

Vol. 7, No. 4: CLRI November 2020 | p 1-27

Incarceration as a Gateway to Wonder in the Poetry of Ahmed Fouad Negm

Ahsan Ul Haq

*Ph D Research Scholar, Dept. of English, University of Kashmir,
Srinagar, J & K.*

Abstract

Ahmed Fouad Negm (1929-2013), was an Egyptian poet writing poetry in colloquial Arabic. He is one of the most celebrated revolutionary poet of Egypt. Negm was arrests and imprisoned multiple times for his outspoken and dissent voice. It was behind the prison walls that he found his voice. His prison poetry has strong impact on the minds of Egyptian folk, and inspires resistance against the dictatorship and regimes. Negm, remains the most popular and vernacular poet of Egypt. Typifying the artist's progress, from inside the prison/jail Negm continues to speak for the voiceless Egyptians. This paper is an attempt study his prison poetry, and how jail/prison infused spark in his art. The paper will

examine some of the best prison testimonials translate in English.

Keywords: Ahmed Fouad Negm, prison/jail, incarceration/imprisonment, revolution, poetry.

Introduction

The themes of incarceration and exile are predominant in the poetry of Egyptian Vernacular poet, Ahmed Fouad Negm (1929-2013), who spent eighteen years of his life in prisons. Negm was nicknamed as Al-Fagomi (the impulsive). 'Al-Fagomy', Negm later explains, 'means impulsive; a confrontational man who can't stand still in times of injustice, an irrational person always prepared to fight the powerful guardians of corruption'. The alias Al-Fagomi – is a linguistic combination of three Arabic words, reflecting aggressiveness, creative chaos and power inspired by people and poetry. In 1959, he was sentenced to thirty-three months in prison for embezzlement and was released in May 1962. Negm was arrested for his trade union activities with other four fellows. They were beaten, tortured, and during the interrogation one man died. Then they were asked to sign a statement alleging the dead worker died in a prison brawl, for which Negm refused. In retaliation, the police fabricated a charge of forging cheques worth of 24,000 Egyptian pounds. The charge took him thirty three months to get released from prison and prove his innocence. His first collection *Pictures from the Life and Prison* got published by ministry in 1962 while still incarcerated. He won the first prize of the contest with this collection, the competition was launched by newly established

supreme Council for the arts and he became famous still behind the bars. Negm later stated that three years he spent in jail turned his life upside down and made him a new human being adding "Three years in which I discovered the poet who became the talk of the people afterwards." After this, he started working at the secretariat of the Asian-African Solidarity Organization in Cairo until 1969, when he was arrested on a political charge. Negm learned to read in jail, cutting his teeth on translations of Turkish poet Nazim Hakmit and Spanish Poet Pablo Neruda.

The poet went to jail nine times, the longest of which was three years during the era of President Gamal Abdul Nasser. He ordered his imprisonment along with Sheikh Imam after their song "Al-Hamdo Lillah"(Thank God). Negm met blind singer Sheikh Imam Issa, known as Sheikh Imam in 1962, for next many years they formed a duo composing and singing political songs. Negm attacked the authorities in this song after the war of 1967, also known as "Al-Naksa" (the setback). He was sentenced to life in prison but released after the death of Nasser. The periods he spent in jails varied in length from two weeks to three years.

In November 1977, he was arrested and charged with reciting a poem called "An Important Statement" in one of the faculties of Ain Al-Shams University. President Anwar Al-Sadat ordered that he be referred to a military court which sentenced him to a year in prison. He was again arrested in 1981, in a house of two French researchers. These researchers held a press conference in Paris, which was published in the French newspaper *Le Monde*. They said that they were tortured

in the Al-Qal`a Prison and that Negm was also tortured in Torrah Prison. While in prison, he declared that he would go on a hunger strike until death if he was not released.

Randa Bakr in his paper 'I know why the caged birds sings: Prison poetry in African and Arabic context' famously puts his point in these lines:

In our part of the world, the so-called Third World, governed mostly as it is by the powerful heirs of imperialism and by comprador police states, a radical thinker and writer is sooner or later most likely to get into confrontation with the regime, which works to silence him or her whether through daily harassment, banning, arrest or exile. (Bakr, 01).

