



Reading in the poetry of the asceticism of Al-Majan in the first Abbasid era - The pattern of heretics as a sample

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Abstract- This article intended to identify the patterns of heretics and unveil their cultural intentions in asceticism of Al-Majan poetry in the first Abbasid era, and the reasons behind its prevalence and the justifications to accuse some of this era poets in using it, observing their psychological and cognitive transitions during their lives. This study also aims to highlight the main incentives that made the poets of the immoral pattern move to the asceticism pattern in intellectual, social, and political effects where the heretic had the main role, after it became an important current and a strong power that the government used to execute those who acted hostility toward it.

Keywords: Al-Abbasi poetry, asceticism of Al-Majan, cultural pattern, heresy

I. INTRODUCTION

The cultural criticism views the literary texts describing them as an integrated letter which represent a knowledge system expressing a collective imagination that carried what was hidden and shown, trying to expose the aesthetic mask which hides cultural patterns which remained untold for a long period of time. It dismantles the speech and unveils the hidden intentions in the collective unawareness to reach the goals and the agendas of the speech. It also expose the facts behind dangerous authority and public decisions which sometimes accuse the poets in both phases – shamelessness and Asceticism, in their religion and beliefs, so the unusual pattern and violating the religion were essential motivations for Majan and Asceticism, and heretic is one of these influential patterns.

The research tries show the cultural patterns and the common accusations in heretics embrace, and the political and nodal influences, condition and promiscuity, confessional, intellectual and literary adversarial guiding to them, so the research is to be finished with the conclusions

Heretics patterns and the common accusations within :

1. The political aspects

There was nothing easier than heretics charge to strike enemies of authority, Bashar ibn Burd (168 A.H) was lewd and promiscuous of Persian origin, his loyalties are fickle, and he was very fanatic to Persia ⁽¹⁾. He was one of the veteran poets of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid periods, he wrote many poems in Umayyad era praising this era successors and men. He satirized (Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur), after the establishment of Abbasid state. He turned to satirize Abu Muslim al-Khurasani, after he noticed the danger and consequences might be caused by satirizing, all his compliments were for (Al-Saffah, Al-Mansur, Al-Mahdi). Then, he became excessive in showing fanaticism to Abbasid succession ⁽²⁾. Bashar was one of the promiscuous poets who challenged the cultural community pattern through rebelling mess and promiscuity, he had many opinions expressed his nodal displacement and religious rebellion, but he was not charged of heretics till he insulted the minister of Al-Mahdi by saying ⁽³⁾ : AlBasetj

لا يَأْسَنُ فُقَيْرٌ مِّنْ غِنَىٰ أَبَدًا بَعْدَ الَّذِي نَالَ يَعْقُوبُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ

Heretics charge played a great role in beating the enemy poets of the Abbasid government. It had a present template in the literature community used by Abbasid government to stabilize their power and authority. The poets felt how dangerous the oversight was so they were very careful, but some of them were loyal to Umayyad and could not hid this loyalty, those, sometimes tried direct confrontation against authority and indirect one in other times⁽⁴⁾. One of these poets was Ibn al-Muqaffa (153/155 H) when he said: (ALmutakareb)

(5) لَقِينَا عَيْدًا وَكُنَّا هَجَاتَنَا فَأَبُوا هَجَاتَنَا وَأَبْنَا عَيْدًا

The attitude of Al-Muqaffa was the main reason behind excluding his role and place in the Abbasid, which was not fit to his knowledge and the ingenuity of his style. He was the classifier of (Kalila and Demna) and it was said that he has translated it from Persian to Arabic, and Al-Mahdi said about him: "All heretics books came from Ibn Al-Muqaffa." (6), and the previous verse and others got him killed (7).

2. beliefs

Abu Al-Atahiya also faced this charge (213 A.H), because his fellows disagreed in defining his beliefs. Al-Isfahanisaid : Abu Al-Atahiya believed in Tawhid, and that Allah had created two counter essences from nothing. Then, he built this world from them, and the world is modern and Allah is the only creator. He claimed that Allah would get everything back to these two counter essences before everything is vanished (8).

