

ZULFIQAR GHOSE: ATTACK ON SIALKOT

The Attack on Sialkot

*Grandfather, eighty now, his pilgrimage
to Mecca over, still lives there, at peace
with his Muslim conscience. At our last meeting
he sat in the courtyard of a mosque, still
as an idol, while I stood outside, garish
as a poster against the whitewashed wall
in my mohair suit and corduroy hat,
advertising my patient secularism.*

*Gunfire made Sialkot a kiln to fire
Pakistan's earthen-pot faith, I listened
to the news hour after hour the whole month
and saw maps in newspapers~ an arrow
pointed at Sialkot. Grandfather's breast-plate
of Islam had become fragile as china
in the intruding heresy of tanks.*

I see that arrow still : aimed at grandfather.

*It was a messy, a child's pudding-plate
of a town during nay first seven years.*

I pulled at grandfather's beard and dragged down

his turban when he carried me to school.

*He turned five times a day to Mecca, bowed
low in prayer and at night swung me round
the bed so that my feet did not insult
the holy direction, the one truth he knew.*

*From east and southeast the tanks, from the air
the jets converged all month on Sialkot
in a massive pilgrimage, bloodier than
the sacrifice of goats at the end of Ramadan.
Grandfather, the landmarks are falling, which
way will you turn now? Islam, Islam, that's
all you cared for, stubborn as a child, while
I had gone westward, begun to eat pork.*

*Grandfather, if the old house falls, if you
die where you built and Sialkot collapses~
I shall have no Mecca to turn to, who
admire cathedrals for their architecture.*

I~eligion is irrelevant to grief:

you will not agree~ nor will Pakistan~

*finding in this war the old Islamic
pride rise like a congregation in a mosque.*

General Concepts:

Zulfiqar Ghose is known as an American-Pakistani writer who with his conversational tone and narrative element is distinctive among other Pakistani poets. "Attack on Sialkot" is a conflict between Secularism and Islamic fundamentalism. The generation gap between the writer and his grandfather is shown. He feels that a childish-like attitude of the people who follow religion as some kind of terror is not going to help anyone. Without understanding the religion and just to follow rituals and offer prayers is not something proper. His father is a very conservative person who strictly follows religion as a true follower. Ghose himself is secular so he condemns his grandfather's approach towards religion, his ritualistic approach. He also questions about his grandfather's landmarks of faith which are falling because of war. He concludes by saying that there will be no direction to turn to, after war... Themes : Typical approach as per religion, Secularism, Generation Gap, Religion as a tradition, East v/s West, War.

Poem "The attack on Sialkot" by Zulfiqar Ghose is an autobiographical poem in which the writer shares his life childhood experiences and then gives his own thoughts on them as when he was a child he saw his grandfather who used to follow religion very strictly but that strictness results in nothing fruitful as his own grandson is a secular person and eats pork, if he spread kindness and show humanity in his acts, language and thoughts may be the results will be opposite, poet is not against God or any religion simply he didn't believe in them, his view is that we have to focus on humanity and leave the conservative thinking also take things logically and follow anything blindly but first consider what is wrong and what is right and then start following it, so also says that to kill humanity is not allowed in any religion and religion is irrelevant to grief which means when there is war and massacre, the grief is same for everyone, loved ones are loved ones not Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians but humans.

Zulfiqar Ghose

Introduction :

Born: March 13, 1935, Sialkot

India [now Pakistan]).

Pakistani American author of novels, poetry, and criticism about cultural alienation.

Early life:

Ghose grew up a Muslim in Sialkot and in largely Hindu Bombay (Mumbai) and then moved with his family to England.

Education:

He graduated from Keele (England) University in 1959. He married Helena de la Fontaine, an artist from Brazil (a country he later used as the setting for six of his novels).

In 1969 he moved to the United States to teach at the University of Texas, from which he retired as professor emeritus in 2007.

Ghose became a U.S. citizen in 2004.

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Major works:

Ghose's first novel,

- **Contradictions (1966),**

explores differences between Western and Eastern attitudes and ways of life.

- **In The Murder of Aziz Khan (1967)**

a small farmer tries to save his traditional land from greedy developers.

- **The trilogy The Incredible Brazilian—comprising The Native (1972)**
- **The Beautiful Empire (1975), and A Different World (1978)**

presents the picaresque adventures.

- **A New History of Torments (1982), Don Bueno (1983)**
- **Figures of Enchantment (1986)**
- **The Triple Mirror of the Self (1992)**
- **Shakespeare's Mortal Knowledge: A Reading of the Tragedies (1993).**

Ghose poems:

Ghose's poems—including those in The Loss of India (1964)

- **Selected Poems (1991), and 50 Poems (2010)—are often about the travels and memories of a self-aware alien.**
- **Beckett's Company (2009) is a collection of personal and literary essays.**
- **He also wrote the autobiography Confessions of a Native-Alien (1965).**

Major Themes:

- Identity
- Homeland
- Themes of Diaspora
- Memory
- Homelessness.

Conclusion:

He has used powerful terms and language in his poetry to convey his messages. His poems are based upon powerful meaning with powerful discourse.

The Attack on Sialkot

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Analysis :

Zulfiqar Ghose (1935)

(Free verse, conversational tone, narrative and autobiographical element)

Poem#1_ "The Attack on Sialkot"

✓Zulfiqar Ghose is known as an American-Pakistani writer who with his conversational tone and narrative element is distinctive among other Pakistani poets.

✓Attack on Sialkot is a conflict between Secularism and Islamic fundamentalism. Generation gap between the writer and his grandfather is shown.

✓He feels that childish like attitude of the people who follow religion as some kind of terror is not going to help anyone.

✓Without understanding the religion and just to follow rituals and offer Prayers is not some thing proper.

✓His father is a very Conservative person who strictly follows religion as a true follower.

✓ Ghose himself is Secular so he condemns his Grandfather's approach towards religion, and his ritualistic approach.

✓He also questions about his grandfather's land marks of faith which are falling because of the war.

✓ He concludes by saying that there will be no direction to turn to, after war...

Historicity of Attack on Sialkot (Anna molka Ahmad)

_One kind of narrative was highlighted throughout the war of 1965 so, there is need to rediscover the history to uncover the parallel narrative

In this sense this poem should be taken as a cultural piece and not only a literary text to discover about the movement of secularism against Islamic fundamentalism.

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Themes :

- Typical approach as per religion
- Secularism
- Generation Gap
- Religion as a tradition
- East v/s West
- War