

A Reflection on the Functions of the Words “Chastity and Pudency” in the Divan-e-Bahār as Indicators of Islamic Life Style

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انعكاس على استخدام عبارة "العفة والعار" في كتاب القصيدة "بهار"

كمؤشرات على نمط الحياة الإسلامية

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الملخص

ثورة واحدة من أهم قضايا زيارة الزعيم الإسلامي لمحافظة خراسان الشمالية يجب أن تكون مناقشة مؤشرات "نمط الحياة الإسلامي". يمكن أن يدعي ذلك لسبب ما، بما في ذلك نهج التفسير الديني لهذا الارتفاع المفاجئ في البلاد، بشكل عام، ونقص الموارد لتبرير أفضل وأكثر، من حيث مجموعة متنوعة من العلوم على وجه الخصوص، لا يمكن العثور على مصدر محدد لها في البلاد وليس في الأوساط الأكاديمية. يتم تدريس ذلك. ولذلك، ينبغي اعتبار ضرورة الدراسات متعددة التخصصات في هذا الصدد، ومن الضروري من وجهة نظر الأدب أيضا لخصائصه وهي نمط الحياة الإسلامية. العفة والعار هي الكلمات التي هي يستذكر النقاش حول العفة والحجاب في الدين كمؤشر على نمط الحياة الإسلامية ويستخدم بكثرة في قصائد الشعراء الفارسيين. مالك الشاعر بهار هو واحد من أشهر الشعراء المعاصرين خلال الثورة الدستورية، التي كانت في وزارة الثقافة منذ عدة سنوات. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة وظائف هذه الكلمات في قصيدتها الشعرية، وقد تم تحليلها وترميزها باستخدام المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي أثناء استخراج الملخصات ذات الصلة في هذه الحالة. أظهرت هذه الدراسة أنه على الرغم من الخصائص المميزة لهذه الفترة، بما في ذلك اكتشاف حجاب رضا خاني والتغريب والتغريب، و... كتبوا عن ضرورة الحفاظ على العفة والآيات الصحيحة التي يمكن أن تكون بطريقة ما في التبرير غير المباشر أسلوب حياة إسلامي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العفة، العار، أسلوب الحياة، الإسلام.

Abstract

One of the main issues the supreme leader of Iran pointed out during his visit to North Khorasan Province is the matter of the characteristics of “Islamic lifestyle”. It can be argued that for some reasons, such as the existence of religious explanation approach toward this subject in the country, in general, and the lack of resources for its better justification in terms of a variety of sciences, in particular, there is no specific domestic source about this subject and nor it can be said that it is being taught academically. Therefore, the necessity of interdisciplinary studies in this regard is clear and it is also necessary to study examples of the Islamic lifestyle in literature. Chastity (/effat/) and Pudency (/sharm-va-hayā/) are words that, while reminding of the discussion of chastity and hijab in religion, are considered as some of the indicators of Islamic lifestyle and are widely used in poems of Persian poets. Malek Al-sho’arā Bahār is one of the most famous contemporary poets during the Constitutional Revolution, who has also been the Minister of Cultural affairs for several years. The purpose of this study is to investigate the functions of these words in his poetry. His related verses have been extracted, analyzed and coded using descriptive-analytical method. The results showed that despite the specific characteristics of this period, including the unveiling order by Reza Khan and Westernization, etc. there are considerable number of verses by Bahār about the necessity of observing chastity and virtuousness, which can be somehow considered the indirect justification of Islamic lifestyle.

Keywords: chastity, pudency, Islamic Lifestyle

Introduction

Definitions and Concepts

Bahār: Mohammad Taqi Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār is one of the most prominent poets and writers, a prominent activist and campaigner for several periods in the National Assembly and one of the most prominent journalists and political intellectual figures of the Constitutional Revolution and the first-half period of the Pahlavi dynasty. His political life started with composing and publication of political poems during the beginning of the constitutional liberty movement, and continued with the membership of the State Committee of the Democratic Party of Khorasan and the publication of the No Bahār newspaper.

