Glorifications of Names and attributes of God in Persian Poems

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Abstract: Since belief in God was based on the fact that there was something in our nature and in the nature of the world which points to a transcendent Creator whom we should worship. Also, the various great Persian Poets applied the different names and attributes of God (in Arabic and Persian) in their poems. Then the aim of this article is to highlight various names and attributes of God mentioned in some of the Persian poems and elaborate on them for a better understanding toward knowing our Creator. It is tried to investigate the different applications of Persian poets regarding their usage and glorification of various names and attributes of God with different frequency in their verses at different periods.

Keywords: Persian poets, Names and attributes of God, Persian literature

1. Introduction

God has many Names and each reveals Him in a different way. God's Names represent His attributes, His nature. Therefore, it is important that we know God by His many Names. It is incumbent upon everyone to know and understand God's names and attributes. It is only through better understanding Him that we gain closeness to Him, and moves from worshipping an abstract God to one we are trying to come to know. He is one God for all and His attributes do not change based on various religions.

God’s attributes are those permanent, or essential, qualities of His nature, which He has made known to us in His word. Each Name and Attribute nourishes a kind of consciousness and humility in man and their study leads one to constantly better their actions. Since God is the same in both the Old and New Testaments, we can see different names and attributes of GOD in different religions or cultures. For example, some of the Hebrew and Greek names of the Old and New Testaments of God are as follow: El or ‘Elohim (means God or Gods), Elyon (Most High God), El-Shaddai (Almighty God), El-Olam (Everlasting God), Adonai (LAord God), Yahweh or Jehovah (I AM God), Jehovah Sabaoth (God of Hosts), … (Harris, S.,2009).

It is noticeable that in many translations of the Bible, the capital form, “LORD,” is used to indicate Jehovah. Lord, is the equivalent of the Greek Kurio”. Its meaning is possession and dominion, expressed by the Latin Dominus, which is its usual translation in the Vulgate, both in the Old and New Testaments (Luther, M., 2009).

According to Islamic tradition, according verses of holly Quran and words of great prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) is said to have invoked Allah by a number of Names. According to a Sunni hadith, Sahih Muslim: Abu Hurairah reported Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) as saying: There are ninety-nine names of Allah; he who commits them to memory would get into Paradise (Alghosheiri, M., 2008). Verily, Allah is Odd (He is one, and it is an odd number) and He loves odd numbers. And in the narration of Ibn ‘Umar (the words are): "He who enumerated them."

The Qur’an refers to the Names of God as God's "most beautiful Names" (Arabic: al-ʾasmāʾ al-ḥusnā) (sura, Al-A'raf 7:180, Al-Isra 17:110, Ta-Ha 20:8, Al-Hashr 59:24). In Islamic traditions, it is stated "The Greatest Name of Allah is the one which if He [Allah] is called (prayed to) by it, then, the Supreme Name of God, Allāh.

“The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them.” (Quran, 7,180)

Allah's names are not limited to 99, which is a common misconception. There are a couple of evidences, one is the du`aa where one calls upon Allah by the names He has kept to Himself (obviously not taking these names since Allah has not revealed them to us); another is the fact that in the narrations of the famous ninety nine names hadith that do contain 99 names, the names are not consistent between narrations.

Muslims are asked to call upon God during their supplications by the most appropriate names that relate to what they are asking for. For example, if one is seeking forgiveness from God for a sin they have committed, they would call upon Him by His name “Al-Ghaffar”, meaning “The Ever Forgiving”. If one is asking for peace and tranquility in their life while experiencing a period of tension, they would call on God by His name “Al-Salaam”, meaning “The Ultimate Source of Peace.”
Since belief in God was based on the fact that there was something in our nature and in the nature of the world which points to a transcendent Creator whom we should worship. Then the aim of this article is to highlight various names and attributes of God mentioned in some of the Persian poems and elaborate on them for a better understanding toward knowing our Creator. It is tried to investigate the different views of Persian poets regarding their application and glorification of various names and attributes of God in their verses. It should be mention that there are a lot of examples and documents in Persian poems which indicative of high frequency of applications of names (Arabic and Persian names) and attributes of God. Then, we only represent some selected of them in present literature.

