

Reflecting the Folk Element of Water in the Poetry of Nizami

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DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.13005/bbra/1617>

(Received: 05 February 2015; accepted: 10 March 2015)

Nizami is the famous poet of the sixth century and the apparent master of visualization in Persian literature. The variety and plurality of imagery and the necessity of using colloquial and folk language (slang) made him to create theme and use different kinds of proverbs and allegories. Using the practical and theoretical wisdom, abundant information and social understanding, he created exquisite images in the poetry. The present study aims to investigate the role and importance of water as a folk element in the poetry of Nizami and to answer these questions: How did Nizami handle water as a folk element in his poetry and how did he use it in three Mathnavies of Khosro and Shirin, Haft Peykar and Leyli and Majnoon. The underlying problem, i.e. the creation of water is first investigated; then the reflection of water as a folk element in the poetry of Nizami is discussed and finally, the ability of the poet to describe this element as different kinds of imageries is discussed.

Key words: Folk Beliefs, water, Khosro and Shirin, Haft Peykar, Leyli and Majnoon, Nizami Ganjavi.

Water is one of the four (quadruplet) elements (water, wind, earth, air), so that these elements have been discussed and debated in different thoughts and beliefs from the past and sometimes all of the four elements, or one or two of them are introduced as the first materials or "Materia Prima".

The origin of this word in Avesta, period of Sanskrit, ancient Persia and Pahlavi is ap, apa, api and ap, respectively.

Considering the importance and role of water in the Iranian culture, it has been the source of many symbols, myths and religions; and has had folk stories and lots of myths indicating the intellectual foundations of ancient Iranians since

the ancient era from Mithraism to the contemporary period, and as an Ahurian place has been considered a safe refuge for Zarathustra semens and has never been caught by the devil (Ghoreishi, 2001, 211-226).

Water is so respected by Iranian that the Greek historians have attributed the praise of the element of water to Iranians. The history of "Herodotus" says that Iranians sacrificed and ransomed for water during a ceremony (Yahaghi, 1996, 29).

In addition, this element has a great place in Islam. Water has been vitalizing and sanative for humans so that it is mentioned as "mercy" and "vitalizing" in Quran.

Relying on the library studies using a descriptive method, this article investigated the place of water as one of the elements of the folk culture in three poems of Leyli and Majnoon, Khosro and Shirin and Haft Peykar from the book

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of Kulliate Nizami Ganjavi edited by deceased Vahid Dastgerdi. Referring to Mathnavies, pages and lines, the right referral letter shows the name of Mathnavi and numbers show the pages and lines, respectively; for example: (Haf/50/6) refers to Haft Peykar Mathnavi, page 50, line 6.

Considering the reflection of the folk culture in the poetry of Nizami, some theses and articles are written; however, considering the reflection the element of water as one of the folk elements in the poetry of Nizami, no separate research is conducted.

Water and Amsal o Hekam

Adage is a term according to one of the writers «staying and living among humans, vitalizing, laughing, crying, making cry, causing a battle or leading a conflict to peace and a miff to placidity...» (Jamshidipour, 1990, Introduction).

Adages are important since they not only record anecdotes and stories, but also like poems, record and maintain some words, language phrases and their original meanings. As the poetries of renowned poets have positively affected the maintenance of Persian words, phrases and allegories, adages have also played their roles well and have been effective and strong factors to survive the Persian language (Bahmanyar, Ahmad, 1990, Introduction, p «Y»).

Deceased Mehdi Partovi Amoli wrote

«Amsal o Hekam expresses the moods of nations and societies more comprehensively than other folk literatures. Virtual and metaphorical meanings and concepts used in Amsal o Hekam represent stages in which nations theatricalize all of their moods such as sadness and happiness, imaginations, superstitions, beliefs and traditions and generally, all of these issues and show them to viewers and listeners. Humans' natural environment along with all of its features is formed and looms as irony and allegory in Amsal o Hekam».

Nizami is one of the orators and storytellers whose speech according to Dr. Zarrinkoob seems to be clearly "saturated" with all kinds of samples undoubtedly due to his dominance over the popular culture and his effort to close his speech to the horizon of popular perception; it is something without which no storytelling poet achieves the perfect method of poetic storytelling" (Zarrinkoob, 1995, P 5-234).

