

HT Saturday LitStream

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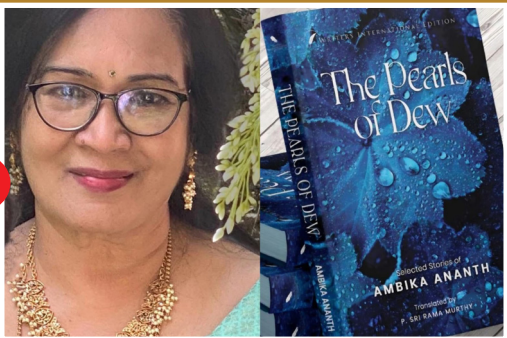


**Shafaq Sopori: A Versatile,
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"Pearls of Dew":
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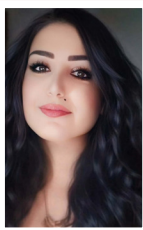
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POETRY CORNER PAGE 14



Maria
Kolovou
Roumelioti



Reema
Hamza



Majrooh
Rashid



Elisabetta
Bonaparte



Prasanna
Kumar



Mustafa
Moin



Professor Muhammad Aslam

The Poet

Born on 10 March 1950, Rafiq Raaz is a contemporary multifaceted Kashmiri writer. He superannuated as the director of erstwhile Radio Kashmir, Srinagar. Raaz writes primarily in Urdu and Kashmiri. We come across each other frequently at academic programmes but beyond salutations, I never had the privilege to talk to him. More often than not, he is there on the dais (or invited to the dais) to speak, many a time without any a priori knowledge of it. He does, nonetheless, speak and enthral the audience with his intelligent talk.

As a modern Kashmiri poet, Raaz has helped improve Kashmiri literature. His first book, entitled *nai chi naalaan* (Flute is Wailing) was published in 1978, leading him to win the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1995. His other book is *anhaar* (Streams or Rivulets). He has written about 60 radio plays for Radio Kashmir. In all, he is the author of more than half a dozen books. Zulfikar Naqvi writes about him thus: "His poems were being published in *Shabkhooon*, the influential modernist journal edited by Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. His inclusion in *Shabkhooon* which was a journal known for its rigorous aesthetic discipline and commitment to *Jadeediyat* (Modernism), places Raaz among the foremost modernist poets of Urdu, attesting to the intellectual seriousness, formal control and symbolic depth of his poetry... Rafiq Raaz's poetry reveals a coherent metaphoric vision in which human existence is defined by resistance, endurance and renewal. His images illuminate the modern condition while retaining a mystic depth that gestures toward transcendence beyond ruin. It is this sustained, intelligent and philosophically grounded use of metaphor and imagery that firmly justifies viewing Rafiq Raaz as a master craftsman of modern Urdu poetry." In an interview with Imran Yousuf (Kashmir Images, 23 June 2018), Raaz said, "[I]t was I think 1970-71 when I started to write in Kashmiri Language. I was a strenuous job in initial stages but with time things happened to get better. Soon I realized that I should show my poems to someone who would do proofreading and fortunately Amin Kamil (one of the finest poets of his time) used to live in my neighborhood. So I went to him for further guidance. He helped me to a very great extent to meliorate my writings, when I used to write something new I would visit him and he always displayed great interest and support. One day he said, "Your writings are so beautiful that you have started to influence me". It was his good gesture to appreciate my writings and these words kindled fire in me and I bugged out to write

better and better.” Yousuf calls Raaz as “the people’s poet”.

Raaz has a PhD in Urdu. Prior to his appointment as a program executive at Radio Kashmir, he taught for some time at the SP College, Srinagar.

I have chosen a few of his Urdu ghazals available @ rekhta.org, as I didn't have any access to his published Urdu and Kashmiri work. Once I have access to his Kashmiri poetry, I will be featuring that in the very near future.

I hope the readers would love these ghazals and understand how vast a canvas Raaz has been working on for decades.

GHAZAL 1

چاندنی رات میں اک بار اسے دیکھا تھا
چاند سے بے سم بھکار اسے دیکھا تھا

Rafiq Raaz: Poetics of Vision, Silence and Transcendence

Professor Muhammad Aslam



مثل خورشید نمودار وہ اب تک نہ ہوا
آخری بار سر غار اسے دیکھا تھا
میں بھلا کیسے بیان کرتا سراپا اس کا
شب یلدا پس دیوار اسے دیکھا تھا
دل میں اتری ہی نہ تھی روشنی اس منظر کی
اولیں بار تو اسے کار اسے دیکھا تھا
لوگ کیوں کوہ و بیابان میں اسے ڈھونڈتے ہیں
میں نے تو بر سر بازار اسے دیکھا تھا
اس نے کیا رات کو دیکھا تھا یہ معلوم نہیں
میں نے تو نقش بہ دیوار اسے دیکھا تھا
اس کی آنکھوں میں چمک دوبار کی یہ کیسی ہے
رات پھر جرجر نہ بیدار اسے دیکھا تھا

