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SHAHRASHUB IN EASTERN POETRY AND NATIONAL SELF-EXPRESSION IN URDU SHAHRASHUBS

RAFAEL HUSEYNOV*

Abstract

Urdu shahrashubs in the context of shahrashubs of Central Asia and as an expressor of socio-political thinking in national literature A glance at the development of Urdu literature and language in the history of Indian culture clearly demonstrates that even the poets who were the ambassadors of this nation began to write poetry in their own language, which actually meant the awakening of national identity of the people. This signified that the Urdu realized their national dignity. The reflection of national, democratic and anti-imperialist motives in Urdu poetry in the genre of shahrashub opens entirely a new page in the history of this kind of poetry. Meanwhile, this genre, which from the very beginning has focused on describing the desires and goals of the middle class, becomes a worthy arena for the fighting determination of the Urdu people.

The crisis of the feudal system, the invasion of foreigners into the country, and afterwards British dependence broke the patience of the people. People, fed up with the invasion, resorted to riots, and this mood of people is reflected in literature, primarily in shahrashubs. The increasingly powerful appeals of Urdu poets allowed new poets-shahrashub writers to emerge.

The scope, themes and ideas of the genre expands over time. A stable circle of topics of shahrashub emerges: as a hero of poetry, the "black people" is highlighted, the desire for equality and freedom of all people, regardless of position and origin, are expressed, intolerance to English exploitation is proclaimed in poetic language, where local feudal lords and judges are leeches, sucking the blood of the people. On the one hand, this becomes a decisive step in Urdu poetry in finding its "I" in world literature, on the other; it turns to the highest stage in the evolution of the genre of shahrashub.

Examples of the genre of shahrashub in Urdu literature need further study. Because these poems can be perceived as not only a real mirror of social and political life, but also as a poetic chronicle of the Urdu people's struggle for freedom.

Keywords: Urdu literature, shahrashub, genre, national and democratic, elements, dahrashub, falakashub, alamshub, English exploitation, Mughal Empire, Nazir Akbarabadi, shahrashub-e Islam, Shibli Nemani

Introduction

While considering poetry to be "more philosophical and more serious" than history, Aristotle believed that the poet, in addition to being a mirror of the age (Aristotel, 1974: 63), should also be a "creator of events" (Aristotel, 1974: 65). Great

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artists have always been concerned with the troubles of their time and the society they lived among, seeking ways for it to live a more flourishing and more fulfilling life.

The people's dreams for freedom, their struggle against colonial oppression, and their ideals of equality and happiness can be noticed throughout more than three centuries of the development of Urdu poetry, opening before us one of the most convincing pages in world literature reflecting the national liberation movement.

Even a brief look at the path of development of Urdu literature and language in the history of Indian culture clearly shows that the very act of poets – who were the representatives of the people – beginning to write poetry in their own language in fact signified the revival of national awareness and the realization of their national dignity. This issue, which requires broad analysis, calls for a separate and thorough investigation. Naturally, it is not possible to cover the subject fully within the scope of a single article. In this paper, we will merely discuss how national, democratic, and anti-imperialist (anti-British) motifs in Urdu poetry are reflected in the shahrashub¹ genre, and we will examine the research of the Pakistani scholar Syed Abdullah on this topic in comparison with other studies on shahrashub and shahrangiz.

Syed Abdullah's study on the shahrashub, first published in Lahore in 1965, is notable in Urdu literary scholarship not only as the earliest research on this subject, but also for the fact that, despite the long passage of time, it has not become outdated in many respects and continues to provide a foundation for new and more in-depth studies.

First, it should be noted that at a certain period, scholars regarded Urdu literature as a body of literature unable to move beyond the foundation of classical Persian and Indian literatures and lacking national and democratic elements.

1. The literal meaning of the word "shahrashub"

The presence of these motifs in Urdu poetry was first mentioned, albeit briefly, by Ram Babu Saksena in the second volume of his "History of Urdu Literature" (Saksena, 1940), published in 1927; this line of inquiry was later developed in greater depth in the research of Syed Ehtisham Husain (Husain, 1961).

The point is that the artistic expression of democratic ideas and the introduction of the life of the people into poetry were not characteristic of Urdu literature until the eighteenth century. It was exactly in that century that deep political, economic, and ideological changes took place in India. The crisis of the feudal system, the invasion of foreign powers, and later British domination exhausted the people's patience. In Karl Marx's work "The Future Results of British Rule in India", there is an enduring

¹ The shahrashub genre is not a local literary phenomenon limited solely to Urdu literature. Examples of this genre were also created in Persian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani literatures. As early as the 12th century, Khaqani Shirvani, Mahsati Ganjavi, and Mujir al-Din Baylaqani composed noteworthy examples of shahrashubs devoted to cities and professional groups. We also encounter shahrashubs in the works of such Azerbaijani poets as Muhammad Fuzuli, Molla Panah Vagif, and Shakir Shirvani. In 19th-century Azerbaijani literature, this genre developed in the light of critical realism, and the flaws of the era were skillfully reflected in such poems. In Turkish poetry, the shahrashub gained popularity beginning in the early 16th century; however, it was referred to by a slightly different name – shahrangiz. In fact, both terms have the same meaning. Turkish shahrangiz poems were composed in praise of cities, craftsmen and trades, and beautiful figures. At present, approximately fifty examples of Turkish shahrangiz are known to scholarship. Agah Sirri Levend, who conducted a comprehensive study of Turkish shahrangiz, regarded this type of poetry as among the finest examples of all Turkish poetry (Levend, 1958: 5).

Analogues of the shahrashub and shahrangiz also existed in European literatures. In German poetry, Schwanks, and in French poetry, fabliaux, may be considered comparable examples. Since the primary subject of shahrashubs has always been cities and urban life, the daily livelihoods of the artisan class, and the celebration of professions, the study of their examples from the 12th to the 19th centuries makes it possible to identify a number of patterns in cultural and social development.

observation: *"The supreme authority of the Great Mughal had been overthrown by his deputies. The Marathas overthrew the rule of the deputies. The Afghans overturned the rule of the Marathas, and at a time when everyone was fighting against everyone else, the British suddenly appeared and were able to bring everyone into submission. Thus, India could not avoid the fate of being invaded, and if there was anything notable in its entire past, it consisted of the successive invasions it endured."*²

The people, tired of invasions, grow rebellious, and this fervent popular mood finds expression in literature, most noticeable in the shahrashub genre.

The increasingly loud and majestic calls of Urdu poets created chances for the emergence of new shahrashub poets.

The literal meaning of the word "shahrashub" is "one who causes fuss or turmoil in the city." It is noteworthy that one of the earliest examples of this genre was created by Masud Sad Salman, a poet whose work was closely connected with the Indian milieu.³

The Pakistani scholar Syed Abdulla, who conducted a special study on shahrashub, defines it as follows: *"Poetic compositions that reflect the prosperity and development of a city, a country, or its people, or conversely, their disorder and turmoil, are called shahrashub. Poetry that expresses, in a humorous or satirical language, the economic and political unrest, decline, or the qualities and conditions of various social strata of a city is referred to as shahrashub."* (Abdulla, 1965: 2).

Characteristic examples dedicated to the illustration of cities, which correspond in style and structure to the established models of this genre in Persian-language literature and which found wide circulation especially in Turkic poetry, were created by Safi Lakhnavi (1863-1950).⁴

The times had already changed. They called for the creation of works that truly corresponded to the essence of shahrashub and for bringing the social upheavals of society into literature. In 1770, ten million people died of starvation in Bengal. Artisans and craftsmen were turned into an army of the unemployed. These tragic events were immediately reflected in shahrashub, which were highly responsive to socio-political appeals. It is therefore no coincidence that during this period new terms with parallels to shahrashub emerged, such as *dahrashub*, *falakashub*, and *alamshub*.

The point is that it was no longer enough to speak only of the struggles and hardships of a single city. The framework of the genre, along with its thematic and ideological orientations, gradually increased in response to the demands of the time.

² We considered it more appropriate to cite this source in a footnote rather than include it in the academic bibliography: Marx, Karl. (1974). *Selected Works: in three volumes, Vol. I*, Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House. P. 542.

³ See about this: Гусейнов, Рафаэль. (1981). *Первые шахрашубы в персоязычной поэзии. Школа Молодых Востоковедов. Материалы конференции молодых ученых востоковедов. Ереван, стр. 5* (Huseynov, R. (1981). *School of Young Orientalists. The First Shahrashubs in Persian-Language Poetry*, Proceedings of the Conference of Young Scholars of Oriental Studies, Yerevan, p. 5).