2. Material and Methods
The research is a descriptive and library based study in which the eminent chosen elements are traced in the above mentioned work to show how Persian poets used various names of God and attributes in their verses at different poem’s styles.

3. Discussions and Results
Persian literature is one of the world's oldest and most well-known literatures. It spans two-and-a-half millennia, though much of the pre-Islamic material has been lost. Poetry is a famous form of literature in the Persian language, Farsi. Persian language is soft and expressive and a poet can use a combination of words in many ways to express his real thought. Perhaps this is a reason that over the centuries Persian and non-Persian poets have written their poems in the Persian language. Persians wrote both in Persian and Arabic; Persian predominated in later literary circles. Persian poets such as Ferdowsi, Sa'di, Hafiz, Attar, Nezami, and Omar Khayyam are also known in the West and have influenced the literature of many countries. Persian literature has been considered by such thinkers as Goethe one of the four main bodies of world literature.

We can distinguish two periods of Persian poetry: one traditional, from the tenth to nearly mid, twentieth century; the other modernist, from about World War II to the present. Within the long period of traditional poetry, however, four periods can be traced, each marked by a distinct stylistic development. Persian poetry has been classified into four popular sabuk or styles, namely, Khurasani (Turkistani/ Azarbaijani), Iraqi (Farsi), Indian (Isfahani) and literary revival return to the old styles of Khurasani and Iraqi. Some critics have subdivided the Khurasani style as Azarbaijani and cited to the pattern of Qatran, Khaqani and Nizami but generally the first style of the Persian Poetry which begins with the advent specimen, of this poetry available from the beginning of the third century A.H. towards the end of sixth century A.H. is generally termed Khurasani as it was the Khurasan area where Persian Poetry flourished during the Samani period and then it reached other parts of ancient Iran. This very style is described as Turkistani, too (Bahar, M., 1343).

**Khorasani style**, whose followers mostly were associated with Greater Khorasan and has been popular for its Qasidas characterized by its verbousity, high flown language, supercilious diction, dignified tone, and relatively literate language. This has been a very forceful and vigorous style. The chief representatives of this lyricism are Asjadi, Farrukhi Sistani, Unsuri, and Manucheheri. Panegyric masters such as Rudaki were known for their love of nature, their verse abounding with evocative descriptions. Through these courts and system of patronage emerged the epic style of poetry, with Ferdowsi's Shahnama at the apex. By glorifying the Iranian historical past in heroic and elevated verses, he and other notables such as Daqiqi and Asadi Tusi presented the "Ajam" with a source of pride and inspiration that has helped preserve a sense of identity for the Iranian peoples over the ages. Ferdowsi set a model to be followed by a host of other poets later on (Safa, Z, 1362).

It is noticeable that Persians used the various only names and only attributes of God or combination of names and attributes of God in their poems in both of Arabic and Persian languages. But, almost poets of this period especially Ferdowsi, tried to use the original Persian names of God such as Izad (The one God. Literally: "worthy of worship"), Yazdan (worthy of worship), Khodavand (LORD), Dadar (Creator), Jahandar (The King and Owner) and ….. in their poems (Moein, M., 1356).

Here are the some extracted examples of applications of names and attributes of God by different famous Persian poets with Khorasani style: 

(Rudaki, Diwan) 

جوش پیغ گردی از آن ایست مرتون اوان 

کشته /زندگان دیده نمی‌شد

بی‌شمار خداوند جان و حیات / کرین برکت، اندیشه برنگردید

(Ferdowsi, Diwan)

(افدستا

فریدرس، Diwan)

(افدستا

Daghighi, Diwan)

In all of the above verses, poets applied the names of Khodavand, Yazdan and Izad as the Persian names of God, alone. Whereas the following verses are the examples of verses which used the combination of Persian names and attributes of God such as Yazdane Dadar, Izade Dadar (The Creator...
God) and Khodavande Jahandar (The Owner of all universe) in Persian poems.