Transliteration

chaandni raat main ek baar use
dekhaa tha
chaand se bar-sar-e-paikaar use
dekhaa tha
misal-e-khurshid numudaar vo ab
tak na hua
aakhri baar sar-e-ghaar use
dekhaa tha

main bhala kaise bayaan kartaa
 saraapaa us kaa
 shab-e-yaldaa pas-e-divaar use
 dekhaa thaa
 dil main utri hi na thi roshni us
 manzar ki
 av valin baar to bekaar use
 dekhaa thaa
 log kyun koh-o-biyaabaan main
 use dhundhte hain
 main ne to bar-sar-e-baazaar use
 dekhaa thaa
 us ne kya raat ko dekhaa thaa
 yeh ma'lum nahin
 main ne to naqsh-ba-divaar use
 dekhaa thaa
 us ki aankhon main chamak
 khvaab ki yeh kaisi hai
 raat bhar charkh ne bedaar use
 dekhaa thaa

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dimension of experience and instead he allows contradictions to coexist where love becomes punishment, speech becomes pain, silence becomes a chain and resistance becomes a form of vulnerability. His metaphors are not ornamental devices. They are epistemological tools of knowing, questioning and witnessing.

*"Ik ada roz nayi karta hai ijaad,
Roz naye dhang se ayyari karta hai."*
(He invents a new gesture every day and practices deception in a new way.)

This couplet stands as one of Shafaq Sopori's most incisive criticism on hypocrisy. The central metaphor of ADAA (gesture, manner, style) situates deceit firmly within the realm of performance. Hypocrisy is not presented as a moral lapse or individual weakness. It is rather inventive, rehearsed and aestheticized. The act of deception becomes theatrical, suggesting a society in which truth has been replaced by spectacle.

The repetition of ROZ (daily) intensifies this critique by emphasizing continuity and normalization. Deception is not episodic but systematic. Each day brings a new mask, a new method, a new rhetorical strategy. The phrase "NAYI KARTA HAI IJAAD" (he invents something new) further sharpens the irony. This creativity traditionally associated with art and imagination is here co-opted by falsehood. Shafaq thus exposes a moral inversion where intelligence serves deception rather than truth. This criticism extends beyond individual morality into broader social, political and ideological domains. Power, in Shafaq's vision survives not through brute force alone but through its capacity to continually reinvent its appearance making oppression appear acceptable, even desirable.

This theme is reinforced in another verse.
"Daman pakarh ke peechhe ye qallaash thi padhi,

Duniya ko hamne bheek ka kaasa bhi de diya."
(This beggar clung to my hem and I handed over even my own begging bowl to this world.)

Here, the metaphor shifts from performance to moral poverty. The image of a QALLAASH (beggar) clinging to one's hem evokes humiliation and desperation. However, the shock lies in the reversal. It is not merely an individual beggar but the world itself that has been reduced to begging. BHEEK KA KAASA (begging bowl) becomes a symbol of ethical bankruptcy, suggesting a civilization that substitutes charity for justice and token gestures for moral responsibility.

Together, these verses reveal Shafaq Sopori as a satirist of conscience, one who exposes social decay without abandoning poetic restraint. His satire is quiet, controlled and devastating precisely because it refuses exaggeration.

*"Phirta raha hun jis ke ta'aqub mein umr bhar,
Kya naqsh uss khayal ne chhoda bhi hai kahin?"*
(The thought which I have been chasing all my life, did that leave a trace anywhere?)

This couplet introduces a deeply existential dimension into Shafaq Sopori's poetry. The phrase PHIRTA RAHA HUN (I kept wandering) conveys perpetual movement without arrival, evoking restlessness, exhaustion and a life consumed by pursuit. The metaphor of TA'AQUB (pursuit) suggests obsession rather than direction and motion rather than destination. The object of pursuit—KHAYAAL (idea or ideal)—remains deliberately undefined. This ambiguity universalizes the experience allowing the idea to signify truth, justice, love, revolution, artistic perfection or meaning itself. The second line transforms this personal reflection into a philosophical interrogation. The word NAQSH (imprint, trace) shifts the question from success or failure to ontological impact. Did this lifelong pursuit leave any mark on the world, on history or even on the self? There is no bitterness here, only ethical self-questioning. Shafaq does not romanticize sacrifice, nor does he dismiss it. Instead he interrogates its consequences, aligning himself with existential

thinkers who question whether human striving carries inherent meaning in an indifferent or hostile universe.

