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ENGLISH GHAZAL: AN INTRODUCTION

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Abstract - Ghazal has achieved an immense popularity in today's world literature. As a poetic genre it has won a wide acclaim. Ghazal is not merely a special proud and privilege of Arabian / Persian poetry (languages in which ghazal was born) but today ghazal is composed in all the major languages of the world. The themes and structure of ghazal influenced the European languages also. Ghazal has developed, widened its scope and has found a special position in the poetic world of Italian, French, German, Spanish and English language. Due to its intrinsic beauty, modesty, philosophical and romantic touch to all the facets of life, it appealed to many English poets. Many poets living in many countries have written poems in ghazal form. A few poets gained perfection and some poets adopted only the structural aspect of ghazal but their ghazals hardly have the peculiar characteristics that may suit for ghazal. The present paper is an attempt to introduce some renowned English ghazal writers who have prospered and glorified this extraordinary poetic genre.

Keywords: Ghazal, Arabian, Persian, theme, structure, poetic genre

Introduction -

Ghazal which has its origin in Arabic / Persian poetry is no longer a proud and privilege of Arabic, Persian and Urdu poetry but it has attained a special position in many principal languages of the world like English, German, Spanish, French, Italian etc. Ghazal is a special attribute of the poetically gifted and extraordinary geniuses. The poet's poetic talent, his / her knowledge of rhetorics, aesthetic sense, mastery over diction, metre and structure, sense of perception all combine together to make ghazal artistically, thematically and structurally perfect. The history of the origin and development of ghazal is quite interesting. It was originated from Arabic poetical type 'Qasida' which was 'a poetry of praise'. Due to its intrinsic beauty, modesty, delicacy, youthful vigour and immediate response from the audience ghazal has become one of the most favourite poetic forms. The structure of ghazal, its thematic variety, its epigrammatic terseness, telling simple things in innovative and excellent manner, use of proverbial language greatly appealed English poets and consequently they turned to ghazal tradition.

Origin of ghazal -

Long before the adoption of Islam, the Arabs sowed the seeds of ghazal in Arabian deserts. In search of water and to earn their livelihood the Arabs wandered from one place to another in the deserts like nomads. Their lives were full of difficulties, hardships and poverty. They could hardly find any opportunity for entertainment. But at the end of the day, they used to meet and shared their feelings with each other. Some poetically gifted writers arranged 'poet's meets'. These poets performed public singing. These poets used to entertain the audience after long hours of labour. 'Qasida' was one of the most preferred form of singing which became extremely popular. 'Qasida' was a long poem written to praise the heroic deeds of their leaders, heroes or ancestors. It was a general custom to introduce a 'Tashbeeb' of two lines before presenting Qasida. Tashbeeb which was always abounding in love, romance was sung first and then the Qasida was presented before the audience.

The Arabs accepted the Islam and started the mission of spreading their religion. They announced a battle of religion called 'Jihad' against Persia / Iran also. As a consequence of war and acceptance of Islam, the cultural dissemination took place in Persia / Iran. Qasida which was popular among the Arabs, also gained special place in Iran.

