Classic Poetry Series

Meeraji

- poems -

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Meeraji (25 May 1912 – 04 November 1949)

Meeraji (Urdu: □□□□□□) (May 25, 1912 – November 4, 1949) was an eminent Urdu poet. He lived the life of a bohemian and worked only intermittently.

Early Life

Born into a Kashmiri family of Gujranwala and named Mohammed Sanaullah Dar, he passed his childhood days in Kucha Sardar Shah, Mozang, Lahore. His father Munshi Mohammad Mahtabuddin was a railway engineer, so his family had to move from one place to another. He lived in Kathiawar, Bostan (Baluchistan), Sanghar and Jacobabad.

Meeraji began composing poetry, under the pseudonym of Sasri, when he was at school. It was from his later encounter with a Bengali girl, Meera Sen, who was a daughter of an accounts officer serving in Lahore, that he fell deeply in love. This left a permanent trace in his life that he adopted his pen name on her name. Though brought up in affluent surroundings, Meeraji left his home and family and chose to lead the life of a homeless wanderer mostly staying with his friends and made a living by selling his songs.

Literary Life

Meeraji was associated with Adabi Duniya (Lahore) and later worked for All India Radio, Delhi. He wrote literary columns for the monthly Saqi (Delhi) and for a short period helped editing Khayal (Bombay). After partition, he settled permanently in Bombay.

From his teenage days Meeraji felt attracted towards Hindu mythology. Hindi vocabulary often came across in his poetry, prose and letters. He acknowledged his debt to the Sanskrit poet Amaru and the French poet Baudelaire. He also translated certain works of the Sanskrit poet, Damodar Gupta and of the Persian poet, Omar Khayyam.
Meeraji is considered to be one of the pioneers of symbolism in Urdu poetry, and especially introducing Free Verse. Along with N. M. Rashid, he was a leading poet of the group Halqa-e Arbab-e Zauq, which broke away from the classic convention of radeef and qafia, explored the rich resources of blank verse and Free Verse, rejected the confines of the socially "acceptable" and "respectable" themes, rejected the stranglehold of Persianised diction, and explored with sensitivity and skill, the hitherto forbidden territories of sexual and psychological states. He also wrote illuminating criticism of poetry and yearned to alter the expression of his age.

Works

Meeraji's literary output was immense but he is said to have published very little of his poetry during his lifetime. However, Khalid Hasan, in his writeup "Meera Sen's forgotten lover", records that during Meeraji's lifetime four collections of Meeraji's works were published by Shahid Ahmed Dehlavi, and one by Maktaba-e-Urdu, Lahore. His complete works Kulliyat-e-Meeraji appeared only in 1988 edited by Dr. Jameel Jalibi. Another collection titled Baqiyat-e-Meeraji was edited by Sheema Majeed in 1990. A book titled "Iss Nazm Mein" containing Essays of Meeraji was published during his lifetime.

Personality

Meeraji had adopted a deliberately outlandish style in his dress. Supporting long, floating hair, a dagger-like mustache, over-size earrings, a colorful headgear, an amulet and a string of beads around his neck, he fits into Coleridge's description of a poet - an inspired being with "flashing eyes and floating hair", who "on honey - dew hath fed/ And drunk the milk of Paradise ". Mehr Lal Soni Zia Fatehabadi, his poet friend and former class fellow, recalled that the only time Meeraji trimmed his long hair, was when he joined All India Radio, New Delhi.

Death

Akhtar ul Iman, his poet friend, who was himself influenced by Meeraji and Noon Meem Rashid, and with whom Meeraji had spent the last days of his life in Poona and Bombay, reported that his excessive drinking, cigarette-smoking, and sexual dissipation had drained away his strength and damaged his liver. Then, there came the additional agony of his psychic ailment, for which he had to be admitted to the hospital where he was given electric shocks to cure him of his insanity - a treatment which he dreaded. The end came at 4 p.m. on November 4, 1949 in King Edward Memorial Hospital in Bombay.

Theses

"Meeraji" a monograph on the Urdu poet written by Shafey Kidwai.
"Meeraji : Shakhsiyat aur Funn" - Doctoral dissertation of Dr. Rashid Amjad.
"Meeraji aur Amli Tanqeed" published by Mah-e-Nau, Lahore in May, 1979. A study of Meeraji's methods of literary criticism.

Works:

"Meeraji ke Geet" (Poems)
"Meeraji ki Nazmen"(Poems)
"Teen Rang" (Poems)
"Iss Nazm Mein" (Criticism - Essays of Meeraji)
"Kulliyat-e-Meeraji" (Poems) compiled by Altaf Gauhar and published by Dr. Jameel Jalibi, Urdu Markaz U.K.
"Baqiyat-e-Meeraji" (Poems) edited by Sheema Majeed and published by Pakistan Books and Literary Sounds, Lahore.
"Intikhab-e-kalaam"
"Pratinidhi Shairy"

Chand sitarey qaid hain saarey waqt ki bandi khane main

Meeraji

Deeda_e ashk baar hay apna

Meeraji

Dhab dekhey tu hum nay jana dill main dhun bhi samaai

Meeraji

Gunahoo.n sey nashonuma pa gaya dill

Meeraji

Hanso tu hansey gi duniya, beth akeley rona ho ga

Meeraji

Jewan jewti jaag rahi hay chor bahaney, chor bahaney

Meeraji

Lab per hay faryaad k saaqi ye kaisa meh-khana hay

Meeraji

Nagri Nagri Phira Musafir ghar Ka Rasta Bhul gaya!

Meeraji

Nur Main Duwa Hua Hai Kalb Ka Maikhaanah Aj

Meeraji

Tera mera rishya kesa

Meeraji

Unjaney nagar mun maney they

Meeraji

Zindagi ik aziyat hay mujhey

Meeraji