

INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON ARABIC POETRY

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In literary circles of the previous nations, verse bore much prominence and status, and one of its reasons was that not only verse mirrors genuine feelings but also, truly, represents inclinations of pure passions. Through this sufficient source, researchers help themselves getting insight into nations' history. The Arab were a poetic nation whose eloquence, articulacy and depth of verse found great fame across the world. The researchers have consumed their energies over the centuries in exploring the Arab poetry and, thus, rendered eternity to this golden heritage. The topic, under discussion, not only takes a general overview of the Arabic poetry but also advocates Islamic point of view in this regard, that literature particularly and other arts generally supply aesthetic solace, however only temporarily. Nonetheless, the most important aspect of art is, and should be, to guide people to right direction and persuade them to universal ethics. Art, if separated from this aim, becomes lethal weapon of evil.

History is the chronicle of mankind living on the Earth and it is all about man's progress with upheavals. This incredible chronicle is for them who benefit from History; for them who learn lessons from others' experiences. Historical verse is also a chapter of this chronicle which has preserved in it an art that has inspired man through history. To evaluate the historical verse and understand its nature, it is inevitable to explore the background of the poets and the influence of their surroundings on them. This can help us unravel the running themes in their poetry.

Arab Region:

Arabian Desert is situated between Asia and Africa. It stretches from North to South. It is surrounded by the ranges of mountains. It has long stretches of deserts and sandy plains. This peninsula divided in such a way that Yemen, rich in ancient civilization with its historical cities of *Najran*, *Sana'a*, *Maa'rib* and *Hazar-a-Maut*, lies in its south. Hijaz, with its great cities of *Yathrab* and *Makkah*, lies in its north. In the centre lies a desert in which are found various species of animals for example *Oryx*, *ostriches* etc.

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The Arabs:

This is *Sami* race. They are the descendants of *Sam*, the son of Prophet *Nooh* (A.S) (famously known as Noah). This race has three divisions:

- 1: *Aariba Arabs*
- 2: *Musta'riba Arabs*
- 3: *Ba'ida Arabs*

The lastly mentioned *Arab* race constitutes those civilizations whose details are unknown because they were destroyed due to the Divine Wrath. Famous among them involved *Aad, Thamood, Tasm and Jadees*.

Aariba Arabs are those who are also called *Arabs* of South and *Banu Qahtan*. Their well known tribes are *Tayy, Aos, Khazraj, Ghassanid*, who once ruled *Syria*; and *Manazira*, who were the rulers of Heera.

Musta'riba Arabs are called *Arabs* of North and *Banu Adnan*. Their well known tribes include *Ghatfan, Abs, Zubyan, Tameem, Quraish, Huzail*, known tribes include *Ghatfan, Abs, Zubyan, Tameem, Quraish, Huzail, Thaqeef, Bakr and Taghlab*.

Source of Income:

Arab economy depended largely on trade and the cattle rearing. The trading Caravans traveled to *Yemen* in the winter and *Syria* in the summer. However, the *Bedouins* were almost completely depended on the cattle rearing. They traveled long in search of pastures. They used to encamp where they found greenery and then moved on for another green land. They ate meat of the cattle and used their fleece to make clothes. When the scorching deserts turned into hellish infernos, the rain water natural springs became their elixir.

“Camels and horses were used for long journeys. Keeping horses attracted people’s attentions in both, rural and urban areas. Thus their influence infiltrated into Arabic verse immensely.”¹

Social Life:

As far as the social life of the Arabs is concerned, they were a free and sovereign race. In a tribal system, tribal loyalty centres on tribal Chief. As a nation, the Arabs were hard working, loyal and truthful. Besides, the Arabs were the masters of three

states under which fell many tribes. Moral and social ills were decaying the roots of the Arab social. Every corner of their houses was filled with gods and deities made from stones. Drinking alcohol was common. Burial of daughters alive was the matter of pride for them.²

In the poetry these vices were glorified. One tribe made sure it remained separate from other tribe. Prejudice against other tribes was so much so that in a fight they fought for the glory of their tribesmen caring least about whether their tribe was justified or not. *Islam* put an end to these evils.

