

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Mir Taqi Mir**  
**- poems -**

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# Mir Taqi Mir(1723 - 1810)

Mir Taqi Mir (Urdu: میر تقی میر), whose real name was Muhammad Taqi (Urdu: محمد تاقی) and takhallus (pen name) was Mir (Urdu: میر) (sometimes also spelt as Meer Taqi Meer), was the leading Urdu poet of the 18th century, and one of the pioneers who gave shape to the Urdu language itself. He was one of the principal poets of the Delhi School of the Urdu ghazal and remains arguably the foremost name in Urdu poetry often remembered as Khuda-e-sukhan (god of poetry).

## <b> Life </b>

The main source of information on Mir's life is his autobiography Zikr-e-Mir, which covers the period from his childhood to the beginnings of his sojourn in Lucknow. However, it is said to conceal more than it reveals, with material that is undated or presented in no chronological sequence. Therefore, many of the 'true details' of Mir's life remain a matter of speculation.

Mir was born in Agra, India (then called Akbarabad and ruled by the Mughals) ca. August or September 1723 in a family of Arab origins. His philosophy of life was formed primarily by his father, a religious man with a large following, whose emphasis on the importance of love and the value of compassion remained with Mir throughout his life and imbued his poetry. Mir's father died while the poet was in his teens. He left Agra for Delhi a few years after his father's death, to finish his education and also to find patrons who offered him financial support (Mir's many patrons and his relationships with them have been described by his translator C. M. Naim).

Some scholars consider two of Mir's masnavis (long narrative poems rhymed in couplets), Mu'amlat-e-ishq (The Stages of Love) and Khwab o khyal-e Mir ("Mir's Vision"), written in the first person, as inspired by Mir's own early love affairs, but it is by no means clear how autobiographical these accounts of a poet's passionate love affair and descent into madness are. Especially, as France W. Pritchett points out, the austere portrait of Mir from these masnavis must be juxtaposed against the picture drawn by Andalib Shadani, whose inquiry suggests a very different poet, given to unabashed eroticism in his verse.

Mir lived much of his life in Mughal Delhi. Kuchha Chelan, in Old Delhi was his address at that time. However, after Ahmad Shah Abdali's sack of Delhi each year starting 1748, he eventually moved to the court of Asaf-ud-Daulah in Lucknow, at the king's invitation. Distressed to witness the plundering of his beloved Delhi, he gave vent to his feelings through some of his couplets.

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Mir migrated to Lucknow in 1782 and remained there for the remainder of his life. Though he was given a kind welcome by Asaf-ud-Daulah, he found that he was considered old-fashioned by the courtiers of Lucknow (Mir, in turn, was contemptuous of the new Lucknow poetry, dismissing the poet Jur'at's work as merely 'kissing and cuddling'). Mir's relationships with his patron gradually grew strained, and he eventually severed his connections with the court. In his last years Mir was very isolated. His health failed, and the death of his daughter, son and wife caused him great distress.

He died, of a purgative overdose, on Friday, 21 September 1810. The marker of his burial place was removed in modern times when a railway was built over his grave.

#### <b> Literary Life </b>

His complete works, Kulliaat, consist of six Diwans containing 13,585 couplets, comprising all kinds of poetic forms: ghazal, masnavi, qasida, rubai, mustezaad, satire, etc. Mir's literary reputation is anchored on the ghazals in his Kulliyat-e-Mir, much of them on themes of love. His masnavi Mu'amlat-e-Ishq (The Stages of Love) is one of the greatest known love poems in Urdu literature.

Mir lived at a time when Urdu language and poetry was at a formative stage - and Mir's instinctive aesthetic sense helped him strike a balance between the indigenous expression and new enrichment coming in from Persian imagery and idiom, to constitute the new elite language known as Rekhta or Hindui. Basing his language on his native Hindustani, he leavened it with a sprinkling of Persian diction and phraseology, and created a poetic language at once simple, natural and elegant, which was to guide generations of future poets.

