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Silence Speaks

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Silence speaks when nobody is there

I hear her talking when boredom chokes me

Oft away from heat and dust

On the banks of Kishanganga river in Gurez

Baking my bones in the Summer sun

The lullaby of the river

Mingled with the melody of musical silence of Gurez

I find myself in an eternal bliss

Waking to the realities that pain me back home

Here I am blessed

There I am crushed under feet

Here I am all music and melody

There I lose the meaning of life

Here I read and feel silence

There I run away from silence

Silence speaks to me in the valley of Gurez

Silence allows me freedom of thought on the heights of Gurez

2

My Dreams are My Nation

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They ask me to show Identity Card

I wonder why at all they can do it

Lost in the retrieval of dreams past

I find the answer to this question

Years back, when I was a mere child

I would weave the web of my dreams

Dreams of varied colours

Of my nation, my country, my home and my bliss and joy

I lost the web

In the vicious cycle of violence

But I read the narrations of my nation

Written by those who died in defiance

We call them Shaheed

In English they are called Martyres

In every drop of their blood

I could see that beloved narration

Though lost in the vicious cycle of violence

My nation is still there in the narration of my dreams

It may take me years to weave that narration in black and white.

3

Silence on the River Jhelim

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As usual, I am on my favorite spot

The bank of river Jhelum

The moon is full tonight

I am being narcissistic

I feel like reading my face in the moon

Or in the mirror of water

Drawn a bit crazy

After years in fact

Madness sometimes is a creative act

I feel like plunging into the azure depths

As if a romantic impulse has guided me so

An eerie silence provokes a meditative strain

My mind's eye visualizes strange thoughts

Scarlet water irritates me

The peace of my mind is disturbed

I look deeper

I hear noisy thoughts

May be of blasts of the past

I let myself go down

To feel the water

It is hot

As if molten iron flowing

The fountain of sweet melodies

Is interrupted

I wish I had not known Jhelum

My Childhood friend

It is so strange now

Times have changed

Much blood has gone down the river

Many an unmourned corpse has been washed away

It is no more a serene place

It is no more an abode of peace

Men in Uniform are ready to “catch and kill”

A word everybody feared a lot

Jhelum reminds me this all

Whenever I chat with this friend.

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They Say He is a father

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*Wearing tattered clothes
He comes to offer prayers at the Jamia Masjid*

Tears always well up in his eyes

He looks here and there in the market

In the Masjid too

I can guess he is search of something

Why is he so weak?

Why is he so pale?

Why does he wear a drawn face?

I ask these questions to myself

His figure haunts me always

They say he is a father

Who has lost a young son

Ashraf was killed by renegades

In the dead of a night

His head was crushed like that of an ant

He is really a father

Waiting for his son to become his support

To shoulder his coffin when he himself dies

His mother is waiting with Mehandi for Ashraf

She has even looked for a bride

They say he is a father

5

Mother Courage

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*Shahmal is on the window of her forlorn home
With thousands of dreams in her eyes*

Her son Maqbool is buried in an alien land

One has disappeared never to return

One died in an accident

And one more was consumed by a gun battle

She is the Mother of Kashmir

Every woman of Kashmir lives in her face

In her eyes

Her dreams and aspirations are beyond the reach of words

Beyond the horizons of any powerful description

She is the Mother Courage

Waiting for her martyred sons

With dreams of homemaking in her eyes

With dreams of recollecting the lost home

With dreams of singing lullabies to her martyred sons

She is all hope

All courage

Waiting, but has not lost hope

She is happy

Maqbool is the father of Revolution

Hundreds and thousands followed his call

Though years after his fall

Shahmal is the mother of a Movement in Kashmir

6

When Clouds Kissed Mountain Peaks

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*When clouds kissed mountain peaks in Kashmir
My heart missed the mirth of childhood days
On the thorns of violent history of years past
It bled to the death of my soul
I look hither and thither in search of the blessed day
When like clouds in the sky, one may walk freely on the earth
In the blessed freedom of clouds and jocund dance of winds
I could feel my heart going after dreams of distant lands
People of varied colours and castes
Would join my dreams
Behind the screen lies hidden the Light
If only one has the vision to wait for that
In the marriage of clouds and mountain peaks
I see the dawn of new light preparing its fight
Undaunted and uncaring I roam
In the hope to encounter the Blessed word
May be a bard shares it with me
May be a herdsman perchance speaks it out
It may be a falling leaf causes it to my tongue
Or in wonder I just have it from a child*

