

Classic Poetry Series

Nasir Kazmi
- poems -

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Nasir Kazmi(8 December 1925 - 2 March 1972)

Syed Nasir Raza Kazmi (Urdu: سیّد ناسر رضا کزّمی) was a renowned Urdu poet of Pakistan. He was one of the greatest poets of this era, especially in the use of "ista'aaray" and "chhotee beher". Kazmi was born on December 8, 1925 at Ambala in British India.

 Education and Career

Kazmi was educated at Ambala, Simla and Lahore. He returned to Ambala in 1945 and started looking after his ancestral land. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he came to Lahore.

He did some journalistic work with Auraq-e-Nau as an editor and became editor-in-chief of the magazine Humayun in 1952. Later he was associated with Radio Pakistan, Lahore and other literary publications and organizations.

Nasir Kazmi started his poetic life in 1940 by following the style of Akhtar Sherani and wrote romantic poems and sonnets. Later he began writing ghazals under the guidance of Hafeez Hoshyarpuri. He was a great admirer of Mir Taqi Mir and probably the melancholy and "Ehsaas-e-Mehroomi" in his poetry was a direct result of that. His tutor in poetry was Hafeez Hoshyarpuri, who himself used a lot of symbols from nature in his poems.

Nasir, few days before his death, said in a TV interview by Intezaar Hussain, that 'horse riding, hunting, wandering in a village, walk along the river side, visiting mountains etc. were my favourite pastimes and probably this was the time when my mind got nourishment for loving nature and getting close to the expression of poetry. All my hobbies are related with fine arts, like singing, poetry, hunting, chess, love of birds, love of trees etc... I started poetry because I used to reflect that all the beautiful things those I see, and those in nature are not in my hands, and they go away from me. Few moments, that time which dies, cannot be made alive. I think can be alive in poetry, that is why I (Nasir) started poetry!'

Nowadays, very few people may remember that Nasir used to hum his poetic verses and that humming had much attraction in it. He migrated from Ambala, India to Lahore Pakistan in August 1947. He also worked as a Staff Editor in Radio Pakistan. He used to sit at Tea House and wander at Mall Road, Lahore with his friends. He was fond of eating, wandering and enjoying life. Normally people take him as a sad poet but most of his poetry is based on romantic happiness and the aspect of hope.

His last four books were published after his death. He died in Lahore on March 2, 1972 due to stomach cancer. Few people know that he did some great translations of English poets, especially his translation of Walt Whitman's "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" by the title of "Brooklyn Ghaat Ke Paar" is a real masterpiece and worth reading.

Aj To Be-Sabab Udas Hai Ji

Nasir Kazmi

Apni Dhun Main Rahta Hun

Nasir Kazmi

Araish E Khayal Bhi Ho Dilkusha Bhi Ho

Nasir Kazmi

Be Minnat-E-Khizr-E-Raah Rahnaa

Nasir Kazmi

Climates

The stories in the lip-bound silences are different.
The expressions of the sorrows of the heart are different.

In another climate grief was more tolerable,
But the events now burdening our lives are different.

O the walker upon loyalty's road, keep your watch.
The obstacles strewn upon this stony trail are different.

There is no fear of separation, nor the wish for union.
The worries and the troubles of my maverick heart are different.

In the last leaf-shedding only flowers fell from twigs.
This year, the omens of the fall are different.

The world lacks the pluck to sense my ache to its depth.
Endow me with a melody for my cry that is different.

One disclosing glance has bared the issue of being.
Now the fields in the vista of my eyes are different.

There will be troops, nor flags. There is money, neither pomp.
The marks of the monarchs of the soil are different.

People do not die for their beloveds these days.
The denizens of youth in my youthful times were different.

Nasir Kazmi

Dard Kam Hone Laga Aao Ke Kuch Raat Kate

Nasir Kazmi

Dayar-E-Dil Ki Rat Main Chirag Sa Jala Gaya

Nasir Kazmi

Dil Dharakne Ka Sabab Yad Aya

Nasir Kazmi

Dil Main Ik Lahar Si Uthi Hai Abhi

Nasir Kazmi

Dukh Ki Lahar Ne Chera Hoga

Nasir Kazmi

Endure

O wayfarer of the waste of sorrow, endure!
The caravans separated will meet tomorrow. Endure!