The death of his family members, together with earlier setbacks (including the traumatic stages in Delhi), lend a strong pathos to much of Mir's writing - and indeed Mir is noted for his poetry of pathos and melancholy.

#### <b> Faith </b>

"Mir ke deen-o-mazhab ka

poonchte kya ho un nay to  
kashka khaincha dair mein baitha  
kab ka tark Islam kiya"

"What can I tell you about Mir's faith or belief ?  
A tilak on his forehead in a temple he resides,  
having abandoned Islam long ago"

What Mir was practicing was probably 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.

<b> Mir vs Mirza Ghalib </b>

Mir's famous contemporary, also an Urdu poet of no inconsiderable repute, was Mirza Rafi Sauda. Mir Taqi Mir was often compared with the later day Urdu poet, Mirza Ghalib. Lovers of Urdu poetry often debate Mir's supremacy over Ghalib or vice versa. It may be noted that Ghalib himself acknowledged, through some of his couplets, that Mir was indeed a genius who deserved respect. Here are two couplets by Mirza Ghalib on this matter.

"Reekhtay kay tumhi ustaad nahi ho Ghalib  
Kehte hain agle zamane me koi Mir bhi tha"

"You are not the only master of Urdu, Ghalib  
They say there used to be a Mir in the past"

—Mirza Ghalib

"Ghalib apna yeh aqeeda hai baqaul-e-Nasikh  
Aap bey behrah hai jo muataqid-e-Mir nahi"

"Ghalib! Its my belief in the words of Nasikh\*,  
He that vows not on Mir, is himself unlearned!"

—Mirza Ghalib

\*Shaikh Imam Bakhsh Nasikh of Lucknow, a disciple of Mir.

<b> Famous Couplets </b>

Some of his impeccable couplets are:

"Dikhaai diye yun ke bekhud kiya  
Hamen aap se bhi juda kar chale"

"(She appeared in such a way that I lost myself  
And went by taking away my 'self' with her)  
Looked as if rendered me unconscious  
away went leaving me separated from me"

At a higher spiritual level the subject Of Mir's poem is not a woman but God. Mir speaks of man's interaction with the Divine. What affect it has on man when God reveals Himself to man. Dikhaai diye yun ke bekhud kiya When I saw you God I lost all sense of self Hamen aap se bhi juda kar chale When You revealed yourself it separated me from myself

"Gor kis dil jale ki hai ye falak  
Shola ek subh yaan se uthta hai"  
(What heart-sick sufferer's misery is the sky?  
an Ember rises hence at dawn)

"Ashk aankh mein kab nahi aata  
Lahu aata hai jab nahi aata"  
(From my eye, when doesn't a tear fall  
Blood falls when it doesn't fall)

"Bekhudi le gai kahaan humko  
Der se intezaar hai apna"  
(Where has selflessness taken me  
I've been waiting for myself for long)

"Ibtidaa-e-ishq hai rotaa hai kyaa  
Aage aage dekhiye hotaa hai kyaa"  
(Its the beginning of Love, why do you wail  
Just wait and watch how things unveil)

"Likhthe ruqaa, likh gae daftar  
Shauq ne baat kyaa badaai hai"  
(Started with a scroll, ended up with a record  
How pursuit escalated the whole thing)

"Deedni hai shikasgi dil ki

Kya imaat gamon ne dhaai hai"  
(Worth-watching is my heart's siege  
What a citadel have sorrows razed)

"Baad marne ke meri qabr pe aaya wo 'Mir'  
Yaad aai mere Isa ko dawa mere baad"  
(O Mir, She came to my grave after i'd died  
My messiah came to my aid after i'd died)

**<b> Mir Taqi Mir in Fiction </b>**

Khushwant Singh's famous novel Delhi: A Novel gives very interesting details about the fictional life and adventures of the great poet. His fictional memoirs and confessions, especially those about his illicit relations with elite women, mainly with the wife of the aristocrat Rias Khan who employed him as tutor to teach his children, are not only very entertaining but also provide a lot of insight into his mind and heart.