Religion:

Majority was idol worshippers. Their great gods involved *Laat, Manaat, Hubal and Uzza*. Worshipping fire, the Sun, the Moon and stars was also common. Minorities of Christians and Jews also dotted the Arab land. One of the sects among the Christians followed strictly the religion of *Ibrahim (A.S)* (popularly known as *Abraham*). They were, thus, called "*Hunafa'a*".³

History of the Verse:

Literary figures categorize Arabic Poetry into various periods. They are as follows:

1. Pre-Islamic Period: it's about 150 years prior to emergence of Islam.
2. Islamic Period: period during Prophet of Islam (Peace Be upon Him) and Righteous Caliphates.
3. Period of *Umayyad*: the dynasty of *Umayyad* which lasted from 40 *Hijra* to 132 *Hijra*.
4. *Abbasid Period*: the dynasty of *Banu Abbas* spanning from 132 *Hijra* to 656 *Hijra* including the period of *Andalus*.
5. Period of Decline: this period began a little before the fall of *Baghdad*. This period of desperation included the rules of *Ottomani* Empire and the Slave Dynasty.
6. Modern Age: this age dates from 19th century onward to date.

Since, in the discussion of the topic, there is a mention of the Early Age poetry; therefore, in order to stick to the topic, it is inevitable to shed light on the verse of Islamic period, the earlier periods of *Banu Umayyad* and *Banu Abbas* and, as a preface, period of Ignorance.

Pre-Islamic Poetry:

The list of poets during the age of Ignorance is long enough

Most of the poetry of that era was not preserved. A few odes (laudatory poems) of that age with their poets' names can still be found preserved in Arabic literature. In some cases, one or the other fortunate poet survives ages on one verse. However, that one verse even proves enough to glorify him. One verse is called "Yateem" (orphan). If any poet's poetry consists of more than one verse ranging from two to four verses, that is called 'Natfa'. And if that poetry goes to ten verses, it is called "Qit'aa". In case of 20 verses, it is known as "Qaseeda".

"At the time of apologies, warnings, persuasions and inter-tribal accords, it was common among the poets of prolong the 'Qaseedas' (laudatory poems popularly known as odes) as was usually practiced by *Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma* and *Harith b. Hilliza* et al. However, to create longer discourse and humour, *Qit'at* (stanzas) were recited."⁴

This poetry constitutes as a major source for classical Arabic language, and as a reliable historical record of the Arabs political and cultural life.

The Arabs considered versification a natural caliber and believed that one who had a long tongue (may be they meant it depth in language) would be a capable poet. Nonetheless, it is said about *Hassaan b. Thabit (R.A)* that once he stuck out his tongue and touched his nose. He swore by God that if he let his tongue fall on the stone, it would turn into pieces and if it touched the head, it could shave it. Given this natural capability, the poets grew immensely in Arab. As it is put by *Ibn e Qutaiba*, "the poets in the Age of Ignorance and Islamic Period are too much in number to be counted"⁵.

Aswaaq (Fairs):

The role of the fairs and bazaars, which were held in specific months of the year, has been very important in promoting Arabic poetry.

J. Welthausen says:

"There fairs were in same sort the centre of old Arabian social, political and literary life. It was the only occasion on which free and fearless intercourse was possible between the members of different clans."⁶

There are three bazaars which hold prominence in this context.

1. *Okkaz Fair*
2. *Mijannah Fair*
3. *Zul Majaz Fair*

Moreover, these fairs and bazaars were not only for commercial purposes but in addition to them, there were also held poetry competitions which, consequently, decided the greatest of the poets. Okkaz would play host to a regular poetry festival where the poets would be exhibited.

