

GAHAL: STRUCTURE, THEMES AND ITS STYLES

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Abstract: *The Ghazal, an enduring form of traditional poetry with roots in the Middle East, has enraptured audiences for centuries through its lyrical and emotive expressions of love, longing, and mysticism. This study systematically explores the multifaceted and poetic nature of the Ghazal, delving into its historical origins, structural components, and distinctive singing style in the context of India. The research initiates by scrutinizing the historical backdrop and cultural significance of the Ghazal, tracing its inception back to the seventh century in Arabic poetry and subsequent dissemination and adaptation across diverse regions, including Persia and India. The study analyzes the unique style of singing, structure, and elements inherent in the Ghazal. Special attention is given to its characteristic rhyme scheme, meter, and thematic progression.*

Keywords: *Ghazal poetry, Structural elements, Singing styles, Themes of Ghazal.*

INTRODUCTION

Ghazal, a captivating form of poetry that has enchanted hearts and minds for centuries, is a delicate and evocative art form originating in the Middle East (Dadi,2010). Originated in ancient Persia, the ghazal has transcended time and borders, resonating with diverse cultures across the globe. It is a lyrical masterpiece that has intricate patterns of emotions, love, longing, and spirituality, all within the confines of a structured verse. The ghazal's beauty lies in its distinct structure and poetic conventions. Composed of rhyming couplets, each line ending with the same refrain, known as a radif, and bearing the weight of poignant imagery, ghazals are carefully crafted to evoke profound emotions. This structured form provides a framework for poets to explore a myriad of themes, ranging from passionate love and desire to introspection and divine devotion. Traditionally, the ghazal has been associated with unrequited love and the intoxicating pain of longing (Kuczkiewicz-Fraś,2010). Poets have used it as a vehicle to express their deepest yearnings and the exquisite agony of separation from their beloved (Servan,1994). The ghazal's allure lies in its ability to capture the essence of these emotions with a delicate balance of restraint and intensity, painting vivid pictures through a mosaic of metaphors and symbolism. Throughout history, ghazal poets have left a significant mark on the literary landscape. Renowned masters like Rumi, Hafez, Mirza Ghalib, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz have crafted timeless verses that continue to resonate with readers and inspire contemporary poets to this day. The universality of the ghazal lies in its capacity to tap into the raw emotions that connect us as human beings, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries (Raza, 2009). In this modern age, the ghazal has evolved and adapted, embracing new themes and voices while retaining its essence. Poets from various backgrounds and traditions have breathed new life into this ancient form, infusing it with their own thought and experiences. The ghazal is a vessel for self-expression, a way for exploring the complexities of the human heart and the mysteries of existence.

Ghazal is an interesting genre, it is a poetic form consisting of rhyming couplets, usually in Urdu or Persian, set to music and mostly performed solo (Manuel, 1988). In India, it has been written in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujrati. In Ghazal there used to be couplets and every couplet is a little

poem by itself and a complete statement which means if a ghazal has 5 to 8 couplets, each one is complete with itself (Fehn, 1989). Along with this, there is a possibility that each and every couplet belongs to different topics. But beside all this all the couplets used to be in together because they all have the same length of the line and the rhymes. These are the thoughts, ideas and feelings which are put together. That's why Ghazal has tremendous quotability because two lines can make the complete statement. Ghazal has a direct relation with the literary genre. The editor of an anthology of Urdu ghazals claims that the literary form has been embraced by different cultures and used in many different languages. It has a common relation to speak of it in musical form. (Appadurai, 1991). The ghazal's trajectory differs greatly from that of any other literary genre with a history of traveling outside of its physical boundaries. Its literary form's singularity and all encompassing appeal can be seen by taking a brief tour of the passages of this poetic form and its many routes would reveal both its uniqueness and its widespread popularity.