No sign guides the journey. Yet, there is the whole night to go.
A voice flows in every moment ... Endure!

Your cry will resound through the Earth and the Sky.
Suffer through the wrongs... for some more time... endure!

Your feet will rouse the musk-cities of ruined hearts.
O broken gazelle in shelter, endure!

The cities have been ravaged but the land of God is open.
We will make a new home yet. Endure!

These imperial palaces are waiting for destruction.
Their flags will eventually fall. Endure!

Line after line, the leaves and the trees will play their tambourines.
This dry earth will yield moist. Endure!

From caravan to caravan fields will be blossoming.
Gracious clouds will rain tremendously. Endure!

Why strike your head upon the rock? Grieve with manner.
Let your heart transcend the pain. Emerge an icon.
Endure!

The ghazal shall unveil as the lotus of my heart unfurls.
A few moments, o the press of my nib, endure!

Lips will break their silence as pain strikes the right chord.
Our tale must wait expression until then. Endure!

Nasir, there is none truly faithful in the cunning world.
Forget the words and vows that beguiler made. Endure.

Nasir Kazmi

Fervor

Plead till the eyes of stars bleed tears.
O heart, beat yet fiercely in your cage of flesh!

Dusty lust commingles with the rare gems of fidelity.
Examine yet the goods of pledged loyalty.

Movements of her ruby lips will bewitch you like a wizard.
Let this silent fire smolder more.

If you be mute, learn the art of eloquence from the Silent.
If blind, glean your lights from the radiance of the doomed.

Who may say to Nasir: O vassal of God,
There is yet some night to go; set your eye to sleep.

Nasir Kazmi

Forgotten Tales

The waters of the pleasant flows
Murmur old forgotten tales.

Here was a jungle before the populace.
So I have heard the people say.

There was a city of décor, fashion.
Time, alas, has left no sign.

I am the heart from the School of Sorrow
Whom for centuries bliss will mourn.

Imagination has often sighted
What Reason calls the Boundless.

Often, sitting deep in thought
I set up delightful fancies.

Words change their meanings
In the crowded pangs of creation.

O the bleak expanse of Chance,
Can there be a Second to my dreams?

Under the black drapes of the eve
Who is mourned by the pouring brooks?

Wherefrom do the beams descend?
To where do steps of stars lead?

A gale blows from the mountains.
Autumn leaves swirl away.

Beneath the bustle of the new age
Old echoes are buried.

Nasir Kazmi

Girifta Dil Hain Bahut Aj Tere Diwane

Nasir Kazmi

In The Trees

Last night, sleep embraced me in the trees.
There was a lullaby twirling among the trees.

The moon came out from the caves of the horizon.
A brush of fire painted the canopy of the trees.

As the rains fell, the toiling woodcutters
Lifted up their flutes weaving melodies in the trees.

Was it wind or an emerging gust of my own thought?
Who gives me a nameless call among the trees?

People grew restless in the safety of their houses;
While far away in the open, a storm disturbed the trees.

The call of the seasons invites my treading footstep
Into the depths of wonderful, unfamiliar trees.

What beings of other worlds inhabit the city's far side.
Go and visit dwellings concealed among the trees.

Ochre gold, crimson, blue and opal white
I have seen the palette shades quivering among the trees.

The sad queen of perfume in the forest,
For nights I have encountered among the trees.

For long, the intenseness of those eager eyes
Kept up an air of radiance in the trees.

Suddenly, the illuminating shafts of light
Turned away from settlements to the wildness of the trees.

The denizens of the woods were frightened through the night.
There was Adam's Son lurking among the trees.

Nasir Kazmi

Jurm-E-Inkaar Kii Sazaa Hii De

Nasir Kazmi

Kaun Is Rah Se Guzarta Hai

Nasir Kazmi

Kisi Kali Ne Bhi Dekha Na Ankh Bhar K Mujhe

Nasir Kazmi

Kitna Kam Kareng

Nasir Kazmi

Ko'Ii Jiye Yaa Ko'Ii Mare

Nasir Kazmi

Kuch To Ehsas E Ziyaan Tha Pahle

Nasir Kazmi

Kuch Yadgar E Shahar E Sitamgar Hi Le Chalen

Nasir Kazmi

Kya Lage Raat Ke Phir Dil Mein Samaya Koi

Nasir Kazmi

Longings

I wait for your announcement in my name..
A penalty to the crime of my defiance.

