

# **The emergence of the Sufi literature as the balance of power in Media**

## **(An Analytical Study on The impact of Sanaee's poem on the emergence of the emancipated Media in Iran)**

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### **Abstract**

*The present study is about the impact of Sufi literature on the emergence of the emancipated Media in Iran. Literature was the most powerful media, when there was not television, radio and internet. As, media is an important tool for maintaining the legitimation of regimes, rulers were trying to make a powerful control on poetry and poets. Economic conditions, publishing and distribution situation and the other limitations were the reason of poets' dependence on the rulers. The emergence of Sufi literature was as the balance of power in media. Sufi poets were so powerful, so they did not have to obey the rulers. Sanaee was the first raised Sufi poet that freed poetry from ruler's control and balanced the power of Media.*

**Keywords:** *Sanaee, Sufi poem, Power in Media*

### **1. Introduction**

The present study is about the impact of Sufi literature on the emergence of the emancipated media in Iran. Nowadays, television, radio and internet are effective media for expansion of power of regimes (Doroodi, 2008). Because the media can maintain the legitimacy of regimes. Literature and especially poetry, was a powerful media, when there was not television, radio and internet; so legitimation of regimes was dependent to poetry. Hence, rulers were trying to control poets. Some rulers were trying to abet panegyrist poets.

Poets needed the regimes too. Economic conditions, publishing and distribution situation and the other limitations were the reason behind for poets' dependence on rulers.

Sanaee (467- 529 Hegira) was the first raised poet that mixed poem with ideas of Sufi. He was enjoying the support of Sufi followers; so he did not have to obey the rulers; after all Sanaee has some poem about praise of rulers, he is also well-known as a critic and mystic poet.

This study is done based on the following fundamental research questions:

1. How much did famous poets before Sanaee (467- 529 Hegira) depend on governments to preserve their works and how much the governors and dynasts used their works as a media for their own benefits?
2. Did Sanaee have an understanding about the purposes of governments supporting poets and what was his approach to preserve his works without government support?
3. Can we claim that famous poets after Sanaee, who composed Sufic-Mystical poems like him, used poem as a more popular democratic media and more free from governments' restrictions?

There are some hypotheses that come in response to these questions:

- A) Famous poets before Sanaee (467- 529 Hegira) heavily depended on governments to preserve their works and the governors and dynasts used their works as a media to spread and expand their acceptability and legitimacy among people.
- B) As Sanaee knew social condition very well, he did know the purposes of governments in supporting poets; he tried to integrate mystical concepts in his poems and attract and use support from people and Sufis instead of government support.
- C) Famous poets after Sanaee, following his mystical approach in poem, did not need government support as much as pre-Sanaee poets due to their social support and they could make poem which was an exclusive media just for governments and expansion of their hegemony more democratic; therefore we shall consider Sanaee Poem as the balancing factor of media power.

There are 3 predicted stages to review and check these matters and prove guesses:

- In first stage, the amount of dependence of some famous pre-Sanaee poets on government support and government use of their poem as a media would be reviewed.
- In second stage, Sanaee's life, his understanding about society and his method in freeing poem from government restrictions are reviewed.
- In third stage, 3 famous post-Sanaee poets who composed sufic and mystical poems and used poem as a democratic media are reviewed.

#### Research Literature

There are lots of articles and books about Sanaee (467- 529 Hegira) and his status in Persian poetry; but there is no research focusing on my approach reviewing his poetry; nevertheless, there are some considerable research works reviewing Sanaee's thoughts and works; *The Lambast of Demeanour* and *In Lightness Continent* both by Muhammad Reza Shafei Kadkani, *The Hakim of Love Continent* by De. Broyne and collection essays which are gathered in a book called **A Distraught in Qazne**.

## **2. Pre-Sanaee poets and Government using their Poems as a Media**

Before spreading printing industry in Iran, authors and poets should consider that due to the few number of literates and handwritten books, their works shall be read by prolocutors (speakers, speech-givers, orator or text-readers) for interested audience (Pournamdarian, 2008) and preserved and spread with the help of a powerful support like government. In Sanaee and Pre-Sanaee period, transcribing and preserving a handwritten book was so expensive so that only governors could do

that; therefore, they easily could abuse this weakness and impose control over their poems and artistic work and use their poem as a media for increasing legitimacy and acceptability of their own power.

