

THE CONCEPT OF HUMAN BEING, LIFE AND DEATH IN THE POETRY OF OMER TARIN AND RAHMAN BABA (A COMPARATIVE STUDY)

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Received: 03 September, 2023

Revised: 14 October, 2023

Accepted: 20 October, 2023

Published: 31 October, 2023

ABSTRACT

In this research study, a comparative analysis of selected poems by Omer Tarin, a prominent Pakistani mystic poet who wrote in English, and Rahman Baba, a renowned Pakistani mystic poet who wrote in Pashto, will be conducted within the context of mysticism. During the course of this research, I randomly selected poems from two books: 'A Sad Piper' and 'Burnt Offering,' published in 1994 and 1996, respectively, authored by Omer Tarin. Additionally, some poems were chosen from the poetry of Rahman Baba, as translated by Robert Sampson Momin Khan in 2005. These selected poems will be examined in the context of mysticism, utilizing the Reader Response Theory technique. The focus of the analysis will be on identifying common mystical elements and themes shared by the two poets. This investigation aims to determine how they perceive various aspects such as the human condition, human life, death, and the quest for the Ultimate Truth. Furthermore, an exploration will be made into whether Omer Tarin, as a modern poet, exhibits any influence from the works of the older poet Rahman Baba.

Keywords: Rahman Baba, Tarin, Human being, Human life, Human Death

INTRODUCTION

Abdur Rahman known as Rahman Baba was born in a village near Peshawar called Bahader Kalay. In *Pata Khazana* (the Hidden Treasury) a well-known book in Pashto, his birth date has been mentioned as 1632AD and his death date as 1708AD. According to Al-Hajj Habibullah Rafi, the birth and death of Rahman Baba is (AD 1632 – AD 1718). According to Prof. Qalandar Mohmand the birth and death dates of Rahman Baba are AD 1671 – 1753). He belonged to a prominent Mohamand tribe of the Pathans. The exact date of his birth and death are not known, yet it can be said that Rahman Baba was an almost exact contemporary of the Mughal King Aurangzeb (AD. 1659- 1707). Rahman Baba got his early education from his own village in Bahadur Kallay, Peshawar. He got the education of “Fiqh and Tassawwuf” in his village from Mullah Muhammad Yousaf Yousafzai. After completion of his early education it

is said that he went to Kohat to get more education from Haji Bahadur, a well-known Mystic and religious scholar of the Sub-Continent.

Omer Tarin is one of the best poets of the current time. He was born in 1966 to the Tarin family of Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (old NWFP). In this research study I am going to analyze Tarin's selected poems in the light of mysticism randomly selected from his two poetry collections, five poems from “A Sad Piper” and five poems from “Burnt Offering” published in 1994 and 1996 respectively, while using Reader Response Theory technique. The main objectives of the research study are to know about similar mystical elements and themes in the selected poetry produced by the above mentioned poets. I will see how different or similarly they perceive human being, human life, death and the Ultimate Truth. I will also try to know that being a

modern poet Tarin's poetry has any reflections of an older poet Rahman baba or not.

DISCUSSION

Mystics don't afraid of the death rather they welcome it. They consider death as the beginning of life. Death causes them to meet their beloved/ultimate reality, even some mystics like Mulana Rumi and others consider death as their wedding. As Sahin (2014) says "Sufis do not see death as an end; they find it meaningful for reunion..." (P, 7)

Hard times and handful miseries in this world may be unbearable but it has best rewards too. It may redeem you from the sins. You should never go on the wrong path. You must know the real reason behind your creation. You will face any kind of situation but you should not care, because it will make you pure. You must follow the divine instructions even you face the death. You should love it. In the same way Tarin is also asking for crucifixion because he is sure that it will certainly take him to God. Tarin also wants to be crucified to feel the pain. He likes the pain because it will redeem him from the sins, if he has committed. He says:

