

SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE PROPHETIC PANEGRYRICS OF THE UMAYYAD ERA

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Abstract: poets songs about the character of the Prophet(peace be upon him), in beginning of Islam in general and those in Umayyad era specifically, was influenced by the political, social and cultural situation of that time. That is, in the beginning of Islam the poems wanted to prove prophetic initiative and defend the prophet and Muslims' character, while in Umayyad era, due to the political and social upheaval and transformation, theme of prophetic poems also changed. In this period the poets of the prophetic poems, adopted tow themes: first, expressing their love to the family of Bani Hashim and the second expressing cruelty of Umayyad to Ahlul-Bayt (People of The House)and also defending their rights. Accordingly, the present study analyzes the prophetic poetry in the first century AD, with sociological approach.

Keywords: Prophetic panegyrics, the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), The Umayyad era.

1. Introduction

There are lots of books and articles written about prophetic panegyrics, each having investigated this issue from a different dimension and has introduced interesting and profitable points on the subject (Prophetic Panegyrics in Arab Literature, Zaki Mubarak). Although there is no necessity and opportunity to mention these works in this article, the authors are well aware of the fact that each of them examines prophetic panegyrics from a different perspective and provides valuable points in this respect.

Among them we could mention: "Prophetic panegyrics" by Doctor Mahmoud Ali Makki. In this book, he has provided a collection of poetries about the prophet and explanations for them, from the time of profits life to date, As well as Zaki Ahmad Kamal's valuable book called "Muhammad in Contemporary literature", in which the authors have tried to explore and decode contemporary prophetic poems. There are also substantial articles written on this issue.

However, it still cannot be said that nothing is remained to say about it and farther investigation and research is not needed. And the evidence for this claim is the fact that none of studies done on written works about prophetic panegyrics has followed sociological approach. That is, in evolution and metastases of prophetic

panegyrics themes, the authors have taken it into less consideration. Specifically, to the best of our knowledge, no research is done yet to explore which external factors in general and which social factors, in particular, have affected prophetic poems' themes. The issue of why the prophetic panegyrics themes in each age are different from the other ages besides why eulogists and poets have praised the prophet completely different in different periods has not been addressed in depth yet. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to scrutinize prophetic panegyrics in Umayyad era with a Sociological Approach, and to answer to this question that, why poets of Umayyad era have turned less to prophetic panegyrics?

What factors led prophetic panegyrics towards love of Ahlul Bayt's themes? How Umayyad dynasty's raising to power, impacted the direction and themes of prophetic panegyrics? In fact, the questions above constitute the foundation of the present study, and to achieve this, first we will discuss the connection between literature and society and then we will go on to examine the main subject. Nevertheless, the basic principle of this paper is that social factors and phenomena have a significant impact on the content and themes of the prophetic panegyrics and poets in each period have considered the Prophet's

character according to the paradigms of that time.

2. Literature and Society¹

If we consider literature as all intellectual heritage and resources of the peoples and nations of the world (Zarrinkoub 1354 vol. 1, 8), then we can say that literature is like a mirror in which the culture and life of every nation and society will be reflected, and exploring themes of any nation's literature reflects understanding and interpretation of its people's life. Because language- whether literary or non-literary- is a social and collective phenomenon, which understanding of the implications of its semantic knowledge depends on understanding and awareness of its human society (Afifi: 1995, 30). Social character of language, bonds it with many phenomena, trends and socio-cultural factors, and this solidarity or joiner is to the extent that language is believed (in fact words of a language) to be a mirror which reflects different kinds of socio-cultural changes and phenomena (Modarresi: 1391, 23). Although the nature of relationship between society and literature have long been debated among scholars, this science was founded by Madam Duvstal for the first time in the nineteenth century (Asgari: 1387, 46). After Dvastal, Hippolyte Taine (1893 1828) stated that Social phenomena- he considers literature as a social phenomenon- are influenced by three factors: race, environment, and time; he believes that literature is the reflect of traditions, behaviors and moods of author's period and a literary work is as the result of the interaction of three factors: biological, cultural and historical (Alai, 1380, 23). Some critics, especially Marxist ones who regard existence of artist and his works totally dependent on her social environment, consider literary works to be generated by life and social environment (Chris: 1381, 14). These critics argue that society exists prior to the work, affecting the author who also to reflect and states the condition of the society and seeks to change it (Pooyande: 1377, 98), and it the social factors that cause change in literary techniques and methods causing a specific

way of thinking in a specific period to be dominant in literary works of the time.