My passion does not rouse me to excess;
.. merely, the reticent pouring of your vessel.

The bleakness of the night fades with lamps.
Send me a luminous tear of the rise day.

Wombs of arid lands you have blossomed.
Give then a fertile wound upon my heart.

You light up dark settlements with candles.
Then send a guide to the desert of my soul.

A return to the voicing through an age..
O God, alas, a comrade to my thought..

Peace has dimmed the pages of my thought.
O the bleakness of separation, give me ink.

If the courage of speaking up has ebbed,
Give testimony with a silent tongue.

Nasir Kazmi

Loss

Times have put our loyalty to a tearing test.
Let us cut our hands, then. Let us sew our lips.

Events have thrown me among soulless zombies.
Their eyes hold no shine; their words are not their own.

O disregarding earth of my homeland, reply!
Where have the men for whom I search disappeared?

The candle of poets' gatherings - Lahore - has been extinguished.
The field which gave birth to our verses has been razed.

Trees with wholesome fruit have been uprooted.
Walls of soothing shades have been fallen.

Closed shops, abandoned ways, unlit.

Forbidden and forbidding nights...
No one ventures out.

Since evening, guards stroll through the lanes.

Candles are but few.
Lights are dimmed.

O Light of heart and vision, when will you reach us?
The world is going dark with your remoteness.

In short, I had to lift the bans from my pocket.
I was cautious though in the beginning of my sorrow.

In witless desperation throw your head upon a rock.
A fairy might spring up from its heart!!

The idleness of leisure is not an hour for wastage.
Let the pen sketch the features of your thought.

Nasir, there are many wishes restless in my heart,

But how can I obtain that heedless life?

Nasir Kazmi

Mumkin Nahi Mata E Sukhan Mujh Se Chin Le

Nasir Kazmi

Naaz-E-Be-Gaangii Men Kyaa Kuch Thaa

Nasir Kazmi

Nasir Kya Kahta Phirta Hai Kuch Na Suno To Behtar Hai

Nasir Kazmi

Naye Kapre Badal Kar Jaun

Nasir Kazmi

Niyat E Shauq Bhar Na Jaye Kahin

Nasir Kazmi

O! Mere Masruuf Khudaa

Nasir Kazmi

Passing Of The Night

The embers of my ache die. Come. I need to pass my night.
Prolong the hold of the dousing grief. Ease the ritual of the night.

Wailing in separation is a custom of the waning past.
Re-enact this custom, friends. Spur the flow of the leaden night.

You are the light that brings life to the chambers of my eyes and heart.
Tonight I need your marvel, friend! Come, release me from this night.

The beloved ever hurts with an indifferent unkindness.
Yet her cruel companionship might just suffice to pass this night.

This benumbing sadness is choking the breath in our chests.
Create some winds of rumors, friends; shift the burden of this night.

I have no vocation, while emptiness occupies you.
Friends! Do not leave the company. Let us stay and pass the night.

The evening yet is nascent; why did you escort our friend back home?
Call him back. We need the whole gathering to drown this heavy night.

Nasir Kazmi

Phir Sawan Rut Ki Pawan Chali Tum Yad Aye

Nasir Kazmi

Rains

The breeze of rainy season blew. I thought of you.
The clapping chain of leaves played. I thought of you.

Ducks spoke in the green sea of rolling grass.
The season full of yellow blooms arrived. I thought of you.

A crow cried in the lonely courtyard of my house.
Drops of the healing shower fell. I thought of you.

At first I screamed crying and then I laughed.

Clouds roared.
Lights flashed.
I thought of you.

Nasir Kazmi

Riverie

I remain lost in a reverie.
I am but like you.

O companion of the last spring,
This year I am alone.

In your lane, all day
I pick the pebbles of grief.

Who will hold my gaze?
I am but your mirror.

Who will light my lamp?
I am your emptied room.

Who but you shall wear me?
I am but your garment.

You... the street full of life
I am the path to jungles.