Crucify me that my all too fond flesh may feel pain;
then alone may I redeem myself and absolve my
impure blood of all its sins (P, 2)

People of the world think Jesus crucifixion was miserable but it caused him to come to you. Tarin also wants to be crucified if it causes him to come to you. We can compare Tarin's this will with Rahman Baba's concept, as he says:

Hanifullah (2009) sites that '*At last Rahman will find you (God), after sacrifice of his life*'. (P, 91)

Khan and Sampson (2005) quote Rahman Baba:

All the pains of love is relief for the lover, There is no remedy for such a disease. Love is rare experience in the world, There is no need of love for any other than God. (P, 505)

According to Christians beliefs crucifixion of Jesus Christ was accepted and that has washed their sins. Tarin is afraid if his crucifixion will be accepted or not because he is past all redemption. So he wants someone to be crucified instead of him like Jesus. He says:

I am afraid I am past redemption And I would, rather,
that somewhere, In my stead, some Christ Suffer for
my salvation. (P, 2)

Mystics suffer the most in this world while living apart from their beloved. Their suffering cannot be

known to others than them. One suffers from crucifixion is nothing in front of his suffering while longing for his beloved (God). He wants to get rid of such a suffering.

Khan and Sampson (2005) write that there is no need of life if there is no union because life is beautiful due to alliance with the Beloved. They say that Rahman baba is of the view, "If the sufferings of the whole world are heaped on my head, it will all be easy if my friend is a friend to me". Further he says, "I love Him so much that I would have sacrificed my body a thousand times for my Beloved If I had a thousand bodies like this one." He says:

They cannot be called lovers, Who are concerned
with their life and honor. Those girls will be famous
like Leila, Who have Rahman, like *Majnun* in their
country (P, 837).

Birds are born to fly. Summer is the beautiful weather to fly. Newly born birds also try to fly. They follow their parents. They learn from their parents, do whatever they make them learn to do. They don't wait for any right moment, but keep their struggle continues. As in the poem Tarin says:

There was the bird that flew because its wings were
young, For it knew it could fly, no matter if its young
wings were untried- Fledging wings of violet-blue,
deep, deep wings (P, 2, 3)

Work of birds is to fly in the air. They know that there may be obstacles while flying high. They may face the dangerous storm, the strong wind and heavy rain. They learn how to overcome those hurdles too. As Tarin says: That flew against the waves, flew against the sky (P, 3)

Birds fly until their wings leave the work. Their wings are unable to move. They are not able to fly. Later in the same poem Tarin says:

Fly, before winter froze their wings And chafed their
hearts with longing For some seasons of flight (P, 3)

The main theme of the poem is life. These birds can be compared to humans because they both fly to the sky. The color of sky and the color of feathers of the bird; is blue, in the poem *violet blue* suggests that there is compatibility between human and the sky (God). If humans try they can be accepted. The word *summer* suggests that when human's spiritual strength is on peak, it is the best age for fly towards sky, to be united with God. We human are born to do something. We have been given this life with purpose. We should know the purpose of life. We are

born to worship our Allah and obey his sayings. We human can take lesson from these birds. We human pass through different stages in life. In childhood we learn, in adulthood we practically use what we have learnt before and when we are aged we are unable to do many things that we want to do. So we human should do good deeds in every time. We should not wait for time to come. We do not know when we will die or the door of repentance will be closed. When the time is lost then we will not be able to do any good deed.

