the powers that be, while Azad suffered at the hands of the Government of the time and had to live from hand to mouth till his death. Mahjoor's poetry is mostly about Nature, but Azad, besides Nature, used poetry as a tool for political awakening and as a voice of the common people. However, both Mahjoor and Azad were concerned about the pathetic condition of the labour class and wanted them to wake up against the oppressive forces, especially the rich. In a poem, Mahjoor laments the miserable condition of the labour class thus:

**Starving labourers, wake up,
manly!
Oppression and tyranny have
trampled you down again and again.
Poverty and helplessness have
made you miserable.
How long will you continue to be
a victim of oppression and hardship?
Wake up and look outside. The sun
of revolution has risen.
The morning of spring is coming
to your deserted garden.**

The "morning of spring" mentioned in the poem seems to be an allusion to the awakening that had come as a result of the Russian Revolution and the labour movement (celebrated globally as May Day or the International Labour Day on 1st May every year) that had propelled the labour class to fight for their legitimate rights. Mahjoor advises them to unite and fight for their rights:

**Workers and peasants have to be
united.
Abandoning humility, they have to
be ready to fight for our rights.
Trees are yours; yours is the land.
All this wealth is yours.
Do not grieve; now every ruler will**

pay you your due.

Mahjoor feels happy for the change and therefore sings in another poem:

**Give way, move away, O, enemy of paradise
Let me water the plants for splendour has come after ages.
Rise up, break the outdated bonds of tradition and custom
Take action, abandon fear with courage, and become a gallant now.**

Mahjoor tells them to use the new opportunity (ie, awakening) to pave their own path of progress. He warns them not to show any dereliction in this regard. The oppressors and exploiters would be wiped out of existence, provided they show courage and work hard:

**The era of truth and justice has returned
The old values have faded; prepare a new world.
Once again, create new means and tools
In the new era, your business will flourish everywhere.
Don't let the tables turn on you again. Just be careful!
All the rich and feudal lords will disappear.**

The use of poetry in politics wasn't new to Kashmir. Earlier, Mir Ali Shah Khoyhami had written his *Mathnavi*, *The Final Epoch* (*akeaer zamana*), in which he protests against the Dogra ruler in the following lines:

**Our prince is stationed in Jammu
Their tillers are Kashmiris
They exploit him greatly
The poor are forced to pay for minimal.**

Mahjoor and Azad, nonetheless, brought poetry to the doorstep of common Kashmiris, and they got them aware of the plight of the working class, especially those who worked in the Silk Factory in Kashmir. This Factory became a political hotbed later on in the history of Kashmir.

Azad was a born revolutionary. As a sensitive soul, he was pained to see his people suffer at the hands of the rulers, factory owners and the rich. He was a self-learner from the beginning, which made him so different from Mahjoor. He worked hard, moved about in the nook and corner of the valley, collecting material about a research-oriented book *History of Kashmiri Language and Poetry*, which saw the light of the day only after his death. He was a Marxist and evoked the wrath of the government for his ideology. His poetic work couldn't be published during his life. It was posthumously collected and edited by his friend, Padam Nath Ganjoo, and published later on by the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture

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Bebooj Nama

Kashmir History, selected readings



A review
By Showkat Shafi

Bebooj Nama: Kashmir History selected readings by our Multilingual poet, scholar, translator and columnist Ayaz Rasool Nazki, is yet another beautiful addition to his series of books wherein he has been creatively engaging his readers with the questions of identity, memory and aspirations of people of Kashmir.

So what is Bebooj Nama all about? What is in the name?

In Kashmiri, "bebooj") means something beyond fixed accountability. It conveys the idea of being beyond any checks or balances. And that is what Mughal, Afghan and Sikh rule covered by the author in the book under review is perceived to be - A history of utter lawlessness, non-accountability, deceit and camouflage.

