MOHD TAQI BAHAR:

Muhammad Taqi Bahar entitled Malik ush-shu’ara (king of poets)\(^1\), the most devoted constitutionalist and trusted leader of the ‘Nationalist Party’ of Khurasan – is the outstanding representative both of the technical perfection and of the philosophic depth of the modern poetry, and no less of sobriety and sanity.\(^2\) Malik ūsh-shuārā Bahar is considered as Iran’s greatest twentieth century poet and scholar, who was in addition a politician, journalist, historian and professor of literature.\(^3\) He was born in 1886 A.D. at Mashhad,\(^4\) the capital city of the Khorasan province in the North-West of Iran.\(^5\) He was the famous son of a famous father, Mirza Muhammad Kazim Saburi.\(^6\) His father Mirza Muhammad Kazim Saburi held the title of Malik ūsh-shu’arā and on his death Bahar was given the

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\(^3\) From Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.


title on the order of Muzaffar Uddin Shah. He acquired his elementary knowledge in Arabic and Persian in a local school and mastered in journalism and Epistology. He received an excellent training for the profession of court poet from his father. He later became a pupil of Adib Nishapuri (d. 1626) and Abdur Rahman Badri, a philosopher and a mathematician. Though he was conferred upon the title of Malik uṣh-shu‘ara, but he could not keep himself aloof from the patriotic struggle and was carried away by the pathos of the revolutionaries. He left the court career and joined the nationalist movement in Khorawan in 1906 A.D.

After joining the revolutionaries Bahar started the paper ‘Khurasan’ secretly with some of his comrades which published his early nationalist verses. He always spoke against the Oppressor of the country and stood in the interest of the country. Bahar addressed in a Qasida to Sir Edward Grey in which he pointed out to him that the Anglo-Russian agreement was a diplomatic error of the first magnitude as it removed the barrier that had so long stood on Russia’s road to India. The Qasida begin thus:

_Suea London guzar Aae pak Naseem Sahree_  
_Sakhan az mon bar guei be sar Edward Grewy_

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Muzundar, Ashique Uddin: An Outline History of Persian Literature, (from the pre-Islamic era upto the 1st half of the 20th century), 1st Published, Jan. 1996, p. 120.
In 1910-11 when the Democratic party of Persia came into power under the leadership of Hydar Khan Bahar was elected to its provincial committee. On account of his Democratic interest he redeemed his opinions by presenting to the Shah four Qasidas known as "Chahar Khitaba" (The four addresses). Some selected verses from here and there may be as below:

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Shah Sude Kasvt Sahee Bepush
Shashm ze tangil wa tabahee bepush
Dusmani Sheh bekasi Dar khur Ast
Kesh Hosh padsahee dar sar Ast
Qudrat wa zah tu saha dar ze mon
Kam Neh Sawad aaj mon wa sad ham sum on
Bandoh Khatai Ne Nomudon Wa gar
Karde aam Aae Shah ze mon dar guzar
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(Thou hast become a king, put on the royal robe, think not of punishment and destruction;

Animosity of the king is justified with a man who aspires after the throne;

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O king! thy power and grandeur will not be diminished by me and a
hundred like me;
I have done no wrong and if I have, O king! forgive me.)

After becoming a member of parliament Bahar started the
publication of his famous newspaper ‘Nu Bahar’ (New Bahar) which
voiced the policy of the new party. This paper according to Dr. E.G.
Brown, “had a peculiar importance on account of its extreme boldness
and fiery denunciation, especially against the Russian aggression.”
Consequently the paper was banned as a result of the pressure brought
upon the ministry of foreign affairs by the Russian Legation in Tehran but
it reappeared the following year under the new title of ‘Taza Bahar’ (Fresh Spring) but it has to bear the same fate and the poet was expelled
to Tehran. In 1917 Bahar started a literary association and a paper called
‘Danesh Kada’. It was this paper through which Bahar resisted the
natural artifice of the new poets and insisted on the traditional and
classical style of poetry and other prominent poets and writers contributed
their valuable poems and articles for the propagation of new trends and
theme into Persian literature. As regards form and structure they upheld
the classical tradition against the excess of the modernist. This journal

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12 Persian Selection, p. 250.
13 Mazumdar, Ahique Uddin: An Outline History of Persian Literature, 1st Published,
was the second great literary magazine which was published in Iran.\textsuperscript{15} 
About the same time the ‘Nu Bahar’ also resumed publication but towards the beginning of 1918 it was again banned because of its opposition to the government. The poet protested against this act in one of his most powerful \textit{Qasidas} whose opening verse is:

\textit{Ta bar jebar ray ast ze lagam}
\textit{For Sudeh wa mastmand wa nalajam.}\textsuperscript{16}
(As long as my careering lies over Ray I shall be worn out, afflicted and lamenting).