7

On the Bank of Wullar Lake

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*From the Heights of Baba Shukr's shrine
Just on the bank of Wullar Lake*

My eyes could go miles away

Doing the aerial survey of Bandipora

Of Sopore and Sonawari

With dreams and nostalgia

The waters are no more pristine

Waves of past could be seen

In every drop of water in lake

History of yesteryears lies buried

Journeying towards a destination unknown

Unfathomable depths of the lake reveal

Undisclosed stories

Secrets Known to the Wullar alone

Of sighs of the dead and shrieks of the murdered

And stories of loot and robbery

In the jungles that surround the lake

In silence on the Baba Shukr heights

Pictures and paintings of pain flash back

To the screen of my mind

And cause motion to my fingers to write

To my heart to feel

*My mind to remember and think
What happened to people
Living around in the years past
When armoured vehicles
Made inroads deep into the forests
To make a manhunt
Go berserk for "Catch and Kill"
Look for the last man with a gun
And with a mind to think
In my maiden visit to the Shrine
I had the chance to meditate
To look inside
And around
To collect the threads lost
And beads fallen apart
In a drop of water
I could see the moments of pangs and pain.*

Blasphemy Again

*I let the river go
Even the Chinar was angry today
The sky had no tears to shed
I was alone
People were shouting
"Down Down America"
"Aik se Bad Kar Aik zaleel
America aur Israiel"
Entire Muslim world is angry today
For somebody has again misused his freedom*

*In the past, it happened many a time
I was today in a different mood
My beloved Prophet is not understood by the world
Even after fifteen hundred years
May be some mentally sick do this hateful game
Mohammad deserves beauty and praise
He is the Praised one by name and deeds as well
Today I remember that old lady
Who would throw dirt on him
In a street of Makka
But one day she did not do the same
Perhaps she was ill
Mohammad passed by the house as usual
No dirt was thrown today
He stopped and asked about her
Mohammad, the beloved Prophet of mankind, went to see her
In her home
Wherefrom she would throw the dirt on Rehmatan Lil Aalimeen
Or
I remember
How Mohammad, the Prophet for all
Would forgive
Those who teased him all through his life
Forced him to migrate to Madina
Subjected him to Exile
When he returned to Makka as victororious
“All of you are free today” ,
Announced Mohammad*

*“There shall be no revenge” ,
Said the Rehmatan Lil Aalmeen
I said to myself
Those who curse this Prophet
Do actually curse themselves alone
Mohammad deserves praises
He has liberated the man in chains
A female child about to be buried
Was given rights and life by Mohammad
Through the word he received from Allah
We must thank Allah
For blessing us all
With such a loving messenger
Whom we know as Mohammad
Those who curse him
Must have a look within
And see what Mohammad
Stood for in the history
Of accursed mankind
Torn and Bruised Body
In a small brook
Two bodies beautiful
Lay torn and bruised
Much violence is visible
The third one is the womb still
All the three
Laugh at the cruelty of men in Khaki
Lawlessness of men to secure*

*Water is not even knee-deep
They have not actually drowned
Left there after rape and murder
God should have come down
To save them at least
Nobody said a word
As to who actually did this all
People protested
But all in vain
Three bodies bruised and torn
Raped by fellow human beings
The brook is still silent
No storm
She did not identify them
Her silence
Is mysterious
Does she fear?
What are her motives?
Or does she speak but we do not hear?
May be the truth is all evident...
May be the evidence is always there...
Those who did it
Are sure to be haunted by three deaths
And their cries in wilderness.*

(In the loving memory of Asiya and Neelofar Jan who were raped and murdered by the men in Uniform.....)