That is why we see what is created in Greek literature under the influence of the maritime geographical environment, cannot be created in Arab literature under arid climates. Metaphors and descriptions existing in an Indian poet's poems cannot essentially be manifested in the poetry of Swedish or Russian poets (Zarrinkoub 1354, 45). Therefore, society is the origin of creation and innovation of poem; because the poet lives in a society with particular economic, social and cultural life. He is tied to a particular social group and believes in a particular ideology... thus in creating his poems, he is influenced by society in a positive, negative or any other manner (Alaq: 1388, 34). In other words, the subject of a work of art or literature is not an individual, but it is the worldview of a community that is presented with integrity and a specific art by an individual (Goldman: quoted by Asgari, 52). Although the influence of the social environment plays an important role in the emergence of a literary work, it should not be assumed that the link between literature and society is a unidirectional one; this means that a literary work is not always generated by the society and time. By exploring literary works and history of literature, it turns out that sometimes literary works are drivers and motives in the society that create another world rather than merely reflecting the ideas and images of the outer world (Haghshenas 1370:17).

In other words, literature in general and poetry in particular, is not a social or historical document, but rather a reflection of inner experience that provides a special time, artistic work's time, humans ego and specific experiences (Alheydari, quotes Seyedi 1388, 164).

It should be noted that, the more a poet or a writer is creative and innovative, the more he will be inflectional and meditative, and instead of imitating common beliefs and thoughts, he will create a new outlook and perspective. Adonis has expressed this truth through a parable: Though grass needs water to grow, it is something other than water. Man is subject to economic and social conditions, but he is not those conditions, otherwise he could never change the reality or create a new one. Social and political

1. To read more on this topic, see the following sources: literature and its reflection, William J. Chris, translation by Behrooz Azabdaftari, P. 1322. Sociology of Art, Amir Hossein Aryanpour, pp, 175 180.

conditions affect the quality of a literary work formation, but yet it is not equal to that work (Adonis: 1974, 3/247). From what was mentioned above we could conclude that the relationship between literature and society is not merely a passive relationship to reflect the social conditions of its time. Literature contributes to the formation of the outer context. Therefore the creator of this artwork is not always passive, but actively participates in the transformation of society shaping a new culture.

3. Content analysis of the prophetic panegyrics in the Umayyad era

Before talking about the evolution of the prophetic panegyrics themes in Umayyad era, is essential to reflect on the earlier poems about the character of the Prophet. It goes without saying that at the time of the prophet Hassan ibn Thabit Khazraj, the renowned poet in the age of ignorance (Ali Makki: 1991, 12), was the only famous poet who defended the prophet and Muslims against the pagans by means of poetry and literary language. The Situation of Muslims and the political and social conditions at that time required Muslims in general and the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in particular, not to rely just on military solution but also arm themselves with rhetorical and eloquent language. Because in the social context of that time, eloquent language of the poet was more impressive than the champion's sword and poetry had a miraculous power in stimulating people's emotions (Javad Ali.: 1993, 7/300). Accordingly, it is not for no reason that the prophet picks up Hessian as a Muslim poet to defend Islam and Islamic nation against all Qureshi poets attacks (Ali Makki: 12). Therefore, Hassan ibn Thabit's poetry is often to defend the values of Islam and Muslims, written on different occasions (Ibid. 13). By reflecting on themes of the prophetic poems carefully, is clear that, rather than expressing his personal feelings towards the Prophet, the poet tries to defend Islamic thoughts and stabilize the prophetic mission by his poems. The following verses by Hassan ibn Thabit well confirm these words (Hassan's Diwan: Bitā, 71).

وقالُ اللهُ : قَدْ أَرْسَلْتُ
عَبْدًا يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ إِنْ نَفَعَ
الْبِلَاءُ

شَهِدْتُ بِهِ فقوموا صدقوه
فقلتم : لا نقوم ولا نشاء
وقالُ اللهُ : قَدْ يَسَّرْتُ جُنْدًا
هَمُّ الْأَنْصَارِ، عُرْضَتْهَا
اللقاءُ
ألا أبلغُ أبا سفيانَ
عني فانتَ مُجَوِّفٌ نَحْبُ هَوَاءِ
بأن سؤوفنا تركتك
عبدًا وعبدُ الدارِ سادَتْها
الإماءُ
هجوَتَ محمدًا، فأجبتُ عنه
وعندَ اللهِ في ذاكَ الجزاءِ
أتهجوهُ، ولستُ له بكفءِ
فشركما لخيركما الفداءِ
هجوَتَ مباركًا، برًا،
حنيفًا أمينَ اللهِ، شيمتهُ
الوفاءُ
فمن يهجو رسولَ اللهِ منكم
ويمدحهُ، وينصرهُ سواءِ
فإن أباي ووالدهُ وعرضي
لعرض محمدٍ منكم وقاءِ

