



The Poetic Patriotism in Faiz Ahmad Faiz's "For Your Lanes, My Country"

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Abstract:

In his patriotic poetry "For your Lanes, My Country", Faiz Ahmad Faiz "a man of wide experience" expresses his patriotic fervor and rebellious zeal towards his motherland-Pakistan. In the poem, Faiz's concern about the prevalent socio-political degeneration is in poetic tone. The poet envisages the beacon light of hope and freedom. Though the poet is ready to sacrifice everything for his country, most people seem to prefer lethargic, complacent or life-in-death existence. The poet reproaches the spineless people of coward soul. The widespread corruption and administrative tyranny have turned the national activities into wicked, hypocrite, sycophant and ruthless ruffians. Injustice and inequality is rampant. The poet's struggle is a crusade against oppression. The poem "For your Lanes, My Country" ends on a note of hope as the poet believes that his exile, imprisonment would soon be over and he would be re-united with his beloved nation.

Key-words: Rebelliousness, devotion, inner respect, sacred, corrupt, liberty

I. Introduction:

The most reputed collection of **prison poetry "Dast-e-Saba"** by the patriotic voice of Pakistan, Faiz Ahmad Faiz is imbued with a revolutionary zeal of optimism and robust confidence. This poetry collection "Dast-e-Saba" focuses on his imprisoned life, a vista to peep out the world in a new way. His poetry epitomizes revolt and dissidence. His ideological audacity and ruling voice resonated widely during the deadly silence of martial law rule. His profound humanism, enriched cultural tradition and spiritual continuum affirmed the law of change. His initial poems on the conventional themes of love and beauty transfigured into patriotic love and socialistic humanism. Faiz witnessed Hindustan-Pakistan partition and its aftermath—homelessness, Hindu-Muslim tussles, trauma, alienation, hyphenated rootless situation etc. All

these afflictions get portrayed in his poetry. His revolutionary cry shook the foundation of oppressive government.

'Love' is the hallmark of Faiz's poetry but his description of 'love' comprises of two kinds: *his love for his beloved and his love for his country*. **To Faiz, 'beloved'— a person, or dearest one is elevated to his homeland, motherland—his country**. The promising poetic advancement in the last poem of "Dast-e-Saba" is fulfilled in the poem "For your lanes, My Country"— poetic manifestation of rebelliousness, recuperation, solitariness as well as disappointment. The poem moves sharply from simplest orchestration of language to brilliant image, from argumentation to emotional evocation, as critic Bly remarks—"From the anguished emotions to the intellect and back".

"For your Lanes, My Country" "crystallizes his poetic voice imbued with robust optimism. As he was a devout Marxist, his humanitarian self yearned for the proletariats, suffering endlessly under the oppressive autocracy of Pakistani Government administered by Liaquat Ali Khan. In the poem, Faiz Ahmad Faiz pays his heart-felt tribute, inner obeisance to his Nation as well as concerned about the contemporary socio-political degeneration. At the fag end of the poem, the poet envisages the beacon light of hope and freedom.

The opening phrase "**For your lanes, My Country**", refers (literary) "let me be a sacrifice to your streets" (Nisar main teri galyon ke). A common Urdu phrase (let me be a sacrifice--) is generally used for religious devotion, but here the poet uses it in an ironical way. He prefers to be a sacrifice or rather prefers to dedicate himself to the sacred streets of his beloved country rather being a puppet in the hands of autocratic authoritarian power. Though the poet wants to dedicate whole heartedly for the sake of the country, but most people of the Nation lead a lethargic, hollow or life-in-death existence. In the current socio-political scenario, none shall walk with his head high and the passionate lovers are couched in "**afraid of life**



and limb". Recalling Saadi Shiraz, a famous Persian-Poet Faiz upholds the current socio-political scenario. People have lost standing erection; have been turned into spineless; banal bricks and sordid stones are imprisoned within the bars of slavery; while the authoritarian propagandist- hungry dogs are roaming relentlessly. The sycophants of the corrupt political institution of tyranny have usurped the patriotic zeal of the nationalists. The national activists have been turned into wicked **"power-seekers, judges and plaintiffs"**— through their hypocrite propaganda. He is confused over secured protection and true judgment. In such a situation when ruthless ruffians rule over, people suffering in dire disorder are unable to express.

In the poem **"London"**, **Dr. Samuel Johnson** describes London as **"the needy villain's general Home"**. Vices, malice, materialism, accident, conspiracy, violent protests and arson become frequent in the city of London. London has become a place where **"relentless Ruffians"** have a field day; they mug and inflict injuries on unsuspecting innocent people; unscrupulous lawyers prey upon their clients; house crumbles and a female atheist (Caroline Queen) bombards people with her relentless propaganda. The cursed walls of London are infested with vice and personal aggrandizement. There is no hope, sprawling frustration; widespread corruption with its masquerades and debauchery has brought down the nation's morale. The ruling elite have done to the country with their pusillanimity and misguided policies; everyone is sycophantic, deceitful and gregarious.

**"London! The needy villain's
Gen'ral**

Home."

However, the nightmarish imprisonment could not suppress poet's inherent patriotism, hope of glorious revolution, inflexible courage and indomitable determination. The poet mourns about how he lives in **"imagined days and nights"**— his crying existence in the **"shadow of prison wall"** being the victim of Rawalpindi conspiracy (1951). The poet wonders how the dark hair of the night sky above his native land would be star-studded, or how the face of his motherland would be sun-bathed. The spirited poet's struggle is a crusade against the oppressive power. The "ritual" (system) of silencing/ suppressing the voice of justice through "monstrous laws" and repressive state apparatuses has been common in the corrupt states. Mass Revolution for liberty, equality and fraternity can uproot the deep-rooted powerful hegemony of

the political Authority. The Fire of Revolution brings forth the "flower" of a promising future.

**"This is how we always grew flowers in fire
their defeat isn't new, our victory isn't new."**

The poet does not howl for the divine deliverance. As the poet is rebellious his revolutionary spirit lies in arm-struggle— the forceful resistance of 'comrade'. The false accusations and allegations imposed upon him by Liaquat Government will be proved wrong soon. His claustrophobic imprisonment will come to an end.

**"We are apart today, but tomorrow
we'll be—together".**

The poet sums up his prolonged imprisonment to a "one night". "Reign of a few days" suggests directly the four years of Pakistani Government. Though the poet does not believe but he assures the patriotic upsurge would save Pakistan from the deadly clutches of political Tyranny. The putrid stricture of the decayed, corrupt system of Government will be banished. A new society based on liberty, Equality and Fraternity "will be founded by the salutation of the suffering patriots—

**"Those who remain true to you
understand what the
daily turmoil really means:"**

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