



REFLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL CONDITION ON THE MASNAVI-E MANVI OF MAULANA JALALUDDIN RUMI

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Abstract

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi was born in 1207 A.D. and died in 1273A.D. From 1219 A.D. till the death of Rumi the entire period was full of battles, killings of innocent people, destruction and plundering of cities. The reason behind was battle of crusade and invasion of Mongols over the Islamic empire. These two battles had left tremendous effects on the political conditions of the Islamic empire. The battle of crusade had weakened the Islamic empire however, the continuous invasion of Mongols which, culminated in the sack of Baghdad and assassination of Caliph Al-Mustasim Billah had not only weakened the Islamic Empire but the Islamic empire came to an end with the sack of Baghdad in 1258 A.D. If all these factors are considered we shall come to the conclusion that as the Masnavi-e Manvi of Rumi was written while the invasion of Mongols on the Islamic empire was completed and their rule over Islamic empire was established therefore, the reflection of political is clearly seen on the Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi.

Keywords: *Baghdad, Masnavi-e Manvi, Political Condition, Reflection, Rumi.*

Introduction: The topic Reflection of Contemporary Political Condition on the Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is quite important. If we have a glimpse of the history of Islamic empire we will find that the Islamic empire had already achieved its full political maturity within the first century of Islamic rule and rising from Mecca, Islam reached Syria, North Africa and then leaping the straits of Gibraltar it hammered at the door of Europe. Islam conquered Sicily and reached as far as the campagna and Abruzzi in the south. Using Spain as a spring board it jumped into Provence, Northern Italy and even to Switzerland. From its strong

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hold in Spain and Sicily it transmitted its powerful cultural influence to the whole of Europe. But, by thirteenth century A.D. Islam and Islamic empire which, were already threatened from within were confronted with two of the most dangerous enemies. The first being the crusaders from the west, who were rather a familiar and the second was Mongols from the east, who were more formidable in the immediate effects of its destruction. Therefore, while Crusaders exercised an indirect, and important influence on the spiritual growth of Rumi, the Mongols had a direct bearing on his life. In the autumn of 1219 A.D. Mongol invasion commenced with the attack on Transoxiana by Changez Khan, and Otrar town being the first target fell after a siege of five or six months. After Otrar, Uzand, Jand, Bukhara, Samarqand and on 13th February 1258 A.D. Halaku Khan captured Baghdad, massacred 800000 of its inhabitants, killed Al-Mustasim, the last Abbasid Caliph on 20th February in the village of Waqf, plundered the city and destroyed the literary and scientific monuments of the once glorious metropolis of Islam.

The Mongol conquest resulted in the fall of the population, mostly among the working class in town and country due to massacre. A Sizable number of remaining population was abducted into slavery and captivity and most of the remaining members of the society took flight to safer places deserting thickly populated areas which, resulted in deterioration of economic condition of the society. Thus, Islamic empire which, was already suffering from various social evils; during and after Mongol invasions came under severe new human problems like insecurity, poverty, and hunger which, further aggravated the social condition of Islamic empire in the given period. All these happened mainly due to the lack of leadership and political change due to the establishment of Mongol rule. Maulana Rumi was also a witness to these political changes and grave human problems therefore, the political condition of the time played a crucial role in shaping the mind and thoughts of Rumi which, got reflected on the Masnavi-e Manvi of Rumi.

Review of literature: The review of literature suggests that the topic reflection of contemporary political conditions on the Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is new and quite important. However, no systematic article has been written on the topic. Therefore, the present topic has been selected for this article to find out the reflection of contemporary political condition on the Masnavi-e Manvi.

Case Study

Reflection of Political Condition: Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi is regarded as a monumental work on mysticism. The Masnavi of Rumi is widely read only because it leads

one towards divinely abode and how to spend life in this material world. However, this is not known to the most of the readers that apart from mysticism this masnavi also points towards the reflection of contemporary politics on it. To find out the reflection of contemporary political condition on Masnavi-e Manvi of Rumi few stories have been selected. However, this is to be clarified that Maulana has dealt with the contemporary politics in a symbolic way and not directly as the fear of life from Mongol was already there.