People's view and even some great speakers was so that they considered the poets as the server of king and his court; for example Nezami Aruzi Samarqandi (? – 560 Hegira), one of the 6<sup>th</sup> Hegira century famous Persian poet, not only he himself was a particular companion and friend of Qurie kings, but also he considered other poets as the king's server (See: Nezami Aruzi Samarqandi, 2006: 8-9).

Official Positions in King's court like Poet Laureate or King Poet were some mechanisms in past Iranian dynasties in which, a reliable poet, server of king, controlled thinking and stylistic methods of poets under support of King Court (See: Marzabadi, 1972: 2). A Control that would teach and encourage poets to compose eulogies which would preserve and expand the legitimacy of king's power and acceptability among people; indeed they wanted poem to serve as a state media like today's state medias.

Famous pre-Sanaee poets or his contemporaries are: Rudaki (329 Hegira), Daqiqi (died between 367 to 369 Hegira), Kasae Marvazi (born in 341 Hegira), Farokhi Sistani (died in 29 Hegira), Onsoni (Hegira in 431 Hegira), Manuchehri (died in 432 Hegira), Anvari (died in 583 Hegira), Khaqani (died in 595 Hegira). All needed a powerful system by aid of which they could preserve their work; nevertheless, there are clear signs of government effect in their works; so that all abovementioned poets are famous for eulogy-composing; however, there were poets like Firdausi and Nasir Khusraw who tried their best to escape from state view and imposes in their artistic works but they were harmed and disturbed a lot due to this.

In one holistic view, Pre-Sanaee Persian poem was in most cases dependent on Court and adulating power was one of its main concepts and it was used mainly as the government server. A brief review of Pre-Sanaee poets and its contemporaries shows a close association between poets and governments. We would review some famous poets whose poem were used as a media in control of governments.

Rudaki (865-875 Hegira) famous as Bokhara and Samanian dynasty (See, Zarinkub, 2007: 12) adulated many kings like: Ahmad ibn Ismaeil, Nasr ibn Ahmad, Abu jafar Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalf ibn Leys, Makan Kaki, and Abalfazl Bal'ami who were all governors (See: Safa, 1993: 374/1- 376 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 41). He unavoidably needed government support and aid (See: Zarrinkub, 2007: 12-13). He was forced and perforce to deliver his poem as the server of government due to his economic condition and his interest to preserve his poetry.

Daqiqi, 4<sup>th</sup> Century Hegira Poet, though famous for composing epic, Zarinkub researches showed that he started his poesy and poetry based on his time's common regulations and laws of king eulogy, (See: Zarrinkub, 2007: 19-20). Kings adulated by Daqiqi include AbuSaleh Mansour ibn Nouh Samani (350-365 Hegira), Abolqasem Nouh ibn Mansour ibn Nouh (365-387 Hegira), Fakhr al Dola Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Amir Abu Sa'd Mozzaffar and Abu Nasr ibn Abu Ali Ahmad Choqani all of whom were from Samanian and Choqanian kings (See: Safa, 1993: 411/1- 412; Safa, 2007: 176; Dezfoolian 2011: 41).

Farokhi Sistani, a famous poet in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Century Hegira (died in 429 Hegira), is one of the famous eulogy-composing Persian poet that adulated Ghaznavid kings in Ghaznavid dynasty (See: Zarrinkub, 2007: 48-49). He adulated Abu al Mozzaffar Ahmad ibn Muhammad Choqani, Soltan Mahmud Ghaznavid, Amir Josef ibn Nasir al Din Saboktekin, Amir Muhammad son of Soltan

Mahmud, Soltan Masud Ghaznavid, Khaje Ahmad ibn Hasan Meymandi, the minister of Soltan Mahmud and so many other (See: Safa, 1993: 534/1- 539 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 45; Hashem pour Sobhani, 2007: 153- 154); in general he adulated 25 kings, and ministers (See Introduction by Farrokhi, 2009: 41) which shows that his poetry was used as a powerful media to expand legitimacy and acceptability of government.

Onsori Balkhi (died in 431 Hegira), other pre-Sanaee poet whom is named the Absolute Master of Eulogy by some scholars and Ghaznavid dynasty used his poetry as a media (see: Safa, 2004: 128 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 44).

