



Al -Rabee Boushama` Poetry: Political Struggle And The Literary Creativity

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Received: 12/08/2023; Accepted: 11/12/2023

Abstract

The Algerian Liberation Revolution is considered a significant historical event, serving as an everlasting source of inspiration for Algerian poets who witnessed its inception and accompanied its events until independence. This gave rise to a revolutionary poetry that immortalizes the battles and heroism, glorifying a great revolution that brought about a radical change in Algerian society. A society that clung to freedom and rejected living under humiliation and slavery. Therefore, the Algerian people fought the colonizer using all means available, resulting in the revolution taking on various forms. Armed struggle and bullets were accompanied by the power of words, where literature, both in poetry and prose, played a crucial role in the revolution and proved to be the most effective. The writers, especially the poets, played a vital role in advocating for the revolution, documenting its important events and facts until the last breath of their lives. One of the poets whose name became synonymous with the revolution is the martyr poet Rabie Bouchemma, who experienced and lived through its events, fighting in its ranks and becoming its poet.

Keywords: poetry, revolution, Rabie Bouchemma, creativity, colonizer.

Introduction:

The martyr poet Rabie Bouchemma is considered one of the Algerian poets of the modern era who dedicated his life in service of his homeland. He carried the message of the conscious thinker and the committed poet, believing in his principles and convictions, defending them until he offered his life as a sacrifice to the flame of freedom. He is the national and nationalist poet who cared deeply about the issues of his Algerian homeland, as well as the Arab homeland in general. He was committed to these causes, fiercely protective of them. The political and social life experienced by the Algerian people during that period, imposed by colonization, was what made Rabie Bouchemma, like other poets of that era, embody literary courage. He did everything in his power to defend his homeland, confront the colonizer, and expel them through various means and methods. He utilized poetry and beautiful expression as a means to exert his strength in the face of a suffering nation, to ignite a revolution against the colonizer, shatter

their tyranny, and instill fear in the hearts of the occupiers. This is what earned Rabie Bouchemma the description of a rebellious and insurgent poet of struggle, as we perceive in his poetry the revolutionary sentiment.

As he was deeply passionate about his love for the homeland and defending it until death, rejecting the various hardships and pains experienced by the Algerian people under the yoke of colonial power, this is what we preferred to address in this study. We will focus on the revolutionary speeches of the poet, which were his distinctive weapon against the French colonizer. This leads us to pose the research problem as follows: How did Rabie Bouchemma contribute, through his poetry, to fueling the revolution in a country that knew how to revolt and triumph? Did the poet succeed in combining the functions of struggle and the artistic creativity of literature through his poetic experience?

To answer this question, we will follow a descriptive-analytical approach in order to clarify the meanings and dimensions of the revolution in the poetic themes of Rabie Bouchemma, highlighting some of its artistic and aesthetic characteristics such as repetition, poetic imagery, and others. However, before delving into that, we need to present the research justifications and methodological guidelines by first introducing the martyr poet Rabie Bouchemma.

1- The poet Rabie Bouchemma:

Rabie Bouchemma was born in the village of Qanazat in the Beni Yalha district of Bouguâa, Setif province, in December 1916. He was the second born among six siblings, three boys and three girls. He was known for his calmness and serenity during his childhood. He started attending the French school at the age of seven. At the age of twelve, he memorized the Quran under the guidance of Sheikh Sadiq ibn Abdul Salam. After that, he dedicated himself to seeking knowledge under the tutelage of the scholars of Beni Yalha, such as Sheikh Saeed Salehi and Sheikh Sadiq ibn Abdul Salam. He utilized all his energy and effort to rely on self-reliance and self-education, building a rich and diverse heritage library from his early youth. In 1937, he became an active member of the movement of the Association of Muslim Scholars and, along with a group of young people from the town, established a youth club in Qanazat. He also assisted Sheikh Salehi in teaching circles held in the central mosque of the town.