Bahar published numerous articles in his newspapers in which he passionately exhorted his readers to stand up and help bring about the establishment of a functioning parliament. He equally forcefully advocated creation of new and reformed public institutions, a new social and political order and of new forms of expression. When Ahmed Shah Qazar, the seventh and the last ruler of the \textit{Qazar dynasty}, was in power, Bahar reinvented himself; he ceased all his clerical activities and became an entirely new man. At the same time, he together with the writer and poet Saeed Nafisi, the poet and historian Gholam – Reza Rashid Yasemi and historian Abbas Iqbal Ashtiani, founded the literary association of

\textsuperscript{15} Ahmed, Tanwir: \textit{A Short History of Persian Literature}, (Revised \& enlarged), NAAZ Publishing Centre, Calcutta-73, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition, 1991, p. 32. 
Academy. The magazine of the Academy was the monthly publication of
this association, in which in addition to works of prose and poetry, other
very informative and useful articles were published, under such divers
title as “Literary Revolution”, “How other nation view us” and “the
literary history of Iran.” In fact, this magazine became Bahar’s vehicle
for publication of the results of his literary researches and introduction of
western literature to Iranians. This magazine also played a key role in
developing and strengthening the present day form of the Persian
literature.\footnote{Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia.}

During the period known as the Istibdad-I-Saghir (Lesser Autocracy), Bahar, with some of his comrades, secretly started the paper
Khorasan which published his early nationalist verses. This included his
famous Mustazad Kár-I-Iran ba Khudast (The affairs of Persia Rest with
God) which appeared in the issue of Jumada I A.H. 1327 and opened with
these lines:

\begin{quote}
Baseh Iran ze azadi sukhan goftan khotaast
Kar Iran ba khodaast
Mozhab Sahenshah Iran ze mozhobah judaást
Kar Iran ba Khoda ast
\end{quote}

(It is a mistake to talk about freedom with the Shah of Persia. The affairs
of Persia rest with God.)
The religion of the Shah of Persia is different from all religion. The affairs of Persia rest with God).

The *Istibdad-I-Saghir* lasted from the coup d’Etat of June 23, 1908 and the destruction of the first Majlis until July 16, 1909. During this period the constitution was suspended and despotism was re-established by Muhammad Ali Shah. Finally the nationalist forces triumphed; the Shah took refuge in the Russian legation and abdicated. This event was commemorated by Bahar in an impassioned poem whose opening stanzas may be quoted here:

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Me doh ke tae s’ud        Dur aan janeh
Asudeh sud mulk           Almulk allah
Sud Sah Nu ra             Iqbal hamrah
Kush Sahe Kuft             Bar ragam bad khuah
Sud subeh tale            Tae and subangah
Al hamdu lillah            Alhamdu lillah
Ek sand ma ra              Gam rahnamun sud
Jan yaar gam jast           Dil garg khun sud
Nam watan ra               Rakh Nilgun sud
Wa Imrug dusman           Khuar wa jebun su
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(Pass the wine for the life – consuming period is over; Tranquil is the country; it is the kingdom of God.

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Prosperity is the companion of the new Shah. The royal drum has been sounded despite the evil-wisher; 
The morning has dawned; the night has ended. Praise be to God! Praise be to God! 
For a time sorrow was our guide; our soul became the companion of brief and our hearts were drowned in blood; 
Blue was the face of our country’s honour; but today our enemy has been debased and humbled; 

In A.H. 1332 (A.D. 1913-14) Bahar was elected to the third Majils and he moved to Tehran. His stay in the capital occasioned the writing of a mustazad in which he condemned the privileged classes and their dishonest treatment of the common people. It began thus: 

*Aaj Khuash ast har aan bad keh rud bar ashkhash* 
*Dad aaj dost khuas* 
*Keest aankash keh ze bedad khuash ast khullas* 
*Dad aāj dast khuas* 

(Every evil which the people suffer comes from the elite; I seek justice against the elite! 
Which is the person who is free from the tyranny of the elite! I seek justice against the elite!)\(^{19}\) 

In A.H. 1338 (A.D. 1919-20) Bahar was put in charge of the semi-official Iran. Following the coup d’Etat of February, 1921 he was 

\(^{19}\) Ibid p. 28
imprisoned, his period of confinement lasting for three months. Subsequently in A.H. 1341 (A.D. 1922) he began to publish the *Nue Bahar* as a weekly magazine. He was elected successively to the fourth, fifth and sixth Majlis after which he temporarily retired from public life and devoted himself to his literary works. When the Qazar dynasty fell in 1925 Bahar welcomed the event in these words:

```
Bedarud goft daulat Qazari
Murg andar amod aj pash bemari
Farzam gust khawish padid aord
Qandi wa qahali wa sabkesari
Wa aamod bezaie kahle wa qundi
Jaladi wa serah dosti wa hoseari
```
(Gone is the rule of Qazars; after sickness came its death. Stupidity indolence and frivolity have revealed their hideous end; And in place of indolence and stupidity have come smartness, skill and vigilance).

Later the poet presented to Riza Khan, the late Shah, a collection of four *Qasidas* entitled ‘*Chahar Khitaba*’ (four addresses). This must have come as a shock to those who expected a different conduct from one whose literary ideal was:

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Mardon andor Sajāit Adabi
Behtor aj shapolusi wa jalbi
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(To die for the sake of literary valour is better than flattery and falsehood).