This existential uncertainty reappears, deepened and complicated in the following verse:

"Tumhari aankh se mein apne khwaab dekhta hun,

Yahi to meri saza hai, samajhta kyu nahi mein?"

(I am dreaming through your eyes and this is my punishment. But I don't understand it.)

Here, Shafaq shifts from pursuit to dependency. Dreams seen through another's eyes signify the loss of autonomous vision. Love becomes punishment not because it causes pain but due to the fact that it replaces selfhood with borrowed meaning. The speaker expresses his frustration through the phrase, SAMAJHTA KYU NAHI MEIN (why don't I understand?) which reveals awareness without escape and insight without liberation.

Both these verses portray Shafaq Sopori as a philosophical poet whose engagement with love, ambition and meaning is marked by intellectual rigor and emotional honesty.

*"Hawa-e-taza mujhe chahiye dareecha khol,
Charaagh kis ka bujhe ga mujhe yeh fikr nahi."*

(I need fresh air, open the window. I do not bother whose lamp will go out.)

This couplet articulates a quiet yet radical ethics of freedom. Fresh air symbolizes intellectual and moral liberty while the window represents openness, dialogue, dissent and the circulation of ideas. Yet the second line introduces profound ethical tension. Opening the window may extinguish someone else's lamp—perhaps fragile authority, inherited dogma or carefully constructed falsehood sustained by stagnant air. Shafaq's refusal to bother about whose lamp goes out is not callousness but moral clarity. He rejects the responsibility of preserving oppressive illusions. The verse situates Shafaq within resistance poetry but of a distinctly ethical and non-incendiary kind. Resistance here is not violence but a source of breathing. Freedom is framed not as rebellion for its own sake but as a necessity for intellectual survival.

*"Main ne diwangi mein phaarhe hue,
Khema-e-khaak mein basar ki raat."*

(In a state of madness I tore it apart, and spent the night in that tent of dust.)

This couplet is a powerful metaphor for existential exposure, intellectual rebellion and voluntary vulnerability that reflects Shafaq Sopori's characteristic depth and restraint. Here DIWAANAGI (madness) does not signify mental imbalance. It refers to an intense inner passion, a state of heightened awareness or radical commitment to truth. In the classical and modern Urdu poetic tradition DIWAANAGI often symbolizes the courage to step outside social norms and accepted comforts. Shafaq uses it to suggest a conscious rejection of safety and conformity. The phrase KHEMA-E-KH K (tent of dust) is a striking compound image. KH K (dust) traditionally represents mortality, humility and the insignificance of human existence, while KHEMA (tent) suggests temporary shelter. Together, the image conveys the fragility and impermanence of human life and it refers to life itself. A tent made of dust cannot truly protect as it is unstable and exposed to collapse at any moment. The act of tearing "the tent of dust" intensifies the metaphor. It implies that even this minimal illusory shelter has been deliberately destroyed. The poet chooses exposure over illusion and discomfort over false security. By spending the night in such a condition the speaker accepts vulnerability as a necessary cost of authenticity.

On a broader level, the couplet can be read as a statement about the poet's intellectual and ethical stance. Shafaq Sopori suggests that genuine thought, creativity or resistance cannot flourish within comfortable enclosures built of convention, fear or compromise. One must be willing to dwell in uncertainty, humility and risk. Thus,

the verse portrays madness as moral courage, the torn tent as rejection of protective illusions and the night spent within dust as an honest confrontation with human fragility. It encapsulates Shafaq Sopori's vision of poetry and life as acts of conscious exposure where truth is pursued not in safety but in openness to loss and vulnerability.

In the following couplet, the poet once again foregrounds bodily vulnerability suggesting that the pursuit of truth necessitates exposure and that the body itself becomes the site of authenticity.

*"Mere badan ki haraarat utaarne waala,
Meri tapish se pighal jayega, khabar nahi thi."*

(The one meant to cool my body—I didn't know he would melt by my heat.)

Here, bodily heat symbolizes inner intensity—truth, passion, suffering or moral urgency. The one who attempts to cool or neutralize this intensity ends up melting. This reversal destabilizes conventional binaries between healer and patient, authority and subject. Shafaq suggests that truth cannot be easily managed. It consumes even those who approach it with good intentions.

In Shafaq's poetry, the body is never merely physical. It is ethical, ideological and historical terrain bearing the costs of resistance and awareness.

*"Zakhm-khurdu'n ke jaane se paida,
Ho gaya hai khala, to bhar ham se."*

(With the departure of the wounded if a void has formed—fills it with us.)

This verse marks a transition from individual suffering to collective ethics. The wounded (zakhm khurda) may represent martyrs, silenced voices or those exhausted by prolonged struggle. Their departure has created (khala), a void that demands response and the poet refuses a passive mourning. His call to "fill it with us" transforms grief into responsibility articulating a moral philosophy in which history does not forgive absence. This ethic reaches its culmination in the following verse.