What is certain is that Hessian ibn Thabit's poems in defense of the Messenger of Allah, Islam and Muslims have often tribal rather than religious spirit². When the prophet passes away, Hessian's poems for him are continued with honest and plaintive feelings (Zaki Mubarak: 2000, 29). Another poet who eulogized the prophet during that time was Ka'b bin Zuhair. His famous ode called "Bunt Saud" is devoted to praise of the prophet and Muslims³. Even though, this poem is written in order to seek forgiveness, which the poet's verses addressing the prophet are worth thinking about. Ka'b repeats "messenger of Allah" three times in his ode, and does not exaggerate in describing the Prophet's character, what was common in prophetic panegyrics of decline era (Diwan: 1994, 38)

أُنَيْتُ أَنْ رَسُولَ اللهِ
أَوْعَدَنِي
وَالْعَفْوُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللهِ مَأْمُولٌ
لَنْظَرٍ يَرَعْدُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ
لَهُ
مِنَ الرَّسُولِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ تَنْوِيلٌ

2. Hessian's ode confirms this fact. In this poem the poet perfectly follows the prevalent style and methods of that time; That is, he begins the ode with a lyrical preface and then talks about his camel, That is, he begins the ode with a lyrical preface and then talks about his camel, and finally explores the main theme.

3. Although Zaki Mubarak, does not consider it a prophetic panegyrics because the poet has written it to save his own life (Zaki Mubarak: 200, 22)

إِنَّ الرَّسُولَ لَنُورٌ يُسْتَضَاءُ
 مِنْهُ
 سَيْفٌ لِلَّهِ مَسْلُوكٌ

Generally speaking, by careful reflection on themes of prophetic poems during the Prophet's life, it is concluded that due to the political, social and cultural situations of that time, defending Islam, the prophet and the believers have been the main goals of poems. On the other hand because of the holy Prophet's presence, no poet allowed himself to exaggerate and overstate about Prophet's character⁴. However, after the death of the Prophet, Islamic civilization and wisdom established through revelation and his endeavor was soon dried up in Hijaz desert. Maybe it was the destiny of the Islamic Ummah and revelation to be sacrificed for tribal interests and development. Such was that newly founded freedom, equality, civility and rationality by Prophet, weakened and under stout branches of tribal authority and then pastoral power of East, their buds never blossomed (Firahi: 1389 144). However, this change was not significant at the beginning of its, but in the time of Uthman, the deviations became apparent. According to Taha Hussein, ...Usman did not allow Muslims to monitor his activities let alone upbraiding him, because he knew himself responsible towards God not Muslims. When he was asked to dismiss himself from caliphate, he said: I don't take off the dress that God has made me wear. Thus, for the first time in Ottoman period, religious tyranny arrived on the scene (Taha Hussein: Bitā, 206207). When Uthman was killed, Imam Ali (AS) accepted caliphate under conditions different from the conditions of Medina at the time of allegiance to the triad caliphs and there was no consensus among Quraishis concerning his caliphate. This can be seen in Talha and Zubair's breaking the allegiance with Imam (AS) and arranging Jamal war against him⁵. After Imam Ali's martyrdom, Imam Hassan (AS) becomes Muslims' caliphate. But shortly after, authority and leadership of the Muslim nation passed from and the family of

the prophet (peace be upon him) to Umayyad dynasty; the family who were the toughest enemies of the prophet during the last years of his life.

In his assessment of the transformation of power in society Ibn Khaldun writes: power relations at the beginning of Islam were based on religion and each individual's governor and impediment was his ego and such a system and was caliphate. But gradually, religion was replaced by intolerance (Asabyiya) and swords in the society. As divine aid vanished as a result of the demise of the Holy The prophet and all those wonders, and by passing the generation whom people had seen passed, the religious intolerance and the ritual of subjugation and subordination gradually changed and ruling changed into its manner before Islam. Thus by the beginning of the caliphate of Muawiyah, which religious motives were weakened, Arab tribes' intolerance reached into highest status and Islamic society required a governor and impediment to establish political order based on kingdom and intolerance (Quoting Firahi: 182). Thus, we see that legitimacy which is based on peoples consent and willingness in Islam, in this period relies on force and deception⁶ and its infrastructure is based on inequality and racism. Companions and followers of Imam Ali (AS) were hardly pursued and threatened and abused by the government. Thus, the poem which only served tribe in the age of ignorance, at the beginning of Islam became in service of religious and by invitation of the caliphs of Bnyamyh served as a political invitation, prejudice, verifying figures, tribal superiority and in some cases entertainment and pleasure in paries (Zeyf, 1426: 2/207). In this period prophetic panegyrics are often limited to poems of Shia poets such as Komeit bin Zayd and Seyed Hamiri. They express their pure love and sincere affection towards the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in their poems. Indeed, these poets often speak about Imams' rights in caliphate and have fewer references to the Prophet's character and the main reason for this goes back to the religious beliefs of these poets; because they were Shia and believed that Imams were the

4. Other poets such as Ka'b ibn Malik, Abdullah bin Ravahe, genius Ja'di have also wrote poems about the Prophet's character in his time. Having explored their poems, the authors' states that the above mentioned points are also true about these poets.