The influence of these *bazaars* proved positive for the Arabic language and literature. Besides, they also helped in bridging various dialects of the Arab tribes.⁷

Muallaqat

With the passage of time, the Arab life took a new turn. It was in this way that whenever, the poets assembled in *Okkaz Fair* for the competition. The winner's *Qaseeda* (ode) was displayed on the wall of *Ka'ba* in golden words. The prestigious odes then became honoured with the names of *Mu'allaqa't*. These best poems were collected in the 8th century. The number of the golden poems is seven.

C.J. Lyall (London, 1885) says the same:

*“Mu'allaqa't (plural Mu'allaqa') is most likely derived from the word 'ilq, meaning 'a precious thing or a thing held in high estimation', eighter because one 'hangs on' tenaciously to it, or because it is 'hung up' in a place of honour, or in a conspicuous place, in a treasury or store house”.*⁸

Because of having been written in gold water, they are also known as *Mudhahhab'at*. Their right number is not certain. Some hold a view that these are total seven in number, however, others contradict by giving their total count as ten.

Keeping in view, Khursheed Rizvi writes that *out of his consideration for comprehensiveness, Tabraizi has written the explanation of the ten Qasidas collectively with the name of "Explanation of Ten Qasidas", gradually; the idea of ten Ma'alaga's took hold that is incorrect according to our view.*⁹

1. ***Imru'ul-Qays***

He is famous as Imru ul-Qays (Handuj) b.Hujr, the adventurous prince poet, of the South Arabian tribe of Kinda .His father HUJR was killed by Banu Asad . He is regarded as the

greatest Arab poet. Both fluency and novelty characterized his vocabulary. His Mu'allaqa consists of eighty verses. His most celebrated qaseeda begins thus:

قفا نكِّ من ذكرى حبيبٍ و منزل
بسقط اللوى بين الدخول فحومل¹⁰

Oh, both of my friends! Wait a moment, let's weep by remembering our beloved and her destination, which lies between Dakhool and Haumal in Siqt al liva.

2. **Antra b. Shaddaad:**

Antra were born of Negro concubine. Shaddad recognized him as his son after making the invaders on Banu Abs flee. His Muallaqa consists of seventy five verses beginning thus:

هل غادر الشعراء من متردّم
أم هل عرفت الدار بعد توهم¹¹

*Have the poets left a single spot for a patch to be sewn ?
Or did you recognize the abode after long meditation?*

3. **Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma**

Zuhayr belonged to Muzaina tribe.... Hazrat Umar (R.A) says about him that he mentions only those qualities that are really present in the person. He lived for about 130 years.

أمن أم أوفى دمرق لم تكلم
بحومانة الد راج فامتلم¹²

Do the signs of Umm e Aufa's (wife of Zuhayr) abode which is in between Homaana al Durraaj and Mutathallam not speak? They don't reply me.

4. **Tarafa b. al Abd Bakri:**

His original name was Amr. Tarfa was born in Behrain. He started writing poetry in early age. He was orphaned in his childhood. His most brilliant poem is a qasida of 104 lines, and begins thus:

خولة أطلال ببرقة تهمد

تلوح كياقي الوشم في ظاهر اليد¹³

Thahmad's stony land preserves the signs of Khaula they shine like the remains of the drawing speckled on the outside of the hand .

5. **Labeed b. Rabi'ah Aameri:**

Labeed belonged to Banu Aamir . He found both eras, of Islam

and that of Jahiliah (ignorance). But the bulk of his poetry was written in Jahiliah period. He lived long. He starts his Muallaqa from traditional mention of deserted houses.

