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“SAADATNAMA”S IN THE MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Abstract: One of the well-known representatives of Sufism in Azerbaijani literary history is Sheikh Mahmud Shabustari; his “Gülşani-raz” has been extensively researched, mainly for the philosophical views found in the 1006 couplets it contains. However, his “Saadatnama” verse have not yet been explored in research. This valuable work of Shabustari’s is one of the most important sources for the study of mysticism and Sufi literature. This article deals with research of the “Saadatnama” verses written by other authors in medieval centuries.

Key words: felicity, Saadatnama, medieval eastern literature.

Language: English

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Sheykh Mahmud Shabustari (1287-1356), the philosopher-poet is renowned mostly with his work “Gulshani-raz”. His other esteemed and reputable work “Saadatnama” gives details of the poet’s life, philosophy and views. The work, being abundant with valuable information and ideas regarding Sufi teaching, meanwhile draws attention as a philosophical source that reflects crucial ideas of sufi’s views in it.

While we were looking through catalogue and internet resources regarding this work that we included into the research for the first time, we also discovered some “Saadatnama”s written by other authors. Tracing back to such “Saadatnama”s written in the medieval literature, we could identify availability of some works with similar subject. We have to highlight that, even though some of those works were indirectly associated with Shabustari’s “Saadatnama” in terms of its idea and content, the other part of it had only a name in common with the abovementioned work. The works are the following:

1. “Saadatnama”(XI century) by Nasir Khosrov is a work with 30 sections containing 300 couplets which teach the rules of morality by advice. It is no coincidence that the work consists of 30 sections. So that, 30 birds are characterized as 30 symbols of perfection and wisdom, which was published with its French translation by Edmond Fagnon. Seyid Munir Badakhshani published the masnavi under the name “Kitabi-Kheyrhayi-Muvahhid-Vahdat” together with “Rovshaninama”

and “Risala” by Kheyrhayi Herati” (Bombai,1333/1915). This work, published under the name “Safarnama” and “Rovshaninama” by Mahmud Ganizada (Berlin, 1341/1922) was translated into Turkish by Maliha Ulkar Tarikahya (Istanbul, 1958).

Nasir Khosrov has brought forward such theories in his “Saadatnama” by which he wanted to believe and convince that he could make the human being happy. He has widely used sayings in his work, and mentioned that, genuine felicity can be reached by the talks of mystics (Arefs). He saw the felicity in giving up the sense of self-esteem, like all other sufis:

If you forget about your self-esteem, you can be a man who worship God (1, p.14)

The following couplets by Nasir Khosrov given at the end of the book, aim at to deliver the value of his work:

“I told three hundred couplets about pure and clean heart,

And the wit called it “Saadatnama”

If you want to stick it in your mind by wit and thought, and desire the help of felicity in every work, always weigh such high and valuable bywords.

Since these are valuable pearls, and words by Khosrov oghlu Nasir (1, p.27)

Meliha Ulkar Ambarjioghlu, the researcher, stated that he had found a note in sources explaining that “Saadatnama” is also attributed to another author named Nasir (Bahar, Maliku’sh-Shuera. Sabk-Shinas).



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2. "Saadatnama" by Shekyh Mahmud Shabustari. Manuscripted copies of this work, written in masnavi, khafif verse of prosodic meter, are preserved in British Museum's Library, Nurosmaniyya Library of Turkey, Majlis Library of Tehran and Tehran University Library. Although "Saadatnama" work is introduced with 3000 couplets and 8 chapters in the major memoirs and catalogues, it is summed up in all copies with 1568-1570 couplets and 4 chapters. The authors of memoirs and catalogues provided false information, having referred to opinions written by "Shabustari" in the introduction of "Saadatnama". We think that, even though Shabustari, at the beginning, aimed to conclude "Saadatnama" by 3000 couplets and 8 chapters, he summed up it in 4 chapters (Recognition of holy and Almighty Vajibul-Vujud's being, Recognition of God's attributes, Recognition of God's names, Recognition of acts of God) and 1570 couplets for unknown reasons.

