

A THEMATIC STUDY OF SHAFIQ MURAD'S POETRY IN SHEHR-E-MURAD

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Abstract:

This study presents a thematic analysis of Shafiq Murad's poetry collection *Shehr-e-Murad*. The collection reflects a deep engagement with human emotions, inner struggle, and social realities. Central themes include pain and sorrow, inner anguish, loneliness, separation, and the emotional consequences of migration. Personal grief merges with collective suffering, creating a poetic space where individual experience mirrors the condition of the age. Alongside sorrow, the poetry carries strong elements of hope, spiritual awareness, and faith in divine mercy. Shafiq Murad explores both spiritual love and earthly love, presenting love as a force that shapes identity, endurance, and moral awareness. Nature imagery, symbolism, and imaginative expression are used to convey inner states and philosophical reflection without direct narration.

The collection also demonstrates contemporary consciousness, addressing social injustice, hypocrisy, moral decline, and political silence. Love for the homeland remains a persistent concern, even while the poet lives abroad. Themes of nostalgia, existential questioning, and life's ongoing struggles highlight the poet's realism and experiential depth. Overall, *Shehr-e-Murad* emerges as a balanced blend of emotion, thought, faith, and lived experience, offering a meaningful reflection on modern human life through poetry.

Keywords: *Shehr-e-Murad*, Urdu poetry, thematic study, pain and sorrow, inner anguish, hope and optimism, love (spiritual and earthly), loneliness and separation, migration and nostalgia, symbolism, nature imagery, contemporary consciousness, philosophy of life, experiential poetry

INTRODUCTION:

Shafiq Murad is a well-known Urdu poet whose life and work reflect a deep attachment to his homeland, even while living abroad. Born as Shafiq Ahmed Qamar on 9 September 1960 in Lahore, he grew up in a family where learning, poetry, and moral values were quietly passed down through everyday life. His parents, especially his mother, played a strong role in shaping his love for language, poetry, and the Qur'an from an early age. Educated in Faisalabad, Lahore, and later trained in law, Shafiq Murad briefly practiced as a lawyer before moving to Germany in 1988. Life in Europe did not distance him from Urdu literature. Instead, it sharpened his awareness of social injustice, human suffering, and emotional displacement, themes that frequently appear in his poetry. His poetic voice blends personal grief with collective pain, giving his work sincerity and depth. In Germany, Shafiq Murad founded Sharif Academy in 2009, an institution dedicated to the promotion of Urdu language and literature across the world. Through literary journals, radio programs, online mushairas, and

international conventions, he created platforms for both established and emerging poets. His efforts connected hundreds of poets globally at a time when digital access was still limited.

Alongside his literary activism, Shafiq Murad has received numerous national and international awards in recognition of his scholarly, literary, and cultural services. His poetry collection *Shehr-e-Murad* and his ongoing unpublished works reflect a poet who carries the pain of the times within himself while remaining committed to beauty, truth, and human dignity. His literary journey continues with the same devotion and quiet persistence.

Shafiq Murad's poetry collection *Shehr-e-Murad* presents a wide emotional and intellectual canvas. One of its strongest themes is pain and sorrow, where personal wounds blend into the grief of the age. His work carries sadness of love, helplessness, separation, and inner loneliness emotions that slowly deepen with time and leave lasting marks on the self.

A closely linked theme is inner anguish (karb). He describes emotional pressure calmly, turning hurt caused by people's behavior into composed poetic expression. His poems reflect the reality that life does not remain the same; every person passes through shifting conditions, disappointments, and tests, yet life still moves forward. Alongside this, he also speaks of hidden enemies and ill-wishers—people who walk with you for their own benefit and later reveal their true face, striking when they get the chance.

Dast-e-dua utha to bani baat phir, Murad

Har sail-e-dard-o-karb jahaan se guzar gaya (1)

Despite sorrow and bitterness, a clear thread of hope (rajaaiyat) runs through his poetry. He refuses to surrender to despair and holds on to trust in God and the belief that time changes, wounds can heal, and failures can teach. This hopeful tone becomes a motivating, positive side of his poetic temperament.

Saans ruk ruk ke chal rahi hai magar

Bansri to baja raha hoon main (2)

Khud hi dooba dard ke toofan mein

Ashk roke dil samandar kar diya (3)

Because Shafiq Murad spent much of his life abroad, his poetry also captures distance from relatives and the scattering of family ties. He highlights how separation weakens connections, how people become unaware of each other's pains, and how loneliness grows even when one belongs to a large family.

Another important dimension is spiritual love (Ishq-e-Haqiqi) his awareness of God's unity and presence in the universe, his longing for divine mercy, and his fear of drifting away from the true purpose of life. Alongside that appears earthly love (Ishq-e-Majazi), where intense attachment to the beloved, loyalty, longing, and the emotional extremes of love are described with passion and sincerity.

Jab main behka to mere saqi ne

Mujh ko apni nigaaah mein rakha (4)

Rumooz-e-ishq se woh bahra-mand kar dega

Mere wajood ko aik roz qand kar dega (5)

His poetry also includes vivid nature imagery, where scenes, colors, fragrance, seasons, rivers, mountains, birds, and landscapes become mirrors of inner feeling. He often uses symbolism, preferring indirect, meaningful images over plain statements, inviting the reader to reflect instead of only receiving information.

