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PROMINENT AUTOBIOGRAPHIES IN URDU (AN ANALYTICAL STUDY)

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ABSTRACT

An autobiography is a well-known and reliable genre of prose literature of Urdu. Under this, the celebrities tell the real story of their life's ups and downs without any reduction. The purpose of writing an autobiography is self-revelation and this is only possible if the writer is truthful and honest. Wherever truth is lost, Autobiography's art does not reach the heights of art. In this article, an analytical study of five best autobiographies in Urdu is presented; namely "Zarguzasht" by Mushtaq Ahmad Yousufi, "Shahab Nama" by Qudrat ullah Shahab, "Yaadon Ki Barat" by Josh Malihabadi, "Jahan-e-danish" by Ehsan Danish and Mirza Adeeb's "Mitti Ka Diya". These five autobiographies are of special importance in Urdu literature.

Autobiography is the name given to the writing that encapsulates the personal life story of the writer. Autobiography is not only a collection of situations and events but also an interpreter of the writer's point of view with the help of his emotions and feelings. A writer usually starts writing autobiography when he has collected enough material to compose a perfect autobiography so that the readers can also benefit from his life's successes and failures.

There can be some other forms of autobiography like diary, reportage and travelogue etc. Even in these forms of autobiography, the writer presents the

situations and events of his daily life in front of the readers by wrapping them in the cord of feelings. The history of Urdu literature is not very old. But in spite of this, the wonderful and unforgettable autobiographies have come to the fore in Urdu literature so far. Among them "Zargasht" by Mushtaq Ahmad Yousufi, "Shahab Nama" by Qudratullah Shahab, "Yadon ki Barat" by Josh Malih Abadi, "Jehan-e-Danish" by Ehsan Danish and "Mitti ka Diya" by Mirza Adeb.

Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi (1921-2018) is an Indian-born Pakistani humorist of Urdu literature. He was born in India, but as a mood writer, he preferred to call himself Pakistani. He was awarded the "Sitar-e-Imtiaz" by the Government of Pakistan in 1999 and the academic award "Nishan-e-Imtiaz" in 2002. He was a banker by profession, but turned his attention to humorism. As soon as Yousufi's name comes to the tongue, his comic style is embodied in front of the eyes. His autobiography titled "Zargasht" was published in 1976. In his autobiography, he presented his vows in a humorous manner. For this reason, this autobiography can also be called a humorous autobiography. It consists of twelve chapters with each chapter given a humorous title.

The first chapter, "Tazak Yusufi", is a case study written in a humorous style that tells the story of his bank job. In this regard, Dr. Muhammad Raza writes: "This autobiography is the story of the few years of Mushtaq Yousufi's life when he joined the United Bank Limited of Karachi in 1950 and was made its President in 1974." (1)

He narrates his experiences and observations in the banking sector from 1950 to 1974 in a very interesting manner and adopts a sarcastic and humorous tone. Like a cartoonist, he draws a character in such a way that the reader can't resist smiling and laughing. Bank-manager Anderson introduces himself as:

"A very handsome Englishman appeared on the front chair. The head was oval and the hand was as clean and smooth as the reflection of a fan so clear that its blades could be counted. Like today's fans, the central part of that fan was not flat at the bottom, but it had a cow's tail beak protruding from it, which was apparently used so that if the fan fell on the head, the skull would not be smashed, but in it a clean cow's tail should be pierced. Later, I often thought that if there were hair on the head, then there would definitely be a difference in its appearance and beauty." (2)

Along with human sketching, he seems to be able to depict the environment with great success. Due to which a vivid scene appears in front of the reader. By describing this brief period of seven years, he presents to the reader all the merits and demerits of his tenure. In this regard, Wahajuddin Alvi writes:

"From a cursory study of Zargasht, it is really felt that this comical feat does not serve any other useful purpose than expansion, and of course the overall situation is not even more than that, but if you look carefully, it partially contains those feelings and the events are also clearly visible in the inter-stories, with the help of which we can feel some vibrations of the author's

sadness and some of the deprivations of life behind the smile of the author."
(3)

The way Mushtaq Ahmad Yousufi has described the bitter experiences of his life in the veil of humor is very interesting because of the comic style found in it.

