

Maliku'sh Shu'ara Bahar

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Abstract

Mohammed Taqi Bahar's Poetry was closely associated with contemporary events. Bahar's style of writing, his opposition to fantasism, and love for his country made him one of the greatest poets of Iran. This research paper will study Bahar as one of the most eloquent advocates of Modern Iran. Bahar is one of the most outstanding figures in modern Persian literature. He was a many - sided genius- a poet, scholar, critic, Journalist and last but not least a man of action, inspired with high moral and spiritual values. Thus, his personality had many facets and his poetry was imbued with an intensity of purpose hardly to be found amongst his contemporaries. He was wedded to his country's cause from the early days of his youth and continued to pursue its changing fortunes with the anxiety of an ardent lover till the last days of his life. He was dedicated to Iran and he idealized her as the cradle of a mighty civilization and as the reservoir of great moral and cultural forces.

Introduction

Muhammad Taqi Bahar was born at Mashhad on 12th Rabi-ul-Awal, 1034 A.H. or the 29th December, 1886 C.E. He inherited over of Poetry from his father Muhammad Kazim Maliku'sh- Shu'ara' and according to his own words, he had scribbled his finest couplet on the margin of a copy of Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, at the age of Seven.

"من از هفت سالگی به شعر گفتن مشغول شدم. یکی خواندن شاهنامه، دیگر کتاب صد کلمه، از آثار نظمى رشید و طواط، در مکتب، تحرک قریحه شعری مرا باعث آمد. شعر اولم این بود که گفته و در حاشیه شاهنامه نوشته بودم. پدرم بدید و ده پول سیاه به من جایزه داد
تہمتن بیوشید ببر بیان بیامد بہ میدان چوشیر ژیان"

(Bahar, 1335)

He received his early education in the old fashion in Persian and Arabic literature, grammar, Logic, history and mathematics. He made a rather spectacular start in Poetry when in return for a Panegyric he received the title of Maliku'sh - Shu'ara from Muzaffaru'd Din Shah Qajar (1896-1906) on his

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visit to the tomb of Imam Reza at Mashhad in 1904. This panegyric opened with the following lines:

ایا نسیم صبا ای برید کار آگاه ذطوس جانب ری این زمان به پیا راه
(Bahar, ببر پیامی از چاکران درگه قدس به آستان ملک شهریار کار آگاه
1335)

For a lad of eighteen years it was a remarkable achievement. But luckily for Iran and for Persian poetry the mood of panegyric writing did not last long. Soon after he threw himself right into the political life of the country which was far from peaceful at the time. During the Qajar period Iran had been groaning under a callous despotism. Moreover, the imperialistic designs of the Czarist Russia and Great Britain had already the country a victim of international conflict. The people of Iran were not watching this phenomenon as helpless spectators. The struggle for complete freedom from internal and foreign aggression had started in the second half of the nineteenth Century.

At the turn of the twentieth century we find a freedom front organizing Italy for the achievement of a constitutional Government. At the age of twenty Bahar was attracted by the political movement to join the "Anjuman-i-Sa'adat at Mashhad which had been founded by the enlightened youth of the town. In 1907 he started contributing to the local newspapers. *Khurasan*, *Tus* and *Khurshid*, under the name of "M. Bahar" some of his famous *mustazads* and other poems were first published in the columns of these very newspapers. The impassioned *mustazad* which is bitter criticism on Muhammad Ali Shah (1906-1910) and open with the lines:

باشه ایران ز آزادی سخن گفتن خطا است کار ایران باخدا است
مذهب شاهنشاه ایران ذ مذهب ها جداست کار ایران باخدا است
(Bahar, 1335)

Was first published in *Khurasan* which he had founded in call abortion with his comrades in 1908. This was the beginning of a hazardous journalistic career by the poet. Similarly, another poem which rings with a note of triumph and robust optimism in the future was published in *Tus* on the Iranian New year Day in 1910. It opened with the lines.

