

Glorifications of Names and attributes of God in Persian Poems

Farhad Divsalar*¹ & Monireh Seyeh Mazhari²

1. Department of Literature, Islamic Azad University, branch of Karaj, Karaj, Iran
2. Department of Theology, Islamic Azad University, branch of Karaj, Karaj, Iran

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.

[Farhad Divsalar & Monireh Seyeh Mazhari. **Glorifications of Names and attributes of God in Persian Poems.** *J Am Sci* 2013;9(6):290-294]. (ISSN: 1545-1003). <http://www.jofamericanscience.org>. 34

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-'asmā' al-husnā) (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,^[3]Rumi^[4] 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 under 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).

Khurasani 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 Manuchehri. 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) andin 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 Khurasani style:

(Rudaki, Diwan) چون تیغ بدست آری مردم نتوان
کشفت / نزدیک خداوند بدی نیست فرامشت
بنام خداوند جان و خرد / کزین برتر اندیشه برنگذرد
(Ferdowsi, Diwan)

نگفتم سه روز این سخن را به کس/ مگر پیش یزدان
فریادرس. (Ferdowsi, Diwan)
جز از ایزد توام خداوندي/ کنم از دل بتو بر
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.

برفتم من اکنون بفرمان تو/ به یزدان دادار پیمان تو
(Ferdowsi, Diwan) کاین فزه پیر ز بهر تو مرا خوار گرفت /
برهاندا ازو ایزد دادار مرا (Rudaki, Diwan)
این یافتن ملک بشمشیر نباشد/ باید که خداوند جهاندار بود یار
(Manuchehri, Diwan)

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 significant verse form, and the diffusion of mystical thought. Its style is generally dubbed Iraqi because of the association of some of its earlier exponents with central and western Persia (even though its two major representatives, Saadi and Hafez, were from the southern province of Fars); it is known by its lyric quality, tenderness of feeling, mellifluous meters, and the relative simplicity of its language. The Iraqi style is 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:

جهانیان همه گر منع من کنند از عشق/ من آن کنم که
خداوندگار فرماید (Hafez, Diwan)
وصال او ز عمر جاودان به / خداوندا مرا آن ده که آن به
(Hafez, Diwan)
شکر ایزد را که دیدم روی تو/ یافتم ناگه ره می سوی تو
(Rumi, Diwan)
نه قرار ماند و نی دل به دعای او ز یاری/ که به خون ماست
تشنه که خدایش یار بادا (Rumi, Diwan)

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 **Rab** (means LORD) and attribute of Ahad, (means The Unity, The Indivisible of God) (Moein, M., 1356).

یا رب هلاک من مکن الا به دست دوست/ تا وقت جان
سپردنم اندر نظر بود (Saadi, Diwan)
به گوش جان ره می منهی ای ندا در داد/ ز حضرت احدی لا
اله الا الله (Hafez, Diwan)

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: الله الصمد (God is The Eternal), پروردگار خلق (The LORD of mankind), کبریا (Al-Mutakabbir means The Majestic, The Supreme), دانا و Razzāq (means The Provider), رحمان Rahman and Alim (means The Exceedingly Compassionate and The Knowing), قادر Qādir (The Able), حکیم Ḥakīm (The Wise), Muṣawwir (The Fashioner of Forms), خالق Khāliq (The Creator) تو یاد کن الطاف خود در سابق الله الصمد/ در حق هر بدکار بد هم مجرم هر دو سرا (Rumi, Diwan)

شکر و سپاس و منت و عزت خدای را / پروردگار خلق و
خداوند کبریا
دادار غیب دان و نگهدار آسمان/ رزاق بنده پرور و خلاق
رهنما (Saadi, Diwan)
توئی دانا و رحمانی چگویم/ در این میدان که سرگردان چو
گویم (Attar, Diwan)
چنین گفت ای خدای حی رحمان / کریم و قادر و دانا و
سبحان

خداوند جهان و جان تو باشی / حکیم و قادر و دین تو باشی
بحق ذات پاکت یا الهی / که تو دانای حالی و تو شاهی
خدای خرد بخش بخرد نواز/ همان ناخردمند را چاره ساز
برارنده سقف این بارگاه/ نگارنده نقش این کارگاه (Attar, Diwan)
خالق خلق و ایزد بی چون/ فاعل کارگاه «کن فیکون»
(Sanaei, Diwan)

Also, it is noticeable that Sufism and the encounters that Sufism facilitates --encounters with God, love, and the deepest aspects of human consciousness-- have evoked feelings in Sufis that have poured out through their ravaged hearts onto their lucid tongues, providing us with some of the most beautiful and profound poetry ever written. Some of the most prominent of the Sufis who wrote poetry were Rumi, Saadi, Attar, and Hafez in Persian.

