

## GHALIB: THE GREAT SHAYAR OF MASĀ.IL-E-TASAVVUF

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The only person can make history who breaking the boundations of this traditional world prepares a new face with the gust of emotion. Such personalities prepare a new world with miraculous strength, aura and ebullience, undoubtedly. Mirza Asadullah Beg Khan Ghalib was one of such personalities, whose couplets rooted into Urdu Literature so deeply and became huge tree having branches of love, philosophy, satire, irony, and departure, the flowers of those branches have spreaded their fragrance in the form of sher-o-shairi that has intoxicated almost all the learned and scholars of the world. He was the person who pitched the milestones of love and philosophy so perfectly. The whole life of Ghalib was full of struggle. However, he never accepted defeat and continued his pen touching the softest surface of heart and never avoided any circumstance of life. Although he had thorny life that anguished him every time yet he cattered beautiful roses to others with the power of his writing skill. In his writings, the moments of meeting and departure walk together hand in hand that touches stilled water of man's emotions and makes everyone the fan of his writing skill. The life for him was not more than a companion of vagabond. His responsibilities, wishes of respect and fame could never stop him following different kinds of life style with his hobbies and habits. Perhaps this is only the reason his couplets are not mere a collection of words but this is a beautiful work of emotions and draws a complete picture of man's life. It is said that Mughlean period gave three things to India and these are Taj Mahal, Urdu language and Mirza Ghalib. *'hogā koī aisā bhī ki 'ghālib' ko na jaane, shā.ir to vo achchhā hai par badnām bahut hai.'* There is hardly anybody who would not be acquainted with 'Ghalib'. He is great poet, but equally ill reputed.<sup>1</sup>

The full name of Mirza Ghalib was Mirza Asad Ullah Beg Khan Alias Ghalib, His couplets never aimed at cheap popularity but that had a deep literature inside with purified words. The poets who generally taking the name of Ghalib quotes shallow couplets will be shocked to know that Ghalib had composed major portions of his couplets by the name Asad. Ghalib was the most interesting character of URDU literary world in India, his arrival and departure to Urdu literary world has been

registered in the history due to many interesting stories attached to him. Asad Ullah Khan Ghalib was born on 17 December 1797 in Agra and his father belonged to Iranian Clan.

His father Abdullah Beg died when Ghalib was only five-year-old. Ghalib's uncle brought him up who was an army Officer in British East India Company. His uncle also died when Ghalib was only nine. Now the Ghalib was fully dependent on the pension of his uncle received by British government, however, that has also been stopped. Ghalib had to fight a long struggle to restart that pension. Ghalib Started receiving his education from Madrasa and learn Arabic, Persian language from Abdul Samad who was an Iranian and had come to India for roaming. When Ghalib was only thirteen he was married with Umrao Begum on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1810 who was the daughter of Mirza Ilahi Bukhs "Maruf" who was the younger Brother of Nawab Ahmad Bakhs Khan of Loharu, that time Umrao Begum was only Eleven years old. It can also be said that special features and techniques of couplets, he learnt from his father in law.

In 1812, Mirza Ghalib came to Delhi from Agra and passed his whole life in Delhi only. That time Zauk, Momin and Wali A had were the well-known and domineering poets of Delhi Ghalib was known as the poet of Persian and Urdu both. Although the people Delhi City knew him very well yet he was finding it difficult to get a chance to join the court of Bahadur Shah Zafar. It is said that when Ghalib got the chance to join the court first time then the well-known and renowned poets who were present in the court could not understand the language of Ghalib because the composition, Ghazal, he recited was in pure Persian that time Zauk was the court poet of Bahadur Shah Zafar. Zauk was reluctant in taking Ghalib to the court and citadel. However, Ghalib was really Ghalib that compulsion could never stop his ways perhaps that was the reason he never left any chance to mock Zauk. Whenever Zauk used to pass through the streets of Ghalib then he was always welcomed with the mocking couplets of Ghalib. As a whole, it was very hard for Ghalib to prove himself in Delhi. However, his novella of composition made him popular in both Delhi and in the court of Zafar. By the year of 1850, Ghalib became the court poet of Zafar and in the same year 1850 he was awarded various times in the court of Bahadur Shah Zafar and was also given the work to write a story about the clan of Zafar. Not only this but also after the death of Zauk, Bahadur Sah Zafar appointed Ghalib as his teacher in 1854 and he started receiving scholarship from British Government as well. On receiving scholarship from British Government, the merchants from whom Ghalib had borrowed money were happier than Ghalib. Gradually he overcame from his economic problem however he could not sustain it, as destiny had written something else for him and so-called happiness was not in the account of Ghalib and just after three years first rebel broke out in 1857 then British Government listed his name also in the names of rebellions. Although Ghalib was not arrested yet