Note: When examining Urdu shahr-ashub poems in the context of the same poetic genre produced by various literatures across the vast area stretching from Central Asia to the South Caucasus, from Anatolia to Iran, and from Afghanistan to India, over the long period from the 11th to the 20th centuries, our choice to designate that region as "Central Asia" is not without reason. Although the term "Central Asia," first used by Alexander von Humboldt in 1844 to denote a distinct region of the world, is sometimes identified with or confused with the phrase "Orta Asiya" ("Middle Asia"), this expression in fact more precisely indicates the sphere of diffusion of medieval Muslim culture and, in geographical scope, is broader than the designation "Near and Middle East." This is confirmed by the set of countries and the geography that UNESCO recognizes as "Central Asia." Historically, the term also brings together the nomadic peoples who lived across this vast expanse and the countries along the Silk Road. It was precisely this area that served as the principal locus of centuries-long cultural transmission, stable poetic traditions, literary schools, and shared frameworks of aesthetic perception.

⁴ He was a specialist in Arabic and Persian literatures and devoted the last 15 years of his life to translating the rubaiyyat of Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) into Urdu. For one of his masnavis, he was awarded a prize by the Indian Academy. Having been engaged in creative literary activity for 60 years, Safi made use of all poetic forms and genres (Husain, 1961: 169).

In Urdu literature, a thematic sphere appeared that was far broader than that of Persian and Turkic-language shahrashubs and that directly seized the pulse of socio-political developments. The “common people” were brought to the forefront as the main protagonists of poetry; the equality of all human beings regardless of rank or origin and hopes for freedom were jointed; and the local feudal lords and rulers were portrayed as leeches sucking the blood of the people, while the intolerable nature of British exploitation was expressed in poetic language.

On the one hand, this became a decisive step in Urdu poetry’s search for its own distinct specification within world literature; on the other hand, it marked an important and superior stage in the evolution of the shahrashub genre.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the tradition of Delhi being the sole center of Urdu-language literature came to an end. The weakening of the Mughal Empire led to the emergence of independent feudal territories across the country. A number of Delhi’s renowned poets left the city in search of secure livelihoods and moved to cities such as Azimabad, Hyderabad, and Rampur.

Renowned poets such as Mir Hasan, Sauda,⁵ Mir Taqi Mir,⁶ Mushafi, Jurat, and Insha gathered in Lucknow, where they laid the foundations of a new literary school perceived by a new stylistic approach and its own distinctive thematic features.

Among these poets, Sauda stands out in particular. It is no coincidence that specialists regard this poet, known as Mirza Sauda, as the founder of the satirical genre in Urdu poetry (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 53).

In his poems, a realistic picture of Indian society is drawn; although the poet is not always able to identify the true wrongdoers and causes that led the country into bankruptcy, he portrays with deep agony the people’s marginalization and miserable condition.

These qualities find their most bright expression in his shahrashubs. In his essay on Urdu literature, the Indian scholar Ahmad Faruqi gives high praise to Sauda’s shahrashub qasida. He writes: *“In the history of Urdu literature, there has never been satire as fierce as this; among the satires exposing the faults of the era, Sauda’s shahrashub is a true masterpiece.”* (Abdulla, 1965: 64).

Although Mir Taqi Mir, a contemporary of Sauda, lived in Lucknow, he longed for Delhi. He preferred Delhi’s crooked, muddy, and littered streets and neighborhoods to the elegant, prosperous streets and avenues of flourishing Lucknow.

In fact, in the lines Mir Taqi Mir dedicates to his native city, there is anger and resentment toward those who brought Delhi to such a deplorable state. The literary scholar A.Glebov aptly captures the essence of these motifs in the works of poets writing in Lucknow: *“This patriotism still carries a local, so to speak, provincial character, but it is here that the seeds of a patriotic sentiment can be seen, which later in many examples of modern poetry would become a central theme.”* (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 68; see also: Glebov, 1962a).

With his entire being and creativity tied to Lucknow, Mushafi’s shahrashub also brings to life the pitiful appearance of Delhi as a city ruined and fallen into decay”.

⁵ Mirza Muhammad Rafi Sauda (1713–1781) was born into a family of Iranian merchants who had settled in Delhi. After the invasion of Delhi by Ahmad Shah Durrani, he left the city. He had a divan in Persian and is regarded as the finest practitioner of the qasida genre in Urdu literature (Husain, 1961: 59–60).

⁶ Mir Taqi Mir was born in 1725 in Anbarabad (Agra). He led an extremely difficult life. Syed Ehtisham Husain writes that anyone wishing to witness the decline of Delhi society should turn to Mir’s poetry. The poet died in Lucknow in 1810

*Delhi lies hollowed out, a ruin drowned in sleep,
Its palaces breathe emptiness, its homes are mute.
I turn to the gardens – autumn has claimed them all;
Withered, broken trees stand stranded in their grief.
Ask not where the gardener has gone, where the nightingale sings
In the nightingale's place, only a scatter of feathers remains⁷ (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 68)*

One of the first figures to raise his voice in protest against British exploitation and British policy in the country was Mushafi himself. The plundering of the land by the British and their trampling of the people's rights filled the poet with boundless anger.

*By fraud and guile the British stripped away
India's boundless wealth and endless riches. (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 68)*

The same motif also finds expression in the poetry of Mushafi's contemporary and another representative of the Lucknow school – Jurat. This poet likens the country's rulers to domesticated animals. With his furious lines, he brands the servility of local rulers living under the British yoke.

*Call them no longer "emir" or "vizier"
They are caged birds, held fast in English hands. (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 69)*

In the broader panorama of Indian poetry, these isolated poems – resembling stars that flare up and vanish – nevertheless clearly reveal the people's longing for freedom and their inability to endure oppression and bondage any longer. Nazir Akbarabadi⁸, a prominent representative of eighteenth-century Urdu poetry, also composed remarkable shahrashubs that portray the life of the people and reflect their pains and sufferings.

"At a time when Urdu poetry was becoming increasingly ornate, conventional, and detached from real life, Nazir Akbarabadi appears on the poetic horizon like a solitary star, reflecting in his verse the hopes and aspirations of the people. He may undoubtedly be called the morning star of modern Urdu poetry" (Farukhi, 1964: 646).

There is a profound truth in these words of A. Faruqi. The poet – who once declared, when invited to the court, *"My pen will not serve wealth and aristocracy"* – was truly a son of the people (Farukhi, 1964: 646).

S. E. Husain describes him as "a poet without equal in originality" (Husain, 1961: 92), while I.S.Rabinovich calls him "the most humanistic poet in Urdu literature" (Rabinovich, 1969: 258).

⁷ The translations of the poetic excerpts in Urdu were based on the interlinear translations by N. Glebov and L. Vasilyeva. It should also be noted that the term shahrashub was rendered into Russian by N. Glebov as "The Shattered City" (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 78), and by I.M.Mashtakova and K.Y.Morozova as "The City of Sorrow" (Husain, 1961: 96, 158).

⁸ The poet's real name was Vali Muhammad. He was born in Delhi in 1740, but spent his entire life in Agra. The poet died on August 16, 1830, and was buried in his own house. Today, that house has, in a sense, been transformed into a place of pilgrimage, a shrine of art. Nazir's son, Khalifa Gulzar Ali (Asir), was also a poet. Saeed Ehtisham considers Naziri Lakhnavi to be the founder of the Lakhnavi stylistic school and notes that the poet based his creativity not on any system of theoretical principles, but on a profound knowledge of life itself (Husain, 1961: 97). As for Nazir's shahrashub, the Soviet scholar N. Glebov writes that the depiction created in this work is remarkably lifelike and realistic, and deeply captivating for the reader (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 101).

Call him a lover, or call him a captive – he hails from Agra.
Call him a teacher, or a scholar – still he is of Agra.
Call him poor, or call him humble – he is born of Agra.
Call him a poet, or simply Nazir – he is Agra through and through (Husain, 1961: 92).

Nazir Akbarabadi, as he himself, was deeply devoted to Agra and its people.

He lived in the Tackend quarter of Agra – a neighborhood of artisans. The poor, as well as representatives of various trades and professions, would often come to Nazir and ask him to compose poems about them (Husain, 1961: 93), and it was in this way that a large part of Nazir's shahrashubs about artisans came into being.

Even today, Nazir's shahrashubs are still spoken of among the artisans of Agra. Yet the poet's humanist-oriented work – primarily his shahrashubs – was labeled "market poetry", and he himself was called a "plebeian poet", being excluded from literature for a century by the hands of court poets (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 69). However, the people never forgot him; they kept him alive in their hearts, and subsequent generations continued his poetic traditions and the democratic spirit of his verses. In Urdu poetry, it was for the first time in Nazir Akbarabadi's work that the word "human" was proclaimed with grandeur; he loudly affirmed that even a slave or a servant possesses the dignity of a king, and, in essence, he exalted the equality of all human beings:

In this vast world, the king is Human,
The poor soul who goes hungry is Human.
Rich or poor, it matters not – Human.
The one who savors every blessing – Human,
The one who survives on a beggar's share – Human.
He who gives his life for man is Human;
He who drinks a fellow's blood is Human.
The one who takes a life, the one who spills blood – Human.
Dark-skinned or fair-skinned, all are Human.
The noblest of men are called Human,
The vilest too are called Human.
A king and his vizier – human, nothing more;
A slave and a bondsman – human to the core. (Glebov, 1962b: 103)

This was Nazir's hymn to humanity, the poet's credo.