To be out of hand: the maximum inability, the

maximum misfortune (Shoaei, 1972, 4) I told him to find a solution for the sake of God / Since I was maximally inable (Haf/ 169/ 8)

Water rarely flows uphill

Equivalent to "Water does not flow uphill" (Bahmanyar, 1990, 3) Now you should be patient and not to hesitate / Since Water rarely flows uphill

(Kh/ 174/ 9)

Water in the brook

Luck and prosperity, having a favorable time. I pour my water in this brook / By that aromatic rose water (L/ 78/ 17) Mouth is still full of the alkahest / Water is still in the youth brook (Kh/ 315/ 12)

Water does not remain in a brook

Things and conditions change. Equivalent to "It is a long lane that has no turning" (Bahmanyar, 1990, 4) Nobody is eternal / Water does not always remain in a brook (Kh/ 349/ 14)

Standing pools gather filth: (Shoaei, 1972/ 77)

They own basin and are satisfied / Standing pools gather filth (Haf/ 322/ 4)

Water and Slangs

Slang

Slangs are phrases and words enjoying a meaning except their literal meaning among the public and being outstanding and common among a nation by this characteristic. Searching slangs not only clarifies the historical, geographical, mythological and dialectical records of a nation, but also contributes to solving the problems of those dealing with ancient texts and is also one of the leading resources to develop Persian words. Using slangs in the poetry of Nizami indicates his companionship with commons and the poet's "reflection and conversance" in the popular language and culture.

Water does not come after water

The sky will not fall in, i.e. comfort and safety (Amini, 1971) I was tortured and he did not come / As if no water came after water (Kh/ 202/12)

Meaning of the line

I lost my honor and he was not affected at all, as if nothing has happened.

Water and Medical Information

Humans are always scared of and disgusted with disease and consequently, death. Therefore, they have been seeking ways to treat

diseases from the past. Therefore, the history of medical knowledge began with the beginning of human life. Nizami is titled "Hakim" ("the Sage") due to his information on different sciences; he has been especially accustomed to common medical information and beliefs rooted in popular culture and has mentioned this in his poems.

Praising this science, he said to his son, Mohammad in the Mathnavi of "Leyli and Majnoon": Although order is dignified / Ask for the useful knowledge In this comparable world / Try to achieve self-analysis.

Dropsy

A disease causing "[the person] to drink much water, cannot tolerate thirst and his feet and legs swell" (Alakhavini Albokhari, 1992, 450). He should drink pumpkin water / To prevent dropsy.

Rose water

Water extracted from rose. Hereunder julep indicating rose water, Allameh Dehkhoda said: "It is honey mixed with rose water and so cooked that it is consolidated, and the bitter rose water is the best kind for treatment". I am not worried since I pour rose water in it / Rose water is good due to its bitterness (Kh / 342/ 9)

Rose water was poured on the comatose person to become conscious. When he became unconscious / he was poured rose water on his face (L/ 207/ 1)

Meaning of the line

Considering his laxity and unconsciousness, every eye poured rose water on him.

Water and Astronomic Information

Astronomy and meteorology have always been very important from the past. Since a long time ago, the path has been found using stars at night, so that it is also mentioned in Quran. Nizami used them not only to visualize (being a poetic skill) but also to write and eternize (in his poem) the beliefs and opinions about the astronomic statements having been rooted in this territory since several decades ago.

Sun and Its Rise and Fall in Water

Semitic nations and Arabs believed that the sun disappears into a hot spring when going down and emerges in mornings from an animal spring in darkness called well of cruelty or western well. (Haf/ 30/ 10)

Pool finds that germinant moon and reflects it in itself as it reflects the sun (Dastgerdi,

Haft Peykar, 1984, 300).

Water and beliefs

Superstition is a social-psychological phenomenon indicating past dark periods in human life and having pervaded the human mind so that it practically dominates over his thinking and logic and is incorporated in his instinct. In fact, intellect and logic cannot always overcome the instinct dominated by superstition (Waring, 1992, 5).

Believing these beliefs and visualizing them, Nizami has especially embellished his poetry.

Beliefs about Animals

If the chicken becomes pregnant and the chick begins to grow, the chicken never leaves the chick. The south were pregnant / While the north were asleep

Beliefs about Plants

Lilies grow in the water, sleep and close during the day and open again during the night (Dastgerdi, Haft Peykar, 1984, 316).

Lilies live in the water / To sleep

(Haf/ 316/ 10)

Beliefs about Jewelry

Gold is made in the water of the slept and mere spring. Popularly, gold is made near the pole in the springs the water of which is always frozen.

It is said that when the water sleeps / It becomes the spring of gold, not the spring of water (Haf/ 47/ 6)

Pearl and Rainwater

Popularly, when the Nissan rain falls, ammonite will come on the water, open its wide mouth and catch raindrops; since these drops go inside the ammonite and due to the feature having inserted an eternal power inside the ammonite, pearl is created, bred inside the ammonite and grown to a certain extent. Some people say that the ammonite's luster represents saliva being always in the mouth. Nasir said: "It is because the year in which more Nissan rain falls, affluence occurs" (Khaje Nasir Toosi, 1984, 85). What do I say, what did it say / Water is obtained from the cloud and dram of Eden If the cloud is generous to the ammonite / The ammonite will be faithful to him What is poured by the cloud is caught by the ammonite)Haf/ 19/ 4-6) If I pour water like the ammonite / Finally, I worth a clump of grass and water (Haf/ 18/ 8) Others benefit from themselves / As much as the ammonite benefits from the Nissan rain

Folk Beliefs about Mythical and Unknown Creatures:

Fairy

According to ancient traditions, "fairy is a gentle and very beautiful creature originated from fire, not seen with eye and bewitching the human using its extraordinary beauty (Yahaghi, 1996, 110).