The second is "Shihab Nama" by Qudratullah Shahab (1917-1986), which has an important place in Urdu literature. Qudratullah Shahab was a prominent Urdu writer and bureaucrat of Pakistan, born in Gilgit. He received his primary education in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and in Mauza Chamkur of Ambala district. He did MA in English from Government College, Lahore. Later, he joined the Indian Civil Services in 1941. The establishment of Pakistan Writers Guild is the result of his efforts. His autobiography titled "Shahab Nama" came out in 1987, a year after his death. Shihab Nama is a historical account of the background of the freedom movement of the Muslims of the subcontinent, the demand for Pakistan, the establishment of Pakistan and the history of Pakistan, which is told through the language of real characters. In 893 pages, this autobiography looks thick but feels very short to read. Qudratullah Shahab has based this book on the truth, in this regard he writes in the beginning of the book:

"I have endeavored, with the utmost care, to present the facts as nearly as possible in the color in which they appear to me." (4)

While reading "Shahab Nama", one gets the impression that every line and phrase is immersed in the sauce of truth. The Shehab Nama is generally divided into four parts:

1. God's Childhood and Education
2. Admission and tenure in ICS
3. Opinions about Pakistan
4. Religious and spiritual experiences and observations

"Shahab Nama" is just like a novel when one reads from the beginning to the end, but there is no fictional glimpse of the described situations and events. In terms of style, this autobiography can be considered as the best autobiography of its kind. In it all kinds of events are described for private, emotional, romantic, spiritual, family, social, political, historical, office, national, domestic, international, intellectual, academic, literary and ideological purposes. Then there is the mention of men from ordinary barons, servants and cobblers to famous scholars and heads of states. In the unique style of writing and charming style of narration, even the smallest events and ordinary people are included in the heart and mind of the reader. He has reflected the situation on the page of the paper in such a way that the future generations will be able to derive a lot from it. For example:

"When I entered my name in the register, Chandrawati narrowed her eyes and stared at me intently and then beamed, 'Well, you're the dark horse who won

the English Eassy prize?' The picture was printed in big frame in the newspapers, but it doesn't look like it when viewed." (5)

Autobiography is a difficult genre because there are opportunities for self-incrimination, so a good writer has to be very careful on such occasions. For example, Qudratullah Shahab does not say anything about his horsemanship during ICS training, but gives all the credit to the horse:

"At the sound of the gallop, my horse automatically started to run fast. He also skilfully overcame the obstacles on the way. Finally, when the colonel gave the order to make the figure of eight, my horse cut such a beautiful circle and made the English figure of eight that the examiner congratulated me and passed with good marks." (6)

Instead of using heavy, foreign and inarticulate language, they have used simple language. Qualities like humour, high characterization and brevity are the jewel of this autobiography. Apart from these, a deep cut of satire is also characteristic of him, which has depth as well as sarcasm. It has different colors. These colors include sketching, landscape, biographical, historiographical and epistemic colors. The prose of Shahab Nama has all the qualities that adorn a masterpiece of prose.

One of the prominent and best autobiographies among Urdu autobiographies is Josh Malih Abadi's autobiography "Yaado Ki Barat". The original name of the revolutionary poet Josh Malih Abadi (1898-1982) is Shabir Hasan Khan. He is a famous and capable poet of Urdu. "Yaado ki Barat" is an interesting autobiography written by him, which excels in Urdu autobiographies. The interest of the book is more in the sense that in it the author openly discusses his virtues as well as his weaknesses, shortcomings, wanderings, misguidances, transgressions, sins and associations. In this book, the author repeatedly goes into the past while taking a dream trip. With the help of this nostalgic technique, they seem to find solutions to the problems. This is the testimony of seventy years of experiences and observations of the author of autobiography, in which thought and vitality, madness and wisdom, color and red-faced lips are mentioned. Regarding the importance of this autobiography, Dr. Muhammad Umar Raza in his book "Biographical Literature in Urdu: Art and Tradition" sums it up as follows:

"After Yusuf Hussain Khan's autobiography, numerous autobiographies were published in Urdu, but Josh Malih Abadi's memoirs, which came out in 1970, have special importance." (7)

This autobiography of Josh is also distinguished among other autobiographies because he has not limited himself to the description of his qualities but has also openly described his shortcomings. Briefly, in "Yaado Ki Barat" the author's birth, childhood, family conditions, education and training, love, poetry, seeking knowledge and philanthropy etc. have been openly expressed. But with all these details there is also an element of nudity. Dr. Mohammad Umar Raza further writes:

“He seems to combine the series of aesthetic poetry with love. Although realism has been employed, cynicism has prevailed... Wherever Josh mentions his relationships, they have crossed the border of vulgarity and seem to undermine the art of autobiography. (8)

In the above reference, the author does not seem to establish any special boundary between love and adultery. The existence of a woman in autobiography is only for the fulfillment of sensual desire. But despite this shortcoming, the manner in which Lucknow society and culture is described in autobiography is commendable. On this too, the author's personality is overshadowed everywhere. In "Yaado ki Barat" the author has used a lot of words. He uses words like colors on a canvas to depict facts and events. Whole memoir looks like a novel. Although the style of this autobiography is opposite to art of biography, still it has played an important role in promoting language and expression. If it is said that the popularity of "Yaado Ki Barat" is due to its charming language and style, then it will not be wrong. See:

"Right now I was jocund and joyful in the joyous company of spring that I lost all the fun. Zahoor Ali Khan told me that Muhammad Sher Khan, you have been called by Khan Sahib Bahadur (my father). I was stunned. Shattered with tears, I was broken with dedication and peace..." (9)

Therefore, it will not be out of place to say that "Yaado Ki Barat" is such a unique poem whose prose has the flavor of poetry.

The autobiography of Ehsan Danish (1914-1982) can be considered as an important addition to Urdu prose. Real name Ehsan-ul-Haq, pen name Ehsan Danish and he was a famous poet of Urdu. Ehsan Danish was a primary pass poet who earned his living by working hard all his life. This hard work fueled his poetry. This is the reason why in Urdu literature he is also known as "Shaar-i-Mazdoor". His autobiography is unique and high in many respects. The events described in it and mentions of poets and writers are unique in terms of style. The luster of this precious gem could not be dimmed even by the tyranny of the age because the status of this book can be considered like a bouquet decorated with different colors. In addition to history and biography, social highlights, critical aspects and sketching, there is an element of interest from the beginning to the end that binds the readers.

Born in a poor family, this person growing up in poverty and selfishness and pride of riches, describes and tolerates the cruelties of the exploitative forces in such a way that the reader seems to be moving towards his destination with him. The heart cannot be affected.

"Jehan-i Danesh" is an excellent work in many respects, but in many places it feels as if the author has adopted a fictional style. In such situations, exaggeration is suspected. For example, Shami was a prostitute with whom Ehsan Danish's relationship is an important part of the book. It feels strange to see that the writer has an affair with a prostitute and the family keeps quiet about the matter despite knowing about it. In such a situation, it is a strange logic for the family not to protest. In one place he writes:

"Many times people complained to my parents, but my father did not give importance to anyone's suspicions. In reply, he only said that even if he is on a wrong path, it will end with him. Does youth ever trust the experiences of others..." (10)

Regardless, the whole book is full of interest and colour. From the beginning to the end, you can find charming examples of composition in autobiography. The author himself is a linguist and the quality of the language of his writing is also a testament to this.

Ehsan Danish belonged to Kandhala area of Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh. Generally, it has been seen that the people belonging to UP consider themselves as "linguists" and consider themselves as "eloquent" while they consider others as non-eloquent and other languages as inferior. The same feeling is more or less found in "Ihsan-e-Danshan" too. Similarly, his style is very fluent like the statement of a native speaker. Along with the features of composition, rare similes and metaphors also come to light. From which a new world is expressed. This thing has made the style of Ehsan Danesh too attractive. Simplicity, fluency, smoothness and charm are found in his prose. Since he was a poet, he has also used poetic techniques to create beauty in his writing and has used poetic devices.

Although the style of "Jehan-e-Danesh" is narrative, but at some time, style has enhanced the beauty of the writing by adopting a dialogue style. It seems that the entire book is unique in terms of characterization, plot and emotions. There is not a single line of "Jehan-e-Danesh" (Volume I) and "Jehan-i Idhar" (Volume II) which is not filled with these characteristics. Many similes are found in the mention of his beloved:

"She was a little taller than me, but she had sweet-colored syrupy eyes, a pointed nose, eyebrows like an onion and a slender body. When she spoke, it seemed that an invisible pleasure was touching the heart from the ears." (11)

Wherever Shami is mentioned in "Jehan-e-Danesh", Ehsan Danish has described it by covering it in the cloak of purity. Dr Syed Abdullah writes:

"In the world of knowledge, the representative of love is always seen as a tall person and a civilized person. We do not see him being a beast anywhere." (12)

Ehsan Danish's small sentences have the pleasure of literature and poetry that quenches the thirst of the reader's taste. Color and charm of the content are characteristic of every biography and readers enjoy it like a novel, fiction and drama. The author of "Jehan-e-Danesh" is also familiar with the mood of words and the master of techniques. It was not difficult for him to create an element of interest, but he has presented the observations and impressions in such a simple way that there is a beauty in the simple way.