In the year 1938, he embarked on a journey to Paris accompanied by Sheikh Saïd Salehi to assist Sheikh El-Wartilani in his reformist activities in France, but his stay there did not last long, and he quickly returned to his homeland. Afterwards, he immediately contacted Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, his supporter and motivator. He also had numerous contacts with Sheikh El-Bachir El-Ibrahimi, the martyr Colonel Amirouche, and various intellectual and political leaders in the Arab world. On the morning of January 16, 1959, a group of gendarmes headed to the Thabbath School in El Harrach and arrested its director, Rabie Bouchemma, on charges of tearing down the French flag that was erected in the school's courtyard. He was taken to the regional gendarmerie headquarters located in the Belcourt neighborhood of El Harrach. He was interrogated about the incident and denied any involvement. Afterwards, he was held in a cell for a few hours before being released, only to return to his home in a state of painful torture. At midnight on January 17, 1959, Rabie Bouchemma was arrested once again, and news about him

ceased until the French press announced his death, stating that he died during the clash between the liberation army and enemy forces. However, no one believed in the play of his death.

The news of the martyrdom of Rabie Bouchemma had a profound impact on the Algerian people, and it was considered a day of national mourning. Despite the prevailing conditions of oppression and injustice, citizens rushed to the home of the deceased for condolences and to offer support to his family. May Allah have mercy on the martyr Rabie Bouchemma and all the martyrs of our nation, may their souls rest in peace. Anyone who examines the journey of the poet and his literary works will undoubtedly find certain aspects of his personality and his stances. Among the impressions that emerge from exploring his poetic works is the dominance of themes of nationalism and freedom, surpassing all other subjects. Almost every poem of his condemns colonialism and its methods and policies, while calling for awakening spirits and strengthening determination to create the necessary conditions and means to overcome this situation and liberate the homeland.

The poet, may Allah have mercy on him, was eager to publish his works, and his dream was realized after independence when his collection was published under the title "Diwan Rabie Bouchemma," edited and introduced by Dr. Jamal Ghanan. Through his poetry, Rabie Bouchemma reflected the sacrifices and heroism of the Algerian people, raising his voice loudly, calling for revolution, and becoming an example of a man who loved freedom and embraced martyrdom (Rabie Bouchemma, 2010, pp. 5-35).

2- The Revolutionary Poems of Rabie Bouchemma, /Characteristics and Significance:

The colonial period and its distinguishing features of tyranny and exploitation were primarily a period of cultural conflict, as it was understood that the paralysis of the Algerian mentality and the deformation of the individual after stripping away their national identity were the two factors that would allow the continuation of control in all fields and on various levels." (Mohammed Al-Arabi Al-Zubairi, Issue 2, p. 08). In order to preserve the national identity, the Algerian people saw the necessity of revolution against the colonizer, and they adopted various methods and forms for that purpose. Because bullets alone were no longer the sole means of liberation from the odious colonization and achieving freedom, the role of words, which were more powerful and influential, was also allowed. Thus, poetry became one of the means of revolution and the most effective one.

The martyr poet Rabie Bouchemma played the role of a soldier in every revolution or battle that erupted between the colonizer and the Algerian people, especially during the tragic events of May 8, 1945, which claimed the lives of more than forty thousand Algerians (Abu Al-Qasim Saadallah, 1985, p. 43). Following this horrific massacre, Rabie Bouchemma, like the majority of the Algerian people, became certain of "the bitter truth that there is no hope for liberation without arms. This massacre, while leaving behind many wounds and pains, made the people despair of passive attempts and exposed their lost selves that were wandering in the fog of years" (Abu Al-Qasim Saadallah, 1985, p. 43). The wounds of May 1945 do not cease to bleed, and Rabie Bouchemma is overwhelmed with anguish whenever the memory appears with its

original terrifying, disturbing, loud, and agonizing features. He yearns for situations that can change those features, restrain those tears, and heal those wounds (Saleh Khrafi, p. 215). In doing so, he challenges colonialism and revolts against it, rebelliously rising up. He dreams of fulfilling aspirations and reaping the fruits to cleanse the Algerian people from its filth. He has several poems that varied in their themes, praising the revolution and the homeland, while praising the heroes who carried the responsibility of struggle and fight for the sake of freedom.