عَفَّتِ الدِّيَارُ مَحَلَّهَا فَمَقَامُهَا
بِمَعْنَى تَأْبُدُ غَوْلَهَا فَرِجَامُهَا

*The abodes are desolate, halting-palaces and encampment too,
at Mina; deserted lies Ghaul, deserted alike Rijaam .*

6. **Harith b. Hilliza yashkuri**

Harith belonged to the tribe of Banu Bakr and set himself the aim of defending the honor of his tribe against the tribe of Taghlab . His most famous poem begins thus:

His Name was Zayed Ibn Mayyawa. His best piece of poetry is his Ma'alaqa that begins thus:

أَذْنَتَنَا بَيْنَهَا أَسْمَاءُ
رَبِّ ثَاوِيْمَلٌ مِنْهُ الشَّوَاءُ

*Asma announced to us she would soon be parting.
Some times the dwelling gets sick of a dweller.*

7. **Al-Nabighah Zubyani:**

His Name was Zyad b. Muawyyah. His tribe banu Zubyan lived near Makkah, but he spent most of his life at the courts of Heerah and Ghassan. His best piece of poetry is his Muallaqa that begins thus:

يَا دَارَ مَيْتَةٍ بِالْعَلْيَا فَالسَّنْدِ
أَقْوَتْ وَطَالَ عَلَيْهَا سَائِقُ الْأَبْدِ¹⁶

*Oh the house of Mayyah between Al- Alya and Al-Sanad,
you are now deserted place, whose inhabitants left It. An
age has passed over it.*

8. **Al- Aa'sha Qays:**

Abu Baseer Maimoon b. Qays commonly known by his nickname of Al-A'sha and he belonged from Manfooha (Riyadh city). He wrote a laudatory Qaseeda in honor of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) Al-Aa'sha died about 629 A.D. His Qaseeda included in Mu'allaqat by Abu Ubaida which begins thus:

وَدَّعَ هُرَيْرَةَ إِنْ الرِّكْبَ مَرَّحَلٍ
وَهَلْ تَطِيقُ وَدَاعًا أَيُّهَا الرَّجُلُ

Bid fare well to Huraira, the caravan is going to leave.

But, oh man can you muster up enough courage to say good bye.

9. Amr b. Kulthum Taghlabi:

He was descended from the tribe of *Taghlab* who were hostile to the tribe of *Bakr* . His mother was the daughter of the famous poet *Muhalhil*. His poetry displayed the acme of the vainglory of the Arab tribes. His famous poem begins thus:

ألا هُمى بصحرتك فاصبحينا

ولا تبقى خمور الأندرينا¹⁸

“up maiden! Fetch the morning drink..
and spare not the wine of Andrin”

10. Abeed b al-Abras:

Abeed belonged to the banu Asad tribe and born in 455 A.D . His finest qaseeda included in Mu'allaqat by Tabraizi that begins thus:

أقفر من أهله ملحوب فالتقيأت فالذنوب¹⁹

As her family(tribe) left the water place Malhoob, mountains of Qutabyyat and the area of Zunoob became a desolate place.

Characteristics of the Verse of Pre-Islamic Period:

Verse of this age mirrors Bedouin life. Focus of their poetry was the beasts of burden and their beloved's place of living. And if it was poetess, her focus was elegies (the funeral notes or famously known as 'Marathi'). In *Imam un Nissa, Umer Raza* has counted many poetesses of the Age of ignorance. All of them wrote elegies. The poets were present in the cities as well; however, mostly the great poets belonged to the Bedouin background. Thus the poetry of the Age of Ignorance mostly reflects this very environment. Truthfulness, eloquent expression of soul enriched feelings, simplicity, natural way of expression, cascade of views without any apprehension; all are found in *Antara b. Shaddad* when he addresses *Abla*.

ولقد ذكرتك والرماح نواهل منى وبيض الهند تقطر من دق

فوددتُ تقبيل السيوف لأنها لمعت كبارق ثمر لظلمبتهم²⁰

I missed you the moment when the spears were thirsty of my blood. My blood was dripping down the shinning blade of the sword. I wished that I kiss the swords because they were shining the way your teeth shine.

