



## TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STYLES OF ABU AL-ALA MA'ARRI AND KHAYYAM

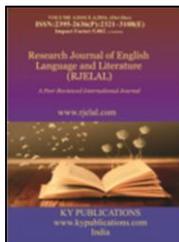
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### ABSTRACT



Abu al-AlaMa'arri the Arab poet, scholar and philosopher and Khayyam Neishaboori the Iranian poet, philosopher and scientist are the ones who have mentioned about death in their poems. According to them various conceptions, whether positive or negative, are available about the death that are rooted in philosophy of creation and life. Therefore, having an accurate concept and making a deep relation between life and death is not possible without life philosophy. This paper beside studying and analyzing the beliefs and thoughts of two above mentioned poets, aims to have a comparative analysis toward the styles of them and find similarities and differences between them.

Keywords: literature, style, philosophy, death

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### INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the thoughts and moral ups and downs of scholars and philosophers is not that much easy therefore in order to study old and new texts about them particularly those thinkers and scholars who have been at the center of attention at their era, researchers should be aware of social, political, and economic conditions of that era. Moreover, worldview of artist in scope of poetry and art is not determinable as simple as scientific scope due to existence of contradictory opinions might have been mentioned by spiteful persons about Abu al-Ala and Khayyam and it is believed that there has been considerable evolution in their attitudes within different periods of their life. These opinions made us more broadly studying about their characters. They lived more than 80b years in this world, did not afraid of any one, started to ask questions about life and thought about death that is an undeniable reality while many of humans are terrified of it so

that people have mentioned and written their beliefs and opinions during thousands years and this trend will continue surely. It is hope that we can find reality and properly know them to appreciate such scholars and scientist who have done many beneficial actions for humanity; according to Marcel Proust, "realities are one thing and our beliefs other things".

### Discussion over looking at life of Abul al-AlaMa'arri and Khayyam

Abu al-AlaMa'arri was born in 8 December, 973 in a family with literature and scientific field in Ma'areh Al-Neman (Al-Fakhoori, 2002, P. 501). Infected with smallpox, he lost his sight did not remember any color except red and mentioned this problem in his poem. He was born in a family who were scholar and scientists so that many of his relatives were judges and scientist at that time (Al-Safdi, 1981, Vol. 97, P. 7). Taha Hussein believes that three main characteristics of his family can be find

from the poetry and prose of Abu al-Ala including numerous travels, donation and maintaining ties with relatives, and being interested in science and knowledge (Hussein, 1965, P. 107). Abu al-Ala was short, thin, and blind with ugly and smallpox signs but he had a great spirit in such undesired appearance and lived as a smart person with an extraordinary memory (Al-Fakhoori, 2002, P. 501), he started his education with his father in Ma'areh city then went to Halab for apprenticeship of students of famous IbnKhalooyeh such as Mohammad Ibn Abdullah IbnSaad. He learnt science from some masters such as YahyalbnMosaar then went to Trablos to study and search over science in a library (Al-Seivati, 1979, Vol. 1., P. 315).

Abu al-Ala went to Baghdad in 1019 and lived there for one year and 7 months. He mentioned science acquirement and existence of a great library as the reason for journey to Baghdad. Losing his mother after coming back from Baghdad, hated life so much that chose seclusion and solitude not to hear words of people and then called himself, "Rahin Al-Mahbasin" that means home prisoner and hopeless blind. Of course, he mentions a third prison under the title of "Rahin Al-mahabes Al-salaseh" in his Luzumiyat Book (Necessities) that these prisons include home, blindness, and boresome that this prison is his body and his soul had been forced to tolerate it (Fazeli, 1973, P. 104).

He quitted eating animals' meat as well as milk, egg, fish, and meat at age of thirty and became a vegetarian just ate lentils and figs, he wore inexpensive clothes and had a carpet made of mat. He did not marry and considered child birth as a major crime and asked this sentence be written on his grave "this is my father crime against me and I have not perpetrated such crime against anyone" (IbnKhalkan, Bi Ta, Vol. 1, Pp. 114-115).

