



Firaq Gorakhpuri: Exploring His Poetic Manifesto and Allahabad's Symbolic Realm

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ABSTRACT

Raghupati Sahay was a celebrated artist of verses in the Urdu poetic canon whose name and fame do not require the support of critical commendation. The solitude and an unvarying hunt for loveliness and beauty are recurring themes in his lyrical writing that made him an admired versifier of Urdu poetry in the world he belonged to. He very intensely believed that somehow he was detached and separated from beauty and loveliness, and this was perhaps in all possibility that he chose the word, 'Firaq', which stands for 'separation/quest' as his penname or his takhallus.

Firaq is an exceptional elegiac personality who can channel his displeasure and discontentment in life into imaginative and poetic channels. In spite of his short temper, which should not be considered a key fault in his character, his creative efforts have engraved an enduring place for himself in the Urdu poetic Canon.

Firaq Gorakhpuri, like his precursors Ghalib, Mir Taki Mir, Miraji, and modern poets Majaz Lucknowi and Jigar Moradabadi, attained primary critical regard in his expedition for beauty. The places that connect this legend in his growth process, like his hometown Gorakhpur and his growth town Allahabad, have also left a moulding impression on his personality and his poetry. It is challenging to differentiate whether these cities have caused him to become what he is or it is he who has left an eternal mark on these cities.

This paper will study the lane taken by this renowned poetic in attaining lifetime acknowledgment in Urdu poetry, and how the cultural grounds of Allahabad cultivated and transform Raghupati Sahay into Firaq Gorakhpuri.

Raghupati Sahay was born in 1896 in a Kayastha family of Gorakhpur in his father's house, Lakshmi Bhavan. he was not just a renowned poet of Urdu. Still, he had many feathers to his crown; along with his poetry, he was also a well-known prose writer and a highly acclaimed critic. He fits into that clusters of poets whose verses makes his addressees fall into the space of breathing and sip in the miraculous healing words. The sweetness of Urdu falls naturally in his poetry because Urdu was primarily the language of that part of U.P. to which he belonged and mainly because his family was Kayastha and their daily driving language was Urdu. Actually, before 1947, Urdu was the language of the middle class. As it is perceived today that Urdu is the language of religion or country, it was always a language of the region, not cast or religion. The roots of his poetry were elevated by the composite culture of Ganga Jumna tehzeeb, and Lakshmi Bhavan was an ideal example where his brothers were also writing poetries. On the one hand, the women of his family were more associated with Hindu rituals. On the other hand, he had poet friends like Reyaz Kharabadi, who says in his verses:

“vo galya yaad ati hain javani jin mein khoi thi,
Badhi hasrat se lab par lavze Gorakhpur ata hai”.

Then, he gradually shifted to Kanpur and finally to Allahabad. Allahabad became the hunting ground for him. As we all know, every artist needs a proper ambience for his growth, and Allahabad served a proper poetic meal for his literary nourishment. Allahabad was not only the meeting point of Ganga Jumna and Saraswati, but it was also a place where Hindi and Urdu met, and we all know that the story of Urdu can only be completed with the inclusion of Hindi, and even Hindi is complete with Urdu, and Raghupati Sahay embraced both languages to create poetic mastery. Hindi met him in the embodiment of Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Surya Kant Tripathi, Mahadevi Varma, Shri Krishna Das, and poets like Viram Chand Tendon. This is how Firaq Gorakhpuri was blessed with the atmosphere where he can walk into the literary gallery, which started with ancient Hindi culture to the modern Hindi ethos, and this is the reason why in the poetries of Firaq, a new tradition of Urdu can be found which is very different from the Persian tradition of poetry writing. This was the Urdu which took birth in India or which was more hindostaniyet in its proposition, and that is the reason why the Indianness which is found in Firaq Gorakhpuri's poetry is because of this choice of language that does not have any affiliation with Persian or even Arabic. There are many anecdotes built around him to tell the real story of his affluent academic environment and his humour and wittiness. Once, a person came down to his Bank Road bungalow, and after some time, Firaq told him you had wasted my time; it would have been more fruitful if I had talked to my gardener than you. He was a great conversationalist, spending most of his afternoon in the coffee house in Allahabad. And whenever he was there, whether it was judges, lawyers or ordinary people, they used to steer their chairs near Firaq. He used to talk to them for hours and hours, and if somebody asked him if you should rest, he used to reply that it was not he who was speaking, but instead, his mind was breathing. Another fascinating example of his conversational ability is when the first prime minister, Pandit Nehru, came to Allahabad after independence, and Firaq Gorakhpuri met him. His name, R. Sahay, was written by the receptionist on a piece of paper, and he was asked to wait outside, so he felt insulted. After 15 minutes, he loudly scolded the receptionist and said that I was here on Nehru's invitation, and before this, nobody ever stopped me. Listening to the noise, Pandit Nehru came out and said, “Firaq, why are you standing outside?” he quietly went inside. Nehru started remembering the old days and was tossing the old romances, and suddenly, he noticed that Raghupati Sahay was only listening to his

stories and was not participating; he asked him, “Raghupati, are you still angry?” he smiled and replied:

“tum mukhativ bhi ho, karib bhi ho, tum ko dekhen ke tum se baat Karen”.

His sense of humour was beyond human. Once, a person visited him and told him in an ongoing conversation that when his house was under construction, and during the digging process they found wires which suggested that there were telephones in ancient Indian civilisation. He, with his mischievous smile, replied that when my house was constructed, nothing was found, which suggested that in ancient Indian civilisation, there was wireless technology also.