Rang, khushboo, phool, mausam-e-wasl ke titli ke par

Waqt-e-rukhsat chahaton ka karwaan banne laga (6)

Aabshaaren, dasht-o-darya aur gul-o-bulbul ke geet

Hai kitaab-e-ishq se tu ne utaari kainaat (7)

A strong sense of loneliness appears repeatedly—especially the loneliness that comes after losing people, when crowds exist but companionship disappears. His work is also deeply internal and personal (dakhiliyat): he observes emotions, memories, changing moods, and inner debates with simplicity and clarity.

Waqt ki tanhaiyon ka zehar mujh ko yun mila

Ik hujoom-e-dostaan hai aur hoon tanha khara (8)

Shafiq Murad shows contemporary awareness (asri shu'oor) as well. He comments on social decay, hypocrisy, injustice, and the silence of society in the face of oppression. Along with this is his deep love for the homeland, even while living in a developed country; he watches the changing situation of his country with concern but still dreams of light overcoming hatred and violence.

Chhaai hai khizaan rut ki chaman mein

Phoolon pe magar raqs-e-saba dekh raha hoon (9)

Ameer-e-shehar ke dast-e-sitam se kaisa gila

Ke ahl-e-shehar hi sab be-zabaan nazar aaye (10)

He gives full space to separation (hijr/judai) as an inevitable truth of love, and he also expresses questions and wonder (istifsaar) about the universe—how a world created with beauty becomes darkened by human greed and misuse.

Mausam-e-hijaan mein khud se bhi bicharne lag gaya
Main ne sochi hi na thi qismat mein aisi dooriyaan (11)

His poetry carries anxieties and inner fears (andeshay) tied to the struggle between sin and virtue, profit and loss, and the search for meaning. His imagination (takhayyul) is strong, turning inner states into fresh expressions. At the same time, he writes with realism (haqiqat-nigari), pointing to human ingratitude, betrayal, and the harsh truths of life.

Wohi andesha-e-sood-o-ziyaan hai
Unhi par phir mohabbat ka gumaan hai (12)

A deeply personal subject is the life partner, where love, loss, and the emptiness left behind are central emotional experiences. Another theme is search and striving (justuju)—not only desire, but an active longing to build a better, humane society free from hatred, injustice, and cruelty.

Khel hai ya koi tamasha hai
Zindagani ka kya khulasa hai (13)

Is aik shauq-e-musalsal mein zindagi guzri
Kahin to mujh ko mera karwaan nazar aaye (14)

Fikr-e-ma'aash ishq-e-butan se guzar gaya
Dil se guzarna tha mujhe jaan se guzar gaya (15)

Banti raheen jo umr bhar uljhi kahaniyaan
Suljhi nahin to gardish-e-ayaam likh diya (16)

His poetry also reflects nostalgia, the pull of the past and the ache of migration remembering family closeness and earlier life while living far away. He explores life's problems, the constant struggle for livelihood, confusion, and unresolved knots that shape human existence.

Phir us ke baad shehr-e-dil ka mausam hi nahin nikhra
Mizaaj-e-yaar mein dekhi thi ek din be-rukhi main ne (17)

Zeest ki naav jo girdab mein aati hai, Murad
Aql-o-danish ke aate hain kirdaar bohot (18)

A philosophical tone is present too: he does not only describe life, he tries to interpret it its purpose, nature, and the questions of life and death. Finally, his work represents poetry of lived experience, where feelings are not imagined from a distance but come from real trials, social observation, and personal history.

Tashkeel de raha hoon naye daur ko, Murad
Har baab kholna hai mujhe kainaat ka (19)

Aalam-e-wajd mein rehta hai wajood-e-khaaki
Maabad-e-ishq mein har waqt sada deta hoon (20)

Murad, is aagahi ke daur mein kyun khud-farebi hai
Ke ahl-e-ilm-o-danish gehre khwab-aawar mein rehte hain (21)

The study of Shafiq Murad's poetry collection Shehr-e-Murad clearly shows that it is not merely an emotional expression but a comprehensive intellectual and artistic exploration of human life. His poetry brings together pain and joy, love and separation, hope and despair, loneliness, migration, attachment to homeland, and spiritual awareness in a unified manner. By blending personal experiences with collective emotions, the poet creates a strong connection with the reader, making his work deeply relatable.

One of the most prominent features of Shafiq Murad's poetry is optimism. Despite intense suffering, hardship, and inner conflict, he does not surrender to hopelessness. His firm faith in God provides his poetry with light, strength, and resilience. Both spiritual love and earthly love appear in balanced form, reflecting his mature vision and inner consciousness.

The effective use of symbolism, nature imagery, inner expression, and realism gives his poetry artistic depth. He presents the harsh realities of life with simplicity and dignity. Even while living abroad, his strong bond with his homeland, his awareness of social issues, and his longing for a more just and humane society align his poetry with contemporary consciousness.

Overall, Shehr-e-Murad stands as a meaningful poetic work that presents various dimensions of life with emotional sincerity, intellectual seriousness, and aesthetic beauty. Shafiq Murad emerges as a sensitive, thoughtful, and experienced poet whose work not only encourages reflection but also offers hope, awareness, and a strong sense of humanity.

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