During the years of his political activities and parliamentary struggles, he was elected as a representative in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and fifteenth terms of the National Consultative Assembly (i.e. the parliament); in the fourth parliament, he was one of the active members of majority faction led by Seyyed Hassan Modarres.

He was actively involved in the largest political group in the constitutional era, the Democratic Party, and the published NoBahār newspaper for many years to promote the ideas of the party, political and social enlightenment of public opinion, and to explain his political thoughts and approaches. In the years after September 1941, he was appointed as the Minister of Cultural Affairs for four months in Qawam al-Saltanah's second cabinet (MirAnsari, 2008, p.3).

Pudency: According to some definitions, the source of prudency is the fear of being blamed by others (Tusi, Bitā: 77; Ibn Muskouyeh, 1992: 41). Hayā (prudency) has three main pillars: the actor, the observer, and the act. Some have considered *Sharm* (modesty), Hayā (prudency) and *khejālat* (shame) as synonyms (Ghazali, 1989: 1/251). There are many factors involved in the creation of prudency in a person, including faith, compassion, knowledge, divine satisfaction, fear of authority, attention to the magnificence of prudency, humility, patristic favor, fame and reputation, and visiting the mosque, etc. (Sabet, 2008: 90-101).

Chastity and Virtuousness: The opposite of Effat (chastity), *Hatk* (aspersion and desecration), means divulgence and desecration (Mousavi Khomeini, 1999: 278). The most important types of chastity are chastity against gluttony and lust as the prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says: "the most cherished and precious chastity before God is chastity against gluttony and lust" (Warram, Bitā: 2/30).

One of the similarities between pudency and chastity is based on their related narratives that proclaim both of them as the highest ethical virtues: e.g. "chastity is the head of all goods" (Tamimi Amadi, 1988: H 5399) and "Al-Haya (pudency) is the whole religion" (Mohammadi Rey Shahri, 1998: 3/1354).

In some narratives, chastity is measured by prudency: "indeed, the extent of prudency determines chastity" (Tamimi Amadi, 1988, H 5414). The other point is that the root of both is known to be in faith: "indeed, prudency and chastity are signs of faith" (Mohammadi Rry Shahri, 1998: 3/1354).

In all divine religions, chastity and pudency are recommended. Of course, chastity and pudency seem to be a global and transcultural subject, so that even some of the most radical feminists, such as Simon de Beauvoir consider virtuousness a natural matter (Shalit, 2007: 47). Francis Benton states that: "The rules and regulations regarding the maintenance of chastity may vary but chastity and virtuousness is a constant and desirable concept" (ibid: 73).

Lifestyle: A lifestyle consists of a set of behaviors and action patterns of each individual that focuses on the normative and semantic aspects of social life, and indicates the quality of the belief system and actions of the individual. In other words, the lifestyle signifies the nature and content of particular interactions and actions of individuals in each community and indicates the intentions, meanings and interpretations of the individual in the course of everyday life.

Problem Statement and Objectives

“Chastity and pudency” are two concepts that are emphasized not only in all divine religions, but also by human reasoning. The study of Islamic teachings shows the high status of these two concepts in the religion of Islam. Investigation into the application and implications of these concepts in works of Persian poets can be very important, especially with the aim of creating resources for a better explanation of Islamic lifestyle, especially at a time known as the era of enlightenment and westernization or “transitional period from Tradition to Modernity”. This is a period when many of the purely moral values have diminished and been transformed.

Although ethical virtues have consistently been emphasized in Islamic societies, unfortunately, the studies confirm that even such societies have not been immune to a series of value transformations. As such, although the observance of religious criteria was once common in Islamic societies, now some have set aside religious criteria for a variety of reasons (Sharaf Al-Din, 2007: 10).

Research confirms that one of the key factors involved in emergence of these abnormalities is disregard for chastity and prudency and the cultural and moral problems caused by the failure to observe these two concepts.