Manuchehri Dameqani (died in 432 Hegira), one of the first half of 5<sup>th</sup> century Hegira (see: Safa, 1993, 580/1 and Introduction by Manuchehri Dameqani, 1984: 22 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 50). He travelled to north of Iran in his youth and went there to serve them a eulogy-composer in Ziarian government (see: Manuchehri, 2007: 20).

As you see, most pre-Sanaee poems were used by government as a media to preserve their power and expand their legitimacy.

### **3. Sanaee Mystical Poetry, an Approach to Make a Media Independent from Government**

Majdud ibn Adam Sanaee (467-529 Hegira) was born in Ghazne, currently in east Afghanistan. Sanaee travelled to Balkh, Sarakhs, Neishabour and Harat in his youth and returned in his late years of living to his homeland, Ghazne; there he started collecting his moral and mystical poems. He had decided to proffer this poem collection to Bahram Shah Ghaznavid which was later called *Fakhri Name*, *Elahi Name* and *Hadighat al Haghghat*; Bahram Shah who respected Sanaee a lot tried many times to bring Sanaee to his Court, but Sanaee respectfully rejected his invitations and requests. Finally Sanaee died before finishing his *Hadighat al Haghghat* chapters due to illness (see: Shafi'e Kadkani, 2011: 14-17).

Sanaee (467-529 Hegira) is one of few poets who composed poems in different domains and areas so skillfully and sophisticated; He was a powerful eulogy-composer, skillful critic in social matters and is the first poet who could have systematically brought Mysticism into poetry (see: Sharifian, 13: 27); it is said about Sanaee that there few poets that were skillful, pioneer and epoch maker like him in different areas, (see: Shafi'e Kadkani, 2009: 9).

**Shafi'e Kadkani** designed 3 personal poles for Sanaee based on his poetry: a) Sanaee, Eulogist and Satire-Composer; b) Sanaee, preacher and Social Critic; c) Sanaee, dervish and Lover (see: Shafie Kadkani, 2009: 25). Reviewing his dark personality pole, we can say that he was a moderate and usual poet in eulogy, a kind of poetry that validated kings and expanded their support toward poets (see: Shafi'e Kadkani, 2009: 26); what made him a brilliant poet was his changing and spiritual evolution (see: Hashempour Sobhani, 2007: 168); in this period of time, Sanaee is a "social critic and moral preacher" (Shafi'e Kadkani, 2009: 29); his poetry in this period was such that there were no benefit for kings and governors to support it and they could not use it as a media in service of themselves.

After Sanaee returning from his travels, he was recognized as a theosophist whose poetry was considered an independent media from Court; powerful figures like Bahram Shah who supported him and tried to make him their friend was not only due to his eulogies but also the authority and hegemony of the media Sanaee had; they perfectly knew that the obtained authority from this media gave him great status among Sufis and mystics and religious groups among people; therefore, they tried to excel their reputation and status by becoming his close friend (see: Broyn, 1999: 210). The

media owned by Sanaee had gifted him a kind of authority that if he paid it in cash, he would not be deprived of his supporters' aid. His supporters and power authorities knew well that Sufis and mystical poem was a significant cultural capital and had a powerful support that invading it would harm invaders.

Mystical poet which was seriously introduced after Sanaee's emergence made it a more democratic media previously directed by governments and serving their benefits. Indeed though mystical poetry was finally compatible with Sufis and mystics interests, but as most Sufis and mystics became from public people and had more mutual interests like other people, this kind of poetry was considered as a more democratic media than government media; in addition, some Sufi groups had a system like government and powerful support from people; so that if a work was not supported from Court, it would be read among Sufis and in monasteries and would have opportunity to become immanent; on the other hand, due to their great significance among people, kings preferred not to invade their policy of thinking and freedom of the medias dependent on mystical poetry.

#### **4. Profiting from Mystical Poetry as an independent Media, After Sanaee**

After Sanaee, some poets could make use of his method to advertise and serve against government. Most famous poets in this regard are: Attar (540-618 Hegira), Mowlavi (604-672 Hegira) and Hafiz (727-792 Hegira). Poets who were forced to seek king and court support to preserve their poems and adulate kings could then introduce themselves as a mystic poet and he was not forced to serve king and its court or adulate him to preserve his poems; it was just reversed and kings were forced to approach poets to get more reputation and fame for themselves.