his scholarship had been stopped with the immediate effect. After two years once again his fortune got a rise when Nawab of Rampur Hamid Ali Khan expressed his willingness to become a disciple of Ghalib therefore Nawab fixed a scholarship for him as well. In the composition of Ghalib meekness and rudeness, love and hate, meeting and departure all can be seen together. Ghalib passed his whole life carelessly in sheer frankness and fun, more than half of his pension he used to spend on drinks and rest of the money used to go to the merchants from whom he had borrowed money. Most of the borrowings were for the sake of drinking only, Whole life of Ghalib was not bound to any principle any responsibility or any religion. The gamblers of Delhi paid him more respect than the respected people of Delhi ever gave him. Ghalib was popular not only among the poets of Delhi but also a chain of gamblers were great fan of him. Once, he got arrested while he was gambling, however he was released soon due to his good conduct and behaviour. It is said about Ghalib that neither he went to Masjid nor he kept Rozah. Whenever, he was asked he replied that 'I am half Muslim'. He used to give a strange logic behind not keeping Roza. He said that *'jiske paas roza khol ke khaane ko kuch na ho, roza agar na khaaye to naachaar kya kare'* the one who has nothing to eat after observing fast then what else he could do but be constrained to "eat the fast." Ghalib was not a patch of any religion. He loved every religion that taught humanity.

Ghalib was expert at making Persian poetry into Indian language popular although Meer Taqi Meer was also expert at the same genre yet Ghalib raised the level of this genre much higher. He is such a poet that is popular and respected both in India and Pakistan equally even today as well. He was awarded with Dabir-UI-Mulk and Nazam-Ud-Daula. Ghalib learnt Urdu and Persian writing in both prose and poetry even at the age of eleven only. He composed in romantic style in Persian and Urdu, known as Ghazal. He was fond of writing letters that's why he is also known as the master of letter writing. He wrote letters on every moment and he wrote these letters in such an attractive way that each letter became a master piece of its own. Some of his unpublished letters are considered as a heritage of Urdu literature. Ghalib composed with the alias name Asad and Ghalib both. He composed everything with the two names however very few people know him as Asad. Even if they come to know, they will not accept him as Asad. The reason behind this is, that the satire and irony which is in the composition of Ghalib is missing in Asad. Well this can be the matter of likeness and unlikeness but the real fact is that his fans admire him in every character. Life was never easy going for Ghalib and he was always tight fisted. His economic conditions were never good. He was the court poet of Bahadur Shah Zafar means it was his duty to make emperor happy by his couplets and earn his livelihood. He struggled a lot in the streets of Delhi, Kolkata and Agra, Struggles rooted in him even in the childhood when he lost the shadow of his father and uncle then he was only five,

