

Shakespeare and Ghalib: A Comparative Study of Their First Sonnet and Ghazal

Md. Parwez Alam

Haji Jamil Ahmed Road, Bhandaridih, Giridih, Jharkhand, India, PIN :815301.

ABSTRACT

As is said, Shakespeare unlocks his heart in Sonnets, the same is also true to that of Ghalib's ghazals. When we study and examine the quality and beauty of Sonnets and ghazals in a comparative manner, we find remarkable similarities. Let us see the similarities between the first Sonnet of Shakespeare and the first ghazal of the Deewan _e_Ghalib . A sonnet is a fourteen line poem written in Iambic Penta metre and Shakespearean or English Sonnet has three quatrains and a couplet while a ghazal has generally five to fifteen couplets linked abstractly by rhyme and refrain and it is also written strictly in a particular metre. In this way both the poetic genres or forms are strictly metric ones. The first ghazal of the Deewan _e_Ghalib consists of ten lines that is five verses or couplets of which rhyme scheme is "aa,ba,ca,da,ea". It is usually the rhyme scheme of a ghazal.

For example , let us look at the very first stanza of the first sonnet:

"From fairest creatures we desire increase
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,

But as the ripper should by time decease
His tender heir might bear his memory: " *1

Shakespeare urges his beloved friend to get married and have children so that his beauty can be perpetuated through them. He says that the fairest of creatures procreate He is of the opinion that all beautiful things of God's creation must become a prey to decay, desolation and death. Time's cruel hand would destroy all beauty of Nature. Ghalib is also of the same opinion. According to Urdu custom the first ghazal should be generally in praise of God but he is here complaining against God. He is complaining if God had to destroy everything, why the hell had he created everything? He says that life is transitory. And he compared the life to paper with the use of allusion of an Iranian custom. The first Sher (couplet) of the ghazal is as follows that is describing about the transitoriness of life. e.g :

" Naqsh faryadi hai kis ki shokhi _e_tahreer ka
Kaghzi hai pairhan her paikar e tasweer ka. " *2

O, man what are you urging the beauty of God's creation for?

Everything in the world is as transitory as clothes made up of paper.

I don't know how far I am successful in translating the first Sher of Ghalib therefore I would like to produce the translation of this by Mr. Najib Jung.

" Against whose playful writings can an image petition

For made of paper is the attire of each image. " *3

(Najib Jung)

Mr.Najeeb Jung has translated the whole Deewan _e_Ghalib. So it would be worth to produce the whole translation of the ghazal.

"Kav kav e_sakht jani ha_e,tanhai na pooch
Subh karna sham ka lana hai ju_e_shir ka." *4

Ask not of the hardships of life and I its loneliness
Labour from dawn to dusk is like bringing forth a channel of milk. *5

"Jazba _e_ikhtiyar_e_shauq dekha chahiye
Sina _e_shamshir se bahar hai dam shamshir ka." *6

Behold my unmatched passion for love
It is like the suimitar unfurled from its sheeth. *7

"Agahi dam _e_shunidan jis qadar chahe bichae
Mudda_a anqa hai apne alam _e_taqreer ka." *8

How wide the web of knowledge has stretched its wings
To understand my words is to understand the concept of a mythical bird. *9

"Bas ki huun 'Ghalib ' asiri men bhi atish zer _e_pa
Mu_e_atish dida hai halqa miri zanjir ka." *10

Even in the bondage Ghalib my feet seem as if on fire
The sparks are like singed hair on the chains that hold me." *11

On a superficial level, there seems no similarities between Sonnets and Ghazals but the deep and thorough examination reveals remarkable resemblance between them. Not only 'matla'_the first couplet (sher) is similar to that of the first stanza of the first sonnet but the last couplet of the first sonnet is also remarkably similar to that of the 'maqta' that is the last couplet of Ghalib's ghazal .

Let us have a look on the last couplet of the first sonnet and the 'maqta' of the first ghazal:

Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due , by the grave and thee." *12

Take pity on the world,or else get ready to be regarded as a glutton devouring the world's due by means of grave and of yourself who refuse to beget children.

"Bas ki huun 'Ghalib' asiri men bhi atish zer _e_pa
Mu _e_atish dida hai halqa miri zanjir ka." *13

Even in bondage Ghalib my feet seem as if on fire,

The sparks are like singed hair on the chains that hold me.*14

The couplet of the sonnet is very much similar to that of 'maqta' the last couplet of ghazal. In this couplet Shakespeare urges his beloved friend to have pity on the world and beget children so as to save his beauty's rose otherwise Time and Grave will devour all his capitals. In other words 'beauty' never dies if it is perpetuated. In the last couplet of Ghalib's first ghazal the poet is also of the opinion that the true love is permanent. The fire of true love can not be extinguished. Shakespeare is hopeful that his friend will accept the proposal and the passion and the beauty of rose will be saved and Ghalib is also hopeful that the iron chains of life has no value before his passion of true love. The chains of life are like burnt hair before his true passion.

Shakespeare and Ghalib are the greatest and favourite masters of their languages. They have very good commands over them. They use poetic devices brilliantly and are very much innovative in this regard.

They took their languages to new heights. Both poetry and prose of English and Urdu are greatly indebted to them.

References:

1. Shakespeare's Sonnet- I
2. First Ghazal, Verse 1st Diwan-e-Ghalib
3. Najeeb Jung (Translocation of Diwan-e-Ghalib)
4. First Ghazal Verse 2nd Diwan-e-Ghalib
5. Najeeb Jung (Translocation of Diwan-e-Ghalib)
6. Diwan-e-Ghalib
7. Najeeb Jung
8. Diwan-e-Ghalib
9. Najeeb Jung
10. Diwan-e-Ghalib
11. Najeeb Jung
12. Shakespeare's Sonnet- I
13. Diwan-e-Ghalib
14. Najeeb Jung