EXISTENCE OF GHAZAL IN DIFFERENT TIMES

As a poetic form it arises from Arabic poetry, moving beyond Arabian Peninsula, it found a welcoming home in medieval Spain, where it was written in both Arabic and Hebrew languages. We have the ghazal extending its reach to West African languages like Hausa and Fulfulde in another instance. (Rahman, 2019) But it carried out to greater heights in Persian poetry, especially in the work of (Sa'di, 1292) and (Hafez, 1390). By later in time Ghazal became a great literary genre in several other Middle eastern and Central Asian languages. While Persian Ghazal earned fame in India, around the eighteenth century it had given way to the Urdu Ghazal as well. The Urdu Ghazal continues to enjoy amazing popularity in North India and Pakistan, it is greater than any poetic form in the west. Even while these ghazals established their own styles, they remained stuck to the Arabic paradigm by continuing to use the conventional Arabic meters and patterns. The ghazal did not fully break away from the system of the Arabic ghazals until it arrived in Persia eighth century. Until then, it had not yet begun to take on its own shapes. The Persian ghazal thereafter acquired its distinct personality when it created its own stylistic marks. The first canonical ghazal poet of Persia was Abdullah Jafar Rudaki, who lived at the end of the 9th century. Other notable poets like Sanai Ghaznavi and Fariduddin Attar followed in chronological order in the 12th century, Sadi Shirazi and Jalaluddin Rumi in the 13th century, and Hafiz Shirazi in the 14th century. The Persian ghazal developed further in the centuries that followed the classical models, but it always stood out for two characteristics that were most peculiar to it: its acute mystical preoccupations and its strong intellectual concerns. The Persian-language ghazals had a significant influence on the development of the ghazal as the quintessential form of poetry expression in the East (Ali Zadeh Kashani, 2014). Persian is the primary literary language of central Asia and India. Outside of Arabia, where it was born, and Persia, where it developed, India was the most welcoming place for the ghazal (Ekbal, 2009). Despite the fact that the ghazal in India is often dated to the 13th century in the writings of Amir Khusrau, its Urdu form is correctly attributed to Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah in the second half of the 16th century and to Vali Deccani in the following century.

When one looks back, it is easy to see that it has passed many of stages of development in terms of form, content, and language since it originally blossomed in the Deccan and then spread out in throughout India. While eminent literary hubs like the Deccan, Delhi, and Lucknow provided a competitive environment for the ghazal to flourish, many others dispersed across the country promoted their own distinctive stylistic elements. They all worked together to create a more extensive and well-rounded tradition of ghazal writing, which has continued to expand ever since. The most prominent aspect of the Ghazal in India is the collaboration of poets from different linguistic, regional, and religious backgrounds to expand its thematic and stylistic boundaries and give it a special resiliency that has remained with it throughout all stages of literary history.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Author Appadurai, Arjun Korom, Frank J. Mills, Margaret Ann in their book *Gender, genre and power in South Asian Expressive Tradition* mentioned that it originated in Arabic literature and became prominent in Persian poetry before spreading to India. The Urdu ghazal replaced its predecessor in the 18th century and remains incredibly popular in north India and Pakistan. Ghazal-singing was popular among the aristocratic classes in India for centuries, but it wasn't until Lucknow emerged as a cultural center in the late 1700s that the genre began to flourish in the public eye. Under the patronage of wealthy and influential supporters, ghazal singers and poets thrived in Lucknow, producing a body of work that is still celebrated today, giving rise to a distinct Lucknowi style of ghazal singing. It also talked about the ghazal's themes, where unrequited love is a common theme in couplets. Other prevalent themes (which frequently overlap with the idea of unrequited love) include mystical longing, disdain for Islamic orthodoxy, celebration of insanity and intoxication, and philosophical contemplation (Servan-Schreiber, 1994). Saeed Yousuf, in his article *Amir Khusrau and the Indo-Muslim Identity in the Art Music Practices of Pakistan*, focused on Amir Khusrau's contribution towards South Asian music where the author mentioned that Khusrau, was brought up by his maternal grandfather after his father's death. His grandfather's position in the court allowed Khusrau to start a career there, where he worked as a soldier, chronicler, advisor, and eventually a poet. Khusrau's poetry was unique in that it combined Persian style with Indian idioms, creating a new form of poetry known as the Sabk-e Hindi. His mathnav and ghazals were considered among the best in the Persianate world, comparable to works by master poets such as Nizami, Sa'di, and Jami. Khusrau's poetry earned him recognition and rewards from the kings of the court, and his legacy still lives on as one of the greatest poets of his time. Amir Khusrau who sought guidance from his spiritual master to refine his poetic skills in capturing the passion of romance in his works (Saeed, Y. 2006). With the master's help, his skills flourished, and his ghazals became even more beautiful and evocative. His devotion to his spiritual master and his mastery of the language of love earned him greater acclaim and admiration among his peers. In his article mentioned that the Ghazal is the primary poetry form of Urdu, a Persianized form of Hindi that emerged as the language of Muslim culture and religion in South Asia and developed into a lingua franca of this widely practiced and admired poetic dialect, is the ghazal.