Fairy makes fire using water

Someone was building the fire at the center of the water / You said that fairy-like creature is fairy (L/ 94/ 10) and conditions got worse it was fairy / Since there are many fairies in the springs (L/ 87/ 14)

Daemon

According to traditions, "daemons are ugly, horned and crafty creatures eating the humans flesh. They are often cruel and hardhearted, have great power, are dexterous in all types of incantations and arbitrarily form in stories (Yahaghi, 1996, 202).

Daemons live in the springs

In the spring where daemons live / fairy goes mad by daemons (Kh/ 63/ 11)

Water and Folk Myths

According to one of the researchers, "story is one of the arts having received attention of humans from the earliest times, so that it dates back to the time when handwriting and calligraphy were not invented" (Sharifzadeh, 1993, 293).

One of the things fitting the story into the realm of art is the fact that "stories are full of the hints and symbols affecting everybody's morale. Although science and intellect constantly distance the human from the spirit world, these myths mysteriously bind the human to the entire nature (Hedayat, 1965, p 120 & 121).

Like other prominent poets, Nizami knew the value and significance of the story and its today relationship with the far past and it is maybe why he has based his Mathnavies on stories and myths common for people and shining orally and sometimes written especially in our literature. "It is a fact that the origin of some military heroes is closely associated with folklore, mythical cases and historical characters." (Benny Kiev, 1993, 316)

Myth of Alkahest

In the opinion of commons, alkahest is a spring that everybody drinking its water or washing himself in it will become invulnerable and live forever. According to narratives, alkahest is in the

darkness and Eskandar went into the darkness seeking for it, but he failed and Khezr drank it and became eternal. Qasas ul Anbiya Neyshabouri quoting by the culture of allusions about the story of Zulgharnein says: Zulgharnein was seeking for eternal life. He was said: "God has a spring behind the mountain of Qaf in the darkness... Zulgharnein intended to go... appointed Khezr as the corps leader... gave him a jewel and said: use this jewel when you lose the corps and become helpless. He put the jewel down and a spring was made there. He washed himself in it, drank its water, thanked his God and left there..." (Shamisa, 1990, 450).

There are many things in the Eden not yet eaten / As Zulgharnein not drinking the alkahest (Kh/ 458/ 8) There was one sign in the darkness that night / In which the alkahest was hidden (Kh/ 131/ 5) If you drink alkahest from these lines / you will survive like Khezr drinking the alkahest

Water and Myths

Myth is the oldest response due to the human's fear of the existence that has been studied and analyzed from different viewpoints during the recent centuries and everybody has been immersed in this boundless sea in the field of his thought and research and has comprehensively defined it in his opinion. Therefore, during the history of this science, different isms have been formed in different branches being complementary, analogous and sometimes contradictory since each of them investigates this phenomenon from a special aspect. However, we can say that the investigation of all of the aspects of this mysterious phenomenon is impossible. The reason lies in the nature of the myth, since the myth is a mobile phenomenon fleeing from being touched and allegedly "resists any rational justification" (Ratoon, translation, 2008, 3).

Myth is based on the human mind's idealism. Therefore, the earliest human firstly poetized using his myth-making. Through this way, the myth is structurally connected to the poem being rythme. It is said that "Myth represents a pole of poetizing" (Imami, 1998, 211).

The present article aims to find the mythical pole of the poem. Since such a great discussion is not tolerated in this article, it is summarized to find shiny and succulent threads of the primary and sacred archetype of water in the

poetry of Nizami since the poet cleans the temporal dust of this primary archetype surviving in the unknown depth inside the humans and uses it as brilliant raindrops to clarify and smooth his speech.

The myth of water is one of the brilliant motifs expressed in the poetries of Persian poets through the delicate songs of the spring and the musical whisper of the rain in the mountains. Different decorations being the main semen of the creation and owned by the poets represent their unconscious attention to this primary archetype of humanity leading to regeneration, longevity and eternity.

“In the Surrey language, *a* represented water but meant loading and reproduction. In the motifs carved on stones obtained from Mesopotamia, water and fish are the symbols of fertility and loading and pregnancy” (Eliade, 1997, 190).

