



## Exploring World defiance as the foundation of ascetic thinking in Nasir khosrow's and Sanaie's poetry

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### **ABSTRACT**

Asceticism and world defiance have always been one of the most important and yet key themes that have been vigorously followed by those committed poets and mystics entitled as the 'pioneers of committed literature' in the literary history of Iran. Meanwhile, worldviews pertained to material life has been different in various historical and political arenas so that world defiance has on occasion been intermingled with world alliance in which enjoying worldly life has also been the center. Such outlook is certainly perceived through Nasir Khosrow's and Sanaie's ascetic thoughts. Absolutely, religious thoughts have in all probability been in action in promoting such considerations. In this article, the authors have tried to comparatively depict such world defiance and world loathing views in Nasir Khosrow and Sanaie.

### **Keywords**

world defiance, world loathing, Nasir khosrow, sanaie

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## Introduction

Development of a nation is possible when the nation is informed about its own history and civilization.(Khalil zadeh; 2015). The human need to the directing and consulting with the others is not hidden for anybody in making decision, selecting and applying suitable solutions in life, especially in ages in which person has to select the important option(Kashfi; 2017: 48) Educational principals are predicative statements which direct the trainers and educational organizations to select methods and policies for achieving aims. (Mansour zadeh, 2017:158) . Large part of Persian poetry consists of mythological allusions, fiction and proverbs as well as beliefs and customs(Yalameha:2014;45)

Fictional literature contains imageries and innovative stories and its creative aspect is superior to other aspects.(Yalameha:2014; 38) attention to these works is the best way to understand the culture and civilization of a nation and should be considered (Yalameha;2017: 38)

The concept of altruism and peacefulness can be clearly found in Persian poetry in different forms.(Yalameha: 2017;104)

He considers every individual and group in his position based on society regulation and by observing justice toward different groups and tribes, so that, the position of individuals and groups(Yalameha:2012) . So there is no branch the more attractive and readable than the romantic lyrical poems.(Sadeghi:2017:97)

The word 'asceticism' is an abstract noun and implies 'the renunciation or denial of the material life'. Imam Mohammad Ghazaly has explicitly signified this fact in the Holy Quran: "Go alert that those Quran verses condemning the worldly life abound and are more intended to denounce man from the material life ..." (Ghazaly, 1368: Robe-e-Mohlekat, 421). In his opinion, religion relies more on piety or asceticism.

The world is the enemy of man and the source roots of all his errs and vicious intentions. "World alliance and affection is the beginning of all faults while world defiance gets man away from glorious life and any person who follows piety has metaphorically engaged himself in thousands of heavenly nick names and Everyone away from it can easily go awry along with entailing thousands of evil names "(Siraj,1382:100). At the heart of a true devotee, one can hardly find any counter evidence apart from God since such concerns may hamper the pious from reaching the real truth. Asceticism is the battleground between the good and evil, world alliance entices heart and destroys the soul.

## 2. World Defiance; Extreme negative asceticism

Early Islamic Mysticism was generated out of a negative monastic asceticism and poverty. Early Sofia vigorously tried to spread their thoughts. They had deprived themselves from all worldly joys even all lawful pleasures. In the quest for eternal life and hereafter and the fear of loss, they had utterly withdrawn themselves from the world. Due to the lack of willingness and the crooked taste, they were deviated from the main divine routes and went to extremes. This deprived themselves from any ordinary personal and social undertakings and even wholly abandoned their religious duties and ultimately failed to

enjoy life with all its restitutions and destitutions altogether.

Researchers and scientists believe that the first step in research is to identify research tools in order to be able to access the treasures of the past and present of human knowledge in libraries and documentation centers as well as making use of these treasures as their scientific support at every stage of their research.(Yalameha: 2016;2319)

In literary term, debate involves works that a poet or a writer talks with language of two or several characters concurrently and expresses their specifications to prove superiority of one of them to others. (Yalameha;2014:192)

Generally speaking, Sufis owned pessimistic views toward the world and they didn't take heed of it even a bit. Even among those earlier Sufis like Rabia Odvieh from whom nuances of mystical theories were gradually being proposed, there was still the same idea about life defiance. Such thinking and stepping into the arena of intellectual and social conflict could be interpreted as a social reaction towards the community and sovereign powers. A case in point here was Kharaghany who disregarded the powered king of his time, Mahmoud Ghaznavi, the King. The first Sofia were more pious rather than mystic. This was the cause of such pessimistic thinking styles. These attitudes could emanate from their lack of moderation and balance. Such monastic way of thinking and acting contrary to the sacred religion of Islam led to 'negative asceticism' or the same 'extreme asceticism'.

