

## THE CHARACTER OF 'ALĪ IN THE POEMS OF NĀSİR-I KHUSRAW AND SANĀ'Ī GHAZNAVĪ

NASİR HÜSREV VE SENAI GAZNEVİ'NİN ŞİİRLERİNDE HZ. ALİ KARAKTERİ

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### Abstract

Ali Ibn Tālib was an eminent personality for all times and was focused on by famous gnostic poets. This study focuses on the poetry of Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī among these poets. The main purpose of the article is a particular research of each couplet devoted to 'Alī by Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and detection of their sympathy for 'Alī. One of the poems written by Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and praising 'Alī is "Adoration for 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib" in the 24<sup>th</sup> part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section of *Hadīgat al-Haḳīqa va Shari'at al-Tariḳah* (The Garden of Truth and the Path to Trek). The research includes study of Nāsir-i Khusraw's couplets in his *Diwan*, while Sanā'ī's mentioned poem was chosen as a basis for comparison. After a brief description of life and works of the Ismā'īlī poet Nāsir-i Khusraw and the gnostic poet Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, historical personality and moral features of 'Alī has been subject to research in the article. The two poets' couplets introducing and praising 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib based on Qur'an verses and sayings of the Prophet have been subject to the study. It may be concluded that both Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī demonstrated 'Alī's virtues and magnificence as a person in all spheres and tried to assume that a close approach to 'Alī was necessary to learn and know Islamic rules, religious law and interpretation of the Qur'an. Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī actually desired that all people take this perfect person an example for themselves.

**Keywords:** Literature, Nāsir-i Khusraw, Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, Poem, Imam 'Alī, Historical Figure, Moral Features.

### Öz

Hz. Ali o kadar muhteşem bir şahsiyetti ki, başta irfan alanında eser yazanlar olmak üzere hemen hemen bütün şairler onun şahsiyetinin özelliklerini göstermeye çalışmışlardır. Bu şairler arasında Nasır Hüsrev ve Senai Gaznevi'nin adları özellikle anılmalıdır. Bu makalenin yazılmasındaki temel amaç, Nasır Hüsrev ve Senai Gaznevi'nin Hz. Ali ile ilgili beyitlerini tek tek incelemek ve böylece şairlerin Hz. Ali'ye olan sevgisini ortaya koymaktır. Senai Gaznevi'nin Hz. Ali'yi öven eserlerinden biri de *Hadikatü'l-Hakika ve Şeriatü'l-Tarika* adlı eserinin 3. babının 24. bölümünde yer alan "Emirül-Müminin Ali ibn Ebu Talib'in Övgüsü"dür. Bu çalışmada şairler arasında bir karşılaştırma yapabilmek için Senai'nin şiiri esas alınmış ve Nasır Hüsrev'in *Divanından* anlam bakımından örtüşen mısralar çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. İsmailî şair Nasır Hüsrev ve irfan şairi Senai Gaznevi'nin hayatı ve eserleri hakkında kısa bir inceleme yapıldıktan sonra, adı geçen şiirde Hz. Ali'nin tarihi karakteri ve manevi nitelikleri incelenmiştir. Nasır Hüsrev'in bu konuda yazdığı beyitlere de yer ayrılmıştır. Bununla birlikte her iki şairin Ali ibn Ebu Talib'i tanıtmak için kullandıkları ayet ve hadislerle dayalı beyitler de bu çalışmaya dahil edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda hem Nasır Hüsrev hem de Senai Gaznevi'nin Ali'nin gücünü her alanda göstermek dışında İslami kuralları, şeriat kanunlarını ve Kur'an'ın tefsirini bilmek için ilim kapısı olan Hz. Ali'ye yakın olmanın gerekliliğini insanlara göstermeye çalıştıkları sonucuna vardık. Nasır Hüsrev ve Senai Gaznevi, Hz. Ali'ye şiir ithaf ederek tüm insanların bu mükemmel insanı örnek almasını istemişler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Edebiyat, Nasır Hüsrev, Senai Gaznevi, Şiir, Hz. Ali, Tarihsel Kişilik, Ahlaki Nitelikler.

## Introduction

تنگ از آن شد برو جهان سترگ / که جهان تنگ بود و مرد بزرگ

(Ghaznavī, n.d., 255, couplet 190)

The earth shrunk as 'Alī's greatness was vast. From early Islam to present, personality of 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib was the center of attraction for many authors, researchers and scholars. There is not a single work on Islamic gnosis or Sufism, where 'Alī's wisdom, valor, generosity and piety, shortly his personality are depicted. In Persian literature, works both in poetry and prose also present relevant source materials. Interestingly, most of authors, who address 'Alī's personality in their works, have been followers of other denominations other than Shi'a (with a small number of authors being Shi'a). Accordingly, despite following other denominations, they did not have any choice regarding *Ma'rifa* (interior knowledge) other than 'Alī and members of his family.

Various Persian poets tried to present virtues of 'Alī's personality, among whom Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī can be included. Works of the two poets have not been chosen within the scope of this study randomly. Both poets are considered members of the Khorasan (Turkestan) style that existed in Persian poetry during the Samanid, Ghaznavid and Seljuk periods. The mentioned style emerged in Eastern Iran and existed throughout the Tahirid (821-873), Saffarid (862-1003) and Ghaznavid (961-1186) periods. However, the period of its promotion was under the Samanids and Ghaznavids. Despite that both poets were considered members of the Khorasan style, they had unique poetic styles of their own, which was used for creation of new poems. Nāsir-i Khusraw did not bring novelties to the Khorasan style, its artistic means and language of depiction, however he made the first step for changes in topics and paved the way for transition into the Iraqi style. Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, in his turn, continued the way paved by Nāsir-i Khusraw and completely switched to gnostic-love topics. Wide use of Qur'ān verses and sayings of the Prophet, poems on the Prophet, members of his family and saints and a religious-philosophical approach to matters are not included in the peculiarities of the Khorāsān style. But works of Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī namely bear similar features. In our opinion, it would be precise to refer Nāsir-i Khusraw's and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's poems to the Khorasan style only by their shape, as their content is quite different from that of the mentioned style.

The pioneer poets of Persian poetry, who wrote about 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib, were Kisāī Marvazī, Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi and Nāsir-i Khusraw. Later, this tradition was continued by gnostic poets of Persian literature Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, Farīd ud-dīn Attār, and Jalal ad-Dīn Rumī.

A comprehensive study of the character of 'Alī in works of both poets is subject to a voluminous research work. However, studying one specific poem of each of them, this research work clearly reveals their attitude to 'Alī's personality. As presentation of interpretation of all couplets bound to the topic in a single article is impossible, the author opted the poems "Adoration for 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib" in the 24th Part of the 3rd Section of *Hadigat al-Haqiqa va Shari'at al-Tariqah* by Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and relevant couplets in the *Diwān* by Nāsir-i Khusraw. Personality of 'Alī has been highly visualized while reading Sanā'ī's poem consisting of 187 couplets and Nasir Khusraw's relevant couplets. Their appeal to the personality of 'Alī in the in poems

cannot be considered occasional, as Nasir-i Khusraw named himself a follower of ‘Alī (shi‘a of ‘Alī), while Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī is one of the three poets (together with Farid ud-Dīn Attār and Jalāl-al Dīn Rūmi), who established the gnostic poetry in Persian literature. Consequently, it has been widely adopted in general view that cognition of Islamic gnosis is hardly accomplishable without learning and understanding the personality of ‘Alī ibn Abi Tālib.

### 1. Literature Review

Iranian researchers conducted studies on the literary work of both Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī. de Bruijn, J.T.P. *Of Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakīm Sanā‘ī of Ghazna, Zairemami*, Parisa. “Sanā‘ī’s Hadiqat al-haqiqeh: Between Narrative and Non-narrative”, Virani Shafique N. “Persian Poetry, Sufism and Ismailism: The Testimony of Khwājah Qāsim Tushtarī’s Recognizing God”, Hunsberger, Alice C. *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan; A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher*, AyyūbMurādī and Sārā Chalāk’s article titled “The Image of Ahl al-Bayt in Sanā‘ī’s Works”<sup>1</sup>, Khodabakhsh Asadullahi, and Zahra Fathi’s article titled “Investigating the Intertextuality of Ali’s (AS) Image in the Poems of Sanai and Nāsir-i Khusraw”<sup>2</sup>, Nasir Kazimkhanli and Shiva Avihangi’s work titled “The Image of ‘Alī in Nāsir-i Khusraw’s Poems”<sup>3</sup>, Maryam Rahmati and Bahare Rahimi’s research work titled “A Comparative Study of the Content with Praise of the Alawite Denomination in Sanai Ghaznavī’s and Haysa Baysa’s Literary Works”<sup>4</sup>, and Khalil Hadidi and Khodabakhsh Asadullahi’s study titled “Imamate in Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī’s Works”<sup>5</sup> can be presented as examples. Besides, Nasrin Biranvand, Nasir Gasim Khanli and Peyman Memarzade wrote an article titled “Praise of ‘Alī in Nāsir-i Khusraw’s and Sanā‘ī’s Poems”<sup>6</sup>, which introduces a study of the image of ‘Alī in creative works of both poets. The main feature distinguishing our article from the mentioned works is that we have compared only one eulogy of Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī, whose works extremely praised ‘Alī’s virtue, to couplets in Nāsir-i Khusraw’s Diwan. The first source has been Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī’s eulogy, which was used as a basis for the systemization of ‘Alī’s image. Later, a comparison was conducted between Sanā‘ī’s work and Nāsir-i Khusraw’s couplets. Besides, ‘Alī’s image as a historical personality and his moral virtues in the creative works of both poets have been subject to study separately.

1 See Murādī, Ayyūb, and Sārā Chalāk. “Sīmā-yi Imām ‘Alī dar shi‘r-i Sanā‘ī.” In *Nāmah-yi Pārsī*, no. 53 (1389 HSh/[2010 CE]): 5-37.