عید نوروز است و هر روزی بماند روز باد شام ایران روز باد
همچنین سال حیات ما به ما فیروز باد روز ما بهروز باد
(Bahar, 1335)

As regards the earliest publication of his poems on political and social themes he says:

نخستین از اشعار سیاسی و اجتماعی من در بین سالهای ۱۳۲۵، ۱۳۲۶ انتشار یافت

The poem which opens with the line:

(Bahar, 1335) باشه ایران ز آزادی سخن گفتن خطا است کار ایران باخدا است

Broke fresh ground and gave birth to a new School of poetry in Iran. In 1909 Bahar joined the newly founded Democratic Party. At that time it was considered to be the most progressive political party in Iran.

The same year he started his famous newspaper *Naw Bahar* which had a chequered career before it was finally closed down in 1943. After its publication for a year it was banned in account of its fiery accent. Soon after, the poet ventured to start another newspaper *Tazeh Bahar*. But this was also banned in 1911 under the Russian pressure. In addition, the poet was externed to Teheran. However, he soon succeeded in coming back and reviving his newspaper. But after nine months it was again banned. During his stay in Tehran he brought it out for the third time. It was now dedicated to social problems, especially to the question of women's rights in society. Moreover, it freely expressed its views on development, in international politics. Those views were not palatable to the two big neighboring powers, viz. Russia and Great Britain which compiled the Shah's Government to ban the newspapers in 1915. As if this was not enough Bahar was detained at a place called Bujnurd in Khurasaan under the Anglo - Russian pressure. The following quatrain dates back to these days of silent suffering:

ای مرکزین گزرگن وریان خواهید و ر بلبل خوشگوری غزلخوان خواهید
یا مرکز ملک را به بنجورد کشید یا آنکه بهار را به تهران خواهید
(Bahar, 1335)

By his political and journalistic activities Bahar had gained enough popularity to be elected to the national parliament in 1914. The next year he was elected to the central committee of the Democratic Party. At this stage in his life we find Bahar drifting more and more towards literary pursuits. It was in the field that his ultimate interests lay and his genius found its best expression. Through his critical insight he could perceive the rot that had set in Persian literature where form had assumed greater importance than substance. This was especially true of Persian prose which, till the middle of the last century, had passed through a tortuous maze of poetic hyperbole. A healthy change had begun in the nineteenth century, thanks to the role played by certain individuals like Mirza Qaim Maqam, the Minister of Muhammad Shah (1835-1848) and Mirza Taqi Khan Amir-i-Kabir, the able Prime Minister of Nasiru'd Din Shah (1848-1896), and by the press and the newly opened Daru'l Funun in Teheran, However, Bahar was anxious to accelerate

the process. He wanted Persian literature to keep pace with the times. With this end in view the poet founded a literary society known as Anjuman-i-DanishKadeh and started a literary journal with the same name, and thus laid the foundation of a new school of Persian literature. To quote himself:

"از جمله کارهای ادبی که درین دو سال آخر کردم دایر کردن انجمن دانشکده و مجله ای به همین نام بود و مکتب تازه در نظم و نثر بود جود آوردم."
(Bahar, 1335)

He invested this journal with a new significance by emphasizing the need to replace the old patterns by new ones which had been borrowed from the west. It also contained articles of historical importance. About the same time he started his old newspaper. This time, however, it had a literary bias, in keeping with the change coming over Bahar. From 1917 to 1920 he was the edition of the official newspaper *Iran* which he produced with the assistance of his brother Muhammad Malik Zadeh.

By this time Bahar had gained enough importance to return to parliament successively to its 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th terms. In 1921 Reza Khan, a colonel in the cossak Brigade and later known as King Reza khan Pahlawi staged a *coup de etat* in collaberation with ziau'd Din Tabatabai, editor of the newspaper *R'ad*. This political upheaval did not augur well for Bahar. For his friendship with the conspicuous contemporary politician Mudarris, his opposition to the termination of the Qajar rule and his interpellation of Reza Khan, then known as Sardar-i-Sipah, the poet came under a cloud. The Government felt it necessary to put him under surveillance at Shimran in the Suburbs of the capital Again, on Reza Shah's accession to the throne in 1926, Bahar was sentenced to solitary confinements for one month in Teheran the poet commemorated his arrest with a *ghazal* opening with the following lines:

قدرت شاهان ز تسلیم فقیران بیش نیست قصر سلطان امن تراز کلبه درویش نیست

The time had come when in spite of his strong nerves and fierce independence Bahar was overwhelmed by circumstances and he had to think of making a compromise with the new regime. Thus, he wrote his famous chahhar khitabeh, a poem divided into four parts and comprising about two hundred couplets. This was recited on the first Nowruz celebrated during the Pahlawi regime. But this so called panegyric bore subtle shades of meaning and smart puns which the Shah would have little relished had be the literary background to understand then. Luckily for Bahar he did not. This tragicomic incident, nevertheless, speaks Eloquently of Bahar's

characteristic Love of adventure. Though he had saved his skin, he was not yet out of the wood. His *Diwan* was censored while it was in the press and its publication had to be stopped.

A year later Bahar was again sentenced to solitary confinement for five months and next exiled along with his family to Isfahan for a year. The cause lay in his scathing criticism of the Government. The hostility of the new Government towards Bahar was so strong that Waiz Qazwini, editor of *Nasihah*, who had striking physical resemblance with Bahar was killed in suspicious circumstances outside the parliament building. He had to give in and compose laudatory poems to protect himself and his family against the wrath of the Government. One such *qasideh* was composed on Mazhandran in which the poet praised the constructive activities of the new regime against the picturesque background of this lush green Caspian province. This poem strikes for its racy and facile expression, musical effect and lovely similes. A few lines of the poem are quoted below:

بر طرف رود چون به وزد باد بر درخت چون پاره های اخگر اندر میان دود
بنگر بر آن درخش کز ابر کی بود فام برجست و روی ابر بناخن همی شخود
چون کودکی صغیر که با خامه طلا کج مح خطی کشد بیکی صفحه کی بود
بنگر یکی برود خروشان بوقت آنکه دریایی پذیره اش آغوش بر کشود
چون طفل ناشکیب خروشان ز یاد مام کاینک بیافت مام و در آغوش او غنود

(Bahar, 1335)

On his return from Isfahan Bahar practically retired from politics and took to a started his life of as a literary researcher. The ministry of Education assigned to him the task of writing books. This infused in the poet a spirit of literary and historical research and with the intellectual background that he had Bahar edited certain books of great historical importance. These included *Tarikh-i-Sistan, Mujmalut awarikh* by Awfa and *Tarikh-i-Tabri*. Again, he rendered certain Parthian and Pahlawe texts, to wit, *yadgar-i-Zariran* and *Darakht-i- Asurik* into Persian. He also wrote books on the life of Mani, that is the ancient Iranian Prophet Manes and on Firdawsī.

The government, in spite of its political differences with the poet, appointed him professor of Persian literature in the University of Teheran in 1937 where he taught stylistics to the Doctorate class till the last days of his life. The monumental work *sabk shinasi* in three volumes bears eloquent testimony to his mastery of the subject and his vast knowledge of Persian language and literature. He was also nominated a founder member of the Iranian Academy, a rare honor conferred upon scholars in Reza Shah's time.

This exclusive dedication to the world of letters was interrupted by Reza Shah's abdication of the throne in 1941 when Iran was occupied by Russian

and British forces and the present Shah Mohammad Raza Shah Pahlawi succeeded his father. Bahar immediately returned to politics and hastened to revive his favorite newspaper ***Naw Bahar***, which, however, could not continue for more than a year. He was elected to parliament for the sixth time for its 15th term. In the new parliament he was elected chief whip of the Democratic Party. On the formation of the new cabinet by Qivamu's Saltaneh, Bahar was given the portfolio of education. However he could not hold charge of the country's education for more than six months, that is, from Bahman (January - February) to Mordad (July- August), 1946 and resigned from his office. This incident had deep repercussions on the poet's life. Amongst the influential Politicians of his country Bahar had at different times joined hands with wuthuqud Dawleh and Qivamu's Saltaneh. He had to part ways with the former on the occasion of the infamous Anglo-Persian Agreement of 1919 when he withdrew his support from the Prime Minister with great disillusionment. Qivamu's saltaneh who invited Bahar to his cabinet as minister of Education did not see eye to eye with him on the Adharbaijan question. Again, some of Qivam's supporters did not conform to Bahar's rationalist outlook, with the result that he had to make an exit. But the incident gave him a tremendous shock. According to the editor of his ***Diwan*** this incident proved to be the cause of Bahar's fatal illness. After his resignation he wrote a bitter poem in the style of Farrukhi. It opens with the following line:

حدیث عهد و وفا شد فسانه در کشور
زکس درستی عهد وفا مجوی دگر

After the breakdown of his health in 1948 Bahar proceeded to Switzerland on medical advice. Even during the attack of tuberculosis he could neither resist the calling of the muse nor forget his country whose intense love had motivated his action during a tumultuous life. Here in Switzerland, for instance, he composed his charming poem "*Lousainneh*" which opens with a description of the picturesque scenery of Lousainne and ends with pensive reflections on Iran's glorious past and a characteristic note on hope in future. He returned from Europe in 1949 much improved in health. But instead of living life of retirement he could not help reviving his political interests. One thing which is of particular interest to Pakistan is the deep attachment that the poet showed for this country after the partition of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. A formal invitation was extended to him by Government of Pakistan to visit this country after the return of the then Finance Minister Mr. Ghulam Muhammad who had attended the international Economic conference of Muslim countries in Teheran in the autumn of 1950. The poet was keen to come and especially to visit Lahore; but he could not fulfill this

desire owing to his failing health. He had composed a poem on the birth of Pakistan in 1947 which begins with the line:

شد سیه مست بلا هشیار تاکستان کجا است
پاکباز خفته شد بیدار پاکستان کجا است (Bahar, 1335)

Again he composed a poem on Pakistan in 1949 when the Shah of Iran was first invited to this country. It starts with the following lines:

همیشه لطف خدا باد یار پاکستان بکین مباد فلک' باد یار پاکستان
(Bahar, 1335)

In the same poem there is a reference to Iqbal:

درود باد به روح مطر اقبال که بود حکمتش آموزگار پاکستان
(Bahar, 1335)

Towards the end of his life he had developed a great emotional kinship with Iqbal whom he had earlier paid glowing tributes by calling the present age the age of Iqbal:

عصر حاضر خاصه اقبال گشت واحدی کز صد هزاران بر گزشت

Bahar had never fully recovered from his illness. In April, 1951, his condition deteriorated and after a week of struggle with death he died in Teheran on April 21, 1951. Incidentally on this day Iqbal's death anniversary was being celebrated in the city.

Bahar was a voluminous writer. It is amazing that he should have so perfectly harmonized his political career with intellectual pursuits. In all he wrote the following books:

1. **Diwan**, this comprises more than fifteen thousand couplets composed in various verse forms chiefly consisting of *Qasidehs* and *ghazals*. As pointed out earlier it was published after Bahar's death in two volumes in 1956 and 1957.

2. **Subk Shinasi**. The book, which is in three volumes, is an exhaustive critical and historical study of the development of Persian prose and its various styles. In the first volume of this book the writer has also surveyed the history of the pre-Islamic Iranian languages and dialects and also the history of Iranian scripts.

3. **She'r dar Iran**. The book surveys the evolution of poetry in pre Islamic period and also specimens of popular songs composed in Iran during the Islamic period.

4. **Risaleh dar Sharh-i-had -i-Mani**.

5. *Ahwal-i-Fardawsi*.

6. *Dastan-i- Nairang-i-Siyah y kanizan-i-Safid*. This is a novel and was published serially in the newspapers *Iran*.

7. *Tarikh-i- Mukhtasar-i-Ahzab-i-Siyasi ya Tarikh-i- Inqiraz-i-Qajariyeha*

8. *Ahwal-i-Muhammad ben Jarir Tabari*.

9. *Dastur-i-Zaban-i- Farsi*. A part of this book was written by Bahar.