One of the contemporary revolutionary poets of Constitutional Period, who was also the Minister of Cultural Affairs for a period of time, is Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār. The study of the poetry of this famous and influential poet in this regard, in addition to explaining his beliefs and intellectual views, can prove to what extent the Islamic lifestyle and indicators of *Efaf* (chastity) and Hijab were emphasized. Hence, the aim of this study is to investigate and explain the application of the words *Effat* (chastity) and *Sharm* (pudency) in the Divan (collection of poems) of Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār to better show whether the invasion of western lifestyle was evident at that time or not.

Research Questions

The main question of this study is:

- How has Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār used two words of chastity and prudency in his Divan?

Subsidiary questions of this study are:

- Is the view of Bahār about chastity positive or negative?
- Does Bahār consider chastity to be for women, men or both?
- What are the other words that coincide with these two words in his Divan?
- Can the divan-e-Bahār bring out new meanings for these concepts that are not addressed in religion?

Background of Research

Our reviews showed there have been many studies on chastity, hijab and lifestyle from a variety of aspects such as psychology and sociology, and even ethics; there are also considerable studies on Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār from a literary and historical point of view. Nevertheless, there has been no study, to the knowledge of authors, on the subject of his attitude towards the characteristics of Islamic lifestyle.

However, a few studies on lifestyle and abilities of Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār are mentioned below, which have been somewhat considered in this study, especially in the theoretical section.

1. Khani (2015) in his article, titled “Sociological Analysis of the Concept of Lifestyle in Western and Islamic Civilizations” published in *Siyasat Quarterly Journal*, explains Islamic lifestyle and describes its differences from western lifestyle.
2. Ghareh-daghi (2008) in her article, titled “An Introduction to Political Thought of Bahār” published in *Journal of Ferdowsi*, explains political thoughts of Bahār and emphasizes on his attention to Islamic lifestyle and religious beliefs.
3. Akbari (2001) in his article, titled “The Place and Role of Religion in the Thought of Bahār” published as an appendix to the *Journal of the Tehran University Literature Faculty*, investigates the framework of thoughts of Bahār regarding religious issues.

4. Elahi Khorasani (2011) in his article, titled “The Nature of the Islamic Lifestyle” published in The Quarterly Journal of Islamic Social Studies (Year Thirty-first; No. 174), investigates characteristics of Islamic lifestyle including piety, virtue and Godliness.
5. Bina, (2007). Definition of Chastity. Quranic Studies Quarterly; No. 51.
6. Mervi Hakim (2010) in her M.A thesis, titled “An Analysis of Sexual Chastity” seeks to show that chastity is not merely for women and men also should act chastely.

Methodology and Tools

This research was carried out with a descriptive and analytical approach according to its objectives. Considering the importance of the frequency of words in this study, all of the verses in the Divan of Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār were analyzed using the “Dorj and Sarir” software, and it was found that these two words were used non-repetitively in 51 verses.

Subsequently, the extracted verses were analyzed through content analysis method, and then coded and categorized in several categories according to the content of the words, as indicated in the Findings section.

Of course, the library tool and document-mining method were used and library documents, texts and articles related to the ideas of Bahār about Islamic lifestyle, the meanings of chastity and types of chastity and pudency were reviewed.

Findings

The analysis of the extracted verses and the study of the concepts of “Chastity and Pudency” led the authors to the notion that these verses can be encoded in different aspects. However, with regard to the goals the study, it seems that the simplest categorization that matches the subject of the study would be as follows.

1. Admonition to Women in Society

This category includes verses that Bahār has composed to address those women who, during the Constitutional and Reza-Khan times, deemed they have achieved freedom because of Unveiling, and those writers and politicians whose tendency and propensity was to the West World and preferred their lifestyle.

These verses show that despite the ministerial position of Bahār and the fact that he himself was one of the liberalist figures of the time and even was considered to be one of the intellectuals, yet, he defends the Islamic lifestyle using words such as chastity, prudency, modesty and virtuousness, and suggests that all, and particularly women, are obliged to observe chastity and virtuousness and this is critical in educating a healthy generation for the future of Iran.