2 See Khodābakhsh, Asadollāhī – Fathī, Zahrā. “Beynamatniyyat-i simā-yi ‘Alī (a) dar eshār-i Sanā‘ī wa Nāsir-i Khusraw.” In *Pazuheshnāmah-yi Alavī (Imam ‘Alī’s Studies)*, Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies (IHCS) Biannual Journal 12/1 (Spring and Summer 2021), 1-32

3 See Kazimkhanli, Nāsir - Avihangi, Shīvā. “Sīmā-yi Hazrat ‘Alī dar ashār-i Nāsir-i Khusraw.” In *Dovvomin hamāyesh-i melli-yi bazshenāsī-yi mashāhīr va mafākhir-i Khorāsān dar adab-i fārsī*. Mashhad, Farhangian University, (1396 HSh/[2017 CE])

4 See Rahmatī, Maryam - Rahīmī Bahāre. “Barrasi-yi tatbiqī-yi mazāmin-i madh-i alevi dar ashār-i Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī wa Haysa Baysa”. In *Kāvoshnāme-yi adabiyyāt-i tatbiqī*. Kirmanshah, Rāzi University 7/26 (1396 HSh/[2017CE]), 63-84.

5 See Hadīdī, Khalīl - Asadullahī, Khodābakhsh. “Imāmat dar āsār-i Sanā‘ī Ghaznavī”. In *The Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Univeristy of Tabriz* 48 (1384 HSh/[2005 CE]), 55-74

6 See Biranvand, Nasrīn et al. “Sitayesh-i Hazrat ‘Alīdar ashār-i Nāsir-i Khusraw wa Sanā‘ī”. In *Konferans-i melli-yi hezāre-yi sevvom va olum-i insāni*. Shirāz(1394 HSh/[2015 CE]).

## 2. The Ismā'īlī Poet Nāsir-i Khusraw

Abu Mo'in Nāsir ibn Khusraw ibn Hārith al-Qubadiani Balkhi, also shortly known as Nāsir-i Khusraw was born in Qubadian City on the 3rd of September, 1004. He was a prominent poet, philosopher, a scholar and propagator of the Ismā'īlīyah denomination. He grew up in a wealthy family, members of which conducted state affairs. He also worked at the palace of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavī in the last years of his reign and later continued his position at the palace of Abū Suleyman Dawud Chagri Beg ibn Mikail.

In youth Nāsir-i Khusraw educated philosophy, astronomy, medicine, Euclid geometry, music, religion, painting, oration and literature. In recent days, the poet is considered among the prominent Persian poets and his poems clearly bear the trace of his wide knowledge of different spheres. Similar to Rūdaki Samargandī and Hāfiz Shirazī, Nāsir-i Khusraw knew all verses of the Qur'ān by heart and used the holy verses in his poems to substantiate his views.

Nāsir-i Khusraw rendered his intellectual services at the palace of the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks for years, but he left state when saw a strange dream and left for Mecca city to perform Pilgrimage. About his dream Nāsir writes in his work titled *Safarnāma* (the Book of Travels): ("He said:) "How long are you going to drink this seductive wine? Better if you have your consciousness". Nāsir Said: "Most probably, it is good, as it should have been made to wash away the sorrow of the world". The man said: "One who directs people to foolishness cannot be called a doctor. Drink something that increases your mind". Nāsir said: "Where can I find it?" The man said: "Seek and you will find" and pointed out the direction of Mecca. After waking up, I could clearly remember my dream. It affected me. I told myself that I have to wake up from my 40 years old sleep just like I woke up from this sleep. I thought I would not be happy unless changing all my deeds (Qubādiyānī, 1335, 1-2)".

After the mentioned dream, Nāsir-i Khusraw experienced a revolution in his mind. Abandoning wine and all worldly pleasure, he left his position in the palace and went for pilgrimage. For seven years he travelled through Azerbaijan, Middle Asia, Aleppo, Tripoli, Damascus, Syria, Arabia, Tunisia and Sudan, staying in Egypt for 3 to 6 years and becoming acquaintance with and later adopting the Ismā'īlīyah denomination. After some years he would eventually become one of the leaders of the denomination. He was entrusted with the task of Propagation of the Ismailiyah denomination in Khorasan, which was under the Seljuk government at the time. However, the Seljuks did not allow him to do so, and he found shelter in a village named Yumgan situated in Badakhshan region, where he lived until he died in 1088. Later, his grave became a tomb for Ismā'īlī followers, where they visited systematically. He enjoyed the respect of Badakhshan citizens, who called him the *Hujjat*, *Sayed Shah Nāsir-i Wali*, *Pir Shah Nāsir* and *Pir-i Kāmil*. In Yumgan he wrote many poems and the work *Jamī'at al-Hikmatayn* (*The Collection of Two Sources of Wisdom*).

Nāsir wrote poems both in Persian and Arabic. He was one of the founders of scholarly-gnostic poetry in Persian literature and is considered a member of the Khorasan style together with Ferdowsi, Rudaki and Unsuri. Famous works of Nāsir-i Khusraw are *Diwān*, *Safarnāma*, *Rawshana-i-nama*, *Zaad al-Musafirin*, *Wajh-i-Din* etc. *Diwān* comprises today more than 10.000 couplets. However, it is known that previously it included almost 30.000 couplets (Safā, 1392, 453-454).

In *Diwān*, not a single couplet can be found on adoration, depiction of a lover and even worldly needs (excluding praise of religious leaders and Fatimid caliphs). Depiction of nature also almost lacks in the work. The main content in the work includes mind, religion, faith, search, cognition of truth, perfection of human and his features etc.

### 3. The Gnostic poet Sanā'ī Ghaznavī

Hakim Abul-Majd ibn Adam Sanā'ī Ghaznavī was born in the 11th century (1080/1081-1140/1141) in Ghaznī. After studying various disciplines and becoming familiar with hidden secrets of versification, Sanā'ī Ghaznavī went to the Ghaznī sultans' palace. He wrote poems praising Ghaznavī sultans Masood bin Ibrahim and Yamin ad-Dawla Bahramshāh. Sanā'ī Ghaznavī had won so much respect at the Ghaznī palace, that Bahramshah decided to marry his sister to Sanā'ī Ghaznavī. However, as a result of a sudden incident, his situation changed, he turned away from the Shah, his palace and luxury. With the shine of truth light, his heart was enlightened with the bright lights of the truth.

Sanā'ī Ghaznavī lived in Balkh, Sarakhs, Herat and Nishāpur for a long time and left to Mecca from Khorāsān. During his pilgrimage to Mecca, he met a lot of Sufis. After returning to Ghazni, he chose the way of wisdom and wrote works on these topics. (Sajjadi, 1376, 114).

Sanā'ī Ghaznavi has mature masterpieces named *Sayr al-I'bad ila al-Ma'ad* (Slaves' (servants of God) Wandering to the Place of Return) *Tarig al-Tahqiq* (The Way to Establish the Truth), *Kārname-yi Balkh*, *Eshq-nāme* (The Book of Love), *Aql-nāme* (The Book of Mind), *Tahrimāt al-Qalam*.

Pieces of art written by Sanā'ī Ghaznavī as *Diwān*, *Letters* were completed with introductory remarks written by Fazlullāh bin Tāhir al-Husayn (who he was dictating) in the preface of Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's *Diwan*. Besides, he had also a letter written to Omar Khayyām (Sajjadi, 1376, 115).

Sanā'ī Ghaznavī is considered as the founder of mature poem in the Persian literature. His work *Hadiqat al-Haqiqah wa Shari'at al-Tariqa* is considered as one of the masterpieces of mystical Mathnawī. There are different opinions among researchers about this work of the poet. Thus, in his book titled *History of Persian Literature*, Edward Brown writes about this book:

It is written with stumbling and unattractive meter. In my opinion, it is one of the most boring books in Persian... full of absurd truisms and flat jokes". The of evaluation of the poem makes it absolutely incomprehensible why it was so highly rated in the East, and even called the "the Persian Qur'an.

Soviet orientalist Y. Berthels writes referring to the abovementioned sentences: "Nevertheless, if not to read this most difficult text, which at each step requires from the reader new efforts to understand it, who usually tends to understand the content at a glance, then of course, it is impossible to give a correct description of the poem" (Berthels, 1960, 402).

According to the copies in our hands, we can say that this work consists of 10 babs (parts). The first bab (part) is titled "About the Monotheism", the second bab (part) is *About the Qur'an*, the third bab (part) is titled *Prophet Muhammad's Description*, the fourth is *About the Characteristics of Mind*, the fifth bab (part)

is *About the Sapience of Science*, the sixth bab (part) is titled *About Nafs al-Kulli (universal temptation) and its Circumstances*, the seventh bab (part) is *About Pride, Ignorance, Forgetfulness*, the eighth bab (part) is *Sultans' Remembrance*, the ninth bab (part) is titled *Wisdom* and the tenth bab (part) is *About the Reason for Writing the Book* (Ghaznavī, 1384, 305).

The storyline of the book starts with God and ends with the remembrance of sultans. Then it continues with babs (parts) about God, The Qur'ān, Muhammad, the mind, science and temptation. Iranian scientist Zarrinkub called Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's *Hadiqat al-Haqiqa* an encyclopedia about wisdom and Sufism. In this work, deeply meaningful words were written in the language of poetry about circumstances and highlights of Sufism.

Berthels answered to the reasons why orientalists call *Hadiqat al-Haqiqa* the encyclopedia of Sufism. In his opinion, there are two reasons for that: "Reasons why Western European researchers relate Sanā'ī Ghaznavī to the list of Sufi authors is quite clear. Firstly, orientalists are inclined to relate any work of a Muslim author, which is about "first mind" or "universal soul", to Sufi philosophical literature, although these ideas entered the scholastic Muslim theology and even became components of *aqāids* (Muslim creeds).