Nazir Akbarabadi's shahrashub is a legitimate account of the people's sufferings. In Urdu literature, realism began to take shape as a creative method in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nazir's shahrashub became a cornerstone of Urdu realism. The lives of thousands depend on a single penny or a single loaf of bread. Artisans and tradespeople are condemned to hunger. Poverty, misery, and misfortune have found their way into every home, every embrace, like a relentless flood.

Unemployment has driven the people into want,
Homes stand roofless, canopied only by grief.
Everywhere poverty reigns – see how the people have fallen,
It slips through each doorway, into every corner,

*Like a raging flood that snaps its chains and pours in.
In Agra now all hearts ache with the same sorrow:
No one knows how to live, or where bread may be found.
Let this bitter season pass, let prayers rise skyward,
For countless lives are weighed against a single coin.
They know a hundred crafts, yet none can save them now.
Merchants and bankers, goldsmiths and lenders of silver –
Once they gave out loans; today they drown in debt.
The markets lie deserted, swept clean by the wind,
In hollow shops the traders stand, resigned to fate,
Arrayed in rows like captives bound in chains.
Those whom fortune grants a meager coin
Hurry home, grateful that tonight there will be food.
The empty-handed turn again to the moneylender;
If even he refuses, grief and illness claim them whole.
They moan in sleep, whispering, "Bread... bread..."
Workshops across Agra stand silent and bare;
People starve, unsure how life can be sustained.
To whom can one speak, for whom can one weep?
The tree of life has slipped too soon into autumn,
Shattered by a sudden wind, fierce and unkind. (Glebov, 1962b: 100-101)*

However, the poet cannot find a way out of this misery, nor a solution to save the country from such a grave condition, and therefore turns to God, asking for help.

*There is a prayer upon my tongue – hear it night and day:
Let the Sun smile once more upon the people of Agra.
Let every soul be fed, singing freely in their own home.
Show mercy, O God, to this city fallen into ruin;
Let craft and trade in Agra bloom again like flowers. (Glebov, 1962b: 101)*

2. The object of Nazir`s satire

The poet returns to this problem again and again, speaking with burning pain about the sufferings of the people. In his poem "*Bankruptcy*," which is very close to the shahrashub both in theme and in manner of expression, he draws scenes that are real, yet bitter and sorrowful. At times the poor must risk even their lives for a piece of bread, forgetting honor and shame. When a poor man dies, there is not even a shroud to wrap his body; his corpse is carried away downstream by the river. Even a poor man`s wedding resembles a funeral. Dressed in rags, the poor are forced into theft and driven to begging. Yes, Nazir Akbarabadi loved the Urdu people with deep devotion, and this is how he portrayed them.

Before Nazir Akbarabadi, there were already notable examples of satire in Urdu poetry. However, he broadened the thematic scope of satire. The object of Nazir`s satire became the hardships and distortions of life itself, while its point of departure was the people`s own view of these realities. If Sauda laid the foundations of satire and, even

before Nazir, had created shahrashub with democratic content, the poet from Agra surpassed him through the power of his artistic mastery.

Nazir's art was not distant from "official poetry" – the kind of verse intended for the aristocracy and detached from the people – only in terms of subject matter. The language of Nazir's poetry also sprang directly from the everyday speech of the common people.

In 1849, British colonial forces occupied Punjab, thus completing the conquest of the whole of India. The last traces of national independence in the country were erased. Consequently, by the middle of the nineteenth century, a land that was one of the world's most ancient centers of civilization lost its most precious possession – its freedom. Although the popular uprisings of 1857 did not end with the overthrow of foreign rule, they powerfully shook and awakened national consciousness, giving a strong impetus to the development of the national liberation movement. These feelings and this state of mind among the people found expression in poetry, and above all once again in the shahrashubs. The well-known literary scholar and poet Shibli Nomani made great contributions to the strengthening of democratic tendencies in Urdu literature and to the sharpening of its anti-imperialist spirit.

Generally, high value is placed on the anti-imperialist, anti-British tone of the satirical poems of Syed Akbar Husain (1861–1921), one of the founders of Enlightenment literature at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. However, one of the finest examples of Shibli Nomani's small poetic legacy is the Masnavi "Shahrashub-e Islam", in which boundless anger at colonialism, a passionate love of freedom, and hatred of the British are expressed in a sharper and more striking manner. In Shahrashub-e Islam, the poet appears not merely as an Enlightenment thinker, but as a poet with an even deeper democratic sensibility:

*Let those who claim to bring us culture speak –
Ask the bearers of so-called enlightenment:
How long must we endure oppression, scorn, and chains?
Tell us – until what sun shall rise and set in vain?
Know this: your swords, however sharp in hand,
Cannot measure the strength upon our necks.
Speak, I say – how long will you dare
To press them down, to make us bend? (Glebov&Sukhochev, 1967: 123)*

Shibli Nomani's "Shahrashub-e Islam" became one of the most important and bold steps in the formation of a new direction in Urdu poetry, known as "citizens poetry." Interestingly, it was precisely the shahrashub poets and their shahrashubs who created and reinforced this direction in Urdu literature. This fact is also noted by L.V. Vasilyeva, who analyzes the musaddas "Maddu Jazir-e Islam" (by Altaf Husain Hali), which aligns with the poem of Shibli Nomani that we mentioned: "Citizens poetry." The first sprouts of this genre appear in Sauda's shahrashub and in the poems of Nazir Akbarabadi. However, in the literal sense of the word, this genre becomes firmly established in the 1870s. (Vasilyeva, 1979: 113)

Hali's "Madd o Jazir-e Islam" musaddas consists of two parts. The first part contains 298 stanzas, each composed of six lines, while the second part comprises 162 stanzas.

In the preface of the work, the poet presents a dialogue involving Hippocrates: once, he is asked which disease he considers incurable. He answers that it is the disease which the patient does not take seriously and to which he pays no attention to the doctor's advice. Hali writes, "With my own unskilled hands, I have built a mirror-house for my nation so that, upon entering it, they can see themselves from every side. Let them see what they once were and the state they have fallen into." (Vasilyeva, 1979: 113)

Although this poem was addressed to Muslims, it soon spread throughout all of India and was received everywhere with admiration. The patriotic ideas in the poem transcend their religious framework; in Hali's work, those who perceive the real condition of colonial India and hear the call for freedom in this poem find an echo in their hearts. (Vasilyeva, 1979: 116-117)

The poet compares the country to a garden that has withered into a ruined marketplace. Everything that remains in this garden serves only one purpose – to be burned in the hearth. Yet the poet looks to tomorrow with hope, sensing the changes that will one day come, like a storm-bird on the horizon. In the lines he directs to the wheel of fate, there is the heartbeat of a patriot burning with concern for the condition of his people:

*O God, guide them in what they must do tomorrow,
Lift the veil of darkness that dims their sight.
Reveal the secret foes that lie in wait all around.
May their home endure the torrents of the coming rain,
And may their boat ride strong through tomorrow's storm* (Vasilyeva, 1979: 118).

Moved by some inner force rising from within, the poet longs to believe in the reblooming of the withered garden and in the rekindling of extinguished hearts.

In his poem "The Medical Examination of the Englishman and the Indian," Hali expresses his anti-British sentiment with even greater anger and intensity.

Two people, one white-skinned and one black-skinned, go to a hospital to see a doctor. On the way, they get into a fight, and the white man lands a punch in the black man's stomach. The doctor issues a medical certificate to the white man, saying: "If he cannot kill the black man with a single punch, then he is indeed ill. In this condition, he cannot rule India."

The black man, on the other hand, is declared healthy and is given a medical certificate as well: "If you did not die on the spot when the white man struck you, who would believe that you are ill?" (Vasilyeva, 1979: 116)

This poem is, in a sense, an outpouring of Hali's surging rage and rebellion against British rule.

An analysis of Urdu shahrashub s of this kind – poems that embody the heartbeats of a people striving for freedom and happiness – clearly demonstrates how this poetic genre, having evolved over centuries, reached a remarkably high stage in terms of the seriousness and significance of the issues it addressed, and how extensively its ideological and thematic boundaries expanded toward the artistic expression of social consciousness.

A substantial portion of Syed Abdullah's fundamental work "Mabahis" is devoted to the theme of shahrashub, and since it reflects the distinctive characteristics of Urdu

shahrashub s and provides information on nearly all the authors of this genre in national literature, that study itself calls for a detailed presentation and commentary.

