History of Medicine, 2024, 10(2): 2320-2327
DOI: 10.48047/HM.V10.I2.2024.2320-2327

"A Study of Jameel Ahmad Adeel's Short Stories in the Context of Sufism"

[1.]Dr. Shaista Hameed Khan (Corresponding author), [2.]Dr. Rehana Kausar

[1.] Associate professor, department of Urdu, GC University, Lahore.
[2.] Associate professor. Head of Urdu Department, Lahore college for women University, Lahore.

Abstract:
Jameel Ahmad Adeel transforms ordinary incidents into stories in such a way that eternal truths are revealed before the reader, keeping him engaged in unraveling the symbolic complexities of the narrative. The characters in his stories reflect the writer's keen observation and realistic outlook on life. His fiction opens the doors of inner insight for the reader. The titles of Jameel Ahmad Adeel's collections also mirror his symbolic temperament. "Mom ki Maryam" is an allusion to Jesus Christ, while "Zard Kafan" contains the hidden symbol of Nakhl-e-Aiman with profound meaning, where the parasitic creeper of materialism entangles the sacred tree of human existence. "Be-Khawab Jazeeron ka Safar" (Journey of Sleepless Islands) symbolizes the isolated human being, likened to an island. This use of symbols and myths, as reflected in the titles of his collections, points to a metaphysical dimension. The writer has keenly observed both local and global issues and events, and instead of presenting them directly, he has artistically employed symbolism to give political happenings a place in his works.

Keywords: Jameel Ahmad Adeel. Sufism. Literature . philosophy . concepts**.** allegorical tale. Rememberance

"A Study of Jameel Ahmad Adeel's Short Stories in the Context of Sufism"

Sufism is an Arabic term which literally means "wool" or "woolen garment." The word is derived from *ṣuffa*, which in Arabic means "platform" or "raised place." This refers to the platform near the Prophet Muhammad's mosque where the *Ashab-e-Suffa* (Companions of the Platform) used to gather and remain engaged in the remembrance of God. The roots of mystical thought stretch far back into human history. Prophets from various nations and religions across the world have engaged in practices that align with what we now recognize as Sufism. Prominent among these civilizations are the Greek, Chinese, Egyptian, Jewish, Indian, and Islamic cultures. However, the most complete and structured form of mysticism is found in Islamic Sufism, which is firmly grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).

In the Indian subcontinent, Sufism evolved into three major spiritual orders: Chishti, Suhrawardi, and Naqshbandi. The source of ideas and spiritual philosophy across all Sufi orders lies in the Holy Qur'an and the personality of the last Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him). There exists a strong connection between Sufism and metaphysics, as metaphysics delves into the study of elements that cannot be comprehended through ordinary senses or physical sciences. Sufism similarly explores spiritual unveilings (*kashf*), miracles (*karamat*), and internal, heart-felt experiences that transcend the limits of intellect and reason.

This mystical philosophy is also present in the short stories of Jameel Ahmad Adeel, where he brings forth the relationship between man and God as a central theme. His stories often reflect the journey of the soul, the spiritual trials of humankind, and the metaphysical dimensions of existence.

Time is an abstract concept, something that can neither be touched nor seen. Is time static? Is it frozen? These are the questions that give rise to metaphysical philosophy. All major religions have debated these ideas, but in Islam, time and space are considered subject to the will of Allah Almighty.

Time and space have been significant subjects in Urdu literature as well. Many distinguished writers such as Qurratulain Hyder, Intizar Hussain, Mansha Yaad, and Ahmed Javed have explored these themes in various literary forms. When we examine the stories of Jameel Ahmad Adeel, it becomes evident that he employs the concepts of time and space as metaphysical elements. He does not treat them merely as settings or backdrops but as forces that shape human consciousness and spiritual experience.

Reflecting on this, critic Asif Humayun writes about Adeel's use of time and space in his storytelling, noting how these abstract dimensions play a pivotal role in conveying metaphysical depth and Sufi ideals.