The second reason why Sanā'ī Ghaznavī was referred to Sufis, is that late Sufi authors considered the *Hadiqa* as a kind of canonical Sufi text. As was mentioned above, Jalal ad-Din Rumi as wrote *Mathnavī* at the instance of Dervishes of his order, who were keen on reading poems by Attar and the *Hadiqa*, but couldn't find in these works parts that a member of their order needed to know. It is known that Jalal ad-Din said:

عطار روح بود و سنائی دو چشم او / ما از پی سنائی و عطار آمدیم

Attar was a spirit, and Sanā'ī – his two eyes,

Wesucceeded Sanā'ī and Attar (Berthels, 1960, 437- 438).

The first poet to declare the truth of gnosis and the meanings of Sufism poetically was Ghaznavī. The work he began continued with Attar and reached its peak with Rumī.

The denominational affiliation of Ghaznavī is a matter of discussion among researchers –several researchers link him to Shi'a, while others assume he was a Sunni or As'harī Muslim.

#### 4. The Poem Sanā'ī Devoted to 'Alī

In classical Persian literature, there was a tradition among poets and authors in general that in the introduction part of a work they wrote about "the reasons for writing the work" (Attār, 1381, 13-16). Devoting a eulogy to Imam 'Alī, Sanā'ī Ghaznavī explains the reason for writing as follows:

زیور دیوان خودساز این مناقب را از آنک / چاره نبود نو عروسان را ز زیور داشتن

(Ghaznavī 1354, 457)

Consider this praising poem an ornament of your collection of poems, as newlywed brides have no choice other than adorning themselves out.

Taking this couplet into consideration, it can be assumed that another reason for Sanā'ī to give wide publicity to 'Alī ibn Abi Tālib in his poems was the desire to beautify them, in other words, to present them "adorned".

The poem devoted to Imam ‘Alī by the poet begins with a short text in Arabic and two couplets. Later, a saying from the Prophet and a poem in Persian consisting of 187 couplets are given:

“The praise of Betul’s (Fatima al-Zahrā’s) spouse, the Prophet’s cousin, Hasan and Husayn’s father, valorous paladin, who never abandoned any battlefield, who routed grand and crowded armies – this is the depiction of the head of the Ansār and the Muhajirun. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “One who loves ‘Alī has held on to a strong rope”. God has sent the following verse about him: “And (those who) give food – despite their desire for it – to the poor, the orphan and the captive”.<sup>7</sup> The Prophet, blessings of God be upon him, told him: “O ‘Alī, you for me are like Aaron was for Moses, with a slight difference that there will be no prophet after me”. Also, the Prophet said: “O Lord, regard as friends those who regard ‘Alī as a friend and turn against anyone who turns against him. Help anyone helps him. Abandon anyone who abandons him helpless”. Also, he said: “Everyone who considers me a leader upon himself, know that ‘Alī is also your leader”. Jābir ibn Abdullah al-Ansāri, peace be upon him, said: “I went to Aisha’s home (peace be upon her for the Prophet’s sake and upon her Father). (I) told her: O Aisha, what can you tell about the leader of believers ‘Alī ibn Abi Tālib (blessings of God be upon him)?” She lowered her head, then raised her head and said the following two couplets:

If to mix gold with another element,  
The (non-gold) element can, with no doubt, be revealed.

We have both mixed half-gold metals and pure gold ones.  
‘Alī is like the pure gold.

The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: “I am the city of knowledge and wisdom and ‘Alī is its gate” (Ghaznavī, n.d., 244).

The poet used the following means of depiction to describe ‘Alī ibn Abi Tālib:

The Standard-bearer of the Prophet	علمدار رسول	Ornament of the religion	دین آرای
Devastator of blasphemy and grudge	تراج کفر و کی	The crown of the Religion	تاج دین
The chosen one	مرتضی	Haydar	حیدر
The Custodian	وصی	The idol breaker	بت شکن
Brother	برادر	The son-in-law	داماد
Leader	امیر	Deputy of Mustafa	نائب مصطفی
King of (religious) tradition	خسرو سنت	Haydar the Repeater	حیدر کزار
Honor of the religious law	شرف شرع	Champion of the religion	تیمتن دین
Pearl of Ali Yasin	صدف در آل یاسین	Veteran of the religion	قاضی دین
Holder of the treasury of interpretation	خازن گنجخانه تائویل	Scribe of the holy scripts	کاتب نامه تنزیل
Sea of valor	بحر هنر	World of knowledge	عالم علم
Sea of knowledge and wisdom	بحر علم	Seeing eyes and torch of the prophet	چشم و چراغ پیغمبر
Lion of God	شیر خدا	Confidant of the prophet	راز دار پیامب
Abu Turab	بوتراب	Lion of God	شیر یزدان
Manager of knowledge and wisdom	کندخای علم	Guide of watchfulness	رهنمای حلم
World of meanings	عالم معانی	Holder of Zulfikar	صاحب ذوالفقار
Gate of wisdom and knowledge	در علم	Fountain of Youth	اب زندگانی
Bearer of the knowledge and wisdom of the Prophet	علمدار رسول	Virtuous man	مرد بزرگ

7 See al-Insān 76/8.

The means of depiction used by Sanā'ī in the poem clearly indicate that he had enormous sympathy for Imam 'Alī and namely this sympathy paved the way for this kind of beautiful poem. Distinctly from Sanā'ī, Nāsir-i Khusraw did not use this kind of depiction means in his couplets about 'Alī. Certainly, the poet arranged the couplets after his own heart. In our turn, considering Sanā'ī's poem, we have compared Nāsir-i Khusraw's couplets and for a more precise study, we have decided to divide peculiarities attributed to 'Alī in the poems into two:

The historical personality of Imam 'Alī in poems of Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and Nāsir-i Khusraw;

Moral features of Imam 'Alī in poems of Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and Nāsir-i Khusraw.

Notably, 'Alī's different features, in most cases, are so intertwined and intermingled that they unite with each other tightly and one cannot define precise borders between them.

The historical personality of 'Alī ibn Tālib is well known, however, his inner peculiarities should not be overlooked, as well.

Let's first examine 'Alī's historical personality through the poets' attitude. How do Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī present 'Alī as a historical personality? Despite precise presentation of a historical personality, here, with no doubt, artistic imagination of the poets has strong influence. Poetic talent of Sanā'ī enables us to assume that one the most beautiful poems ever written about 'Alī is the poem subject to our study. In this poem, each couplet is devoted to reveal personal peculiarities of Imam 'Alī. Still, couplets can be grouped from the aspect of content. Main attention in the couplets is drawn to Imam 'Alī's knowledge and wisdom, watchfulness and valor, his struggle for religion and religious law. Reading the poems, one can observe that poets usually prefer to put forward his valor, while in regard to his moral features they write more about his knowledge and wisdom. 'Alī's valor was well revealed in battles he took place, including measures taken and steps made by him on the purpose of spreading religion and religious law. Naturally, describing 'Alī's knowledge and wisdom one should definitely pay attention to his watchfulness, faith, piety, justice and other virtues. Shortly, Sanā'ī based his poem devoted to 'Alī on two sayings of the Prophet. The first is "There is no braver than 'Alī and no better sword than Zulfiqar", the second being "I am the city of knowledge and wisdom and 'Alī is its Gate. Whoever desires to enter it, shall go through the gate".

## 5. Historical personality of Imam 'Alī in Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's and Nāsir-i Khusraw's Poem

### 5.1. Mutual Relations of the Prophet and Imam 'Alī

According to the poem, "once in his childhood his father took him to the prophet, and he became his protector and educator". 'Alī learned valor, knowledge and wisdom. It is described as follows: The prophet put his finger in his mouth, moistened it and then put it in 'Alī's mouth. This meant he blessed the child. It was the same finger that split the Moon. So, Haydar's speech was as magnificent as Mount Qaf (Ghaznavī, n.d., 251-252, couplets 133-139).

According to studies, the first person to use the sentence *أَدْخَلَ لِسَانَهُ فِي فَمِي* was Abu Hamid Ghazali, which was later narrated from him in Shi'a sources by Sayyed

ibn Tawus (Ibn Tawus, n.d., 284; Majlisī, 89/106). The phrase انكب عليه written in some Sunni sources means that the Prophet entered his tongue into 'Alī's mouth (figuratively). Ghazalī does not indicate any source for it. The sentence "put his tongue into his mouth" means that Imam 'Alī received wisdom and knowledge directly from the source without any means. So, Ghazali interprets it as adoption of divine knowledge and wisdom and considers that it cannot be achieved by learning, but only by divine intervention (Ghazalī, 1416, 232-233).

For Sanā'ī, 'Alī's status is equal to that of Abraham. 'Alī's submission to God is at the same level as Abraham's submission. Therefore, he calls 'Alī "Khalīl in submission / deputy in religious law" (Ghaznavī, n.d., 245, couplet 9). Just as Abraham was ready to sacrifice his father (according to some authors, his uncle) and son to God's will, 'Alī also sacrificed his father Abi Tālib and his son Imam Husayn in the way of God. Shortly, "he was ready to sacrifice for the right cause whatever he had" (Ib., 245, couplet 7).

As mentioned above, the relationship between the Prophet and 'Alī was cordial. As said by the poet, "the Prophet was very happy whenever he saw 'Alī's face" (Ib., 247, couplet 50). He was a brother, a confidant, a deputy, a custodian, a viceroy, a standard-bearer for the Prophet and finally, he was his son-in-law. According to Sanā'ī's poem, in addition to all mentioned, "Murtaza and Mustafa were helpmates"<sup>8</sup> (Ib., 250, couplet 108). "In this monstrous world, 'Alī always / was subservient to the Messenger of God" (Ib., 251, couplet 118).