During this era, the suffering, sorrow loss and pain for people continued unabated. People had no option than to be subjugated under the might of the powerful but did they do anything in response? Did they find any means of expression? What was the expression like? It was our rich oral tradition, our folk lore, our folk tales, our folk poetry and the like that became only means of "catharsis". As Ayaz Rasool records "Kashmiris never accepted their occupation of Kashmir rule and instead demonized it through their literature". How, with what style and with what modus operandi. This is what I will discuss in the following lines.

The 19th century Persian poet of Kashmir Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi's Beboojnama (Chapters 7 & 8 in the book under my review) was perhaps one of the earliest attempts to capture this essence, using poetry to express unrecorded aspects of life, and cultural values that defied formal histories. Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi is one among many who left behind collections of their feelings about the events they saw. The Sikh rule is brought out in gruesome detail by this poet in Baboojnama. The English translation of the original text has been included in the book. A manuscript in the hand of famous Kashmiri historian of the 19th century Pir Ghulam Hassan Khuihami also titles it as Napursan Nama. Written in an innovative format Baebooj Nama of Shahabadi combines poetry and prose, theatre and story telling in

one landscape to give the reader a sense of utter lawlessness, unaccountably and deceit of the times.

So what does Ayaz Rasool Nazki do. His, book in English also titled Bebooj Nama, builds upon this legacy, exploring the richness of Kashmir through an unbounded lens, seeking not just events but the spirit that lies in Kashmiri collective memory.

Nazki's Babooj nama is not in any way a book of history. It is at the best As he himself admits "a limited reading of a small period in history". What has been attempted is reading conventional history and supplementing it with non-conventional folk sources of history.

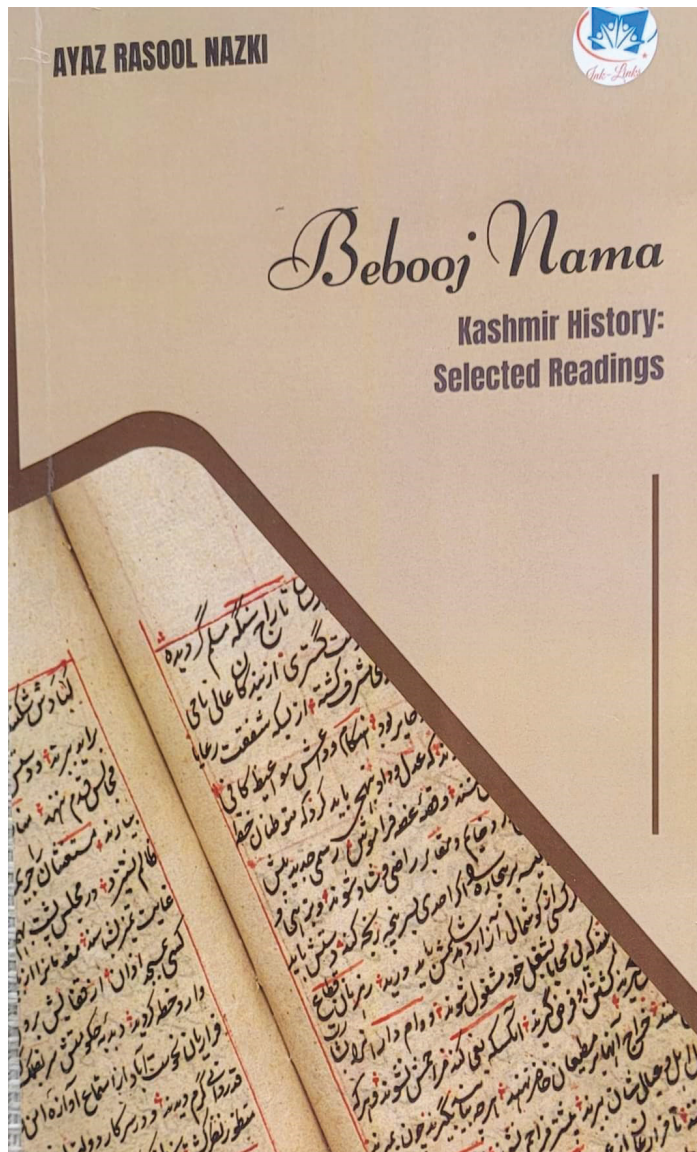
This approach by Ayaz Rasool shifts focus from conventional historical documentation to the collective memory embedded in oral traditions and verses. By tracing his-

Book : Bebooj Nama
Author: Ayaz Rasool Nazki
Publisher: Ink Links Publishing House
Price: Rs 350

tory through these forms author tries to uncover layers of Kashmiri identity, values, and resilience that have been preserved for centuries. Folk songs, and folk tales for instance, reveal the lived experiences, aspirations, and struggles of ordinary Kashmiris.