Syed Abdulla first provides information on the history of the shahrashub and, drawing primarily on examples from Urdu literature and partly from Persian-language literature, offers the following definition of the genre: *"In poetry, it is a form of verse in which the economic condition of a particular city or information about the coexistence of various social strata living in the city is expressed in the form of humorous, satirical, or lampooning discourse."* (Abdulla, 1965: 201)

For this reason, we emphasize that this definition is more applicable to Urdu and Persian-language literature, since in the shahrashub (shahrengiz) examples of Ottoman poetry, the depiction of cities and the portrayal of urban life and the artisan class constitute the principal thematic focus, which in this respect makes them stand out significantly within the broader shahrashub context.

Referring to the explanatory dictionary "Nuru-Luğat," Syed Abdulla also gives the meaning of the word "shahrashub" as "a form of verse in which the unrest of a certain city, calamities descended from the heavens, and the ingratitude of the times are discussed." (Abdulla, 1965: 201)

In our view, Syed Abdulla's observation is also noteworthy that the explanations given in various dictionaries for the meaning of the word "shahrashub" should not be directly equated with the essence of the genre itself. This is because the semantic nuances the word acquires in different dictionaries and within various textual (contextual) settings differ from its strictly terminological meaning: "The meaning given to shahrashub by our lexicographers (that is, its purely etymological sense – *R.H.*) is correct.

However, after reading shahrashub poems, it becomes evident that these verses contain meanings that lexicographers have not addressed at all. On the contrary, they have even conflated certain meanings. For example, if we accept the explanation given in "Asifiyya" that a shahrashub is a poem filled with joy and sorrow about a particular city – then we would also have to classify as shahrashub all the hundreds or thousands of poems written in Persian, Urdu, Arabic, and Turkish about the happiness or distress of various cities (by that same criterion – *R.H.*). Yet such poems cannot be subsumed under that category. Likewise, merely mentioning reflections on calamities sent by God or the ingratitude of the times within a poem is not sufficient grounds to label that poem a "shahrashub" (Abdulla, 1965: 202).

After this, Syed Abdulla attempts to offer his own definition and characterization of the shahrashub genre. However, this assessment can be accepted only partially. This is because Syed Abdulla bases his view primarily on the prominent features of the Urdu shahrashub s with which he is well acquainted, and partly on Persian-language shahrashub s, while overlooking many of the thematic and ideological directions that shahrashub had encompassed over centuries in Persian poetry, and, in a sense, passing over the distinctive characteristics of Turkic shahrashubs. *"In fact, for a poetic work to be considered a shahrashub, it must contain several general features and conditions. The foremost condition is that it should discuss the various social strata of a city or a country – especially artisans and professionals. The second condition is that the poem should include reflections on economic conditions or on political and mutual unrest arising from a particular event. At the initial stage, the first characteristic predominated in shahrashub s. However, later the second characteristic also became necessary for a shahrashub. Under*

these conditions, if we look at Persian and Urdu poetry, we encounter a large number of poems that could be called shahrashubs.” (Abdulla, 1965: 202)

In fact, when we survey the examples of shahrashub and shehrangiz composed in Persian-language literature from the 11th–12th centuries up to the 20th century, in Ottoman poetry from the 15th to the 18th centuries, and in Azerbaijan from the 18th century until the beginning of the 20th century, we observe a much broader range of themes.

Therefore, in order to give a precise definition of this genre – which remained in vogue for nearly a thousand years in the literatures of the Near and Middle Eastern peoples and, in a sense, fulfilled a unifying function – it is essential to consider the entire panorama and to take into account the modes of expression found in all the literatures in which the genre was employed.⁹

We have previously written about the earliest examples of shahrashub found in Muhammad Awfi’s *Lubāb al-albāb*, dating back to the 11th–12th centuries, as well as about the first fully developed cycle created by Mas’ud Sa’d Salman, and we have also introduced into scholarly circulation the fact that this genre appeared in Ottoman literature approximately four to five centuries later.¹⁰

Unfortunately, when discussing the history of the emergence of the earliest examples of the shahrashub genre, Syed Abdulla makes an error, claiming that even before Mas’ud Sa’d Salman, as early as the 10th century CE, the first shahrangiz in Ottoman literature was written in Edirne, and that this shahrangiz belonged to Masihi, an Albanian poet who wrote in Turkish. (Abdulla, 1965: 202) Of course, this is incorrect. Here, the Hijri and Gregorian dates have simply been confused. The “Shahrangiz of Edirne” did not emerge in the 10th century CE, but rather in the 10th century AH, and it was written by Mesihî of Prishtina, who passed away in 1512 according to the Gregorian calendar.

Syed Abdulla hypothesizes that the shahrashub was brought to India by Iranian poets during the reign of Akbar Shah, and that by the end of Shah Jahan’s reign a poet using the pen name Behishti abandoned the satirical (*hajviyya*) and humorous (*hazliyya*) form of this genre and composed a shahrashub on a political theme (Abdulla, 1965: 203).

It thus appears that by that time this type of poetry had already become established in Indian and Urdu literature within the thematic boundaries of Persian-language poetry, and that Behishti merely gave a new impetus to the development of the genre. Syed Abdulla notes that with this *ashub-nama* by Behishti, which deals with “the political affairs of the country and the anxieties of society,” the foundation of politically themed shahrashubs in Indo-Urdu literature was laid (Abdulla, 1965: 203).

⁹ See this in detail: Hüseynov, R. (1981). *Klassik şeirin bir unudulmuş janrı. Azərbaycan SSR Elmlər Akademiyasının Məruzələri*. №4. Bakı. (Huseynov, R. (1981). *A Forgotten Genre of Classical Poetry*, Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR, No. 4, Baku.)

¹⁰ See about this: Гусейнов, Р. (1985). *Развитие азербайджанского рубаи в XII веке*. Тезисы конференции аспирантов и молодых научных сотрудников. Т. I, История. Литературоведение. Языкознание. Часть I, Москва, 1985, стр. 98 (Huseynov, R. (1985). *The Development of the Azerbaijani Ruba’i in the 12th Century*, Abstracts of the Conference of Postgraduate Students and Young Research Fellows, Vol. I: History, Literary Studies, Linguistics, Part I. Moscow, 98); Hüseynov, R. (1980). Türk şeirinін şəhrəngizləri və şəhrəngizçiləri. *Türk filologiyası məsələləri. Azərbaycan Elmlər Akademiyası Yaxın və Orta Şərq Xalqları İnstitutu*. Bakı (Hüseynov, R. (1980). *The Shahrangiz Poems and Shahrangiz Poets of Turkish Poetry, Issues of Turkic Philology, Institute of the Peoples of the Near and Middle East, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences*, Baku;); Гусейнов, Р. (2013). Царица державы рубаи. Мехсети Гянджеви. Баку: Шарп–Гарб, 100–123 (Huseynov R. (2013). *The Queen of the Realm of the Ruba’i: Mahsati Ganjavi*, Baku: Sharq–Garb, 100–123).

3. “Irregular” shahrashubs

Syed Abdulla emphasizes that in the shahrashubs that emerged during this period, the anxiety and tension evident in the political situation across various regions of India, as well as criticism of poor governance, became central targets, and that these realities are reflected in detail in the “Ibratnamas” and “Ashubnamas” of the reign of Muhammad Shah (Abdulla, 1965: 203). It was precisely during this period that the shahrashub acquired stable generic characteristics in Urdu literature, a development realized in the works of Shafiq Aurangabadi, Shakir Naji, Shah Hatim, Mir Taqi Mir, Mirza Rafi’ Sauda, and others.

Stage-defining socio-political events that leave a profound impact on society’s life are first and foremost felt in all their sensitivity within literature.

Syed Abdullah characterizes the shahrashubs that emerged during the Delhi Uprising of 1857 and in the months that followed as “bloody,” noting that they are imbued with an elegiac spirit. At the same time, he points out that it was precisely during this period that the old shahrashub style in Urdu poetry came to an end. He notes that after the Delhi Revolution a new era began in India, and the changing circumstances transformed both poetry and prose. The shahrashub became an expression of the national spirit, and, in Syed Abdullah’s terminology, “irregular” shahrashubs – that is, examples that did not conform to the traditional formal patterns of the genre – came into being. As he writes, “The development of political poetry and the spread of verse on economic themes led to the death of the old form of the shahrashub, but to the renewal of its spirit; this process breathed new life into the spirit of the shahrashub” (Abdulla, 1965: 203).