Moreover, pithy but all-encompassing style i.e., to express the exhaustive points in the least possible words, the longest praise poems, imagination, the use of strange and unfamiliar words that sound good to ears, to compose the praise poem after much reflection and carefully selecting the diction. These are the things that need to be discussed in detail keeping in view the works of poet. But here is not a place of such detail so just a hint is sufficient so that the particular topic can easily be understood.

Purpose of the verse in in Pre-Islamic Period:

1: Wasf (Description):

— Praising the residence of beloved, means of transportation i.e. animal used for the journey towards beloved's place of living, wars and natural elements such as deserts, rivers, valleys, wind and rain.

2: Hamasah (Enthusiasm or war poetry):

Glorifying one's actions in the time of wars, braving the tragedies of life, mentioning one's morals and immortalizing the ancestors.

3: Hikmah (Maxim):

Essence of life experiences is found in common in the world of Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma and Tarfa b. Al Abd. Other [poets also showed their interests in making mention of these characteristics. Preaching good values and advising also fall under this category of purpose.

4: Naseeb/ Ghazal (Amatory):

Its theme is the fair sex (woman). Ghazal had two types:

- (i) *Ghazal Afeef* (ii) *Ghazal Sareeh*

The former is found abundantly in the verse of the Poets of *desert*.

5: Fakhr (Pride/Boosting):

- (i) *Personal* (ii) *Of Clan (Collective)*

Fakhar stands for pride on one's own tribe and people. This characteristic is common in the work of many poets.

In addition to it, their poetry had brevity with comprehensiveness. They used to express great things in a few words. Stretches of odes, fomenting of imagination, the use of strange and unknown words, unfathomable depth.

6: Madeeh (Praise):

1. Sycophancy (*Mad'h Kasaby*)

This kind of *Mad'h* is found in the poets like Nabigha Zubyani and Aasha Qays.

2. Praise with no expectation (*Mad'h Ghair Kasaby*).

This kind of Mad'h is produced at the moment of likeness and gratitude as by *Imru'u'l-Qays* and *Zuhayr b. Abi Sulma*.

7: Ritha' (Elegy):

This is a genre on which both men and women have tried their hands. In this genre; qualities of the departed ones are highlighted.

8: Hija' (Satire)

In order to defame someone, for disliking for him/her bad qualities as by *Labeed b. Rabeea's* and *Tarafah b. al-'Abd's*.

Poetry of Islamic Period:

Little poetry of early Islamic period has survived to our age.

With advent of Islam, the poetry saw some changes. a considerable decline with visible elements of 'Mad'h and especially the exaggeration in it. Similarly, extremism in *satire* ceased to exist and Amatory was also of no exception regarding the change. Didactic element is prominent in Islamic poetry in addition to the praise of Islam and Martyrs. In first century of Hijra, the glimpse of these social and economic changes in poetry can easily be seen. These changes were the result of Islamic movement and Arab conquest. These changes involve consistently increasing prosperity, financial stability, establishment of central Govt. tribes and their politics, grouping in religious and political fields as *Hazrat Hassan* says after the unholy murder of *Hazrat Uthman (R.A)*:

كَسَمَعْنُ وَشِيكَافِي دِيَارِهِمْ

الله اكبر يا ثارات عثمان!

"You will hear loud voice of revenge of
Uthman from their houses"

Apart from the mentioned purposes, people hardly adapted any other themes as the focus of people shifted from poetry to *Hifz* and elaboration of the Holy Qur'an.

Islamic Influence on Poetry:

Islam exercised a great deal of influence on words and contents of Arabic Poetry where expressions of Islamic intensions and meanings can be found in poetry, poets used references from Islamic thoughts. A clear glimpse of Islamic and Qur'anic influence is found in them. A few examples are given below.