It may well have been to defend himself against the charge of flattery in his poem that he wrote:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Gor mudti ze ebnaie besar meguiem} \\
\text{Neh sun degaran betomi jer meguiem} \\
\text{Anan pae julb nafi guind modeh} \\
\text{Mon modeh pe dofi jarar meguiem}
\end{align*}\]

(If I praise mankind it is not, like others for the greed of gold; The latter praise to obtain benefit, whilst I praise to avert injury).\(^\text{20}\)

When Bahar's \textit{Dewan}\(^\text{21}\) was published it came under the attack of censoring authorities who seized the sheets which had been printed. Soon after the poet himself was imprisoned for five months and exiled for one year in Isfahan. During his imprisonment he composed the poem \textit{Shabahang} (The morning star) which for the excellence of its sincerity and strength may be regarded as one of the finest masterpieces of contemporary poetry. It opens with the stanza.

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Bar su aai raiet ruj aj dar sarq} \\
\text{Besakf aai gunseh subeh aaj bar kuh} \\
\text{Dahr ra taj jar aawiz befarq} \\
\text{Kamadm jein sab majlum besatuh}
\end{align*}\]

\(^{20}\) Ibid p. 30

\(^{21}\) Shaqiba, Parvin: \textit{Sair farsi Aaj Agaj ta emroj}, p.289.
(O banner of the day, rise from the gate of the east! O blossom of the morning, open the hilltop.
And place the golden crown upon the head of time, for I am tired of this dark night).

This poem is regarded as one of the finest masterpieces of modern Persian poetry. When Riza Shah officially gave up the position then the New Bahar reappeared as a daily newspaper and continued for a year. Malek ush shuara (king of poets) Bahar was elected to the fifteenth Majlis, but his parliamentary activities were seriously curtailed by ill health. In 1945 Bahar visited the republic of soviet Azarbayjan to take part in the twenty-fifth anniversary of its independence. His impression of the journey were later expressed in a long poem entitled Bahar dor Baku (Bahar in Baku) which opened with verse:

Ruj adeneh aaj ray rakht safar
Be sapardem rah delam wa daries khajr
(On Friday we started on our journey from Ray and traveled by way of Daylam and the Caspian Sea).

During the last years of his life Bahar became an enthusiastic supporter of the Soviet Union. He was actively associated with the

24 Shaqiba, Parvin: Sair farsi Aaj Agaj ta emroj, p.289.

- 114 -
society for cultural relations between Persia and the U.S.S.R. since its establishment in 1943-44 A.D. and was the president of its literary section for a considerable time. In a poem composed on the occasion of the first congress of this society he expressed his pro-soviet sympathies in the following words:

\[ \text{Bari nekunam nehan keh suei ma} \]
\[ \text{Har fiej keh aaid aaj samal aaid} \]

(In short, I do not conceal that every favour we receive comes from the north).

Bahar was an accomplished scholar.\textsuperscript{26} His propensity for ancient and archaic words is an indication of his link with the classical poets. His acceptance of tradition, however, does not interfere with his responsiveness to contemporary thoughts and problems.\textsuperscript{27} In the course of his tenure as professor, he dedicated most of this time to writing and editing books on Persian literature and history. Notable amongst numerous works written and edited by Bahar are:

- \textit{Tarikh – e – Sistan} (History of Sistan)
- \textit{Tarikh – e – Mukhtasar – e – Ahzab – e Siassi} (A concise history of the political parties)

\textsuperscript{26} Ahmed Tanwir: \textit{A Short History of Persian Literature}, (Revised & enlarged), NAAZ Publishing Centre, Calcutta-73, 1991, p.33.

\textsuperscript{27} Ahmed, Dr. Rekibuddin: \textit{Indo-Iranica}, The Quarterly Organ of the Iran Society, Iran Society, March 2005, Kolkata – 16, p.76.
• Sabk Shenasi (Methodology), which concerns the variety of styles and traditions of the Persian prose,

• Mojmalal ol Tavarikh O Val Qesas (concise Histories and Tales)

• Javame ol – Hekayat (Anthology of Stories),

• Two volumes of verse, consisting of his own poems.\textsuperscript{28} Besides these the published \textit{‘Zedan}\textsuperscript{29} one of famous mathnawi and also produced many articles dealing with literary issues.

Bahar was an outstanding representative of the classical and modern Persian poetry as well. He exhibited a complete mastery of expression.\textsuperscript{30} The poet-laureate Muhammad Taqi Bahar, author of some 30,000 couplets has well reflected the pessimistic and the optimistic sentiments of the people, prevailing before and after the national victory:

\textit{By despotic rule, O king what is thy aim? For naught but calamity can ensure from such policy.}

\textit{Give generous aid to the constitutional government then shalt thou be adored}

\textit{In generosity is the pre-eminence of men and in prostration before God in exaltation.}

\textit{Whoever lacks these two qualities better for him not to be than to be.}

\textsuperscript{28} Free Encyclopedia.
\textsuperscript{29} Asif, Dr. Mazhar: \textit{Adabiat – e – classic – o – jadeed (hissa – e – sher)} Kitabistan, Chandwara, Muzafarpur-21, Bihar, (Vol. I), p.140
O king be generous and break not thy pledges. The punishment of God shall over take thee.  