هر دو یک قبله و خردشان دو / هر دو یک روح و کالبدشان دو

(Ib., 250, couplet 110)

"They had one direction of prayer and two minds, / One spirit and two bodies".<sup>9</sup>

هر دو یک در ز یک صدف بودند / هر دو پیرایه شرف بودند

(Ib., 250, couplet 111)

"They were two pearls from one nacre / Both were ornaments of honor".<sup>10</sup>

دو رونده چو اختر و گردون / دو برادر چو موسی و هارون

(Ib., 250, couplet 112)

Two travelers like a star and the sky / Two brothers like Moses and Aaron.<sup>11</sup>

دش ردارب ی بن اب یلع نوچ / دش ربارب یرت یرت اب

(Ib., 250, couplet 106)

The Pleiades and the Earth stack together / As 'Alī became brother of the Messenger.<sup>12</sup>

8 See Āl 'Imrān 3/61.

9 You (O 'Alī) are like the Kaabah – everyone turns faces to you, it is not you that turns his face to others" and "Truly, 'Alī is a part of me and I am a part of him and he is the leader of all believers after me (Ibn al-Athir, *al-Ghābah*, 4/31), (al-Haythami, *Majmu' al-Zawa'id*, 9/100).

10 I and 'Alī have roots in the same tree, while other people in other trees (Reyshahri, *Mawsu'a*, 8/67).

11 (O 'Alī), you for me are like Aaron was for Moses, with a slight difference that there will be no prophet after me (Majlisī, *Bihār ul-anwār*, 37/273).

12 He ('Alī) is my brother and viceroy and deputy after me upon you. Listen to him and obey him (Hindi, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, 13/131).

## رازدار خدای پیغمبر / رازدار پیمبرش حیدر

(Ib., 249, couplet 92)

God's confidant is the Prophet/ the Prophet's confidant is Haydar.

'Alī was the Prophet's son-in-law. The poet writes about it as follows: "He had shining eyes and a happy face, when he married Zahrā" (Ib., 245, couplet 11). "Imam 'Alī with Batul under the shadow of Tuba (a tree in Heaven)" / Made a marriage contract" (Ib., 255, couplet 189).

It could say with observing that the poet narrates the contribution of 'Alī for the cause of Islam and evaluates it as follows: "He deprived the family of the Rock of honor / As he started a new revolution" (Ib., 245, couplet 20). With the phrase "family of the Rock" (Al-i Sukhra) the poet refers to the Rock (in the Dome of the Rock), which is considered holy by Muslims, Christians and Jews. According to Sanā'ī, Imam 'Alī started a revolution in history that deprived all three branches of the Abrahamic religions of their honor, as he became the master of that honor (of monotheism).

The poet does not overlook the event of the Ghadir Khumm and poetically narrated the respective sayings of the Prophet as follows: On the day of Ghadir, Mustafā appointed his deputy as the Commander over the religious law (Ib., 247, couplet 54).

Mustafā asked God that He / befriend anyone who accepts the mandate of 'Alī<sup>13</sup> (Ib., 249, couplet 81).

'Alī's righteousness also was praised by the poet: "His name was derived from the word friend (wali) / wherever he went, his friend was Lord (or the Right/the Truth)"<sup>14</sup> (Ib., 245, couplet 19).

Anyone who saw 'Alī and the Prophet admired the one with heart and the other with soul (Ib., 252, couplet 144).

گفته او را رسول جبارش / کای خدای از بدان نگهدارش

(Ib., 252, couplet 141)

The Messenger of God said about him / O God, defend him against the evil

In the relevant context, Nāsir-i Khusraw's Diwan bears almost the same content with contents of Kisai Marvazi and most probably, he was strongly influenced by Kisai's style of praising Ahl al-Bayt (people of the house (of the Prophet).

آن را که هر شریفی نسبت بدو کنند / زیرا که از رسول خدای است نسبتش

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 179, eulogy 82, couplet 18)

His ancestry was the same with the Prophets, so all virtue is attributed to him

ایزد عطاش داد محمد را / نامش علی شناس و لقب کوثر

(Ib., 47, eulogy 22, couplet 71)

God bestowed him upon Muhammad / Know his name 'Alī, his nickname Kawthar (Pond of Abundance)

13 He whose leader I am, 'Alī is his leader. O God, befriend the friend of 'Alī and be the enemy of his enemy (Majlīsī, *Bihār ul-anwār*, 37/126).

14 'Alī is with the Truth and the Truth is with him. They will never separate until the Day of Judgement and I will meet them then near the Pond of Abundance. (Ibn Asākīr, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, 3/ 153).

گر گفتم از رسول علی خلق را وصی است / سوی شما سزای مساوی چرا شدم؟  
(Ib., 139, eulogy 62, couplet 31)

If I narrate from the Prophet that 'Alī is his deputy upon people / Why should I be equal to you?

احمد مختار شمس و حیدر کرار نور / آن بی این موجود نی و این بی آن انوار نیست  
(Ib., 313, eulogy 147, couplet 38)

Ahmad the chosen was the Sun, Heydar the Repeater was light / Neither of them can exist without the other one.

چو هرون ز موسی علی بود در دین / هم انباز و هم هم نشین محمد  
(Ib., 130, eulogy 58, couplet 21)

'Alī (for Muhammad) was like Aaron for Moses / He was Muhammad's friend and companion.

به محشر بیوسند هارون و موسی / ردای علی و آستین محمد  
(Ib., 130, eulogy 58, couplet 22)

On the Day of Judgement, Aaron and Moses / 'Alī's cardigan and Muhammad's sleeve.

چون پیمبر را برادر بود حیدر سوی خلق / گر بنام من بدو چون روی خویش اصفر کنی؟  
(Ib., 454, eulogy 217, couplet 30)

'Alī was the Prophet's brother among people / I am proud of him, why do you make a wry face?

راز ایزد با محمد بود و جز حیدر نبود / مر محمد را ز امت رازدار، ای ناصبی  
(Ib., 538, eulogy 2, couplet 26)

God's secret was with Muhammad / No one else among the Ummah was Muhammad's confidant except Haydar, you vindictive!

ره سر یزدان که داند؟ پیمبر / پیمبر سپرده است این سر به حیدر  
(Ib., 308, eulogy 145, couplet 59)

Who knows the God's way of secrets? The Prophet / The Prophet elected Haydar for the secret.

احمد لوای خویش علی را سپرده بود / من زیر این بزرگ و مبارک لوا شدم  
(Ib., 140, eulogy 62, couplet 40)

Ahmad chose 'Alī as the custodian of his standard / I got under that magnificent and blessed standard.

جز که زهرا و علی و اولادشان / مر رسول مصطفی را کیست آل؟  
(Ib., 74, eulogy 34, couplet 47)

Who is included in Mustafa's family except Zahra, 'Alī and their children?

شرف خیر به هنگام پدید آید ازو / چون پدید آمد تشریف علی روز غدیر  
(Ib., 219, eulogy 102, couplet 25)

The good gained honor with him / As on the day of Ghadīr Khumm, ‘Alī rose.

بنگر که خلق را به که داد و چگونه گفت / روزی که خطبه کرد نبی بر سر غدیر  
(Ib., 1357, 105, eulogy 46, couplet 45)

Behold whom he referred his people / on the day the Prophet spoke in Ghadīr.

دست علی گرفت و بدو داد جای خویش / گر دست او گرفت تو جز دست او مگیر  
(Ib., 1357, 105, eulogy 46, couplet 46)

He held ‘Alī’s hand and gave his place to him / You don’t hold another person’s hand, as he held ‘Alī’s hand.

جز که علی را پس از رسول که را بود / آنکه خلافت بدو رسید ز بنیاد

(Ib., 302, eulogy 142, couplet 24)

Whom the caliphate was given after the Prophet?

حق نیست مگر که حب حیدر / خیرات بدو شود محقق

(Ib., 451, eulogy 216, couplet 10)

The Truth is only in love to Haydar / Good things are realized with him.

آنکه بیش از دگران بود به شمشیر و به علم / وانکه بگزید و وصی کرد نبی بر سر ماش  
(Ib., 276, eulogy 129, couplet 19)

He was superior to others in sword and wisdom / He was chosen by the Prophet and was made a leader onto us.

آنکه معروف بدو شد به جهان روز غدیر / وز خداوند ظفر خواست پیمبر به دعاش  
(Ib., 276, eulogy 129, couplet 20)

The day of Ghadir became popular in the world with him / The Prophet prayed to God asking victory for him.

آگه نه‌ای مگر که پیمبر کرا سپرد / روز غدیر خم ز منبر ولایتش؟

(Ib., 179, eulogy 82, couplet 12)

Aren’t you aware whom the Prophet authorized / In regard to his succession on Ghadir Khumm day?

Mutual relationship between the Prophet and ‘Alī was depicted in works of both poets. However, it should be noted that Sanā’ī’s poetic language is richer and more eloquent, while Nāsir-i Khusraw simply verified historical events. Sanā’ī, in his turn, presents historical events in a high and eloquent poetical language. Nāsir-i Khusraw handles matters mostly from religious-philosophical aspect, while Sanā’ī Ghaznavī adds gnostic-amative tones. In other words, Nāsir-i Khusraw thinks with “mind”, while Sanā’ī prefers “soul”, which can be clearly seen in their works. For Nāsir a poem is a means and not the target. Therefore, he cares more about what he desires to express than how to express it. Notably, a peculiarity of the Khorasan style was its simple language and its closeness to people’s speech. For Sanā’ī, on the other hand, both beauty of poems and magnificence of the idea are equally important. Paying attention to Sanā’ī’s expressions on the relationship of the Prophet and ‘Alī, one can observe how elegant poetic matters he presents in the poem. He praises his heroes

and compares them to Abraham, who was ready to sacrifice his closest ones for the sake of his faith, to Rafael, who read the text written in the *Lawh Mahfuz (Preserved Tablet)* and brought it to Gabriel, to Noah, who was not afraid of anything. Sanā'ī's expressions as *the monstrous world, helpmate, one spirit and two bodie, one nacre, two pearls, one direction of prayer and two minds, a star and the sky, the Pleiades and the Earth*, and other metaphors beautify the language of his poem.