3- The Duality of Homeland/Revolution in the Poetry of Rabie Bouchemma:

In Rabie Bouchemma's poetry collection, the reader will find numerous poems in which the poet calls for revolution and the cleansing of the pure land of Algeria from the seeds of humiliation and disgrace. The most significant feature of his revolutionary poetry is its "close connection to the liberation revolution... It is an internal and interactive connection, not merely an observer's connection that describes events. This applies to both free verse and traditional verse in general. The reason is clear: the poet was engaged in revolutionary work within and outside the homeland. This is the source of authenticity and simplicity in the 1950s. Any poet who lived during that period could only write in that manner because there was no time or philosophy other than the philosophy of the revolution. There was no current other than the overwhelming current of the revolution, and no school other than the school of the revolution. Even in the realm of emotional poetry during this period, the influence of the revolution was undeniable" (Mohammed Salah Bouyahia, 1979, p. 2).

Rabie Bouchemma, with his revolutionary sensibilities, was aware that the liberation revolution would inevitably erupt. Therefore, his poetic revolution was closely linked to the revolution of the people. He paved the way, alongside other poets such as Abdulkarim Al-Aqoun, Mufdi Zakariya, and Mohammed Al-Eid Al-Khalifa, to reach the goal. The painful events of May 8, 1945, were devastating blows directed at the Algerian people, which silenced the poets due to the shock. However, this silence did not last long. The poets soon erupted in remembrance of the bloodshed and tears, vowing revenge. Rabie Bouchemma expresses in a poem titled "Ajaban Liwajhik Kayfa 'Aada Lihalihi" (Rabie Bouchemma, 2010, p. 68) his astonishment at how your face returned to its state.

"Disgraceful you were throughout the years, O May!

How many people you have distressed.

Young girls were disheveled in Algeria because of your severity,

And rocks shed tears of lamentation.

The hearts of the compassionate were torn apart,

In the universe, even the essence of days was shattered.

Your cursed history was written with blood,

And tears on the page of agony."

In these verses, the poet indicates that May was a month of sorrow and pain for all Algerians, leaving a painful imprint in their memory. However, the month of May is considered a new starting point in the history of the Algerian national movement. The popular resentment rose, and the elements opposing the path of revolution consolidated. It marks the beginning of awakening and a historical turning point between a period of hesitation and a period of struggle (Delouz Suleiman, p. 316).

The challenge posed by Rabie Bouchemma to the ruthless colonization was evident and undeniable. He felt pain and sorrow deep within himself, "tears and precious blood," turning the tragedy into a call for a fierce revolution. His poetry became visions, outpourings, and revolutionary sentiments. It was an inspiration for revolution, preparation for jihad, and a call for confrontation (Mohammed Zaghina, 2004-2005, p. 102). The poems recited by the poet in the aftermath of the events of May 8 became a critical and decisive turning point in the Algerian revolution's journey. This, if anything, demonstrates the poet's patriotism, as he was among the pioneers who dreamt of revolution, rose to the level of prophecy, and accompanied its triumphant march, conveying rare images of its heroic features. He was one of those who wrote from the heart of the revolution and the essence of the revolutionary atmosphere that preceded it for decades. This poet grew up embracing the cause of Algeria, its echoes, depth, grandeur, and dimensions. He lived passionately for the pains and hopes of the hardworking masses, whose fire ignited and whose torch he carried, depicting it all with vivid realism and deep sincerity (Hawas Bari, 1994, p. 54).

Rabie Bouchemma, one of the writers, was arrested after the events and was not released until February 1946. He immortalized this painful memory in a long poem consisting of sixty-five verses titled "A Secret Upon Tears and Precious Blood," dedicated to the prolonged echo of souls and the wounded hearts, the pure spirits of the martyrs on May 8. In it, he says: "Rabie Bouchemma" (2010, p. 59).

A secret upon tears and precious blood, O martyr under the custody of the Almighty.

Ride the light to the heavens, following the songs of contentment and the spirit of majesty.

And blessed are you, in the ascents, with hopes, like the sky with desires and the best of rewards.

For you, the abode of the righteous, connected to blessings, in the protection of God, the structure, and the generations.

Leave the body to iron and fire, plundered, scattered limbs.

Sought after by dogs and wild beasts for sustenance, in houses, paths, and mountains.

Do not mourn him with tears, nor pity him for the harshness and retribution.

For since existence, he has been nothing but a target of degradation and horrors.