Abu al-Atahiya was fatalist issued from his fatalism of Manichaeism and dualism origins, he showed up through a cultural speech and exposed clearly his creed, what made sure that he was influenced by the Manichaeism and its books , and what they had of Zoroastrianism and Christianity remains, (9). He had verses about fatalism like(10): (ALramal)

جَفَّتِ الْأَقْلَامُ، مِنْ قَبْلِ، بِمَا حَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَكَتَبَ

Abu Al-Atahiya's previous speech had implicit patterns which he derived from his faith-based pattern (fatalism). He used them to denote his regrets about the Umayyad king, and his crying on the king's death, and being patient for this as a sign of his acceptance to acts of Allah.

3. Joking and promiscuity: Yahya Ibn Ziyad Al-Harithi (160 H) (11) is one of the poets who were charged of heresy, who spent his time in fun and promiscuity with funny people, poets and writers of Kufa . There is a story tells(12) that when Yahya Ibn Ziyad was dying, they told him to say : **there is no god but Allah**. He said

(13) لَمْ يَبْقَ إِلَّا الْغُبُطُ وَالْجُلَاجِلُ

Then he lost consciousness, and when he woke, they told him to say the same thing , so he said

(14) وَبِأَرْزَلٍ تَغْلِي بِهِ الْمَرَاجِلُ

It seems clearly that the verse didnot fit what is right, it showed that the writer missed the life of having fun and the boys society. He missed the life of having alcohol , and insisted to be unbelief and promiscuous, because it is not possible that the previous verse came from a man on his deathbed?!

Returning to the cultural prejudices which dominated the texts , and tracking the accurate storied told about Yahya Ibn Ziyad, We noticed that most of those, who said he was heretic, based on cultural patterns which depended on his companionship for a number of those who were promiscuous and accused of heresy. Mohammed Mustafa Hadara said about his heresy: Maybe he was like his fellows whose names came with his one. (15) How could one single story told by Sharif Al-Murtaza in Amalieh, turn the scales of the cultural rule and prove the charge of heresy? After we investigated, we found out that this story is of weak source with obvious deceit, set by Al-Haytham ibn 'Adi who is considered as fraudster and undependable according to the scholars of Hadith, and that he wasn't suitable for such matters (16). Besides, he had hostility towards Yahya's brother Mohammed Ibn Ziyad .Mohammed was one of the important Haritheen in Al-Rashid period, as it was said, he was agovernor of some cities, and he never gave away his daughters for those whose descents were doubted. So, when he knew about the marriage of Alhaitham Ibn Adi to a woman from the tribe AlHarith Ibn Kaab, he went Al-Rashid with his friends and asked him to break it apart. Al-Rashid ordered to break this marriage apart , so they took Al—Haitham Ibn Adi away to a house and beat him up until he divorced his wife (17).This was the reason why Al-haitham accused Yahya of writing the two verses when he was on the deathbed(18). These two verses were set as an indication to what previously mentioned about the hostility of Al-Haitham to Ibn Ziyad(19) .

Joking and promiscuity were reasons of why poets were charged with heresy. It was a deviation from the nodal pattern, the term (heretic) was popular on those who were promiscuous and erotic. This is what we

find in the heresy of Adam Ibn Abd Al-Aziz (160 A. H) the grandson of Omar ibn Abd al-Aziz the Umayyad caliph. His heresy was not blasphemy and atheism only, but he was known for being joker, drunkard, and excessive in impedance, Al-Mahdi beat him 300 times with a lash to force him confess of being heretic, after he heard verses of him ⁽²⁰⁾ : (Majzu Al Ramal)