> When one studies Jameel Ahmad Adeel's short stories within the framework of time and space, many of the characters seem to slip through one's grasp. Even between the lines, they appear to be both in harmony and in conflict with one another. If one reflects deeply, the way these characters engage in dialogue reveals countless dimensions—dimensions that seem to form a backdrop rooted in the shadowy contours of prehistory. This is precisely why Jameel Ahmad Adeel desires to carry his reader's prior literary consciousness along with him, weaving it into the fabric of his narrative. **[1]**

In the short stories of Jameel Ahmad Adeel, his characters often entangle the reader in layers of complexity. In *"Bekhawab Jaziron Ka Safar"* (*Journey Through Sleepless Islands*), the story titled "Vekho Ni Pyara Mainu Safne Vich Chal Gaya" (*Look, My Beloved Slipped Away in a Dream*) is deeply rooted in Sufi philosophy. The protagonist of this allegorical tale is Dr. Afwah, a woman journeying on a train composed of six carriages. Of these, five are shrouded in complete darkness, while Dr. Afwah travels in the sixth, which is illuminated.

During her journey, the railway inquiry informs her that at the next stop, a seventh carriage will be attached to the train, at which point the sixth carriage—her current sanctuary—will also be plunged into darkness. At a later stop, an eighth carriage will be added, and passengers will be expected to move from the sixth to the eighth carriage, passing through the seventh.

Symbolically, the first five carriages represent the five human senses, while the sixth carriage, filled with comfort and light, represents illumination—the state of awareness or spiritual awakening. The seventh carriage, offering not only light but profound peace, can only be reached through repentance (istighfar) and by fostering a deep, unwavering connection with the Divine.

Dr. Afwah is confronted with three dilemmas: the physical difficulty of her journey, the anticipation of the seventh carriage, and—most significantly—her unmarried status. She had chosen to remain single in the hope of a better, more purposeful future. But not long ago, she dreamt of a man whom she accepted in her heart as her husband. In the dream, this man pours the sacred honey of purification down her throat—an act with both symbolic and physical repercussions. She awakens feeling nauseous, haunted by uncertainty, and experiences other symptoms that suggest a mystical conception. A medical test confirms her suspicion—marked positive in red ink—setting her on a mysterious, uncharted journey.

She finds no confidant worthy of sharing this secret, one that recalls the story of Maryam (Mary), who too faced immense trial in proclaiming her chastity. In parallel, Dr. Afwah chooses to embark on an unknown journey, seeking refuge from judgment and turmoil.

During her travels, she feels an overwhelming desire to eat soil. As a doctor, she is well aware of its harmful effects, yet this craving points to something more profound: a return to origin, a symbolic longing for the primordial earth from which humans were created. Adeel uses this imagery to express the mystical idea that man is formed from clay and returns to it for fulfillment.

In the depths of her anguish, Dr. Afwah envisions a vast sea, above which countless ropes dangle. Every human being clings tightly to their own rope, shifting it from one hand to another in exhaustion. All are naked, their feet just brushing the surface of the water. Dr. Afwah is among them. The only release from this torment comes from signing a register, after which individuals are thrown outward while still holding onto their ropes.

Through this symbolic narrative, Jameel Ahmad Adeel illustrates the weariness of the soul in the realm of spirits, followed by the process of human creation. He portrays this spiritual evolution step by step, layering the metaphysical with the real.

In a sudden moment of mental clarity, Dr. Afwah recalls lectures from Cambridge University, based on modern science, specifically about the origin of human life. Adeel thus brings together science and mysticism, embedding the Sufi journey of the soul within a contemporary intellectual framework, blurring the boundaries between dream, reality, and spiritual truth.

> "High electrical charges gave rise to a kind of primordial particle—devoid of life, yet chemically structured like a brick, capable of becoming the building block of life. From this, the formation of proteins began, which would eventually lead to the emergence of DNA and RNA.
>
> The sea cast this substance onto a place rich in silicon, and once it was absorbed by the silicon, it transformed into fragments of clay—potshards that marked the earliest phase of life's architecture." **[2]**

Through this excerpt, Jameel Ahmad Adeel weaves the creation of human existence into the framework of modern scientific knowledge. In his story, he skillfully blends mythological

references with scientific facts and rational explanations, creating a narrative that moves seamlessly between the mystical and the empirical.