It is important to state that, this work has not randomly been called "Saadatnama", which is wide in volume and deep in content compared with other "Saadatnama"s. As the author told:

"There is not a work in verse containing mystical insight, divine evidence and the verses of Holy Quran. Furthermore, nobody had any information all over the world about the availability of prosaic book that contain the abovementioned scientific fields together"

Therefore the author decided to write such work. Afterwards he emphasized:

"But the thing is that, such couplets will be referred to by the figures of science, thought and lore.

Special terminology of the four masters has been mentioned there, so have a look at it with certainty." (2, p.152)

The thinker added one more thing to make clear why he called his work by the word "felicity (Saadat)":

بلکه توحید و حکمت است و اصول
پاک کرده ز حشو شعر و فضول
چونکه نام دیدم در او سعادت
کردمش نام نامه سعادت
ذکر اهل سعادتست در او
ختم گشت این مقام جمله بر او

"On the contrary, this work summed up the fundamentals of divine unity, wisdom and religion, and no additional senseless words are reflected in it. (2, p.153)

I called it "Saadatnama", because I saw genuine felicity in it.

Felicity of the ahli-zikr is in it.

Its destination will always be felicity which will start with felicity and end with worship.

We think that, Shabustari, like previous "Saadatnama's authors, used "felicity" not only in

mystical and religious meaning, but also as a "rule", "law", "treatise" and "constitution". It is true that, the author seeks felicity in being reunited with the Truth, like his predecessors. He explains what he has to go through on the way to God in his work:

"If you want to find a way to the presence of God Almighty, hold firmly the mind and action". (2, p.151)

Like thinkers, Shabustari is based on heart, not mind to reach the Truth in his work, although he treats God with rational thought:

"A fool, who has ascended the peak of Sufi's pleasure and pure heart, prevails over agile man of reason." (2, p.185)

In another couplet he writes:

"It is heart affair, ask it from heart, and never deal with senseless things again". (2, p.168)

-Hereby he also reminds of "sufism" being "heart science" and "state science". (3, p.80) According to Lahiji, "Mind is helpless in ingenuity of the truth" (4, p.192,)

He wrote "Know yourself, as you are self-universe" in "Gulshani-raz" (4, p.41,) masnavi by which he wanted to say that he felt pity, for all perfect faces have been accumulated in human, but the human was unaware of it, and couldn't reach the truth which was main purpose of mysticism. Shabustari indicated the way to felicity in his "Saadatnama":

"If you can get them, but cannot reach what you want, God's slave has composed its basis in poem for you" (2, p.152)

Based on unity (tawhid) on this way, he explained the essence, attributes, names and actions of God from the viewpoint of 'ilm-ul-yaqeen (the knowledge of certainty), Ayn-ul-yaqeen (the vision of certainty), haqq-ul-yaqeen (the level of certainty gained through experience). He duly used fables and stories to argue his opinions:

"A lover, whose heart burns with the flame of love, dreamed Hazrat Haqqi, Allah Taala.

Sunk into grief and sorrow, the man turned to Him and asked him for help telling that he did not have any other way out to turn to. (2, p.165)

That is, affinity with the Truth is perfect level of the human. Here another motive attracts attention: Attar's coordination with Simurg and Simurg's (thirty birds) sameness.

But another point has to be noted that, he called his work "Saadat" (felicity) to put all such issues in scientific order, because "saadat" was reflected not only in religion and mystical literature, but also as abovementioned in scientific literature. "Saadat" used in religious meaning is different from that used in mundane meaning. "Saadat" in the medieval literature was used as "rule of law". Both "Gutadgu-bilik" by Yusif Khas Hajib, or "Saadatnama" by Nasir Khosrov" or "Saadatnama" by Falakeyi Alayi Tabrizi, or "Kimyayi-saadat" by

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Gazali are set of certain rules. “Gutadgu-bilik” deals with the rules of state, “Kimyayi-saadat” by Gazali tells about the rules of faith and mysticism, “Saadatnama” by Nasir Khosrov is about the rules of morality, and “Saadatnama” by Falakeyi Alayi Tabrizi refers to the rules of the science of accounting.

