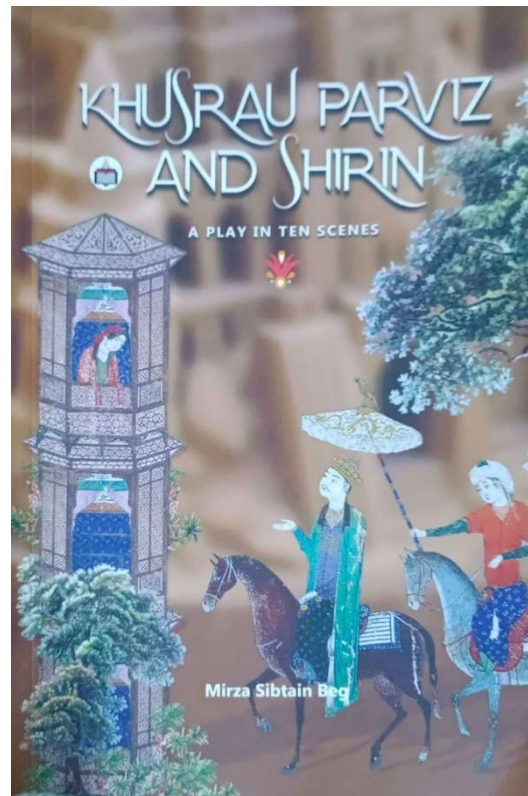


***Khusrau Parviz And Shirin: A Play in Ten Scenes* by Mirza Sibtain Beg, New Delhi: Authors Press, ISBN: 9789360957346, 2023, Price: 295/-**

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“Our love tale will radiate like legend,
To enlighten lovers with souls Godsend.” (93)
Did anyone ever feel that a book can touch the soul so deeply that one can feel it in every ounce of ones being, akin to a solitary pond in a desert standing out as an oasis in the vast, unending arid landscape? This book possesses a similar nature. Perhaps, it is not solitary, as there are many versions of the stories from the Sasanian Empire, but this book is unique in its own way. It has profound value that is not found in other works. This is what I meant by ‘pond in a desert;’ perhaps a pond is too common for the people living in mainstream land, but for those in the desert, it has immense value. Similarly we are all familiar with the Shirin-Farhad story, a tale



famous for its depiction of love, but this book allows us to consider the another side of the story, which is not known by many people. Thus, the book truly is a rare pond in the vast, unending land of books.

The play is authored by Mirza Sibtain Beg, a distinguished professor in the Department of English at Shia P.G college, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. He is not only a poet but also a dramatist, critic, and reviewer of notable acclaim. The play *Khusrau Parviz and Shirin* is his first play. It is set in Persia present day Iran and revolves around the rule of the Sasanian Empire or Sassanid Empire, also known as the Second Persian Empire or Neo-Persian Empire, was the last Iranian empire before the early Muslim conquests of the 7th to 8th centuries. The setting provides a perfect backdrop for the depiction of the mystical love between two star-crossed lovers.

This fascinating tale centers on the love story based on the life of Sasanian Persian King Khusrau II and Armenian Christian princess Shirin. As someone said “Love transcends all” and this holds true in their story. After encountering numerous obstacles, their love surpasses all the hardships, and they led a lustrous conjugal life until Khusrau’s son from earlier marriage rebels against his father, disrupting their tranquil existence. The book is a romantic tragedy where you can feel everything that unfolds in the lives of the characters.

The story takes the form of a play in ten scenes, with each scene being unique and holding an important part of the story. Each scene is preceded by a brief preface, ingeniously crafted to provide even those unfamiliar with the history a clear understanding of the events unfolding within the empire. The play is the perfect blend of different themes including romantic, tragic, and political elements, all of which contribute perfectly to the main plot of the story.

The play begins with the dream of King Khusrau and his conversation with his first wife, Miriam. The author presents a perfect poetical mystery that captivates readers, leaving them wondering and driven by the manner of dialogues. This captivating element keeps them engrossed in the book for hours without blinking an eye.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Mirza Sibtain Beg has mastery in poetic language. As a poet himself, he adds a beautiful touch to his play by using evocative poetic descriptions that captures the love and inner turmoil of the characters. The language is adorned with a myriad of metaphors, each painting vivid imagery, such as—“You are sky wherein stuck sun, and moon,” (46) and “Thy eyes are two stars studded in sky” (42). Love and poetry always go hand in hand so how can a play full of love be devoid of poetry? It’s a perfect piece for anyone looking for a

poetic drama in present time. Author rhythmically describes Shirin as:

Grandpa whispers her name as Shirin,
Looks nymph when does loll and lean,
Have you ever heard such a lass or seen,
Sate me with inputs as thy pal is keen,
To accept her ally in life or after life,
To turn my rule a utopia sans any strife. (33)

The characters in the play are reliable, likable and lively. The portrayal of characters and the dialogue writing are as lively as you are watching the play right there with your own eyes. In a drama, language and description should be full of life, allowing the reader to have a very picturesque imagination. Thus, in a play, whether its father-son relationship, cultural description of the Sasanian Empire, the customs of Zoroastrian religion, or the political tensions within the rule, all are described with picturesque detail.

Mirza Sibtain Beg eloquently describes Persia and Armenia with an ambience so idyllic that it creates a sense of awe in the minds of readers. Places in the play hold significant value and are not just merely a place for rest. For instance, Shirin in Persia speaks about Armenia as something that soothes her soul, saying, “I miss the breeze that plays with me and my senses here.”(35) The places themselves become characters, impacting the life of individuals and providing healing from the atrocities outside.

This book enlightens us about the rich history and culture of the Sasanian Empire, which should not be forgotten. History books may be dull for some people as they lack the ability to relax the reader while they peruse them. On the contrary, this poetic masterpiece is the perfect choice for a leisurely evening read. Regardless of where you are seated, the picturesque descriptions transport your imagination to a realm of wonders. Additionally, this play illustrates how negative influences on children can lead them commit the most heinous of acts. It prompts contemplation on the most instinctual acts of love and emphasizes the importance of not losing oneself while becoming completely immersed in one’s beloved forever.