Dr. Afwah Shaheed, overwhelmed by the inexplicable event she experiences, finds herself plunged into a state of deep psychological distress and confusion. Time, for her, seems to come to a standstill. She fears no one will believe in her innocence. The dread of being judged by society—of hearing whispers that suggest this is the "gift" she brought back from university—weighs heavily on her.

To escape the tightening web of her thoughts, she eventually reaches a transformative conclusion: this was no aberration of fate, no curse. Instead, she chooses to see the extraordinary event as a blessing in disguise, an act of divine grace rather than shame.

> "This, entirely, is my own creation. I cannot squander this gift. Yes, I swear by the One whose Divinity knows no flaw, no partner in His Majesty. It is He who has granted me another form of existence—one in which no human being has any share, save for the man who, in a dream, awakened the sleeping parts of my soul and completed the forgotten circle of my being." **[3]**

In his fiction, Jameel Ahmad Adeel speaks profoundly of God's creative power, alluding to the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus (Isa)—a birth without a father, a divine marvel that occurred only twice in the history of the world. Dr. Afwah, too, is portrayed as a chosen figure who transforms the impossible into reality. The story concludes with a message of hope—the long-awaited seventh carriage has finally been attached to the train. In Adeel's narrative, the train carriages serve as powerful symbols, representing the stages of human life. Through this metaphor, he maps a soul's journey from darkness to illumination.

In the short story *"Ratan Mala aur Katib-e-Kalaam"* (*Ratan Mala and the Scribe of the Word*), from his collection "Mom Ki Maryam" (*The Waxen Mary*), Adeel brings together elements of Sufism, spirituality, philosophy, wisdom, and science. The story revolves around two central characters—Sarwar Hashmi, a young man, and Mai Mala, a woman in her thirties.

Sarwar Hashmi, though a postgraduate, is unable to secure employment and returns to his village. Over time, the villagers begin to regard him as a sun-worshipper, as he would rise at dawn and head east to greet the sun. On the other hand, Mai Mala is portrayed as a perfect spiritual guide, a *Pir Kamil*. She resides in a mystical palace, ten miles from the village—a place steeped in enchantment.

Everything in her palace is white: the walls, the furnishings, the curtains. The color white, and the palace itself, symbolize purity and transcendence. Her followers may only enter her spiritual court on the condition that they too wear white garments, a gesture underscoring spiritual equality and inner cleansing. Since Mai Mala is a symbol of mysticism and spiritual elevation, every detail—from the décor of her palace to her conduct—is designed to reflect her sacred aura.

Within her court, the throne is surrounded by layers of white veils, and followers progress stage by stage, spiritually advancing from one veil to the next. This journey through veils represents

the Sufi path of purification and enlightenment. Mai Mala is deeply versed in philosophy, knowledge, and metaphysics, and she articulates the essence of question and answer with a clarity that reflects her philosophical depth and intellectual brilliance.

> "For the Creator has never placed a question in any seeker's mind without also creating its answer. Remember—question and answer are sealed within the same envelope. That is the nature of this divine system: the question arrives first, and the answer follows. But the only condition is waiting—pure, unwavering waiting.
> The span between the emergence of the question and the arrival of the answer—that is faith." **[4]**

The character of Sarwar Hashmi in the story serves as the "Scribe of the Word" (*Katib-e-Kalaam*). Mai Mala assigns him a sacred duty: should any divine or inspired speech descend upon her in a language she does not understand, it will be his task to translate it for her.