Ahmed Fouad Negm spent all in all 18 years in Egyptians prisons because authorities despised his words. It was in (1959-62) that Ahmed Fouad was first imprisoned for three years for counterfeiting government papers, a period in which he seriously took up writing. During his first stint of prison, he also got to know a number of communists. In early 1960's, still in prison Negm first read the poems of the great vernacular poet of Egypt Bayram al-Tunisi, a poet from earlier generation. In 1919, for having allegedly insulted the royal family in one of his verse, Bayram was exiled from Egypt. Marilyn Booth in his article writes 'upon the impact of reading Bayram on Negm's' as:

Baryam's voice had a strong impact on Negm's poetic formation and his move toward a political voice constructed on the popular oral heritages of the Egyptian countryside and urban quarter. Indeed, Negm attributes his political-aesthetic awakening (and specifically, the concept of the union of politics and poetry) to reading Baryam's poetry (Booth, 58).

It was in prison, behind the impregnable fortress like walls that Negm began to write poetry in Egyptian vernacular language and found his voice. Colin Penter in his article entitled 'The poetry of Ahmed Fouad Negm (1929-2013)' writes about the outcome of Negm's poetry from prison:

He started writing poetry in prison in the 1960's. His sympathy was with the poor and downtrodden, and his poetry expressed contempt for the powerful elites who controlled Egypt. He became well known in the 1960's as a result of a partnership with Sheikh Imam Eissa, a composer and oud player, who put music to Negm's verse. They worked together for more than 20 years. Negm had little formal education and worked as a domestic worker and a postal worker. He was jailed for his political views under the rule of presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat. He was imprisoned in 1967 by the regime of General Nasser for performing verses that criticized the President's handling the 1967 war against Israel. In 1978 he was sentenced to 11 years in prison for attacking President Anwar Sadat. He spent three years on the run before his eventual capture. (Penter, 01)

In his poems Negm mostly started depicting working class jokes over the harsh reality of tyranny. When the prisoner guards found that he was writing something, fortunately they started helping him to record him in a tape recorder and to help pass on his poetry. Joel Beinin in his paper titled 'Workers and Modern Egyptian Colloquial Poetry (Zajal)' writes regarding this collection in these words:

The poems embody an awareness of social injustice, much of it situated in the prison. But for Nigm the salient issue is inequality and domination, not class. Although these poems are temporally closest to Nigm's personal experiences as a worker, they contain nothing that reflects the distinctive character of workers in contrast to other subaltern group (Beinin, 211).

His incarceration sparked a new fire in him, the Egypt was in a need of voice to the voice less and they found Negm at the ends.

Negm's first incarceration of an attempt to steal few pounds from the government was compounded with the worst military defeat of Egypt in 1967's war with Israel. Negm's star was destined to rise higher and brighter against all odds, fueled by his lifelong deprivation from parental love which rendered in landing him in an orphanage when he was six, hard labor since childhood, homelessness in adulthood, and his incarceration for attempting to steal. With the military defeat of Egypt, it rendered life impossible to orphans and urban dwellers like Negm. In Al-Qala Asylum (or the citadel) Negm's celebrity gained greater impetus, where a number of political prisoners indicated National Security sentence were kept. It was in prison that his faith was challenged by the Islamist or traditional religious minded people. Most of these people started him treating as atheist or blasphemous, a man who doesn't offer five times prays, doesn't recite the Holy Quran etc. as the basic tenets of Islam. But Negm viewed these people as narrow-minded, and naive and poor individuals. He confirms that these people possesses extensive knowledge with Islamic law, its philosophy and literature, but they lack the immense practical experience of orphan children deprived from essential survival necessities.

Negm was once again arrested in April 1978 and charged with invading with the faculty of Engineering at Ayn Shams University in Cairo with the aim of interrupting classes and causing riots. Seemingly, Negm was student poet, he was

invited by them to read some of his poems. His one of the poem 'Bayan Hamn' (An Important Announcement) was particularly biting and was believed inflammatory and libelous by the authorities. Negm was tried by a military court as the poem mocks al Sadat and his policies. He was sentenced to a year in prison but somehow managed to escape and to go underground. Later a few days before the verdict was passed, Negm in an interview spoke about case:

I am accused of disturbing the public peace. What peace? And who can say it is public? Neither Sinai is regained nor Palestine and even Begin had not softened his extreme position...I am a link in a chain of poets and writers who had to stand in the same dock. This is the fate of (honest) conscience in a country whose authorities do not respect man's conscience in its purity and spontaneity. (Malek, 25)

On his way to jail, before he managed to escape, a police officer advised him to stop writing this kind of poetry and instead write some joyful poem for few months. Negm explains: "The officer said that I if I was to do that, my situation would totally change and I would become a superstar on radio and television and would be able to leave Hush Qadam, my (poor) alley and move to where I could breathe the (fresh) air of main streets." (Malek, 25).