*Be more attentive than ever, to pudency and chastity,
O' you woman, now that you walk free.*

(Divan, 232)

*O' Bahār, the chastity of a maiden is a sapling,
that if cut off, never it will grow again*

(Divan, 667)

*It is hoped that the pure-hearted maids
Be blessed due to their wisdom and chastity.*

(Divan, 412)

*The pure and decent girls are of beauty and chastity,
And such boys are of perfection and dignity.*

(Divan, 843)

*Try to gain knowledge and keep your chastity today
O' women, you will be mother of another in some day.*

(Divan, 195)

*A man with no prudency will have no chastity
He will be deceitful, his words full of lies.*

(Divan, 715)

*A woman who is not faithful to the husband
Also she has no prudency before God.*

(Divan, 982)

*O' Bahār, chastity is not merely wearing hijab,
There are a thousand other things in this regard.*

(Divan, 609)

2. Commitment to Magnanimity, Religiosity and Piety

This category includes verses in which the words of pudency and chastity are used in relation to the notions of magnanimity, piety and dignity. In other words, in the words of Bahār, those who are chivalrous, pious and loyal are also individuals with chastity and prudency.

*With pudency gone, gone also is the chastity
So is piety, magnanimity and generosity.*

(Divan, 122)

*Religion and faith and chastity are indispensable
Pudency and piety and honor so are indispensable.*

(Divan, 650)

*As loyalty fades away, it takes away sympathy
As well as honor and chastity and chivalry.*

(Divan, 419)

*Chivalry died due to the cowardice, buried in ground
Chastity died due to these promiscuous unchastes.*

(Divan, 934)

*With lust aroused and out of control,
Put to sleep, will be pudency and chastity.*

(Divan, 112)

*So compassionate your look is;
So chastely your act is.*

(Divan, 851)

*With the pain gone, so is pudency,
Followed by honor and hot blood*

(Divan, 819)

*Because it became apparent and no doubt was left,
They will leave aside pudency and glory.*

(Divan, 583)

*François: Go away; you do not have any prudency
You do not know the value of loyalty*

(Divan, 668)

*Honesty and loyalty and prudency are meaningful with freedom
You, O' Bahār, be free and speak up whatever you want to say.*

(Divan, 492)

*Prudency is gone and obscenity rules instead
The time is changed and so are the people.*

(Divan, 309)

*O' prudency, you saved my honor, and then nobody
Heard me speak of nothing except with tolerance*

(Divan, 626)

3. Expression of the Cause of Pudency

The third group is dedicated to those verses that somehow express the cause of prudency and consider it to be due to a fear of a superior force. Bahār, in some verses, claims this superior force to be the God and, in some others, people.

*Be fearful of God if nothing else, and know that
For your own good, is prudency; not a favor to others.*

(Divan, 673)

*That one is chastely and the God is the reason
This one is chastely but people are the reason.*

(Divan, 439)

*Ashamed you are to speak the truth before the king
Where is your pudency to speak it before the God?*

(Divan, 296)

*Blame is for the king who, in anger,
Will not observe pudency and modesty.
No fear of God and no pudency before people;
I seek refuge in God from these immoral animals.*

(Divan, 486)

4. Used together with Figures of Speech

The fourth group includes the verses where Bahār uses a variety of figures of speech such as simile, metaphors and poetical aetiology, etc, while highlighting the importance of pudency.

*The sky of glory and dignity has never had a moon like him,
The tree of virtuousness and chastity has never had a fruit like him.*

(Divan, 778)

*Virtuousness is the sky and she is the bright star,
Chastity is the sea and she is the shiny pearl.*

(Divan, 451)

*The beautiful young flower smiles in pudency,
Just like a new bride to her wedded husband.*

(Divan, 449)

*Like the blue horizon of the sky, because of her pudency,
She covers her face behind the clouds and manifests her nature.*

(Divan, 111)

*The weed of greed has not grown in his heart
The spring of pudency is not dried in his soul.*

(Divan, 705)

*I get it that there are billions of temptations,
But what happened to your pudency?*

(Divan, 441)

5. The Importance of Parent's Advices about Hijab

The fifth group includes the verses showing the importance of parental advices about and emphasis on hijab and chastity; and generally the concepts of hijab and chastity are accompanied by the concept of pudency.

