

Classic Poetry Series

Yaas Yagana Changezi
- poems -

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Yaas Yagana Changezi(1883 /1884 - 02 February 1956)

Mirza Yaas Yagana Changezi (Urdu: میرزا یاس یگانہ چانگیزی), was one of the most important Urdu poets of the twentieth century and indeed among the masters of Urdu poetry. Real name was Mirza Wajid Hussain (chronological name Mirza Fazl ali Baig).

 Early Life and Education

Yass Yagana Chengezi was born in Azeemabad, now Patna (Bihar) in 1884 (according to some sources 1883). He was a bright student and always won scholarships but he couldn't go beyond entrance examination that he passed from Calcutta University. At an early period of his life he shifted to Matyaburj, in Calcutta, where he became the tutor of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's grandson Mirza Muqem and his children. But the climate of Matyaburj did not suit him and he returned to Azeemabad and later shifted to Lucknow. In the beginning he used the pen name 'Yaas' meaning despair, and addressed himself as Yaas Azeemabadi, but changed it later on to 'Yagana' (meaning unique), and became Yagana Lackhnawi and finally Yagana Changezi. He considered himself from the Changezi mughal lineage. He was sixth in the generation of his ancestors who migrated from Iran during Mughal era. According to author of the foreword to his first poetry collection *Nashtar-e-Yaas*, two brothers Hasan Ali Baig Chughtai and Murad Ali Baig Chughtai came from Iran, and became part of Mughal court, one of whom got the jagir of Azeemabad and settled there. He was in the lineage of Mirza Hasan Baig Chughtai.

He was an iconoclast and rebellious by nature. Seeing Ghalib's extreme veneration, he took to demolishing Ghalib's iconic status and that earned him hostility of his contemporaries in Lucknow and elsewhere. He was ostracized and harassed for his views and writings. Finally he was declared apostate and went through extreme kind of humiliation at the hands of people in Lucknow. The place and people he had so fondly adopted that he changed his Name from Yaas Azeemabadi to Yagana Luckhnawi. He himself writes:

"Watan ko chhod kar jis sar zameen se dil lagaya tha
Wohi abkhoon ki pyaasi hui hai Karbala ho kar"

(Having left the motherland, gave heart to the place which has now become

thirsty of my blood like Karbala).

 Work and Contribution

Yagana's first collection of poetry was *Nashtar-i-Yaas*, which appeared in 1914 when he was 30 years of age,. His second collection was *Aayat-i-Wijdani*, which was published in 1927. In 1933 came *Tarana*, and in the years 1934 and 1945, the second and third edition of *Aayat-i-Wijdani* appeared. Each edition of *Aayat-i-Wijdani* was a bit enlarged, in 2003 *Kulliyat-i-Yagana* was compiled by Pakistani scholar and writer Mushfiq Khwaja and has the opinion that Yagana or his publishers appeared to be naive regarding the art of presentation. Thus, Yagana has four collections of poems to his credit: *Nishtar-i- Yaas* (1914), *Tarana* (1933), *Aayat-i-Wijdani* (1927) and *Ganjina* (1948), besides his works in prose, including *Ghalib-Shikan*.

In 1946, Sajjad Zaheer persuaded Yagana to prepare his *Kulliyat* so that it could be published by the publication house of the Communist Party of India — *Qaumi Darul Ishaat*, Bombay. Yagana agreed and the *Kulliiyat* saw the light of the day. "This collection, however, proved to be so unwholesome that we could consider it a major tragedy. Some couplets were added and some corrected (rather changed to the extent that Yagana lost his cool and blew up)".

According to novelist, short story writer and columnist Intezar Husain, "Mushfiq Khwaja has done a great job. He has managed to pull out a poetic genius from the oblivion where he had been pushed by his hostile contemporaries. They saw to it that he was personally humiliated as a poet. His uncompromising attitude in respect of his literary opinions and his unorthodox thinking in matters of religion made their task easy. While still alive, he was consigned to the grave along with his poetry. His poetic work remained unpublished. Most of us had heard of him only as a crackpot with no respect for the greats of Urdu poetry."

Thus, Yagana was not only an important poet he was immensely gifted poetic genius, equal only to masters of poetry like Mir, Ghalib, and Iqbal, whose contemporaries could not accept his writings and ideas and he was not well taken rather misunderstood and misinterpreted by his detractors. His following couplets which are referred to as anti-religion are in no way a statement against religion and Persian and Urdu poetry is full of similar kind of verses.

Khudi ka nasha charhha, aap main raha na gaya
Khuda banay thay Yagana, magar bana na gaya
Sab terey siwa kafir, Aakhir iss ka matlab kya
Sar phira dey insaan ka, Aisa khabt-e-mazhab kya

The compilation of Kulliyat-e-Yagana by Mushfiq Khwaja is considered to be an event of significant literary importance and resurrection of the great poet to his deserving status in Urdu literature.

** Death**

He died on the night of 2 February 1956 after battling through long illness and loneliness in later years of his life. According to Najeebuddin Jamal while quoting Malik Ram, a famous Urdu Scholar says that Yagana had lost his mental balance in his later years and held Yagana's contemporaries and people of Lucknow responsible for it. Yagana himself was aware of the condition and wrote about it in one of his letters.

Ilm Kyaa Ilm Kii Haqiqat

Yaas Yagana Changezi

Mujhe Dil Kii Khataa Par 'Yaas' Sharmaanaa Nahii.N Aataa

Yaas Yagana Changezi

Shama Gul Ho Gayi, Dil Bujh Gaya Parvane Ka

Yaas Yagana Changezi