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Description

A Ghazal and its Parts: A Closer Look at Ghalib's Naqsh Faryad?

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Abstract:

All of us who read Ghalib know that his *d?v?n* begins with “naqsh faryad? hai kis k? shokh?-e tahr?r k?/ k?ghaz? hai pairahan har paikar-e tasv?r k?.” It was the traditional practice to begin a *d?v?n* of classical poetry with a *?amd* or poem in praise of the Creator. But, is naqsh faryad? a *hamd*? This paper examines some important threads of the discourse commentary on this famous ghazal. It also tracks Ghalib's editing of this ghazal intending to go forward with new perspectives on the ordering of bayts (two-line verses) in the ghazal. It is an exercise in scrutinizing a ghazal for the coherence of the theme through a careful study of the arrangement of verses. While working on the progression of ghazals in Ghalib's *d?v?ns*, I was struck by changes in the ordering of verses. This generally happened when new verses were added, or verses were deleted. I was also fascinated by how Ghalib cherry-picked verses from two or three ghazals in the same meter and rhyme (*ham tarh*) and made a new ghazal. I compared the old ghazals with the newly minted one— what was going on in Ghalib's mind as he moved verses around? Was there something deeper in the editorial process, beyond simply removing verses that could be regarded as ‘heavy’ or ambiguous, even meaningless? I am raking up an age-old discussion here: is the ghazal a (whole) poem qua poem? Or, in other words, does the ghazal have a semblance of specificity as implied by theme, images or allusions?

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Works cited / Notes:

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- Alessandro Bausani. “The Development of Form in Persian Lyrics.” *East and West*; New Series 9, 1958. P 145-53.
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- Div?n-e Ghalib*, Nuskah-e Shirani, Lahore, Majlis-e Taraqqi-e Adab, 1969, p.2
- Frances Pritchett, “The Meaning of Meaningless Verses, Ghalib and His Commentators,” *A Wilderness of Possibilities*, Urdu Studies in Transnational Perspectives, ed. Kathryn Hansen and David Lelyveld. New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005. 251-72.
- All of Ghalib's letters that address literary issues are collected in one volume titled ‘*d-e Hind?*, ed. Saiyyid Murtuza Husain Fazil, Lahore, Majlis Taraqqi Urdu Adab, 1967.

Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, Tafh?m-e Ghalib, p20. Kamal al Din Ism?‘il Isfahani (1172-1237) was a celebrated poet especially known for qas?dah Faruqi, p.21.

Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Mata‘-e Lauh-o Qalam, Karachi. Maktaba Daniyal, (third edition), 1983, p. 62-63
Divan-e Ghalib 1826, Nuskhah-e Shir?n?, p.1

Frances W. Pritchett: A Desertful of Roses

Jain, p 61. “Jo mizhah jauhar nah?ñ”. According to Jain, “that person, whose eyes do not have the perception, his claim that that he is capable of seeing the wonders of the world is false. His vision is scattered dreams seen in the state of non-being (‘adam).” I find Jain’s explanation forced because the two lines don’t come together.

Princess Shirin was the wife of King Khusrau. For details of the Shirin-Khusrau-Farhad romance as penned by the twelfth century Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi, see:

http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/texts/txt_chelkowski_1975_nizami.pdf

Jahan Ramazani, “Lyric Poetry: Intergeneric, Transnational, Translingual,” JLT 2017; 11(1): 97-107.

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