*"Gou is amal se toot gaye ustakhwa'n magar,
Zanjeer se khamoshi-e-tanhaai torh di."*

(Although this act shattered my bones, I broke the silence of solitude with the very chain that bound me.)

This couplet powerfully encapsulates Shafaq Sopori's ethical vision of resistance where suffering becomes secondary to the necessity of speech and moral action. The opening phrase establishes a stark contrast between physical destruction and ethical achievement immediately foregrounding the poet's hierarchy of values. The image of "breaking bones" symbolizes extreme personal cost—not merely bodily pain but the collapse of strength, stability and security. Bones are the structural foundation of the body and their shattering suggests that resistance has exacted the highest possible toll. Yet the poet does not linger on victimhood. Pain is acknowledged but it is not allowed to dominate meaning.

The second line introduces the poem's central paradox. The chain (zanjeer) traditionally a symbol of bondage, repression and enforced silence becomes the very instrument through which silence is broken. By stating that he has broken the (the silence of solitude) from within the chain the poet transforms oppression into a means of expression. Silence here represents not mere quietness but isolation, marginalization and imposed invisibility.

At a deeper level, the couplet articulates a philosophy in which silence is more destructive than physical harm. Bones can break and heal but enforced silence annihilates dignity, agency and historical presence. By breaking silence at the cost of bodily integrity, the poet reclaims ethical autonomy.

*"Deewar kha gae woh shajar, jis ki shaakh se,
Girtay the kuchh anaar tere sehn ki taraf."*

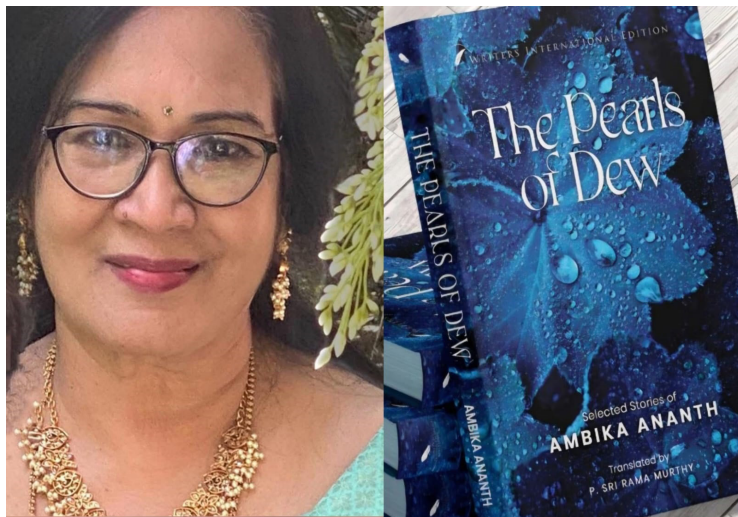
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Ambika Ananth's: "Pearls of Dew": Fiction Addressing Socio-Familial Realities



Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Book title : The Pearls of Dew
Genre: Short Story (Collection)
Author: Ambika Ananth
Publisher Writers Capital
Foundation
ISBN 9788197358548
Pages 218



I knew Ambika Ananth as a Literary Reviewer for *Hans India*, *Deccan Herald* and also I read her amazing book reviews in *The Hindu* and *Muse India* of which she has been the Founder Editor. I read her amazing translation works and above everything I knew her as a versatile and multi-talented creative mind. Her intellectual profundity is awesome and once again she comes out with a bouquet of ever brilliant fiction. Ambika Ananth's "Pearls of Dew" "is a quietly powerful collection of short stories that examines life in its everyday ordinariness and extraordinary emotional depth. Translated into English from the original Telugu collection *Manchu Mutyalu* by the seasoned translator P. Sri Rama Murthy, the book succeeds not merely as a linguistic transfer but as a sensitive cultural and psychological rendering of lived human experience. The collection stands as a testament to the enduring relevance of short fiction in addressing socio-familial realities, ethical dilemmas, and the subtle fractures that mark contemporary life.

The original Telugu version, *Manchu Mutyalu*, has already earned critical recognition for its humanitarian concerns and literary merit, to the extent that it has been prescribed for M.Phil-level study by Kakatiya University. This academic endorsement is significant, as it points to the layered complexity of the narratives, which invite not only casual reading but also deeper critical engagement. The English translation extends the reach of these stories to a wider readership, enabling non-Telugu readers to encounter Ambika Ananth's distinctive narrative voice and thematic preoccupations.

