

An Explanation of Mystic Thoughts Using Astronomy in Sanaee's Poetical Works

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Abstract: *The sky and its beauty have always been interesting for man. This interest and curiosity led to the emergence of astronomy in which Iranians made a big contribution. After Iranians accepted Islam and became familiar with Quran verses which mentioned God's kingdom, their interest in astronomy increased so that writers, poets and mystics used it for conceptualization in Sanaee's poetical works. In the present article, the development trend of astronomy and its influence on some mystic works is studied. Meantime, it is discussed how astronomy was used in Sanaee's poetical works.*

Key words: *sky, Sanaee, God's kingdom, astronomy*

I. Introduction

Since his settlement on the Earth, man has been influenced by natural and unnatural factors of his surroundings. Undoubtedly, unknown factors made him surprised and think. He got even more surprised by looking at objects, animals and other creatures on the Earth, shining objects above him which didn't have sun's blinding light.

As his awareness and knowledge of his surroundings increased, he, with a feeling of fear and surprise, regard it a sustainable and charming attraction (Dagani, 2011, p.5) and chose sky objects as their goddess.

Vast space above Earth is called Aaseman in Persian (sky). Aaseman means like Aas. This name was chosen for sky's movement. Sky is called Sama' in Arabic, meaning everything that is over something and casts a shadow on it such as cloud, roof ...etc (Birouni, 2006, p: 58). The dome-shaped and seemingly infinite space is the home of countless sky objects including stars, planets and comets which constitute billion galaxies and systems. It's also in the space which clouds, snow, hail, mist and gases (Mahyar, 2009,p:8).

Ancestors thought sky constituted a set of firmaments; each called a sky (Masaheb et al. Bit entry Aaseman). They believed that sky shining objects have a direct relationship with human community so as to be used for fortunetelling and revealing human individuals' destiny. Thus, they always tracked the movement of stars and recorded them. Based on these superstitious beliefs which were illusions, they managed to create a scientific collection later called astronomy (Hekmat, 2008, p: 88). Astronomy is defined as a study of the positions, movements, structures, destinies and lives of sky stars. In the development of astronomy to a science, astronomers discovered a lot of basic laws dominating sky objects (Dagani, 2011, p: 5).

It's generally accepted that Kaldanian and Babylon were the masters of astronomy; they were founders of astronomy; they observed stars; they determined the location of the moon and the sun and predicted eclipse, lunar eclipse using astronomical tools some 40 centuries ago (Varjavand, 1993, p:9; Zein Al-Abedini et al. 2008,p:9; Hekmat, 2008,p: 88; Moein, 2005,p:123). They assumed sky was made up of seven floors situated on each other according to a special disharmony. They believed that the moon, the sun, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Mercury were habitants and those floors and their actual owners (Nalino, 1970, p: 134). Almost all Iranian Scientists thought that the Earth was motionlessly located in the center of the universe, and the sky was a giant sphere where stars were situated. They thought sky circulated around two stable poles, namely the North and South Pole. That's why they sometimes literally called the sky rotating sphere, charkhgardun (Mahyar, 2009, p: 8).

An explanation of mystic thoughts using astronomical vocabulary in some mystic texts

Iranians were the first people who related space objects with spiritual and divine aspects. This relation is clearly understood in mythical culture of Iranians and some ancient Iranian religion like Mithraism, Mazda worshipping and finally Zoroastrianism (Varjavand, 1993, p: 10). After having embraced Islam religion and learned different aspects of divine instructions, Iranians tried to obtain knowledge in various fields based on Quran instructions and prophet's sire. They became particularly interested in astronomy after they read Quran verses which mentioned the moon, the sun and stars. However, the biggest contribution was made by Iranian poets, mystics and writers who were mostly absolute masters of different scientific fields of their epoch and were titled Sage, Hakim in Persian. With a glance at remaining works, we realize that poets and mystics used shining sky objects for creating different amazing images (Mahyar, 2009,p:9).

The sky and its high position over the Earth along with objects in the sky were considered by Iranian poets, writers and mystics from different angles. According to Najm Al-din Kobra, not everything is single in superiority but there's always a creature better and superior until God who is the single absolute superior. There is a well within every creature. Creature is of seven kinds which account for seven numbers of firmaments and the earth (Kobra, 2009, P: 31).

Sanaee And The Expression Of Mystic Thoughts Using Astronomy

Sanaee Ghaznavi, a prominent Iranian poet and mystic in the 6th century AH, used the words such as sky and firmaments in order to explain his mystic thoughts in most cases. Therefore, he can be referred to as "Sheykh Alghyb", omniscience, as he rises to heavens and appears there (Kobra, 2009, p: 40).

God, Absolute Truth

According to mystic instructions, God is the absolute truth and his will dominates every creature. Sanaee is well aware of this truth. As he says God is immediate enactor without whose will even the sky would be all dark (Divan, p: 598).

Ascent to Heaven

Mystics believe that God exists beyond heavens. Thus, mystics and wayfarers need to leave worldly life and ascend to God's kingdom (Divan, p: 141).

This view is mystic. Mystics believe that observation is either low or high. Low observation is defined as the observation of things on the Earth including shapes, colors, seas, fire, deserts, cities, villages, wells, practices ...etc. high observation is referred to as the observation of things in the sky like the sun, the moon, stars and so on. We can only see a little of everything. When you see the sky, the Earth, the sun, the moon and stars, you obtain some divine knowledge (Kobra, 2009, p: 36). Sanaee warns new wayfarers to leave this worldly life and to ascend to the high world (Divan, p: 205, 776, 454, 589, 197).

Sanaee assumed only a true human can become perfect and ascend to God's kingdom (Divan, p: 205, 198, 719, 287, 181, 151, 657). He calls Jesus a symbol of a perfect man and a mystic since he was the God's prophet who ascended to heaven and settled in the fourth level of heaven (Divan, p: 589, 810, 430, 761, 1076, 138).

Throne of God

Falak Al-Aflak area (the superior firmament) is called the direct firmament (also known as high Throne (Tahanvi, 1984, p: 1135). Scientists referred to a firmament as Falak Al-A'zam, Falak Atlas, Falak al-mohith or Falak Al-mostaghim. This is the firmament that moves and makes octal firmaments move from the east to the west (Lahiji, 1957, p: 174).

II. Conclusion

We must admit that poets including Sanaee were masters of different fields of science and tried to use their knowledge for explaining their thoughts. As we infer from Sanaee's works, he was an absolute master of astronomy and applied it for explaining mystic notions. In conclusion, referring to the outstanding professor "Manouchehr Mortazavi", Persian poetry and prose has a special language. Understanding this language requires not only a mastery of vocabulary, grammar and meanings but also general knowledge of sciences, fables and history. Persian literature readers can easily find many words from astronomy, medicine, mathematics, music, mysticism and so on (Mosaffa, 2009, p: 8).

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Appendix

- 1) Some scientists divided the world into divine and material worlds. Heavenly world is called the firmament
- 2) which is eternal. It covers an area beyond space. Material world is called the world of decay and covers an area from the sky to the earth (Ekhavan Al-safa, 1984, p: 146; Jorgiani, 1976, p: 7).
- 3) In ancient time, seven planets (Haft Siyyareh) were called Divine Fathers ('Aba) in terms of their effects on reproduction and material elements. The elements of water, wind, soil and fire were called Four Mothers (OmmohatArba'e in Arabic). Mines, plants and animated creatures were also called threesome children (Mosaffa, 2009, p: 1; Sajjadi, 1962, p: 1).