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Book Name: Hasratoon Kay Sirhanay
Author: Shahi Shahbaaz
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"Hasratoon kay Sirhanay" is a maiden Poetic Collection in urdu language by a budding and promising writer Shahbaaz Mushtaq who has chosen his pen name as Shahi Shahbaaz. He is exceptionally a brilliant student of Government Degree college, Pulwama. His collection comprises almost fifty-five Ghazals and seven Nazams. This way he tries his hand at both the two genres. Let us talk less about Shahi and more about his Shahkaar (Masterpiece). As it is aptly said "writing writes not the writer".

Without an iota of doubt, every poet, whether consciously or unconsciously, turns out to be the mouthpiece of his or her own age. Every poet mirrors the zeitgeist of the age he belongs to. And in our era, specifically in this part of the globe where we live in, the poetic canvas no longer reflects the floral beds of Nishat and Shalimar, the singing Nightingales of Badamwari, the vibrant shades of Nageen and Dal, the serene waters of Jhelum and the ilk. Shahi Shahbaz is no exception in this respect. His readers can vividly see that he also draws on the gory and gloomy picture of the life. He keeps on recollecting heart wrenching innocent killings, ever haunting bloodbath, clueless disappearances, subsequent social crises and their horrendous impact on the human psyche. Here are a few couplets from Shahi for substantiating the argument:

وہ بچہ آ گیا دست طلب لیکر یہ کہنے کو
مرا ابو، جو غائب ہے، کہیں تم کو ملا جہلم۔

پلٹ کر رہ گئی بازی، سکوں غائب ہے صدیوں سے
لٹا پر چم، لٹا ساحل، لٹیں لہر ہیں، لٹا جہلم۔

دکھائی لال سا جو دے رہا ہے
یہ کیسا داغ ہے جھیل ولر پر۔

یہ چیخیں کیا تھیں بیٹا کچھ ہوا کیا
نشان کس ہاتھ کے ہیں یہ کمر پر۔

Having seen how Shahi Shahbaaz feels upon the nerves of his times and exerts instant response to any sort of stimulus, Sahir Ludhianvi can be appropriately quoted here when he says :

دنیا نے تجربات و حوادث کی شکل میں
جو کچھ مجھے دیا ہے، لوٹا رہا ہوں میں۔

Even in his tender age, Shahi Shahbaaz transcends the boundaries of his own mind. He often comes up with a discernibly matured thought that baffles an average reader as the thought does not go in conformity with Shahi's young age. Let us go through one of his artistically well-crafted poems which is at the same time the title poem of his collection "Hasraton kay Sirhanay":

موت سامنے ہے
میتھے زندہ ہو رہا ہوں
آخری بار ملنے چلا گیا
اپنے آپ سے
خواہشوں سے
خیالوں کے نگر
جہاں
کچھ صدائیں گونج رہی تھی
خواب اور خواہشیں
کسی گمنام شخص کو گود میں لئے
رو رو کر دلا سہ دے رہے تھے
خواہشوں کا کیا
ہمیشہ روتی ہیں
اور میری طرح کسی خاک کو
خاک میں ملادیتی ہیں

کسی اپنے کا رونا
جس کی وابستگی دل کی گہرائیوں سے ہو
برداشت نہیں ہوتا۔
اور انسان جیتے جی مر جاتا ہے
میرے ساتھ بھی یہی ہوا
اور میں لیٹ گیا
حسرتوں کے سرہانے۔

This poem makes any sensible reader travel far off the valleys of thought. Only a matured reader can comprehend the extraordinary structural system and mind-boggling metaphorical beauty of such a poem.

I believe that this is a complete journey of a genuine thought coupled with consciousness. It has both outward and inward movement. The poem moves on a theme line describing the poet's personal experience but what makes it an organic whole is that its core is equating the need of the poet. So consciousness is merged artfully with subconscious flow.

In order to escape from the fret and fever of the present, Shahi takes recourse to his past. His nostalgia heels up his wounded psyche with honey and roses. It catapults the poet's preoccupation with memories of his childhood, his hometown, his parents and all that has been bracketed with his past life, inspiring the readers to peep through and go on an excursion back to the annals of poet's past life. While reading few of his nostalgic poems, we can understand how his imagination sketches the lanes of memory in his unique personal way, and how his mind becomes the cradle of the incidents, events and persons he has come across in his life. Shahi does not provide his readers with sheer abstract images, instead he deals in the concrete with concrete experiences. Moreover, his childhood memories are simultaneously bitter and sweet.

Take for your perusal the following couplets, and then a full fledged Ghazal:

جب سے اپنے گھر کا رستہ بھول گیا
میں تو گویا ہر اک چرچا بھول گیا

اس دن مجھ کو کتنا پیٹا پاپا نے
جب ٹہنی پر اپنا بستہ بھول گیا۔

Now look at this beautiful Ghazal:

جہاں گر پڑا ہوں وہاں سے اٹھا دے
وہ بچپن کی نیندیں مجھے پھر سلا دے

وہ جس کو میں سربانے رکھتا تھا شب بھر
وہ یادوں کی گڑیا کہیں سے دلادے

بھٹکتا ہوں ہر موڑ پر میں جہاں کے
پکڑ کر مری انگلی رستہ دکھا دے

پہن کر میں، بھائی سے لڑتا تھا جس پر
وہ چھوٹی سی چپل کہاں بے بتا دے

سویرے سویرے اٹھا کر ابو جی
مجھے پھر سے جبراً وہ روٹی کھلا دے

بڑا ہو گیا ہوں، مگر التجا بے
کسی طرح پھر مجھ کو بچہ بنا دے۔

The experiences of shahi as a poet are not through and through melancholic but an amalgamation of joy and sorrow, ecstasy and agony. So to say, he turns romantic many a times. Such type of romantic frenzy is evident at the poetic threshold of every young poet. If a beginner speaks nothing through the means of his "tukbandhi", atleast he speaks romance spontaneously throughout. For a tender poetic heart, we can see as if there is only one theme and that is Love and separation. A few couplets bear testimony to the fact that the poet dovetails joy and sorrow in love in a very powerful way, and the reader too is carried away by the power the lines carry:

کچھ تو ہے اندر میاں تم جھانک کر دیکھو ذرا
میں نے تیرے جسم میں کیسی حرارت دیکھ لی

بظاہر چمن میں گلوں کی بے خوشبو
مگر ہے یہ تیری مہک جانتا ہوں

یہ تو خدا نے عشق کو ایسا وصف دیا
ورنہ آگ میں پھول کو کھلتے دیکھا ہے
ہجر کی ان سخت راتوں سے تو واللہ
موت ہی آسان ہے اب لوٹ آو

When it comes to language and diction employed by Shahi Shahbaaz, it is demanding and requires much endurance. As it is said "Poetry should always be implied rather than self-explanatory". The forte of poetry is its complexities. So that it can offer the reader with multi-layered meanings, which is the beauty of poetry. Perhaps it is because of Shahi's young age and his less attention towards the systematic essence of words which is otherwise so vivid in his handful of Nazams. My humble suggestion to Shahi is to focus equally on Nazams. There is always room for improvement. Anyways, "Hasratoon kay Sirhanay" is the book which is worth reading and enjoying. I wish Shahi Shahbaaz all the best in his future endeavours.