A Ghazal should have rhymed couplets which will follow the pattern aa ba ca da, etc. Each couplet is meant to stand alone as a distinct thing, much like a pearl in a necklace, to borrow the well-known metaphor. The couplets are connected solely by meter and rhyme rather than by substance (Mahmoudi, 2017). Ghazals are typically composed of a series of couplets, with each couplet consisting of two phrases called hemistichs. Traditionally, Ghazals contain around 10 couplets, although this can vary. Each couplet, on average, contains about 20 words, resulting in an average length of about 200 words per Ghazal. Despite their brevity, Ghazals are popular for their emotional content and aesthetics (Asgari, 2013). Based on their genre, ghazals are of four groups: Khorasani, Iraqi, Indian, and Voghu (Javadi, 2005). These genres are, in order, dated to the 13th to the 15th centuries, the mid-9th to the mid-11th centuries, the 17th to the mid-18th centuries, and the 16th century. The designations are only customary and don't necessarily denote affiliation with a specific area (Asgari, 2013). Religious and secular ghazal genres can be found, as well as "serious" and "popular" in tone. Each genre in this idiom is denoted by one of the two major musical performance genres known as "song" and "chant" (or "recitation"), which are primarily defined by the presence or absence of instrumental accompaniment (QURESHI, 1990).

THE STRUCTURE

Ghazal is a collection of autonomous couplets, or 'Sher' in Urdu, typically ranging from five to fifteen in number. Each couplet stands as an independent poem, yet collectively they form a cohesive narrative of emotion and thought. This duality of independence and unity is the defining characteristics of Ghazal's compositional structure. A Ghazal have rhymes in its couplets. For example-

Chupke chupke sakhiyo se wo baatein karna bhul gayi

Mujhe dekha panghat pe to pani bharna bhul gayi

Here, *karna* and *bharna* are the rhymes. There is one more thing that Ghazal required when it traveled to Iran and came to Persian literature, that is called **Radif**. The first couplet of the ghazal has rhymes in both the lines as well as radif, but it is not compulsory. A ghazal can be without radif, but most of the Ghazal have radif. While the rhymes keep on changing, radif is recurring, radif is that which continues the Ghazal. For example-

Dil a nadaan tujhe hua kya hai?

Aakhir is dard ki dawa kya hai?

Here, the **hua** and **dawa** are the rhymes and **kya hai** in both the lines are radif. As radif is not compulsory but it is desirable in a ghazal. And it has been taken from Persian. The lines which have rhymes in both the lines are called Matla, meaning horizon, it is known as the first couplet of the Ghazal. The last couplet is called Makta. After the matla the first line does not adhere to the rhyme or radif, the second line does. For example-

Dil a nadaan tujhe hua kya hai?

Aakhir is dard ki dawa kya hai?

Hume mushtaaq aur woh bezaar

Yailahi ye maajra kya hai?