## 5.2. 'Alī's valor on Battlefield

'Alī's participation in the battles of Khaybar, Jamel and Siffin was also versified in styles specific to them. Devastated by his sword, water source of Khaybar became a mirage (Ghaznavī, n.d., 245, couplet 15). As he pulled the gate (of Khaybar) off, the Prophet authorized him to guard the gate of the religion (Ib., 251, couplet 121). The metaphor used by the poet is exclusively interesting from the artistic aspect. As we read in the couplet, 'Alī ruined the Castle of Khaybar as there never stood one and even its water became mirage. The poet successfully managed to use here the cause and effect relation. He mentions two gates: one is the gate of the Castle of Khaybar, the other being the gate of the religion. According to him, only one, who can pull the gate of the enemy off can guard the gate of the religion. In another couplet we read: As he pulled the gate of the Jew, the gate of wisdom, good deeds and religion was given to him (Ib., 246, couplet 25). So, according to the poet, the reason why the gate of wisdom, good deeds and religion was given to 'Alī was his valor in the Battle of Khaybar.

به بدر و احد هم به خيبر نبود / مگر جستن حرب كار على

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 186, eulogy 85, couplet 40)

In Badir, Uhud and Khaybar 'Alī's work was nothing else than skilled fight.

Nāsir-i Khusraw simply versified historical events, namely 'Alī's fights in the battles of Badr, Uhud and Khaybar.

On the day of Jamel, when the battle ended with 'Alī's victory, He showed his virtue and pardoned his enemy (Ghaznavī, n.d., 252, couplet 149). Sanā'ī presents 'Alī's virtue as the reason why he pardoned his enemy at the battle of Jamel.

بيامد به حرب جمل عايشه / بر ابليس زى كارزار على

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 186, eulogy 85, couplet 36)

Aisha came to the battle of Jamel / 'Alī entered the battle with the evil.

بريده شد ابليس را دست و پاى / چو بانگ آمد از گيرودار على

(Ib., 186, eulogy 85, couplet 37)

Hands and feet of the evil were cut / When the war cry of 'Alī was heard.

At the battle of Siffin, he had a firm consultation against his enemy (Ghaznavī, n.d., 252, 150. couplet). Heydar, titled Lion by God, / Did not thrust his sword into Muawiya. The lion did not hurt the fox / But he would not leave alive a hundred of onagers<sup>15</sup> (Ib., 249, couplets 93-94). Using allegory, the poet indicates that the fox is so weak that the lion does not even pay attention to him. At the battle of Siffin, Muawiya ordered his soldiers to raise copies of the Qur'ān on their lances and thus, blaming him for being cunning as a fox, the poet confronts him against the Lion (i.e. 'Alī).

15 See *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 200. (Zamani, 1360).

آن کز بت تو آمد بر عترت پیمبر / از تیغ حیدر آمد بر اهل بدر و صفین

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 235, eulogy 109, couplet 8)

When your idol stood against the Prophet's successor / Many soldiers suffered from 'Alī's sword in Badir and Siffin.

علی شیر نر بود لیکن نبود / مگر حربگه مرغزار علی

(Ib., 185, eulogy 85, couplet 15)

'Alī was a Lion / His hunting ground was only battlefield.

شیر خدای بود علی، ناصبی خر است / زیرا همیشه می برمد خر ز هیبتش

(Ib., 189, eulogy 82, couplet 30)

'Alī was the Lion of God, but his counterpart was a vindictive onager / As onegars always are afraid of a lion's grandeur.

عرین بود دین محمد ولیکن / علی بود شیر عرین محمد

(Ib., 130, eulogy 58, couplet 23)

Muhammad's religion was like a land of lions but / the only Lion in his forest was 'Alī.

Sanā'ī uses the allegory of lion and fox, while Nāsir prefers to use a lion against an onager. Nāsir-i Khusraw hates 'Alī's enemies so much that he desires to humiliate them as much as possible.

'Alī is described by Sanā'ī as an enormously strong, valorous and brave. As history reveals, 'Alī's several nicknames meant "God's Lion" and the poet also depicted him as a lion. In two couplets he even titled him "Hercules of the religion" (Ghaznavī, n.d., 247, couplet 62 and 251, couplet 124) (*Tahmtan-Rostam* in original poem). As known, Tahmtan (Rostam) is a symbol of strength, valor, power and invincibility in Persian literature. Couplets describing 'Alī's valor are the following: 'Alī was born to abolish blasphemy and hatred (Ib., 245, 8. couplet). He was gifted immense power and whoever the enemy was, once he knocked him down, Gabriel immediately took his soul (Ib., 247, couplet 17). The poet also asserts that the power was gift by God. Those who were hit (by him) for the sake of religion, actually, were hit by God himself<sup>16</sup> (Ib., 245, couplet 18). 'Alī turned enemies of the religion into a cumulus cloud imbruing a mass of sand (Ib., 246, couplet 24). 'Alī, being the Lion of the religion, turned Islam into a shining slogan (Ib., 246, couplet 27). He was always on the front at a battlefield<sup>17</sup> (Ib., 247, couplet 52). So, in the very first couplet of his poem, the poet names 'Alī the master of the wisdom of the Prophet and his Standard-bearer (Ib., 245, couplet 5). For describing 'Alī's power, the poet depicts that "on Earth he broke idols, while in the sky he swung his sword on Saturn" (Ib., 246, couplet 34). 'Alī was so paramount that the neck of the enemy broke when he tied the feet of blasphemy (Ib., 246, couplet 38). 'Alī possessed the fury of a Lion (Ib., 247, couplet 57). Whoever sow his sword drawn would immediately forget the way he came through (Ib., 247, couplet 58). Eloquence among the Arab and valor among the Ajam belonged to him exclusively (Ib., 248, couplet 75). Whoever stood against the

16 See al-Anfāl 8/17.

17 See *Nahj al-Balāgha*, letter 45. By God, even if they turn their back to me on the battlefield, I will not turn my back! (Zamani, 1360)

religion was buried by him under Earth (Ib., 249, couplet 83). Whenever he showed his teeth to his enemies, the world would seem narrow to them (Ib., 253, couplet 158). Whenever the Lion of God opened his claws, the sky would change its color (out of fear) as the back of a tiger (Ib., 253, couplet 170).

Couplets written by Sanā'ī on the fearlessness of 'Alī are interesting both historically and poetically. “‘Alī’s fearlessness was so complete that he pursued the fear in every battle<sup>18</sup>, Mars would dread like an orphan soul (out of his grandness), Saturn would petrify out of admiration and Venus was anxiously watching the Moon (Ib., 253, couplets 163-164). He would crimp Rome thanks to his fearlessness in battles (Ib., 253, couplet 162).

Describing virtues of 'Alī, Sanā'ī enters his poetical language names of celestial bodies as Mars, Saturn, Venus and Moon, taking the reader to the sky, as to him, his hero is not an ordinary man, but a paragon of virtue. Furthermore, the usage of scientific terms also was a feature within the Khorasan poetic style. In this regard, the poems of Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī indicate their serious knowledge of astronomy.

According to Sanā'ī, 'Alī used his valor for the protection of the religion and the religious law. Therefore, he says: He was the crown of the religion and wiped blasphemy and grudge out (Ib., 245, couplet 8). 'Alī was a person, who “united valor and bravery by use of sword and pen thanks to his mind and knowledge of religion (Ib., 248, couplet 60).

به مردی و علم و به زهد و سخا / بنازم بدین هر چهار علی

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 185, eulogy 85, couplet 8)

Bravery, wisdom, piety, and generosity / I am proud of these four features of 'Alī.

Sanā'ī indicates 'Alī's wisdom, valor, and bravery in one couplet, while Nāsir-i Khusraw adds to all these his piety and generosity. So, both poets try to present 'Alī's virtues as well and much as possible.

### 5.3. 'Alī's Zulfiqar

Imam 'Alī cannot be imagined without his sword – Zulfiqar. Therefore, together with 'Alī's personality, the poets give publicity to his Zulfiqar, too. “Gabriel came from Sadra and presented the Prophet “*la fata*”<sup>19</sup>. God sent Zulfiqar from heaven to abolish polytheism. Gabriel brought it to the Prophet and told the sword was sent for 'Alī. The purpose was to help him to propagate God's religion and to devastate the army of infidels. Mustafa gave the sword to Imam 'Alī saying it was time to uncover the religion (Ghaznavī, n.d., 247, couplets 41-45). The poet here not only describes Zulfiqar as a worthy sword but also indicates that 'Alī's tongue was just like a sword: Indeed, he had two swords: one Zulfiqar and the other one being his tongue (Ib., 246, couplet 28). He propagated the religion by the use of Zulfiqar, while revealing wisdom to the world with his tongue (Ib., 246, couplets 29-30).

'Alī's sword was so popular in the history of Islam, that Sanā'ī devoted dozens of couplets to it. Imam 'Alī was such a person, according to the poet, that “his body was soaked by monotheism, while his hand and sword was the border of Islam” (Ib.,

18 See Ibid., sermon 104. I did not dread and fear did not find a way into me. (Zamani, 1360)

19 “There is no braver than 'Alī and no better sword than Zulfiqar” (Tabarsi, *al-Ihtijāj*, 1/66).

250, couplet 103). ‘Alī’s strength was so much that, if a rock saw a wound of his sword in a human hand, it would lose its spirit and escape away (Ib., 254, couplet 171). Zulfiqar was so powerful that “it never disappointed him and always sawed infidels” (Ib., 254, couplet 173). Not only people but also animals were afraid of his sword. For instance, at the battle of Jamel, Zubayr ibn Awam’s horse “felt (‘Alī’s) victory out of fear of ‘Alī’s Zulfiqar” (Ib., 254, couplet 172).

‘Alī’s strength and Zulfiqar’s power are depicted in Sanā’ī’s poem with numerous metaphors and exaggerations: rocks, people and animals were afraid of ‘Alī’s sword. Even rocks could lose their soul, when it touched them. Horses would feel defeated after just seeing the sword.

