CHAPTER – II

DEVELOPMENT OF ABBASID POETRY
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Abbasid Period:

The Abbasid period covers about five centuries long that started from the accession of Abū al-ʿAbbās Saffāḥ (A.D. 749) to the death of Mustaʿsim, and the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols (A.D. 1258). (1) In fact, the total duration of the Abbasids may be divided into two periods: the First Abbasid Period which started from 132 A.H. and ended in 334 A.H. i.e. (750 A.D. – 945 A.D.) and this span of period became famous in the history of Arabic language and literature as the Golden Age of the Islamic empire. The Second Abbasid period started from 334 A.H. and ended in 656 A.H. i.e. (945 A.D. – 1258 A.D.); in fact, during this period the Islamic empire turned into many small states and Baghdad saw the destruction as and when the Tatars attacked it causing great massacre. Synthetically we find the First Abbasid period that depended on the Persians who protected administrative power in tact and did not retreat to any austerity befallen time to time by those Persians like Abū Muslim Khurāsānī and Barmakites. On the other hand, the latter Abbasid caliphs became the puppet of mutiny power. (2)
Under the guardianship of the Abbasids, Arabic literature toned up with vitality by dint of their influence, since all literary activities were looked after by them. In fact, the world could see a huge number of literary productions in Baghdad under the Abbasids; the Buwaihids did a lot in Persia, Hamdhanids in Syria, and the Fatimids in Egypt and Morocco.

Here mention may be made that Baghdad was the first and foremost principal centre of the Abbasids, where literature flourished to the great extent; and again it became the capital of the Buwayhid dynasty. During that period, it was one of the most important capital cities for knowledge and civilization. During that period, the city of Baghdad was the meeting place for people and civilization, and became a confluence of various cultures where a large number of educational institutions were established. (3)

It appears from the political aspect of the Abbasid dynasty that there started growing up weakness in the control of administration right from 323 A.H. to 358 A.H. During this period, Buwayhid ruled in Persia and Banî Hamadhân in Mosul including the area of Bakr. Further al-Qaramita made sway in Syria and a portion Arab peninsula. On the other hand, one of the Umayyad scions, Abdur Rahman started ruling in Spain. Thus the Fatimids ran administration in Northern Africa, but the Abbasid caliph, al-Radî Billah could run rule only in Baghdad. It is imperative to know that when the Tatars destroyed the rule of the Abbasid dynasty in 656 A.H. /1258 A.D., the Middle Islamic period started in the rising of the Mamelukes and then Ottomans; their administration continued up to the point of Modern Period. In fact, the Modern Period is supposed to begin
with the year 1798 A.D. / 1213 A.H.; in which year Napoleon Bonaparte, the emperor of France made an attack in Egypt. (4)

It reveals from a general view that the Arabic literature flourished in Baghdad in the middle of the eighth century A.D and it reached the culminated position in various dimensions. As such, the period earned the fame of the Golden Age for literature, science, business and Islamic culture. In fact, the utmost brilliance for science and literature came to happen in the period of the caliph, Hārūn al-Rashīd and his son Māmūn. Besides prose genre, Arabic poetry began to produce in the authentic position. Alongside the religious education, the profane literature came to evolution in the Abbasid period. The authors of this period not only took part in flourishing their literature, but also left their influence for the European renaissance. (5)

**Abbasid Poetry (الشعر العباسي):**

During the Abbasid period, the intellectual motto of life reached the pick of progress and prosperity, particularly in education and literature. In fact, the important cultural movements and intellectual trends appeared in this period as and when different nationals of Greek, Persia and India exchanged reciprocally their culture and heritage. Furthermore, the caliphs, commanders and governors made encouragement to the people of the Arabs to accept different cultures and accordingly their influence fell on the literature of the Abbasid period. As a result of which, the Abbasid poetry appeared with multifarious development. (6)
Besides, Arabic became official language even in the subjugated countries, because the Muslim rulers ran sway over them; and the Arabic language became the language of science, literature, philosophy and religion for all the nationals. The books, produced during that time, were written in Arabic, although many authors were not Arabian.

As a matter of fact, the foreign culture left a deep influence on the science and philosophy of the Arabs, but from the literary point of view, the literature of the non-Arab people could not influence the Arabic literature. Only a little portion of foreign literature was translated into Arabic by the Arabs, because they did not feel its necessity. The litterateurs and poets of Arabia did not like western language, so naturally their literature remained pure and free from the foreign trends and reaction.\(^{(7)}\)

In fact, the Arabian culture had the supremacy over the non-Arabs who wrote in the Arabic language. Moreover, they were influenced by the Arabic literary trends and their new achievements were restricted to the traditional models. So the Abbasid period bore many new literary productions, but their extent remained within the traditional frames.