Bahar’s style of writing and the beauty of his poetry, in addition to his deep passion for Iran and his persistent opposition to fanaticism, have indeed made him one of the greatest cultural icon of the modern Iran. Bahar, basically composed Verse with a view to awaken people from their political and social slumber. His views did not differ much from those of Nizami Aruzi seven hundred years back, had declared that the aim of poetry was to cause “Great Events.” They were source of inspiration for, as well as spokesman of their nation. Their verse is thus a valuable document of the political history of the early decades of the present century. More than that, it has a ring of sincerity and a charm of style, for the composers of this national poetry believe in emotional appeal of verse. In the words of Bahar:

*Sair an based Keh Khijid aj dil O Jusad aj lab
Baj dor dilha Nasind har kuja guis shunqat*

For expressing the mastery of poetic art Bahar had a great impact. His resort to ancient and archaic words in an indication of his link with

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31 Hasan, Hadi: The Golden Treasury of Persian Poetry, the publication division; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p. 215.
the classical poets. His acceptance of tradition, however, does not interfere with his responsiveness to contemporary thought and problems. Indeed the secret of his greatness lies in the fact that the combines in himself a profound sense of classicism with a readiness to assimilate new ideas. Thus most of his prominent works, which include such masterpieces as Damayancheh (or Damavandiya) and *Jughd-i-Jang* (the owl of war) while following rigidly the classical pattern never degenerate into stereotyped verse.33

Bahar, like many of his noted contemporaries began his career as nationalist poet. His early poems generally deal with the topical themes and reveal the sentiment of the poet against the existing social condition and its abuses. The poems which were written to arouse feelings of the masses in respect of prevailing social and political issues, vividly reflect the spirit of the period. In his poetry we find the reflection of contemporary political developments. Bahar criticized the policies of the court and supported the constitutional reforms. On July 13, 1909 A.D. Tehran was captured by the troops of Sipadhar and Sardar-I-Asad. Mohammad Ali Shah took refuge in the Russian legation and subsequently abdicated. On this occasion Bahar wrote a poem. The first stanza of the poem run as follows:

33 Ahmed, Dr. Rekibuddin: *Indo-Iranica*, The Quarterly Organ of the Iran Society, Iran Society, Kolkata – 16, p.76
In his poetry "Aamal – e – shair" (The Desire of the poet) which was published in the early thirties, he expressed his hatred for war as follows:

\[
\text{Aaj jang wa kussos beza Nemanom Nam}
\]
\[
\text{wa in Nanang je dureh basr girm}
\]
(I would like to leave no trace of war and slaughter: I would like to obliterate this Shame from the family of mankind.)

He also expressed his resentment against the war in the poem Jughd-e-jang (the owl of war) as follows:

\[
\text{Bekhaq moshrq aaj sheh ru jannnd rah}
\]
\[
\text{Jehan Khuran gurb wa Aaulia wau}
\]
\[
\text{Giraftm aankeh deg shud gusadeh sar}
\]
\[
\text{Kujaast Saram Gurbeh wa heaiee wa}
\]
\[
\text{Kasi keh dar dilsh bejag hawai jar}
\]
\[
\text{Neeaa farideh buch aai khudae wao}
\]
\[
\text{Rafah wa emni tamie medar han}
\]
\[
\text{Ze Kaswari keh gust mobtalle wao}
\]
\[
\text{Bekhuiston hawan wa khowari aafkund}
\]
\[
\text{Kasi keh dar dil aafkund hawae wao}
\]

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Nehand manat Nedadeh bar sarat
Wa gar dahand sist ma zaraie wao
Benan wa aarjanat besaj wa kun hjr
Ze gundom wa zu wa mas wa tallee wa
Besan keh suwee kahrba rud
Rud jar tu suee kemeacee wao

(Why do the world – eaters of the west and its guardians tread upon the soil of the west?
I agree that the cooking pot is wide open, but where is the shame and modesty of the cat?
Beware, do not expect welfare and safety from the country which is afflicted by those in whose hearts their God has not created any desire expect the lust for God.
He who entertains in his heart a love for them brings dishonour and debasement upon himself.
They expect gratitude for favours undone; and if they do some favour, what is its condition?
Put up with your bread and millet, and avoid their wheat and barely, copper and gold;
Your gold is drawn towards their alchemy just as the straw is attracted by amber.36