after the death of his uncle, the pension was only source of his survival. Though, Ghalib married only at the age of thirteen he was proceeded to be responsible and good husband. The important thing is that he earned lots of respect in his life and Moughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar honoured him with two titles. The emperor made him an important part of the body of his court and not only this he appointed Ghalib as a teacher for his eldest son. Since Ghalib was a knowledgeable person he was a historian of the court as well. The struggle that caught Ghalib in childhood he could never came out from its jaw whole life. However, Ghalib got enlightened so much in the furnace of his struggle and better humour sense got developed in him. The biggest lacking in the life of Ghalib, was children/kids, although Ghalib was blessed with the seven kids yet no one could survive. The careless nature of Ghalib, his habit of drinking and continuous death of kids broke Umrao, the wife of Ghalib so deeply. She was already having strong faith in God however in later days she got sunk completely in offering prayers to God (Sajda). Ghalib was already atheist and the death of children made him a sheer enemy of God. Ghalib kept on facing struggles however never surrendered. Fighting with the compulsions in his life Ghalib never bowed his head before anybody perhaps this was the reason Ghalib was lacking neither enemies nor friends. Ghalib has written that **'hue mar ke ham jo rusvā hue kyuuñ na ġharq-e-dariyā, na kabhī janāza uThtā na kahīñ mazār hotā'**.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of death for him was a symbolism of departure. He always wished to sing in his composition in Ghazals. So that he would never die and turned out to be a corpse and would never become a part of graveyard because in reality Ghalib never dies. Ghalib survives in the fragrance of words and deep emotions of heart because Ghalib is not a name of person but a name of a complete thought and philosophy. **'ragoñ meñ dauḍte phirne ke ham nahīñ qaa.il, jab aañkh hī se na Tapkā to phir lahū kyā hai.'** The whole world is a fan of his couplets (sher-o-shairi).

His aim was to represent the bitter truth of the common men's life. He raised the height of Urdu couplets to such a classic height that Urdu literature is proud of Ghalib. His way of expression is liked by special class and common folks both. He was such a poet that can never be compared to anyone. Mirza Ghalib composed his couples with name Asad and later on adopted alias name Ghalib. Ghalib got his primary education of Persian from contemporary learned maulvi Mohammad Moazzam of Agra and, in the beginning he started composing Ghazal in Persian in the same century (1810-1811) Mulla Abdul Samad learned and respected scholar of Persian and Arabic came to Agra from Iran that time Ghalib was only 14-year-old. However, Ghalib had a good command on Persian, Mulla Abdul Samad lived in Agra for two years and during this period, Ghalib received special knowledge of Persian language and poetic composition from him and he became an expert in such a way as he himself was Iranian, Abdul Samad was so much impressed with Ghalib and he poured all his

knowledge into Ghalib. During the primary education only, Ghalib started composing couplets before getting married. Ghalib sometimes went to Delhi however after two three years of marriage he became Delhites. The same matter he has mentioned in his book Urdu-e-Moalla that his leg was chained with lock of marriage and Delhi city was declared as a jail and he had been sent to that. Now he had been sent to the jail of Delhi permanently by locking his legs with the iron chains of marriage. Leaving Agra, settlement in Delhi brought a huge change in the life of Ghalib, those days the ambience of Delhi was filled with the fragrance of (Sher-o-shairi). Everyday gathering used to be organized and poets were invited to recite their poetry (sher-o-shairi). Ghalib also used to join such gatherings and everyday became used to with the atmosphere. Two things are very popular about Ghalib, and often it is a part of conversation first that, he was a philosophical poet and second his composition work is so hard to be understood. ***agar apnā kahā tum aap hī samjhe to kyā samjhe, mazā kahne kā jab hai ik kahe aur dūsrā samjhe, kalām-e-mīr samjhe aur zabān-e-mīrzā samjhe, magar un kā kahā ye aap samjheñ yā khudā samjhe.*** What use if you alone can understand your verse, when others enjoy what you write, herein lies your worth, we can easily comprehend Mir and Sauda both, but none can make sense of Ghalib, except God and he himself. We are reminded of Robert Browning (1818-1889), an English poet contemporaneous with Ghalib, the myth of whose obscurity had started with the publication of his early poem, Sordello (1840). But bowing to the pressure of publication criticism, Browning had changed his style, and adopted an easier mode of writing in his later dramatic monologues, and Ghalib, too, though he pretended to care two hoots for public praise had tacitly accepted the popular mandate, and turned in his later poetry to a simpler style, however without, surrendering his right to be distinctively individual. He must also have been influenced by Mir Taqi Mir (1723-1810) who, looking at Ghalib's early verses, is reported to have remarked: "If this boy finds an accomplished teacher he will become an incomparable poet, otherwise he will write nothing but poetic nonsense."<sup>3</sup> ***'na satā.ish kī tamannā na sile kī parvā, gar nahīñ haiñ mire ash.ār meñ ma.anī na sahī'***.<sup>4</sup> I do not hanker after praise, nor seek reward, if my verse make no sense, I do not care a jot. In the gatherings of poets and general celebrations the hardships of his composition were discussed and used to be Centre of conversation, very soon Ghalib touched the heights of popularity. He gave a new dimension to Urdu couplets. In the couplets of Ghalib a glimpse of philosophy can be seen. He was not Sufi however this couplet is very appreciable. ***'ye masā.il-e-tasavvuf ye tirā bayān 'ghālib', tujhe ham valī samajhte jo na bāda-khvar hotā.***<sup>5</sup> Ghalib was spendthrift and was so goverous in nature that was the reason that he was always tight fisted. Even sometimes he did not have single penny. Once he was under a trial of a case as he drank borrowing but did not pay the amount. The case was in the court of Mufti Sadruddin