Shabustari substantiates his opinions as below:

نشوم بعد از این دگر خرسند
که به تألیف و درس و دادن پند
از پی کار دین کنم منظوم
بلکه این علم را ز جمله علوم (2, p.152)

I will not be satisfied with writing, teaching and giving advice

I will compile this science above all sciences for religion (in verse form) -hereby he clarified the name of the work to certain extent.

3. “Saadatnama” by Falakayi-Alayi-tabrizi Abdullah b.Ali The work was written by the command of Sadaddin Mahammad ibn Tajaddin Ali Us Savaji, Gazan khan’s vazir in 1309 in order to teach state accountancy, and was completed in 1336-37. This is the first among four books (“Saadatnama”, “Ganuni-saadat”, “Jamiul-hesab” and “Risaleyi-Falakkiya” (“Kitabus-siyagat”)) written on the science of accountancy of Elkhanilar state. “Saadatnama” was written in “siyagat” writing method then used in the offices of finance stationary and waqf. (see, 5)

The work reflects initial traces of double counting method (graded method) in modern calculation system. Whereas the renowned founder of such system of computing practices is considered Fra Luca Bartolomeo Pacioli who was the author of “Summa de Arithmetica, Geometria Proportioni et Proportionalita”. The book was first received by dr.A. Zaki Validi Togan in 930 from Konya Yusufagha Library. According to Dr.Jamal Elitash, a copy of the work is preserved in Ayasofya library.

4. “Saadatnama” by Sahar Abdal (1459). This work is, actually, turkish version of “Saadatnama” written by Nasir Khosrov. The work is a translation in verse. Sahar Abdal lived in the XV century, and was priest in nature. He made a number of trips. Having visited the grave of Nasir Khosrov during his trips, dreamt Nasir Khosrov and thereafter translated his “Saadatnama”.(6, p.3) Sahar Abdal fell under the influence of the Nasir Khosrov’s “Saadatnama” while translating; therefore he added two sections himself: “Haza kitabe-Saadatnama” və “Dar bayani-xatimatul-kitabe-Saadatnama”. Hence the volume of the work increased from 300 couplets to 500 couplets.

5. “Saadatnama” by Vahidi,(see, 7) one of the prosaists of the XVI century classic Turkish literature. We cannot provide any information about its content, because we couldn’t access to the work.

6. “Saadatnama” by Prizranli Shami, poet of the XVI century. Prizranli Shami (date of death:

1591), who interpreted “Pandnama” by Faridaddin Attar considered useful to write a work; therefore he called it “Saadatnama”(8, p.85). Shami, known with his translation and interpretations made from persian, is one of the figures of classic turkish literature. His main works are: “Sharhi-Mathnawi”, “Sharhi-Gulustan”, “Sharhi-divani-Hafiz” (21 manuscripted copies of this work are known), “Sharhi-Baharistan” (This is is the interpretation of “Baharistan” by Abdurrahman Jami), “Saadatnama” (“Sharhi-pandi-Attar”). This work has been written as an interpretation of “Pandnama” ascribed to Faridaddin Attar. Such interpretation called “Saadatnama” has been dedicated to Zeyrak Agha, one of the companions of III Murad. Meanwhile, such interpretation has more copies among interpretations made on “Pandnama”.