10. A book comprising his lectures to the Doctorate class in the University of Teheran is still unpublished.

Bahar edited the following books:

1. *Tarikh-i-Sistan*.

2. *Mujmalut Tawarikh*.

3. *R.Salehtu'n-Nafs-i-Arastatalis*.

4. *Jawamiul-Hikayat-i-Aulfi*.

5. *Tarikh-i-kabir-i-Bal'ami*.

Bahar had also studied the ancient languages of Iran from the German orientalist professor. Hertsfield whose services had been engaged by Reza Shah's Government. This knowledge is amply revealed in his survey of the Old Persian, Avestic and Pahlawi languages in the first volume of *sabk Shinasi*. He also translated two Pahlawi works into Persian, viz, *Yadgar-i-Zariran* and *Andarz-i-Adharbad-i-Marsipandan*. The former was published in the literary journal *Talim-o-Tarbiyat* and the latter which Bahar rendered in verse was published in the now defunct monthly journal *Mehr*.

Bahar had a dynamic personality. Life for him was on endless struggle and he seldom faltered in his mission. He had a fierce passion for freedom. For this he had to suffer time and again. Twice in his life he was put into poison and thrice he was detained or externed. Political passion and reformist Zeal motivated him to write noble pieces of poetry. It is a rare phenomenon that an active politician should have raised to such great heights of poetry. Yet it is as truer of Bahar as it was of Zafar Ali Khan and Hasrat Muhani in Urdu literature. Bahar not only excelled his contemporaries in the art of poetry but also secured for himself a pride of place amongst the great Iranian poets of the classical age. The Iranian critics who are extremely sensitive to the artistries of style and most of whom adhere to almost rigid technical criteria in literature, look upon Bahar as the greatest poet of Persian language since Hafiz and Jami. Thus according to Ali Akbar Dekhuda:

مرحوم ملک الشعراء بہار گترین شاعر معاصر سبک خراسانی است و میتوان گفت کہ در طول
چہار پنج قرن اخیر شاعری باین قریحہ و ذوق در سبک نبودہ است

Sa'id Nafisi is also equally eloquent in his praise of Bahar:

قطعا بزرگترین شاعر زمان ما و یکی از بزرگترین شاعران زمان ما بود

Paying a tribute to Bahar, Badiuzzaman Furuzanfar had thus remarked in the Persian senate:

قریب هفت صد سال است که شاعری مانند بهار در ایران پدید نیامده

To quote Habib yaghamai:

وے تردید و تزلزل میتوان گفت کہ از قرن نہم یعنی بعد از حافظ شیرازی تا کنون نظیر او بوجود نیامده و شعرای دورہ تیموری و صفوی و قاجاریہ هیچ یک بیایہ او نمی رسند۔

These tributes showered in a rather poetic strain at any rate indicate the esteem in which Bahar is held by modern Persian scholars and poets; Bahar, himself, is however wonderfully modern and progressive in his views on the functions of poetry. A penetrating insight into the nature of art and a true appreciation of freedom of treatment are typical features of Bahar's progressive mind. He looked upon the sincerity of emotion and the intensity of purpose as the true criteria of poetry as he says in the following lines:

شعر آن باشد کہ خیزد از دل و جوشد ز لب باز در دلہا نشیند ہر کجا گوشہ شنفٹ
ای بسا شاعر کہ او در عمر خود نظمی نساخت وے بسا ناظمکہ او در عمر خود شعری نگفت
(Bahar, 1335)

With his entire open mind, however, Bahar still preferred to stick to classical conventions and infuse in them a new vitality by virtue of his creative genius. Thus in his poetry we find a blend of the old and the new-a harmony between the modern and the classical.