Prison Testimonials

A Note in the File of the Case, dated Feb. 9th 1972 and was written while Negm was in prison. Here Negm describes the interrogation session of somebody who was accused of disturbing the peace. The poems leads to poet's autobiographical resemblances. The accused charged with being a communist –asks the interrogator about his exact title.

To whom interrogator replies that he is state prosecutor. The accused again asks to which state, 'Egypt' replies the interrogator to which accused again asks to which Egypt? Egypt as the Shack or Egypt of the Palace. The accused means that there are two kinds of Egypt: one that represents the 'rich few' and is here typified as state prosecutor, the other represents the 'deprived and poor people' to which accused superficially belongs. The poem is composed in dramatic dialogue with the accused and interrogator alternating speeches: the poem starts with the interrogator:

Are you a communist?

I am Egyptian

You are a pest, a trouble maker

Can I know who you are

We are the state prosecutor

Which state

Egypt.

Egypt of the shack or Egypt of the palace

The state prosecutor continues to interrogate and cross-examine the accused about his illegal participation in the student demonstration which were calling for people war against their enemy. The interrogator rebukes the accused for advocating war, reminding him that country is not ready for war since weapons they possess cannot kill even mosquito. They continue to argue back and forth, finally prosecutor calls in an undercover agent to beat up the accused and persuade him to change his mind.

His another famous and most often poem 'Baladi wa habibati' (*My country, My Beloved*) was written on Feb. 6th 1972 in The Qila Prison. It is one of the most beautiful and complex poem composed especially for the University students. In this poem the poet reveals the false promises of the each regime.

*Love runs through my blood,
Love sprouts affection—
Longing for closeness is painful.
To be away from you is hurtful, O 'Azza.*

*You're the smile of dawn that appears
And that sends my sad night away—
You are morning dew that drops
On my pale cheeks,
And brings out their rosy colour again.
Each cheek and ...has a flower
Who should taste it?
But you.
Yes, you
Who else but you,
My soul, my angel,
The breeze of love that makes my hear quiver
O love of dreams, O Azza
Last night, there came to arrest me, O my angel,
Two loafers and six uniformed pigs
I was dreaming my love—
I was dreaming of you
You and I in green garden
Hedged by orange trees*

*And sesban,
You like a carnation, were
In the garden, bathing in fragrance
I chased you my love, my love
You ran away
You chased me, and I caught you
You chased me
I embraced you,
Sucked in the fragrance
From you lips,
The branches
Standing there, looking on, watching us,
Afraid
Of eyes
Eyes that say words,
Words that fly like pigeons
Calling us in the melodious tunes
Greeting us with peace.*

*I was dreaming, O my love.
Dreaming of you
Who else but you?
My life
My angel,
The breeze of love
That makes my heart quiver.
O love of dreams*

O 'Azza

Suddenly, my love, there yelled out,

The sound of a surprise

A blood-curdling sound

WAKE UP, AHMAD!

WAKE UP, AHMAD!

The beautiful dream vanished

Gloom and worry set in

“Where is Imam?”

“Where are you?”

“We’re authorized

If you come with fuss,

You’ll have no problems.”

“We are not off course, to blame.”

“You, you are the worms of the earth.”

The terrorizing pest

“And you, you’re a grain of sand in the eyes of the Caliph.”

“You are the lash of injustices and miseries,

The disease in the body of my country,

You’re stinking carcass!”

“Shut the son-of-a—bitch up!

Rub his face in the dust!

Search the whole place,

Pull out the drawers of the wardrobe!”