# A Jayen Ham Nazar Jo Koi Dam Bahut Hai Yan

Mir Taqi Mir

# Ab Jo Ik Hasrat E Jawani Hai Hai

Mir Taqi Mir



# Andoh Se Hui Na Rihai Tamam Shab

Mir Taqi Mir

# Ankhon Mein Ji Mera Hai Idhar Yar Dekhna

Mir Taqi Mir

# Arzuen Hazar Rakhte Hain

Mir Taqi Mir

# Ashk Aakhon Mai Kab Nahiin Aataa

Mir Taqi Mir

# Barang E Bu E Gul, Is Bagh K Ham Ashna Hote

Mir Taqi Mir

# Bat Kya Admi Ki Ban Ai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Be-Khudii Le Gaii Kahaan Ham Ko

Mir Taqi Mir

# Dam-E-Subah Bazm-E-Khush Jahan

Mir Taqi Mir



# Dekh To Dil K Jan Se Uthta Hai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Dil E Purkhun Ki Ik Gulabi Se

Mir Taqi Mir

# Dil Se Shauq E Rukh E Niko Na Gaya

Mir Taqi Mir

# Faqiraana Aae Sadaa Kar Chale

Mir Taqi Mir

# Gam Raha Jab Tak K Dam Main Dam Raha

Mir Taqi Mir

# Gul Ko Mahboob Mein Qayaas Kiyaa

Mir Taqi Mir

# Hastee Apnee Hubaab Kee See Hai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Hoti Hai Agarche Kahne Se Yaron Parai Bat

Mir Taqi Mir



# Ibtida E Ishq Hai Rota Hai Kya

Mir Taqi Mir

# Idhar Se Abr Uthkar Jo Gaya Hai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Is Ahad Main Ilahi Mohabbat Ko Kya Hua

Mir Taqi Mir

# Jis Sar Ko Garur Aj Hai Yan Tajawari Ka

Mir Taqi Mir

# Jite Ji Kucha E Dildar Se Jaya Na Gaya

Mir Taqi Mir

# Jo Is Shor Se 'Mir' Rota Rahega

Mir Taqi Mir

# Jo Tu Hi Sanam Ham Se Bezar Hoga

Mir Taqi Mir

# Kabe Main Janbalab The Ham Duri E Butan Se

Mir Taqi Mir



# Koft Se Jan Lab Par Ai Hai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Kya Kahun Tum Se Main Ke Kya Hai Ishq

Mir Taqi Mir

# Mahar Ki Tujhse Tawaqqo Thi Sitamgar Nikla

Mir Taqi Mir

# Manind E Shama Majalis E Shab Ashkbar Paya

Mir Taqi Mir

# Mausam-E-Abr Ho Subuu Bhii Ho

Mir Taqi Mir

# Milo In Dinon Hamse Ik Rat Jani

Mir Taqi Mir

# 'Mir' Darya Hai, Sune Sher Zabani Us Ki

Mir Taqi Mir

# Munh Taka Hi Kare Hai Jis Tis Ka

Mir Taqi Mir



# Na Sochaa Na Samajha Na Siikhaa Na Jaana

Mir Taqi Mir

# Patta Patta, Boota Boota, Haal Hamaaraa Jaane Hai

Mir Taqi Mir

# Rahi Nagufta Mere Dil Mein Dastan Meri

Mir Taqi Mir

# Shab Ko Wo Pie Sharab Nikla

Mir Taqi Mir

# Sher K Parde Mein Main Ne Gam Sunaya Hai Bahut

Mir Taqi Mir

# Shikwa Karun Main Kab Tak Us Apne Meharban Ka

Mir Taqi Mir

# Tum Nahin Fitna Saz Sach Sahab

Mir Taqi Mir

# Ulti Ho Gain Sab Tadabiren, Kuch Na Dawa Ne Kam Kiya

Mir Taqi Mir



# Yar Bin Talkh Zindgani Thi

Mir Taqi Mir

# Yaro Mujhe Muaf Karo Main Nashe Mein Hun

Mir Taqi Mir