His poetry pulsates with a mission- the mission to create a rational, healthy and progressive society in a completely independent country, a society which is free from social tyranny, corruption and religious fanaticism and which is ruled by high moral values. Almost all his notable poems have a deep social, moral or political strain. Thus poetry for him becomes a means towards the attainment of a higher and fuller life. There is a note of hope, courage and resolute faith in his poetry though at times his resistance gives way to despair and frustration. Nevertheless his love of freedom is never completely subdued. In the words of Husain Khatibi people were crazy about Bahar's poems during the days of the constitutional struggle

and his couplets proved more trenchant than the sword of fighters in the cause of freedom. The note of revolt continued even after the constitution had been granted, because the poets' dream of an ideal society was yet to be realized. His environments were corrupt, and the poet had nought but disgust for them. In his autobiographical note *Qalb-i-Sha'ir* the poet describes his unhealthy and degenerate surrounding in the following words:

از تهران رفتم ' باز آمدم ' باز رفتم ' مصایب ' رزایا ' جریحه های قتال ' جس ها مخاطرات '
هجوها ' بی انصافیها ' مظلالم ' بی وفاییها ' دورویی ها ' حقہ ' بازیها ' شیطننت ها ' دسیسه ها ' اینها
هیچکدام مژگان را تر نمودند.

In the same passage he gives vent to the cravings of his heart which was rebellious, wayward and untamed and which wanted to pursue its own values and ideals. The lack of harmony between the environments and the poet's ideals was the cause of his ultimate frustration. Muhammad Malik Zadeh has to add:

بهار درین مقالات اعتراف کرده است که دارای یک قلب عاصی و سرکش و تربیت ناپزیر است و
ازین جهت همرنگ و هماهنگ با محیط خود نیست.

The note of despondency is heightened in the poems composed in prison. The poems like the prison poems of Mas'ud -i-Sa'd i- Salaman and Khaqani have an under-current of pathos. One such poem is shab Ahang which overwhelms the reader with its sad music and a note of deep despair. The poet dwells on the failure of his own mission with a haunting sense of grief:

ای دریغا که جوانی بگذشت بهر آبادی این ملک خراب
همچو دهقان که برد آب ز دشت تاگل و سبزه دماند ز سراب

But even in this poem the message of revolt has been conveyed against the order of injustice and oppression. His disgust with the unwholesome environment is discernible in other poems like Sakut-i- Shab and Kabutran-i-Man. In those poems the poet gives expression to mental agony and seeks escape in the night, for the day brings him only misery and humiliations.

چون بر شود ز مشرق تیغ کبود شب مغرب بخون روز کشد دامن قبابی
ز آشوب روز و آرامی اندر سکوت شب با فکرت پریشان ' باقامتی دو تایی
گویم شب اصد گه راستی و لیک چونان دو صد ز دیده فشانم تو رامزای
ای تیغ کوه ' راه نظر ساعتی ببند وی پیک صبح دریس که لحظه بیای
با روز دشمنم که شود جلوه گر بروز هر عجز و نامرادی ' هر زشت ناسزای

Bahar)

In kik Namah, another such poem modeled on one of Khaqani's poems be creates an udder current of pathos by his undying sense of humor in a state of utter helpless ness. The poet creates effect through the gift of wit, sarcasm and humor, This method he has employed with great success in such poems as Zalal-o-Dalal (ضلال و دلال) which is an excellent example of gay and buoyant humor on the one hand and a subtle satire on pseudo-religious clergy on the other:

دیدم به بصره دخترکی اعجمی نسب روشن نمود شهر به نور جمال خویش
میخواند درس قرآن دریش شیخ شهر وز شیخ دل ر بوده به غنج و دلال خویش
میداد شیخ درس ضلال مبین باو وآهنگ ضاد رفته باوج کمال خویش
دختر نداشت طاقت گفتار حرف ضاد باآن دهان کوچک غنچه مثال خویش
میداد شیخ را بدلا مبین جواب وآ شیخ مینمود مکرر مقال خویش
گفتم بشیخ راه ضلال اینقدر مپوی کاین شوح منصرف نشود از خیال خویش
بهتر همان بود که بمایند هر دو وان اودردلال خویش و تو اندر ضلال خویش

Another fine example of satire is the poem Jahannamiyeh in which he ridicules religious leaders for their irrational approach to religion and their perverse fanaticism. As against these, there are his early poems composed in moods of frenzy. In later years, generally the tone of his poetry is more restrained although in the poem Damavandiyeh the poet bursts out against the existing order of tyranny and hypocrisy, and invokes Iran's lofty mount Damavand to erupt and sweep away the rotten order of things.

