

## Satire as an Approach to Educate in the Words of Moulavi

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### ABSTRACT

*Satire is a particular genre in which poet or author tries to discover the defects of individuals and society through a critical approach and express it in an artistic and satiric way to prompt the reader to rethink and reform. Maulana Jalaluddin Mohammad Balkhi, also, has used satire and humor as a way to educate people; so that in some of his works the traces of irony and humor can be seen. He has used satire to establish didactic communication, make his educational lessons comprehensible, help his listeners to get rid of their exhaustions and encourage them to listen to his sermons. This article is an attempt to briefly introduce satire and investigate Rumi's purpose of using satire in some of his works.*

**Keywords:** Education, Satire, Fihi Ma Fihi, Masnavi, Rumi

### INTRODUCTION

The application field of didactic literature is broad and far-reaching, since a didactic literature work expresses a knowledge of a human sciences and includes any kind of science such as religious, spiritual, social, political, ethical, scientific, philosophical, advise, dramatic, artistic matters and even some lyrical and epic concepts; but didactic literature pays attention to the issues that are in the study area of religion and morality and are composed with the fantastic and literary features. It should be noted that in most cases religious and mystical poems are combined with mysticism like, Masnavi-I Ma'navi, Bostan-e Saadi, Hadiqa of Sanayi, Makhzan-al-Asrar-Nezami Jam-e Jam Ohadi etc. Didactic literature is a type of literature and its ultimate goal is learning. A didactic work teaches a doctrine and wisdom or religious, moral and spiritual character or gives information about vocational or practical sciences. Didactic term has an invective and contempt with itself and often suggests the meaning that literature is used for a specific purpose and reader reads a cheap work. Except those creative works which have a didactic feature, among the didactic works there exist masterpieces which negate this type of approach and focus on the innovative feature of the work and its didactic aspect (Mer Sadeghi, 2009, 18).

Composing didactic works has a long history and in fact it has been more common in ancient times. Some of these works are *Alfiyyah-ibn Malik* in Arabic grammar instruction; *Nasab Abu Nasr Farahani* to teach a full course of various sciences to beginners; *Haji Mulla Hadi Manzomeh* in philosophy; they all are purely didactic. But didactic literature can be imaginary; so that represents a didactic issue in the form of a narrative or dramatic story in order to be more attractive; this method is often used especially in children's books (Shmysa, 2004:269).

According to the traditional division of poem from the view point of Plato and Aristotle, Persian poetry in general, can be divided into three types of epic, lyrical, advise and didactic (instead of dramatic poetry). One of the most widespread forms of poetry in Persian literature is didactic poetry, since we do not have dramatic poetry (which is a sort of didactic

literature) to include most of the ethical and psychological issues, therefore most of our poets have expressed moral, social and psychological issues in the form of non-dramatic didactic works and this is why our didactic literature is broader than the didactic literature of west (Dad, 2008:21).

The rise and growth of didactic and advise poetry was due to the close environment and social and political oppression of the society which did not allow the emergence of poems with social and political content. Addressees of didactic poem are common people who had little knowledge and this kind of poetry was not limited to the court in this type of poetry three types of poetry, persuasion and referential functions are outstanding (Bameshki, 2012:23).

One of the important and primary commitments of advise and didactic poem is to impart cognition in one of the domains of human thought and if according to the view point of ancients we consider poem as a harmonious speech, this particular type of poem can even impart specific sciences such medical, syntax and astronomy. Obviously when rhythmical speech is at the service of such a task, its purpose is not to convey the cognition along with the influence of the reader but its aim is to facilitate retention and recall and this purpose distances it from the essence of poetry.

Therefore didactic poem should have a more narrow scope of cognition fields such as religion, ethics, morality, philosophy and politic and social impressions that their expression via the language of poetry in addition to convey the meaning, also influences the audience (Pour Namdariyan, 2001:255). Didactic literature has no particular format. Our didactic poetry and prose are in the form of animals' tales as well as simple stories or stanza, sonnet, Qasida, quatrain, Masnavi and a single verse (Farshidvard, 1999:74).