In the second line it is repeated to the rhyme and radif. So, this is how a Ghazal can be structured. The first two lines of a Ghazal are known as Matla. The rhyming scheme in a Matla known as Quafiya. In the last stanza of a Ghazal, the poet talks about himself and gives a signature, that lines are known as Takhalous (Chakraborty, 2023)

THEMES

The ghazal's principal subject—love, both human and spiritual—serves as a rarefied, universalized, yet intimate vehicle for the expression of emotion and intellect through its highly formalized, stylized, and metaphor-rich style (Qureshi, 1990). The most common ones are using alcohol to symbolize receiving spiritual grace, utilizing mirrors or Joseph from the Bible as symbols of beauty, and using a butterfly drawn to a flame to symbolize an intense love that results in the loss of oneself. Two major themes dominated early Arabic ghazals were, the rakish celebration of drink, women, and song; and the elegiac mourning of lost love. Ghazal's one hand has been predominantly romantic. This second theme had acquired mystical implications by the time the ghazal was passed into Persian. It stated that the core of love was suffering and separation, and that the devoted, longing lover was even a way of martyr (Bauer, 2006). Ghazal is about the love between a man and a woman. It has been written from the perspective of the unrequited lover whose beloved is portrayed as unattainable. However, at every stage Ghazal has also reflected socio-political concerns, talked about injustice in the society but in their own style of language. For example-

Jinhe pyaas hai unhe kam se kam,

Jinhe pyaas kam unhe dum ba dum.

Here it is talking about the inequality in society.

STYLES

Ghazals are categorized into four genres: Khorasani, Iraqi, Indian, and Voghu. However, the Khorasani genre is rarely found and was excluded from the analysis. Therefore, the classification problem was reduced to three genres. Literary scholars provided the genre labels of the poets, based on which the Ghazals were categorized. In the Indian genre, Ghazal has been a fundamental component of many musical genres, with Tarannum, Qawwali, and semiclassical styles being the most prominent examples. Tarannum is a type of chanting that is often used in musha'iras, while Qawwali is a form of Muslim devotional singing. The semiclassical style, on the other hand, is a more refined approach to ghazal performance. Together, these styles illustrate the rich and diverse musical traditions that are influenced by ghazals in India (Manuel, 2010).

The light-classical style typically involves a solo vocalist singing accompanied by melodic instruments such as the harmonium or sarangi, and the tabla drum pair. The melodic structure follows an *asthai-antara* pattern, where the "a" lines are sung to a precomposed tune (*asthai*) while the first lines of couplets that don't rhyme are sung to a more elaborate and melismatic melody (*antara*), which may be somewhat improvised. During the *antara*, the artist may use varied and extended melodic elaboration to interpret the text, creating suspense leading up to the end-rhyme and completion of the couplet. After each couplet (she'r), there is typically a *laggi* section where the tabla player improvises. A somewhat different annotation to the light classical Ghazal-song was given by Barkat Ali Khan (1910-63) and, to a lesser extent, his elder brother Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, representing the Patiala gharana (hereditary musical lineage) (Manuel, 1991). Ghazals can also be composed using classical ragas, as well as non-raga based melodies. They typically use simple talas, such as *Kaherva* (eight beats) or *Dadra* (six beats). The ghazals exhibit a strong classical influence by incorporating a diverse range of *raagas* and emphasizing on virtuosity through impressive, rapid melodic runs known as tans.

Since the beginning of the Indian film song genre, ghazals have consistently been the most prevalent types of songs. Consequently, the film ghazal became a significant genre that followed the established stylistic guidelines. It is no surprise that a significant number of classical and semi-classical music enthusiasts and singers hold a disdainful view towards Bollywood music. They criticize its crude emotionalism, lack of improvisation and *bol-banao*, use of often over-sentimental lyrics, and the way in which Hindu singers sometimes distort Urdu phonetics. The ghazal has undergone a successful transformation from being performed solely in court and courtesan salons to being widely disseminated, resulting in it becoming a typical example of a commodified music that is easily recognizable and catchy, rather than a complex and elaborative musical form (Hines, 2007).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GHAZAL AND NAZM