7. “Saadatnama”, translation work written by Jami Rami (Galibolulu Jami) in the XVI century. The work was translated from “Rovzatush-shuhada” of Huseyn Vaiz Kashifi. The work is considered to have been written in 1553 in some sources, or 1534 in others. (see, 9)

The work is a sample of magtali-Huseyn in a certain sense. “Saadatnama” is about shahaadat (martyr) of Imaam-e-Hussein, grandson of Prophet Mahammad, and Karbala events. The work has been written both in prose and in verse. (see, 10) Quran verses, hadiths and kissas have been widely used in the work. At present this is preserved in (nu.42Yu516) in Nurosmaniyya Manuscript Library under the name “Saadatnama:Tarjume-yi-Rovzatush-Shuhada”.

As it seems, most of works with similar names abovementioned, have been written in religious-mystical theme. Namely for this reason, we tried to seek linguistic shades of meaning, and definition of the notion “saadat” (felicity) in religious, mystical and scientific literatures, as this notion was the source of idea-content of the foregoing works.

Definition and scope of meaning of “Saadat”

“Saadat” is an Arabic word, and means “happiness or felicity”(11, p.261)

Alongside with “saadat” (سعادت) which means felicity, we can come across some phrases that express the shades of the same meaning like “sæd” (سعد), or “sæud” (سعود), (12, p.44-45) “sæodeyn”-سعدین, or “sæadan”-سعادان (Venus and Yupiter-stars that bring happiness), as well as ezafe constructions like “sæd æxtær”-سعد اختر (star of happiness), which are expressions formed by “saad” in Arabic.

There is a notion “saadat” in Holy Quran, too. “Sæid” (سعيد) is used to mean “happy” (sæid) and “they became happy” to mean “suidu” (سُئِدُوا) (13, p.300)

In the old Turkish language, a word “kut” was used as an equivalent to “saadat” to mean “felicity”. “Kut” has some shades of meaning like “luck”,

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“state”, “fate”, “destination” and “saadat” in “Divani lugat it-turk” by Mahmud Kashgarli (14, p.388-389). Based on it, we can tell that, “Gutadgu-bilig” (1069-1070) written by Yusif Khas Hajib is “Happiness bringing science” or “Happiness carrying science”.

“Saadat” in religious and mystical literature

“Saadat” is a notion expressing comfortable and carefree lifestyle that human being tries to reach in this world. But such felicity that human waits for and wants to reach, is conditional that is related to mundane conditions. “And only believer can live permanent felicity” (15, p.13)

In accordance with Indian myth, wise men decided to hide the secret felicity, because people evaluate felicity when they reach it. One of them suggested hiding it on the top of mountain, while others preferred to hide it in the seventh level of the Earth, or in the deepest of the sea. Finally, one wise man put forward an interesting offer: “Human beings have that intelligence to discover mountains, seas and seventh layer of the Earth. But they do not direct such intelligence to discover and know them. We have to bury felicity in their heart, so it will never come to their mind to have a look at their hearts.” (16, p.28)

According to Islam, genuine felicity is related neither to people, nor events, nor fortune, nor position, nor opportunity. Felicity has only a secret that is love and trust in God. The tradition locates felicity in paradise, and wretchedness in hell (15, p.13)

Sufis maintain that, “saadat” (felicity) is “tranquility of soul after giving up the world” (17, p.149)

Felicity is also a genuine beauty. “Genuine beauty is in occultation, do not seek it anywhere except occultation” (attar151). Therefore Attar finds the following ways appropriate:

“Firstly sacrifice yourself, then come to reason” (17, p.172), “I do not know any other condition that is more superior than the person’s disappearance by sacrificing his existence.. Nobody would be able to reach such felicity.” (17, p.175)

Conclusion:

Consequently, although main idea of “Saadatnama”’s written in the medieval centuries was the dream to reach felicity, conditions required to realize such dream or ways to felicity etc., the word “saadat” mainly bore the meaning of “designed rules” or “an issue considered as perfect”. It is of great importance to mention that, “saadat” in mundane definition means recognition and perfection of oneself, while in religious meaning it stands for “settle in paradise being close to God”. Although felicity was used in mystical definition to mean “reach the Truth, ultimate union or the level of certainty, “saadat” had not found its definition in relevant dictionaries.

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