Persian didactic literature generally has three themes and attitudes. Some of the themes are on ethics and some are on religion and some are about wisdom. In Iran's past literary period these types of works named sermon, piety and wisdom. Wisdom and admonition from early fourth century entered into the Persian literature by poets such as Rudaki, Abu-Shakur Balkhi, Kisai Marvazi and Ferdowsi. In the fifth century, Nasser Khosrow through adding philosophical and theological implications to these kinds of odes devolved the didactic literature.

In the sixth century Sanayi combined the Sufi concepts with wisdom and advice and formed a new didactic literature. The success of Sanayi in the development of didactic literature made other poets such as Nizami and Khaghani turned toward this type of literature. In the seventh century with the advent of Rumi, Saadi didactic literature reached to its apex (Tamimdari, 2000: 239). Certainly, if the didactic poem reached to an unattainable perfection in the scope of morality by Saadi in the seventh century, didactic poem in the scope of Sufism thoughts achieved the same amazing perfection in the seventh century by Rumi. Valuable experiences of Sanai and Attar in the field of didactic and mystical poem provided the groundwork for the emergence of unique works of Rumi. Rumi in the analogies of Masnavi and some of the lyrics of Shams and a few quatrains and also in his prose works mainly *Fihi Ma Fihi* pays attention to didactic themes. Rumi in his didactic works, encourages gradients to acquire moral virtue and denounces the moral vices; in order to express deep mystical and moral teachings, he uses sayings, verses, tales and advise anecdotes. One of the didactic and educational techniques of Rumi is satire. Satire actually is a means which Rumi uses it to encourage listeners to pay attention to the words, to eliminate fatigue and ennui, show the moral flaw of men's larger than it is, express his criticism indirectly to correct untruth and wake his audiences. Given the importance of satire in didactic works of Rumi and also since

so far no complete and precise attention has been paid on this aspect of his works; therefore author in this paper will try to investigate satire and the didactic approach toward it in the works of celebrated mystic Rumi to represent the features and educational purposes of Rumi's satire. Next, to better understand this article; first we will briefly review the characteristics of satire

## **HUMOR**

### ***Satire***

The word satire means to make fun of someone or blame him. In literary terms, satire is a certain kind of poetry or literary prose that criticizes the wrong or undesirable aspects of human behavior, social, political and philosophical thought corruptions in a funny way (Aslani, 2008) (Abdi Miardan, 2014). The main reason for the emergence of satire in society is social circumstances and one of the important objectives of satire is to fight turmoil and social injustice. The aim of satire is making aware, think for correction, education, construction, fix flaws and pave the way to excellence. "Satire is a sort of glass where in beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it" (Plard, 2004: 5) (Abdi Miardan, 2014).

When poet or writer cannot directly express his criticisms, resort to satire. "Satire by creating a new reality and changing our situation invalidates our usual expectations" (Krichely, 2005: 9). Although satire is based on the laughter but this laughter is not due to the happiness and satisfaction, rather is a bitter sneer associated with blame and mockery that makes wrongdoings realize their mistakes and rectify their shortcomings (Behzadi Anduhjerdi, 1999:116).

In classical Persian literature, satire is not recognized as an independent genre and in the works of the poets and writers of this period; satire is more seen in the form of lampoon or smut and gets far from the structural characteristics of a real satire which its main reason was due to the strong dependence of poets and writers to the court; kings and elders of that era (Abdi Miardan, 2014). Since old Iranian poets and writers, had less critical and social views toward the issues of community the volume of satiric literature was less than numerous and ample works of Persian literature. Also at those times, Persian poets mostly paid attention on lampoon and smut than profound satire and social criticism, yet sometimes among the works of poets and writers some pieces are faced that are satiric, and this kind of works can much be seen as we go away from the early Persian poetry (Mirsadeghi, 1994: 182). Attention to social issues can be seen in the works of Sa'di and Hafez and more in Obaid Zakani works.

The real emergence of satire in Sufism literature occurred in sixth century and mostly was based on philosophical and mystical way of thinking. In that time more attention was paid on God and injustices in the structure of creation, thus satire was free from the objections to social injustices. Sufi literature is based on instruction and edification and entertainment therefore in many Sufism works such as Rumi, Sanayi and Attar satire can be found.