اسقتني واسق خليلي في مدى الليل الطويل

These drinker's verses indicate that the writer is suspected of being far from the holy religious patterns, through manifesting that he drinks alcohol, which is regarded as one of debauchery types. In time, no one dared to manifest of having alcohol, and showing this color of joking and impedance was considered heretics in Al-Mahdi period, who called to question him and check the authenticity of the heresy charge against him. Adam pleaded not guilty by saying : (I was one of Quraishboys, used to drink alcohol and say what was erotic , but I swear by Allah that I have never denied the existence of Allah, and never doubted him.) ⁽²¹⁾. For this, Al-Mahdi set him free and it was a good start for both of them. By investigating this historical tale, we can notice that the poet referred to several things to plead not guilty of being heretic , the most important one was the Arabic origin of Adam Abd al-Aziz, because most of those who were accused of heresy were of Persian origins. The sentence (One of Quraish boys) is a cultural sentence of two parts, the first : the word (boy) refers to teenage and indiscretion; to give an excuse to praise alcohol. The second one : (Quraish boys) the poet was successful for adding boy to Quraish , which means the expressing of pride of the Arabic origin, and to confirm that he was innocent of heresy charge, he used the style of swearing in denying atheism⁽²²⁾.

There was confusion between promiscuity and heretics in the first Abbasid period, the promiscuity had taken a mischievous heretic turn called (promiscuous heresy). Promiscuity seemed to be one of the prestige and joke colors until it turns to promiscuous heresy, which is different form the intellectual and creed heresy. It was a kind of sensual turnout for life due to the economic recovery patterns prevailed in first Abbasid period, and due to the proliferation of bars and houses of singers, and in this phase. Promiscuity, joking and libertine manifesting may lead to jail sometimes ⁽²³⁾. This was what happened to Abu Nuwas (198 A.H) He became known for promiscuity and combining it with comedy and joking, manifesting for having alcohol, and flirting kids. The reason behind accusing him of heresy is when he said ⁽²⁴⁾: (AlKamel)

ما جاءني أحدٌ يخبر أنه في جنّةٍ مذ مات أو في النار

The poems of Nawas formed a notable cultural manifestation of doubting in creed and underestimating the religious holy accusation of heresy was a result of swing manifestations between joking and mocking the holy things the erotic of promiscuity. The researcher often has poetic samples of cultural patterns used by Abu Nawas to direct his provocative cultural letters to tear down the religious constants, like what was said in the following verse⁽²⁵⁾: (Al Kamel)

جاهزٌ بفسقك واهتك السترا واخلع عذارك في الهوى جهرا!

The previous verses of Abu Nawas represent a heavy turning far from the creed pattern, through which he called upon people to profess the debauchery and brag promiscuity, hitting the religious origins by illegal rebellious rules that he wrote for himself.

4 . Literary antagonism: the reasons of heretics accusations were many in the Abbasid period, the poetic antagonism was one of them . This one was behind the accusation of heresy for Aban ibn Abd Al-Hameed Al-Laheqi (200 A.H) ⁽²⁵⁾. He lived in the same period of time as Bashar and Abu Nawas. He was a poet who grew and became famous in Basra⁽²⁶⁾. He was Bahsar's friend, who convicted atheism. He called Barmecides, Al-Fadhil ,his father Yahya ibn Khalid Al-Barmaki and his brother Jaafer ,who liked and trusted him . He wrote (Kalila and Demna) in poetic form, and called Al-Rashid⁽²⁷⁾. Yahya ibn Khalid Al-Barmaki decided the poets contest and rewards to be under Aban authority. Here, Abu Nawas was not happy to the rank Aban had reached. So, there were satires between them ⁽²⁸⁾, and most of what came to us about Aban heresy was from his rival poets. Here is Abu Nawas accusing him of heresy ⁽²⁹⁾: (Al-Mujtath)

شهدت يوماً أباناً، لا ندر ذر أبان
حتى إذا ما صلاة لأولى بدت لأوان
فقام منذر ربي بالبر والإحسان
.....