There are some stories in Masnavi-e Manvi which, prove the reflection of contemporary politics on Masnavi-e Manvi of Rumi. For example stories like: Bayan-e Tawakkul wa Tarke Jehd,(1) Jawab-e Sher Nakhchiran Ra,(2) Tarjihe Nakhchiran Tawakkul Ra,(3) Tarjih Nehadane Sher Jehd Ra,(4) Tarjih Nehadane Nakhchiran Tawakkul Ra,(5) Digar Baar Bayan Kardane Sher Jehdra, (6) Baz Tarjih Nehadane Nakhchiran , (7) Baz Tarjih Nehadane Sher Jehd Ra, (8) Muqarrar Shudane Tarjihe Jehd, (9) Inkar Kardane Nakhchiran bar Khargosh, (10) Jawab Guftane Khargosh Nakhchiran Ra,(11) Eteraze Nakhchiran,(12) Baz Jawab Dadane Khargosh,(13) Zikre Danishe Khargosh,(14) Baz Justane Nakhchiran az Khargosh,(15) Poshida Dashtane Khargosh,(16) Qissa-e Makre Khargosh ba Sher, (17) Ranjidan-e Sher az Der Amdane Khargosh, (18) Ham Dar Bayane Makre Khargosh, (19) Rasidane Khargosh ba Sher, (20) Uzr Guftane Khargosh, (21) Jawab Guftane Sher Khargosh Ra, (22) Pa Wapas Kashidane Khargosh, (23) Pursidane Sher az Sababe Pa wapas Kashidan, (24) Nazar Kardane Sher dar Chah, (25) Muzdah Burdane Khargosh, (26) Jama Shudane Nakhchiran, (27) Pand Dadane Khargosh Nakhchiran Ra, (28) Raftane Gurg wa Rubah, (29) Imtehan Kardane Sher Gurg Ra(30) and Adab Kardane Sher Gurg Ra. (31)

The above stories reflect the contemporary politics. The mentioned stories are narrated in the shape of a dialogue between the lion and the preys. The lion is shown adopting the path of efforts while the preys are shown adopting the path of containment. The words jehd and tawakkul are also symbolical. The weaker section of wild animals is represented as adopting the path of containment and the lion which, represents the stronger section of the animals and who has been gifted with the claws and with strong and big teeth is shown adopting efforts. In these stories efforts and containment represent two sections of the society; one being the ruler and another being the ruled or subjects. Here in these stories lion represents Mongols who were not only strong as lion but also barbarous and the preys represent the people who are ruled and had no strong leadership. Here in these stories Maulana has shown the lion always making efforts and preys always believing in containment and it was due to the fear and weakness

because the politics had changed which, was not in their favour. They had lost the Caliph and the local leadership and they were helpless due to political change.

If Masnavi-e Manvi of Rumi is studied minutely one can find that Maulana does not believe in containment. He is the only poet who taught that life should be full of actions and therefore, tried to infuse fresh soul in the lives of human beings. He also does not like the passive people. For example, at one place in the Divan-e Shams Tabrez Maulana says “Yesterday Shaikh taking lamp in his hand was searching round the town (and was telling) I am tired of demon and wild beast and wish to get mankind. From these weak elements fellow travelers my heart is displeased. I wish to get humankind like Rustam and Shere Khuda. I said that we have searched but such types of humankinds are not found. He replied that I wish to get those who are not found.” (32)

Here in these stories Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi conveys two general messages; the first message is that the politics has changed therefore, people were weak and hence, they had to be polite, submissive, and obedient otherwise they would have been killed like the wolf because wolf did not divide the prey as per the wish of the lion. Another message is that in comparison of ruling class of the Islamic empire who were defeated, the Mongols were hard working and believed in action and not in containment as did the ruling class as well as the subjects of the Islamic empire which, had come to an end. But this is the satire on the ruling class as well as on the people of the Islamic Empire. Another message, which, Maulana has conveyed is that the people like Mongol can be subdued if people are united and having the trick as once prey unitedly did with the lion by carrying the lion up to the well and after reaching the well lion peeped in to the well and seeing another lion in the well tried to fight and thus jumped in to well and the preys were happy.