The most important feature of Sufi satire is its admonition and didactic aspects and most prominent artistic show of Sufi satirist is his absolutely pristine moral and educative inferences and interpretations of travesty and vulgar and possibly obscene stories that after representing contradictions and invidious affairs, makes the mental background of the reader ready to accept such didactic sayings (Behzadi Anduhjerdi, 1999:373).

Some Persian language speakers and writers, especially mystic poets, along with narrating the simple short anecdotes with an especial elegance and through the use of allegory have mixed

education with parody and satire. While narrating these stories they avoid difficulty and used easily comprehensible language for educating public and indicating the moral conflicts and social and religious disorders. To this end they used exaggeration and hyperbole to enlarge slips and show the ugly face of sins and wrong deeds and to guide community and people used criticizing and satirizing so people stay away from evil deeds and have tendency toward good deeds.

Rumi is one of these renowned mystics who has chosen satire as an approach to education. In Rumi's works, along with deep spirituality, interpretation of Quran verses and Hadith of Prophet, lampoon, parody and satire also can be found. According to him any type of speech has its own admonition and mystery. This great mystic takes a sublime point out of any harsh and vulgar satire (Halabi, 1998:701). Following are some didactic satires of Rumi's works:

### ***Satiric Criticism of Pride and Selfishness***

Arrogance is one of the immoral characteristics which is the main reason of other moral pests and human being because of considering himself as a perfect one is affected by this pest. Rumi in the satiric anecdote of "Grammarians and Oarsman" by using Socratic satire method scorns and criticizes grammarian and his inappropriate pride. In this method, an individual pretends to be unaware of a subject and asks a question about therefore through the response of the claimant makes him to realize his mistake and in fact, he uses the Socratic method of questioning and responding. In this anecdote oarsman asks the proud grammarian about his familiarity with swimming and when proud grammarian expresses his inability; oarsman by the use of his negative response criticizes and satirizes his arrogance, since the arrogance of these types of individuals can cause their death. Rumi by the use of this satiric anecdote teaches human beings that to upgrade to the stage of development and perfection they should avoid egocentrism:

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*Once a grammarian stepped into a boat                      And turned towards the oarsman just to gloat*  
*Have you learned any grammar? He said, No.                      Then half your life has been wasted just to row!*

*Although this made the oarsman burn with pain                      From answering back he opted to refrain*

*Wind steered the boat towards a whirlpool there                      The oarsman shouted to him, once aware*

*"Have you learned how to swim and keep afloat?"                      I've never learned, skilled captain of my boat.*

*Grammarian, your whole life has been in vain:                      We're sinking fast what good now is your brain!"*

(first part of Masnavi, 2004:831)

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In this satiric tale, grammarian is the allegory of those educated people who are pride of their knowledge and their claims are futile. oarsman is the allegory of purification who has been uprooted the arrogance and hubris of their soul, in other words, the one who is the claimant of knowing everything up to the time which he does not put his proud away, he cannot escape from the vortex and hurricane of risk and test (Masnavi, 1<sup>st</sup> volume, 2004, 832). In fact, the message in this anecdote is that if you want to survive what is important is not the language syntax, word order and Tajwid but the heart syntax and its ornamentation by cutting trimming. This is what Rumi calls it fade level and is an interpretation of the concept of death before death (Zarrinkoub, 2004, 331).

### **Satiric Criticism of Secularist Kings**

Satire is one of the most elegant and powerful agents of social struggles which has a large share fighting injustice, corruption and social and political problems; therefore mystic poets used it to fight with corrupt governments and to warn the ruthless, ignorant and secularist kings. In Rumi's works the concept of king is used both in the literal and content meaning. Where Rumi has spoken about the kings and monarchs of the world his voice is critical and humiliating. He asserts that the real king is the one who does not mind apparent administrations and does not need a throne (Tajadini, 2013, 212). A dervish went to the king, the king said to him: pious! Dervish Said: you are the pious. Said: I'm pious because the entire world is mine. Said: no, you just think so. The entire world and the hereafter, and your property is mine, you are just satisfied with a piece of bread and stole (Fihi Ma Fihi. 2011, 17). In this anecdote the discussion between dervish and the king is not devoid of satire and criticism since dervish through his elegant and subtle repartee gives an unanswerable reply and surprises him. In fact, it can be said that: Sufi satiric is based on the verbal and Rumi's satire and humor in Fihi Ma Fihi are classified in this group (Irani, 2010, 14). Maulana prevents human beings of the world and its deceptive appearances and in various ways likens world to worthless things.

