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Poetics of Homelessness and Dislocation: A Reading of Agha Shahid Ali's Poems

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Abstract: *A home is not just made of four walls, it is also a place of memories. It assures protection, and gives a sense of belonging. It gives not only roots to grow but also a sense of pride and identity. Therefore, when one remains away from home for quite sometimes, home starts haunting. It happens with everyone. When anyone is in exile, the sense of homelessness becomes deeper. Agha Shahid Ali is one of the prominent poets from Kashmir origin who was in exile by choice. He was forced to migrate to America in order to pursue higher studies, but he had not accepted self chosen separation easily. He has taken his migration as one's displacement. He always feels that he has been culturally and geographically displaced. His physical separation from his hometown creates in him a deeper sense of homelessness. He examined nostalgia, memories of home and nation, sense of loss etc. in his poems. The themes of exile and loss are tinged in his poems. His poems chase relentlessly the collective memories of the past and expresses the desire to return to Kashmir by idealizing ancestral home. The present paper aims to examine his confrontation with memories with a view to understand a poet's sense of loss, exile, banishment and inescapable solitude.*

Key words: *Home, Memory, Nostalgia, Cultural Dislocation, Homelessness.*

Introduction:

Writing is an act of remembering the past. It takes a writer to different time zone and space of the past. It is an art of reproduction of amassed experiences. The poems of Agha Shahid Ali (1949-2001), a Kashmiri Indian-American poet, fall under the principles of Diasporic literature as the poems are marked by loss and nostalgia with a yearning to recreate the past by writing memories. His two works 'The Country without a Post Office' and 'The Veiled Suite' have shown his longing for the past. He cherishes the identity which has been lost.

Agha Shahid Ali was born in a respectable Kashmiri family. He grew up in Kashmir valley. He did his graduation from University of Kashmir. After completing his masters from Hindu