A study on stylistic features of poets Qajar period

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Abstract: Abdullah Mirza was among Qajar princes and a poet of 13th century A.H. He was among the talented children of Fathali Shad. He was a poet of the Return Period. The language of his Qasidas was similar to that 4th and 5th century poets, and his ghazals were similar to those of Sa'di and Hafez. His qasidas had eulogy themes and his ghazals were about love. His religious requiems distinguished him from his contemporary poets. Some of his requiems are in Turkish. This paper provides a study of the biography and life of this poet as well as discussing his bibliography and characteristics of his style in poetry, so to show his place among the poets of the Return Period. It should be noted that his divan has yet to be edited, and this paper is an adaptation from the first edited version of his Divan of Dara.

Key words: *Abdullah Mirza; Return school; Intellectual; Literary; Lingual features*

1. Introduction

The return period in history of Iran refers to the period in which Indian style was abandoned for different reasons, and Khorasani and Iraqi styles became the dominant style among the poets. Literary return can be divided into two periods: first started from mid-12th century A.H. and lasted into early 13th century A.H., in which period poets followed the style of 6th, 7th and 8th centuries A.H. poets in qasida and masnavi. The second period, however, started from mid-13th century A.H., in which period the poets followed the style of 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries A.H. poets as well as following the style of poets of 4th, and 5th centuries A.H.; the topics on which the poets focused during return period included description, sermons and preaching, eulogy, requiem, love stories and ghazal (Safa, 1994).

The fact that poets of Safavid era turned to the past (Iraqi and Khorasani styles) to the extent that with vasukht style emerged, indicates the significant difference between Indian style and return style. Literature of return period was literature of imitation, and there is a large gap between it and the circumstances of that period. "The poet of return period wrote poems about every condition but the conditions of his period" (Langerudi, 1996).

It was as if the poets of this period often lacked personal experiences. Imitation increased the gap between the poets and the real world. Literature of early periods dominated the literature of this period, and increased the gap between the past and the present. Poets of this period were far behind their time. To prove their superiority, the poets not only referred to the divans of the past poets but also

referred to Dasatir (Shafiei Kadkani, 2004). Although it drived them to the past, referring to Dasatir satisfied their ambition for supremacy.

The fact that the poets of this period didn't reflect the conditions of their time cannot be their problem, because this had occurred in Iranian literature before then as well. In Khorasani style, which is the starting point of the Persian literature, poetic elements were mostly adopted from the life of nobles (Shafiei Kadkani, 2007). Although the frequency of use of elements of noble lifestyle decreased in Iraqi style, and more elements from popular culture were introduced into poem, the gaps still remained in place. Dominance of divine issues over the poetry of this era made it impossible to write poems about the life of ordinary people. The truth came from another world. The truth spoke to the people through the prophet, and the light of divine knowledge illuminated the heart of mystics (Meskoob, 1994). The result of this style was words becoming empty of their material meanings. Words assumed transcendental meanings, and the meaning of the words were so transformed that their meaning must be explained and interpreted now, because the return style, whether Khorasani or Iraqi, reproduce that large gap (Langerudi, 1996).

The scholars of Iranian literature and the world don't disapprove of the revival of the past, but they always warn of dangers of such attempt. Eliot said, "In the protection and preservation of an old tradition and attempts to revive an old tradition lies the danger that we fail to distinguish the essential elements from inessential ones, and the true elements from the false one. There is also a second danger that tradition is turned into a static thing, and consider it to be the enemy of any change and evolution, that we aspire to return to the past which

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we believe deserved to be eternal, instead of being driven forward by the libido that also build the past. Such powerful libido would be wasted on collecting the fallen leaves and sticking them back to the trees" (Eliot, 1969).

Doctor Shamisa said about the positive role of return period, "Poets of this period were the first stylistic scholars of Iran, because they had to study the previous styles in order to be able to imitate them" (Shamisa, 1994).

In qajar period, especially, in Fath Ali Shah, eulogy was revived in Iran. Eulogy reading was an integral part of daily schedule of qajar princes and kings. Four of seven qajar kings wrote poem: Fath Ali Shah, Naser al-Din Shah, Mohammad Ali Shah, and Ahmad Shah, with divans of Fath Ali Shah, Naser al-Din Shah being available today. Names of dozens of princes are also mentioned among poets (Soheili Khansari, 1949).