In these verses, the poet exalts the sublime status of the martyr, as his blood is precious and his soul ascends to the light of the heavens, even if his body remains scattered and torn, preyed

upon by dogs and wild beasts. Furthermore, in the same poem, Rabie Bouchemma challenges colonialism, indicating the heinousness of its oppressive injustice. It is a deceitful colonizer, foreign to the people and the nation (Rabie Bouchemma, 2010, p. 61).

Woe to the enslaved people who seek mercy from an enemy, an enemy engaged in combat.

They yearn for happiness and prosperity from a deceitful foreign colonizer.

Oh, my dear, son of Algeria, this is a deceptive dream and the epitome of misguidance.

Abandon illusion and delusion, seek your freedom through strength and struggle.

It is the poet's cry directed towards the people of Algeria, urging them for revolution and rebellion against the tyranny of the oppressive colonialism. In this poem, the poet attributes a range of qualities and labels to the colonizer (vengeful, oppressive, unjust, reckless, destructive, oppressive, deceitful, deceitful, tyrant, tyrants, despot, enemy, combat, foreign...). All of these words carry negative connotations that deepen the meaning and indicate the injustice of colonialism. They emphasize the poet's spirit of resistance on one hand, as well as his rejection and revolution against the destructive forces on the other. The poet continues to defend his homeland against the tyrants, delivering a message to his people, urging them to have patience until freedom is achieved. He emphasizes that commitment to the covenant - the covenant of revolution and independence - inevitably yields positive results and changes the circumstances. The revolution is their path to liberation from the grip of the colonizer and attaining freedom to elevate the country's dignity and raise its banner high. Regarding this, the poet says (Rabie Bouchemma, 2010, p. 77).

Do not assume that the passing time, which has dried us up, will remain with you in good condition.

If iron and fire deceive you, then the spinning wheels are destined to perish.

The abundant armies with their provisions are nothing but illusory decorations.

The days of God in every moment are instructive and intensely dreadful.

How many oppressors on Earth have come and gone, their memory erased by the hand of time.

The oppression, injustice, and tyranny of French colonialism in the country made Rabie Bouchemma liken it to a statue of injustice. It is a symbol of the blood and tears of Algerians, as he expresses in his poem "If Only My Poetry Could" (Rabie Bouchemma, 2010, p. 76).

A tragic scene encompassing all evil,
emanating from the deceitful colonial oppressor.

Martyrdom is manifested in it - patience –
under the horrors of torture and conflict.

It will remain a statue of oppression and subjugation,

inspiring symbolism and powerful words.

People can see in it blood and tears, flowing in abundance.

From the weak and isolated, calamities of darkness befall them in every domain.

In these verses, the poet presents a vivid metaphorical image and demonstrates great skill in weaving the threads of the imagery. It is a beautiful portrayal where the poet assumes the role of a weaver narrating the tragedy of the Algerian people and their suffering due to the oppression of colonization and the shedding of innocent blood. The colonizer is portrayed as the cause of the nation's calamity and the reason for the shedding of tears mourning its people. The crimes committed by France in Algeria were horrifying, resulting from the violence and atrocities inflicted upon its people, the burning, destruction, and devastation inflicted upon its land. In his poem "The Tragedy of Childhood," Rabih Boukhama depicts the magnitude of the losses suffered by his homeland and its people. He states: (Rabih Boukhama, 2010, p. 219).

How many green mountains with lush slopes

Currently blooming in the countryside

Skillful hands have crafted them

Turning them into a verse in the beauty of creation

They were trampled by infantry and aviation

Burning fires destroyed their greenery

They turned into dark graves

Where forests and animals were buried

You no longer see the songs of its gardens

Only these black scenes remain

Here and there, scattered trunks

Like ghosts of death in the darkness

How many magnificent flowers bloomed there

And melodious birds sang in its branches

Water flowed beneath it like a stream

And prayers soared in its atmosphere.