In the Abbasid period the scopes and facilities for education widened and people's inclination to research activities and compilation of books increased, and libraries were established, and book stalls were opened. There produced different books related to the subjects namely history, geography, astronomy, mathematics, medical science, chemistry, pharmacology, morphology, syntax, language, criticism, poetry, story, religion, philosophy, politics, moral study, sociology etc. It is enough for us to go through the book entitled *al-Fihrist* (الفهرست) written by Ibn Nadîm in...
view of knowing the progress of Arabic literature. Under the circumstances of new culture, the writers and poets got interest in acquiring knowledge for intellectual initiatives, finding out power over explanation, sorting out analyses, making comparison and drawing inference. Therefore, Arabic literature in the Abbasid period developed to the great extent. In fact, the testimony of excellence of the Abbasid poetry may be perceived in the poetry of Abû Nuwâs (d. 810 A.D.), Abû Tammâm, Abû Tayyîb al-Mutanabbi (d. 965 A.D.) and Abû al-‘Alâ’ al-Ma‘arrî (d. 1057 A.D.). Needless to say that the Abbasid literature brought overflowing contributions to the thought of the human jewel following different spirits and conditions like despair, hope, weakness, strength, prudence, delightfulness etc. In addition, Arabic prose and poetry literature brought the common issues, idea, politics and morality to the greater society. In fact, all these matters reflected in the “wine poetry” of Abû Nuwâs; and the “ideas” of al-Rumî, “philosophy” of al-Mutanabbi, “emotions” of Abû Firâs, “contemplations” of al-Ma‘arrî, the examples of Ibn al-Muqaffâ’, criticisms of al-Jâhiz made remarkable influence in the Arabic literature that flourished in the Abbasid period. It is imperative to know that there were a good number of schools for poetry development in the Abbasid period and these schools were pioneered by some distinguished poets; and they are rightly known as follows:

(1) The School of Abû Nuwâs

(2) The School of Abû Tammâm

(3) The School of Abû al-Atâhiya
It has been observed that during the 7th to 8th centuries the Muslim Empire grew and spread far and wide; along with this it developed new intellectual centers such as Kufa and Basra in Iraq. Poets flocked to these cities, where they could find patrons and meet other writers. Lyric poetry was especially popular. It is imperative to know that Bashshār ibn Burd wrote delicate love poems. Abu Nuwas wrote brilliant lyrics of love, wine, and the hunt, and he showed great imagination in his use of Arabic. Side by side we find religious poems that flourished to the great extent. In this connection, the credit of Abu’l-‘Atahiya is remarkable one in the domain of Abbasid period. Two centuries later, the blind Syrian poet Abu’l-‘Ala al-Ma’arrī took up similar solemn ideas; one of his poems says, “Like coins in its hand, time spends us as it will.” Another type of poem that grew more popular was poetry that praised powerful rulers or patrons. These poems used stately language and a grand style to celebrate the subject's virtues. A patron might be described as “a sea of generosity” or “a lion in battle.”

It appears from the literary picture of Arabic poetry of the Abbasid period that different styles of poetry started emerging from different personalities of Arabic poetical arts. Influence from other cultures and the Bedouin desert dwellers contributed to the growth of Islamic poetry. There is a spacious field of Arabic lyric art and its art of imagination started from the ancient centuries having been developed to its considerable extent. No wonder, the origin of poetry belonged to lyrical character; especially Arabic poetry was owned by the singers irrespective
of ladies and gents from the inception of its creation. In fact, we find a
good number of characteristics in the domain of Abbasid poetry as follows:

(1) *al-Ghazal* or *al-Tashbīb* or *al-Nasīb* (Amatory Verse) that describes
about woman and speaks of her qualities, in fact, it is the song of
remembering friends or beloveds and weeping for their
reminiscences etc. In other words, it is the erotic prelude to a Qasīda
or other amatory verses, in which the poet portrays the passion of his
heart, and expresses his love-longing for his mistress. In fact, this
theme of poetry occupies a very prominent place in ancient Arabian
poetry.

(2) *al-Fakhar* (Glorification) or *al-Ḥamāsah* that which is the
glorification of self qualities and of the tribes including *hamāsa*
poetry. By this theme poetry the poet prides himself on his noble
lineage, and recounts the valorous deeds of his tribe and ancestors.

(3) *al-Madīḥ* (Panegyric) is a poetical art for praising tribe and different
beauties of their people. In fact, through this theme poetry, the poet
eulogizes the bounty, the liberality and other virtues of a patron who
has helped him or his tribe out of a difficulty. In the Abbasid period,
this characteristic of poetry finds to be degenerated into flattery of
the great.