5. The true proof to this statement is sermon 217 of Nahj Albalaghe. In this sermon, imam, says:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَعِيذُكَ عَلَى قَرِيضٍ وَمِنْ أَعَاتِهِمْ .

6. ...Muawiyah's sermon delivered after gaining power, confirms the above conclusion: But then, I swear to God, I did not become caliph through your love, but by my sword...

only ones who deserved to be caliphs. An example of it can be found in the Komeit ibn Zaid's ode. (Isfahani: 1970, 17/24)

وَقَالُوا وَرِثْنَاهَا أَبَانَا
وَأُمَّنَا
وَمَا وَرَثْتَهُمْ ذَاكَ وَلَا أَبُ
يَرُونَ لَهُمْ فَضْلًا عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَاجِبًا
سَقَاهَا وَحَقُّ الْهَاشِمِيِّينَ أَوْجِبُ
وَلَكِنْ مَوَارِيثُ ابْنِ أَمْنَةَ
الَّذِي
بِهِ ذَانِ شَرْقِي لَكُمْ وَمُعَرَّبُ

Seyed Hamiri's poems (103,173) are mostly about Imam Ali, his greatness and wonders and his legitimate succession, rather than being about the character of the prophet and his eulogy. His own precious ode "Qsydh plated" nearly 107 Bit life of Hazrat Ali addressed

In his precious ode "Qasidat al Mozhaba" which has about 107 stanzas (Beit) addresses Imam Ali's life and his braveries and wonders. The following examples are cited: (Alsharif: 1969, 123)

صَهْرُ النَّبِيِّ وَجَارُهُ فِي
الْمَسْجِدِ طَهْرُ
بِطَيْبَةِ لَلرَّسُولِ مُطَيَّبِ
وَسَرَى بِمَكَّةَ حِينَ بَاتِ
مَبِيَّتِهِ وَ
مَضَى بِرَوْعَةٍ خَائِفٍ مُتَرْقِبِ
خَيْرِ الْبَرِيَّةِ هَارِبَا
فِي شَرْهَا
بِاللَّيْلِ مُكْتَتَمَا وَ لَمْ يَسْتَصْحَبِ
بَاتُوا وَ بَاتِ عَلَى
الْفَرَاشِ مُلْقَعَا
فَيَرُونَ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا لَمْ يَذْهَبِ

Therefore, in prophetic panegyrics of this period, poets have few references to the Prophet's character, and mostly seek usurped rights of the Ahl al Bait, unveil deceptions of the Umayyad dynasty. The true proof of this testament is the sextet odes of Komeit bin Zaid, which are known as Hashemiya. In this ode he expresses his honest sentiments and loves towards the Prophet's family in one hand and on the other hand, provides logical arguments to disclosure Umayyad treachery to them. (Ali Makki: 62). Accordingly it could be argued that defending values of Islam, the prophet and Muslims were the prophetic panegyrics' themes during the Prophet's life, which were subject to change during Umayyad period, due to the political transformation. This means that at this time most of the Shiite poets turned to this kind of

poetry and instead of addressing prophet's character in their odes, devoted their poems to his Ahl al Bait, especially Imam Ali (PBUH) and his competence in being Prophet's successor. But since the rule of the Umayyad government apparatus not only considered praising Ahl Al Bait impermissible, but also tortured those who did it. Therefore, prophetic panegyrics, better to say Ahl Al Bait's panegyrics, were limited in poems of Komeit and Seyed Hamiri. As mentioned before, the two poets also expressed the greatness and wonders of Imam Ali, in their prophetic panegyrics.

4. Conclusion

By carefully examining theme and content of the prophetic panegyrics in Arabic Literature of first century AD, the following results are obtained:

1. Sociopolitical facts have had a great impact on evolution and transformation of prophetic panegyrics; that is, these changes have not occurred in vacuum, and were influenced by political and social occurrences and change in the collective mindsets.

2. Symptoms of external conditions influence on themes of prophetic panegyrics the content of external conditions can be observed in proving prophetic mission legitimacy, defending Islamic values, Islamic doctrine conceptualization and defending Muslims against the Quraish pagans at the time of the prophet (pbuh) and expressing pure love towards the Ahl Ab Bait and overturning the deceptions of Umayyad dynasty towards them.

3. By reviewing the prophetic panegyrics in Umayyad period, we could conclude that, regarding changes in political, social and cultural structures of Islamic community, themes and contents of Arabic prophetic panegyrics are changed. It means that, in this period unlike the time of the prophet's life, themes of prophetic panegyrics, which have defending Islamic values aspect, seek to prove Imam Ali's Competence on the succession to the prophet (pbuh).

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