In these verses, the poet repeats the interrogative form twice, expressing his astonishment and rebellion against the crimes committed by France against the people and the land. This repetition intensifies the meanings and their variety through the interrogative structures ("How many green mountains... How many magnificent flowers bloomed there"), making the poet's audience (the people) convinced of the necessity of rebellion and revolution to bring

about change and save the country from destruction and the people from humiliation. The poet Rabih Boukhama never ceased to demand the liberation of Algeria from colonial control and the emancipation of its people from humiliation, enslavement, and degradation. Recognizing the value of the homeland that provides blessings, security, tranquility, and peace to its people, he says in his poem "Realize the Highest Hopes for Your People": (Rabih Boukhama, 2010, p. 260).

And it established magnificent structures and heights
From the strength of spirits and connections
And from the destruction, rivers flow
For the elderly, the youth, and the children
And from guidance and high morale
And knowledge, ethics, and deeds
Yes, the foundation of a mighty state
Depends on the determination of men and the spirit of heroes
And the powers of the future spring rise with greatness
And build the garden of eternity for generations
You lived, and the entire people lived
In the embrace of high freedom and independence

What can be observed regarding the verses is that the poet repeated the conjunction "waw" (and) on one hand, and repeated the preposition "min" (from) on the other hand. The repetition of these two particles contributed to opening up the semantic field and sharpening it with suggestive force, causing the reader to interact with Boukhama's demand for the liberation of Algeria from the grip of the colonizer. It also contributed to connecting the meanings and making them consecutive and coherent with each other, resulting in the continuity of discourse and the expression of the poet's emotions and sentiments, as he motivates his people to struggle, revolution, and uprising against oppression, injustice, and aggression. The poet made his poetry directed towards the revolution, and this latter provided him with a space for creativity and innovation, especially since he accompanied it from its early beginnings and was responsive to it. He depicted "the brutality of the French army and its heinous acts, as it killed children, violated the sanctity of women, executed and hanged adults, filled prisons with freedom fighters, destroyed villages, and burned farms and homes. Despite all this, the Algerian people believed in the inevitability of breaking the oppressive monster" (Sharibat Ahmed Sharibat, p. 97).

From here, it can be said that Rabie Boukhama and many Algerian poets of that period made their poetry responsive to the revolution. They fully committed themselves to expressing its depth and stood as defenders of the land and humanity. They were genuinely sincere, as "when

the revolution intensified, it shattered emotions and shook feelings and pens, which were previously suppressed, and opened up horizons for poets that they could only dream of without blood, fire, and struggle. As a result, the poets' emotions erupted in revolutionary and passionate poetry" (Sharibat Ahmed Sharibat, p. 98). The poet Rabie Boukhama did not only defend his homeland Algeria, and he was not merely a patriot, but he was also a man of Arab nationalism. He defended the Palestinian cause as well and called for the necessity of revolution and jihad to liberate that land: (Rabie Boukhama, 2010, p. 197).

Firmly and with a strong heart, advance

To protect from destruction and free the land

Palestine, the land of guidance and promise

Calls for jihad, jihad, jihad

Arab youth, come forth and respond to the call

Embrace martyrdom in the field of sacrifice

Palestine, ravaged by the hostility of enemies

Calls for jihad, jihad, jihad

Rescue the weary in agonizing torment

Dragging themselves through the inferno

Elders, women, and every orphan

Call for jihad, jihad, jihad

Indeed, the poet's reliance on the repetition of the phrase "jihad, jihad, jihad" emphasizes his stance on the Palestinian issue. Through the tone of his voice, one can sense his complete rejection of the Zionist entity. Therefore, he calls for jihad and sacrifice in order to liberate the Palestinian people. By repeating this refrain at the end of each couplet, the Palestinian tragedy unfolds, crying out to Muslims for liberation.

Protagonists in the Poems of Bouchemma

The poetry of Rabie Boukhama did not lack mention of the heroes of the revolution who decided to stand against the oppressive colonizer. The poet's discourse about them and his perpetuation of their actions and positions can be attributed to their efforts towards liberating the homeland. Their motto was one of rejection, rebellion, and revolution against colonization. In the eyes of our poet, the revolution is a glorious one, nothing but 'a thunderous roar in an atmosphere veiled by awakening.' It aims to achieve freedom and dignified living, to rid oneself of humiliation, degradation, and subjugation. Therefore, Boukhama depicts the heroes on the battlefield of jihad, defending their homeland against all forms of injustice, tyranny, and resource plundering, sacrificing themselves to attain freedom and independence. In his poem

titled 'The Neighborhood of Heroes,' he speaks of the persona of Amirosh, a hero of the Algerian revolution.