The coming season shall mourn me.
I am a breath of the dying one.

My wave and my grief to myself,
I am the river and I am deprived.

Nasir Kazmi

Safar E Manzil E Shab Yad Nahi

Nasir Kazmi

Silence

The caravan is slow, the travelers quiet.
The journey looms in a dreadful silence.

You want to speak but pronounce no words.
You see and pass like a vigilant, silent.

I sit in your path, cornered, dimmed;
Like a lonely lamp of the way, silent.

The house you had once inhabited
Now stands in the stillness of silence.

Strangers cross the lane, passing.
The doors and the walls stare, silent.

What loving people have risen from the globe.
What laughing houses snuffed to silence.

Is there someone the land waits for?
Who knows the reason for the city's silence.

The night is live, but the city slumbers.
There is a storm in the curtains, silent.

The ship is across but the journey remains.
There are whirlpools lurking, silent.

I do not fear the swell of the river.
But the sight on the banks makes me silent.

All the caravans are not yet home.
O travelers, do not sit silent.

Every moment cloaked a message.
But I have committed the crime of silence.

Nasir Kazmi

Tere Milne Ko Bekal Ho Gaye Hain

Nasir Kazmi

Teri Nigaah Ke Jadu Bikharte Jate Hain

Nasir Kazmi

Terii Zulfon Ke Bikharne Kaa Sabab Hai Ko'Ii

Nasir Kazmi

The Eve Of Separateness

The tears that I had saved for my eve of separateness
Glimmered through the dark eve as lamps.

O the comrades of my solitude! I look to you for firmness.
Here the Eve stands now, in wait, upon my doorstep.

Sparks shoot out in the dark as I raise my eye-lids.
Coals smolder just beneath the fabric of this eve.

Groping lines crawl forth from every angle of the walls.
Under every shade there is something the Eve searches.

At times there is the concern: life wants living in the daylight.
At times there is a sorrow: will I meet my Eve again?

I cannot let the Eve turn untended from my door.
Let it have a shade of my heart from the bleeding cup of eyes.

Tonight, only a dim light falls through from the Moon,
While the Eve drags its feet begging for fulfillment.

Nasir Kazmi

The Fire

I have called at the front of massacre!
I have announced the voice of my heart!

Before, I had broken a gap in the door.
This time I've shaken the foundation!

Such a tale I began at daybreak,
I have dimmed the lantern of day.

With sparks from the blaze of sorrow,
I have set my prison to flames.

The hands of the wind have wilted.
I have nourished the flowers on fire.

The Spark in the rose,
The Flare of the flute,

I have provoked all who burn.

The lost voice of forgotten eras

I have poured
In the bosom of the flute

Since the revelation of the Moon
I have roused the night tonight!

Nasir Kazmi

The Garden Of My Being

Seasons have receded from the garden of my being.
What I have observed is unsettling. Don't ask.

Your hands are disabled.
Pick the bloom of sight with lashes.

None of us possess these flowers.
Whose is the Garden? Don't ask!

The night is bleak. Hold high the lamp of thought.
Who cares for whom in the caravan? Don't ask!

Your very own confidants were ignorant of their secrets.
What multitudes I have inquired to reach you, don't ask!

Nasir Kazmi

The Jungle And The Night

This jungle with your timid tread grows my thorny memory.
If the dread of me defeats you, then move beyond my boundaries.

One moment your flower hand was laid upon my shoulder.
This moment it's me alone and a mangling bush of spines.

I can't forget the evening dark when you and I separated.
Lingering on the silent brink, your kajal* made the talk.

I remain engrossed in the fancies of a different world.
How can we move together, since you act on your reflections...

Don't stand to stare my face. Throw a glance at the bleak night.
I am your fellow-voyager old; move if you wish to come.

Nasir Kazmi

The Soothsayer

Do not give your ear to what Nasir, the maverick, has to say
The stories that a madman tells, surely, are inconsequent

The treasures of Yesterday...today they crumble all to dust
What lies in the palms of your hands today, make full of it!

This verve will disperse. The blood will cool come tomorrow.
The swell of youth is quickly spent. Do not pine in waiting.

Who knows how the wind will set. The circumstance is full of risk.
Do not remain a lonely sheep. Come, move with us in the caravan.