One of the defining features of contemporary Telugu short stories is their deep engagement with everyday reality. Modern Telugu writers draw their material from lived experience—middle-class homes, villages caught between tradition and migration, workplaces marked

by insecurity, and digital spaces that blur the boundaries between the real and the virtual. The ordinary becomes extraordinary through careful observation and emotional depth. Small incidents often serve as entry points into larger questions about human values and ethical responsibility.

Another significant aspect is the strong psychological orientation of present-day Telugu short fiction. Writers are increasingly interested in the inner conflicts of their characters rather than in externally dramatic events. Loneliness, anxiety, suppressed desire, guilt, and moral confusion are explored with remarkable subtlety. This inward turn reflects the pressures of contemporary life, where material progress often coexists with emotional emptiness. The modern Telugu short story thus becomes a space for introspection, offering readers a mirror to their own unspoken fears and dilemmas.

Women's voices occupy a central place in the Telugu short story of our time. Equally important is the attention given to marginalized voices. Dalit consciousness, subaltern experiences, and rural disenfranchisement find powerful expression in contemporary Telugu short fiction. Writers from these backgrounds bring authenticity and urgency to their narratives, exposing systemic injustice and social exclusion. The short story becomes an act of resistance, reclaiming dignity and visibility for those historically silenced.

Translation has also played a crucial role in shaping the contemporary Telugu short story's visibility and influence. When works are translated into English and other Indian languages, they

The title "Pearls of Dew" is itself evocative, suggesting fragility, transience, and quiet beauty. Dewdrops are momentary, shimmering briefly before dissolving into the day; similarly, the stories in this collection capture fleeting moments of human vulnerability, moral choice, and emo-

tional revelation. Each story functions like a pearl—small, self-contained, yet luminous—while collectively they form a string bound by empathy, emotional intelligence, and a deep concern for human dignity.

A striking aspect of this collection is its rootedness in everyday life. Ambika Ananth does not rely on extraordinary events or sensationalism to propel her narratives. Instead, she turns her attention to ordinary households, familiar relationships, and commonplace conflicts, revealing how profound crises often arise from seemingly trivial circumstances. Her stories revolve around life and living, exploring the pressures of modern existence, the erosion of traditional values, and the psychological toll of unmet expectations. This focus on the quotidian lends the stories an authenticity that resonates deeply with readers.

Despite the diversity of themes and narrative situations, the stories are unified by strong emotional threads. Empathy emerges as the central connective tissue of the collection. Ambika Ananth approaches her characters with compassion rather than judgment, even when exposing their flaws, weaknesses, or moral lapses. This empathetic gaze allows the reader to engage with the characters not as abstract types but as complex individuals shaped by circumstance, social conditioning, and inner conflict.

As GSP Rao, Chief Editor of *Muse India*, perceptively observes in the Foreword, modern lifestyles generate new challenges and forms of mental duress. Ambika Ananth's stories take up these existential predicaments with remarkable psychological insight. She examines how individuals respond to adversity and how, in the process, they often complicate their own suffering. The narratives trace the subtle progression from external stress to internal turmoil, sometimes culminating in mental health issues. What distinguishes Ananth's writing is her ability to dissect the human psyche

with the precision of a seasoned counsellor, laying bare the motivations, fears, and rationalizations that govern human behaviour.

One of the most compelling stories in the collection, "Entertainment or Spoliation," addresses the contemporary problem of children's addiction to computer games. Rather than treating the subject in a simplistic or moralistic manner, the story explores its darker ramifications through a suspenseful narrative involving the gruesome murder of an elderly person. The tension builds gradually, and the plot unfolds with unexpected twists that lead to an open-ended conclusion. The story is particularly effective in highlighting how technological excess, when combined with parental neglect and social apathy, can lead to devastating consequences. It functions both as a gripping piece of fiction and as a disturbing reflection on modern parenting and digital culture.

In contrast, the story "Selection" delves into the quiet anguish of a couple unable to conceive despite medical intervention. Here, Ambika Ananth sensitively portrays the emotional vacuum created by childlessness and the social stigma that often accompanies it. The couple's vulnerability is exacerbated when their own family members attempt to exploit their situation for personal gain. The narrative carefully charts their journey from despair and helplessness to self-assertion, culminating in a bold decision that restores their sense of agency. The story stands out for its nuanced treatment of reproductive anxiety and familial exploitation, avoiding melodrama while retaining emotional intensity.

Gender politics and women's agency form another important thematic strand in the collection. The provocatively titled story "Frailty thy name is woman?"²⁷ subverts the Shakespearean cliché by presenting a strong, self-assured woman who refuses to submit to sexual harassment by her boss. The narrative exposes the power dynamics of the workplace and the insidious normalization of exploitation. What is particularly noteworthy is the protagonist's refusal to internalize victimhood. Instead of retreating into silence or fear, she confronts the injustice head-on and exposes her oppressor. The story becomes a powerful affirmation of female autonomy and moral courage in a society that often penalizes women for speaking out.