Syed Abdullah, who undertook an attempt to periodize the shahrashub, designates the first period (again, incorrectly, since it is well known that the tradition of this type of poetry begins in Persian-language verse) as the hazliyya in Turkish and the hajviyya in Persian, which he calls “Khandāy-i Bejā.” He considers the second period to consist of Persian-language shahrashubs that emerged in India after the reign of Shah Jahan and gives them the collective heading “Khūn-i Barādar.” The third period he associates with Urdu-language economic shahrashubs, assigning the shared title “Fakāy-i Mastī” to those written after the reign of Muhammad Shah. Finally, as the fourth period, under the title “Dillī ke Āsū,” he includes the shahrashubs of the Delhi Uprising (Abdulla, 1965: 203).

When Syed Abdullah compares the examples of shahrashub in Persian- and Turkic-language literatures with poems of the same genre in Urdu literature, he arrives at the following conclusions: *“In terms of content, at the initial stage the main characteristic of the shahrashub was that within a single poem it spoke about various social strata living in one city. In Turkic-language shahrashubs, the beauty of youths belonging to different guilds or occupational groups was depicted. In Persian-language shahrashubs, the defining feature was that the condition of different social strata of a city was presented in the form of satire. The shahrashub in Urdu, on the other hand, was written in the form of economic and political satire and elegy”* (Abdulla, 1965: 205). He also notes that a characteristic feature common to Persian- and Turkic-language shahrashubs and shahrangiz – namely, the freedom in choosing poetic form – was likewise typical of Urdu shahrashubs: *“There was no single common form for the expression of these themes. Masnavi, rubā’i, musaddas, mukhammās – in fact, almost every*

form was used, although in each period one form tended to be more popular. For example, at the beginning the masnavi and rubā'ī were prevalent; in the time of Mir and Sauda the mukhammās was popular; and during the period of the Delhi Uprising the musaddas gained prominence" (Abdulla, 1965: 205).

While discussing the presence of shahrashubs at the beginning of "Jawāhir-i Khusrawī", a work by Amir Khusrow of Delhi – who wrote the first complete response to Nizami Ganjavi's Khamsa and thereby laid the foundation of the khamsa-writing tradition that began in the thirteenth century – Syed Abdullah also points to an Indian poet whose name does not appear on the established "map" of shahrashub writers: Kupal Kuy (کوی کوپال). He even tentatively raises the question of whether Amir Khusrow may have decided to compose shahrashubs precisely under Kupal Kuy's influence. If this were the case, it would become possible to assume that the shahrashub had other authors rooted deeper in, and dating further back within, Indian literary tradition (Abdulla, 1965: 206).

In the same context, Syed Abdullah recalls Muhammad ibn `Ali ibn Shahrashub, the author of the book "Ma`ālim al-`Ulamā'", who died in 588 (1192), and once again draws attention to the fact that the term shahrashub was already in use in much earlier periods.

Citing "Ma`āsir-i Raḥīmī", regarded as one of the authoritative sources, Syed Abdullah notes that it indicates Faghfur Lahijī's familiarity with the shahrashub, and that "Tabaqāt-i Akbarī" mentions a shahrashub by Azizi Qazvini. He immediately goes on to express regret that many poems of this kind written during the Mughal period have been lost and are no longer accessible today (Abdulla, 1965: 213).

We consider information about all these examples of shahrashub to be valuable because, in order to properly observe the genre's history and course of development – its evolution and enrichment over time – and to arrive at sound scholarly conclusions, it is essential, as far as possible, to become acquainted with all known examples. Only in this way does it become possible to offer a comprehensive and accurate assessment of the shahrashub, a genre that has taken root in many literatures and has manifested itself in each of them with its own distinctive character.

Needless to say, it is necessary to dwell on individual Urdu shahrashubs and to carry out analyses of them. It is essential to study not only the well-known examples, but also the lesser-known ones, as well as those whose names alone are known and which have not yet been brought into the analytical purview of literary scholarship. Syed Abdullah seeks, at the very least, to share his views on the famous Urdu shahrashubs, their authors, as well as their circumstances of composition and content. In this sequence, he begins first with Beheshti's Āshūbnāma.

Relying on the opinions of historians, he writes that with the end of the Mughal Empire, the era of Shah Jahan also came to a close, and with it the phase of the triumph of Turkic influence in the region ended. He adds that Shah Jahan's sons had already begun contending for the Delhi Sultanate while he was still alive.

The internal chaos that began in Shah Jahan's later years escalated to the point of civil war, and although even the smallest details of that conflict are reflected in historical sources, the perspective of literature – the way artistic expression witnesses and portrays those tragedies – is entirely different. A poet of that period and an eyewitness to the events, Beheshti, composed the Āshūbnāma-yi Hindustān, a masnavi,

in which he provides a detailed account of the events of 1067–1068 AH, their consequences, and the “ašhub” (turmoil) they brought upon the Indian sultanate.

The title of this masnavi is sometimes also given as Shahrashub-i Hindustān.

Syed Abdullah observes that in his masnavi, Beheshti expresses regret over the lack of a clear law of succession in India, and convincingly depicts – using vivid, realistic detail – how the absence of a regulatory mechanism allowed unrest to spiral, how the internecine wars of the Timurid princes worsened the economic conditions of various social strata, and how an economic crisis that began with unemployment led to greater calamities. He notes that this approach not only activated the political content within the shahrashub genre but also represented an overall advancement in Urdu literature. From this, Syed Abdullah concludes that a number of later shahrashubs with political and economic themes – including those composed during the reign of Muhammad Shah – drew their initial spark from Beheshti’s masnavi (Abdulla, 1965: 214).

Syed Abdullah connects the shahrashubs’ heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to societal processes – compared with other poetic forms and literary genres – to the turbulent political life of India and the demands of the time: *“During this period, shahrashubs written in Persian and Urdu were in vogue. It is true that this arose from the necessities of the time. Regardless of whether ordinary poetry changed its tone in response to the political climate, the shahrashub underwent a complete transformation. Across India, fragmentation, internal conflict, unemployment, distrust, and social unrest had increased to such an extent that no sensible person was unaware of the real situation. Qulamali Azad mourned in his Khazān-i Amīra the unpreparedness of the army and the collapse of the military system. Although some poets of that period did not comment on certain events – and for this reason many historical occurrences are not reflected in their works – shahrashubs faithfully reflect the daily political anxieties and instability.”* (Abdulla, 1965: 215)

Noting that the social upheavals of Muhammad Shah’s reign, the hardships people faced, and the calamities experienced by society are reflected in the works of many writers of that period, Syed Abdullah once again emphasizes that shahrashub poets predominated in this regard, and he provides information about some of them.

Mil Rai Shawqi, an officer in the Punjab province, was also a poet, and he composed a qasida lamenting the unbearable conditions in Punjab, similar to Anvari’s “Ishq-i Khurāsān” (Tears of Khurasan). Syed Abdullah points out that although the qasida is titled Guldaftar-i Sokhan and its heading does not indicate that it is a shahrashub, in its essence it belongs to the shahrashub genre (Abdulla, 1965: 215).

This principle can generally be applied to many shahrashubs in the literatures of other peoples as well. In other words, the fact that a poem is explicitly labeled as a shahrashub is not a necessary condition; the primary criterion is its content – essentially, whether the poem aligns with the shahrashub spirit.

In Mabāhis, there is also mention of several other poems and poets from that calamitous period, which are considered classic examples of the genre with newly enriched content: Faryād by Jafar Zitlin, Shahrashub by Faiz Muhammad Shah, and Shahrashub by Shafiq Urangabadi (Abdulla, 1965: 216).

Following Nader Shah’s invasion, the hardships in India multiplied, and due to the severe economic situation, as Syed Abdullah writes, *“many noble and respected people were forced to live as paupers and beggars.”* (Abdulla, 1965: 216) This greatly increased the burden of suffering within society and led to the emergence of new shahrashubs.

Syed Abdullah notes that from the reign of Muhammad Shah until the end of Bahadur Shah Zafar's era, shahrashubs were primarily concerned with themes of economic deprivation, and that some of the finest examples of this type were composed by Shafiq Urangabadi, Kamtar-i Dehlavi, Shakir Naji, Hatim, Sauda, Mir Taqi, Nazir Akbarabadi, and Rasikh Azimabadi (Abdulla, 1965: 216).

In Shakir Naji's shahrashub, the lines reflect the mourning caused by the destruction and devastation in Delhi resulting from Nader Shah's invasion. At the same time, he satirically and ironically criticizes the cowardice and lack of courage of the Indian army.