listening to the blame Ghalib recited a couplet ***'qarz kī piite the mai lekin samajhte the ki haañ, rañg lāvegī hamārī fāqa-mastī ek din,*** his having the couplet Mufti Sadrudden himself took out rupees at once and deposited and asked Ghalib to go. Once in the month of the Ramadan Nawab Hussain was sitting by Ghalib then Ghalib ordered a pan to be catered and chewed the paan then a religious Muslim asked him who were sitting over there, asked him 'Do you not observe fast, Rozah then Ghalib replied smiling that Ghalib is a saitan. He used to consider himself theist there is a couplet that ***'ham ko ma.alūm hai jannat kī haqīqat lekin, dil ke khush rakhne ko 'ghālib' ye khayāl achchhā hai'***. (I know the reality of the heaven however it is a good thought to make our-selves happy). His married life was never happy and that always became a long story of sorrowness in which actor and actress completes their painful life having a hell of responsibilities. The clashes between Umrao and Ghalib increased due to their ego and that was the reason Ghalib could not receive the shadow of beautiful heart at home therefore he fell in love of a singer she also loved him. Their love continued for years suddenly she died and Ghalib got broken completed. The compositions he made in the memory of that love is full of pains. ***'tere dil meñ gar na thā āshob-e-gham kā hausla, tū ne phir kyuuñ kī thī merī gham-gusārī haa.e haa.e, umr bhar kā tū ne paimān-e-vafā bāñdhā to kyā, umr ko bhī to nahīñ hai pā.edārī haa.e haa.e.'***

Once Ghalib came to Banaras then he said that, if he had come in young age there then he would have been in Banaras only whole life. The morning of Banaras and river Ganga enticed him so much that Ghalib called Banaras as a Kaaba of Hindustan. The same he has mentioned in his couplets. ***'Ibadat khanaye naakusiyān ast, Humara kabaye Hindustanan ast.'*** This is the worshiping place of conch blowers; definitely this is Kaaba of Hindustan. Facing lots of problems and struggles of life Ghalib had become so stern that sorrowness could never forsake him. He was so proud and self-respected person in nature and attitude that sometimes he used to face a gust of problems and used to overpower him but he never surrendered at the cost of his self-respect. In 1852 Tomson send a proposal for Ghalib to become a Persian teacher in Delhi College and called him at his place, however, Tomson said something awkward to Ghalib that Ghalib could not like it and felt his self-respect damaged then he denied the offer. Fighting with the problems one day he wrote, ***'rañj se khūgar huā insāñ to miT jaatā hai rañj, mushkileñ mujh par paḌīñ itnī ki āsāñ ho ga.iiñ.'*** (I have faced so much problems that now I am used to with it and take it easy) contemporary Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar hi contemporary Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar himself was a poet and the poets were well treated around him, therefore, seeing the poor condition of Ghalib he offered him to write the history of Taimoor clan in Persian. During this time the teacher of Zafar, Jauk died, then He started showing his composition to Ghalib, once Ghalib remarked ***'huā hai shah***