Abu al-Ala's seclusion prolonged for 49 years and he wrote and taught many books that one of most prominent can be mentioned as follows: (*Luzūmmā lam yalzam*) "Unnecessary Necessity", (*Saqṭ al-zand*) "The Tinder Spark", (*Doriaat*), (*Al-Fuṣūlwa al-ghāyāt*) "Paragraphs and Periods", (*Risālat al-ghufrān*) "The Epistle of Forgiveness", "Collection of Letters", etc.

Finally, Abu al-Ala passed away in May, 1507 after 86 years living in Maareh Al-Neman. Although he had a magnificent funeral, 200 Quran reciters read Quran completely 200 times during two weeks, mourned for him for one week (Teimorian, 1945, pp. 30-36), and 48 poets composed elegies for him but there was not any attention to his tomb and many of Muslim scientists have visited his tomb regularly have seen it ruined (Forrokh, 1984, p. 44).

#### Abu Al Ala Maari And Khayyam Nishapuri Style

One of features of Abu al-Ala's words is that he had a specific attention to "word" and such attention led to a specific style that introduced works of Abu al-Ala as the most melodious, pleasant and interesting works. Abu a-Ala insisted on using verbal styles such as puns, paradoxes, rhymes especially in prose and interested in using spiritual styles respecting "Luzūmmā lam yalzam" in rhymes. Abu al-Ala has used rhyme to show his talent and ability:

*In kan men fel al-  
kebaermojberafaaghebahzalmalamoyafaal  
Vallahkhalagh al-maadentalam in al-hidad  
al-bayzmenhatajaal*

Meaning: if the guilty person commits a sin forcefully then his/her punishment is cruelty God created metals and knew that people would make sharp swords from them (Frookh, 1984, p. 60).

Abu a-Ala was able in irony (mockery and sarcasm) and criticizing and this style of him is more similar to literati than philosophers and this array can be seen in all parts of "Necessities". Abu al-Ala is one of characters he is blamed due to improper perception of style while his style is in frame of de-familiarization, against tradition and realistic method that its main essence is some holy realities that poet believes in them. In summary, poet is strictly adhering to some realities in his mind and inner resulted from faith and experience in this method and show its peak in life of asceticism and self-preservation against all history evidences.

Ghiyath al-Din Umar Ibn Ibrahim Khayyam known as Hakim Umar Khayyam Nishapuri is one of the greatest mathematicians in Middle Ages and one of Iranian poets and scientists at late 5 century and early 6 century. He was born in Nishapur, 1407 during Seljuks era one of prominent eras of Iran

history in terms of emergence of science and knowledge thinkers and scholars (Ghanbari, 2005, P. 7). He studied in Nishapur and Balq and reformed Iranian Calendar in 467H with 7 members invited by Malekshah Saljuk and this calendar was named Jalali Calendar respecting Jalal Al-Din Saljuk that is now considered as one of the most accurate world timeline (MoghadasSedghiani, 2006, Pp. 14-15). Khayyam contemplated about mathematics, astronomy, etc. during his life and removed this exhaustion of occupations through composing Rubaiyat in which, verses indicate philosophy system and intellectual views of him (Hejazi, 2002, P. 11). Poetry fame of Khayyam has casted a shadow over his fame of being a scientist and his universal fame is more for his Rubaiyat translated to English in 1859 by Edward Fitz Gerald the English poet and literate (Ahmadi, 1996, P. 85). When Khayyam was studying the chapter of Vahid and Kasir of book of Healing (Shifa) of IbnSina in 12 Muharram, 1123 stopped and called population then put his head on ground after pray said, "oh God, I could know you that much I was able so forgive me please because my knowledge about you is the only mean for forgiveness" then he died. Khayyam was buried in Nishapur beside shrine of ImamzadehMahroogh (brother of Imam Reza) (Amin Razavi, 2006, p. 46).

