

Mir Babar Ali Anees, a Musavi sayyed i.e. decendent of the 7th Holy Imam Hazrat Moosa Kazim(as), belonged to a family of poets. In his book 'Khandaan- e-Mir Anees ke Naamwar Sho'ara' (Famous Poets from the family of Mir Anees), Sayyed Zamer Akhtar Naqvi has listed twenty-two poets from Mir Anees' family and their poetry. Mir Anees was a fifth generation poet and he has mentioned this fact in the first stanza of his famous marsiya "Namak-e-Khwaan-e-Takallum hai Fasaahat meri." He says:

*Namak-e-Khwaan-e-Takallum hai Fasaahat meri  
Naatqein band hai'n sun sun ke balaaghat meri  
Rang udte hain wo rangee'n hai ibarat meri  
Shor jiska hai wo darya hai tabeeyat meri  
Umr guzri hai isi dasht ki saiyaahi mei'n  
Paanchvi pusht hai Shappir ki maddaahi mei'n*

Translation

My eloquence is the salt of the food of thought  
The eloquents are mute when my style they hear  
Fly colours when the colour of my ink I jot  
The sound of the seas are my ideas clear  
Hunting in this forest (for words) spent life I mine  
Praising Hussain, fifth in progeny line

Mir Anees' father, **Mir Khaleeq** who was a famous poet and litterateur, took personal interest in the education and upbringing of his son, and entrusted him to the care of reputed contemporary teachers, Mir Najaf Ali Faizabadi and Maulvi Hyder Ali Lucknavi. In addition, Anees's mother who was an educated and pious lady, played a significant role in shaping the personality of the boy poet. But above all, it was the boy's own instinctive urge for learning and literature that made him an accomplished poet, proficient in Arabic and Persian scriptures, and well-versed in logic, literature and philosophy. Poetry came to him as ancestral heritage, for his forbears, going back to his great grandfather, were eminent poets and men of letters. Mir Anees was the grandson of **Mir Hasan** who is remembered for his immortal Masnavi, Sehir-ul-Bayaan.

**Mir Zaahak**

, great grandfather of Mir Anees, was also a poet. Mir Anees has mentioned him in the verse below as Jadd-e-Aali. Other poets from his family are his uncles, his father Mir Khaleeq's brothers,

**Mir Khulq**

and

**Mir Makhlooq**

. Mir Anees' younger brothers

**Mir Uns**

and

### **Mir Monis**

too were known for their marsiyas. Mir Anees groomed his sons into fine poets. Their names are

### **Mir Raees**

,

### **Mir Nafees**

and

### **Mir Salees**

. Among his nephews

### **Mir Waheed**

, son of Mir Uns, was famous. His parents had migrated in their old age to Lucknow, where he spent the best part of his life. Mir Anees was very proud of his family. In the same marsiya he praises his. He says:

*Is sanakhwaa'n ke buzurgo'n mei'n hai'n kya kya maddaah  
Jadd-e-Aali se na hoga koi aala maddaah  
Baap maddaah ka maddaah hai, dada maddaah  
Um zee qadr sanakhwaano'n mei'n yakta maddaah  
Jo inaayaat-e-Ilahi se hua naik hua  
Naam badhta gaya jab aik ke baad aik hua*

Translation

Great appraisers in the sires of this appraiser  
Greater than great grandfather is no appraiser  
Father appraiser of appraiser, grandfather appraiser  
Uncle of all great appraisers, unique appraiser  
By Your mercy O'Lord every scion was born good  
More the name famed when one after another stood

Translation

*Bhai Khush Fikrat o Khush Lehja o Paakeeza Khisaal  
Jin ka seena gauhar-e-ilm se hai maala maal  
Ye fasaahat, ye balaahagt, ye salaasat, ye kamaal  
Maujiza gar na ise kahiye to hai seher-e-halaal  
Apne mauqe pe jise dekhiye la-saani hai  
Lutf Hazrat ka ye hai rehmat-e-Yazdaani*

Great thinker with grand accent pure charactered Brother!  
With a chest full of pearls of wisdom and treasures other  
This eloquence, this wonder like him couldn't be another  
If not miracle then call it permissible magic rather  
Each one is matchless in a way of his very own  
This is the love of Hussain, mercy of Allah we're shown

Mir Anees had started writing poetry quite early in his life right at Faizabad, though he

perfected his art in Lucknow under the supervision of Imam Baksh Nasikh. In fact his first sher came as a child when he was weeping inconsolably at the death of his pet goat. Like all small children he loved his pets very much. With tears in his eyes and his father trying to pacify him, he said:

*Afsos ke duniya se safar kar gayi bakri  
Aankhe' to khuli reh gayi'n aur mar gayi bakri*

Translated:

Alas, has left this world my dear goat, but do you note?

The eyes are still open and is dead my goat, O' how I dote!

(Note: When a goat dies, its eyes remain open) He was about four years old when he said this.

Mir Anees did initially write a few ghazals, but changed over, on his father's advice, to the writing of marsias. This advice turned out to be a blessing in disguise because Mir Anees established the highest possible reputation in this domain equaled by none else. Anees broadened the scope of this genre by including in its body, in addition to the customary lamentation and mourning, realistic scenes of the battlefield, graphic delineations of the hero's face and physique, lively portrayals of the emotional states of the combatants, accurate descriptions of the landscape, and occasional interludes of moral edification. Anees was a master of simple, natural utterance, with a superb command on the language, which was always adequate to express a large variety of moods, scenes, characters and situations. He is specially notable for presenting the same scene or situation, over and over again, in different words or phrases, without letting it appear monotonous. Besides being a master of the marsia, Anees was also a specialist of the rubai, the shortest complete poem in Urdu, containing only four lines.

Anees died in 1874 at the age of 72.

Mir Muhazzab was Mir Anees' great grandson who wrote the famous urdu dictionary 'Muhazzab ul Lughaat'. The dictionary has several volumes, one volume for each alphabet.