

METAPHORS OF YORE – A STUDY OF SELECT METAPHORS IN URDU GHAZALS

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ABSTRACT

The word Ghazal has more than one meaning, but literally it means conversing with women. Ghazals are a very important part of Urdu literature and have roots in Persian literature and Arabic traditional poetry techniques. The normal ghazal is brief and contains one or more ideas. The themes range from love and devotion to God and human beings, praising the might of man, afflictions and greatness of human race. Some ghazals which contain a single theme have been used as songs in Hindi movies.

Urdu poets generally adhere to traditional techniques of ghazal. In fact, that is the main reason for the liberal use of conventional and classical metaphors and symbols which were quite widespread in Arabic and Persian poetry. In spite of the interval extending to centuries, those who hold on to their unrequited love, find solace in the couplets of the Urdu poets ranging from Amir Khusrau to Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Unfortunately, changing times leave their impact on people and their lifestyles. What has been taken for granted by the previous generation may be considered as frivolous or ridiculous by the next generation. Invention of articles or gadgets to make the common man's life easier like the light bulb also end up erasing an entire range of memories or identity of previous generations. Many symbols and metaphors used in Urdu Ghazals are based on the relationship of mankind with certain customs in life. For example the lighting of a candle or a diya in the evening, going to the river bank or a lake to fill water, nightingales singing in rose gardens etc. Regrettably, with changing times these commonplace incidents which are used as metaphors with deep philosophical meaning in Ghazals are becoming incomprehensible. The paper briefly explores the system of metaphors in select Urdu ghazals and attempts to study the effect of times on certain metaphors like candle (shama), garden (chaman) and tavern (maikada).

KEYWORDS: Urdu Ghazals, Metaphors in Urdu Ghazals, Symbols in Urdu Ghazals

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