#### **Thoughts and Attitudes of Abu al-Ala and Khayyam**

Abu al-Ala became blind in childhood deprived from world beauties and his great soul considered this blindness as a weakness and preferred to hide it from people. People annoyed him by their words so that he tolerated numerous difficulties in his life so could not fulfill his dreams so his body could not bear the burden of life.

There were some insolvable issues and questions in his mind that could not find any response for them. These questions included why am I born? Why should I returned to the where I came? What happens after death? I have not come to this world by my choice and my death is not under my power so am I free of obliged in my life?

None of philosophers and scholars' words could convince him. His mind had no response for such question so he was forced to be isolated to think about his opinions and meet his sense of curiosity (Hussein, 1965, Pp. 38-59).

When he was alone with his soul thinking of his destiny then he found his life hopeless and meaningless so he hated the world and all things in it and due to such hatred and definite pessimism cut his relation with the world and cruelly judged the life following a strict asceticism (Yekani, 1963, P. 281).

He believed that the life should be quitted knowing the life as an unfavorable issue associated with human nature but those who are ascetics are not evils.

When Abu al-Ala found that life is a seductive matter then hated it and asked people to do so. He did not try to find a way to brightness and kindness through such dark room of life that is full of pains in order to enjoy beauties. Such thinking method is resulted by his deprivation from world advantages and this is not his fault and any person might choose such view.

Contrary to Abu al-Ala who had imprisoned himself in home, Khayyam opened his window to the garden and sunlight. He did not want to avoid all pleasures like Abu al-Ala that was a vegetarian avoiding from birds and animals meat. Khayyam not only was not a vegetarian but also was interested in food and benefited from God's gifts.

Khayyam did not treated life as an evil but the beauty of angles and what was his grief was instability of these beauties and world gifts. This is the pain of Khayyam. In other words, Abu al-Ala denies the life and Khayyam denies its mortality (MohajerShirvani, 2003, Pp. 515-523).

Many of researchers consider Khayyam as a pessimist wise like Abu al-Ala due to his emphasis of human mortality that in fact indicates his realism not pessimism. This emphasis has Quran root and God has manytimes reminded death and praised its power. Religion leaders have always emphasizing on thinking of death and life reason considering those people smart who more think of death.

The view of Khayyam about death is a poetic expression of Quran. Pessimist is who sees the glass half empty while Khayyams' poems are full of deep advices about taking life opportunities that pass rapidly like clouds in view of Imam Ali (al-forsahamar al-hisab). Khayyam never

recommended seclusion but his teachings are related to opportunity consideration.

Khayyam is looking for the reality of creation with a holy wonder first being mesmerized by dignity and magnificence of this world then asking questions including where have I come: where will I go? Where is the end of life? And the most meaningful of these questions: why?

He is wondering to find the responses. A man whose questions about life and death is countless and narrates his wonder with a unique courage about human mortality always praises the eternity knowing it vain to reach it within life trance. Such person does not choose to be isolated in order to get rid of this great grief so that he tends to take life opportunities.

Khayyam believes that all of us are subjected to world cruelties without any authority in our past and future so we are not able to come over the life and events; hence, it would be better to forget life sorrow, be happy, take opportunities, not to be affected by incidents, know the value of life and take responsibilities (RezazadehShafagh, 1952, Pp. 162-165).

Writing about death in Khayyam's poem is praise for life. Regular remind of death is honoring the mortal life of human that its price is found in irreversible time before the last departure. Khayyam did not see anything better than enjoying life when there is not any better reason for it except our life (Forookh, 1984, p. 235).

In response to the charge of irreligion and atheism against Abu al-Ala and Khayyam it should be stated that the concept of these charges is resulted by material philosophy in Europe and is not related to opinions and beliefs of Islamic jurists and wise and if these charges are attributed to Abu al-Ala and Khayyam is to being against to poetry and sheer holiness or issuance of quotations and actions that are considered as vice in religion not in the sense of disbelief and deviation, heterodoxy, and denial of the origin and resurrection (Homaei, 1967, P. 7).