Like the Sangam, Firaq Gorakhpuri's poetry is a convergence of three distinct traditions. It incorporates the Urdu language, which was the language of the middle class to which he belonged. It also reflects the Hindi tradition, which he imbibed from the great poets of his time. As an academician, he embraced European and British literature, enriching his poetic style. Moreover, his humble cultural surroundings, where a gardener, cook, or prime minister could engage in the same conversation, further influenced his work. This rich cultural amalgamation forms the essence of his poetry and defines his personality.

The Poetic Voyage of Firaq Gorakhpuri

Before getting into Firaq's illustrious poetic flight, it is essential to understand the choice and naming of his takhallus 'Firaq', which stands for 'separation/quest'. But why he chose 'separation/quest' and the probable answer finds its roots in his life, where he cannot find beauty in his loved one. Through his poetry, it is pretty evident that he must have been a lonely and introverted person who had poetry as the only vehicle through which he could attain purgation, and the first step was to choose 'Firaq' as his takhallus or pen name. This kind of tradition was not new to the poets of that time, and especially Urdu poets had that tendency to bring their unrequited emotion in their pen names. Urdu poets like Jigar Moradabadi, Majruh Sultanpuri, Majaz Lucknowi and our very own Firaq Gorakhpuri align with the same tradition. One thing that was very common in these poets was they used to use their takhallus in the last couplet of their poetry. Returning to his takhallus Firaq is self-explanatory and suggests his quest for beauty and the realization of loneliness in his poetry, which actually made him the Firaq that we know and love so much. Luckily, his creative labours were acknowledged during his life span, and he was honoured with the Jnanpith Award, the highest literary award of India, the Sahitya Akademi Award in Urdu, Padma Bhushan, Soviet Land Nehru Award and Ghalib Akademi Award.

From Khusrau to Faiz Ahmed Faiz, a poet barely deviated from the poetic conformist tradition. The verses were copiously sprinkled with traditional imagery and allegory associated with Persian and even Arabic traditions. But as earlier discussed in this paper, the poets centring Firaq welcomed Hindi and Urdu, popularly known as Hindustani, in their creative creation. But whether it was Khusrau or Faiz Ahmed Faiz or any of the poets of the late 20th century, one thing which was common among them was their susceptibility and their lurking to the influence of beauty. Furthermore, they respond straight away to receptive and sensitive subjects. Luckily, they trace the feelings in words for posterity. But still, unfortunately, they get swallowed up in the result of their opinion, which spreads through their poetry. Sometimes, they lose their lives or even become psychotic. But Firaq, for whom

poetry was everything, did not compromise his poetic voyage for a second, though he had outstanding grievances with life. Firaq's life was ideal for those who adhered to discontent and disgruntlement. Coming to his theme of loneliness, a recurring theme of his poetry, Firaq has balanced his loneliness, which had the power to destroy and dismantle his complete existence, as he cannot find an understanding soul in his family and friends. However, Firaq accomplished channelizing his torment into imaginative and creative energies, as the state:

“Tabiyat apni ghabraati hai sunsaan raton mein.
Hum aese mein teri yaadon ki chaadar taan lete”.

Firaq's poem *Phir Bhi* exalt the authority and supremacy of love even on the prudent and well-read person of his time and of course in all time.

Teri nigaah se bachne mein Umar guzari hai
Uttar gaya rage-jaana Ye neshtar phir bhi.

These verses disclose the uselessness of intellect over the authority of heart. Even experienced scholars are known to throw concern to wind over the subjects concerning of heart. However, Firaq exalted love saying that love can also fetch out kindness and humanity in an individual:

Ishq mein kehte ho hairan hue hain,
Yeh nahin kehte he insaan hue jaate hain.

Another verse which speaks levels of the poet's visual and aesthetic sense:

Shaam bhee thee dhuan dhuan, husn bhee tha udaas,
Dil koi kai kahaaniyan yaad sa aa he rah gai.

Firaq is known for sumptuous and opulent poetry and also seen in the rubai stated below:
Ajata hai gat men salonapan aur Chanchalpan, balpan, anelapan aur Kat-te hi suhag raat dekhen jo use
bad jata hai rup ka kanwarapan aur.

The loveliness of this verse stands for its paradox and irony that the poet uses in the last two lines. According to the versifier lovemaking augments the innocence and virtue of a new bride. He most likely suggests that care and consummation is the virtue of a wedded woman and complements her womanly elegance. Firaq expresses in his poetry on love that the loveliness of a lady is improved due to closeness and immediacy with her lover.

The poetry on love are apparent of the truth that Firaq never stoop down before life's quandary. His trustworthy hopefulness in life can be observed in the following verses:

Dikhaa to deitii hai behtar hayaat he sapnay,
Kharaab ho key bhi yeh zindagi kharaab nahin.

The magnitude and the enormity of Firaq creative verses lies in his resistance for order in the throes of bedlam. Those who went through this stage can understand his predicament. Firaq Gorakhpuri is definitely one of those exceptional character who make a distinction and steer his society by his own example.

Bahut pehle se un kadmon ki aahat jaan lethe hain Tujhe ye zindagi, hum dur se pehchan lethe hain

Conclusion

To conclude it can be said that, it is definitely impossible not to agree with Firaq's poetries:

Aanay waali naslein tum par naaz kareingi humasron
Jab inn ko yeh dhyaan aayegaa tum ne Firaq ko dekhaa thaa

The given verse not only discloses his poise concerning his lyrical skills but also exemplifies his faith in the poetic magic appreciating skills of the prospect generations. He could not only envisage the inception of life but also predicted the acclaim from upcoming generations. Firaq's poetic verses divulge that hope and trust are breathing within him. Despite the loneliness and solitude in his life and being temperamental at times, he was never sad and miserable. He came out of his dilemmas like a phoenix to serve as an instance to individuals loaded with trouble and problems. Indeed, the trail he voyaged is a path to be adorned and imitated.

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