‘Alī used not only his sword but also other battle tools. “Seeing the wound of the arrow he threw the arrow itself would bend like a curve and lose its color” (Ib., 253, couplet 165). Because he was God’s viceroy and master of Zulfiqar – he was Haydar (Ib., 253, couplet 165). Foothills would lose their load seeing his arrow in-flight (Ib., 253, couplet 169).

نبود آهن تیغ علی که آتش بود / کزو بجست یکی جان به جای هر شری

(Nāsir-i Khusraw, 1357, 223, eulogy 104, couplet 44)

‘Alī’s sword was not made of iron, but fire / in every sparkle a soul would be lost.

Nāsir-i Khusraw also versifies that it was not an ordinary sword, but made of fire, killing a soul in every sparkle.

In battles against tyrants / No one was Heydar’s friend except Zulfiqar (Ib., 313, eulogy 147, couplet 35). There is light only in Ahmad’s words / There is flame only in Haydar’s sharp sword (Ib., 313, eulogy 147, couplet 37). Muhammad’s unfading religion is based on two columns / The Qur’ān and Haydar’s sword (Ib., 129, eulogy 59, couplet 18). I am a friend of ‘Alī because his sword / Creates nights for the hypocrite and days for the follower (Ib., 1357, 162, eulogy 74, couplet 33). At the battlefield, upon the infidel army / The fate was clear by a swing of ‘Alī’s sword (Ib., 219, eulogy 102, couplet 34). On the days of Siffin and the Trench, on the border with hell / assistant of the revolutionist was ‘Alī’s sword (Ib., 219, eulogy 102, couplet 35). ‘Alī was honorable / As on the day of Ghadir he was as the sun shining on the horizon (Ib., 220, eulogy 102, couplet 42).

According to the poet, one of the two foundations of the Prophet’s religion was the Qur’ān, the other one being Heydar’s sword. The sword would create nights for hypocrites and illuminate the followers (of ‘Alī). Another difference between Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā’ī is that he is always proud of his Shi’a denomination and emphasizes that only followers of ‘Alī will find salvation.

#### 5.4 ‘Alī as a Treasury of Wisdom

As seen in the poem, Sanā’ī Ghaznavī was well aware of the books *Nahj al-Balāgha* (*The Path of Eloquence*) and *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim* (*Exalted Aphorisms and Pearls of Speech*) attributed to Imam ‘Alī. Many couplets in the poem refer to sermons of ‘Alī. The second book is referred to in the poem:

هریکی غین و صد هزار غرر / هر یکی دال و صد هزار درر

(Ghaznavī, n.d., 251, couplet 126)

Each is ghayn and a hundred ghurars / Each is dal and a hundred durars.

Sanā'ī describes 'Alī's talent of written expression as follows: The Zamzam is the favor of his pen's water / The Kaaba of the virtuous is his script. Once he took the pen / He arranged words just like pearls. Each word was equal to a hundred thousand pearls. Because the *ghayn* (of *ghurar*) was aware of the invisible world / And the dal (of durar) was a friend of the religion in trouble" (Ib., 251, couplets 126-129).

After these couplets, the poet refers to the letter (found in the *Nahj al-Balāgha*) of Imam 'Alī to Sahl ibn Hanif, emphasizing once more his penetrating talent in written expression: Remembering a piece of 'Alī's script reminds the perfection of his pen. Words sent by him to Sahl ibn Hanif are as valuable as a guest at a banquet<sup>20</sup> (Ib., 251, couplets 130-131). In the next couplet, Sanā'ī reminds us: Magnificence of 'Alī's pen was given by the Prophet's finger (Ib., 251, couplet 132).

Influence of *Nahj al-Balāgha* on Nāsir-i Khusraw's works was even more.

عیبه اسرار نبی بد علی / روی سوی عیبه اسرار کن

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 214, eulogy 99, couplet 34)

The box of secrets of the Prophet was 'Alī / Secrets always faced the box.

This couplet refers to the 2nd sermon in *Nahj al-Balāgha*: "The people of the House are the holders of God's secrets, columns of His orders and holders of God's wisdom and knowledge".

اه تو زی خیر و شر، هر دو گشاده ست / خواهی ایدون گرای و خواهی ایدون

(Ib., 8, eulogy 4, couplet 10)

Your path is open to both good and evil / You can face both of them.

This couplet refers to the 5th couplet in the *Nahj al-Balāgha*: "Today we stand in the junction of two ways, guiding one to good and the other to evil".

Nāsir-i Khusraw sharply criticized those, who shouted slogans, but did not keep their promise:

در خور قول نکو باید کردنت عمل / تو ز گفتار عقابی و به کردار ذباب

(Ib., 189, eulogy 86, couplet 32)

Good promise should be kept properly / You are an eagle in speech, but a fly in deeds.

قول را نیست ثوابی چو عمل نیست بر او / ایزد از بهر عمل کرد ترا وعده ثواب

(Ib., 189, eulogy 86, couplet 35)

There is no reward for promise, which were not kept / God promised you rewards for your good deeds.

عملت کو؟ به عمل فخر کن ایرا که خدای / با تو از بهر عمل کرد به آیات خطاب

(Ib., 189, eulogy 86, couplet 36)

Where are your deeds? Be proud only of deeds / God addressed you with his verses so that you have (good) deeds.

This couplet refers to the 29th sermon of the *Nahj al-Balāgha*: Your words can smash a tough rock, but your weak deeds will build up your enemies' hopes. Sitting

20 See *Nahj al-Balāgha*, letter 1071. (Zamani, 1360)

at home, you shout sound slogans, but on the day of battle you turn back and escape from battle.

ای ناتوان شده به تن و برگزیده زهد / زاهد شدی کنون که شدی سست و ناتوان

(Ib., 500, eulogy 238, couplet 17)

O those who chose piety and have weak bodies / Now you are prayerful, because you are weak and slim.

This couplet refers to the 32<sup>nd</sup> sermon of the *Nahj al-Balāgha*: Some people are deprived of power, because they are in total humiliation. So, they adorn themselves with modesty, putting on the clothes of piety. They never were true devotees.

این آرزو، ای خواجه ازدهائیت / بدخو که ازین بتر ازدها نیست

(Ib., 116, eulogy 51, couplet 41)

This dream, o master, is a monster / It lacks any moral, there is no worse monster than it".

This couplet refers to the 42<sup>nd</sup> sermon: "O people, I am afraid for you of two things: Inclination to the cravings of the flesh and endless dreams. Following cravings indeed deprives human of the Truth, while endless dreams make him forget afterlife".

هر چند تو را خوش آمد این خانه / باقی نشوی تو اندر این فانی /

بیرون کندت خدای ازو گرچه / بیرون نشوی تو زو به آسانی

(Ib., 59, eulogy 28, couplets 15-16)

You will not stay in this ephemeral world / Even if you like it. God will remove you from it / Otherwise you will not exit easily.

جای رنج و اندوهست این ای پسر / جای آسانی و شادی دیگرست

(Ib., 34, eulogy 16, couplet 25)

O son, this is the place of sorrow and torment / The place of ease and joy is different.

The following is written in the 45<sup>th</sup> sermon of the *Nahj al-Balāgha*: "The world is the house of temporal dreams; abandonment of the Earth is inevitable.

جهان معدن رنج و غم و تاریکیست / نور و شادی و بهی نیست درین معدن

(Ib., 36, eulogy 17, couplet 25)

The world is a source of torment, sorrow, and darkness / There is no light, joy and goodness in it.

توشه از طاعت بزدانت همی باید کرد / که درین صعب سفر، طاعت او توشه ماست

(Ib., 20, eulogy 10, couplet 13)

We should gather the provision of obedience to God / As it will be our provision in our difficult travel.

Imam 'Alī writes in the 83<sup>rd</sup> sermon of the *Nahl al-Balāgha*: Possess strong faith like a man, who gathers provision for hard times and long travels.

جز راست مگوی گاه و بیگاه / تا حاجت، نایدت به سوگند

(Ib., 23, eulogy 11, couplet 11)

Always speak truly / In this way you will not need to swear.

It is written in the 84th sermon of the *Nahj al-Balāgha* that “the most dangerous word is lie”.

A comprehensive study of Nāsir-i Khusraw’s *Diwan* can reveal in his work a strong identity with the *Nahj al-Balāgha*, which indicates that just like Sanā’ī, Nāsir-i Khusraw also was well aware of ‘Alī’s deep wisdom and knowledge and tries to take advantage of it.

### 5.5. ‘Alī as a Brilliant Orator

‘Alī’s eloquence was equally effective along with the use of his pen which attracted people toward Islam. His eloquence and fluency are described by the poet as follows: Listeners would learn beautiful words while he was speaking with high eloquence (Ghaznavī, n.d., 247, couplet 56). Among Arabs, he held the highest eloquence (Ib., 248, couplet 75). The poet compares ‘Alī’s eloquence to Mount Qaf (Ib., 252, couplet 139). ‘Alī’s language had the same sharp effect with Zulfīqar (Ib., 246, couplet 28). His language, as sharp as a sword, would sprinkle pearls and spread wisdom (Ib., 246, couplet 29). Wherever ‘Alī’s valor and speech were present, arrows would lose their mind and turn into curves (Ib., 248, couplet 69). ‘Alī cut the head of deviation (from religion) with his tongue and washed the face of the (religious) tradition with his lancer’s water (Ib., 248, couplet 70). ‘Alī’s heart was the world of meanings, and his word was the Fountain of Youth (Ib., 255, couplet 188).

بودند همه گنگ و علی گنج سخن بود / بودند همه چون خر و او بود غضنفر  
(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 132, eulogy 59, couplet 45)

Everyone was deaf and ‘Alī was the treasury of words / Everyone was like onegers and ‘Alī was like a lion.

Sanā’ī compares ‘Alī’s words to pearls, while Nāsir-i Khusraw says that he was a treasury of words. So, both of them state the same in different ways. Another attention drawing nuance in Sanā’ī’s poem is that he compares ‘Alī to Mount Qaf, which is a well-known symbol of height and magnificence in Persian literature. Also, he compares him to Rostam, a symbol of valor and bravery. The Khorasan style had this specific peculiarity of comparison to heroes of ancient Persian legends. Writing in this style, poets used their knowledge of Pahlavi literature and ancient myths.