از سر بکشن آن سپید معجر بنشین بیکی کبود اورند
بگرای چر اژدهای گرزه بخروش چو شرزه شیر ار غند
برکن زین این بنا که باید از ریشه بنای ظلم برکند

(Bahar, 1335)

In "Vataniyeh" the poet combines courage with forthrightness to admonish the present kind on the strength of moral virtues and the irresistible force of public opinion:

راست باش و پاک باهم میهنان از مرد و زن
کاین یکت همچو برادر وین یکت چون خواهر است
هر چه سلطان قادر آید خلق ازو قادر تراند
گو شها بر داستان کاوه آهنگر است

(Bahar, 1335)

This attitude of straight forward talking reminds us of Sa'di's general attitude in his *Qasidehs*.

Bahar's poetry, in short, has a purpose and a message. The message is one of endeavor and ceaseless activity, and revolt against evil. In this he bears

resemblance to Iqbal. Both Love positive activity and hard struggle; both crave for a better social order and both have wide human sympathies; both admire the virtues of western knowledge but both are equally suspicious of the western concept of life in general and its attitude towards the East in particular, and both are proud of their glorious cultural heritage. That is the reason why Iqbal's poetry had such powerful impact on Bahar's later life. He felt gratified that he had lived long enough to know Iqbal through his poetry. Unlike Iqbal however, Bahar has no profound or elaborate Philosophy of life nor is his attitude deeply steeped in metaphysical thought. His revolutionary attitude is rather romantic in nature and lacks the depth of vision and profundity of thought which are the hallmark of Iqbal's poetry.

As mentioned above, Bahar, in spite of his susceptibility to new ideas and his appreciation of modern developments, is essentially conservative in his approach to poetry and though he does not grudge the younger generation a chance to experiment with new patterns, yet in his own treatment of the thought-content he seldom deviates from classical standards. The poet seems to be singularly unruffled by European influences on Persian poetry though he was amongst the earliest literateurs to advocate a radical change in literary aims and ideals. It was actually in his journal *Danishkadeh* that a new policy was adopted for Persian writers and poets in the light of the new requirements. He did make new experiments in certain poems but these were strictly limited in scope. To give an instance, the influence of Western poetry is visible in 'kabutran-i-Man' where the poet has made a deliberate attempt to effect a new rhyming scheme and employ new images. But such experiments are few and far between. Another rather childish attempt to give a new look to his poems is the insertion of European words in these. It only mars the general tone and dignity of these poems. This was however, a common weakness from which the contemporary Persian poet has now happily recovered.

Bahar excelled in *qasideh*. Not that he wrote Panegyrics, but he employed the old form of *qasideh* as an effective means to express his thought and emotion. This can be divided broadly into these categories. The first consists of poems in which both form and substance conform to the classical tradition. The second category contains poems which are purely classical in form but new in substance and outlook. The third comprises poem in which new words and expressions have been employed in order to attempt harmony with new themes. At times the desired result has not been achieved and actually the poems have lost their sedate tone. That the poet consciously made these varied experiments and was confident of their success is proved by the following words:

تبعات من در کلاسیک و سبک معاصر هر دو پیشرفت کرده ' توانستم بر رویه و سبکی که نجواهم
شعر بگویم چه قصاید کلاسیک چه مستزادها و مسطح های ملی ساده ' چه قطعات و رباعیات و
مثنویات عوام پسند و چه غزل های عاشقانه بسبک عراقی.