(4) *Al-Rithā’* (Elegy) is composed for expressing sorrowfulness after the
demise of dear ones. In fact, this theme of poetry is of elegiac
verses, in which the poet praises the qualities of a dead person. If the
deceased was foully murdered by a man of another tribe, the poet by
his indignant verses incited his people to avenge his death. The task
of dirging over the dead was generally assigned to women, because
it is only women who are capable of giving vent to their deep
sorrow. They would sing of their early graves made verdant by the mourning cloud, dwell upon the fleeting and transient nature of human life, comparing it to the shifting sands of the desert, or to the meteors that shoot across the sky and die in the same moment, while the stars will rise and set, and mountains rear their lofty heads heavenwards and never grow old.

(5) *Al-Hijā' (Satire)* is composed for ironical expression to ridicule enemy or his tribe as well as derision against him and to make him disgrace keeping away from the earlier position. In fact, in the kind of *Al-Hijā' poetry* the poet rails at his adversaries, and throws invectives upon his tribal enemies. In the Umayyad period, satire became an important political weapon, and performed the function of the press in modern times. This characteristic of poetry also continued in the Abbasid period, since some of the renowned poets also dwell this poetical theme in their expression of avenge in any kind.

(6) *Al-Zuhd (Asceticism)* is an art of poetical expression by which remembrance of death, description of quick catastrophe of the world, placing supplication to Allah, agitation to the betterment and prohibition from doing mischief.

(7) *Al-Ḥikmah (wisdom)* is composed for admonition that which the poet brings to light out of his accumulated experiences, knowledge and observation obtained in life; he expresses briefly in a couplet or two couplets or whatever attachment found to him, so as to present them as an advice.

(8) *Al-Wasf (Portrayal)* is composed for mentioning divisions of things, interpretation of their conditions with a view to bringing them to the mind of listener. In fact, this theme of poetry indicates to the
descriptive poetry, by which the poet describes the scenery of the
desert, its impressive solitudes, the enchanting illusions of the
mirage, the magnificent constellations of the tropical heavens, the
life of incessant peril, the exploits of romantic gallantry, the
nocturnal journeys, the sylvan chase, the battle, and other things
found in the desert. (10)

(9) Al-I'tidhār or apologetic verses, in which the poet, having
temporarily fallen in disfavour with his patron for some supposed
offence, tries by a series of oaths to vindicate his innocence. The
poet Nābighah ranks most high in this kind of poetry, and was only
equaled by al-Bufrtārī in post-Islāmic times. In this connection, we
may cite example with the verses of the poet ‘Alī ibn al-Jahm who
apologized to al-Mutawakkil as follows:

أعف الله عنك ألا حرمـة
لبن جلّ ذنب ولم أعمـد
ومول عفا ورشيذاء هدى؟
فعاد فأصلح ما أفسـدا

In comparison to the poetry of foreign language, Arabic poetry
is generally conspicuous in short form. It has been observed that Arabic
poetry known as qasīda (قصيدة) is composed of couplets usually consisting
of one hundred to hundred twenty in number. Sometimes it is found
minimum of ten couplets. Despite qasīda, another poetical style called al-
maqtu'ah (المقطوعة) comprises of seven couplets or lesser thereof in
number. Generally the Arabs consider al- qasīda or al-maqtu'ah as an
independent unit, aimed at single object or several to communicate with
each other. In fact, al- qasīda and al-maqtu'ah are composed of couplets
(أبيات), and in this respect, we see that from ancient period the Arabs used to compose every bayt having independent from other sister abyât and every bayt is constituted in akin to one measure (wazan) and rhyme (rawîy) i.e. final letter of every verse. In case of the unpopular spelling, there may be difference in rhyming verses although one hemistich may not differ. But, in the course of times and periods, the Arabs have been making freedom gradually from that very confinement. (12)