Shakir Naji, presented by Syed Abdullah as one of the "elders of the high poetical class" (Abdulla, 1965: 217), was known in literary circles as a haṭvagu (satirical poet). However, due to the dire condition of the state, his writings transcended ordinary satire, elevating his work to the level of political critique. The disruption of stability in the country following Nader Shah's attacks, and the way internal conflicts further impoverished the already struggling lower classes, gave rise to a series of writings that, in Syed Abdullah's words, were "heart-rending" (Abdulla, 1965: 217). Shakir Naji, in turn, composed a long mukhammās on this theme. Syed Abdullah cites what Mawlana Azad writes in "Āb-i Ḥayāt" about this mukhammās, noting that it accurately reflects the internal state of the royal court in Delhi at that time, the honor and integrity of the nobility, the corruption of the palace attendants, and the people's demands for comfort. He also provides two couplets from the poem as examples, confirming that Shakir Naji's mukhammās became a model and standard for later Urdu shahrashub poets (Abdulla, 1965: 217).

Following this, Syed Abdullah analyzes Sauda's shahrashub, noting that the leitmotif of this long qasida is unemployment, and he summarizes the poem's content. Sauda laments that work has now vanished; even if you take a horse and go to someone to labor, you receive no wages. Hunger has increased to such an extent that not a single grain is available, and insecurity in the country is so extreme that even a sword at home cannot protect you. When you finally find work, hope for payment stretches for years, and even after years, you may not receive your wages. Government employees cannot escape this situation despite their efforts, because all sectors are in the same condition. If you take work from a wealthy person, you find that his own situation is difficult. If you engage in trade, the situation there is no better than in other fields. Suppose you buy goods from Isfahan and bring them here – how and to whom can you sell them? If you try to sell your goods to a wealthy person in northern India, you first have to negotiate the price, and even after selling, collecting the money owed is difficult. Even if you go knocking on someone's door every day to collect payment, you return empty-handed, exhausted from going here and there, and in the end, you may not collect anything, with no certainty of when you will.

*No soul is spared a quiet life;
Suffering is the lot we all inherit.
Comfort has vanished without a trace,
Leaving us only empty promises behind.
Where peace once lived, a hundred shames now stand.*

*In every heart, hope and faith have faded into ash*¹¹. (Abdulla, 1965: 218-219)

In another shahrashub, Sauda laments that unemployment – now the nation's most inescapable vortex – has left even the army and its soldiers paralyzed. He notes that poverty has taken on a mass character: men who once governed twenty or twenty-two provinces now find themselves without even the smallest employment. Former offices survive in name alone – hollow, like empty images. He sketches a bleak picture: the treasury is drained, agriculture has collapsed, no summer or winter harvest arrives, and everywhere reign helplessness, fear, and an inner, unrelenting anxiety.

*So fearful is the common soldier
He trembles even at the barber's blade.
The horseman is worse by far –
Sleep overtakes him, and he spills from bed.* (Abdulla, 1965: 220)

So that the reader may honestly grasp the scale of the catastrophe engulfing the country and its army, Sauda lays bare reality in its sorrowful nakedness and asks: when animals in the stables are dying of hunger for lack of fodder and grain, how is it possible to keep military units active in such a dreadful situation? (Abdulla, 1965: 221)

And to the question for which he can find no answer – one that is, in truth, unanswerable – he himself provides the reply:

*Enough, Sauda – be still, say no more.
These griefs are heavier than the soul can bear.
If the thing within your chest does not burn like meat on fire,
It has no right to be called a heart.
Which eye today is not brimming with blood and tears?
Alas – your question has no answer.
What is to be done? This is the temper of the age:
peak nothing. Breathe softly. Stand and endure.* (Abdulla, 1965: 221)

Though Sauda and the other Urdu shahrashub poets were told to “be silent,” they could not stay quiet. They could not. The grief tightly knotted in their hearts found its voice, transformed into poems that were vivid, burning, and unflinchingly true.

Syed Abdulla also explains why Urdu poets who wrote shahrashub frequently brought the horse as a motif into their verses, a point that is useful even for those unfamiliar with the realities of early India. The fact is that the image of the horse was itself a clear reflection of the decline experienced by Indian society. Syed Abdulla clarifies: “*It is important to note that, in addition to the shahrashub works of Mir and Sauda, the 'horse' is a prominent theme in their other poems as well. In reality, horses held a significant place in the Mongol military system. Just as elephants were trained in the ancient Indian army, great time and effort were devoted to the preparation of horses during the Mongol period. Numerous treatises on horse breeding indicate that, after the reign of Shah Jahan, the number of well-trained and high-quality horses gradually declined. By the time of Muhammad Shah, the scarcity of special cavalry horses and*

¹¹ Subsequently, the translations of the literary poems were made based on the Urdu originals taken from “Mabahis”. I am grateful to our Pakistani colleague Tariq Hamid for his assistance in producing fluent translations of the texts in Urdu.

distinguished breeds had become a widely voiced and common complaint. It is therefore no coincidence that Mir and Sauda treated the horse as a matter of importance. Perhaps in the military structure, this was the most conspicuous weakness, which they felt compelled to critique in their works.” (Abdulla, 1965: 221-222)

Weighty scholarly studies are written on every historical period, often in multi-volume works, and documents that convey the events of the time as they truly happened are also published. Yet, even if they cannot depict past events with the same precision and indisputable evidence as historical records, literary works dealing with history always possess a certain advantage. No historical source can convey the mood, feeling, and excitement of an era as well as a literary work created within it. Moreover, even after decades and centuries have passed, unlike historical sources, literary works can keep those feelings and that excitement alive just as they were in bygone days. Therefore, Seyid Abdulla is right: *“There is no need to comment on Mir and Sauda’s depictions of the palace’s wretched condition. The state of the Delhi sultans of that era is no secret to any historian. The absence of law and order, the withdrawal of capable and wise administrators from politics, and other such factors can all be studied in historical texts about the period. The shahrashub poems of Mir and Sauda effectively reflect the political situation of their time. There is no doubt that certain passages contain exaggeration. Yet the overall portrayal of events and conditions is very close to reality. In terms of vividness and the bitter quality of description, Sauda’s shahrashub surpasses Mir’s. Sauda’s work also has a broader scope. To present a fuller picture, he employs more colorful and varied techniques. He strives to make the impact of the situation on the reader equal to the impact it had on those who lived through it. It would not be wrong to suggest that it was primarily Mir and Sauda who gave life to the shahrashub in Urdu and made it significant. Before them, poems of this kind were neither as powerful nor as vivid. Much of what was written on this subject after them appears only as an explanation or commentary on what they had written.” (Abdulla, 1965: 223)*

Later, Syed Abdulla discusses shahrashub-mukhammas by Nazir, which reflects the simple working people of Agra – money changers, shopkeepers, firewood traders, necklace makers, blacksmiths, and teachers – as well as factory owners and government officials in similarly powerless and vulnerable situations. He also examines the masnavi-shahrashub of Rasikh Azimabadi, and the shahrashub works of Shafiq Ourangabadi and Sayyah, highlighting their distinctive qualities and merits. (Abdulla, 1965: 226-228)

Next, Syed Abdulla discusses the shahrashub by Sayyah, a poet whom Mirza Galib nicknamed “Sef ul-Haqq,” which satirizes the beggars of India’s major cities. He notes that he has not seen the work himself and that his knowledge of the shahrashub comes from the 1942 publication of “Risale-yi Urdu”, but he also provides the location of the manuscript copy mentioned there – the Sûrat library of Haji Hakim Muhammad Qasim. (Abdulla, 1965: 229)

Sayyah, who traveled to many cities across India, depicted the lives and morals of the wealthy and the nobility from various angles, and he also wrote his shahrashub poems as a response to Sauda, openly asserting his claim: *“Do not regard me as inferior to Sauda.” (Abdulla, 1965: 229)*

Syed Abdulla begins the section dedicated to the shahrashub of Delhi with a couplet he takes from one of the poems in the series:

In Delhi, there is no fine wine – only pain and woe;

The people of Delhi are not drunk on the square, but on their sorrow.
(Abdulla, 1965: 229)

According to Syed Abdulla, a new era in Urdu shahrashub begins after the Delhi uprising. We observe significant differences both in the content and in the structure of the work. As the period and politics change, so too do the themes and forms of the shahrashub poems.

In earlier works, complaints about the times, the course of events, unemployment, and the weakening of the army's discipline were the main themes, expressed through satire and praise. But now, there was neither an army nor anyone who commanded it. If any patriotism remained, it had been swept away by the flood of rebellion. For this reason, satire and praise gave way to elegy.

Syed Abdulla refers to these shahrashub poems as *"bloody tears, sighs and lamentations, the words and letters of a broken heart clothed in paper, poems of calamity."* (Abdulla, 1965: 230)

The researcher, who reported having seen two collections of Delhi shahrashub and ashubname poems, notes that one is titled "Fughan-i-Delhi" and the other "Faryad-i-Delhi". He explains that "Fughan-i-Delhi", written by Muhammad Tafazzul Husayn Kawkab in 1279 AH (1862 CE), was published in Delhi in 1280 AH (1863 CE). The second, "Faryad-i-Delhi", is also known under the title "Inqilab-i-Delhi" and was printed in 1931 at the Nizami Press in Jupid, a district in India. (Abdulla, 1965: 231-232)

The shahrashub poems in both collections offer a topic that is interesting both for studying this genre as a stage in its historical development and for observing how Delhi and its people, who endured great upheavals, are reflected in the mirror of the shahrashub.