Bahar also participated in the political struggle for constitutionalism and democratic freedom and his poetry expresses new

subject, new feelings, and new aspects, keeping himself abreast with the speech and rhythm of his age. His poetry has biting satire against the contemporary society and is full of revolutionary fervour. He strictly observed the art of rhyme and metre and was not influenced by the blank verse of the Western Nations. In ideas, however, he had wonderfully new treatment. He basically indited on the contemporary problem, vehemently supported the constitutional movement and even criticized the majlis on policy matters. In many of his poems Bahar depicted the unhappy situation of the country and its administration in the hands of fraudy administrators and also reveals a complete mastery of expression. Indeed the secrecy of his greatness lies in the fact that he combines in himselfs a profound sense of classicism with a readiness to assimilate new ideas. Thus most of his important works which include such master pieces as “Ai Charkh”, “Dar Mulk – Iran” while following rigidly the classical pattern, never degenerate into stereotyped verse. The Satire in Bahar’s work is well represented by his poem “Jahannamiyah” (On Hell). This poem ridicules in a masterly style the bigotry and prejudice of the reactionary clergy. Its polished and restrained tone may be illustrated by the following verse:

\[ Jag siah har keh hast bealam khoda porast \]

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Dar duj khust ruj Qiamot mekan wau
Vaj siah jer har keh fakt bast wa sak sud
Sujd benar pekar shun pur nean wa
Wa Aankas reh ba amameh Sar muie sar gujast
Mondil wast suae dark resman wa
Wa ankash keh kard kar Adarot dauloti
Sujad bepost mej jehanam raven wa
Wa ankas keh sud wakel wa j mosroteh harafjod
Dujukh bud beroj joza parlamen wa
Wa ankas keh rojnamah Nawish ast wa siz faham
Atash fatd bedaftor wa kallk wa besan wa

(Whoever is a worshipper of God in the world, except the Shia, his place will be in the hell on doomsday.
And even amongst the Shia, whoever wears a collar and becomes fashionable, his Silken body will burn a fire.
And whoever wears the Turban and keeps hair on his head, his Turban cloth will serve as a rope (leading him) to Hell.
And whoever is engaged in governmental administration, his soul will burn behind the desk of Hell.
And whoever becomes a deputy and talks about constitution, his parliament will be in Hell on the Day of Judgment.
And whoever is a journalist and has some understanding, his journal, his pen and his report will be set aflame.)

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Bahar strikes a new note in contemporary verse throughout the poem *Kabutaran – e – Mon* (My pigeons). It is customary for Persian poets to allude in their poems to certain birds noted for their beauty such as the nightingale, the peacock the hoopoe, the turtle – dove, and so on, but perhaps never before was as single poem devoted wholly to the description of one particular bird. As such, *Kabutaran – e – Mon* stands out as something quite new in Persian poetry.

*Come dear pigeons, with bodies like camphor and feet like red sulphur, fly from the housetop and fall suddenly around me like Snow.*

*At dawn when that golden bird flutters its wings in the tower of the east, through the glass panels of my door I see your heads raised in ostentation.*

*Singing a song of innocence and dragging your tails amorously along the ground. Your music brings tidings of love to my ears with the morning breeze.*

*Peacefully, at dawn you sing your delicate and heavenly melodies; incessantly with your speechless tongues you send tidings to lovers.*

*Prepare yourself, O brides adorned, that I may open the doors of this nest. In that moment the sound of your wings will pass from the house over the quarter.*

*It is as though the gates of the high heaven opened when I undo these door to you. Suddenly with your wings stitched together, you take flight like angels.*
Angels descend from heaven — such is the belief of the ancients. Surface to the heights and turn celestial.\textsuperscript{39}

The tendency to report nature and life from direct observations and a desire to express the sentiments and emotions of the individual has emerged from the impact of European literature.\textsuperscript{40} This optimistic note, the robust message of life and hope and the glimpses of brighter days, ahead of once differentiate the modern poetry from the earlier. The romantic agony is occasional complaints against the world, life, society and existence. The painful features of nature or of life are compared to the thorns of rose. But, Bahar, with his greater wisdom and more philosophic insight, writes this line as if to chastise one who takes such a wrong view of nature and of human life:

\textit{Sanandeh Gul ar Kharsh angust k hast}
\textit{Janeh bar sanendeh ast bar khar nist.}

(If a thorn pricks the finger of one who plucks the rose, the fault is the plucker’s and not of the thorn.)\textsuperscript{41}

In the field of modern Persian poetical literature Bahar’s position as a tasnif writer is also unassailable. His \textit{Tasnif Murgh – i – Sahar} (The bird of the dawn) is likely to rank amongst finest contemporary poems. It

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid. p. 40
has revolutionary fervour, is simple and forceful in diction and rich in symbols: The nature itself perhaps signifying the poet of a new age. It runs like thus:

 Murgh sahr Naleh sar kon
 Dag mora tajeh tar kon
 Jeaah Sarabar in Qafas ra
 Bar sakun wa jer wa jabar kun
 Bulbul pur basteh ze kunj Qafas dara
 Nagmah aajadi Nuih besar sara
 Wa ze nafse aruseh in rhaq tuvdeh ra
 Pur Sarar Kun
 Julom jalim jur said
 Asianom dadeh barbad
 Ai khoda, ai falk, ai tabiat
 Sham tarik ma ra sahar kun.