*What is this world? To be forgetful of God;*

*It is not merchandise, silver, weigh-scales and women.*

(First part of the Masnavi, 2004: 339)

### **Satiric Criticism of Lack of Love in Life**

Love is the main theme of our mystical literature and has a high position in Rumi's approach which is very valuable and precious. Love in the Rumi's approach whether virtual (in this world) or true (in another world) makes human being to get rid of his egoism and steps toward path of knowledge (Estelami, 2005:111). According to Rumi love can solve the dilemma of existence and treat the ethical disease and love is a physician which can make a messianic miracle and through deluging the Pharaoh of honor in infinity sea, like Moses places the human being upon Sinai Mount, so that the radius of that sun which is closer to me than I am to myself shine on him and give him a new identity (Sorouh, 2005:277). In following verses Rumi notes that anyone who is deprived of love should follow the vain and routine things and waste his life and spent his life in flattery and begging. The combination of "go and spin the wool" and "go and lick the bowl" creates satire through spiritual humiliation in verses. Minimizing or humiliation is one of the most important and essential satirical techniques. "Means that when an author wants to criticize a person makes him free from any deceptive appearances and humiliates him in all aspects. This can be done in different ways for example, physically or spiritually, or in other ways" (Javadi, 2005:17) and (Abdi Miyardan and Seyed Almasi, 2014).

In spiritual humiliation, satirist humiliates the person from different spiritual aspects such as ethics, personality, culture, and social rank. Rumi by the use of this method criticizes and humiliates the people who do not have a sense of love and describe their lives as a vain. According to Rumi the human being can get the joy and reign of life and experience the true honor only if he is caught by love (Ghanei, 2011:91)

*Since you do not get in love go and spin your wool*

*and amuse yourself with your own world*

*Since your head is free from the love*

*Go to the kitchen of stingy people ask their bowl to lick*

(Kolyat-e Shams-e Tabrizi, 2004:1605)



### **Satirical Criticism of Bad Companion**

The role of companion and its effect on fostering the human psyche is one of the affairs which attention has been paid on in didactic works. In didactic literature, humans have always been discouraged from accompanying with baseborn people and encouraged to accompany with righteous ones. Rumi believes that a companion can have a great effect on human so people should look for a good friend and companion and speak with lovers and avoid bad companions.

*Since each person chooses a lover who he deserves*

*We as mystics never amuse ourselves with worthless things*

*One day someone was traveling with Bayazid, Bayazid asked him what do you do ?The man replied: I am the one who takes care of donkey, mule and horse or rent them. Bayazid told him go away from me. And prayed that the Lord please take his donky so that he will be your servant, nor the servent of his donkey.*

*(Kolyat-e Shams-e Tabrizi, 2004: 3)*

In this story, Rumi by the use of words such as “*Dæga(deceit)*” and “*Kharbandeh*” , curse of the end of the line and also by the use of mockery tone humiliate those people who are just pay attention to appearance of this world and are unaware of the world of sense. Rumi in above verses points out that in the selection of companion first condition is to be congener and everyone selects a companion which he himself deserves it.

### **CONCLUSION**

Didactic literature is one of the most important and useful genres in Persian language and literature since most of the literary works directly or indirectly have educational and didactic goals but in some of theme especially mystics’ works didactic aspect is prominent. In the case of putting aside the scattered endeavors it can be said that mystical didactic literature started with Sanai and continued by Attar to pave the way for Rumi and he raised the didactic and mystical literature to its apex. Because language in the didactic literature is at service of meaning and knowledge transfer so in addition to being simple, clear, understandable, attractive it also should be exhilarating; the way mystics have chosen to achieve this goal is to combining didactic literature with stories, anecdotes, analogies and humor as an important element. Rumi in most of his works i.e. *Masnavi-I Ma’navi*, lyrics of *Shams-i-Tabrīzī*, *Rubaiyat* and *Fihi Ma Fihi* by the use of satire addresses the deep mystical concepts and conveys his complex and subtle ideas. Rumi’s satire is a way to intuit love, kindness, goodness, peace and friendship.

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