Humans have noticed to the symbolic aspects and has known each character or matter of the story as a symbolic matter.(Shaban zadeh; 2014:246)

## 3. Nasir Khosrow's materialistic worldviews

Nasir's era was coincided with the commencement of the religious conflicts and political struggles of gold and force owners. At this time, two great dynasties of Ghaznavid and Saljugi were in grave conflicts on the one hand and controversial masters among different faiths and religions on the other hand had created a suffocating atmosphere for both pen and speech holders. Nasir Khosrow tried to associate all these unruliness to those afflicted with world alliances. Hence, he tried his best to empty his complexes and inner conflicts by scorning the worldly matters in his works with a distinguished style of his own replete with all Nasir's prejudice towards material life. A wide range of terms and the relating vocabularies, simplification of proses and difficult proses could be among the consequences of literature and cultural products translations from other countries.(Haghshenas: 2015; 2)

He is extremely pessimistic towards world. "Despondency and flock against the existing era of Nasir is all seen in Nasr's poems", (Yousefi, 2535: 627). Addressing the world is so serious in his poems that nothing else is found apart from worldly affairs or microcosm. "World affairs and despondency against the catastrophic status of his time is so gravely described that has inflicted him to entertain himself by presenting other poetic themes too."(Eslamin Nadoushan, 1370:183).

Censuring the world and its people is depicted in a flash back in all his wise words and sermons. His Odes are replete with such censuring. Apparently, just holy Fatima's, The Muslim's last prophet's reverent girl, world

is complimented. No need to re mention that in all subjects, including his religious poems, eulogies, ethics and social affairs, he condemns the world. One can obviously notice in his works world defiance and world loathing of the early Sufis' nature. Nasir's asceticism is positive unlike other poets whose ascetic ideas are negative and oppression seeking; that's why Sana'i, the poet, has adopted his styles. (Shafiekadkani, 1372:50).

The most important theme pertained to Nasir is asceticism. Many other themes in his poetry are also the subset of asceticism or piety. In his view, piety is honoring real values and adorning humanistic virtues:

Thee, the so-called pious!

Your ride along over your horse with silks over the lanes,

If you seek for piety, why do you lean before lords? (Nasir Khosrow, 1378:42)

It is worth mentioning that this piety in Nasir Khosrow was generated after his inner thinking revolution.

The asceticism in Nasir, the Yamgan Sage, is divided into two main categories including religious poems and eulogies.

### **3.1 Nasir Khosrow's moral and social asceticism**

Unlike the zealots who leave the whole world, what should be reprimanded is the world alliance or attachment to the world, not the world itself. Nasir, is a pure zealot who abandons world itself. His views indicate that from both moral and social ascetic stances and religious piety, his fights with the world has been relentless. This attitude denotes his ascetic worldview.

#### **3.1.1 Nasir Khosrow's moral asceticism**

Nasir Khosrow as a teacher of morality and ethics overflows in all his poetry. In his works, He calls for the real virtues and perfections for man. His poetry implicates research and wisdom too. "He is considered as the first Persian speaker who has wholly incorporated ethics in poetry. Before him, two great poets who had similar tendencies were Rudaki and Ferdowsi, but unlike these two poets Nasir suspends poetry to intellect and to him any separation between the two is impossible." (Eslami Nodoushan, 1370: 173). His worldviews are based on asceticism and his sermons denote religion and wisdom. Unlock the chest door with advice,  
Mount the sonnets on piety. (Nasir Khosrow, 1378:183)

He is a real adviser, preacher, mentor and guide. The disposition of his moral and religious opinions is incompatible with worldly beauty. His morality reminds man of the great saying 'What is not eternal is not worth affection' He thinks man must find some ways to combat with the world. One way he suggests is self-awareness and one of the attributes of a self-aware man is gained via world ignorance. Indeed, Nasir had truly followed this route.

#### **3.1.2 Nasir Khosrow's social asceticism**

Nasir is regarded as a social critic and reformer and is truly committed to his career. His poetic ontology or 'Divan' is a perfect illustration of his commitment in religious, moral and social ideas. In social asceticism, all social classes are taken into consideration. After Ferdowsi, Nasir Khosrow is the greatest social poet. He is seemingly involved in a long lasting fight and conflict with injustice and social deviances with two weapons: piety and religion. "Philosophy and religion are deemed as the cornerstone of

social morality and honors wisdom", (Ashraf Zadeh, 1363: 247).

He is a protesting poet. "He is typically the most courageous, outspoken representative for protesters in Persian literature." (Eslami Nodoushan, 1370 b: 193) As a real clergyman, he forbids the evil and enjoins for good (Amr bi al-maruf wanahi an al-munkar) addressing all classes in the society.

The major line of his protests and criticisms involves existing hypocrisy; the only factor that to him devastates the integrity and purity of an ideal religious utopia. In his view, all people are without any exceptions inherently hypocritical even the Jurists, the rulers, scholars, preachers and the worshipers. Accordingly, Nasir Khosrow recognizes them as 'pervert practitioners or antichrists'.

Yee! The poem dealers of Khorasan,

Open hearts to my sayings, if you are real poets!

You get delighted by your lies!

Are you the wise?

If you seek the truth from today's sapient,

They are the deceivers, Yee the hypocrite!