The Unity, The Indivisible of God) (Moein, M., Rab

applications of just Persian names and attributes of God whereas; the further verses represented the Arabic names of God and just attributes of God which used in following verses (which indicative of applications of names and attributes of God in Quran by Persian poets) are as follow:

The Iraqi style, the second Persian poem style, from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, is marked by the prominence of lyric poetry (the ghazales), the consequent development of the ghazal into the most beautiful style of the Persian Poetry. The meanings may be deep and mystic but the words in Iraqi style are found to be of very lucid and fascinating nature. Emotional romantic poetry was not something new however, as works such as Vis o Ramin by Asad Gorgani, and Yusof o Zoleikha by Am’aq Bokharai exemplify. Poets such as Sana’i and Attar (who ostensibly have inspired Rumi), Khaqani Shirvani, Anvari, and Nezami, were highly respected ghazal writers. However, the great Masters of Iraqi style like Rumi, Saadi, and Hafez have used the Arabic words in such an artistic way that they appear to be mild and well-suited (Safa, Z, 1362). As it mentioned, the poets of this period such as, Hafez, Saadi, Rumi, Nezami applied both of the Arabic and Persian names and attributes of God in their poems. Here are the some extracted examples of applications of names and attributes of God by different famous Persian poets with Iraqi style:

Also, the combinations of Names with attributes of God and just attributes of God which used in following verses (which indicative of applications of names and attributes of God in Quran by Persian poets) are as follow:

In all of the above examples, we can see the applications of just Persian names of God whereas; the further verses represented the Arabic names of God and just attributes of God which used in following verses (which indicative of applications of names and attributes of God in Quran by Persian poets) are as follow:

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The fourth period, from approximately the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, is known as the Literary Revival (bazgasht-e adabi). It features a reaction against the poetic stagnation and linguistic foibles of the late Safavid style, and a return to the Iraqi style of lyric poetry and the Khorasani style. In modernist poetry, all formal canons, thematic and imagistic conventions, as well as mystical dimensions of the traditional school are by and large abandoned, and the poets feel free to adapt the form of their poems to the requirements of their individual tastes and artistic outlooks. It should be mentioned that we can see the names and attributes of God with lower frequency in the poets of this period relative other period, especially in beginning of the verses, the poet less use the names of God in compare to other period.

Conclusion

By studying on the Persian classical manuscripts, one can understand the high frequency of applications of names and attributes of God in Persian poetry which originate from Persian's beliefs in Islam and holly Quran. As it can be seen in these manuscripts we can see usage of different names and attributes of God in Arabic and Persian with different frequency at different period. For example, because of national and nasionalistic issues, importance of collection of original Persian manuscript, achievement to cultural independence, in the period of khorasani, the poets tried to apply the original Persian words in their manuscripts and poems. Then, we can see the Persian names of God such as Izad, Yazdan, Khodavand, Dadar, ... and original Persian attributes of God which equivalent to Arabic attributes of God in Quran such as Ruzi deh (equivalent to AL-Razagh means The Provider), Bakshashdeh (equivalent to AL-Karim means The Bountiful, The Generous) and so in their poetry. Whereas in the period of Iraqi, the poets tried to use the religious language which was Arabic in their poetry, then, we can see harboring to different names and attributes of God such as Allah (الله), The Rahman, The Most Merciful, The Merciful, The All-Hearing, The Omniscient, The Great, The Best Patron, The Only One, The Steadfast, The Lord of daybreak, The Lord of mankind and .... in the poetry of this period. It is noticeable that at the end of this period was associated with appearance of Sufism resulted to applications of some special sufism names and attributes of God such as Hu, Hagh, .... In the next two periods compare to the previous periods, the glorification and usage of names and attributes of God were with lower frequency, especially in beginning of the verses, the poet less use the names of God (as the Bismalah) in compare to other period.

In this article, the writer just touched the tip of the iceberg while it is hoped that other researchers will continue.
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