

Classic Poetry Series

Imam Baksh Nasikh
- poems -

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Imam Baksh Nasikh(1776 - 1838)

Ustaad Imam Baksh Nasikh (Urdu: ????? ??? ?????) was an Urdu poet of Mughal era.

 Early Life

Ustaad Imam Baksh Nasikh was born in Faizabad, India, which was ruled by the Mughals at the time. His poor father died early in his childhood. Afterwards, a wealthy merchant from Lahore, Khuda Buksh Kheema Doz, adopted him and gave him a good education, and Nasikh remained carefree in early period of his life. When his adoptive father died, his brothers tried to challenge the inheritance. An attempt was made to poison him unsuccessfully. Ultimately the inheritance issue went to court, and the court decided in favor of Nasikh.

 Literary Life

Nasikh learned Persian with Hafiz Waris Ali and other learned scholars of Farangi Mahal, a quarter of Lucknow noted for its erudition and boasting of a noted academy of Persian and Arabic learning. He was not proficient in Arabic, but knew it enough for the Urdu poetry. He learned poetry on his own, and was not known to be a pupil of any notable figure in poetry. After Lucknow became the capital city of Oudh, Nasikh moved to the city, and spent the rest of his life there, in a neighbourhood called Teksilla. It was reported that during Nasikh's learning years (when the well known Urdu poet of Lucknow, Mir Taqi Mir was alive), Nasikh once went to Mir for seeking his guidance in poetry. For some reason, Mir did not help him, and Nasikh returned broken-hearted. He vowed to perfect his skills in poetry with a new vigour, on his h was a great admirer of Mir Taqi Mir in whose praise he had said - Aap bey bahrah hai jo muataqid e Mir nahin meaning - " He who does not vow by Mir is himself not learned. "He took the takhalus (???? or poetical name) of 'Nasikh', which implies that his splendor has eclipsed and abrogated that of all other poets.

Faith

It is not very much evident from his poetry, but it seems that Nasikh was a Sufi Muslim. Much like Mir Taqi Mir, his predecessor, he was probably a follower of the "Malamati" or "Blameworthy" aspect of the Sufi tradition. Using this technique, a person ascribes to oneself an unconventional aspect of a person or society, and then plays out its results, either in action or in verse. As in Ghalib or Mir's poetry, Nasikh's ridicule of Abrahamic/Koranic concepts of paradise, hell, zahid, etc. are

very much found in his poetry.

See this:

O waiz (the righteous person), now I leave mosque for the pub
As I pick the wine bottle, the wazoo (ablution for prayers) gone wasted

** Famous Couplets **

1.

????? ?? ????? ??? ?????? ????? ??? ????? ???
????? ????? ?? ?????? ??? ?? ?????? ??

My verses fly out to the corners of the world
as if the paper turns into the birds of meaning

2.

Don't expect the poet's pen to always write the best of verse
Pearls are but rarely formed, often though the rains burst

Saath Apne Jo Mujhe Yaar Ne Sone Na Diyaa

Imam Baksh Nasikh