

Classic Poetry Series

Rahi Masoom Raza
- poems -

Publication Date:

2012

Publisher:

Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Rahi Masoom Raza(1 September 1925 - 15 March 1992)

Rahi Masoom Reza (Hindi: राही मासूम रेजा), born in Ghazipur in eastern Uttar Pradesh (India) in a Muslim family, was a famous Urdu shayar. He also won the Filmfare Best Dialogue Award for the hit film Main Tulsi Tere Aangan Ki in 1979. He also wrote in Hindustani and Hindi language. He was also an eminent lyricist of Bollywood.

 Early Life and Education

Rahi Masoom Raza was born on September 1, 1925, in Ghazipur district of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, India.

He completed his early education in and around Ghazipur from where he went to Aligarh Muslim University to complete his higher studies. Masoom Raza did his doctorate in Hindustani Literature and pursued his career in literature.

 Literary Career

He wrote the script and dialogues for a popular TV serial, Mahabharat. The TV serial was based on the epic, the Mahabharata. The serial became one of the most popular TV serial of India, and its peak Television Rating was around 86%.

Several works of Raza vividly depict the agony and turmoil of the consequences of partition, and its effect on the Hindu-Muslim relationship in the Indian subcontinent, as also the social tension among different social groups of India but above that Raza depicts the life in feudal India and the ordinary happiness, love, emotions, pain, sadness of general people in his master story telling style in which at times he himself is the narrator. For instance, his novel named "Adha Gaon" (divided village/split village) narrates the story of two opposite land lord Muslim families of village Ganguali and their rivalry, life style, concerns, at the time when India was gaining independence, spread with depiction of ordinary life of every character of that novel and their love, romance, hate, vengeance, emotional struggle with every emotion of a ordinary man very clearly and vividly described. The Novel "Adha Gaon" is based on central theme that people whether elite or belonging to general class of both Hindu & Muslims were sharing same land, water and air like brothers with all their human qualities and weaknesses but communal rivalry was not that much prominent then the mutual relationship between the both the communities in United Provinces at the time of Indian

Partition. In "Adha Gaon" Raza paints a very colourful picture of 1940's rural India showing interdependence of Muslim & Hindus on each other be it may be in form of relationship between two landlords or relationship between master and servants (right hand man of a Muslim Zamindar is a Hindu and best friend is also a Hindu Zamindar). Theme of novel is that, that before politics tore us away we (Hindu and Muslim) were one nation, Hindustan.

Katra Bi Arzoo (that is, The Lady Desire locality or The Lady Arzoo locality) is set in the city of Allahabad, Katra being a locality of the city. The novel is set in 1970's India and as its central theme it bares the brutality of emergency in India and how general people were affected by such a draconian regime. Its an ode to anti emergency activist and shows how people through their vested interest enjoyed the fruits of emergency and how emergency ruined and destroyed the life's people. In foreword Raza dedicates the novel to anti-emergency activists and say that freedom of speech is basic novel shakes the conscience of every reader and by the time one ends the novel he is in tears.

Another novel, named Topi Shukla also revolves around the acts and conducts of devilish politicians of India min character topi shukla being metaphor for Indian politician.

In his "Neem ka Ped" Raza tells the story of a "asami" i.e. tenant/serf and labourer and his landlord master, story starting in pre-independent India and ending in post independent India, showing the vagaries of both the feudal and democratic systems in India with its darker side. The main protagonist is a landless labourer who is very faithful and obedient to his master and dreams only of making his only son an educated person. Fortunes dwindle in landlords home and he is sentenced to jail for murder of a upcoming leader of congress because of manipulations of his cousin who is also a landlord but nurses a grudge against the landlord. After independence son of labourer becomes a member of parliament and son of landlord his trusted aid and advisor but as the saying is "power corrupts" the son of labourer who had now become an M.P. gets corrupt and selfish and in that is destroyed. Highly popular T.V. serial by same name was made on these novel in which Pankaj Kapoor marvellously depicted the landless labourer.

The pop sensation of yesteryears Parvati Khan is his daughter-in-law. She is married to his son Nadeem Khan, director and cinematographer.

Dil Ke Ujle Kagaz Par Ham Kaisa Geet Likhe

Rahi Masoom Raza

Hamm To Hai Pardesh Me, Desh Me Nikla Hoga Chand

Rahi Masoom Raza

Jinse Ham Chhoot Gaye

Rahi Masoom Raza

Strange Roads Of The Strange City

Strange roads of the strange city
kept smiling on my loneliness

for long time I wandered there
for long time you came to my mind

hardships came, hardships I suffered
I lived daily as if I had breathed out

Life kept on testing me
I kept on testing my life

So on and so forth I lived my life
What was wrong me, you didn't like?

I was ready to give my life for you
Money not love was of value to you

I wish I had never met you
No I cannot live without you

Take me back my darling
All my life I'll be a serf to you

Kiss your rear no matter what you do
My heart has now for ever fallen for you

O my poor bastardly heart, I am
Suffering now only because of you!

- Added verses and translation by Ravi Kopra

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