The miserable men! Why are you the like? (Nasir Khosrow, 1378, 447)

Basically, depression and emotional concerns runs Nasir up to the creation of thought and self-awareness; the poet who is one of his century's call of conscience. When this idea is created, it gradually turns into a social movement. In Yamgan prison, Nasir calls out such revolutionary movement and social dynamics. Every poem is a clear reflection of his/her inner self. (Shafiekadkani, 1380: 87) He says "I" but this "I" mirrors not himself but his society with its due demands.

### **4. Sana'i's worldviews and thoughts**

Sana'i's main line of thinking involves spirituality, religion or Sharia, eulogy, wisdom and social criticism. The multiplicity of his words and sayings along with his unique thinking together with his powerful dominance over the above themes has symbolically made this poet the mastermind of Balkh territory. On the other hand, such characteristics has made up his poetry into great mystical, religious, social and moral poems. He has ostensibly called his poetry 'asceticism and parable':

With Sana'i's speech,

Balkh territory prides in Adan Sea. (Sana'i, (?): 489)

Asceticism and mysticism are the two main doctrines of his thought. His moral, social and religious ideas are a mixture of mysticism and asceticism. Renouncing the world and its belongings constitutes the foundations of these doctrines. His asceticism is based on his worldviews.

#### **4.2 Sana'i's ethical asceticism**

Regarding moral concerns and wisdom, Sana'i and Nasir Khosrow are on the same road. The main motive behind Sana'i's themes like that of Nasir is piety; the one asset that is believed, if met by man, it can guide him through the desired ever-lasting perpetual life.

Unlike Nasir, Ethical ideas typical of Sana'i are mingled with mysticism and romance themes. He was the founder of didactic-mystical poetry. Research modes, preaching and admonition starts and ends his poetry. In this respect, Sana'i is considered a moralist before being a mystic; He is by all means a real preacher. His only difference with Nasir and Kasa'i, the poet, is that his words are interwoven

with mysticism. This has given rise to an exclusive tone of his own which is different from Nasir's. "In Nasir's poetry, the wisdom tone is stronger while in Sanaie, the tone connotes mysticism" (Zarinkoub, 1376: 169).

Another point to note is that in moral and mystical asceticism, the individual is addressed while in social asceticism the whole society is the focus. The addressee forms are either "You" or "I":

Sanaie! Before the conscience, your king  
Try your best to build a crown from collar,  
And throne from clothes (Sanaie, *ibidem*: 286)

In moral and mystical poems, the "I", is of humanitarian nature. What surrounds the poets' and speakers' minds is delving into the crucial problems of human destiny. (Javadifar: 2014)

Sanaie's views toward worldly life is different from those of Nasir. Sanaie is considered a social-mystical knower. Hence, contrary to Nasir's deep renouncing attitudes against the world, he is more merciful in this concern. He is more balanced and has less attention to the world unlike Nasir who totally neglects it. He inter-mingles world alliance with world defiance. In Hadigheh, one of his books, he is more as such but not in his 'Divan'. It must be noted that Mysticism is a discipline with a balanced approach towards Islamic belief, but in Fiqh or jurisprudence, an exclusive and fanatical orientation is taken for granted by the scholars. This dichotomy is undeniably perceived in the moral and religious teachings of both Sanaie and Nasir Khosrow.

As a gnostic, Sanaie relentlessly instructs man to leave the world. This attitude can be rooted by his mysticism as a cultural product of his time.

#### 4.3 Sanaie's religious asceticism

Sanaie is a religious poet. In fact, in most of his literary works, he is religiously oriented specifically in Hadigheh.

Religion is not moving on whims or quirks,

What is religion then?

Surfing in divine,

What is asceticism?

It's ignoring everything except GOD,

It's being not on the right sight. (Sanaie, *ibidem*, 462).

His goals like those of other mystics are searching for the right way. Like preachers and pious worshipers, he follows and cares for other religious matters such as prayers (Salah), fasting, and other religious acts.

All his poems have a religious tint. He considers religion as a proper pathway through which man can find the truth:

If you seek faith, let the world alone,

As its calls are with you all hours and moments. (*ibidem*, 53)

He is more religiously oriented in Hadigheh. That's why one may find a bulk of concepts and sayings pertained to religious acts.

One who performs seventeen postures (Rakaatin praying)

The angels favor him thousands of gifts,

Envy, anger, avarice and lust,

Takes you to awry and loss,

Ensure 'Ghosl' (Dip) and ablution (Vodu)

One is lending, the other an obligation,

You're not let in the divine door,

Ever since you are not clean and pure. (Sanaie, 1374: 139)

#### 5. Conclusion

Nasir is a relentless opponent to the worldly life; this is ostensibly perceived in all his poems. Addressing the world matters has seriously engaged him to excess so that he thinks of nothing else but the world. He was a wise and Ismaili religious fanatic. He summarizes everything in his beliefs. In his poems, he has transferred the moral teachings with a harsh language. His prejudice doesn't let him be smoother.

Sanaie, on the other hand, was a gnostic that joined man to leave the world. His attitude to the world is different from Nasir Khosrow's. Unlike Nasir, he is far from being quick-tempered and takes a well-balanced approach in renouncing the world.

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