Hazrat Abu Bakar says:

عَزَّرُوا الْأَمْلَاكَ فِي دَهْرِهِمْ
وَأَطَاعُوا كُلَّ كَذَّابٍ أَشِيرٍ

"They dignified their kings in their eras. they obeyed every mischivious person"

In this verse a word "عَزَّرَ" is used. It means "to respect". In holy Qur'an it is used as : ﴿وَعَزَّزُوهُ ۙ وَنَصَرُوهُ ۙ﴾²²

Hazrat Umar (R.A) says:

يَكْلَأُ الْخَلْقَ جَمِيعًا لِيَعِ
كَأَلَى الْخَلْقِ وَرِزَاقَ الْأُمَمِ

"He protects every being, he is the one who protects and feeds"

Allah almighty says in Holy Qur'an:

He used the word of "يَكْلَأُ"

﴿قُلْ مَنْ يَكْلَأُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ بَلْ هُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾²³

The word *Mulhid* in Hazrat Usman's (R.A.) poetry

وَأَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ لَيْسَ كَصَنَعِهِ

صَنِيعٌ وَلَا يَخْفَى عَلَى اللَّهِ مَلْحِدٌ

is derived from the Holy Qur'an.

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا﴾²⁴

"There is no artistry like that of Allah almighty and none of nonbelievers is hidden from His sight".

Similarly Hazrat Ali says: "The Abu Hukam died in war. His family damned."

فَبَارَ أَبُو حَكْمَةَ فِي الْوَعَى
هَنَاكَ وَأَسْرَتَهُ الْأَرْضُ ذُلُونَا

This word "بار" is used thus in the Holy Qur'an.

﴿وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ﴾²⁵

The word "al-bawar", "البوار" means "mortification".

Countless are the examples that show how far Islam Influenced the poetry.

Islamic Point of view:

Regarding poetry, Islamic point of view is quite clear. It is

the same as in the cases of all other arts. It reveals that literature, is a temporarily entertainment.

However, one of its prominent purposes is to be didactic and without being didactic besides, it also aims at creating urge for good morals. It carries harm and destruction. So Islam invites to good poetry and inspires disgust against the bad kind of poetry. In this regard, the study of Qur'anic verse is also necessary;

وَالشُّعْرَاءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوُونَ ۚ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّهُمْ فِي كُلِّ وَادٍ يَهِيمُونَ ۚ وَأَنَّهُمْ يَقُولُونَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُونَ ۚ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَانْتَصَرُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا ۚ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَنْقَلِبُونَ ۚ²⁶

It is stated by *Abi Bakra (R.A)*: Than Amr b. Al-Ahtam came to the Holy Prophet and talks for some time about Az-Zabriqan b. Badr.

On this, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) said:

"ان من البيان لسحرا، وان من الشعر لحكماً"²⁷

"Undoubtedly, some expressions carry magical effect and some carry wisdom."

He (S.A.W.) liked poetry and he used to pray for the one who admired him and he used to say: "الشعر ديوان العرب"²⁸. He was impressed when he listened to poetry. One Quraish attacked *Bannu Kaab*, a tribe of *Bannu Khuza'a* and killed many a men their and plundered the material. Since *Bannu Khuza'a* was ally of Muslims, *Amr b. Saleem Khuzai* came to seek help from the Holy Prophet and said:

يارب إني ناشد محمداً

حلف أبيتاً وأبيه الأئيداً

"O God, I am calling for *Muhammad's* (SWA) help.

He remained an ally of our for-father.

On hearing this, tears roll down the cheeks of prophet (PBUH) and he sets out for help.²⁹

Ka'ab b. Zuhayr defamed Prophet of Islam (PBUH). When Prophet (PBUH) came to know, he held him liable to punishment of death. *Ka'ab's* brother *Barjair* embraced Islam, wrote him that Prophet of Islam (PBUH) had handed the capital punishment to *Ka'ab b. Ashraf* because he used to utter vulgar poems about *Umm-e-Hakeem b. Abdul Muttalib* and *Umm-ul-Fazl b. Al-Abbas*. When brother's message reached, he turned pale. He ran to *Abu*

Bakr Siddique (R.A) and asked for shelter which was turned down on the ground that the one who had been condemned by Prophet of Islam would and should not get any rescue.. then he rushed to *Umer-e-Farooq (R.A)* and found the same answer. Then he counted his hope on *Ali (R.A)*. However, he became nearly disappointed after he got once again the cold reception. Nonetheless, *Ali (R.A)* told him a way out :

“Offer prayer with Prophet (PBUH), when he turns around after prayer, reach behind him and ask for his hand in order to take the oath of allegiance. He would surely give you hand behind. When you get the hand, ask for shelter. I am sure, he would pardon you.”