They trussed me up, my love

They gagged me, my love

They made me stand,

*They made me sit,
They searched every hear in my body,
The pillow, out of the madness,
They split it apart.
When the search was ended,
They found nothing.
Believe me,
Don't be afraid,
Have I anything to hide, O 'Azza
Except that I love people
And hate to keep my mouth shut?
One of those loafers looked me in the eyes—
You know hoe crystal-clear and kind my eyes are,
Like all the eyes of our people, my love,
They are two windows that led straight to the heart.
The loafer hoped to spot a little sign of fear,
Why would be there fear, the bone head?
Which of us is the coward?
Which of us is the traitor?
The one whose heart is vibrant with love and hopes,
With an evergreen blooming spring and songs
Or the haunting dog and his imperial masters
The (ravenous) eaters of the raw flesh of the people
On (silver) trays?
Which of us is the coward?
Which of us is the traitor?
The loafer stared at my eyes.
He shivered, there was lamp in his throat
He bent over, swayed and said*

*Two jumbles-up sentences
For he witnessed two beautiful images
In the kind eyes:
Egypt in the left eye
You, my love, in the right one.
Yes, you, who else but you?
My soul...my angel,
The breeze of love that makes my heart quiver—
O love of dreams!
O 'Azza. (Malek, 132-140)*

The poem is generally divided into two parts, first part dealing with a love affair between the poet and of a girl named as Azza, the next part deals with the oppression of state security. A state where people are not even allowed to dream about love. Whilst who incarcerated Negm are dead long ago, but the poet's voice and poetry is still alive. Commenting upon the poem Marilyn Booth in his article 'exploding into the seventies: Ahmed Fouad Negm, Sheikh Imam, and the Aesthetics of New Youth Politics' says:

My Country, My beloved, a cry from Cairo's ottoman era fortress, now a prison in the age of independence. For Egypt's university students (and for many secondary students too), exposing the false promises and premises of each regime was a primary goal. Grounding their activism was the demand for an open system permitting forthright critique and political discussion, and in which true political participation was possible, both on campus and for the nation. (Booth, 69).

The poem attacks the hallow policies and hypocrisy among politicians. The poet claims in the poem let decide who is brave and how is coward. He laughs at the cowardice acts of

regimes. He used his poems as aesthetic weapons of resistance against political oppression in his art, he fights against authoritarian regimes and inspires the Arab public to defy the status quo and refuses to be a defeated nation. The poem is a great example of how aesthetical aspects like the intense metaphorical language to describe the love story of female beauty with that of his country combined with an attack on authorities in particular and politics in general. The more time he spends behind bars, the more his voice got louder, every time he was released, his voice grew louder and his poetry stung even more. On his continuous activism with Sheikh Imam, Kamal Abdel Malek writes: "In almost every manifestation of mass unrest, whether by students, workers or both, from 1968 onward, both Negm and Sheikh imam were implicated and consequently arrested and locked up in prison for disturbing peace" (Malek,)

*A Few Words for Egypt
Every eye loves a beauty,
You are a beauty in every eye
Love!
My heart is in Love.
Just allow me two words,
May they will be the last two words
From me, O Egypt.
Who can wander about safely?
Where can one wander about safely?*

*Young woman of pitchy black hair!
Your forehead is a disc of daylight,*

*Your eyes two seas of hope,
Your cheeks honey and fire.
The pearls in your smile
Give away the secrets of the oysters.
You who live in the high palace,
When will I have the joy of seeing you?
Speak to young woman!
My waiting has gone on for so long
Speak, even say two words,
Maybe they will be the last two words.
O Egypt
Who can wander about safely?
Where can one wander about safely?*

*The ghouls of your magic palace
Are more idiotic than the worms of the fields.
After sucking dry the green boughs
They gnaw at the bones of stems.
And he who makes the land green
And the home safe
Lives with his belly full of hunger,
Dies out of the fear of the ghouls,
Poor soul, he passes away
Without even telling of his life struggle,
Without even saying two words to Egypt
May be the last two words,
Who can wander about safely?
Where can one wander about safely?*

*Out of my pain I said one word to you.
The other word,
Out of my love for you,
I hid it inside my ribs,
Away from an unjust world
I was afraid they might spot the word
And kill it in the dark alley.
In the first hours of the light
The cactus flower blossomed, O Salma,
Breeze of love, while you are floating by,
Take a word to Egypt in the morning:
As long as the march goes on,
As long as there is insight and eyesight
One can be safe
Two wander about
One can see where
To wander about.*

(Shibin il-Kom prison, 1973)