Although it may appear at first glance as merely a list, Syed Abdulla's study actually provides a foundation suitable for a separate investigation: the names of poets who wrote Delhi shahrashub – Azurdé Dehlavi, Salik, Kamil, Afsordé Dehlavi, Suzan, Mubin, Tashna, Zahir, Mohsen, Daagh, and Aish.

Following that, we can list the poets who wrote shahrashub ghazals: Ahsan, Raqim, Talib, Ahqar, Salik, Zahir, Ikram, Sipehr, Sahib, Ahmad, Shifte, Aish, Tajammul, Shatir, Aqil, Saqib, Shaiq, Aziz, Sabir, Asi, Rizwan, Zamir, Abid, Qamar, Lutf, Mohsen, Kawkab, Mubin, Hunar, Kamil, Mehdi, and other masters of words who tested their skill in composing shahrashub. We may also discuss Hassami Dehlavi, Hali Pani Peti, Rizwan Dehlavi, Shamsher Dehlavi, Safir Dehlavi, Zamir Dehlavi, Talib Dehlavi, Zahir Dehlavi, Abid Dehlavi, Aziz Mirza Dehlavi, Abbas Dehlavi, Mirza Ghalib, Jahani Dehlavi, and Majruh Dehlavi. (Abdulla, 1965: 232-233)

Touching on the distinctive features of the Delhi shahrashub, Syed Abdulla emphasizes that they differ in form from the shahrashub of earlier periods. It also becomes clear in these shahrashub poems that, both in terms of structure and content, it is more common for poets to move beyond the traditional boundaries established by earlier works: *"Delhi shahrashub differs somewhat from the shahrashub of the previous era in terms of form. We can state openly that, during this period, a somewhat new direction was created in this genre in terms of both meaning and form. Admittedly, these shahrashub still include discussions of various social classes and descriptions of economic elements, but there is far less obligation to adhere strictly to the earlier conventions of the genre. Some aspects of these shahrashub may appear similar to those in earlier works. For*

example, there is a section that first praises the grandeur of Delhi. When addressing this topic, the poets exercised considerable skill with their pens. Several poets wrote this section at great length; for instance, Suzan composed sixteen stanzas on the subject.

Soon after, the beginning of the uprising and the destruction it caused, the damage inflicted on Delhi and its inhabitants, and the calamities that befell them are described. Indeed, this section of the poem is where the poets display their greatest skill. Each poet attempted to portray the subject according to their own nature, reflecting the circumstances and emotions of the time. Some sought to present the initial and final states in parallel within each stanza, while others depicted the events sequentially, developing the first subject and then the second in continuous progression.

In the final section, a prayer is offered. Here, the wish for spring to return once more over Delhi is expressed.” (Abdulla, 1965: 234)

4. The style of elegy and lament

Syed Abdulla notes another nuance in these shahrashub poems, which he calls *qamnama*: in the Delhi shahrashub , the style of elegy and lament becomes more prominent, replacing the earlier tone of satire and praise. (Abdulla, 1965: 234)

This is understandable, because the events being described dictated it; it was a necessity arising from the content and themes of the Delhi shahrashub poems.

A careful reading of the Delhi shahrashub poems provides insight into the specific perspectives of Delhi's residents regarding the uprising. Similarly, we see each poet's distinct approach to Delhi's former prestige and its ruined state after the revolt. In other words, each poet felt a different kind of affection for Delhi. Therefore, when Delhi fell into ruin, each poet composed an elegy in their own unique manner. In this way, the city's overall devastation moved all the poets, yet each one depicted the sorrowful events in a style shaped by their personal way of life and religious outlook. As a result, one poet writes about the ruler, another sheds tears over the grief of friends and relatives, another mourns the death of family members, one laments the destruction of Delhi's buildings and walls, another grieves the decline of knowledge and learning, and yet another mourns the erasure of Delhi's literature and the purity and beauty of its language. In short, we can say that the cries and tones of each poet are different.

...In summary, although these shahrashub poems describe the same events occurring at the same time, each presents the content and approach in a different light. Alongside differences in temperament and circumstances, the meaning and substance also vary. Thus, Daagh, Zahir, Mohsen, Aish, and Kamil are devoted to the ruler; Kamil, Suzan, and Mohsen are devoted to Delhi itself; Aga Jan, Aish, and Tashna are enamored with Delhi's gatherings, its prosperous and carefree urban life, and the city's refinement and beauty; while Afsurde and Azurde mourn for their friends.

Beyond the shahrashub , the same distinctions can be observed in the ashubiyya ghazals. One poet speaks of the city's former beauty, another depicts the social life of the past; some compose elegies for the lost people of refinement, while others lament the respected elders of Delhi; some praise Delhi's language and purity, while others write of their anxiety over its disappearance. (Abdulla, 1965: 234-236)

The praises given to Delhi in the shahrashub , the carefully chosen metaphors, and the admiring comparisons are not only the heartfelt words of the poets who composed these verses but also the expressions of devotion of millions of people who, over the

centuries, have harbored the purest love for this city: “Kuçayı raşk-i can” (“Street of Enchantment”), “Behişt məkan” (“Place of Paradise”), “Fələk zəmin” (“Earth like the Sky”), “Malayik cənab” (“Honorable Angels”), “Behişt və xüld min intixab” (“Chosen in the World and Paradise”), “La cavab” (“Unmatched, Excellent”), “Hər ins ü can ka del” (“The Heart of Every Human and Being”), “Hər qədrdan ka del” (“The Heart of Every Worthy Person”), “Hendustan ka del” (“The Heart of India”), “Montəxeb-e cahan” (“Chosen of the World”), “Cahan abad” (“Flourishing World”), “Bulənd şəhr” (“Lofty City”). (Abdulla, 1965: 239)

*Grace shimmers through every corner of this city,
Nobility breathes in each soul of Delhi.
Adorned with freshness, delicacy, and light,
Every word unfolds as wit and delight. (Abdulla, 1965: 240)*

The shahrashubs of Zahir Dehlavi, Mubin, Daagh, Hakim Muhammad Taqi Khan Suzan, Muhammad Ali Tashna, Salik Qurban Ali Bey, Mohsin, Afsurda, Mufti Sadruddin Azurda, Agha Jan Eysh, and Kamil present the ancient city of Delhi and its inhabitants` suffering and deprivation in the aftermath of the uprising as if through the most truthful and moving historical film, shot in documentary frames; they resound as a lesson for today and for the future. (Abdulla, 1965: 242-271)

5. The ashubiyya poems

The Delhi shahrashubs also gave rise to a cycle of poems belonging to the mournful wing of the genre – works that may be considered akin to elegiac and lamentational shahrāshubs. This series of poems, known as “Ashubiyya ghazals,” is cited by Seydi Abdulla, who writes: *“In order to convey the sorrow and grief surrounding the Delhi uprising... Mirza Qurban Ali Salik, in the preface to Faghan-i Delhi, notes that ‘some people composed their mourning and lamentations in musaddas shahrashubs, while others expressed their cries of anguish in the form of ghazals. If we look closely, each ghazal is like an elegy. When they are heard, some listeners are able to restrain themselves and do not weep, while others shed tears of blood. When one listens to anyone’s poetry on this subject, even the ears seem to suffer pain. At times the burden is so heavy that one’s breath is cut short; one recalls one’s own calamity, envisions the devastation all around, gathers one’s bundle to leave the city, tries merely to eat corn, begs the nobles for a place to stay – in short, one remembers every misfortune that has befallen oneself.”*

It is a fact that the ghazals composed by poets on the calamities of Delhi are no less powerful in their impact than the shahrashubs. The ghazal demands that the poet interpret meaning with precision and convey an extended theme within a single couplet or two. For this reason, the listener has no need for superfluous or lengthy exposition and grasps the work immediately.

Among the ashubiyya poems written on the Delhi uprising, some of Ghalib’s quatrains and ghazals have become widely memorized and recited (Abdulla, 1965: 272-277).

Syed Abdulla also opens a path toward a line of inquiry that could itself constitute a separate research topic, presenting a list of Delhi poets who composed ashubiyya

ghazals. This list is drawn from the section entitled “Majmua-yi Faryad-i Delhi” in Kawkab’s Faghan-i Delhi and includes the following names: Ahsan, Daagh Dehlavi, Shifta Dehlavi, Asi Dehlavi, Ahqar Bajnuri, Raqim, Sabir, Aqil, Ahmad Dehlavi, Rizvan Dehlavi, Saghir Dehlavi, Abbas Dehlavi, Shaiq, Shamshir, Mubin Dehlavi, among others – approximately thirty poets in total. (Abdulla, 1965: 273-274)

A new phase in Urdu shahrashub writing begins after the upheavals brought about by the Delhi uprising come to an end.