(O bird of the dawn, utter a plaint and open my wounds afresh with the fire of thy Sigh break this cage and overthrow it. O wing – tied nightingale, step forth from your cage and sing the song of the freedom of man. With thy breath, fire the clay of this vast multitude. The tyranny of the tyrant and the cruelty of the huntsman have desolated my nest. O God, O Heavens, O nature, turn our dark night into dawns).

Like many other poets Bahar believe that death is irresistible. No one can escape from the secrecy of death. A few months before his death he wrote premonition of the approaching end:
From the realm of literature the judges have all gone. Arise prepare for the journey the friends have all gone.
The dust flying in the expanse of the desert says: why dost thou tarry, the riders have all gone?42

IRAJ MIRZA:

Iraj Mirza, Jalalu’l Mamalik, whose famous poem Madar (Mother) has been quoted by E.G. Browne in the dedication of the fourth volume of his literary history of Persia, was a scion of the Qazar dynasty.43 He was born at Tabriz in 1874 A.D. (1291 A.H.) where he was given a thorough and systematic education in the Darul Fonun or the polytechnique college - a centre of modern education which was established in Tehran in A.D. 1882 during the rulership of Nasir Uddin Shah.44 His father Ghulam Hussain was the great grandson of Fateh Ali

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Shah. He learned Arabic, Turkish and French and acquired proficiency in these languages. He began his education at home under a tutor employed by his father, who was himself a poet of average talent. Though some literatures indicate that Iraj was schooled privately, there is reliable evidence that he studied at a branch of the house of science and techniques in Tabriz. Within a short span of time he became able to speak Turkish and Arabic language. His handwriting was very artistic and still is considered to be one of the famous calligraphers of Iran.

Iraj Mirza, started his career as a poet at a very early age and became renowned throughout the country for his literary compositions. He entered the service of the court of the crown prince Muzaffaruddin Shah Qazar and in 1892 A.D. at the age of nineteenth, on account of his poetic talent, was conferred upon the title of Sadrol-Show-Araa. This was, however, not a career congenial to the taste of a man of spirit and honour like Iraj. Being a man of broadmindedness and catholicity of thought and judgement he could not reconcile himself to the hollowness and hypocrisy of court life. He, therefore left the court and became a private secretary to Aminud - Dawla, the governor of Tabriz. In 1896 A.D. he returned to Tehran with Aminud - Dawla and continued to hold

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47 From free encyclopedia
that post for a pretty long-time. When the latter became Prime Minister he accompanied him on a journey to Europe. On his return from Europe, he served for sometime as president of the chamber of commerce in Tabriz. Thereafter he held several government jobs at different periods. In 1906 A.D. he entered into the service of the Ministry of Finance. During the upheavals, after the First World War, he was appointed as a confidential adviser to the American Financial Mission and accompanied the American Agents visiting different parts of the country. Finally he settled in Tehran and passed the remaining part of his life in peaceful retirement.

According to A.J. Arberry, Iraj “was the last of the classical poets and the first of the modernists. Being a descendent of the royal family, his life was essentially different from other contemporary poets. He remained alien to the revolutionary happenings and political upheavals. That is why we find his poetry somewhat different from the others which had taken place in the country. Among the new ideas of that time with which the poet showed his notable interest was the freedom and education of Iranian women. He threw his weight on the side of the removal of veil. He burst forth impatiently.

Khoda – ya ta ke Een mordan be khoaband
Janan ta ke girafar hejaband

- 128 -
Mogorzon dor mian ma be sar nist
Mogor dor zon tamiz khir o sar nist.48

(O lord! How long will the nation remain insensible how long will women remain in the clutches of the veil? Are women not human amongst us, or is there in women no power of distinction between good and evil?)

Iraj wrote a very popular satiric poem on covering the face called Hejab Nameh in which he raised his voice against the veil. In Arif Nama (Book of Arif) which is a satire against the well known contemporary poet Arif Qazvini, he wrote many poems which deal with the political and social problems of his time. Though in many places his treatment of the subject lacks the poetic taste, yet his words convey a feeling of refined sincerity as in the following verses exhorting the women to renounce the veil.49

Dor aqtaar degar jan yaar mordost
Dor ein mehnat Sarasor bar mordost
Tu aei b mask o gul homsang o homrang
Nomigorbad dor ein chador delot tang
Neh aakher gunseh dor seer takkamal
Suad aaj pardeh berun ta suad gul
Tu hom dosti bejon ein pardeh burdar
Kamal khud bealam Qun gamudar

To hom ein purdeh aaj rakh dur me kun
Dor o dewar ra pur nur me kun

(In other countries a woman is man’s companion but in this house of suffering she is burden to him.
O thou, who art equal to the mask and similar to the rose, is thy heart never disgusted with this veil?
Does not the blossom, in the course of development, come out from the veil so that it should become a flower?
Thou too rouse thyself and lift the veil; show the excellence to the world.
Thou too cast aside the veil from, the countenance and illuminate every nook and corner).