There is not any end to wonder of Khayyam that wonder considered as irreligion of Khayyam by mystics.

"What make mystics to know Khayyam irreligion is not denial but is his wonder that Lisan

Al-Gheyb (Hafiz) has it also but his expression makes such doubt about Khayyam. Hence, pessimism and disappointment in Khayyam's Rubiyat is considered atheism" (Zarrinkoob, 2003, P. 141).

#### **Death according to Abu al-Ala and Khayyam**

No one oppressed over Abu al-Ala except himself and anybody imposed such hardness to him during 50 years like him. He considered the soul imprisoned by body so that the spirit is forced to remain in it not allowed to separate from it unless at time of death. The soul does not know the value of this freedom during life because the limits of this freedom remain always unrecognized with an unknown subject. The question in mind of Abu al-Ala is as follows: where the soul goes after doors of body prison is opened to soul?

If Abu al-Ala was humble in his logical and philosophical life as he was in practical way of life and if he considered a limit for his wisdom or was aware of his power and ability could remove all pains as he considered his body limited and was aware of his limited power (Zarrinkoob, Pp. 54-263-265).

Faithful people who believe in resurrection also believe in resurrection of body and soul as well as hereafter life, reward of their good actions and punishment for their sins. However, it was hard for Abu al-Ala who was doubtful to believe in such thought that why resurrection is allocated to human? What will be the end of death? His only dream was the dead returning to make him aware of hereafter life (Hussein, 1965, Pp. 38-54).

Death is prior to life and body will be tranquil after death. This philosophy was proved to Abu al-Ala after thinking. He considered life as a misery for body because it prepares body to tolerate pains through linking body organs but the body reaches to calmness after death. He continuously considers life as a great pain for body that their result is grief; therefore, death can remove this pain from body.

Khayyam's way of thinking about death includes a death that can be the beginning of another life in which, conversations do not need language as it is mentioned in poem of SohrabSepehri "death is not the end of pigeon" but it is the key to enter to another life (Sepehri, 1987, P. 296).

This is the same view that is considered as "life and death is under the authority of God" among Islamic Hakims. Expression of Khayyam about death is similar to expression by Jean-Paul Sartre the French Philosopher and writer who calls death as life force or human status and what is common among human is living, working, and dying in world (Sartre, 1991, P. 16).

In summary, Khayyam have a different attitude toward death compared to ordinary people, he is disappointed of death that destroys dreams of people so he invite them to take life opportunities.

The basic orientation of Khayyam's thought is not hatred and concern toward death like pessimism of ordinary people to death but he considers death as a painful tragedy (Mahboob, 1966, P. 586).

#### Conclusion

Undoubtedly, death is one of basic concerns of human the fact that human could never deny it. A sense of fear and concern about this phenomenon has been always with us willingly or unwillingly and such fear might have been related to some reasons including lack of proper recognition, fear of mortality, separation of attachments and properties, etc. human thinks a lot to heal this pain in order to make people feel comfort but it should be considered that proper view over death is not possible without having life philosophy because there is a deep relation between life and death.

According to Abu al-Ala, death is prior to life and body comfort is in death because he considers death as a pain in human nature and ascetics are not only evils. He judges the life cruelly due to his blindness and difficulties in his life made him deny the whole life and warning human about it.

While, death remind in poems of Khayyam is like a praise for life, he did not consider life as a pain but encouraged people to enjoy life pleasures recommending not to think about past and future but live in moment, be happy, not be affected by incidents, know the value of life and use world pleasures.

Abu al-AlaMa'arri and Khayyam were philosophers and thinkers who lived several years in this world, mentioned death in their poems as the most legal and formal invitation is world and tried to solve the death mystery but they were accused of

being irreligion and pessimist. According to a study of the thoughts of these two wise poets in different life courses, it can be found that there words have been based on the time and place conditions that consist of some mysteries that are not that much undesirable.

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