He did the same and then said these verses in which he mentioned:

وَقَالَ كُلُّ خَلِيلٍ كُنْتُ آمَلُهُ إِنَّكَ يَا ابْنَ أَبِي لَمَقْتُولٍ
فَقُلْتُ خَلُّو سَبِيلِي لَا أَبَاكُمْ فَكُلُّ مَا قَتَرَ الرَّحْمَنُ مَفْعُولٌ
نَبِئْتُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَوْعَدَنِي وَالْعَفْوُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ مَا مَوْعُولٌ

Every friend, on whom I counted for help, he said: o my brother! You are no more. I replied them to get aside of my way, may your father leave you. Everything decreed by Rehman (an attribute of Allah almighty) was bound to happen. I was told: Prophet (PBUH) had issued warning for me and, thus, pardon I beg you, o' Prophet.

When he had narrated it, Prophet (PBUH) asked him to mention Ansar in verse, and he also uttered an ode in their praise. It shows that Prophet (PBUH) did not dislike poetry. That's why he said:

”إِنَّ مِنَ الشَّعْرِ حِكْمَةٌ³⁰¹“

No doubt, there is wisdom in verse.

Fore mentioned Qur'anic verses contain poetic perfection in them. They also show that the possesses in it good and ill both. The poets, who are the ambassadors of destruction in the society, can push it into the deep void of morality. And a poet can be resembled with the bee which flies around farms and gardens sucking the nectar from different types and kinds of flowers and plantations. While believing not in settlement and permanence and losing his self in the world of imagination, whatever a poet says, it is not necessary; he has also practiced the same physically.

Sometimes, he is in intoxication of pride; contrary to it, he, in reality, does not have the same attribute. Next time we find him boasting about valour and rule when he himself is being ruled.

There are some other moments he thinks he has ventured enough in the ocean of life when, actually, he has not done enough. This is the unfulfilled desire of a poet which attracts him to the world of imagination; and, so, poetry takes its shape.

In the same way, these verses seem to have issued license to those poets who came to be Muslims, did good deeds, set paradise as their goal, versified the glory of *Jihad*, and provided guard with their verse to a true faith and actions of the faithful.

About poetry, Islam's point of view is clear and without any confusion. Islam does not confine the poetry to the frontiers of religion. However, Islam only condemns the poetry when it distracts from the universal moral values or it becomes instrumental to inspiring anti-faith feelings. These kinds of deviant poets only want to create rift in the peace of society and provoke people to commit sins by flooding their emotions with the frustrated ideas.

Besides, Prophet (PBUH) never showed contempt to poetry or poets. He, however, did not offer his approval towards those poets who are frustrated, mentally ill and psychologically disturbed and caused captures in a society of high values. Prophet of Islam even did not disapprove pre-Islamic poetry written in the context of 'Wasf', 'madh' and 'Ghazal'.

Umar Farooq (R.A) awarded the punishment of whipping and imprisonment to two poets vis-à-vis *Hutaiah* and *Abu Mihjan Thaqfi* not because they sang the grandeur of kindness and scarifies of the Age of Ignorance but because *Hutaiah* flung dirt on the repute of the people and *Abu Mihjan* drank wine openly (which is forbidden under Islamic jurisprudence) and then confessed, an act that brought him under the ire of the state.