This is one of the love poem from prison, the poet tries to say few word for his country. The speaker of the poem seems very passionate about his country Egypt. The poet's heart is in the love of his beloved, and he is asking for just two words in honor of his love that may be the last two. Poet mixes the feminine beloved with his country, he praises his beloved. He yearns for the reunion of his beloved woman, for which he is waiting for so long. The refrain of the poem conveys that in his country the lovers are not free, they cannot move, because the regimes are always to arrest them. The poet say that his pain allows him to say one word, but on the other hand his

loves hides another word. He is afraid that once he speaks for his beloved, authorities may kill in him in the dark. Randa Abou-bakr writes on poem:

Poems such as “A Couple of Words for Egypt”] and [“Enduring”] recreate the fear of a lover who appears to surrender to a supernatural power mysteriously working to put the two lovers asunder, so much so that he cannot with certainty tell what will happen to him next. Such instances of voicing total defeat, few as they are compared to others where victory is only superficially salvaged at the very end, further consolidate the mask of the antihero who appears here as passively and superstitiously succumbing to his fate. (Bakr, 275-76).

The Prison Ward (1978)

Prison Ward listen in:

*I’ve shaken the dice many times,
And gambled with everything on the big prize and loss,
And bitter though prison is,
I’ve never once wanted to repent.
Had bid the night guards good evening,
Every single one of them,
The bringi (1)
The kingi
And the shingi
I say we were wicked inmates all,
Though the storeroom clerk
Has given us different uniforms.
My first words are for my Prophet;
My second, for Job;*

*The third are for my estrangement;
The fourth for my destiny;
My fifth, I will say that he who oppresses others
Will himself be defeated one day.*

*Frist hail to the Prophet who freed mankind,
Cure the afflicted, and rescued the poor;
You honored the man above the animals,
Raised the sword of righteousness high above oppression,
And declared to your people
If one day injustice should prevail,
And right be trodden down,
No rain will there be, no greenery, no civilization,
Just snakes and crows
Wreaking havoc on the mountain and valley,
No moon or light in the skies,
Only blindness, sorrow,
And fear of the jailer's cruelty;
Thus, people become scared of each other;
And they scare the Sultan*

*Second, I say I'm Job
When Job was afflicted
And suffered for a couple of days,
Stories were told about him, and he has given two names,
Called both a prophet and saint.
But when about me, here in prison, twice patient?
Patient after I was kidnapped from my people,*

*And patient with what has been dealt out to me?
The rascals rule, and their reign is one of the shame.
It's the law of animals over people.
I swear by the grave of the Prophet
The one day the scales of justice will be twice upheld,
And I shall be satisfied, seeing justice twice applied.*

*Third my estrangement in a world of rascals,
Where they are protected,
And free people are endangered.
When the mean climb, they hire sycophants,
Thugs, crooks, thieves, hypocrites,
(Praise be to the Prophets):
Naked tarts dance vigorously for no reason,
Strangling words,
Drowning out the sound of music
And the poetry in the mawwal,
Smothering the meaning of songs
And the ringing of bells.*

*One, the one and the only;
Two, the grandfather of Hussein, (2)
Three, it is ugly to gloat;
Four, the ink of the press;
Five, my strong resolve;
Six, the coming tomorrow;
Seven, my heart in love;
Eight, the longing of my fellow inmates;
Nine, the wide world;*

*Ten, damnation to all the traitors.
Let it be known by all*

*That prisons are only walls,
The ideas are like light,
That light can jump over a thousand walls,
And that walls never hold back the spirit.
And let it be known be all
That injustice has grown old,
That the gates of prison are weak,
That the handles of the gates have disappeared,
And that soon all this will just be memories,
And that these promises will be fulfilled tomorrow,
And that all your days, and ours, will be filled with light.*

Note

- (1): Turkish military ranks given to the guards, meaning first, second, and third.
(2): Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) is the grandfather of Imam Hussein.