Further study of the Masnavi-e Manvi suggests that there is one story named ‘Giraftar Shudane Baaz Mayane Jughadaan ba Virane.’(33) As the heading of this story reveals, through this story Maulana Rumi has tried to convey the same message which, he has conveyed through the stories of lion and other animals and like the other stories this story is also a symbolic one. The eagle is a bird which, of course is the king among the birds and it prey the other birds. Eagle has been bestowed such weapons that no bird can try to risk the life by fighting with eagle. Because eagle possesses sharp claws and beak which, help in catching prey, killing, and eating. However, through this story Maulana has tried to convey the message that, even king of birds like eagle can be arrested by the birds which, are often prey of eagle. For example, in the above-mentioned story owls capture the eagle in a deserted place however, this is not done

by a single owl but by many owls unitedly. Here in this story Maulana has highlighted two points; firstly, that an eagle, the king of birds can be captured and secondly the eagle can be captured unitedly.

The above story of Maulana Rumi is included in the second volume of the masnavi suggesting that this masnavi was dictated when the Mongol invasion was completed and their rule was established and they were dangerous like eagle. However, owls captured the eagle in a deserted place because they were united and unitedly anything can be achieved. Through this story Maulana Rumi has tried to convince the weak subjects of the Islamic empire that like eagle, Mongols can also be captured when they are alone or in a small group but for this unity is must. Because, Maulana Rumi was aware that the defeat of Islamic states and even the Abbasid Caliphate was due to disunity among the independent states and the Islamic empire. So, Maulana tried to convey that, Mongols can be defeated but unitedly.

Similarly, few stories found in Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalauddin Rumi are also throwing enough light on the political condition of the Islamic empire. These stories are symbolic but if one can study minutely it become clear that the lion represent the invader and the other animals are the common people of the Islamic empire who cannot stand against the formidable invading army. Therefore, it is obvious that if they cannot resist, they must make containment. Rumi was also aware from the fact that the subject of Islamic empire cannot stop the powerful Mongol army. Rumi also knew that he cannot advice the people openly otherwise he would have faced wrath of the Mongols. Therefore, he conveyed the message to the people in the shape of stories and that too through the stories of lion and other weak animals which, are symbolic and through these stories Rumi conveyed the message. Study of those stories suggest that Rumi advised them to be careful and to escape from further loss and destruction, obey them and wait for the suitable time to take revenge as the politics had changed and they had no leader who can fight for them. For example: Jawab Guftane Rubah Sher Ra, (34) Jawab Guftane Rubah Khar Ra, Jawab Guftane Aan Khar Rubah Ra, Jawab Guftane Rubah Khar Ra Ke Man Raziam, (35) Baz Jawab Guftane Khar Rubah Ra, (36) Baz Jawab Guftane Rubah Khar Ra, (37) Jawab Guftane Rubah Ra Ke Tawakkul Behtarin Kasbhast, (38) Jawab Guftane Rubah Khar Ra, (39) Zabun Shudane Khar Dar Daste Rubah, (40) Burdane Rubah Khar Ra Peshe Sher, (41) Duwum baar Amdane Rubah Bar Aan Khar, (42) Jawab Guftane Rubah Khar Ra, (43) Ghalib Shudane Makre Rubah Bar Khar (44) and Said Kardane Sher Aan Khar Ra. (45)

All the above referred stories as from the names are clear depict the condition of a weak person and a strong person. As the weak cannot fight with the strong therefore, the weak must surrender in front of the stronger. The same condition has been depicted in all the stories in which, all the weaker animals are seen obeying and surrendering in front of the lion and they follow what the lion says and wish. If any animal goes against the wish of lion, is killed. Rumi has explained this in one of the stories in which, wolf is assigned the responsibility of dividing the prey. However, wolf does not divide the prey as per the wish of the lion and therefore, the wolf is killed by the lion. So, by narrating these stories Rumi alerted the people against Mongol invaders who did not spare even the women and children.

Conclusion: To conclude it can be said that there are several stories in the Masnavi-e Manvi of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi which, shed light on the contemporary politics. However, these stories do not shed any light directly they are just reflections and that too from the tongue of animals.

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