### 5.6. ‘Alī’s Martyrdom

Sanā’ī describes the reason why ‘Alī was killed as follows: Only an infidel would swing a sword onto Heydar the Repeater (Ghaznavī, n.d., 248, couplet 59). Those, who out of ignorance considered blasphemy and the religion the same / Are like Kharijites in constant doubt (Ib., 247, couplet 51).

In Nāsir-i Khusraw’s *Diwan* no narration is found regarding ‘Alī’s martyrdom.

## 6. Moral features of Imam ‘Alī in poems of Sanā’ī Ghaznavī and Nāsir-i Khusraw

In the couplet below Sanā’ī gave Imam ‘Alī’s description:

عشق را بحر بود و دل را کان / شرع را دیده بود و دین را جان  
(Ib., 250, couplet 98)

He was the sea of love and the source of heartiness / He was the eye of religious law and the soul of religion.

### 6.1. 'Alī's Wisdom and Knowledge

Sanā'ī Ghaznavī beautifully versified 'Alī's humanistic features. As mentioned, the main line in his poem devoted to 'Alī is wisdom and knowledge. In the poem, 'Alī and wisdom are inseparable concepts. 'Alī possesses so many virtues and the very first couplet of the poem refers to that: Virtues of 'Alī (are so much that) endangered their possibility to be written (Ib., 245, couplet 5). Therefore, in the second stich of the first couplet written in Persian, the poet presents 'Alī as "the person, who adopted the Prophet's wisdom and knowledge" (Ib., 245, 5 couplet). 'Alī's wisdom raised his head to the position of Rafael (Ib., 245, couplet 6). His wisdom originated from the Pond of Abundance, while the sharpness of his sword would kill infidels (Ib., 246, couplet 32). God chose 'Alī, the honor of Ali Yasin, bestowing wisdom upon him (Ib., 247, couplet 53). The Prophet called him the master of authority in religion and in property, the gate of knowledge and wisdom and the Standard-bearer (Ib., 248, couplet 61).

Both friends and enemies knew how powerful 'Alī was in wisdom and knowledge:

هر که تن دشمنست و یزدان دوست / داند الرّاسخون فی العلم اوست<sup>21</sup>

(Ib., 249, couplet 86)

Enemies and followers of God / All know that he is the strongest in wisdom and knowledge.

'Alī's wisdom was so immense that / It would make wax out of a rock (Ib., 249, couplet 79).

عالم علم بود و بحر هنر / بود چشم و چراغ پیغمبر

(Ib., 249, couplet 80)

He was the realm of wisdom and the sea of valor / He was the Prophet's eye and his candle.<sup>22</sup>

در بود مر مدینه علم رسول را / زیرا جز او نبود سزای امانتش

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 180, eulogy 82, couplet 24)

He was the gate of the castle of wisdom (of the Prophet) / No one deserved more than him to hold the succession.

گر علم بایدت به در شهر علم شو / تا بر دلت بتابد نور سعادتش

(Ib., 180, eulogy 82, couplet 25)

If you need wisdom and knowledge, then enter the city of wisdom through its gate / So that the light of felicity may enlighten your soul.

پیغمبر بد شهر همه علم و بر آن شهر / شایسته دری بود و قوی حیدر کرار

(Ib., 379, eulogy 180, couplet 36)

The Prophet was the city of all wisdom and knowledge / And Haydar the Repeater deserved to be its gate.

21 See al-Nisā' 4/162

22 See *Nahj al-Balāgha*, sermon 187. "I am like a candle in darkness among you. Whoever faces it and sits close to it, can take its advantage". (Zamani, 1360)

گر به خانه در ز راه در شوید / این مبارک خانه را در حیدر است

(Ib., 34, eulogy 16, couplet 45)

If you enter the house through its door / Know that the door of the blessed house is Haydar.

ندهد خدای عرش در این خانه / راهت مگر به راهبری حیدر

(Ib., 47, eulogy 22, couplet 67)

The master of the universe would allow you / To enter the house only under Haydar's guidance.

شهر علوم آنکه در او علی است / مسکن مسکین و مب مثاب

(Ib., 142, eulogy 63, couplet 42)

The gate of the city of wisdom and knowledge is 'Alī.

Because Imam 'Alī read the secrets of the Qur'ān out of heartiness, he gained the wisdom of the two worlds (Ghaznavī, n.d., 247, couplet 55). The sea of wisdom in his soul was so restless that he chose a well to reveal his secrets (Ib., 249, couplet 91). Because "ordinary people were narrow-hearted and so, he did not dare to reveal the wisdom of the religion to people. He told people only secrets of the religious law" (Ib., 251, couplets 119-120). The king of the realm of wisdom and knowledge is 'Alī (Ib., 252, couplet 148). In order that people could take the advantage of the tradition of religion, 'Alī had to open the door of wisdom and knowledge (Ib., 252, couplet 152). The wisest and learned person in both worlds is 'Alī (Ib., 252, couplet 174). 'Alī was as fearless as Noah and had a world as large as a soul (Ib., 254, couplet 185). Mustafa called him the authority of wisdom not by his hat and shirt, but by his soul and body (Ib., 250, couplets 99-100).

وانکه یزدان بر زبان او گشاید قفل علم / جز علی المرتضی اندر جهان دیار نیست

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 314, eulogy 147, couplet 42)

God unlocked the lock of wisdom by his tongue / There is no one (notable) except 'Alī the chosen.

The attribute of both poets to wisdom and knowledge is almost the same. In some cases, Nāsir-i Khusraw versifies this nuance in a highly poetical language, stating that the lock of wisdom and knowledge can be unlocked only by 'Alī's tongue.

هر که از علم علی روی بتابد به جفا / چون کر و کور بماند بکند جهل سزاش

(Ib., 276, eulogy 129, couplet 26)

Whoever turns his face away from 'Alī's wisdom / Will stay dumb and blind, deserving ignorance.

تا نبودم من به حیدر متصل / علم حق با من نمی کرد اتصال

(Ib., 74, eulogy 34, couplet 51)

Had I not embraced 'Alī / I would not adopt the wisdom of the Truth.

Exceeding Sanā'ī in some couplets, Nāsir-i Khusraw notes that turning one's face away from 'Alī's wisdom means staying dumb and blind. In another couplet, the poet states that the only reason of him gaining knowledge and wisdom was that he chose 'Alī's path. A different nuance in Nāsir-i Khusraw's poems is that he either

presents himself as an example or bases his poems on an appeal to enemies. Most probably, it originates from Nāsir-i Khusraw's belonging to the Ismā'īlī denomination and tried to enlighten people by means of answers to questions.

معروف شد به علم تو دین، زیرا / دین عود بود و خاطر تو مجمر

(Ib., 47, eulogy 22, couplet 78)

The religion spread out thanks to your wisdom / Because the religion is like harmful and your mind like a tray.

Just like the fragrance of harmful spreads out while burnt on a tray, so 'Alī's mind adopted religion and propagated it.

علم علی نه قال و مقال است عن فلان / بل علم او چو در یتیم است بی نظیر

(Ib., 105, eulogy 46, couplet 49)

'Alī's wisdom is not an ordinary speech about something / His wisdom is like a unique big pearl.

از علی علم و شجاعت سوی امت ظاهر است / روشن و معروف و پیدا چون نهار، ای ناصبی

(Ib., 538, eulogy 2, couplet 22)

'Alī's wisdom and valor are well known among the Muslims / It is as bright as a day, o haters.

ز علم است غار علی، سنگ نیست / نشاید به سنگ افتخار علیا

(Ib., 185, eulogy 85, couplet 26)

'Alī's cave is made of wisdom, it is not a rock / For 'Alī's proud would not bear it.

According to the poet, 'Alī is a hero, who finds shelter in wisdom and not in rocks, because rocks are not able to bear his pride. Apparently, Nāsir-i Khusraw's expressions about 'Alī's wisdom and knowledge are as interesting and rich in artistic means as those of Sanā'ī.

## 6.2. 'Alī's Watchfulness

'Alī's watchfulness was so perfect that it would be a nightmare for any kind of a monster. (Ghaznavī, n.d., 245, couplet 6). The Prophet stated that 'Alī's yeast was wisdom, while Abu Turab's (in fact, it is 'Alī's nickname) yeast was watchfulness (Ib., 250, couplet 100). 'Alī's watchfulness was so perfect that he guided even fate itself (Ib., 252, couplet 148). At the battle of Jamel, the reason why he pardoned his enemy was his watchfulness (Ib., 252, couplet 149). Imam 'Alī was a shadow for people with his watchfulness and the leader of lovers (of God) with his wisdom and knowledge (Ib., 251, couplet 115).

تاج حلمش گذشته از پروین / تخت علمش نهاده بر در دین

(Ib., 252, couplet 101)

The Pleiades put the crown of watchfulness on his head / He set his throne at the threshold of religion. "Alī's watchfulness smelled like heaven / And his fury could erupt blazes" (Ib., 252, couplet 167).

'Alī reached the zenith of wisdom and knowledge / So, if the curtain between the worlds was drawn, nothing would change in his knowledge<sup>23</sup>(Ib., 249, couplet 79).

23 "If the curtain was drawn, my strong belief would not need to increase" (Abd al-Wahhab, 1349, 3).

‘Alī never beheaded an enemy out of fury, he drew his sword only when it was ordered (Ib., 245, couplet 14). He never allowed fury close to himself, only fulfilled God’s orders (Ib., 253, couplet 160). It was a strong belief that was in the foundation of all of his deeds, not fury (Ib., 247, couplet 48).

به روز هزارهز یکی کوه بود / شکيبا، دل بردبار علی ۆ

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 185, eulogy 85, couplet 85)

He was like a mountain (only) at battles / He was patient and warm hearted.