*My father raised me such polite and chastely,
So pudency is intertwined with my character.*

(Divan, 610)

*The short story of Hijab captures
The chastity so skillfully.*

(Divan, 190)

*I saw chastity and pudency in you
I liked it very much in my heart.*

(Divan, 1021)

*Instead of being shameful hearing that
She became more impudent, that shameless woman*

(Divan, 1106)

6. Addressing General Public

The sixth group is those verses in which the word pudency is used to address the general public and without any specific one in mind; here it is used with the meaning of embarrassment and shame.

*Is that you putting me in jail? Oh!
Shame on you, I'm ashamed to call you family!*

(Divan, 309)

*You saw a little infant in a cradle; how could you
Feel no pudency and attempted his life with hatred?*

(Divan, 448)

*I'm embarrassed to say; otherwise, there are several thousands of issues
Beyond the innocent beauty of this flower.*

(Divan, 661)

*My suspense and doubt turned out to be wrong;
I cover my face with the mask of pudency and shame.*

(Divan, 487)

*The heaven rebelled and shaken up the world with the king's death;
Pudency was not the rule to be followed by that wicked tonight.*

(Divan, 1076)

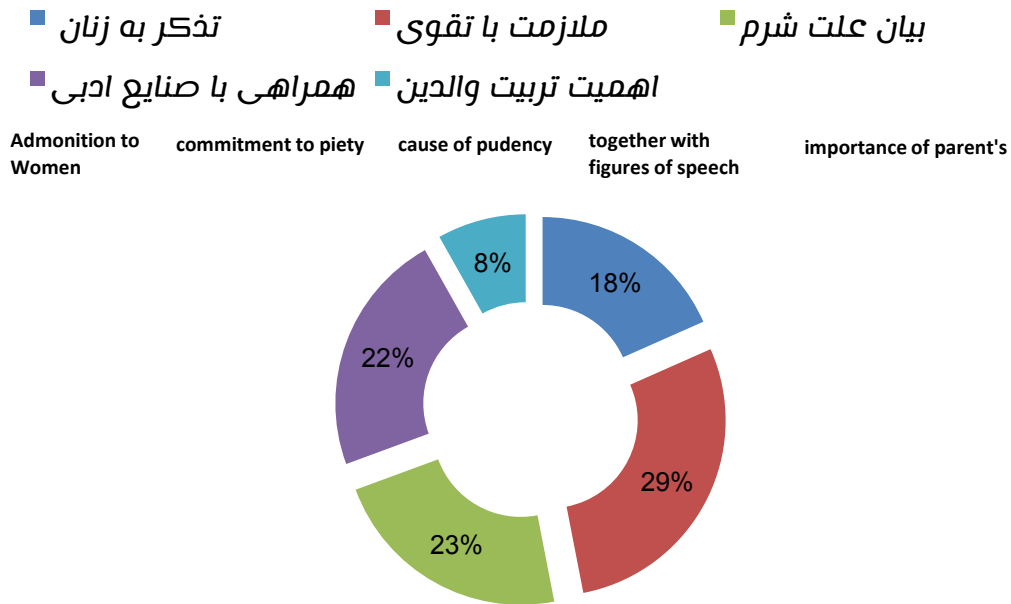
*O' you whom the king considers honored,
Why do you cover your face with pudency?*

(Divan, 407)

*Then Fath Ali became the king of Iran;
A Sultan so merciful and a king with so much pudency.*

(Divan, 1139)

The Diagram of Comparison of Frequency of Using the Words Chastity and Pudency



Conclusion and Suggestion

This study showed that using interdisciplinary approach to demonstrate the characteristics of the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle can provide good results and then use them as sources for the study of this subject in academic terms from different non-religious aspects.

In addition, this research confirms that the efforts of Malek Al-sho'arā Bahār to promote Islamic lifestyle are admirable, considering the fact that most of writers and scholars of that period were thought to be west-oriented. It can be claimed that Bahār, although indirectly, used his poetry to encourage his audience to observe and adhere to the practice of Iranian-Islamic lifestyles.

It is suggested that other researchers study this subject in the works of other contemporary poets and writers, such as Dekhoda, Bozorg Alavi, and others.

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