Momand and Momand, (1984) says; Rahman Baba is very much aware of the reality of the world. He explains his idea of the world in two different poems. The two poems of Rahman Baba is very fine display of the world. One poem is for the acceptance of the world and the other one for the rejection of the world. Rahman Baba does not totally reject this world nor totally accept it rather he use; this world according to the requirements of his life in the light of Islamic Shariah. He is against the total rejection of this world because the next world depends on the use of this world. They quote some verses from Rahman baba's poetry:

This world is good, it is good; It is an investment for the world to come There is much benefit in the world Which only the learned know 53 53 (P-15)

Khan and Sampson (2005), quote Rahman Baba as he says:

That very thing will be harvest after death; Whatever he has sown in this world (P, 93)

Tarin tries to make us get lesson from birds. He invites all the people of the world to use this temporary world in proper way and with the help of this get the pleasures of the next eternal life. Tarin considers *this* world as a sowing field i.e., the world of action and the next world to come is the world of reward. Every action and every moment spent in the world is counted and man is answerable to God for every moment spent in this world. Tarin advises the people to come and use this world for the next world because this is the only and final chance for them. He says create tolerance in you; do well with others as this is the best way to get nearness to Allah. Tarin says in the poem that do good that may you find goodness of Allah in that world as Momand and Momand (1984) quote Rahman Baba as he says:

Sow flowers so your surroundings become a garden; Don't sow thorns, for they will prick your feet (P-271)

So Rahman Baba invites all the people of the world to use this temporary world in proper way and with the help of this get the pleasures of the next eternal life.

In the poem Tarin talk about God's presence. He says we cannot reach to him or cannot recognize him, though he is very close to us. It's because we are surrounded by our worldly wishes and darkness (lack of knowledge, ignorance), which stop us. As Tarin says:

Rock of ages, furry with mossy fingers halt my paces I have seen the plums ready in the orchard (P, 3)

Tarin has seen something and wants to go to that thing but something here is stopping him. Tarin has realized the ultimate reality. A plum ready is symbolized as God in the poem. As one tries to have a ready plum but that is surrounded by bushes, then first he needs to take those bushes aside, then he will be able to reach the plum and will have the plum. He sees what we common people cannot see.

These bushes can be compared with worldly desires which stop us to see something fruitful behind them. They can be removed by putting spiritual effort to reach the desired place.

Shushtery (1976) cites that Ahmad, bin Khazruvaih says, "...God is clearly visible but if one fails to see Him, he or she is blind by worldly desires." (P- 371)

Hanifullah (2009) quotes Rahman Baba as he says: The *marifat* of God is evident in everything; May the one without this insight lose his eyes (P, 98)

Shushtery (1976) says; Sufism is neither performing religious rituals, nor it is knowledge of science and philosophy. It means moral perfection and purification. It means freedom, manliness, non-attachment (to worldly desires) and generosity (self-sacrifice). Sufism means enmity to world and friendship of God."(P, 371)

(Some scholars contend that "direct vision of God" is not open to human mind especially in this earthly existence. In fact God's *Noor* (Light) stands in between God Almighty and His lover or the Sufi. That is the ultimate limit of human experience i.e., he can experience God's *Noor*; but cannot go beyond that *Noor*. This contention, in their opinion, is testified by the Qur'anic narration of Prophet Moses'

quest for a physical encounter with God Almighty; and God's response to Moses). This refers to *mushahidah* (contemplation), which is the result of intense love for Divine Beauty, and detachment from human attributes and subsistence in God. Khan and Sampson (2005), quote Rahman Baba as he says: It is no surprise that the whole world becomes mine, Since I have encountered the king of the entire world (P-387)

All the mystics consider God as a creator of the universe. All the joys and sorrows are from Him. He is the source of all the beauties and He Himself is the holder of the absolute Beauty. Man is by nature His servant and lover. The mystics' desire is to meet this absolute and Eternal Beauty as soon as possible.

Tarin tries to show us our essence. He says we all are made of the same soil, born from the same Adam. We should not be proud of ourselves. He says: Essentially I am dust As are you (P, 3)

Clay or soil remains attached to the ground, and hence displays an unassuming and humble nature. Allah loves humility and dislike arrogance. As Ahmad states that Allah created clay to be intrinsically humble, and created man from that clay so man would also be humble because He loves humility.

There are duties and rights of man in this world. One's responsibility in life is to perform duties to one's self and to others. When the individual has a developed sense of such responsibility then he is a moral being and of better service to society.