The book dedicated to Hamidullah Shah Abadi Kashmiri, great historian Pir Ghulam Hasan Shah khoihami and all those bold artists who author believes "kept recording history in very difficult times". This book published by Ink Links Publishing House Pampore J&K has eight chapters, which are 1. Shinai Mougul 2. Jabbar jandi 3. Bandipather 4 Gulab Sing 5. Ranjit singh 6. Kashmir under Sikh rule 7. Mullah Hamidullah Shahabadi and the last one 8. Baebooj nama.

The very first chapter Shinai Mogul covers the mogul rule and the author records his observation thus "Kashmir had cast a spell on mogul emperors and for more than a century and a half they held it tightly to their bosom notwithstanding the fact that for them it was just a pleasure garden and the population was of much less value than the salubrious climate and the scenic splendour. Notwithstanding this love and longing for Kashmir, Kashmiris never approved the loss of their sovereignty of their country at the hands of Mugals and that is evident from the fact that even after more than 4 centuries Kashmiris remember moguls in the most negative sense. The barn owl is named as rati mougul, the Mogul of night, The one bringing POG or ill luck is pugi mougul and the one causing death and destruction is



Shinai mougul.

And then the chapter "Jabari Jandi". Ayaz Records "Replacing moguls as rulers proved the proverb" from frying pan into the fire "true for hapless inhabitants of Kashmir". The rule ended in 1819 AD. The last Afgan governor whose regime lasted only a few months Jabbar khan 1819 AD came to be known in ridicule as Jabbar Jandi (Jabbar the rag). The popular saying goes Jabbar Jandi, Hardus ti korun wande'. (Jabbar -the Rag turned autumn into winter)

The folk theatre the Bandipather has a razi pather devoted to the subject of exploitation of masses at the hands of Afghan occupiers."

To set the stage, Ayaz Rasool offers a concise account of the troubled realities that shaped life in Kashmir, drawing attention to several pertinent sources, with a particular focus on literary ones. He delves into these references to underscore the themes and challenges that define the region's complex history.

"The economic exploitation of the population in particular of

the peasantry is chronicled in a folk ballad "Grees Bai ti maanch Tuler". The peasant woman and the Honey bee. This is a dialogue between the peasant women and the honey bee with each narrating the tyranny it is subjected to. The honey bee at the hands of a bear who vandalizes the hive for honey and in the process destroys thousands of bees and the peasant women at the hands of cruel officials who destroy the family for taxes ".

Similarly there are details of the tax collection system of the times, Unique chicken collection system of Kashmir. He also invites our attention to heavy snow fall on the standing and ready to harvest paddy crop in October of 1833, causing famine that was followed by intense cold wave "The snow fall was so heavy that it lasted months and unleashed a cold wave that froze all water bodies. The demon of famine coupled with harsh winter led to terrible times where mothers did not hesitate eating the flesh of their dead children"

Noted scholar, critic and prominent intellectual Dr Maroof Shah vehemently acknowledges this

new approach to reading history in his introduction to this book and I quote : "Ayaz has pioneered a new approach to Kashmir: reading its history in literary archives. This promises a great deal and we can unearth a treasure of words mostly in manuscript or unpublished or untranslated form. Reading history through literary works, Says Dr Maroof, illuminates aspects of past that historical works miss".

So what is Ayaz upto in handling Bebooj nama. He has sought to read it in the light of political context and as a commentary on the sorry state of affairs and provided historical background for the work. He does not discuss the literary qualities of the poem or reads it as literature.