As a result of major upheavals in the country’s political situation, the general orientation of national poetry undergoes a transformation. Syed Abdulla, who introduced into the terminology of shahrashub writing a new designation – so-called “unregulated (non-canonical) shahrashubs” – writes: *“Sir Syed Ahmad Khan’s educational movement and national reconstruction became the central themes. The people paid great attention to these issues. For this reason, poets of this period such as Maulana Hali and Maulana Ismail Mirehi composed many works on these subjects. Hali’s musaddas Shikva-yi Hind (‘The Lament of India’) and Ismail Mirehi’s qasidas Ibrat, Nava-yi Zimistan, Qal’a-yi Akbarabad, and others may be described as unregulated shahrashubs. Shibli’s Shahrashub-i Islam was written during the period of the Balkan Wars. In a similar vein, Ze-Xe Shin Khanum also composed an Islamic shahrashub. The poetry of Maulana Zafar Ali Khan and Allama Iqbal likewise contains numerous unregulated shahrashubs. After the spread of communist ideology, economic conditions came to occupy a central place in poetry as well. However, adherence to a specific formal structure of the shahrashub no longer held the same importance for poets. In Allama Kaifi’s book Vardat (‘The Theft’), there appears an Alamashub that vividly expresses anxiety over the global economic situation.”* (Abdulla, 1965: 276-277)

Conclusion

Thus, tracing the trajectory of the shahrashub in Urdu literature and examining the section devoted to this genre in the work Mabahis by the Pakistani scholar Syed Abdulla help us to perceive and evaluate more accurately the overall landscape associated with this poetic form – both within Urdu literature itself and across other literary traditions in which the shahrashub genre has been employed.

First and foremost, it becomes evident that throughout its entire historical development, the shahrashub reaches the pinnacle of its evolution precisely within Urdu literature.

The shahrashub emerges as the most suitable genre for depicting socio-political motives, reflecting the life of society, and serving as an artistic medium for fulfilling social demands.

In Turkic and Persian-language literatures, it moves beyond the limited thematic range that produces a fixed effect in just a few lines and becomes the genre most sensitive to social concerns and the anxieties of the public.

While traditionally suited to expressing the most ancient and conventional emotions and thoughts, the shahrashub also proves appropriate for articulating the most contemporary calls and ideas dictated by the new era.

The democratic spirit inherent in shahrāshubs allows the genre, from the 18th to the 20th century, to expand into new horizons of content and meaning. Its depth and breadth of development give rise to a variety of new expressive forms, including

directions such as Dahrashub, Alamashub, Falakashub, and others that illuminate global issues.

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Şərq şeirində şəhraşub və urdu şəhraşublarında milli özünüifadə

RAFAEL HÜSEYNOV**

Xülasə

Xalqın azadlıq arzuları, müstəmləkə zülmünə qarşı mübarizəsi, bərabərlik, xoşbəxtlik idealları urdu şeirinin son üç əsrdən artıq müddətdəki inkişafı boyu müşahidə olunur və qarşımızda dünya ədəbiyyatındaki milli-azadlıq hərəkatının əksi probleminin ən maraqlı səhifələrindən birini açır. İstiladan cana doyan xalq üsyankarlaşır və bu coşqun xalq əhvali-ruhiyyəsi də ədəbiyyatda, ən əvvəl şəhraşublarda əksini tapır. Urdu şairlərinin getdikcə daha ucadan və əzəmətlə yüksələn çağırışları yeni-yeni şəhraşubçu şairlərin meydana gəlməsinə imkan yaradır. "Şəhraşub" sözünün lüğəvi mənası "şəhərdə qalmaqal, vəlvələ salan" deməkdir. Bu da diqqətəlayiqdir ki, həmin janrın ilk nümunələrindən birini də məhz yaradıcılığı hind mühiti ilə bağlı olan şair Məsud Səd Salman yaratmışdır.

Şibli Nemaninin "Shahrashub-e-İslam"ı urdu poeziyasında "vətəndaş poeziyası" deyilən yeni istiqamətin formalaşması yolunda atılan ən gərəkli və cəsarətli addımlardan biri olur. Maraqlıdır ki, urdu ədəbiyyatındaki bu istiqaməti yaradan, möhkəmləndirən məhz şəhraşubçu şairlər və onların şəhraşubları olmuşdur. Yaxın və Orta Şərq xalqları ədəbiyyatlarında təqribən 1000 ilə yaxın bir müddətdə dəbdə olmuş, müəyyən mənada qovuşdurucu vəzifə daşımış bu janra dəqiq tərif vermək üçün bütün panoramı göz önündə tutmaq, janrın işləndiyi bütün ədəbiyyatlardakı ifadə üsullarını nəzərə almaq vacibdir. Şəhraşub bütün tarixi boyu keçdiyi inkişaf yolunun zirvəsinə elə urdu ədəbiyyatında çatır.

İctimai-siyasi motivlərin təsviri, cəmiyyət həyatının aynası olmaq funksiyası, sosial sifarişlərin bədii icra məkanı kimi şəhraşub ən münasib janr kimi çıxış edir. Şəhraşub türkdilli və farsdilli ədəbiyyatlarda bir neçə sətir içərisində sabitləşmiş təsiri bağışlayan mövzu dairəsindən kənara adlayır və poeziyanın ictimai qayğı və dərdlərə ən həssas janrına çevrilir. Ən əski, ən ənənəvi duyğu və düşüncələri ifadə etməkcün uyğun görünən şəhraşub yeni zamanın diktəsi ilə ən müasir çağırışları və ideyaları bəyan etməkcün də münasib gəlir. Təmələndən şəhraşublara xas olan demokratizm XVIII–XX yüzillərdə onun yeni məzmun və məna üfüqlərinə çıxmasına imkan yaradır, janrın dərinə və eninə inkişafı onun bir sıra yeni ifadə formalarının, global problemlərə işıq salan "dəhraşub", "aləmaşub", "fələkaşub" və digər istiqamətlərinin meydana gəlməsinə də səbəb olur.

Açar sözlər: Urdu ədəbiyyatı, şəhraşub, janr, milli və demokratik elementlər, dəhraşub, fələkaşub, aləmaşub, ingilis istismarı, moğol imperiyası, Nəzir Əkbərabadi, şəhraşub-e İslam, Şibli Nemani

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Шахрашуб в восточной литературе и национальное самовыражение в шахрашубах урду

РАФАЭЛЬ ГУСЕЙНОВ***

Резюме

Достаточно беглого взгляда на путь развития литературы и языка урду в истории индийской культуры, чтобы увидеть, что начало создания поэтами, являющимися посланниками этого народа, стихов на родном языке, в действительности, означает возрождение национального сознания народа. Это означает осознание народом урду своего национального достоинства. Отражение в жанре шахрашуб национальных, демократических и антиимпериалистических мотивов в поэзии урду, в целом, открывает совершенно новую страницу в истории стихотворения, написанного в этом жанре. В то же время, этот жанр, главным направлением тематики которого с самого начала являлось изображение желаний и идей средних слоев общества, превратился в подходящую площадку для решительной борьбы народа урду.

Кризис феодальной системы, нападения иноземных захватчиков, затем зависимость от Англии переполнили чашу терпения народа. Народ, сытый по горло вторжениями, видит выход в восстаниях, и это настроение народных масс находит свое отражение в литературе, прежде всего, в шахрашубах. Постепенно приобретающие могущественный характер призывы поэтов урду приводят к созданию новых поколений поэтов, пишущих в жанре шахрашуба. По велению времени рамки, направления тем и идей жанра постепенно расширяются. Образуется стабильный круг охвата тематики шахрашубов: простой народ выдвигается в передний план, как герой поэзии, изображаются равенство, мечты о свободе всех людей, независимо от истоков и происхождения, поэтическим языком выражается, что местные феодалы, правители, словно пиявки, пьют кровь народа, английская эксплуатация становится невыносимой. Это с одной стороны является решительным шагом на пути поисков поэзии урду своей сущности в мировой литературе, а с другой – превращается в самый важный этап в эволюции жанра шахрашуба.

Образцы жанра шахрашуба в литературе урду нуждаются в еще более глубоком исследовании. Потому что эти стихи наряду с тем, что являются зеркалом общественно-политической жизни, они также могут считаться поэтической летописью борьбы за свободу народа урду.

Ключевые слова: Литература урду, шахрашуб, жанр, национальные и демократические мотивы, дахрашуб, фелекашуб, аламашуб, английская эксплуатация, империя Моголов, шахрашуб-е ислам, Шибли Немани

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