

## A stroll down memory lane - All sciences end as poetry!

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### This article is a book review of:

Title: Gushing Fountain: A Collection of Poems  
 Author: Dr Javed Latoo  
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Poetry is a way of expressing the subjective experiences that spill over the rational mind and it permits spontaneous overflow of subjective feelings. The ability to express oneself through poetry, and share that experience, is one of the unique human experiences that distinguish us from lower biological forms. The strife and struggle of modern men have made them miserable wretches on the face of this beautiful cosmos, and the technological revolution has taken the poetic sense from them; a time old coping mechanism. Those not capable of expressing their own sorrows and joys of everyday life in poetic words could find a surrogate writer in The Gushing Fountain.

In his collection of poetry, Dr Latoo (who is currently working as a Consultant Psychiatrist in United Kingdom) has catered poems for every mood and occasion: love, parting and sorrow, inspiration, rapture, memory, nature, solitude, and contemplation. Some of them are deeply personal and the author is trying to unearth a time capsule he had left in his native country of Kashmir. Dr Latoo appears to be searching for inner truths and making a self exploratory pilgrimage in his collection of poetry. Poetry has the power to describe and dramatize one's own life, and Dr Latoo has done it well. The themes generally move from childhood to old age, love to grief, sorrow to joyfulness, aggressive nationalism to corrupted politicians, and depression to psychosis. There are pearls of mystical wisdom embedded in the poetry:

*"Be choreographed by a great master for our sustenance  
 Rather than just be a part of random unplanned accident?"  
 There are wise statements in "Divine Justice":  
 "Anything like fatalism shall be a contradiction  
 Of the Divine justice, free will and Lord's will."*

All poetries have some hidden messages, and the book as a whole stands for immense moral values. "Woman" stands for women's rights and dignity. The thoughts about the forgotten orphans are heart touching. "Behold a Man - Judging others"

points towards the fallacy of judging other people without correcting oneself. Mental health professionals are particularly prone to this error because they are often professionally bound to assess their clients; we are only supposed to assess others and not judge others. We should not even judge ourselves, but only do self-assessment - God is the only Judge. The author writes about very ordinary humble human beings like the barber, Rupa, Ayesha, Ahmed, Puja etc. "Marriage" highlights the sanctity of wedlock. These poetries reflect the world view of the author. "Hold fast to thy dreams" may be inspired by Langston Hughes (1902 - 1967) and reminded me of my father who liked the verses of Hughes on dreams. "A raven who wants to be a dove" refers to people who pretend to be what they are not - wearing borrowed garments.

There are also poems about the author's travelling experiences. A century ago, if a poet wrote about airport, he would have been frowned upon by the peer group, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is appropriate to write such poetry. "Noisy airport and my mind" illustrates the hustle and bustle of contemporary life and gives the book a modern flavour. "By the Dal Lake" is nostalgic and the author is trying to recapture and share his lost Kashmiri literary Empire with the readers. Born in Kashmir, there is no surprise that the author renders beautiful nature in his poems. One wonders, if William Wordsworth were born in Kashmir, what would have been the content of his writings. Dr Latoo's dual identity is evident when he writes about Kashmir and London.

In these days of global union through mere technology, poetry may have a serious role in the "international soul-union." The days of regional poetry are over. Poets like Dr Latoo may be able to contribute to the formation of a healthier global village; poetry penetrates beyond the psychic realm into the spiritual dimension. There is a mission of peace and love in the Gushing Fountain, and the author is not enforcing any strong

convictions on the readers. There is a poet-philosopher in the author of the Gushing Fountain.

The author has used rhyming and free verse styles of poetry. Metaphors and similes are appropriately embedded in various situations:

*“A smile on our face blooms the gardens of her innocent soul  
A tear in our eyes arises from the blood of her bruised heart”*  
(From the poem, “Mother”)

Lyrical poetries are ravishingly harmonious and there are no repetitions. The thoughts are clear and there is an exotic element in all the poetry. On the whole, all the poems are cerebral and riveting. The works are relevant to the present century and can be appreciated by scholar and casual readers alike. Every poem is an experience to be savoured and memorised. Let these pieces of poetry echo and reverberate not only in the conflict-ridden valleys of Kashmir, but all around the world until they find rest in the minds of the waiting millions.

Psychiatry is going through an identity crisis because the newer medications are not as effective as expected to be and clinicians are turning to different forms of psychotherapy. Poetry/lyric therapy could be another form of psychotherapy that needs attention in the field of soft psychiatry. Dr Latoo’s book could be an inspiration and encouragement in this line of treatment. Hypnotherapists readily recognize that words are like loaded bullets and are highly potent. To an extent, poetry therapy involves the principles of both hetero- and self- hypnotherapy. Primitive and modern religions take advantage of the potentials of different forms of poetry in religious rituals for healing and promoting health.

A study of the mechanism of poetry writing is helpful in developing better conceptual models of creativity and deeper understanding of mental process. Sudden flashes of creative insight and other intuitive leaps, which arise from states of mind through intermediate steps that remain hidden beneath consciousness, and such ultrafast processing involving a concealed intermediate step, is consistent with quantum computations. A poet who enjoys superior mental health is capable of swinging from the unconscious quantum logic to the classical logic of consensus consciousness with an ultrafast speed. In psychotic states, “the quantum gates” do not shut swiftly as in normal mental states and the sufferers get trapped in the quantum logic. The usefulness of poetry therapy in psychotic patients, who get stuck in the quantum logic of the unconscious mind back to the classical logic of ordinary consciousness, needs further analytical studies. The primary

aetiology of psychotic disorders may be biological, but secondary symptoms are quantum-linked and the new generation of psychotherapists have to learn the quantum meta-languages to communicate with psychotic and depressed patients. Poetry is such a source of quantum meta-language.

Poetry therapy promotes abstract thinking and develops imaginative powers. It is also a means of relieving and revealing innermost sentiments; it helps to ventilate overpowering emotions and hidden tensions. It is a form of self-expression and aids to build greater self-esteem; useful in strengthening interpersonal skills and communication skills. It would be valuable in repairing the assault of psychosis on the personalities of the sufferers. Quoting from my own memory lane, I became interested in poetry therapy when I comprehended the core problem of a patient who wrote:

*“Moon, you shine at the centre of the sky,  
Catching attention from all over the world,  
Don’t you know that I am lonely?”*

Poetry is of the heart and imagination whereas science is about reason and logic and may be grounded on contradictory principles. If science is about objectivity, poetry is essentially about subjectivity and to blend those human experiences harmoniously is a hard task; Dr Latoo has successfully achieved this goal. A man of science, when he writes poetry, has to liberate himself from the shackles of rationalism so that he can be a wholly free human: to be a poet one has to be a natural human being. To quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau: “Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains.” Let us hope that the Gushing Fountain will have a part two and even more!

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#### Competing Interests

None declared

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