*kā musāhib phire hai itrātā, vagarna shahr meñ 'ghālib' kī aabrū kyā hai.*, Zafar had done a lot for Ghalib that's why Ghalib used to praise him a lot through his couplets. Once Ghalib said '*ghālib' vazīfa-ḵhvār ho do shaah ko duā, vo din ga.e ki kahte the naukar nahīñ huuñ maiñ*' when Bahadur Shah Zafar was arrested and sent to jail then the scholarship of Ghalib was stopped. The same, Ghalib has mentioned in his book named 'Dastambu', he thought that the pension would be continued once the peace was maintained but it didn't happen. Then he took the way of sycophancy and composing some of the couplets in favour of Queen Victoria, sent them through Delhi Officials. But he did not gain anything; Delhi commissioner returned these, saying those were mere flattering. The days were being too tough for him even he had to sell domestic things like clothes and others for survival and in hopelessness he decided to leave Delhi. Then, he decided that wife and children will go to Loharu, and liked to live alone and wrote '*rahiye ab aisī jagah chal kar jahāñ koī na ho, ham-suḵhan koī na ho aur ham-zabāñ koī na ho,*' then he survived on the support of the Nawab of Rampur, Gopal Das Tufta and Mahesh Das and day by day he was being broken then he had to face the days of hunger, now he became so weak that his hands were stopped automatically writing a few couplets only and, thus evening of his life approached Ghalib and he died painfully at the age of seventy-one, on date 15 February 1869 in the afternoon, the moment gave him a complete sleep forever. He was a great fan of Mir Taqi Mir and he composed a lot about him. '*haiñ aur bhī duniyā meñ suḵhan-var bahut achche, kahte haiñ ki 'ghālib' kā hai andāz-e-bayāñ aur.*' The world contains many a poet meriting great respect. But Ghalib's style, they say, is different from the rest. *ikkīs baras guzre āzādi-e-kāmil ko, tab jā ke kahīñ ham ko 'ghālib' kā ḵhayāl aayā, turbat hai kahāñ us kī maskan thā kahāñ us kā, ab apne suḵhan-parvar zehnoñ meñ savāl aayā, sau saal se jo turbat chādar ko tarastī thī, ab us pe aqīdat ke phūloñ kī numā.ish hai, urdu ke ta.alluq se kuchh bhed nahīñ khultā, ye jashn ye hañgāma ḵhidmat hai ki sāzish hai, jin shahroñ meñ gūñjī thī ghālib kī navā barsoñ, un shahroñ meñ ab urdu benām-o-nishāñ Thahrī, āzādi-e-kāmil kā elaan huā jis din, ma.atūb zabāñ Thahrī ghaddār zabāñ Thahrī, jis ahd-e-siyāsat ne ye zinda zabāñ kuchlī, us ahd-e-siyāsat ko marhūm kā gham kyuuñ hai, 'ghālib' jise kahte haiñ urdu hī kā shā.ir thā, urdu pe sitam Dhā kar 'ghālib' pe karam kyuuñ hai, ye jashn ye hañgāme dilchasp khilaune haiñ, kuchh logoñ kī koshish hai kuchh log bahal jaa.eñ, jo vāda-e-fardā par ab Tal nahīñ sakte haiñ, mumkin hai ki kuchh arsa is jashn pe Tal jaa.eñ, ye jashn mubārak ho par ye bhī sadāqat hai, ham log haqīqat ke ehsās se aarī haiñ, 'gāñdhī' ho ki 'ghālib' ho insāf kī nazroñ meñ, ham donoñ ke qātil haiñ donoñ ke pujārī haiñ.<sup>7</sup>*

In the journey of seventy-one years of respect in his life Ghalib worked a lot for Urdu and Persian and earned lots of respect and fame. With the help of his beautiful writing and strength of pen

Ghalib gave a new level, a life and a speed to Urdu Couplets. If there is a conversation about Urdu literature and Ghalib is not mentioned then everything will become meaningless. In the world of etiquettes, where William Shakespeare, Milton, Tagore, Tulsidas have achieved a level in the same Ghalib is also placed. His work named Deewan-e-Ghalib, is a heritage for world literature the couplets and composition of Ghalib still flows like the water of Ganga on the surface of readers and listeners' hearts and always be immortal in the memory of people.

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