No doubt, Iraj Mirza is considered as one of the famous contemporary poets of Iran and also as the first Iranian master of colloquial poetry. In his verses he uses the actual words of everyday speech. The origin of this tendency has come to be identified with his name. Through Iraj, poetic language has become rich in many colloquial words and expressions. His simple language is also famous for witticism and satire.

During the Qazar era, Iraj was influenced by the Iranian constitutional revolution as well as changing circumstances in the country. The distinctive change which took place in Persian verses towards the beginning of the present century was confined mainly to the

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choice of themes. At that time the reaction against classical literature, in which the poet was highly conditional in his subjects, had been expressed in the demand to enlarge the content of poetry. However, with certain exceptions, the poetic expression and form remained the same as employed by classical poets. The rules of eloquence and rhetoric had entrenched themselves so firmly that the poets who attempt new themes found their expression tied down by conventional metaphors, similes and allusions. In addition, the antipathy towards radical innovation was so great that of someone departed from the established tradition he was liable to come up against fierce opposition from the acknowledged arbiters of literary taste, a typical of example of which is provided by the following couplet of *Iraj*.

\[
\text{En juanan ke tazodud talband}
\]

\[
Rasti dushman Ilm o adband
\]

(These youths who are modernists are truly enemies of learning and literature).

*Iraj* freely criticized social conditions as well. The striking originality in his use of metaphor when addressing diverse social problems has been admired by the critics. His style is rich in the art of

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51 Ibid p. 165
simile. His striking sarcasm, along with his pungent and fanged words are pointed at the dishonest mullahs, businessmen, merchants and statesman. In addition to those colloquial poetries, Iraj also composed elegies (Marssieh) to praise Muzaffar-e-Din Shah, Hassan Ali Khan-e-Garrosy (also known as Amir Nazam, the governor of Azarbaizan and Karmenshah during Qazar era), and many other Qazar historical personalities. In his elegies, however, the borders of praising did not reach extreme flattery.

Iraj also composed very nice Masnavi and Ghatat (different style of Persian poetry) on children training and education, mother affection, love and romance. He was an enlightened innovative poet but was also inclined towards the new European thoughts. Although Iraj was one of the pioneers of the innovative movement in the Persian poetry, he never thought of leaving rules of classic poetry. Being an ardent lover of European thoughts he sometimes uses Qalup (club) and Hotol (Hotel) in the followings line.

\[
\text{Dar Qalupha netuan kord homeh oqt nesat} \\
\text{Dar hotolha netuan burd homeh omar besar.}^{53}
\]

(Animation was made all time in the club, whole period was passed in the Hotel).

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\(^{53}\) Ibid p. 49
The importance of words though enriched the Persian tongue but it may likely affect to the natural sweetness and delicacy of the language. But Iraj Mirza was full responsible for having introduced into his mother tongue the largest number of French words, and he has produced to such extremes that if these words are not explained in the footnotes, they may obscure the sense of some of his poems. It is to be hoped that this fancy for adopting foreign words remains within due limits and does not amount to a craze.\textsuperscript{54}

Nevertheless, his interest towards events of the country is also remarkable. When Aminns-Sultan was assassinated, the Anglo-Russian Agreement was signed at St. Petersburg. But this was fully indignant and strongly resented by Iraj through the following qita:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Guind ke English ba rus}
\textit{Eahde basteh ast tajeh emsal}
\textit{Aaj suleh mian gorbeh o mus}
\textit{Barbad rud dokan baqal}.\textsuperscript{55}
\end{quote}

(They say that Britain has made this year a new treaty with Russia; The grocer’s shop will be despoiled owing to the agreement between the mice and the cat).

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid p. 128
Iraj Mirza has written many poems which enriched the field of modern Persian literary history. Among many poems that Iraj composed, his well known poems include ‘Satan’ (Ebleess), ‘Mother’ (Maadar)56 ‘A letter to poet Arif’ (Ariframeh)57, women’s picture (Tassvire-e-zan), The story of Veil (Daastan-e-Chaadar) and the story of Zohreh and Manouchehr” (Daasten-e-Zohreh-o-Manouchehr).

In the poem entitled ‘Satan’, Iraj explains how a wife maliciously complains about her mother-in-law, and encourages her husband to kill his own mother and bring the heart for her. The young man, ignores the respect due to his mother, pushes her to the ground, cuts her chest and takes her heart out. As he walks towards the door, all of the sudden, he falls and injures himself. He then clearly hears his mother’s heart cry out “Oh! My son’s hand got cut. Oh! My son’s foot was hurt!” Throughout this poem Iraj plainly presents the evidence of an unconditional love.58

A large number of beautiful verses were written by Iraj Mirza for promoting the new trends of Persian poetry relating to the theme of motherhood and maternal love with a deep feeling in simple, lucid and tender poetic language. The poem Mother is remarkable for its tender

56 Ahmed, Dr. Rekibuddin: Eentekhab Shai’r Ma’sir Farsi, 2003, p. 46.
58 From wikipedia
simplicity, mild, smooth and graceful style\textsuperscript{59} and also gained considerable popularity.\textsuperscript{60} The poem run as follows:-

\begin{center}
\textit{Guind mora su jad mador}
\textit{Pustan b dohon girafton aamokht}
\textit{Subha bar gahorah mon}
\textit{b dar nesast o khofton aamokht}
\textit{dastam b girft o pa b pa burd}
\textit{ta sioh rah rafton aamokht}
\textit{ek haraf o du haraf bar jabanom}
\textit{Alfaz Nehad o gofton aamokht}.\textsuperscript{61}
\end{center}

(They say when my mother bore me, she taught me how to suck her breast;
At night by my cradle she sat awake (and) taught me how to sleep.
(She) caught hold my hand and taught me to walk step by step so that I can walk on the path.
She put words one after another in my mouth and taught the art of speaking).