With changed clothes, with groomed hair, where you go and for whom?
Look at the overwhelming dark. It's not the night for rambling!

Nasir Kazmi

The Summer And The Sign

Flower, nor Wine, neither Cup;
There are no signs of the past in my hand.

The leisure of my hobby has chained me.
My caprice has no way left to fly now.

This bitter consciousness meets no remedy.
I am not intoxicated as much as I drink.

Hear it immersed in the depths of heart.
No song is indeed the song of glee.

Sorrow in every form unlocks the heart
But the gathering lacks the courage for the cries.

The breeze in the morn of pleasure says to me:
Flower is the Summer, not the Sign.

There are hues of my heart still tangled
That lie beyond the vicinity of voice.

Expanses of such deserts wait for me yet
Upon whom no camel-feet have left their mark.

These atmospheres of gloom wait to light up.
But your heart does not possess the igniting spark.

Nasir, your Heart is a mound of ash,
If it does not beat with the clang of an axe.

Nasir Kazmi

The Unraveling

Your beauty so emerges in the couplets of my ghazal,
As an unveiling Bilquees in the courtyards of Soleyman's.

Union and separation taste the same under your tyranny.
I cannot relish anymore the fruiting of forbearance.

I've entered such states in my rambles through the mountains
Where I was accompanied by the echo of a toiling axe.

The decorum of existence has required me to enter
The sphere of dry endeavor from the oasis of reflection.

The good is hand to hand with the bad every moment.
What a fervent field of battle have I entered!

Life used to gather light from their existence.
What beacons of brilliance have the cave of death entered!

Nasir Kazmi

Transcendence

Ornament to my thought... Unraveling to my heart...
I have lost that pain to which my soul aspires.

Day to day, I face the same grief and the same hope.
I wish to disengage from this wasteful sorrow.

How can I hold my life in a single vessel?
I feel the urge to fly in other skies than you.

This stupefying dream of day and night should cease.
I yearn to see some new face in the crowd.

A single wish consumes my madness like a fire:
I shall have a home not confined by doors and walls.

Except Heart, there is no such house in the whole world
Where the doors are left open and theft does not threaten.

Every speck of wasteland carries an example.
Who is there to show? There is none willing to see.

Everything speaks behind these cloaks of silence.
Alas, there is no audience. Ears here are struck.

When free, listen to the sound of the roses' glee.
This is not speech that has been uttered.

For a long past hour, someone keeps me company;
Is there anyone who can see the dialogue occur?

Rousing verse demands stimulating gathering.
Song of the pea-cock needs a flourishing forest.

Nasir Kazmi

Tu Hai Ya Tera Saya Hai

Nasir Kazmi

Udaasion Ka Samaa Mehfilon Mein Chhor Gayi..

Nasir Kazmi

Whispers

The whispers of these fearful cities tremble in the air.
The eloquence of the land merely waits for an audience.

Shivering, the long nights put to us a haunting question.
Their laden sound-like silence hisses answers.

People span the long night benumbed in sleep.
Distant, the voice of a cuckoo wastes its wisdom.

When sparrows sing in merry tones their meek songs at dawn,
A half-perceived melody contrasts the gloom of being.

When stars hold their watch upon the universe of the night,
Those sunk beyond the horizons bespeak our reversals.

At dawn, evening, midnight; in ever-changing robes
The breeze of my turning world whistles a harbinger.

We are visitors;
And this' our place of sojourn.

O you visitors, do you hear what your sojourn whispers?

Be wakeful...
Be wakeful...
Be wakeful...

Or will we disregard the counsel of the traveling bell?

Nasir!
These tumultuous times reverberate with warnings.
People's cries bring about undoable upheavals.

Nasir Kazmi

Wo Dil Nawaz Hai Nazar Shanas Nahi

Nasir Kazmi

Wo Sahilon Pe Gane Wale Kya Hue

Nasir Kazmi

Yaas Men Jab Kabhii Aansuu Niklaa

Nasir Kazmi

Ye Bhi Kya Sham E Mulaqat Ai

Nasir Kazmi

Zaban Sukhan Ko, Sukhan Bankpan Ko Tarsega

Nasir Kazmi