1. Life, objects of eulogies and works of Abdullah Mirza Dara

Abdullah Mirza Dara was born on November 24, 1796 in Shiraz (Azodi, 1997). His mother's name was Umm Kolthum (Sepehr, 1998). He was a sadat (Azodi, 1997), and therefore, was respected by all. After death of Fath Ali Shah, and lived with respect in the court of Mohammad Shah (ibid). Mirza studies in the court until the age of 13 under teachers of princes (Garusi, 1997).

He used pseudonym of Dara. The cause of choice of such pseudonym has not been referred to (Besmel Shirazi, 1992). In April 1829, Fath Ali Shah appointed Dara to governor of Zanjan. He was then only 13. Shah appointed Mohamamd Taghi Aliabadi, who was a high profile figure in the court, to his vizier (Khavari Shirazi, 2001). In 1811, Dara married daughter of Soleiman Khan E'tezad al-Dawleh Qajar Qavanlu. In 1826, people of Zanjan complained about Dara to Shah. Subsequently, Shah dismissed him. However, shortly Shah appointed him back to the governor of Zanjan. During Mohammad Shah, he resigned governmental position, and became a company of Shah, as he took part in expedition of Mohammad Shah to Herat (Hedayat, 2003; I'tizad al-Saltaneh, 1991; Bamdad, 1978). After death of Mohammad Shah, and movement of Naser al-Din Shah from Tabriz to Tehran, Abdullah Mirza was reappointed to governor of Zanjan (Nasiri, 2005). According to Azodi's History, he died in 1846) (Azodi, 1997). Nasekh al-Tavarikh also supports this date (Sepehr, 1998).

According to Dhul al-Qarnayn's History and Azodi' History, he had 19 daughters and 9 sons (Azodi, 1997). However, according to Majma' al-Fusaha and Makarim al-Athar, he had 20 sons and 10 daughters (Hedayat, 2003; Habibabadi, 1985).

Historical and poetic evidence suggest that he was Shiite, as evidence by his eulogy about Ahl al-Bayt.

In Azodi's History, Ahmad Mirza described him as a witty, outspoken and punctilious person (Azodi,

1997, 112). Due to such features, he was a permanent company of his father, and whenever, Fath Ali Shah was said, he made him happy. Dara's Garden and Safineh al-Mahmud supports the said statements about the features of Abdullah Mirza (Danbali, 1964; Mahmud Mirza Qajar, 1967).

The objects of his eulogies were two groups: first group included noble religious figures such as Prophet Muhamamd and Ahl al-Bayt, and second group included members of his family such as parent, and brothers and sisters.

Abdullah Mirza didn't read many religious eulogies. Such eulogies, however, are characterized by the lack of reference of historical events. He referred to write emotional eulogies about Prophet Muhammad, rather than focusing on historical events. Another important point to note is that he turned to religious eulogy when no other means of expression of his talent and existent was available, thus purifying his soul and focusing on the afterlife.

"The time came that I prepared papers and pen
I filled my treasury with jewels
I make up the bride of the verse
Then I take it to her husband
I prostrate before the one before whom the angels prostrate
I am not like those poets who prostrate before anybody"

Dara wrote qasidas about Imams including Imam Reza (PBUH) and Imam Ali (PBUH). His love for progeny of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is clearly visible in his poems. A part of his divan (Majlis and Astan Quds versions) comprises his requiems about them.

Eulogic poems of his were mostly about Fath Ali Shah. Qajar princes were also objects of his eulogies.

Works of Dara include: Divan including 62 qasida, 331 ghazal, 23 masnavi, 40 qat'eh, 2 mukhammas, 125 quatrain, and 35 single verses. It should be noted that he wrote two ghazals in Turkish. According to Majma' al-Fusaha, the number of the verse of his divan is 5000 (Hedayat, 2003). According to the results of this research, he wrote 5941 verses.

Divan of eulogies: According to Makarim al-Athar by Habibullah, divan of eulogy was written by Dara (Habibabadi, 1985). In Majlis and Astan Quds versions studied in this research, there are 42 Persian eulogies and monodies, and 8 Turkish eulogies and monodies, 853 verses of which were in Persian, and the rest in Turkish (a total of 1073 verses). The National Library version contained no eulogy and monody.