In Baeboojnama Chapter 3, Razi pather - Bandipather, the author explains how Razi Pather, like Bandipather, adapts to the oppressive times through subtle resistance. By using indirect language and humour, it reflects people's emotions—joys, sorrows, and struggles—without openly challenging authority. This folk theatre's use of subterfuge and camouflage has allowed it to endure, responding to the needs of the people while avoiding direct confrontation with oppressors. And Rasool records his observations and I quote "In time, folk theatre became a repository of Kashmiris collective memory, an archive of history. Pather may not be history in the conventional sense but it preserved and conserved the happenings enacted in the distant past".

This experimental approach in baebooj nama does not in any way challenge conventional histories, but recognises this fact in unequivocal terms that much of what defines Kashmir lies not only in documented events but in the vivid, timeless imagery found in its folk tales and poetry.

Baboojnama by Prof Nazki. Provides unique insights that official records and conventional historiography often overlook. The author has shown us a new path that Folklore and folk literature offer a profound and culturally immersive approach to tracing Kashmir's history. By exploring these sources, historians can gain a richer, multidimensional understanding of the region, one that encompasses not only political and economic events but also the lived experiences, beliefs, and values of the Kashmiri people. This method highlights the resilience of Kashmiri culture, the strength of its collective memory, and the enduring importance of local voices in understanding a region's true history.

In chapters 4-6 titled Gulab Sing, Ranjeet Singh and Kashmir under Sikh rule author also explores these

CONT. ON PAGE 7

Short Story

At The Zebra Crossing!



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To cross or not to cross? That was the question which baffled him for more than an hour. Puzzled and petrified, he helplessly watched the speeding vehicles passing by. Road etiquette demanded that vehicles should stop or at least slow down on approaching the pedestrian crossing and let the pedestrians cross the road but drivers did not show any signs of responsibility. Why should they? There were neither policemen nor traffic signs to regulate them at this place. Self-discipline is something unknown in our country. Every driver wants to overtake the other.

In Delhi, pedestrians generally throw caution to the wind while crossing the road. They tarry a while, watch the flowing traffic and at the first available opportunity push ahead to make way for themselves. But his case was different. He was not able to muster enough courage to cross the road while lorries, motor-cars, jeeps, motor-bicycles, scooters and auto-rickshaws were speeding mercilessly past him. He feared that one of them might crush him to death in a similar manner they had crushed his son a day before. He was aware of his liabilities at home, and therefore, did not want to die so soon.

Black and white stripes on the roads meant for pedestrians were hardly visible in the place where he had come from, or more appropriately, had been forced to come from. In the entire district, one could notice just a few zebra crossings in some posh areas which practically had no utility except that they were indicative of a VIP area. You could walk across any road anywhere and at any time. The vehicles would slow down automatically and even stop to allow you to cross the road.

However, in bigger cities, black and white stripes offer an open invitation to a person walking on foot to cross the busy road assuring him precedence and a safe passage. It is the duty and responsibility of every driver to stop when you are walking over the stripes.

Duty...! Responsibility...! Good gracious...! He felt nauseated and reacted instantly, "Who cares about duties and responsibilities? Everyone wants to outwit everyone else. Even if it takes a toll on a few men it does not matter because human life has lost its value in this overpopulated country."

At that very instant, a Mercedes sped past him leaving a gap of just a whisker. Shivers ran down his spine. He withdrew both his feet from the road immediately for fear of being run over. He was reminded of the death of his son the day before. His son had

also attempted to cross a road when he was run over by a speeding truck. The body had lain in a pool of blood the whole night till it was noticed the next morning. The police registered a case against an unknown driver, conducted a post-mortem of the body and in the end declared the case as untraced. It would not have been difficult for the police to trace the murderer had they pursued the case sincerely but they were not willing to shoulder additional responsibility. In our country, the police believe that they are overburdened with such cases especially those with VIP tags.

However, the police found a diary on the dead body which helped them to trace his house and hand him over to his parents. Otherwise, the body would have been consumed as unclaimed.