He was primarily devoted to the Khurasani School of poetry, popularly known as Sabki-khurasani which dates back to the earliest period of Persian literature in the post Islamic times and derives its name from Khurasan, the cradle of Persian arts and letters and the home of most of the early poets. This school is among other things, characterized by its love of simplicity of thought and expression, directness, spontaneous ease, brief and simple epithets and metres, its stress on the use of Persian words (though the Arabic element is not always missing), its sensuous imagery and rich descriptions. Bahar pursued this style with amazing success and secured for himself a place of eminence amongst the great masters of this style. It was his consummate skill in this field which brought him rich tributes from his admirers after his death. Bahar composed poems which for their style can be easily misunderstood to have been written in the 10th or 11th century C.E when the khurasani school of poetry had reached its perfection. One such typical poem is Bahariyeh, which opens with the following line:

مرا داد گل پیش رس خبر که نو روز رسد هفته دگر

Bahar loved simplicity of diction in the true khurasanian fashion. But he had a vast treasure house of words and epithets at his command. His knowledge of Arabic and the ancient Iranian languages further enriched his choice of words a quality which distinguishes him not only from his contemporaries, but also from the classical poets. To show his unique mastery of the language he would even freely employ archaic words in his poems. In the eyes of some of his Iranian critics this supremacy in the use of diction is one of the major virtues of Bahar's poetry.

Besides, Bahar relished in the skillful use of difficult rhymes and abandoned metres. This quaint interest in mental acrobatics which stands in sharp contrast with his love of simplicity is perhaps due to a desire to establish his extraordinary technical skill. This characteristic reminds us of salman sawaji from amongst the classical poets of Iran and of the famous urdu poet Zafar Ali Khan.

Bahar has composed some remarkable poems on the models set by classical poets. To wit, he has followed Minuchehri in Jughd-i-Jang and shumar-i-Giti, Bashshar Marghazi in Fakhriyey, Unsuri in Bahariyeh, Anwari in Tup-i-Rus and Dailam, Azraqi in Mawludiyeh Masud-i-Sad'i- Salman in Sakut-i-Shab and Teheran and Khaqani in Kik Nameh. In

a few poems he inserted couplets or hemistichs of Rudaki and Daqiqi etc. These poems have not been composed at random. On the contrary there is a cogent historical or Psychological reason for doing so For instance, he wrote jughd-i-Jang after Minuchehri's

فرد یاد ازین غراب بین و واهی

Because 'غراب' or raven was regarded as inauspicious by the Arab poets whose influence he had strongly imbibed. They regarded it as the symbol of separation. In the poem under discussion Bahar lays stress on the destructive and inhuman nature of war; therefore, he has deliberately selected Minuchehri's poem as a model with this ominous background in mind. Similarly, he has composed his prison poems on the pattern of Masud-i-Sa'd-i-Salman and Khaqani who had written moving poems in Prison during periods of great adversity.

In creating such strong kinship with the classical poets, Bahar seems to have turned his back on modern times. But this does not hold true of the substance of his poems, most of which are a commentary on the Political and social history of modern Iran.

As mentioned earlier Bahar employed various forms of poetry including *tasnif* or ditty. But his poetic genius finds its best expression in *qasideh*. *Mustzads* and *fasnifs*, however, bring in a cheerful note of freshness and even originality. Bahar used them to great advantage during the period of constitutional struggle. His lyrical poetry does not impress the reader and one has to agree with the prominent contemporary Lyrical poet Shaharyar that Bahar's ghazals have little merit. In fact Bahar was not temperamentally a lyrical poet. Like Zafar Ali Khan, with whom he has so much in common in his love of freedom and resistance against oppression, as well as in his personal sufferings and privations, his inner emotional experiences seem to have been suppressed under the weight of political and social events around him, so that both have been agitating mostly against their external environments rather than taking recourse to the world of inner experience.

Bahar's poetry had a goal before it and the poet adopted the skill of a great master to ventilate his feelings and ideas in a style which won for him a place of unique importance in modern Persian poetry. Throughout his life he grappled with hard facts. He was patriotic, courageous and forthright, and the changing fortunes of his country led him to fight for a sacred cause rather than restrict his genius to pure lyricism and seek escape from the bitter realities of life. The poetry of Bahar is a lasting symbol of resistance and revolt against tyranny and high handedness, whether political, social or religious, in the words of sa'id Nafisi:

نمیتوان منکر شد که این مرد بزرگ بود و بزرگ زیست و بزرگ از جهان رفت و پس از مرگ
نیز بزرگ خواهد ماند

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