Sarwar Hashmi is astonished—how could she receive a message in a tongue unknown even to her? Mai Mala, perceiving the question before it is fully formed, immediately understands his bewilderment and offers this explanation:

> "It is among the greatest mysteries of God's power that at times, the bearer of the message himself does not fully understand what has been spoken, and yet he embraces it with unwavering faith. This—this alone—is the true measure of the strength of one's faith." **[5]**

Akram Bajwa writes about *Mom Ki Maryam* and *Qutbi Tara*:

> "Although *Ratan Mala aur Katib-e-Kalaam* draws inspiration from the *Ghazal al-Ghazalat*, it remains a beautiful, heartfelt, and consciously crafted story by Jameel Ahmad Adeel, marked by sharpness and uniqueness. In an era when short stories have been stripped of character depth and human features, *Ratan Mala aur Katib-e-Kalaam* stand out as richly textured and deeply human. It is the masterpiece of the *Mom Ki Maryam* collection that fully reflects the spirit of its time." **[6]**

Mai Mala had Sarwar Hashmi translate the verses she received, which were organized into chapters, including Bab al-Ma'arif (Chapter of Knowledge) and Dar Maknoon (The Hidden Door). This collection of poetry was named Ratan Mala.

Dr. Humaira Irshad writes about Jameel Ahmad Adeel's storytelling under the title "Naqsh-e-Jameel" (The Imprint of Jameel):

> "In the entire universe, there is a sphere; within that sphere, a continent; within the continent, a country; within the country, a city; within the city, a

> neighborhood; within the neighborhood, a street; within the street, a house; within the house, a room; and within the room, a charpoy (a traditional woven cot).
>
> In essence, a man needs only a space the size of a single charpoy for peace. Yet, by virtue of this small space, everything becomes his own." **[7]**

At the conclusion of the story, it becomes clear that the narrative is essentially built around a dream, which forms its central theme. Jameel Ahmad Adeel imbues the story with a metaphysical tone, and the inclusion of supernatural elements grants the tale its transcendent, otherworldly quality.

In another of his stories, "Dasht-e-Talab" (*The Desert of Desire*), Adeel explores the relentless pursuit of human desires. The protagonist, Naeemuddin, is a junior clerk working in an office. One day, while praying on the upper floor of the office building, he prolongs his prostration because of the softness of the carpet beneath him.

> "Indeed, this is the flaw of nearness: when one is destined, he goes to ask, yet what is asked is not always granted. But in this very act, one loses the true delight of nearness.
>
> Yet what can be said—without the anxiety of seeking, nothing is born. Perhaps that is why the restless seeker is not truly the desired one." **[8]**

Naeem considered himself the filthiest insect in the world, merely by virtue of being a junior clerk. He no longer believed in the philosophy that God does not accept every prayer; rather, he thought that such prayers are kept by God in reserve for a person's future.

Just as he was carefully choosing the right words to ask Allah for a prayer, suddenly—

> "He suddenly remembered the man who had entered his office—how strange his words had been:
> I am searching for the young man whose hair is long and who wears golden shoes." **[10]**

In this story, Jameel Ahmad Adeel uses this mysterious man as a symbolic reference to the Hadith and the quest for God. Naeem brusquely dismisses the old man, sending him out of the office, thinking, *"Because of him, my prayer will not be answered."*

Haunted by these doubts, Naeem's mind drifts toward blasphemous thoughts. The answers to such questions, however, are drawn from the words of the Holy Qur'an:

> "What is your status? You cannot even create the wing of a fly or the foot of a mosquito." **[11]**

In this story, Jameel Ahmad Adeel links the character of Naeem to the tradition of Prophet Musa (Moses). The coexistence of good and evil has persisted from eternity to eternity. This narrative acknowledges the presence of evil. Naeem rejects the blasphemous thoughts that arise in his mind. Generally, good can only be recognized through the existence of evil.

Allama Iqbal, while justifying the creation of evil, states:

> "Life is the battlefield between good and evil, between the angel and the devil. All character-building and spiritual growth depend upon this very struggle. One who asks why evil exists in life is, in fact, asking why life itself exists." **[12]**

Shaking off the superstitions swirling in his mind, Naeem regards this moment as the hour of answered prayer and earnestly beseeches Allah. He prays that his wife—who considers him the source of her happiness and measures her sister's well-being against her own—should not be blamed for anything, for after all, she is a woman.