House...! Was it worth calling a house? A tattered canvas tent, repaired at several places which gave it a patchy look. The family of six huddled up to spend their allotted days. Their real house was left behind by them in Anantnag. A building of three storeys with a foundation made of green flawless stone drawn from one of the most reputed quarries, walls made of high-quality bricks, ceilings, doors and windows made of deodar wood and an inclined roof covered with Tata corrugated galvanized iron sheets which did not permit snow to stick to it for too long. The building was surrounded by lush green meadows and paddy fields which extended right up to the foothills on the far side. At a short distance from the main door of the house, one could see a large stone mortar placed permanently under a magnificent walnut tree. Four feet high wooden pestles were kept in the cow shed nearby for use by the women of the household for pounding paddy, red chillies and condiments during the autumn season. The pounding was accompanied by melodious Kashmiri songs. Behind the house grew almond, plum and peach trees, blossoms of which would enchant the passers-by. The family got their requirement of grains, pulses, vegetables, fruits and marigold flowers for the entire year from their own farm and did not make any additional purchases from the market.

Many a time he thought of going on a pilgrimage to the four dhams across the country before his mortal self would breathe its last but his ties with the family prevented him from doing so. All his life he had not ventured out of his nice little town except on a few occasions when he had gone to Srinagar where tongas were not yet replaced by minibuses, tempos and taxis. He saw the train for the first time after migration from the valley.

"What a fool am I? What wild thoughts besiege my mind? That house is a lost dream now. Never to be seen again," He laughed at himself and continued thinking. "They call this suffocating torn tent a house. My cowshed at Anantnag was bigger than this tent."

Suddenly he remembered the face

of his lost son. His son was a tall, fair and handsome youth with apple-red cheeks and sky-blue eyes that fairies would yearn to possess. He was intelligent as well as sharp in his studies and used to get excellent reports from his school. Yet one thing that differentiated him from his class fellows was his compassion and sentimental behaviour. Of late he had started brooding and thinking endlessly about his glorious past, insecure present and uncertain future. Most probably he may have been lost in his thoughts at the time when he crossed the road and was therefore run over by the truck.

"Brooding has become a permanent feature of this afflicted community coupled with hypertension and diabetes. Nobody is able to escape. This is what they will leave as a heritage for their future generations till the whole community becomes extinct and part of history," he shook his head briskly to get rid of all the painful thoughts. Then he fixed his gaze on the pedestrian crossing in front of him. It was as expectant as ever, shining bright under the scorching sun. The vehicu-



"What a fool am I? What wild thoughts besiege my mind? That house is a lost dream now. Never to be seen again," He laughed at himself and continued thinking. "They call this suffocating torn tent a house. My cowshed at Anantnag was bigger than this tent."

lar traffic too was as brisk as before.

He gathered his courage and moved his right foot forward to walk over the stripes. At that very moment a speeding motor bicycle passed by, almost touching his advanced foot and leaving him no option but to pull it back hastily. The biker turned round and spewed abuses on him calling him blind. He was at a loss to understand how to cross the road under such circumstances.

It was the month of June and the sun was shining bright overhead. His family had cautioned him about the high temperature outside but being a villager he was confident of his physical fitness. He had no choice but to leave his home to collect his monthly relief and rations for which he had to traverse a distance of around ten kilometres. Earlier he was entitled to sixteen hundred rupees a month but after the death of his son, he could only draw twelve hundred rupees as a relief.

His son was a great asset to him. The son would do all the work such as collecting rations and relief, purchasing bread and vegetables, taking his parents to the doctor and getting them the prescribed medicines. But

now the entire burden had fallen on his shoulders.

Being a peasant, he was entirely dependent on the meagre relief provided by the government, unlike government servants who were assured of their full salaries, work or no work. Worse still, in Anantnag, he lived jointly with his two brothers but at the time of migration the three fled in three different directions and nobody knew where the other person had gone. Anyway, he was successful in taking his family safely out of the valley which by itself was a great solace to him. He had rescued his wife, a son and two teenage daughters not knowing that Death awaited his son on one of Delhi's roadways.