وَكَلَّمَا قَالَ قُلْنَا إِلَىٰ انْقِضَاءِ الْأَذَانِ
فَقَالَ: كَيْفَ شَهِدْتُمْ بِذَا بَغْيِ عِيَّانٍ؟
لَا أَشْهَدُ الذَّهْرَ حَتَّىٰ تُعَايِنَنَّ الْعَيْنَانِ
فَقُلْتُ: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي! فَقَالَ: سُبْحَانَ مَانِي

These verses have complements but it is not proper to mention them due to what they have of immorality and dirtiness. Al-Jahiz observed the contradictions of the charges of which Aban was accused by Abu Nawas; veneration of Christ (A) was one of Manichaeism creeds, Aban should not insult Christ (A) by saying : of Satan. This confirms that the verses were meant to accuse and defame Aban: I wonder at Abu Nawas, who used to accompany the spokesmen, more than I wondered at Hammad, who speaks about people like those in a way was not used by no one. This is a joy of the satirized one`s eye, and who says: praise Mani who much appreciates Jesus, How could he say that Jesus came from Satan?!⁽³⁰⁾,and we agree with Taha Hussein when he considered Aban`s response to Abu Nawas`s satire as poor⁽³¹⁾. Aban did not defend himself from the accusation of heresy and atheism, and he never suspected or denied what Abu Nawas had said, but he just responded the abuse by another, and this is what made Aban`s attitude weak. We do not go against the suspicion of Hussein Atwan in responding the reason behind accusing Aban of being heretic. This was because he had been known for his jokes and comedy, just like others who were jokers , promiscuous, and accused of being heretic ⁽³²⁾.

5 . Sectarianism and intellectual rivalry

Literary competition was not the only reason to accuse of heresy, sectarianism and intellectual rivalry played a great role in this, the rivalry adopted by the Islamic groups and creeds, and the people of the intellectual association which is influenced by the approaching philosophical and cultural current. Saleh Bin Abdolghoddu (167 H) ⁽³³⁾ is one of the speech science founders in Basra, and one of the old poets , who witnessed both Umayyad and Abbasid and was killed in Al Mahdi period after he had been convicted of heretics ⁽³⁴⁾. Saleh called Wasil ibn Ata, the founder of the Mu`tazilite in Basra with Bashar ibn Burd. However, the revolution in their intellectual directions separated them into conflicting and hostile schools. These conflicts obscured all Saleh`s stories and controversial topics, and remained what Mu`tazila accused him of being heretic –which might be- invalid, because Saleh used to be a strong opponent to them and they always tried to get rid of him. In spite of this violent hostility, Saleh turned the battle field from the private houses to the public mosques. He started explaining the religion stuff to people, showing them the path to salvation⁽³⁵⁾. He is who said ⁽³⁶⁾ (Al Taweel)

مَتَىٰ يَنْتَهِي عَنْ سِيءِ مَنْ أَتَىٰ بِهِ إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْهُ عَلَيْهِ تَنْدَمُ

Some critics considered Saleh`s religious poems and philosophical reflections as covers to hide his heresy, and his dualism attitudes⁽³⁷⁾, and we haven`t found what proved this in his poetical works, all his poems were about giving wisdoms and believing in Allah.

Al Mahdi accused Saleh of heresy and ordered to bring him, when Al Mahdi spoke with him, he was surprised by his good style, the knowledge he had, the nice way he used to respond, and how wise he was, so Al Mahdi ordered to release him, but again he brought him back and asked ``Did you say?``⁽³⁸⁾ (al Saree)

وَالشَّيْخُ لَا يَتْرُكُ أَخْلَاقَهُ حَتَّىٰ يُوَارَىٰ فِي تَرَىٰ رَمْسِهِ

Saleh said: Yes, commander of the believers.

Al Mahdi answered back: ``so you don`t leave your morals, and we will judge you as you judge yourself, and he gave orders. Saleh was executed and his body was crucified on the bridge. It was also said that al Mahdi told verses belong to Saleh which induced to turn away from the prophet Mohammed ⁽⁹⁾, but Saleh denied them and said: ((I swear by Allah that I never disbelieved, so fear Allah and do not judge me without being certain)), so he released him, and when he left ,al Mahdi ordered to bring him back and asked him to recite the Seniya poem, he did that and when he reached : The elder doesn`t leave his morals...., Al Mahdi then gave orders to execute him ⁽³⁹⁾.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The research resulted some conclusions such as :

1 . Using the nodal pattern helps us understand the way of the cultural movement of the poet from the promiscuity to Zahad.