In the history Islam, no Muslim ruler ever stopped the poets from versifying the beauty of forests, deserts, rivers, animals and hunting etc. Nor they have ever limited them to glorifying only Islam. "Contrary to it Prophet (PBUH) demanded specifically of his faithful companions to say poetry. Then he praised and respected the good feelings of the poet."³¹

Qurtubi quotes *Abul Hasan* "When Surah Shoara' was revealed, Hazrat Hassan (R.A), Hazrat Ka'ab b. Malik (R.A) and

Hazrat Abdullah b. Rawaha (R.A) came weeping to Prophet of Islam (PBUH) asking, "O' Prophet of Allah, Allah Almighty has revealed these verses of Holy Qur'an and He almighty knows we are the poets". Prophet (PBUH) replied; "Read ahead!"

﴿الذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ﴾

﴿وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهَا إِلَىٰ آلِهِمْ لَا تَجِدُونَ فِيهَا شُكْرًا وَلَا كُفْرًا سَوَاءٌ عَمِلُوا فِيهَا بِحَسَنٍ أَوْ بِفَسَادٍ﴾

And then He (PBUH) said: "This is about you".

The Prophet said; *Help others and don't say anything but truth. Don't mention mothers of followers of Islam.*

So the poet of Prophet (PBUH) Hassan (R.A) said about Abu Sufyan:

هَجَوْتُ مُكْتَبًا فَأَجَبْتُ عَنْهُ

وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ فِي ذَلِكَ الْجَزَاءُ³²

*You spoke ill of prophet of Allah (PBUH) and I only
answered you for it
and God has my reward in store.*

And when Hassan (R.A) stands guard for the repute of Prophet of Islam before the infidels of Makkah, they are left answerless because Gabriel (famously known as *Rooh ul Qudus* or *Jibrael*) lends him aid.

Prophet (PBUH) said:

وَجَاهِ حَسَّانَ فِشْفَىٰ وَأَشْتَفَىٰ

Hassaan talked about their ills and fouls. This way he became successful and blessed.

Islam gave such a prominence to poet and poetry that Prophet of Islam (PBUH) had a pulpit made for Hassan (R.A) in *Masjid Nabawi*. There he used to recite his poetry and defended Islam as a faith and Muhammad (PBUH) as a prophet of Allah³⁵. *Hazrat Hassaan (R.A) continued it even after Prophet of Islam (PBUH) had passed away.*

Umayya b. Abi As-Salt was the one who has positive thinking in his poetry and Prophet of Allah (PBUH) used to listen to his verse and showed his likeness. *Hazrat Amr b. Al-Shura'id* quotes his father who says:

One day I was sitting behind prophet of Islam while riding. Prophet (PBUH) asked me if I knew any poetic verse of Umayya b. Abi Sallat. I replied in yes and recited one verse.

*Prophet demanded for more and I narrated hundred verses. He demanded for more after every verse.*³⁵

Many occasions like the one narrated above strengthen the case that Prophet (PBUH) viewed poetry with praising eyes. Prophet's words and actions both come in conformity with the claim. He listened to the poets, accepted their apologies in verse and pardoned them. The Righteous Caliphs also followed Prophet's foot prints. *Abu Bakr Siddique (R.A)* is quoted of having listened to the poetry of *Zuhayr b. Sulma*.

نعم ممترك الجياع إذا حب السفير وساقى الخمر
ولنعم خشو الدرع أنت إذا دعيت نزال ولج في الذعر
ومرهق النيران يحمد في السلا و لو غير ملعن القدر

After listening, he confirmed, 'yes, the Prophet (PBUH) was the same praised in the verses'. And then he said, 'Zuhayr is a wonderful poet'.³⁶

In short, these evidences should bear witness that Islam has viewed the poetry as an aesthetic art and guided the poets by setting limits for them within parameters of morality. Islam holds that poets are responsible members of society and correction of society on divine moral values stands higher than anything else. So, Islam condemns only that poetry which could be disastrous for a society. The verse which calls people towards faith and incorporates in it aesthetic beauty is always encouraged by Islam.

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