Here it may be noted that Arabic poetry right from pre-Islamic to the Abbasid period plays a pivotal role in the expression of philosophy of live and culture of the societies as well. It is defined by the critic Qudama ibn Ja'far (d. 948 A.D.) that poetry is 'discourse that is metred, rhymed, and conveys meaning', a set of what appear to be definitional minima that came to be adopted as a prescriptive device; the formula was used to exclude types of writing that did not match those criteria. The critic suggests that one should regard poetry as being anything that has an effect on the soul. In fact, Arabic poetry has always been regarded as the diwân al-‘arab (the repository of the Arabs). The odes of Abû Nuwâs (d. 815 A.D.) and Bashshâr ibn Burd (d. 784 A.D.) give us insight into the tensions that arose when new converts to Islam brought with them many of the values of their own cultural traditions and sought to challenge the hallowed norms of the earlier poetry. Abû Tammâm (d. 846 A.D.) and al-Mutanabbî (d. 965 A.D.) are two of many poets who bequeathed to later generations ringing odes in praise of a ruler whose forces have just won a great battle for the cause of Islam. In all the preceding ages, the motto of al-hijâ' (الهجاء) continued to the Abbasid poetry as an ultimate poetic weapon to lampoon as the media carried stinging attacks against the rulers of the other side in the conflict.
When Islam came to appear, some aspects of the poetic function changed. It is clear to note that the establishment of new cultural centres outside the Arabian Peninsula – Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, Qayrawân, Marrakesh, Fez, and Cordova, to name just a few – and the vibrant cultural admixture that populated them created new and expanded opportunities for the patronage of litterateurs and, given the predominant position of poetry, of poets in particular. In fact, the poets were of an important court functionary, and their careers were made or broken according to the extent that talent recognized. The negative side has been observed in the career of Ibn al-Rûmî (d. 896 A.D.) who complains bitterly in some of his poems about a lack of recognition. On the other hand, poets like al-Buhtûrî (d. 897 A.D.) and al-Mutanâbbî feel sufficiently confident of their status to drop unsubtle hints about the lack of appreciation they feel from their patrons. (13)

It is a matter of fact that the Abbasid period is essentially a period of reconstruction. With it an emersion causes from the turmoil to the conquest and expansion. The martial order cools down, and the wild sons of the desert gladly exchange their coarse mode of living for the amenities of the town life. The poets like the warriors become effeminate. They sing no more of war and vengeance; they change themselves into countries, and celebrate the praises of the caliphs and other powerful potentates, from whom they expect rewards. Still clinging to the ancients as their models they lack their inspiration in describing various objects, and endeavour to make up the deficiency by studied refinement of expression, by virtuously of style, by flashes of wit, word-play and bombast. They may now again, like early poets, describe battles, which they never fought, praise a horse of
whose merits and demerits they knew next to nothing, and arouse terror by depicting a storm which they witnessed while safely resting under their roofs. Their poems seldom possess that outburst of feeling which characterizes the old Bedouin poetry. They are mere words artfully arranged, but without life and without soul.

In fact, the influx of Greek sciences and philosophy during the time of the first illustrious ‘Abbasids further widened the scope of poetry, and prosody itself, astronomy, theology, mathematics, chemistry and grammar afforded new subjects to the poets. Under such environments, the change was inevitable in the nature of the circumstances, for the poetry of an epoch is but a mirror of its social conditions and environment. The Abbasid poets regardless of the altered conditions, kept on singing in the old fashion, they were swiftly reminded of the real facts of the case. In this connection, we may point out to the sharp rebuke, which the poet Abū Tammām (190 – 231 A.H.) received for comparing Aḥmad b. al-Muṭṭasim to the old Arab chiefs in the verse:

اقدام عمرو في سماحة حاتم في جمع أحنف في ذكاء أياس

(He combines the intrepidity of 'Amr with the liberality of Ḥātim, the forbearance of Ḥānaf and the acuteness of Iyās.)

It appears from the realm of the Abbasid poetry that the Muṭṭī‘ ibn Iyās tried his level best to avoid imitation of the ancients, because his love poem is without the erotic prelude (تسبيب) and he was followed by Bashshār ibn Burd, Abū Nuwās (d. 199 A.H.), Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283 A.H.), and Ibn al-Muṭṭazz (d. 296 A.H.) drifted farther and farther apart from the
old conventions. This severance from the past became complete with the poets of the fourth and fifth centuries. They sang of the green gardens, the roses, the narcissi, the warbling bards, the silver streams with the moon and the stars quivering in them, of wine and the young Saki, the snow-clad ground and other natural objects. (15)

As the new approach finds in the poetry of Abbasid period, the poet Muslim ibn al-Walîd (d. 823 A.D.), instead of addressing the desolate dwellings of his mistress, turns to ask the waters of the Euphrates to tell him where the boats had carried his beloved:

(Would the waters of the Euphrates could tell me “where wended the boats with their inmates.”.
How sweet is death at their separation! And how bitter is life after they depart!)

The new approach also finds in the poetry of Abû Nuwâs (145 – 199 A.H.), because he dares to have defiance against the ancient models of poetic expression that he says as follows:

(The description of the worn-out camps is the eloquence of the dull-witted; so devote thy descriptions to the daughter of the grape i.e. wine).
Here mention may be made that the poet Abū Nuwās was seen to ridicule the conventions of Bedouin love-poetry, and poked fun at the rude life of the desert. In this connection, the Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd threatened to imprison him if he did not praise the ruined abodes, but he went on with his wine songs as follows:

(An autocrat has called me to commemorate the ṭulūl, but it distresses me to obey his command. 
I hear and obey, O Commander of the Faithful, though thou hast imposed upon me a difficult task.)