Ghazal and Nazm are two prominent forms of poetry in Urdu literature. Ghazal is a short lyrical poem consisting of self-contained rhyming couplets called "sher" or "bayt." It follows a strict rhyming pattern and often explores themes of love and longing. Each couplet expresses a single thought or idea, and there is no necessary continuity between them. Ghazal has a rich historical and cultural significance and is often sung as a form of classical music. On the other hand, Nazm is a longer, more expansive form of poetry without a fixed structure. It can have multiple stanzas with varying lengths and rhyme schemes. Nazm provides flexibility to the poet and can cover a wide range of themes, such as social concerns, politics, and philosophy. It exhibits a narrative quality with a logical flow of ideas or events throughout the poem. Nazm gained popularity during the modern era and allows for a more diverse exploration of subjects. Ghazal and Nazm have distinct characteristics and structures. Ghazal is concise, self-contained, and focused on emotions, while Nazm is all about storytelling. There will be one subject in a Nazm. There are no couplets in a Nazm. But the length of the lines and rhymes should be maintained. Both the genres belong to Urdu poetry. But in Ghazal it has couplets (sher) which have the same length, rhymes.

And every couplet could narrate different subject or topic. The discipline in the couplet, rhymes and radif is very important (Faruqi, 1984).

SINGING STYLES

Ghazal, being a lyrical form of poetry, lends itself beautifully to musical interpretation. Over time, various singing styles have emerged to accompany Ghazal compositions, each adding its own flavor and nuances to the poetry. Here are some notable singing styles of Ghazal. There are three styles in Ghazal singing. They are

1. Khyalnuma Ghazal
2. Thumrinuma Ghazal
3. Geetnuma Ghazal

The khayalnuma ghazals are performed like the khayal raga performances. These ghazals are performed more like ragas in terms of vocal technique. Before the song's lyrics, this form of ghazal begins with an alap. With murki, khatka, and meed, these ghazals are more ornamented. However, the Ghazals of this genre don't use taans, swar vistar, bol-alap like raga. Famous Musicians that sing Khyalnuma Ghazals are Mehdi Hassan, Ghulam Ali etc. Thumri singing, a semiclassical style of Indian music, is more frequently used to perform Thumrinuma ghazals. These Ghazals are beautifully ornamented with thumri's characteristics. Musicians that perform this type of singing are Begum Akhtar, Farida Khanum. Geetnuma Ghazals are simple to sing than the other two types of Ghazals. It primarily focuses on the composition's storytelling. It is used to sing more like a song using straightforward gayaki. Musicians that perform this type of Ghazal are Jagjit Singh, Ahmed Hussain and Mohammad Hussain (Chatterjee, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Originating from the Persian tradition, Ghazal has surpassed cultural and geographical boundaries, captivating the hearts of people worldwide. The Ghazal's structure is defined by independent couplets, interconnected through a recurring rhyme scheme. This distinctive framework allows for a diverse exploration of themes and emotions within the form's limitations. The Ghazal's concise nature demands precision and artistry from the poet, resulting in a concentrated meaning and an elevated sense of lyrical beauty. Singing styles play a crucial role in bringing the Ghazal to life, infusing it with the soulful expressions and melodic grace that make it so enchanting. Ghazal singers employ delicate vocal techniques, emphasizing the nuances of the lyrics and allowing the emotions to flow freely. The heartfelt rendition of Ghazals, often accompanied by traditional instruments such as the Rabab or Tabla, creates an immersive experience for listeners, transporting them to a realm where words and melodies merge in perfect harmony.

The enduring popularity of Ghazal can be attributed to its universal themes of love, longing, and introspection, which touch the depths of human emotions. Ghazal has the power to evoke profound sentiments and evoke a feeling of shared humanity. It is an art form that continues to inspire and resonate with generations, making the Ghazal an invaluable treasure of human expression.

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