Rahman Baba says (as cited by Khan and Sampson (2005) that one can get happiness of this and of that world when he or she takes care of others without any concern. He teaches the message of peace. He says one should be like a fruit tree, which is stoned by everyone but in response, tree provides shade to the lowly and fruit to the hungry. Everything in this world is mortal so one should not be proud. We should be humble. He says:

Human kindness is not found in wealth O Rahman; Being made of gold statue doesn't make a human. (P, 569)

Man cannot live without other people. There is strong relationship amongst human beings. If men living in the society are morally strong, they constitute exemplary society. There will be happiness and prosperity everywhere. This world will become like paradise for everyone. Khan and Sampson (2005)

cites that Rahman Baba says that man should adopt humility and distribute love in the society; he will get love from God and respect from even the bad people of the society.

Those fallen from the mountain, will get up again; But those fallen from the hearts will never rise again. (P, 845)

So we can compare the thoughts of these poets, which make us realize our essence, similarities among us and duties, which we are obliged to perform. So no one is superior to other, nor inferior, rather the same.

Tarin laughs at his insignificance and says us to laugh on ourselves too. As he says: I laugh at my own insignificance As should you (P, 4)

But later in the poem Tarin tries to show us our other side. Apparently we are dust, made of soil but on the other hand we are of great value in the whole universe. Allah wanted to create us so created the universe. We are the idea of Allah. Tarin realizes our reality as says: Yet, somehow, I feel too, That something there is that laughs not at our Dustiness- Perhaps the Dust collector? (P, 4)

In Sufi's heart there is nothing except the love of God. If he loves this world, he considers it the source of reaching God. God is present in his heart all the time and this is the reason that he has called his heart *Arsh*, *Ka'ba* and *Baitullah* i.e. the home of Allah. Rahman Baba says, "God is with me in my home, why should I search Him elsewhere."

Requiem is funeral song, which is sung on the death of someone in order to pay tribute and pray for a dead person. In this poem, Tarin talks about death. He says to people of the world that you people are mourning on my death. Tarin says in the poem:

You draw your breath yearning a sadness infinite in its contemplation; (P, 20)

Mystics welcome death. According to Sahin (2014) Sufis do not see death as an end; they find it meaningful for reunion, and they find life important as a path to making a meaningful death. (P, 1833) Mulana Rumi considers death as wedding. As he says in one of his poem:

Our death is our wedding with eternity. What is the secret? "God is one."

Khan (2009) quotes that the Prophet (S.A.W) has said that one cannot see God in this world with physical eyes. So he will have to die for seeing God. This is why Rahman Baba says,

The wine of your lips is forbidden for Rahman;
Until I give a bowl of my blood in exchange. (P, 24)
Death causes mystics to meet their beloved that they
yearn for, throughout their life. They embrace death
in astonish ecstasy because it is the happiest occasion
for them. They consider death as rebirth after which
there is no death again. As Tarin also says:
I, who embraced death in dumbfounded rapture, am
reborn in the eternal question imprisoned in your
eyes; (P, 20)
Poet says that in divine term my death is my birth in
real. With my death I got inter to eternal world,
where there is no death again. There are no
miseries, no worries and sorrows. I am carefree
now. In the last line of the same poem Tarin asks
God to be with him. As he says:
Let's be buried together. (P, 20)

CONCLUSION

Rahman baba and Omar Tarin, though belonging to
different time periods and having distinct styles, yet
explore almost the same themes in their poetry.
Spirituality and Sufism are the significant themes in
their poetry. Rahman baba explores the path of
spiritual enlightenment, the quest for inner divinity
and the relationship between the human soul and the
divine. Tarin's poetry also reflects on the spiritual
dimension of life, the search for meaning and the
connection between the individuals and the divine.
His poetry conveys the message of unity, self-
realization and the pursuit of divine love.

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