In addition, we find another striking characteristic of the Abbasid poetry that which offers comparative freedom from rare and obscure expressions which were in favour with the scholarly poets. In this connection, Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī maintained that poetry should be written in simple and plain language in order that it may be intelligible to all people. With Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah also begins the philosophical poetry of Islam, and here we find the simplicity of expression in his poetry as follows:

(And there were many lessons for me in thy life; but today thou art more instructive than when alive.)
The new ideas that found in the poetry of the Abbasid period may be conspicuous in the poetry of Bashshār ibn Burd, which had never occurred to the early poets, of which testimony may be mentioned as follows:

(Would I were an apple that is divided in twain, or a blossom of the twigs of the sweet basil,
So that when she smelt it and found its fragrance sweet, we being in privacy, I would be turned into a man.)

In fact, in the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī there is also innovativeness and simplicity, since he was one the prolific poets of the Abbasid period; of which testimony may be inspected as follows:

(When you look at my eye, is a vital centre for your eye, but your eye is a flying dart of death.
It is a marvel that the meaning is one and the same, though in your case it is a dart, and in my case a vital centre.)
Poetry Collections:

It has been observed that a good number of poetry collections were made in the Abbasid period ranging poems from Pre-Islamic to the Islamic Ages. A collection of Arabic poems is usually called a diwàn (ديوان). The early philologists who gathered poems into collections used a variety of organizational criteria. Some were named after the tribe under whose protective umbrella the works had been conceived and performed: thus the poems of the Banû Hudhayl. In fact, others were entitled after the names of the compilers. In this connection, we may cite the example of Mufaddaliyyát of al-Muফadّdal al-DAQbî, and the Aṣma’iyyát of al-Aṣma’î. Still others were clustered around particular motifs; one of the most cherished was heroism, hamāsah (حماسة); it was compiled by Habîb Ibn Abî Aus, al-Ta’î, surnamed Abû Tammâm, a renowned poet of the Abbasid period, who happened to compile the same under a specific circumstance that he met in a journey, as the road was blocked due to heavy fall of snows; he had to remain at the abode of his friend. Finding there a library he selected many poems of the poets belonged to the periods from the pre-Islamic to Islamic and this compilation was entitled as hamāsah. The collection of this anthology is so called from the title of its first chapter hamāsah. It contains poems descriptive of constancy and valour in battle, patient endurance of calamity, steadfastness in seeking vengeance, mindfulness under reproach and temptation, all which qualities make up the attribute called by the Arabs (حماسة). It consists of ten chapters (إيوباب), containing in all 884 poems or fragments of poems, and named respectively حماسة (1) (al-Hamasa), 261 pieces; حماسة (2) (al-Marathi), “Dirges,” 169
pieces; (3) (al-Adab), "Manners," 54 pieces; (4) (an-Nasib) "The Beauty and Love of Women," 139 pieces; (5) (al-Hija), "Satires," 80 pieces; (6) (al-Adyaf wa-l-Madih), "Hospitality and Panegyric," 143 pieces; (7) (as-Sifat), "Miscellaneous Descriptions," 3 pieces; (8) (as-Sair wa- n- Nu`as), "Journeying and Drowsiness," 9 pieces; (9) (al-Mulah), "Pleasantries," 38 pieces; and (10) (Madhammat-an-nisa), "Dispraise of Women," 18 pieces. Of these books the first is by far the longest, both in the number and extent of its poems, and the first two together make up more than half the bulk of the work. The poems are for the most part fragments selected from longer compositions, though a considerable number are probably of entire. They are taken from the works of Arab poets of all periods down to that of Abu Tammâm himself (the latest ascertainable date being A.D. 832), but chiefly of the poets of the Ante-Islamic time (Jahiliyyûn), those of the early days of Al-Islam (Mukhadrimûn), and those who flourished during the reigns of the Omayyad caliphs, A.D. 660-749 (Islamiyyûn). Perhaps the oldest in the collection are those relating to the war of Basus, a famous legendary strife which arose out of the murder of Kulaib, chief of the combined clans of Bakr and Taghlib, and lasted for forty years, ending with the peace of Dhu-l-Majaz, about A.D. 534. Of the period of the Abbasid caliphs, under whom Abu Tammâm himself lived, there are probably not more than sixteen fragments. However, the most favoured organizing principle for collections of Arabic poetry has been and remains the gathering of the works of a single poet and as for example we may mention the diwân of al-Mutanabbî.
It is a matter of fact that the majority of collections by early poets frame the poems themselves within a series of short statements that recount the occasion for which the poem was composed. A preferred mode of sequence for the collected poems was an alphabetical one based on their end-rhymes. The most famous poems were often referred to in this way, and in this connection, we may refer to the most famous ode entitled as *lāmiyyat al-‘Arab* (لامية العرب) of the vagabond poet al-Shanfarā’. As the Arabic poetic tradition developed and particular genres came to be recognized as separate entities, the *dīwān* of the poet was often subdivided into categories. Abū Nuwās’s collected poetry contains large separate sections of love poems addressed to males and females known as ghazal (عُزْل) and wine poems (خمرية). In addition to anticipated sections on eulogy, lampoon and elegy, there are also others gathered around the themes of hunting, asceticism, and reprimand. With Abū Tammām’s *dīwān* we find separate sections on eulogy, lampoon, elegy, love, chiding, description, boasting, and asceticism. (22)