Several other stories, such as "Equalism," "Autumn is Past," and "Fate," reinforce the collection's thematic concerns through strong narrative drive and readability. These stories engage with social

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Population Explosion and Loss of Biodiversity: A Challenge and A Responsibility



Dr Sameer Ul Haq

At the time of Independence, India already ranked among the world's most populous nations, with nearly 350 million people. Since then, the country's population has grown rapidly, reaching approximately 1.43 billion by 2023. While this growth reflects improvements in survival and life expectancy, it has also intensified pressure on natural resources and ecosystems. Population dynamics and biodiversity are closely linked, and understanding this relationship is critical for sustainable development.

Population ecology is the study of how the population of plants, animals or other organisms change over time. From a critical perspective, we are discussing the human population. At independence, India inherited multiple structural challenges such as a fragile economy, widespread poverty, low literacy, and weak healthcare systems. Alongside these, rapid population growth emerged as a defining issue. Improvements in medical care and public health reduced mortality, while high fertility persisted for decades, created a demographic momentum that continues to influence India's development trajectory even today. India's population explosion did not occur due to a single factor but emerged from a convergence of social, cultural, economic, and biological influences. One contributing factor has been India's tropical climate, which is associated with earlier physical maturity in adolescents. This extended the reproductive lifespan of women, increasing the likelihood of multiple births over time. While climate alone cannot explain population growth, it reinforced other social patterns. Early marriage played a major role. For decades, a large proportion of Indian women married during their teenage years. Early marriage results into longer reproductive periods and higher fertility. Although legal frameworks now discourage child marriage, its legacy still shapes demographic patterns in several regions. Poverty and illiteracy, particularly among women, further fuelled population growth. Limited access to education and reproductive health information reduced awareness of family planning options. In economically insecure households, larger families were often seen as social security, especially in agrarian



communities. Another important factor is the sharp decline in death rates. In 1947, India's death rate stood at around 45 per thousand, largely due to infectious diseases, malnutrition, and poor sanitation. By 2021, this figure had fallen to approximately 8 per thousand, reflecting advances in healthcare, vaccination, and disease control. Life expectancy rose from about 35 years at independence to nearly 70 years, significantly expanding the population base. Migration also contributed at various points in history, particularly during post-Partition displacement and later regional movements. Together, these forces produced sustained population growth that continues to exert pressure on India's resources. In recent years, an important shift has occurred. India's fertility rate has fallen below the replacement level, a milestone confirmed by national surveys and international agencies. Yet population growth persists due to demographic momentum, a large proportion of the population is still in reproductive age. This means the environmental consequences of population expansion are far from over.

India is one of the world's megadiverse countries, hosting nearly 8% of global biodiversity within a small fraction of the Earth's land area. This extraordinary ecological richness is now under severe strain, largely due to human population pressures. As population increases, demand for land rises. Forests are cleared for agriculture, housing, roads, industries, and infrastructure. This conversion of natural habitats fragments ecosystems, disrupts wildlife corridors, and pushes many species toward extinction. In recent years, diversion of forest land for development projects has reached record levels, intensifying human-wildlife conflict and ecological imbalance. Population growth inevitably leads to higher consump-

tion of water, energy, minerals, and food. Over-extraction of groundwater, unsustainable mining, and excessive use of fossil fuels have become common. Regions such as the Western Himalayas, Western Ghats, and central Indian forests, all biodiversity hotspots are witnessing rapid land-use change driven by human demand. To feed a growing population, agricultural land has expanded at the cost of forests and wetlands. Intensive farming practices rely heavily on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which degrade soil health and contaminate water bodies. Monoculture farming reduces genetic diversity and weakens ecosystem resilience. More people produce more waste. Untreated sewage, industrial effluents, plastic pollution, and air emissions degrade ecosystems across India. Rivers, lakes, and coastal areas suffer from declining water quality, directly impacting aquatic biodiversity. Excess nutrients from fertilizers and sewage enter lakes and rivers, triggering eutrophication; a process that leads to excessive algal growth, oxygen depletion, and mass fish deaths. Many of India's freshwater ecosystems now face ecological collapse due to nutrient overload.

Population growth also intensifies climate change, which acts as a threat multiplier for biodiversity. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, floods, and extreme weather events disrupt ecosystems and species survival. India is particularly vulnerable due to its geography and population density. Coastal ecosystems face sea-level rise, coral reefs experience bleaching, and mountain ecosystems witness rapid glacial retreat. Climate change is forcing species to shift their ranges, often faster than they can adapt, increasing extinction risks. India is a signatory to the Paris Agreement (2015), committing to reduce emissions intensity and

expand renewable energy. While progress has been made in solar and wind energy, the scale of population-driven demand remains a formidable challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the link between environmental destruction and human health. Overpopulation leads to habitat encroachment, bringing humans into closer contact with wildlife. This increases the risk of zoonotic diseases, where pathogens jump from animals to humans. Leading epidemiologists have warned that continued ecological disruption may hasten the emergence of new infectious diseases, reinforcing the relevance of One Health Approach. Dense populations, urban overcrowding, and environmental degradation create ideal conditions for rapid disease spread, making pandemics a recurring global threat.