"Relief of just twelve hundred rupees and rations for the family every month besides a tattered tent to take shelter under," he lamented, "Neither a roof overhead nor a piece of land to stand on. Moreover, so many mouths to feed. What a contrast! There was a time when everything was in plenty. Money, food grains, dry fruits, and spices. We used to expect one or other guests in our home and cook food for one or two extra persons every day. What a turn the wheel of fortune has taken! We have to live from hand to mouth now. Out of twelve hundred rupees, the clerk in the relief commissioner's office takes away one hundred. What remains is just eleven hundred to feed four mouths, purchase their apparel and pay for their education. My wife is illiterate and unskilled and cannot get a job. It had never occurred to us that such a day will come in our lives. Now the only hope was my son who was snatched away by the jaws of death even before he could complete his studies. All that is left are two daughters who are studying in school."

All of a sudden he remembered that his wife wanted him to return home before lunch. She had given him a small towel wetted with ice-cold water which by now had dried up. He turned around and enquired about the time from a vendor of drinking water nearby.

"It is quarter past one," sharp came the reply. The vendor had curiously watched him all along he stood there and felt pity for him. "Babuji, you have been standing in this scorching sun for the last two hours. Pray tell me where you want to go?"

"I want to cross this road but this uncontrolled traffic does not allow me to do so," he replied.

"So many people have crossed since the time you stood here. What are you afraid of?"

"No no, the traffic is so much and so fast that anyone may crush me. Then where will my family go? I have already lost my only son recently while crossing a road. The drivers should at least have some consideration for those walking on foot. Nobody is bothered. Brother, it is not so in our town. Neither so much traffic nor so much speed. No, not at all. In our place, if an old man is unable to cross the road on his own, people will catch hold of his hand and help him

till he reaches the other end. I have done it myself so many times when I was young."

He started thinking as to why people in this city were so apathetic and inhuman and then laughed to himself. "What a fool am I? Which place am I claiming to be mine? If that is my town then what am I doing here under this scorching sun?"

"Babuji please have this glass of water. You need not pay for it," the vendor said while handing over a glass of ice-cold water to him. "You seem puzzled. Which country are you from?"

"Country...! What makes you think so? No brother, I belong to this very country. I am no foreigner." He drank the water in one sip and requested the vendor to wet his towel if possible.

Having said so, he suddenly felt speechless and again started thinking. "Belong to this country...! How? How do I call this country my own? The country which neither ensured my security nor sustenance. How does a person become a refugee in his own country?"

"Babuji, it seems you wanted to say something but stopped short."

"Brother, what do I say? There is nothing left for me to say. I have become a refugee in my own country."

"Babuji, it seems the traffic has thinned out. This is the best time to cross."

He looked at the road in front of him. The traffic had really become less comparatively. Possibly the traffic had thinned down due to lunch-time in the offices. So he mustered up the courage and put forward his feet one after the other on the black and white stripes. Instantly he turned around and nodded his gratitude to the vendor and then moved his feet briskly.

One...two...three...four...five...six...seven...and so on, till he reached the other end of the road.

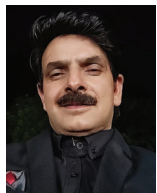
He stopped on the footpath at the other end and heaved a sigh of relief. Then he wiped his sweaty face with his wet towel. He was feeling feverish. His whole body had turned into a furnace by now. His head was reeling, his eyes became blurred and he could not see anything around him. Frothing at the mouth, he fell like a chopped tree right on the footpath.

The vendor whose eyes were fixed on him was shocked. He ran across the road carrying a bottle of ice-cold water and sprinkled it over his head but it was too late. The body was lying motionless on the footpath with white foam in the mouth and the pulse had already stopped.

People started gathering around the dead body and soon the police came by and picked up the dead body and took it away in a van. For the police, it was a simple case of heat stroke. That is all it meant for them, another addition to the statistical register of deaths by sunstroke.

Deepak Budki is a retired Indian Postal Service Officer & a renowned Urdu Short Story writer, critic and researcher.