- a) According to the age of antiquity (the ancient era), Moses met his wife near a well (Bible: 85).
- b) Therefore, we find that “love is born near the water” (Shavaleh, 1999, 8).
- c) Khosrow, the Sassanid king saw Shirin in the spring:
- d) He habitually looked everywhere / Suddenly he saw a moon
- e) She was not the mercury mirror / She was descended from the Moon of Nakhshab
- f) She was reflected like a flower in the blue water / And wore a silk (Nizami Ganjavi, 1983, 90)

In the ancient Iran, Anahita, the goddess of water was a powerful, graceful and popular god. “Perhaps we can say that the worship of this god dates back to the first millenary B.C. and her religion has continued till the Parthian period as “Nanai”. Nanai is the name of Sami, the mother of Maga mata, the Great God the religion of whom was extended from Mediterranean coast to the coasts of Dejele, Forat, Send valley and the eastern borders of the Great Iran and was worshiped by Greeks, Babylonians, Loddies and people of the Asia Minor as Artemis, Anahid, Ishtar and Nanai (Gobari, 1996, 41).

Then it entered Avesta and Aban Yasht praises it. Aredvi Sura Anahita is created by Mazda (the God of wisdom). His beautiful and white arms adorned with magnificent and spectacular jewels

are as robust as a horse’s shoulder” (Doostkhah, 2008, 298).

According to Yasna, water is praised with the feature of fertility: “We ask you, the fertile water for help, you who are like a mother, you who care the poor like a milch cow and are the best and the sweetest beverage.” (Same, 2008, 321).

Therefore, the simile of a woman and soul mate to the spring and flowing water, respectively expressed in the poetries is resulted from this old belief, so that this belief in the poetry of Nizami leads to different illustrations and allegories. According to Leyli and Majnoon, Majnoon’s father wooed Leyli from her father as the following:

My inferior wishful son / Wants to marry your daughter
(Nizami Ganjavi, 1960, 99)

“Mermaids known as Nymphes in Greek mythology were the wives of Gods of all flowing waters, springs and fountains intervening in the human life” (Eliade, 1997, 202).

According to the Persian poetries, these fairies or nymphes are near the seas, rivers and springs and according to Nizami “there are many fairies in the springs” (Refer to: Fairy near the springs ...)

Life and Eternity

The holy emanation of water is the new generation and rebirth, since “water is the womb of the world where all potential facilities exist” (Eliade, 1997, 192).

Therefore, we find that “the motif of the water has a special attraction in the poets’ minds and they resemble their life to the movement of a Carina” (Delvasho, 1987, 6).

“Water being the key to the creation of the universe and the source of all gemma is a magical substance enjoying remedial or magic-medical property, is curative, leads to rejuvenation and the main eternal life. Alkahest is the leader of the water attributed to the sky by recent theoretical speculations. The flowing water and the springs of rejuvenation and alkahest are mythological versions of a metaphysical and religious reality being single and life, power and eternity are hidden and safe in the water” (Eliade, 1997, 193).

The myth of the water expressed as allegory, simile and metaphor in post-Islamic Persian poems and prose is only its literal reflection. Nizami symbolically versified the

magnificent myth of the eternity spring and alkahest (Refer to: myth of alkahest.

Water and Traditions

Traditions, customs and religions are a part of the rules of social group life transferred in consequence of experience throughout the societies' history and inherited from the past to the future. "The investigation and codification of these traditions are very important in terms of social history, sociology and understanding the change in the people's thoughts and reflections during different historical periods" (Bayhaqi, 1990, 143).

In his poems, Nizami has referred to these traditions where possible.

It has been a tradition from the past that the groom was sprayed rose water in the face. Nizami has referred to this tradition in the Mathnavi of Haft Peykar in Mahan myth when Mahan goes near his bride.

When shame was reduced due to love / Mahan went to his beloved party

When she saw his face / she commended him like kings

She accepted him in her special position / And sprayed rose water (Haf / 260/10-12)

Washing the Dead with Rose Water and Camphor

Rose water and musk were mixed with amber / They were poured on the bloody body Washing with rose water and camphor / led to a bright body like light (Kh/419/10 & 11)

CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that using folk beliefs can be one of the main characteristics of the poetry of Nizami. Using tangible elements receivable from the people's lives, he provided necessary conditions for expressing thoughts and visualizing and led to consultation, sympathy and rapport with his addressees. In fact, he shows that he is a mighty poet not only regarding metaphor and simile, but also regarding the expression of folk elements as different types of imagery so that he can be a model for other poets. In a comparative study, water not only highly affected the poetry of Nizami as a sacred element, but also its reflection as an element of folk elements in all dimensions of oral literature in Khosro and Shirin is higher than this in two other another poems.

We can achieve the belief that the human

can ignore everything; however, he has never been able to ignore his beliefs. This applies to all humans with all types of thoughts and insights.

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