Current Biodiversity Trends: Alarm and Hope

Recent assessments provided a mixed picture of biodiversity in India. Several bird species, especially those dependent on open habitats and grasslands, are declining. Insect populations vital for pollination and food chains show alarming reductions in many regions. Wetlands and freshwater ecosystems continue to shrink due to pollution and encroachment. Yet there are encouraging signs. India's long-term conservation efforts have resulted in a notable recovery of tiger populations. Expansion of protected areas, improved monitoring, and community participation have contributed to this success. India has also committed to protecting 30% of its land and marine areas by 2030, aligning with global biodiversity targets. Scientific surveys continue to discover new species, highlighting how much of India's biodiversity remains undocumented and worth preserving.

CONT. ON PAGE 11

An illustration of a person wearing a dark hoodie and a face mask, looking down at a smartphone. Floating around the phone are several glowing icons: a broken heart, a crying face, a speech bubble with quotation marks, a speech bubble with three dots, and a large eye, symbolizing digital surveillance and emotional distress.

The question remains: are we doing enough today to ensure a liveable environment for future generations?

کیٹھ غزلہ



فیاض تلگامی



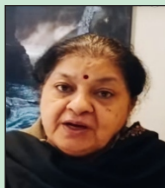
نثار اعظم

اوسنت رتھرتھ چھ نارن تھالیہ اوش
ہورمُت چشمو چھ سخ بے ولیہ اوش
پیدیانس رکیٹ ظہری اوسس یئے
کناہ وو از کناز ووتھ درلیہ اوش
گراو اُم زانہہ کر نہ پنہ عن قاتلن
زانہہ تہ تراوان اوس نہ امہ آیہ اوش
جیر بیہ کڈک جیر جھم سوچس انان
نیر ہا پوز تراو پیٹہ کتھ جلیہ اوش
گس پران پیٹہ کانہہ چشمن ہنر کتاب
کس نہ لاچارس گوتھاں پیٹہ ضایہ اوش
اوسہ نس ککو تام وومت چانڑ وڑے
آسہ پزاران تمہ ہنرے تھہ تھالیہ اوش
گنہہ تہ داؤس پیٹہ نہ کانہہ دوسے فیانس
چھم چھوکن پنہ عن فقط ہسلیہ اوش

وَتَه وَجْهَانِ چَانِ اُچھنِ گاشِ مے نُو ذرا بکھرو
خوابِ زَرَنیابِ بُو کتہِ خوابِ وَجْهَانِ تعبیرِ
ستارمہ پُٹھ مینارِ وَجْھکِ رُمِ مُسلسلِ پُٹھِ دِراں
وَنہ تہ وایانِ بے غمِ لے بُکتنِ چُھکھہ ہیرِ
چُھچُھہ نہ کانہہ نیرِ خیرِ دِراں مے ہیڈِ دادِ ولہ
سُکھہ دِسِ منز بہ ہر تھ شوقِ رچھتہ جاگہرِ
ہزارہ دگر، تازِ چھوکن، دُغی بہارنِ چاننِ
بھس پریشانِ ز کتہ کتہ بہ دس کتہرِ
پیٹہ نِسِ دلِ مے کتہ تھ تاو توکم، اور مہ گتھ
چھچھہ سہل کتہ، ژے اتن زاپہ گتھی ولہ وپرو
شوقِ اوئم مے چٹک ٹور مگر دُور تہ نو
پے پتہ لوب مے گنہ عتھہ دُکا لک مہرو
پو پُر نِ گتہ ژے کُری وائہ شانِ شمعہو
سُور سید نامِ پُٹس آو مے حَاصِلِ زرو



نثار گلزار



سنیتا رینہ پنڈتا

زوتان اُچھ لکن تہ وں بے حساب ہتھ
 کتھ گن لکن بچاڑی سیاہ آفتاب ہتھ
 ترتیب راہو مے گوڈے پتھم عبارِ زن
 کانہہ گوڈھ نہ یں پگاہے بدل کانہہ کتاب ہتھ
 شہباز بُرُ بلم تہ اتھن سایہ تاہتھ تھو
 اُس سوئے ڈر چھ تھنہ زن چشمہ خواب ہتھ
 وورن پھیر ڈور ڈور کھس اوپر نب ہتھ
 اُنی ناگہ راد میانی چھ بس قُط آب ہتھ
 لیکتھ یہ اوس بُرُ دِلن پٹھ ہوا گوشت
 لاؤں چھ تمبیر منز ہتھ انقلاب ہتھ
 از اوس گاڑی گام جمع پٹھ رچھتھ پنڈر
 کھوت بزانہ سے فقہر مگر کھوڈن قاب ہتھ
 یو کھ نحر تہ سانہ گامہ تھیل واو موسن
 آباو راتھ بور مہلکی کناہ گلاب ہتھ