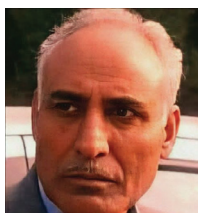
Woman



Akram Siddiqui
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Not carved from stone,
nor forged in flame,
but fashioned from a rib,
a curve of grace,
bent not in weakness,
but in sacred design,
close to the heart it vowed to shield.
She is the hush beneath the storm,
the arc that guards love's trembling flame,
fragile, yes,
but within her fragility lies the strength
to cradle sorrows,
to soften wounds
before they reach the soul's citadel.
The rib does not strike,
it does not scar,
it breaks only when pressed
by the weight of pride,
or the hunger of mastery
masked as love.
Most wounds of the heart
are born not of the rib's defiance,
but of the hands
that forget tenderness,
of the voice
that commands instead of consoles,
of the man
who seeks to rule
when he was made to walk beside.
A woman does not ache
from her own essence,
she aches
when the one meant to honor her
becomes a tyrant
instead of a teacher,
a master
instead of a mirror.

A Habit Called Love



Ali Shaida....
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How can her memories be carved so deep?
Why does her image shadow every breath I keep?
Sleep descends, yet she appears in my dream;
On the roads she left, I wander, chasing her gleam.
What words could capture how she parted from me?
Each mile of distance only draws me near to she.
Her silence perhaps spoke more than her voice;
Even in quiet, sorrow gave me no choice.
I tried to forget that fable of our flame,
Yet every heartbeat begins again with her name.
Even the ashes could not let her memory go;
I burned to dust, but her smoke still flows.
Why does every verse return to her, O Shaida?
Is love itself nothing but a habit to obey?

FROM PAGE 4...

Politics and Poetry...

and Languages in 1967 as kuliyaat-e-azad (Complete Works of Azad). Azad was a lover of Nature like his predecessors Rasul Mir and Mahjoor, but he had also made his poetry a vehicle for raising awareness among the masses so that they could change their destiny by changing themselves. One of his friends, Premnath Bazaz, writes that Azad's poetic journey started with lyrics and devotional songs under the impact of Persian. When he met Mahjoor at a conference in 1936, he began to write poems about and on Nature. His best phase of poetry was the last one when he became an iconoclast, a rebel and standard-bearer of social revolution against the oppressors of the time. Azad wrote several poems that are concerned with the life of the people during the 1940s when Kashmir was under the Dogras. He was a revolutionary by nature and used poetry as an effective tool to forge a revolutionary consciousness among the proletariat so that they could shake off their slumber of slavery, oppression and suppression. He pricks the conscience of his people repeatedly

and warns them that unless they revolt against these forces, they will not be able to change their pattern of life.

Azad was a very sensitive poet. He knew that without standing on their feet, Kashmiris wouldn't be able to change their life. He pricks their conscience and says:

**Why have you become so meak
My countrymen! Wake up from the slumber of ignorance.**

In the same poem, he likens people to earthworms that get trampled under the feet of the walkers:

Submerge you lay in the mud of humiliation

**Like an earthworm, you are in slumber
O, python, come out waving
My country men, wake up!**

Azad uses metaphors like khai (ditch), niri (meadow), and bumsin (earthworm) to warn people of their plight. He doesn't want them to blindly follow like cattle. He says:

**O, the blind follower sheep
Look ahead yourself too
You might fall into a ditch for a meadow**

**Play with the sword of truth.
This is like Allama Iqbal warning students:**

**May God confront you with some storm!
No billow in your sea break in foam.**

Azad too asks Kashmiris to fight like warriors:

Build up trust in yourself, take a step for revolution

Break the shackles of fear and superstition.

Both Mahjoor and Azad were extremely conscientious poets who knew what maladies Kashmir and Kashmiris suffered from. However, Azad's voice got unheard while Mahjoor's songs earned fame far and wide primarily because of the great efforts put on by a street singer whom Mahjoor himself gave the name Mehmood Shehri after Mehmood Gami, one of the greatest classical poets of Kashmir. Kashmiris should thank these two poets for writing poetry which left an indelible mark on our conscience and made us aware of our rights at a time when speaking against the powers that be was a crime.

