



The Creative Launcher

ISSN: 2455-6580

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Perception Publishing

India

Salim Jahangeer, Peer; Qadri, Asif
Mehjoor: The Poet of Kashmir
The Creative Launcher, vol. 2, núm. 4, octubre-, 2017, pp. 597-601
Perception Publishing

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An International, Open Access, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, E- Journal in English
UGC Approved- (Sr. No. 62952)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2017.2.4.87>

Mehjoor: The Poet of Kashmir

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Abstract

Mehjoor is one of the most prominent pioneers of Modern Kashmiri poetry. He initiated his poetic career in 1912 by writing in Persian and Urdu, but the circumstances and forceful patriotic movement turned Mahjoor's attention to write in Kashmiri. He realized that his artistic desires would come only if he produce a literary work in his own mother tongue. The remarkable part played by Mehjoor in bringing a result was to make Kashmiri poetic medium more natural. He expanded the boundaries of Kashmiri poetry by including in it the themes of nature, common life and patriotism. He was a poet of great beauty who summoned the nature and people of Kashmir in his poems.

Keywords- *Poetic Career, Kashmiri, Literary Work, Mother Tongue*

Gulam Ahmad Mehjoor was born on 11, August, 1887 at Mitrigam Pulwama belongs to the Peerzada family. He became famous by his pen name "Mehjoor" received by his poetic works in literature. After receiving earlier education from his father, who was also the scholar of Persian language. He was sent to a maktab (school) of "Abdul Gani Ashiq" (Akhoon Sahab) who was himself a poet and this is the result of those days that poetry imbibed in Mehjoor's mind and started to learn the same.

Mehjoor was sent to Nusrat-ul-islam school for further education but he slipped away and reached Amritsar where he came in contact with well-known and reputed poets of the days like Molvi Abdulla Bismil and Alama Shibli. Molvi Abdulla Bismil adjusted Mehjoor as an editor in a newspaper named "Al-Budder". In 1907 Mehjoor returned home from Amritsar and got married. He was appointed in the department of floriculture, but unfortunately he leaved the job after the death of his father. Mehjoor was appointed as

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Patwari (Regional Administrator) in the department of revenue and was posted in Ladakh where during the leisure time he complied Safarnami-e- Baltistan. Along with his official duties, he used to write poetry in Kashmiri.

Gulam Ahmad Mehjoor, the man of unique ideology and strong interest towards literature was suspended many times from his government job. Besides economic conditions and family responsibilities he doesn't let the poetic desires and remain connected with the contemporary poets of the days. He along with Abdul Ahad Azad stated the new epoch in Kashmiri poetry. They were well known with old Kashmiri poetic tradition, with the help of this they made new developments in Kashmiri poetry and literature. They become the founders of new literary renaissance in Kashmiri poetry. Mahjoor has a place of respect among the poets of Kashmir. He is particularly renowned for two things. First, he pioneered a new style into Kashmiri poetry. Second, he brings in a new contemplation into Kashmiri poetry. Mahjoor wrote poems of liberty and development in Kashmiri. These songs wake up the undeveloped Kashmiris. He was a poet of affection and mutual harmony. In his former days, he used to write only love poetry, but then started to write about freedom.

Mehjoor is the single poet in Kashmiri literature on whom a movie named "Shair-e-Kashmir" was made in 1972. Thus, he seems to be the single warrior of Kashmiri literature who touches the skies. He is also known by the name of "Shair-e- Kashmir" (the poet of Kashmir). In 1911 he made his first attempt in Kashmiri by writing the Mathnavi "Fa Fa Katin". He was keenly observing and analyzing the happenings in world, and wrote a long poem on the First World War "Jang Jarman". "Bagi Nishat Kay Gullo" is one of the popular songs that deeply impressed the readers. His songs became very popular. He wrote on such topics as love, common concord, and social improvement, and also wrote on the troubles of the Kashmiris.