Masnavi Kolnameh: This masnavi includes 98 verses. Dara wrote this with the assistance of his brother, Mohammad Mirza Afsar (Ja'fari, 2013, paper on Abdullah Mirza in Islamic Encyclopedia).

Basat Nashat (Qanun): This is ironic prose, written in 1845.

2. Poetic Style of Darda

In the book Stylistics, the characteristics of the poem of return period are studied in intellectual, literary and lingual aspects. This paper follows the same methodology in study of Darda's poems.

2.1. Intellectual characteristics

The thoughts based on which Darda wrote his poems are the same as those of his ancestors: praise of kings, description of the nature, expression of need before the object of eulogy, praise and admiration of noble religious figures, gratification of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, monodies and requiems, and writing cruxes and chronograms for entertainment. The themes are so repetitious that ghazals are like qasida, and qat'ehs and masnavis are like ghazals and qasidas. When the poet chooses a different theme, he cannot complete the poem that has such a different theme. Darda wrote a poem about cholera pandemic in Rey. His descriptions well show the way courtiers see the public.

"Rey's cholera then turned into a burning fire,
A fire burning every place, whether abandoned or developed
A dead girl like Layli is lying on the earth here
A dead boy like Majnun is lying there, not covered with shroud
One whose lips sucked nothing but wine
Is now collapsed with his lips turned wine-color"
(Abdullah Mirza, National Library version, 95-6).

Among other intellectual features of the poems of this period is lack of attention to human body in lyric theme. Darda used the cliché description like moon-like face, and amber lips. However, he used such description very skillfully.

"I am surprised at the sight of that infant with amethystine lips
Whose lips amber colored by wet musk encircle the moon"
(Abdullah Mirza, Majlis version, verse No. 6)

2.2. Literary characteristics

Poets of return period wrote in different formats. Darda also wrote in different formats. He wrote 62 qasida, 331 ghazal, 23 masnavi, 40 qat'eh, 2 mukhammas, 125 quatrain, and 35 single verses. He wrote 42 Persian eulogies and monodies, and 8 Turkish eulogies and monodies. Masnavi of Kolnameh is an ironic work. His qasidas and ghazals were eulogic. He followed style of Khorasani poets in writing qasida. He also wrote crux and chronogram (heritage of 7th century A.H.).

Some of figures of speech used in his poems include:

* Simile and metaphor: His poem is abundant in simile and metaphor:There are other figures of speech, such as contrast, pun, symmetry, mura'at nazir (image based on semantically related words), husn al-ta'lil (attributing a serene cause), tazmin (where the poet works a line from another poet's poem into his own), *etc.* in poems of Darda. The

examples of each of these figures of speech in poems of Darda are provided below:

2.3. Characteristics of poetic language

Some of the characteristics of Khorasani style are found in poems of Darda, which are discussed here under the headings of phonetic, verbal, and syntactic characteristics:

2.3.1. Phonetic characteristics

* Alif qua alif: Alif with no meaning that is used at the end of a noun, verb or letter. It is seen in Sasanid writings. It became popular during return period by way of imitation of Khorasani style (Shamisa, 1993).

Transformation: In the chain of speech, sometimes a chain unit is transformed to another without any justification according to homogeneity, heterogeneity, inclusion, exclusion or other processes (Haqshenas, 2005, 160). Adding a letter to a word: Addition of meaningless to the end of rhymes ending in alif: Change of vowel: This can take three forms: change of short vowel to long vowel, change of long vowel to short vowel, and omission of short vowel or changing short vowel to sukun.

3. Conclusion

Among periods of Persian poetry, qajar era is called return period, because poets of this period make a revolution in poetry and literature, and revived the style of old scholars, who had become obsolete. Among the most important features of the poet of this period is abandonment of subtle far-fetched themes of Indian style and return to such themes as praise of kings, description of the nature, praise of noble religious figures, description of the beloved, *etc*. Writing crux and chronogram was also common among poets of this period. The poets of this period tended to avoid complexity and use simple and natural language. The language of Dara's poems also followed the same style. He imposed artificial complexity on his poetic language by using astrological terms, and complex rhymes, which seems to be rather aimed at pontification and counteracting such poets as Khaghani.

It is clearly seen from the works of Mirza Abadi that he was not among the leading figures of return style.

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