On the soft carpet of the mosque, he prays to Allah, asking for abundant sustenance. The story records his prayer in these words:

> "O Best of Creators! Now, masters are born from the wombs of slaves; the owners of grand palaces are the black camel herders. Has the mountain of the ancestors become barren, that those with wings shall never descend again?" **[13]**

Naeem becomes so entangled in his prayer that he asks for sustenance without distinguishing between halal and haram. He speaks of his pregnant wife's condition, believing that sustenance is sustenance, regardless. He says, "O Allah, You have perfected Your religion upon us, yet Your blessings remain incomplete. Hunger, thirst, poverty, and destitution are so widespread in this world—how can we possibly avoid evil?"

The "mountain of the ancestors" refers to the place where Prophet Muhammad once tended sheep, and the "six hundred winged ones" are the angels, led by Prophet Michael (Mikail), who are responsible for providing sustenance.

Naeem prolongs his prostration, during which a ten-rupee note slips from his hand onto the carpet. The note then falls out through an open window into the busy market below. When Naeem breaks his prayer to retrieve the note, his cap falls from his head due to the window sash hitting it. Distracted, he leaves his prayer incomplete and steps outside to search for his cap and note. Outside, a procession passes by. The procession features donkeys laden with books, while other participants carry banners and placards. These people are protesting to punish Mian Mustaqim Nawab, proprietor of the Munim Cloth House.

Naeem picks up a fallen banner, thinking to use it as a curtain for his office window. The procession and donkeys symbolize the hypocrisy of inactive religious scholars who use religion as a veil while stirring people's emotions for their own ends.

At the story's end, the shopkeeper returns Naeem's ten-rupee note and cap, holding them as a trustworthy deposit in his palm.

"Dasht-e-Talab" is a story by Jameel Ahmad Adeel that explores human desires. It shows how a person, in pursuit of fulfilling their wishes, may disregard the lawful and unlawful even in prayer.

Jameel Ahmad Adeel's short stories reflect the ruthless realities of the contemporary world. In his works, he explores themes of Sufism and related metaphysical elements. Rather than adopting the role of a preacher or moral guide, he provides the reader with a platform to draw their own conclusions through the experiences narrated by his characters.

In Adeel's Sufi-inspired creations, there is a dynamic interplay between prayer, good and evil, materialism, and spirituality. His stories invite contemplation on these contrasts without imposing definitive judgments, allowing the mystical and existential to coexist within his narrative framework.

References

1. Asif Humayun, *Phlap, Yellow Shroud in Nakhl-e-Aimen*, Ghalib Academy, Burewala, 1992.
2. Jameel Ahmad Adeel, "Wekho Ni Pyara Menu Sapne Mein Chhal Gaya," in *Be-Khawab Jazeeron Ka Safar*, Lahore, Al-Hamd Publications, 1994, pp. 96–97.
3. As Obove , page. 98.
4. Jameel Ahmad Adeel, *Ratan Mala Aur Katib Kalam*, in *Mom Ki Maryam*, Ghalib Academy, Burewala, 1991, page. 124.
5. As Obove., page. 127–128.
6. Akram Bajwa, "Mom Ki Maryam Aur Katbi Tara," in *Saheb Usloob*, Jameel Ahmad Adeel, page. 209.
7. Jameel Ahmad Adeel, *Ratan Mala Aur Katib Kalam*, *Mom Ki Maryam*, p. 138.
8. Jameel Ahmad Adeel, *Dasht Talab*, in *Zard Kafan Mein Nakhl-e-Aimen*, Ghalib Academy, Burewala, 1992, page. 40.
9. As Obove., page. 40.
10. As Obove., page. 41.
11. Allama Iqbal, cited by Khalifa Abdul Hakeem, *Khair-o-Shar*, Dr. Waheed Ishrat (ed.), Lahore, Sang-e-Meel Publishers, 2007, page. 76.
12. As Obove., page. 43.