FROM PAGE 2...

Between Salvation and...

devil himself offers him insight, yet he refuses to heed it.

The Tragic Dimension

Faustus is often regarded as the archetypal tragic hero of the Renaissance. He possesses extraordinary intellectual gifts, ambition, and courage, but his fatal flaw—hubris—leads to his downfall. In Aristotelian terms, his tragedy evokes pity and fear: pity because his downfall seems avoidable, and fear because it reflects humanity's own potential for self-destruction. His final soliloquy, where he pleads for time to stand still, is one of the most moving passages in English drama. It captures the human terror of mortality, damnation, and the

realization of wasted potential.

Unlike Shakespearean tragedy, where the hero often dies in battle or political conflict, Faustus' downfall is entirely internal. His battle is with his own conscience and with forces of temptation. This inward dimension makes the play not only a theological warning but also a psychological exploration of despair and alienation.

Conclusion

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus stands at the crossroads of medieval and Renaissance thought, combining the morality play tradition with the new spirit of humanism. It dramatizes the dangers of intellectual pride, the com-

plexity of free will, and the devastating consequences of misusing one's potential. Through Faustus, Marlowe presents a timeless warning: ambition without moral direction leads not to greatness but to destruction. The play's enduring power lies in its ambiguity, its refusal to provide easy answers about salvation and damnation, and its haunting portrayal of a man who could have been great but chose otherwise.

In the end, Doctor Faustus is more than a cautionary tale—it is a tragic reflection on the human condition itself, torn between aspiration and limitation, freedom and fate, knowledge and humility.

FROM PAGE 5...

Bebooj Nama...

eras through the lens of folklore and folk literature. Author reveals a local perspective on foreign governance, the region's resilience, and the nuanced interactions between Kashmiri society and these dominant powers.

Kashmiri literature is deeply enriched by its folklore, an aspect that has fascinated several European researchers over time. Scholars such as Jhon. Hinton Knowles, , Richard Temple, George Abraham Grierson, Walter Lawrence, Frederic Burkard and many more have been captivated by the vast and vibrant world of Kashmiri folklore.

In the preface to Folk-Tales of Kashmir, J. Hinton Knowles remarks, "Kashmir as a field of folklore literature is perhaps not surpassed in fertility by any other country in the world.

My interest had been aroused from their rich store of popular lore which Kashmiri presents in its folk tales, songs, proverbs, and the like." So one can understand the importance of taking folklores as a source for recording history. This task of course comes up with some challenges. Some impediments like Subjectivity and Bias, Lack of Specificity and Chronological Precision, Absence of Clear Dates and Contexts: Ambiguity in Characters and Places, Oral Transmission and Alterations Over Time, Changes with Retelling, Loss of Original Meaning: Difficulty in Distinguishing Myth from Reality: fragmentation and Regional Variations may seemingly prove to be bottlenecks but if one zooms in to these happenings from the prism Ayaz has tried to use then one would agree

that folklore remains a valuable tool for understanding the cultural impact and collective memory of these eras

In the book under review , Kashmiri folklore and folk literature offer a rich, layered understanding of the Mughal, Afghan, and Sikh periods. By exploring these narratives, we gain insight into the local perspective on foreign rule, capturing both the admiration and resentment that shaped Kashmiri society. This approach allows us to see beyond the official accounts, highlighting the resilience, adaptation, and cultural pride of Kashmiris during times of political subjugation. In preserving these stories, Kashmiris have kept alive a collective memory that continues to shape their identity and historical consciousness to this day.

LG Manoj Sinha Participates in Classical Music Festival at DPS, Srinagar

Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha participated in the classical music festival at Delhi Public School, Srinagar today. The event was organised by Benu Heritage in collaboration with



SaMaPa (Sopori Academy of Music & Performing Arts) and Delhi Public School, and supported by the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Matrix Freight Systems Private Limited.



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