Markedly affected by the Gazal of Mahmood Gami, Mejoor wrote his first Gazal
"Vanta Vesay Bewafie Shive Dildar Cha".

O friend, should one, as beautiful as the moon,
Delight in breaking hearts by playing false in love?

He plunged into my heart his pointed dart,
Showing no more pity than a swordsman in war.

He shot me from afar, but how could I hide the wound?
O how beautiful he is, but how cruel his sport !

O archer! Was the forked shaft that pierced my heart
Tongued with fire, or dipped in the deadliest venom ?

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What's sliding down his robes may be coils of snakes,
Tresses of hyacinths, or meadows where bulbuls sing !

Lovers in mortal pain take heart when they behold
Those twin breasts - an elixir for ailing souls !

He slipped out by subtle stealth, but I'll seek him out
In his favourite haunts - Pari Mahal, Telbal, Dal or Shalamar.

My lot is tears! Leaving me lonesome and broken, he's gone!
Who knows where? - Prang or Brang or Drang or Kotahar!

Who has appeared at break of dawn, rattling at the door?
A thief or a drunk - or could it be sweet-throated Mahjoor?

He was also deeply impressed by the poetry of Rasool Mir as he says "Yat Darde
Sudras parde tulit gov su Rasool Mir, Mahjoor Lagith Aav Beye Dubare Ati Roz"

He remained connected with the well-known poets of other languages. In light of
progressive movement Mahjoor published his poem "Grees Koer" in 1935. His poems gave
an impelling force to the people to free their land from the unworthy governance of rivals.
Inspired by love of nation he wrote as.

"Waloo Ha Bagwano Nav Baharuk Shan Paida Har
Phulan Gul Gath Karm Bul Bul Tithi Saman Paida Kar"

Come, O Gardener!
Come to create the glory of a new spring.
A spring in which
the gul will bloom,
the bulbul will sing.
The garden is desolate;
the dew is mourning.
And the gul in torn robes
looks perplexed.
Come, O Gardener!
To rekindle the gul
To rejuvenate the bulbul.

Come, O Gardener!
Weed out the nettle from the flower-beds

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And look at row after row of hyacinth,
Come and make a smiling garden.
Who can free a captive bird mourning in his cage?
You must bring your own freedom, O, Gardner!
Wake up, O Gardener, to realize that
power and riches.
Comfort and kingship,
all these are at your feet
only after you realize yourself;
O Gardener!
Come, O Gardener!
to awaken your garden,
to say goodbye to the strains of gul,
to say goodbye to the strains of bulbul;
And--
bring about an earthquake,
bring about a storm,
bring about a rumbling thunder,
bring about a tornado.

Mehjoor also expresses his love for his land in various poems that can attract the readers like “Gulshan Watan Chu Sonie”. Through his great poetic works like, “Wuzmal”, “Jay tamie Raet Paristanan Maz”, “Azadi”, “Yemberzul”, “Nai Trav Mai Thave Pane Wane” etc. He imparts skill of love, unity, nature, brotherhood, human values, Jealousy, peace and hatred. He is also generally approved as a person in the history of Kashmiri literature who revolutionize the orthodox forms of “Nazam” and “Gazal”.

To bring people closer together, to inculcate values of brotherhood, give them the information of political and social injustice he initiated first newspaper in Kashmiri language named “Gash”.

Gulam Ahmad Mehjoor was the first poet who pedestals a link between old traditional poetry and new one. He adds together different elements and symbols throughout his poetic career. He writes such poems in Kashmiri that changed the style of Kashmiri poetry. He was simple and writes with different varieties and this is because of different artistic beauty that he put before us lyrics, songs, prose, translations, criticism etc.

Mehjoor left this temporary world in 1953. He is the first poet in Kashmiri literature who was buried with government honour at Athwajan on national highway of Jammu and Kashmir. The death of Mahjoor was a huge loss to Kashmiri language as well as to Kashmiri poetry. But, Mahjoor's songs are still on the tongue of every Kashmiri. Through these songs, his name will live everlastingly and became immortal.

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