Some topics in the poems of the two poets are almost equally handled, while other aspects prevail in one or the other. One of the topics in question is ‘Alī’s watchfulness and piety. Nāsir-i Khusraw does not appeal to these aspects presenting an example from ‘Alī precisely; however, poems with similar topics are in abundance in his Diwan.

### 6.3. The Speaking Qur’ān

The topic of ‘Alī and the Qur’ān is presented very interestingly in Sanā’ī’s poem. According to the poem, the Holy Book rests in ‘Alī’s heart. Sanā’ī is convinced that ‘Alī’s heart is equal to a hundred thousand pearls and to the honor of a hundred thousand heavens (Ghaznavī, n.d., 249, couplet 77).

‘Alī did not hear the interpretation of the Qur’ān from Mustafa, he discovered it in his soul<sup>24</sup> (Ib., 245, couplet 10). Another couplet states that “He could gain the wisdom of both worlds, as he read the secrets of the Qur’ān by his soul” (Ib., 247, couplet 55). ‘Alī’s spirit breathed with the Qur’ān and his soul tasted the very core of its interpretation (Ib., 248, couplet 65). He understood the essence of the religion at once, as he was always obedient to Mustafa (Ib., 249, couplet 80). ‘Alī was a grace manifestation of Qur’ān expression (Ib., 250, couplet 97). ‘Alī knew the Qur’ān well and so, the description of soul in his heart emerged in the shape of the Qur’ān (Ib., 250, couplet 102). The secret of the truth was deserved only by his dignity, the Book of Revelation of the Truth was commended to him (Ib., 248, couplet 64).

هر که در بند مثل‌های قران بسته شده‌است / نکند جز که بیان علی از بند ره‌اش

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 276, eulogy 129, couplet 25)

Whoever stuck in understanding Qur’ān issues / Can be salvaged only by ‘Alī.

معدن علم علی بود به تاویل و به تیغ / مایهٔ جنگ و بلا بود و جدال و پرخاش

(Ib., 276, eulogy 129, couplet 24)

‘Alī was the source of wisdom thanks to his interpretation / He was the reason of battles thanks to his sword.

بر سر گنجی که یزدان در دل احمد نهاد / جز علی گنجور نی و جز علی بندار نیست

(Ib., 314, eulogy 146, couplet 41)

The treasury God set in the Prophets heart / Had no custodian and treasurer except ‘Alī.

24 SeeĪbid., Sermon 192. “The Prophet spent a definite period in Mount Hira every year. Only I could observe him. No one could see him except me. I could see the light and the breeze of prophecy”. (Zamani, 1360)

جز که حیدر همگان از خط مسطور خدا / با بصرهای پر از نور بماندند ضریر  
(Ib., 220, eulogy 102, couplet 47)

All except Haydar was deprived off the divine script / They became blind to the light.

مر نهفته دختر تنزیل را / معنی و تاویل حیدر زیور است

(Ib., 35, eulogy 16, couplet 48)

Haydar is the ornament of Qur'ān meanings and their interpretation.

Both poets display almost the same degree of artistic talent in describing how well 'Alī was aware of the secrets of the Qur'ān. According to Nāsir-i Khusraw, 'Alī could help those, who were stuck in understanding the Qur'ān, as he was the source of wisdom, knowledge and he was the custodian of the treasury engrafted in the Prophet's heart. Sanā'ī also calls 'Alī the treasurer of the treasury of interpretation.

#### 6.4. 'Alī's Piety

Among the endless moral virtues of 'Alī, piety has an exceptional place. There are numerous sermons in his book *Nahj al-Balāgha* related to worldly matters. Sanā'ī wrote about 'Alī's breakoff with the world in several couplets: He never turned to an enemy of his people for gold or slaves (Ghaznavī, n.d., 245, Couplet 16). Appealing to the world he said: Go deceive others, you don't deserve me<sup>25</sup> (Ib., 252, couplet 145). 'Alī's status is so high that "He does not even take a glance towards the rope of mundane desires and does not fall into its trap" (Ib., couplet 146). Because, "his well of cravings was just like others and so, he held firmly to the divine rope" (Ib., 253, couplet 156). 'Alī always was satisfied with a small portion of provision (Sanā'ī, n.d., 254, couplet 178). No creature would be able to trap him to the old coffin named the World (Ib., 254, couplet 178). He did not choose loyalty to the world, but rather preferred "the path of freedom, divorcing the old world three times and reciting "Allahu Akbar" four times"<sup>26</sup> (Ib., 254, couplets 180-181). A child can be deceived by yellow-red colors, but valorous people would not be attracted to colorful things (Ib., 254, couplet 182).

حبل ایزد حیدر است او را بگیر / وز فلان و بوفلان بگسل حبال

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 74, eulogy 34, couplet 49)

Heydar is God's rope, hold to it firmly / Cut the ropes tying you to others.

به مردی و علم و به زهد و سخا / بنازم بدین هر چهار علی

(Ib., 185, 85. eulogy, couplet 8)

Valor, wisdom, piety and generosity / I am proud of these four merits of 'Alī.

نیود اختیار علی سیم و زر / که دین بود و علم و اختیار علی

(Ib., 186, 85. eulogy, couplet 29)

'Alī's choice was not gold and silver / His choice was religion and knowledge.

In Sanā'ī's words, 'Alī held firmly to God's rope. Nāsir-i Khusraw, on the other hand, called people to hold onto 'Alī's rope. In this case, mundane values would be

25 See Ibid., sermon 77. "O world! O world! Keep away from me! Have you come to show you off? Have you fallen in love with me? It will never be your time! Deceive others than me! I don't need you". (Zamani, 1360)

26 "I have divorced you three times. There is no comeback from it" (Ibid.)

reduced for people and people would become valorous, avoiding being deceived like children deceived by colorful toys. Both poets assume that 'Alī turned his face away from the world, as he chose the path of religion and knowledge.

### 6.5. 'Alī's Generosity

'Alī's generosity was so boundless that even a verse was descended about it in the Qur'ān. Therefore, Sanā'ī did not overlook it and versified 'Alī's generosity: "He gave bread to the poor and was honored by the verses *hal-ata*"<sup>27</sup> (Ghaznavī, n.d., 250, 113. couplet). "Because 'Alī gave his ring in belt-low and full-low bowing, he gained an immense property"<sup>28</sup> (Ib., 253, couplets 154-155).

آنچه علی داد در رکوع فزون بود / ز آنکه به عمری بداد حاتم طائی

(Qubādiyānī, 1357, 92, eulogy 42, couplet 41)

What 'Alī gave in belt-low bowing / Was more than Hatim al-Tai gave during his lifetime.

آنکه با علم و شجاعت چو قوی داد عطاش / به رکوع اندر بفزود سوم فضل: سخاش

(Ib., 276, eulogy 129, couplet 22)

Together with his wisdom and valor, he generously gave / Third virtue in belt-low bowing increased his generosity.

بنگر آن را در رکوع و بنگر این را در سجود / پس همین کن تو ز طاعت ها که می ایشان کنند

(Ib., 150, eulogy 68, couplet 12)

Look at him in belt-low bowing and at the other in full-low bowing / Do whatever they did regarding obedience (to God).

آن را که در رکوع غنی کرد بی سؤال / درویش را به پیش پیمبر سخاوتش

(Ib., 179, eulogy 82, couplet 16)

What made him rich after his deed in belt-low bowing / Was his generosity in front of the santon Prophet.

'Alī had perfect morals and immense generosity. Eyes seeing him would feel shy out of embarrassment (Ghaznavī, n.d., 254, 175. couplet). His will could not be deceived by any human, he was only busy with prayer and generosity (Ib., 252, couplet 147).

Both poets, speaking on 'Alī's generosity, refer to the well-known event when he gave his ring to a poor man himself being in belt-low bowing in his prayer. Both Sanā'ī Ghaznavī and Nāsir-i Khusraw confine themselves to it, adding colors to the topic. Sanā'ī claims that the verse "*hal-ata*" was descended after this event, while Nāsir-i Khusraw, indicating the importance of the deed of generosity, states that the ring given in belt-low bowing was far more than what Hatim al-Tai (a well-known symbol of generosity among Arabs) gave out of generosity during his lifetime. These are artistic methods the poems used to present 'Alī as an important figure in history and both of them successfully managed to realize their intention.

27 See al-Insān 76/7-8.

28 See al-Mā'ida 5/55

## Conclusion

Thorough study of the Khorasan style shows that, Nāsir-i Khusraw brought to poetry topics of mind, world, strong faith, death, religious law etc. The revolution made by Nāsir-i Khusraw in the Khorasan style was further developed by Sanā'ī Ghaznavī through religious-philosophical and gnostic topics, which prevailed over praise poems and satire. Research of Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī revealed that besides eulogies on virtues of 'Alī, Nāsir-i Khusraw also devoted couplets in his Diwan to 'Alī. Sanā'ī Ghaznavī, on the other hand, bounds himself to the only poem about 'Alī, which gives the impression that Sanā'ī's poem preserves its preciseness more accurately. Both poets were able to reach their goal of presenting 'Alī's personality to readers successfully. The result of the study states that Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's artistic expression ability prevails in several cases, while in other nuances Nāsir-i Khusraw emerges with better performance. If not to take into consideration several small differences in poetic language, it would be difficult to define the authorship of poems precisely, as there is a close similarity between works of the two poets.

Both poets lived approximately in the same period.

Both of them were philosophers.

Both are representatives of the Khorasan style in Persian literature.

Both had immense love for the Prophet and his people of the house.

Both well knew contemporary disciplines and were well aware of preceding Persian literature.

The most important conclusion is that despite accepting the artistic peculiarities of the Khorasan style, Nāsir-i Khusraw and Sanā'ī Ghaznavī did not undergo the influence of their predecessors about repeating similar topics and did not abstain to bring new ideas to literature. As a result, the development direction of Persian literature changed and the influence of religion and gnosis increased, resulting in the emergence of poems, examples of which were focused on in the research paper.

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