2 . Heretic is one of the main guides to the cultural movement of the poets from promiscuity to Zahad in the early Abbasid period, the accusations of heresy varied according to the tendencies of its followers; such as: political, creed , joke and promiscuity, and literary rivalry. The logic and philosophical thinking were considered as one of the reasons behind accusing the poets of heresy.

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- (10)Karam Al-Bustani, Diwan of Abi Al-Atahia, Beirut House for Printing and Publishing, 1406 AH-1986 AD: 42-43.
- (11)He is Yahya bin Ziyad bin Ubaid Allah Al-Harithi, nicknamed Abu Al-Fadl, and he is called Al-Harithi, from the people of Kufa, a magical poet, blamed for heresy. On it, the sources did not refer to the year of his birth, he died in the days of Al-Mahdi, about 160 A.H .: See: Al-Zarkali, Al-Alam, House of Knowledge for the Millions, Edition 15, Beirut-Lebanon, 2002: 8/145.
- (12)See: Ibid: 1/143.
- (13)Glegul: It is said that the ram is blessed, I will be happy with it if it spies its instrument to see its father roads or not.): 2/195.
- (14)Al-Basel: It is said to drink wine and other things by gushing: its clearing, and puncturing: filtering the drink and the like, the boilers: the boiler is the vessel in which the water is boiled, whether it is of iron or zero or stones or ceramics, Ibn Manzur, Ibid: Article (Bazel) 1 : / 308, Article (Boiler): 8/180.
- (15)Dr. Muhammad Mustafa Hadara, Ibid: 249.
- (16)Al-Haytham bin Uday: Bin Abdul Rahman Al-Thaali, Al-Ta'i Al-Buhtari Al-Kufi, Abu Abdul Rahman, a historian, a scholar of literature and lineage ... He specialized in sitting with Al-Mansur, Al-Mahdi, Al-Hadi and Al-Rashid, and narrated about them. He hated it, and challenged his lineage. He died in the year 207 AH, see: Ibn Khalekan, Ibid: 6/786, Al-Zarkali, Ibid: 8/104.
- (17)See: Al-Isfahani, Ibid: 20/32.
- (18)There is another narration related to it that Al-Haytham bin Uday attributes to Yahya bin Ziyad despite the authenticity of its chain of transmission for Mutia bin Ayas when he was dying. See: Al-Sharif Al-Murtada, Ibid : 1/142.
- (19)Adam bin Abdul Aziz: He is Adam bin Abd al-Aziz bin Marawan bin al-Hakam bin Abi al-Aas, son of Umayya bin Abd Shams bin Abd Manaf, and his mother is Umm Asim bint Sufyan bin Abdul Aziz bin Marwan bin al-Hakam also, (d.160 AH), see: Al-Isfahani, Ibid : 5/286, Dr. Mustafa Shaka, The Journey of Poetry from the Umayyad to Abbasid, The World of Books, 3rd Edition, Beirut, 1979 AD, 502.
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- (25)Ibid: 5/212.

- (26) Aban bin Abdul Hamid bin Haqiq bin Afeer, the ruler of Banu Raqqash, lived in Basra a life of prostitution and immorality, he harbored hatred for the Arabs and the tendency to the Persians, he moved to Baghdad and joined the Baramkeh, and more than praised them. A person who composed poetry and was proficient in his reliance on typography, envelope and encompassing the fundamentals of poetry and the awareness of his eyes, who died in the year 200 AH, see: Al-Isfahani, Ibid : 23/155, Al-Zarkali, previous reference: 1/27.
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- (33) Salih bin Abdul Quddus Ibn Abdullah, he was a wise man, a writer, an honorable, and a glorious poet. He used to sit and preach in the embodiment of Basra, telling them about them. He was accused of heresy, so the Mahdi killed him with his hand. See: Al-Hamawi, Dictionary of the Writers, edited by Dr. Ihsan Abbas, Dar Al-Gharb Al-Islami, 1st Edition, Beirut-Lebanon, 1993 AD: 4 / 1445-1446.
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- (37) See: Ibid: 65.
- (38) Ibid: 143.
- (39) See: Ibn al-Mu'taz, Ibid: 90-91.