مُتشرس کُیت کاٹھہ بہانا آسہ ہے
اسہ مڑے کاٹھہ یوت دانا آسہ ہے
وقتہ وِ پلہ ہس نظر بلہ ہے جہاں
پڑھ چھے شولاں اکہ بہانا آسہ ہے
کہوچن از کھے چھے کچھو کینا کرو
خاص لوکن ستر زانا آسہ ہے
تس چھ یازم راتھ اُمّت دگ تہ دود
تس پیٹھے کاٹھہ داستانا آسہ ہے
اکہ نظر اکہ روے تہ اکہ فلسفہ وِو
مینہ گو تے اکہ جہانا آسہ ہے
شیش ناگکہ شرابہ کینا موکلن مے شرابہ
من تہ یا تے اُنہ خانا آسہ ہے
مس گڑھتھ لفظن بہ وِمہ ہا پچن مڑر
چون ہئے ہے میزبانہ آسہ ہے

کلامِ شیخ العالمؒ معہ اردو ترجمہ



سید شہباز رضوی

اُس جگہ ماں باپ کیسے کام آئیں گے بھلا
جس جگہ سب کو اکیلے ہی میں رہنا ہے سدا
شرک کے جالوں کو یا رب میری آنکھوں سے ہٹا
جس جگہ کوئی نہیں اپنے عمل کے ماسوا

تتہ	کنیہ	مول	تہ	مائی
پیٹہ	روژن	کداجی	پئے	
دبہ	کاستم	شرکچہ	زاجی	
آزر	میلک	باہت	ستر	توت
			یے	

جنتی ساتھی ہیں سارے خوبصورت، پارسا
دو زخی ہیں شرک والے، اور اُن کے ہمنوا
ہاں وہاں پر اہل ایمان ہوں گے سب با ہم رفیق
جو یہاں اک دوسرے کے غم میں شامل ہیں سدا

سورگس بوج ریش کینہ موجی
زگس ہاج یم شرکس پیے
تہ یاری کرے مومن ہاجی
ئس بردین مہم بانس پیے

آدمی ہوتا تو بہتی اور بن میں گھوم کر
چارو عالم میں پہنچا دیتا میں پیغامِ حق
آہ ضائع خود کو بھی کر ڈالا میں نے، اور پھر
روکے رکھا ایک ہی منزل یہ میں نے نامِ حق

آسم ہا ہے آدمی پھیر ہا نے
سارے عالمس انہ ہا لیہ کتھ
جھس نہ دمی گوس ما ضایہ
اکرے جاپے رمتھ کتھ

بے غرض ہو کر تری جانب کب آتا ہے کوئی
کون ہے وہ جس میں ہوگی اتنی وسعت قلب کی
اُس کو جنت کا ہے لالچ، اس کو دوزخ کا ہے ڈر
اے خدا سب بندے یوں کرتے ہیں تیری بندگی

عُکسِ تیرے گلن بے غریبے
کس آسِ دِلِ تیرے وسعت
جہلمِ ہاوسِ تیرے دوزخِ پیے
دبِ چھپی کرانِ عبادت

مت کہو ہرگز کبھی تم نفس کو اپنے بُرا
نفس ہی ہوتا ہے ضامن کامیاب انجام کا
بس ذرا تم نفس کو اُس کی حدوں میں روک دو
نفس کا عرفان ہی ہوتا ہے عرفان خدا

نفس	مو	دَپ	بداء
نفس	سَتر	سودا	چُھے
نفس	پُن	رُن	حداء
نفسے	پز زیتھ	خوداء	چُھے

آتشِ دوزخ سے بچنے کا وسیلہ فقر ہے
انبیاء کی نیک فطرت کا طریقہ فقر ہے
فقر سے دُنيا و عقبیٰ ہوتے ہیں بالیدہ تر
مٹک و خوشبو کا مہکتا ایک جھونکا فقر ہے

فَقْرُ چُھے دوزخس وُرَن ٲُھرو
فَقْرُ چُھے انبیاءن ہندے خوے
فَقْرُ چُھے اَلک تہ پلک ٲُھرو
فَقْرُ چُھے مُکک تہ پُہ خوشبوے