Negm was not afraid of any action taken against him. To write and to publish prison literature while the political prisoner is still in jail is to hide in plain sight. It is to pose a risk of "disciplinary" sanction against the prisoner. It is to raise a big middle finger to the system of repression, oppression and suppression. It is to declare that our minds are free, our imaginations are free from the prison warder, the prison walls, and the judges' sentence. Negm did it all with brave heart. In fact, it was in prison that Negm gave vent to his militant and

vocal voice and become the brave poet as in one of paper Randa Abou-Bakr writes 'I know why the Caged Bird Sings: Prison Poetry in an African and an Arab Context' the anonymously writer comments:

In prison, the poet gives vent to his militant voice, expressing hope in the future out of a belief that prison is a temporary condition that will soon give way to not only the liberation of the individual but also to that of the whole nation. This is usually expressed in hyperbolic statements and images typical of traditional folk songs – an element the colloquial poet very often borrows. Such hyperbolic expressions of praise and worth also come out in pieces where Nigm deals with the theme of the vocation of the poet, viewing it as most noble and most capable of transcending the physical limitations imposed by incarceration. This again is expressed in hyperbolic terms aiming at belittling the immediate feelings of insufficiency and helplessness, and establishing the written word as a strong weapon against the poet's oppressors. (Bakr, 5).

Negm's belief was that poetry can act as an expression of resistance and opposition. He has been one of Egypt's most prominent voices of resistance for decades and was an irreverent poet in his 80's. In 1980's one could easily be sentenced to six months, if found/caught with the tape recorder of poems of Negm, recorded by Imam Esa. It was for his outspoken resistance through poetry that he spent eighteen years of life behind the bars, indeed he was no stranger to imprisonment. Negm is no stranger to imprisonment.

His another famous poem The Consolation of Poetry written behind bars carries same message and hope:

The Consolation of Poetry (1978)

*How consoling poetry
And singing are
At times of hardship.
How consoling words and love are
In troubled times.
We have wandered far from each other,
And we have dispersed,
Now we are together,
In prison.*

*Oh comrades,
What maze is it
When the moon is strangled by long nights,
When friends tread in darkness,
Stumbling over friends,
And when a two-step road
Takes a whole year to tread.
Look where we are today
And how many of us there are.
How many will be there tomorrow
And where we will be after tomorrow?
What is our situation now,
And what will happen to us the morning after?
Where have we been,
And where did we end?
We visit a new place every day.
We open doors every day.
And every day we remove obstacles.
A building goes up every day,*

*And every day another comes down.
Every day we are pregnant with new songs,
And every day we give birth to new hopes.
Whether we are inside a prison,
Or outside a prison,
This is how we should be.*

*How consoling poetry
And singing are
At times of hardship.
How consoling a green branch is
Amid desolation.
We have wandered far from each other,
But now we're together,
Writing the first words of our book:
Damned be he who bows down
Before oppression
By a cowardly ruler;
Damned be the word
That bends in the throat
Or escapes before it's uttered;
Damned be an hour of one's life
That is consumed by subjugation;
Damned be bread eaten with humiliation;
Damned be the cowards.*

*Oh comrades,
You who taught the stones strength,
I am calling out against*

Monotony

Depression

And boredom.

You who can speed up the light of dawn

And it is advent,

Listen attentively

To a singer's cry

Emanating from the bottom of nothingness:

Unite,

Unite. (Trans. Mona Anis 41)

The incarcerated writer/poet writes because he/ she believes the role literature plays in political/social change and revolution. And liberating the poet's voice, the poetry soars out of the impregnable walls of prison to assume its role in liberating others or to put in the word of black American poet Etheridge Knight, live "behind myriad walls that permeate society". Negm always kept strengthening his militant voice and status as a dissent poet. And actually it was in prison the poet gave vent to his radical voice, and in the this poem poet is expressing the hope in future and believing that prison is a temporary condition that will soon lead to liberation of him and the whole nation as well. And till then he will keep singing songs and celebrating his incarceration. All this is expressed in the typical images or in a hyperbolic language of folk or colloquial Arabic. His firm determination that written words will act as a strong weapon and may bring solace and relief at the times of hardship is brilliantly expressed by Bakr:

...This is usually expressed in hyperbolic statements and images typical of traditional folk songs – an element the colloquial poet very often borrows. Such hyperbolic

expressions of praise and worth also come out in pieces where Nigm deals with the theme of the vocation of the poet, viewing it as most noble and most capable of transcending the physical limitations imposed by incarceration. This again is expressed in hyperbolic terms aiming at belittling the immediate feelings of insufficiency and helplessness, and establishing the written word as a strong weapon against the poet's oppressors. (Bakr, 05).