Now we would briefly review works of 3 poets to understand more about the changes in poetic themes after and before Sanaee: Attar (540-618 Hegira), Mowlavi (604-672 Hegira) and Hafiz (727-792 Hegira). Emphasizing on works of these poets and their comparison with famous poets Pre-Sanaee (467-529 Hegira), in which eulogy was one of the main themes, would show us that the way Sanaee opened was so much powerful in keep guarding poetry over powerful figures' interests. Attar Neishaburi (540-618 Hegira) is one of the most famous poets in Mystical poetry and his skillful followers that sought a mystical route in all of his works and had a great status among his contemporary Sufis and mystics (see: Safa, 1993: 858/3-861 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 98). It is this status among Sufis and their support that let him to escape adulating powers and kings (Behzadi Anduhjerdi, 1972: 133) and not to use his poetry as a media and server of king.

Attar clearly blamed eulogy poetry (see: Attar, 2007: 153) and his poems show that he is proud of not being in support of Court (see: Attar, 2004: 440). When a poet can become famous without king and court support show that the relations between power figures and poets had changed; since mystic poets having powerful support among Sufis no longer needed king's attention by composing exaggerated eulogies.

Molana Jalal al Din was born in 604 Hegira in Balkh and died in 672 Hegira in Qoniye (see: Foruzan far, 2010: 22 and 24 and Dezfoolian, 2011: 153). Molana was one of the poets under effect of Sanaee such that Shafie Kadkani named Sanaee Ghazals as the mother of Molana Ghazals in *Divan-e Shams* (see: Shafie Kadkani, 2011: 32). Considerable point about Molana here is that his poetry was independent from King and Court due to power social support obtained among Sufis and mystics; due to this fact Moe'in al Din Solomon Parvane, who was the most powerful king of Seljukian in Rome, participated in Molana sessions and meetings alongside Molana's other

disciples and were sometimes the address of his advice (Zarrinkub, 2005: 218); this sole issue show that relations between power figures and poets had changed.

Khaje Shams al Din Muhammad Hafiz of Shiraz (727-792 Hegira): He is one of the most famous Persian poet whose Mystical-Love Ghazals are among the most perfect Persian poems. Though Hafiz adulated some of governors and power figures in his period, he never let his poetry to become a media as a server of kings and courts. He culminated a kind of poetry which began with Sanaee and was famous to Ghalandari poem; there is some intellectual liberty and deviation from contemporary traditions, customs and ideas in this kind of poem (see: Shamisa, 2003: 115); due to this fact it is said that Hafiz poetry is the liberty route for Iranian souls which delicately and perfectly had broken taboo norms and criticized society in some of his poems (see: Shafie Kadkani, 2007: 50). Culminating this kind of poetry which was not compatible with interests of power figures like kings shows clearly that Hafiz was not impressed by government and also shows the formation of a kind of poetry which is a democratic media; this issue became obvious by the power of Hafiz in mystical poetry.

### **5. Conclusion:**

In a period when there were none of the current media, art was the most significant media tool under government's control to expand their legitimacy and acceptability among popular people. The Art which had a dominant display among Persian speakers and was mostly under attention of governors was Poetry. Due to this fact, governors tried to keep poets dependent on Court and even some kings nurtured eulogy-composer poets in their Court. Poets also welcomed government support due to their poor economic condition and interest to publish and preserve their works.

Sanaee as one of the poets who had an exact social understanding of his time (see: Namdar, 2005: 18), began a kind of poetry called Mystical Poetry which opened a new path for future poets. Mystical poetry was an opportunity for poets to get and obtain more support from Sufis and mystics who had powerful support among people and kings and power figures considered poets' friendship as their reputation and fame. Due to this fact and independence of mystical poetry from Court, it became a more democratic media among people.

Establishing Mystical poetry that can be regarded as a more democratic media than eulogy poetry challenged the absolute dominance of related medias to Court and balanced the dominance and support obtained from different medias in his period. An important issue which was impossible without constructing Sufi Literature.

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