Mirza Adeeb's (1914-1999) autobiography "Matti Ka Diya" is a very important in Urdu literature. "Matti Ka Diya" was first published in July 1981.

Before its publication, some parts of it were published in different literary magazines and journals like Sayara Digest, Urdu Digest and Mah-e-Noo. The early chapters of the autobiography mention his childhood, education, parents, other family members and home environment. Love and devotion are mixed in this memoir. Just one example can show how much devotion he had to his mother. He has been mentioned by Mirza Adeeb with deep emotions and has highlighted every corner of her life. Her temperament, character, likes and dislikes are mentioned with great love. He has not only presented a sketch of his mother but has also showered flowers of his love and deep devotion on her through words and beautiful sentences. For example:

"My mother is not in this world, but whose hand is it that starts moving slowly on my head in a crowd of disappointments. Whose fingers are these that touch my wet cheeks and all my tears dry. Whose face is this that rises in darkness and scatters light in all directions" (13)

Mirza Adeeb was primarily a creator, so his creative and literary journey is also seen in detail in his autobiography. He creates a legendary and symbolic atmosphere in his style. In this regard, Dr. Muhammad Umar Raza writes:

"In this autobiography, which includes creative style and linguistic features, the era of Mirza Adeeb in which the various literary movements and trends were going on and other political, social and cultural and social situations and events have become prominent with their entire existence." (14)

In the discussed autobiography, Mirza Adeeb has shown the Lahore of his era with all its charm. The cultural and social conditions of Lahore have been presented in a very interesting manner. Apart from this, he has openly shed light on the political and social layers of his family and era. He writes in one place under the topic of "Remembering Old Lahore":

"Wrestlers' wrestling was a very prominent feature of old Lahore. The features of this man who was called 'Talliwala' are still in front of my eyes. A few days before a Dangal (wrestling match), this person would pass through the bazaars of Lahore playing 'Talli' with a drummer and describe the details of the wrestling matches that were going to take place.

Mushtaq Baje Wala Patha Balaqi Wahlawan will wrestle with Meena Darzi Patha Maida Amritsarye." (15).

Overall, Mirza Adeeb's autobiography is unique and unique in terms of artistic style. Being an expert in landscape painting, through people's hobbies, their means of entertainment and other festivals, they present not only a beautiful image of Lahore of this era but also a picture of hundreds of colors of love.

In terms of language and expression, "Matti Ka Diya" can be described as an interesting poem, the style of which is narrative. Symbolism, dialogue and similes and metaphors have been used at several places to make the events more impactful and to create emphasis in the narrative. Sketching and landscape painting have given flavors to autobiography. At many places, a

fictional atmosphere seems to be established regarding the narration of events in autobiography, but its effect is not so much that autobiography is thought of as a fictional literature. For example, Agha Shorush Kashmiri writes:

"We both started walking on a long street to the right. Then they reached some distance and entered another street. This street was also on the right side. The tall swarthy boy entered a gate and disappeared within a minute. I sat on a bed in the hall inside the gate and waited for him to come. A considerable part of this bed (charpai) was hanging down and touching the ground." (16)

Mirza Adeeb excelled in presenting landscape and sketching together. By which the reader would think that he is seeing all these events and persons in front of his eyes. Therefore, "Matti Ka Diya" can be given a unique place among Urdu's representative autobiographies.

Although a lively and rich tradition of biographical literature and autobiography exists in Urdu literature, there is still a need for complete biographies in terms of style and art, except for a few. In Urdu prose, there is a need to draw attention to the fact that in order to keep alive the tradition of autobiography, opportunities for new experiences should be provided in it so that the art of autobiography comes out in a more refined way and becomes the center of attention of the readers.

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