Credits of Abbasid Poetry:

Here it is imperative to know that the poems thrived in the Abbasid period, they are considered to have the new phase in the realm of Arabic literature and the critic like Ibn Qutayba (213 – 276 A.H.) is of the opinion that the new poetry is superior to the old. In this connection, Dr. Hasan Ibrahim Hasan says as follows:
Am in the Abbasid period is concerned, many poets appeared who followed poetry with new methods in matters of ideas, objectives, and styles. Even they excelled in all those which were preceded by the Islamic, Mukhdarim, and pagan poets. Among all these Abū Nuwās was the best one, who gave the information with his poetic art relating to wine, love and hunt etc. that spread out the civilization and luxurious aspects; and subjected to the reminiscences that the poets traditionalized in their versification mentioning in the prelude of the odes.

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In fact, Ibn Qutayba (213 – 276 A.H.) also shared his view alike Abū Nuwās about the modernity of poetry, who was the first famous one to do criticism; he declared that it is necessary to have arbitration over ancient and the modern scholars for talents without any alternative irrespective of time during which they lived. And those who came after Ibn Qutayba followed him, they were of the critics, Tha‘lālibī (d. 1038 A.D.), and Ibn Khaldūn who also asserts that it is necessary for the poets to sing about nature and reality; nay not only to describe journey on the back of camel which they did not ride over practically, and passing through the
deserts without any enjoyment thereof; instead they should compose their odes in the befitting manner of literature as to the city where they reside.

It has been expressed in the text of Ibn Qutayba who mentions in the preface of the book *al-Shi‘r wa al-Shu‘ara‘* (الشعر و الشعراء) as follows:

(And I did not intend about the poetry of every poet that I mentioned, there is choice of path for him who adorned and approved along with others approval, I did not look at those of the formers with the eye of sublimity for their advancement, nor at those of the later with the eye of despise for their backwardness, but I looked with an eye of justice over the two groups, and I gave every right to them, and gave due share to them. Because I saw some of our scholars who consider the inferior poetry as good for the advancement of their statement and gave position to the later, and disowned the excellent poetry, there is nothing defectiveness for him except to speak of his age.)
It has been observed that among these poets, Abū Tammām was the greatest one of all the poets due to his intellectual and trends in poetry, and his disciple Abū ‘Ibadah al-Buḥtari was of the excellent descriptions and permanent eulogies. Ibn al-Rūmī is known for his lengthy life, enormous poetry, and his submersion into the rare ideas and wonderful thoughts, while Abū al-‘Atâhiyyah became prominent in the art of poetry and became famous for minute amatory verses. In fact, Tha’labī mentions in his book entitled Yatīmah al-Dahr (نَائِمَةَ الْدُّهْرِ) as follows:

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إِنَّ الشَّعْرَاءَ الْمُهَدِّينَ فَازُوا شَعْرَاءَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فِي رِقةِ الْلُّفْظِ وَعِذْوَةِ الْمَعْنَى.

(The modern poets became superior to the pagan poets in the delicateness of word and sweetness of meaning.)

Ibn Qutayba ‘asserts that in tenderness and elegance the Pre-Islamic bards are surpassed by their successors’. Ibn Rashîq (d. 1070 A.D.) mentions in his book Kitāb al-‘Umda (كتاب العمدة) which also concerns with the art of poetry; he mentions that the superiority of the moderns would be acknowledged, because the new poets draw inspiration from nature and truth instead of relating imaginary journey on a camel which they never owned, through deserts which they never saw, to a patron residing in the same city as themselves. In fact, Ibn Khaldūn described on the art of new poetry as an epoch-making work.

Here mention be made that the new poetry of the Abbasid period obtained popularity to the great extent; because the poets of this period treasured a huge range of knowledge and philosophy in their poems. Henceforth popular taste ran strongly in the other direction, as is shown by
the immense preponderance of modern pieces in the anthologies compiled during the Abbasid period and afterwards. In fact, it is necessary to recognize the writings of Mutanabbi and Abū al-'Alā al-Ma'arrī, because their poems are the testimony of modern philosophy.