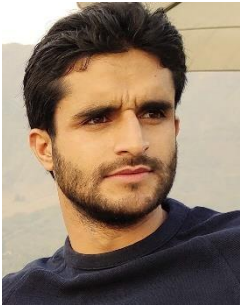
Conclusion

Negm had left behind a large poetic legacy that made him one of the most chief revolutionary poets in Egypt. A man who learnt the true meaning of humanity, choses to extremely lead a modest and simple life, and refused to knell down before tranny. Despite his suffering he celebrated his life, poked fun at cowards and raised flag of freedom, justice and equality. Negm, remains the most popular and vernacular poet of Egypt. Characterizing the artists progress, from inside the prison/jail Negm continues to speak for the voiceless Egyptians and invoke them.

References

1. Bakr, Randa Abu. "The Political Prisoner as Antihero: The Prison Poetry of Wole Soyinka and Ahmed Fouad Negm." *Project Muse*, vol. 46, no. 2, 2009, pp. 261-286.
2. -----, "I know why the Caged Bird Sings: Prison Poetry in an African and an Arab Context." *The American University of Beirut*, 2004, pp-1-12
3. Benin, Joel. "Writing Class: workers and Modern Egyptians Colloquial poetry." *Poetics Today*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1994. Pp. 191-215.
4. Booth, Marilyn. "Exploding into the Seventies: Ahmed Fouad Negm, Sheikh Imam, and the Aesthetics of a New Youth Politics." *I Say my Word out Loud*, 2013, 54-74,
5. El-Hewie, Mohamed. *A Rebel Unlike Any: Egypt's Revolutionary Poet*. Createspace Independent Publishing platform, 2013.
6. Halim, Hala. "Ahmed Fouad Negm: Speaking Truth to Power." *I Say my Word out Loud*, 2013, pp 44- 52,
7. Khatri, Chhote Lal. *Prison Literature: A Global Perspective*. Authors Press New Delhi, 2016.
8. Mostafa, D. S. "Najm and Sheikh Imam: The Rise and Decline of Political Song in Egypt". U of American University in Cairo. 2011.
9. Saffaf Farah and Raya Khatib. "The Imam and Negm duo, and their Influence on Folk Culture and Youth." November 11, 2013.
10. Mona Anis. *I Say my Words Out Loud: Ahmed Fouad Negm*. Prince Claus Fund, 2013.
11. Emery Ed. "Sheikh Imam of Cairo: Invisibility, Suppression, Visibility and Resurgence".
12. Stork, Joe. "Sadat's Desperate Mission". *Middle East Research and Information Project* .no. 64, Feb 1978, pp 3-6.
13. Michael Slackman, "A Poet whose Political Incorrectness is a Crime." *New York Times*, 13 2006.

14. Malek, Kamal Abdel. *A Study of the Vernacular Poetry of Ahmad Fu'd Nim*. Brill Leiden New York. 1990.
15. Wu, Yenna and Simona Livescu. *Human Rights, Suffering, and Aesthetics in Political Prison Literature*. Lexington Books, 2001.



Ahsan Ul Haq

Ahsan Ul Haq has completed his masters in English Literature from Barkatullah University Bhopal. He is currently pursuing his PhD from the Department of the English University of Kashmir, Srinagar. His primary research area is Prison Literature. He has qualified SLET (State Level Eligibility Test) from University of Kashmir and NET (National Eligibility Test) three times. Moreover, he is a columnist, writing for several leading dailies like Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir and Kashmir Times.

An advertisement banner for Amazon Prime. It features a light blue background. In the top left, a white starburst shape contains the text 'PRIME AT ₹ 999 PER YEAR*'. In the top center, the 'amazonprime' logo is displayed in white on a dark blue rectangular background. Below the logo, three white boxes with blue borders contain the text 'Original Shows', '1-day delivery*', and 'Ad-free Music'. At the bottom center, a yellow button with a black border says 'Join now'. In the bottom right corner, the text '*T&C Apply' is written in a small, dark font.

PRIME AT
₹ 999
PER YEAR*

amazonprime

Original Shows 1-day delivery* Ad-free Music

Join now

*T&C Apply

[Get Your Book Reviewed](#)

If you have got any book published and are looking for a book review, contact us. We provide book review writing service for a fee. We (1) write book review (2) publish review in CLRI (3) conduct an interview with the author (4) publish interview in CLRI. [Know more here](#).

[Authors & Books](#)

We publish book releases, Press Release about books and authors, book reviews, blurbs, author interviews, and any news related to authors and books for free. We welcomes authors, publishers, and literary agents to send their press releases. Visit our website <https://authornbook.com>.