Besides the poem \"Mother\", the mathnavi \"Zuhra -o- Minuchihr\" is his another important work containing 525 couplets. This poem deals with the story of Minuchihr, a young and handsome boy and Zuhra (the

\textsuperscript{60} M Ishaque: Modern Persian Poetry, 1943, p. 163.
planet venus), who reduces *Minuchihr*, and finally leaves him forlorn and love stricken.\(^{62}\) This poem is obviously inspired by Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis – a fact borne out not only by its theme but also by existence of memories of Shakespeare’s poem. The poem itself is such in pictorial effects as may be illustrated by its opening verses:\(^{63}\)

\[
\text{Subh ne tabedeh hanuz aftab} \\
\text{O aansudeh dedeh Nargish z khuab} \\
\text{Tajeh gul atosh moskobue} \\
\text{Shestah z shabnom b sumon dost o ruee} \\
\text{Muntejar hualeh bad sehr} \\
\text{Ta ke kund khosk bedun ruee tar.}^{64}
\]

(It was morning and the sun had not shone yet. The eyes of the narcissus had not opened from their sleep.
In the garden the musk-scented red rose had just washed itself with dew.
And was waiting for the towel of the morning breeze to dry its wet face).

*Iraj*, is essentially a satirical poet employing a simple and unsophisticated diction almost verging upon ordinary speech.\(^{65}\) He also went much further in his attempts to maintain the natural flow of

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\(^{62}\) *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. 58, Iran Society, Kolkata, p. 79.


\(^{64}\) Rahman, Munibur: *An Anthology of Modern Persian Poetry*, 1956, p. XII.

everyday speech. The following verses, which form a part of his reasoning with women about the absurdity of the veil show his characteristic simplicity.\footnote{\textit{Divan-i-Iraj}, pt-ii, Tehran, p. 25}

\begin{quote}
\begin{verbatim}
b qrbanot mogor seere? Piazee?
Ke tue bagcheh o sador Namaze
Tu murat jumal juol jalali
Chera manond shalgum dor zoali
Sar o teh basteh sun dor kuseh ai
Tu khanomjan neh badamjan mai
b dan khubi do rein chador koriehi
 b har chizi b joz einsan shabehi.\footnote{Ahmed, Tanvir: A Short history Persian Literature, 1991, p. 22.}
\end{verbatim}
\end{quote}

(\textit{Be I sacrificed for thee! Art thou a garlic or an onion that thou art wrapped up in a bundle and a prayer scarf;}
\textit{Thou are the mirror of the beauty of the lord of glory, why art thou like a turnip in a sack?}
\textit{How out thou comest in the street covered head to foot! Thou art our beloved lady and not an egg-plant;}
\textit{With all those charms thou last, thou lookest ugly in the veil, thou resembllest anything but human being}).

Among the satirist poets of modern Persian literature, \textit{Iraj} may, undoubtedly, be placed in the first and foremost position. He composed

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Divan-i-Iraj}, pt-ii, Tehran, p. 25
\item Ahmed, Tanvir: A Short history Persian Literature, 1991, p. 22.
\end{itemize}

- 137 -
many poems which are not merely ribald and satirical in character. They rather reflect the corruption prevailing in the society of those days. Thus these poems supply a strong impetus to the people to raise their voice against the outdated manners and customs. A few of his verses may be cited here to show how keenly he wanted to have a social change in the country:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Amod aj khaneh b run seer farus}\noindent
\textit{Kujeh seer pur aaz aab b dush}\noindent
\textit{Kasab duzd ba bazar amad}\noindent
\textit{Talab mejad sor kar amud}
\end{quote}

(Having filled up the jar with milk the confectioner came out from home. Having got their reward after theft, the merchant came to the market.)

No doubt, such poem lacks literary fineness and more often than not they are in most of the cases crude and indecent yet their subtle beauty can not be ignored.

However, \textit{Iraj Mirza} is also noted for the simplicity of his poetic diction. In his verses he uses the vocabulary, common man adopts while expressing his feelings and ideas. The origin of his tendency has come to be identified with his name. Through him poetic languages has become
rich in many colloquial words and expressions. The poem "Kar Gar o kar forma" may be cited by way of example:

68

To aaz mon zur khahi mon ze to zor khwahi

Cheh monnot dast baid ek digor ra

Cheh bor ek digor monnot guzarand

Su mehtaz anod mordum ek digor ra.

68 Ibid p. 23