



The versatile poetess: Habba Khatoon

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Abstract

Kashmir produced so many poets and poetesses, but few of them got name and fame because of their unique style of poetry. 16th century witnesses most traditional 'lol lyrics' of folk literature produced by a remarkable poetess and who became last queen of independent Kashmir - HABBA KHATOON (Zoon).

Keywords: versatile poetess, Habba Khatoon, pampore, Kashmir

Introduction

Famous for saffron cultivation Pampore at a distance of ten miles away from Srinagar. Near Pampore a village is situated namely Chandrahara, this village has historical importance because it is birth place of remarkable poetess -Habba Khatoon, hailed from a poor peasant family. It seems incredible; too from far off and high land area she was given education by her parent. When she became literate she took interest in reciting poems of famous poets of Kashmir, this wit generated in her zeal for writing, composing and singing her own poetry. She was encouraged by parent, it seems that her parent were having great perception and observation of things that they kept sarcastic comments of people aside and managed to impart education for her daughter. And Habba Khatoon had something eternal to receive education whole heartedly. Regarding her education Habba Khatoon herself divulges:

Kashmiri version: "Meil maji treiveness sabqus dooray
Aukhoonun wolnum moray paan
Ari rus tulnum nari tamboory
Kansi ma raven shoorey paan"^[1].

English version: "My parent sent me far enough to get education

*But I was terribly beaten by my Teacher
Not having any sympathy
By his beating my body was crumbled down
Let no one lose her days of youth as that of Mine"*

Tragic Married Life of Habba Khattoon

When she was making her career, the fame became punishment for her, because by her fame her parents scared and married her off with a boy who was not right match for "Habba" she was tortured by her in-laws. Her husband, felt ashamed when she was appreciated by anyone for her singing. Her husband's home was ill-suited for her, while passing through a period of physical torture and acute mental agony^[2], she expressed all this in these verses:

Kashmiri version: "Varivan seith vari chhus nu
Chari kar meon malinav ho
Gari bi drayees abi natees
Noet mi photmo malinav ho
Ya detav nati nota, nate
Nati chia hari malinav"^[3].

English version "I'm unhappy in my husband's home
Relieve me from suffering my father's clan
I went to fetch water from stream
The earthen pot broke, my noble parents
Pay for it, I entreat you
O else get new one to replace it...."

Moreover, it is mentioned in every book, which has literature about Habba khattoon that she had very melodious voice. she has been given a title: "Nightingale of Kashmir". It has been told that she wrote compose and sung her songs herself. It is said that one day while Habba was singing on terraced paddy field absorbed in herself, she caught the eyes of prince Yousuf Shah Chak who fell in love with melodious voice of Habba Khatoon and when he asked her who she was, she reciprocate in quatrain:.

Prince Yousuf: "sander drayakh chhalet ti chuketh rood ma wali lolo"

(The beauty has come out with great attire I fear the storm rushing the rain)

Habba Khatoon: "Aye padshahaw dil thaw saf thaph karey lo lo"
O' Prince Take heart, banish all fear and fright for soon
The sun will run the cloak of night.)

Prince-"Sunder assan kati chhui ghari lo lo"
(Oh sweet pearl where is your home?)

Habba Khatoon- "Aye padshaho boni chanerehar pathi chanderihari lo lo"

(Uphill and down dale in chandharhara)

Prince: "sunder shubakh padshahgari lolo"

(Your place is in a prince's palace)

Habba Khatoon "aye padshahaw yas bagia ayas sukay kari lolo"^[4].

(How can I go away from whom wedded am I?)

Her melodious voice, innate etiquettes and this conversation left a great impact on Prince Yousuf Shah Chak. And it was not impossible for Yousuf Shah to secure her divorce, the destiny brought a peasant women working in fields to royal abode as a beloved wife of Prince Yousuf Shah Chak. It was happiest period in Habba's life. Yousuf Shah Chak gave her full freedom to carry her talent⁵. Habba Khatoon composed scores of songs many of which are extinct. She invented two famous Muqams in Sofiana Mosique e.g. Rast-i-Kashmiri and Gazal-i-Kashmiri.

Habba Khatoon's Contribution to Kashmiri poetry

Habba Khatoon had received Persian and Quranic education she had innate disposition in Kashmiri language; she was exceptionally gifted when it was era of ignorance. Habba contributed her best to Kashmiri poetry she has uninterrupted flow in Kashmiri language, when Persian was court language of the time. Her poetry unveils the language and the emotions of the common masses and divulges all sort of passion ting passion, melody, tenderness which was comprehensible by masses. It is quite acceptable that the poet feels much pleasurable and ecstatic while dealing with his/her native language.

Habba Khatoon was trying to convey a universal message of love and humanity through poetry. She belongs to the category of such poets who without being influenced by spiritual poetry, through their poetry expressed the emotions and experience of common man. The greatness of Habba Khatoon lies in that, being under the threat of facts and furies of life she did not give herself to cruel circumstances and maintaining the dignity of poetry. It is true she didn't keep herself completely aloof in preaching the morality of life and self-sacrifice, in her famous renowned poem:

*Kashmiri "Maliney ghari no din guzaree
Varivav laguiv per periyee"*

Meaning: "The days spend in this world are worthless
I wish return to real world hereafter"

Here she appears to be influenced by the spiritual poetry. In this song it was emphasised that human struggle in this short duration is useless and what is eternal life after death. She was not completely discarded life but gave due importance to it. Habba Khatoon's life was full of worries she vigorously accepted it. In the galaxy of poets she was a shining star who gave much emphasis on human love and brotherhood.

Reference

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