For example, Saadi was a Sufi (Muslim mystic). A salient feature in his writings is, therefore, devotion and gratitude to God. In the opening verses of the *Rose Garden*, Saadi remarks that for every breath we take we should thank the Lord twice, the first time for the inhalation which sustains our life and the second time for the exhalation which brings delight rather than suffocation. Our daily bread, he continues, is the result of “the workings of the cloud, the wind, the Moon, the Sun, and the entire firmament.” So, even though the human can never possibly thank the Creator and the Creation for all these endowments, we should eat our daily food mindfully, thankfully, and humbly. Here are the some examples of Sofi's poetry in Persian poems:

صبغة الله چیست رنگ خُم هو/ پیسه ها یکن رنگ گردد اندر او
(Rumi, Diwan)

فکر ما تیري است از هو در هوا/ در هوا كي پایداری آید ندا
 باد در مردم هوا و آرزوست/ چون هوا بگذاشتی پیغام هوست
 (Rumi, Diwan)
 حق میان من و تو آگاه است/ هو یکی من الذی ظلما,
 (Attar, Diwan)
 چون جان بمرد ازین زندگانی ناخوش/ ز خود برید و میان
 خوشی به حق پیوست
 دل آن دل است که چون از نهاد خویش گسست/ ز کبریای حق
 اندیشه می‌کند پیوست (Attar, Diwan)
 خوشا آنکه که الله یارشان بی/ بحمد و قل هو الله کارشان بی
 که یکی هست و هیچ نیست جز ا و / وحده لا اله الا هو
 سبحان من بعبث و یحیی و لا اله الا هو الذی خلق الارض و السماء
 (Saadi, Diwan)
 آنکه ذاتش بریست از آهو/ الذی لا اله الا هو,
 (Iraqi, Diwan)

As we can see in all of the above examples, Sufism generally used the names of Hu (هو), indicative of **unmanifestation of God**) and attribute of Hagh (حق, The Truth, The Reality) as the Sufi's names of God.

The third style, which extends from the fifteenth well into the eighteenth century, is associated with the **Indian style** of Persian poetry (sometimes called Isfahani or Safavi). It has its beginning in the Timurid period and is marked by an even greater prominence of lyric poetry, although it is somewhat devoid of the linguistic elegance and musicality of the preceding period. The poets of this period often busied themselves with exploring subtle thoughts and farfetched images and elaborating upon worn-out traditional ideas and metaphors. Also, Indian style is known for deep meanings and a complex way of saying. This style evokes thinking but some of the poets have indulged in exaggerations. The style of poetry known as Indian had two important features: expressing novel meanings by means of simple words and being heedless of literary figures of speech. It was developed as a reaction to the Iraqi style of Timurid era, which lacked both the eloquence of Khorasani style and the fluency of the Iraqi style of the 7th to 9th centuries. The most significant poets with this style are Saeb Tabrizi, Abdolghader Dehlavi, Kalim Kashani and Naziri Neishaburi. Here are the some examples of Hindi style poetry in Persian poems:

حباب پوچ از آب گهر امیدها دارد/ خداوندا به حق دل ببخشا
 بیدل ما را (Bidel, Diwan)
 یارب از عرفان مرا پیمانهای سرشار ده/ چشم بینا، جان آگاه و
 دل بیدار ده (Saeb, Diwan)
 خدایا قطره‌ام را شورش دریا کرامت کن/ دل خون گشته و
 مژگان خونپالا کرامت کن (Saeb, Diwan)

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), Bakhshandeh (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 (الرحمن), The Most Merciful /The Merciful (الرحيم), The All-Hearing (السميع), The Omniscient (العليم), The Great (العظيم), The Best Patron (الولي), The Only One (الاحد), The Steadfast (الصمد), The Lord of daybreak (رب الفلق), The Lord of mankind (رب الناس) 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.

Acknowledgements

The financial support of Research Council of Islamic Azad University, branch of Karaj is highly appreciated.

References

1. Alghosheiri, M. Sahih Muslem, Book 26, No 5427, 2008.
2. Bahar, M.T. Sabk Shenasi ya Tarikhe tatavor e Sher e Farsi. Elmi Publishing. Teharn, Iran. 1343 AH.
3. Dastgerdi, H. Nizami Diwan, Elmi Press, Tehran. 1342AH
4. Dekhoda, A.A. "Loghatnameh" Tehran, 1981
5. Frughi, MA. Saadi Diwan. Amir Kabir Press, Tehran. 1362AH.
6. Hafiz Diwan, Translation by Henry Wilberfoce Clarke and Farzad Farid Afshin, 2008.
7. Harris, S. Exploring the Bible. McGraw-Hill. 2009. p. 480.
8. Luther, M. Questions and Answers". Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Archived from the original on 2009. 15.
9. Mardaduke Pickthall, The Meaning of The Glorious Qur'an, Tehran, 2001.
10. Moein, M. Farhanghe Farsi. Amir Kabir Press, Tehran. 1356 AH.
11. Motlagh Abedini, K. Shahnameh Ferdowsi, Teharn. 1389 AH.
12. Nickson. Moriri bar Masnavi Molavi. Amir Kabir Press, Tehran. 1363AH.
13. Safa, Z. Tarikhe Adabiate Iran, Ibn Sina Press, Tehran, 1362AH.
14. Siaghi, M.D. Diwan Manuchehri, Zavvar, 1381 AH.
15. Sanaei Ghaznavi, Diwan, verses of 45, Neghah, 1391 AH.
16. Tafazoli, T. Attar Diwan, Tehran. 1362AH.

5/7/2013