In the neighborhood of heroes, young men of sacrifice reside,

And I specifically praise "Amirosh" among them,

The hero of the revolution, enduring forever,

In the jihad against the aggressor, the best affliction.

He repays measure for measure,

With relentless and cunning combat,

He quenches his thirst with free hands,

Every cup is filled with annihilation.

He imparts living lessons,

In the bitter struggle for redemption,

Fear resides deep within him,

In his body and various forms of misery.

Amirosh, the courageous hero who revolted and terrified the colonizer with his intelligence, cunning, and skill, he forged glory for himself, his people, and his homeland. He is the valiant adventurer who bewildered the colonizer in every battle with his bravery that surpassed all expectations. As the poet says:

That is Amirosh, the call of fever,

Humiliating the wretched invaders.

Beloved by the people, from every inclination,

And nurturing even the innocent young.

Oh, caller, you have taught us

How to protect the sanctuary and build high.

The poet Rabie Boukhama also had great pride and admiration for his mentor, the courageous hero, and the leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis. He praised his qualities, ethics, and valor. Sheikh Ben Badis was a prominent fighter who had a significant impact on the revolutionary arena at that time. Boukhama addressed this matter in a poem titled "The Flag of Light," where he expresses:

How wondrously you sheltered an entire generation

Within these walls, embracing a flame from God

Enduring the bitterness of times
He is Ibn Badis, the spirit of nobility
The guide of enlightenment and the symbol of dedication
He is Ibn Badis, the pride of Constantine
The devoted guardian of Algeria
Oh, leader, stationed at the pinnacle of greatness
Protector of the nation's secrets
We, your devoted soldiers, stand in your place
Anticipating your guidance and finding solace in your embrace.

The poet affirms that Imam Abdelhamid Ben Badis, the distinguished scholar, was a beacon within the ranks of the Algerian people. He held a high status, for he was the guardian of Algeria against ignorance and backwardness. He was the embodiment of noble values, the guide of enlightenment, and the symbol of dedication. To emphasize these meanings, the poet repeats the phrase "He is Ibn Badis" twice in this passage, deepening the connotations, affirming the meanings, and clarifying the ideas. Rabie Boukhama speaks of the revolutionary spirit of Ibn Badis within the Algerian people, where he symbolized knowledge, loyalty, and the defense of the land and its sovereignty. Regarding this, the poet says:

You have attained eternal bliss in the ardor of paradise,
Oh Ibn Badis, the valiant champion of the homelands.
You have possessed the secret of elevated permanence,
Everlasting, content, throughout the ages.
You ascend the throne in the realms of the soul,
Exalting its dignity by the hand of the Most Merciful.
Destiny shaped it through your tireless efforts,
Or through your selfless jihad.
You adorn the crown of sanctity, resplendent,
In its domain, the stars of radiance shine.

Indeed, accounting the heroes of the Algerian revolution is endless and cannot be confined. Amirosh and Ibn Badis are heroes amongst many. There are many heroes, and no matter how much we praise them, we can never fully do them justice. They are symbols that history bears witness to, immortalizing their memories and immense sacrifices for the sake of living in security and dignity. That is why we often find Rabie Boukhama, upon recalling their heroic deeds, filled with enthusiasm, pride, and admiration. He sees himself in them because they are

the ones who rebelled and revolted against the oppressive colonizer, just like him, for the sake of independence. This is the mission of the revolutionaries and the heroes of Algeria as a whole: defending the homeland and liberating it from the clutches of the oppressive colonizer.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can affirm the uniqueness of Rabie Boukhama's poetry is charged with symbolic and aesthetic elements that express the poet's visions and his rebellious stance against all forms of colonialism. His poems are not devoid of the spirit of nationalism and patriotism, filled with love for his small homeland, Algeria, and his larger homeland, the Arab nation. Thus, his poetry intertwines feelings of rejection, rebellion, and revolution with emotions of pain, regret, and sorrow for his Algerian and Arab people, whom he constantly called upon to struggle against the colonizer in order to attain freedom and independence. For what is taken by force can only be regained by force.

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