It is a matter of fact that the characteristics of the new poetry thrived in the Abbasid period flourished under the patronage of the court. The poets were usually dependent for their livelihood on the capricious bounty of the Caliphs. Huge sums were paid for a successful panegyric, and the bards vied with each other in flattery of the most extravagant description. Here it may be noted that Abbasids ran their administration of Islamic empire establishing capital at the Persian lands, which gave a golden chance to the Persians for having the official jobs largely at court. In such situations, a goodly number of poets and eminent men of learning had Persian blood in their veins, that an unmistakably new note makes itself heard. In fact, as a poet Mutanabbi was the most illustrious exponent to use the high flown, bombastic, and ornate style in respect of his poetry that marked with a high quality texture in later Muhammadan poetry. The Persian poets like Bashshār ibn. Burd and Abū Nuwās brought a lively and graceful fancy, elegance of diction, depth and tenderness of feeling, and a rich store of ideas into the consistence of the Arabian poetry. The poet Abū al-'Atāhiya had the most perfect expression in his reflective and didactic poetry, while the process of transformation was aided by other causes besides the influx of Persian and Hellenistic culture; and it was triggered by the growing importance of Islam in public life and the diffusion of a strong religious spirit among the community at large. Shortly speaking, every change of many-coloured life is depicted in the brilliant pages of these modern poets, in which we notice the maddest gaiety and the shame-fullest
frivolity; strains of lofty meditation mingled with a world-weary pessimism; delicate sentiment, unforced pathos, and glowing rhetoric; but seldom the manly self-reliance, the wild, invigorating freedom and inimitable freshness of Bedouin song. (26)

Here an attempt has been made to shed light on the factors that led to the development of Abbasid poetry which created new dimensions in the meaning, imagination and styles of poetry and literature in common; they are as follows:

(1) The change of life picture and evaluation of things in the Abbasid dynasty from the visions of the pagan life. The excellence of the Arab in the pagan period is not counted in a glance of those who lived in the Abbasid Period-I that it obtained richness.

(2) The different activities of people and their enormous experiences in the Abbasid period led to the progress of their mundane life, but the life existed on the simplicity in the days of the pagan period.

(3) The spreading of the movement within the early Islamic commonwealth of nations which refused to recognize the privileged position of the Arabs and the criticism of their poetry and meanings.

(4) The influence of the foreign culture, Persian in particular, exerted on the Abbasid poetry and literature. In spite of all these, we are bound to see some of the remnants subject to the ancient poetry like rhymes and meters in Arabic language.

(5) During the Abbasid days except a little period there was a reliance of the poets on the encouragements of caliphs, commanders and the high handed people of the state. In this connection, the cause refers to not having any organized business of books. Likewise, no
publishers were there to have the capacity of publishing books for their benefit. So, every sort of reliance of the poets was on earning their livelihood having been closer to the caliphs and their great patrons that they sought rewards and gifts with their tuning fork of the odes. Therefore, the Abbasid poets were engaged deeply in making eulogy with important poetical characters. It made for the non-Arabs especially the Persians to enter the arena of poets. When the rule of the Abbasid administration was of despotism, there was excess in eulogy, since it was only the way to become closer to the caliphs and other high handed persons of the state.

In addition, it has been observed that the different religious groups like Shi’ite and Mu’tazilite created in the first century of the Hijra, which had progress in the Abbasid period I; poets were defending their patrons and instigating their followers for the resistance of every enmity to overcome the caliphs of that period. In fact, the Mu’tazilite spread their propaganda in the beginning of the Abbasid period and it developed quickly in the period of Mamun; as such, the poets started singing about their sources and activities.\(^{(27)}\)

**Distinguished Poets of the Abbasid period:**

During the Abbasid period a good number of poets flourished with flying colour in the sky in the realm of Arabic poetry; but among them, we may consider five typical poets to bring into account as representative of the Abbasid poets. This view has been supported by R.A. Nicholson who dared to mention their name as follows:
It is imperative to know that the first three were in close touch with the court of the Baghdad, on the other hand, the poet Mutanabbi and Abū al-ʿAlâ al-Maʿarrî flourished under the Hamdânid dynasty that ruled in Aleppo (حلب).

Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās (مطيع بن أياس):

The poet Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās is considered to be the earliest poet of the new school. His father was a native of Palestine, but he himself was born and educated at Kūfa. No doubt, he began his career under the Umayyads, and was devoted to the Caliph Walîd ibn Yazîd, who found in him a fellow after his own heart, accomplished, dissolute, an agreeable companion and excellent wit, reckless in his effrontery and suspected in his religion. When the Abbasid came into power Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās attached himself to the Caliph Manṣūr. Many stories are told of the debauched life which he led in the company of zîndîqs (زنادقة) means freethinkers. In the domain of Arabic literature, his credit goes in the songs of love and wine due to their lightless and elegance. The best known is that in which he laments his separation from the daughter of a Dîhqân and invokes the two palm trees of Ḥulwân, a town located on the borders of the Jîbâl province between Hamadhân and Baghdâd. In fact, there is a proverb
"Faster friends than the two palm-trees of Ḥulwān" arose from his renowned poem. (28)

It is imperative to know that the poet Muṭṭīʿ ibn Iyās died 787 A.D. and he was famous for his debauchery as for his blasphemy. He was skilled in matters of eulogy and lampoon together at the same scale of versification. In fact, he had a pronounced taste for scandal and blasphemy. It would be an exaggeration to claim that he represented a certain aspect of Baghdad society. After all, he is considered as one of the lyric poets of the Abbasid period. (29)

In praise of his credit, we find information that which is available in a website as follows:

(A poet of the two periods: Umayyad and Abbasid, who is full of spirit, dissolute, pleasant intimacy, rare phenomenon of beauty, saucy, accused of freethinkers, in that matter he was alike Bashshar ibn Burd, Ḥammād ‘Ajrād, Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-Quddūs and so on.)

As a poet, he earned great reputation and his verses were felt pleasant by people in common as well as by the great personalities; once his verses were sung before the Caliph Walīd ibn Yazīd, then he asked him who recited the poem: "Who has composed this poem?" The poem singer
informed the Caliph: “This is of Muṭī‘ ibn Iyās”. Here an attempt has been made to focus on his poem as follows:

إكليلها ألوان
ليس لها جيران
كأنها ثعبان

It is known from a source of information that the poet Muṭī‘ ibn Iyās was called upon in the court of the Caliph by a messenger; and accordingly after his arrival, the Caliph Walīd ibn Yazīd sought his vicinity, as soon as the poet Muṭī‘ ibn Iyās came near to the Caliph, he hugged the poet and kissed on his mouth and on the place between the two eyes. In fact, this incident gives witness in favour of his familiarity that spread out far and wide.

It is imperative to know that once the poet Muṭī‘ ibn Iyās sang a poem of his own on the relation that ran between Ja‘far ibn Abī Ja‘far (جعفر بن أبي جعفر) and his maid servant Jauhar (جوهر) as follows:

أما و الله يا جوهر
فلا و الله ما المهدي (م)
فنان شئت ففي كفيك (م)
خليل ابن أبي جعفر(31)

The poet Muṭī‘ ibn Iyās had familiarity among his companions like other poets Ḥammād al-Rāwīyah, Yaḥya ibn Ziyād and Ḥakam al-Wādī, once all of them assembled in a garden at Kufa for drinking and they
called upon the singer Jauhar; they drank wine and became intoxicated. In this connection, the poet Muṭṭī ibn Iyas says as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{و نجعل سقفاً الشجر} & \quad \text{خربنا بمتتلي الزهراً} \\
\text{تخال بكأسها الشررا} & \quad \text{و نشتركنا متعققة} \\
\text{بدارة وجهها القمرنا} & \quad \text{و جوهرا عندنا تتحكي} \\
\text{إذا ما زدته نظرا} & \quad \text{يزيدك وجهها حسنا} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Here mention may be made that the poet Muṭṭī ibn Iyas is regarded as the first heretic one, who avoided to imitate the ancients. His love-odes begin without the customary erotic prelude and his use of light metres give to his poetry naturalness and pathos rarely to be found in his contemporaries who stuck to the past.\(^{(33)}\)

**Abū Nuwās (أبو نواس):**

Ḥasan son of Hāni, son of ‘Abd al-Awwāl al-Ḥakami, received the familiar title of Abū Nuwās (Father of the lock of hair) from two locks which hung down on his shoulders. He was born of humble parents in a village of al-Ahwāz, the capital of Khujistan in the year of 140 A.H. / 762 A.D., and remained in Basra for his upbringing period. Later on he went to Baghdad and settled there up to his last breath that took place in 199 A.H. / 715 A.D. His father was one of the army of Marwān ibn Muhammad, the last caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. When his father died, Abū Nuwās did not find anyone who might support him; then he took shelter to a person Attar by name for working purpose. In fact, he was fond of knowledge of poetry. He found many scholars as his friends; and used to
attend the poetical competition for singing there accordingly. In the meantime, Wālibah son of al-Ḥabbāb heard about Abū Nuwās and his fame in poetry. So, he had an interest to take him home, if he could meet him at any cost. Suddenly it came to pass that Wālibah trod by the ‘Attār in whose house Abū Nuwās was working. Having noticed on him of the intelligence, shrewdness and lively mind, Wālibah said to him: “I saw in you the (poetic) symptoms which you should not destroy; so, take my company I would make you saying poetry.” Of course, the poet Abū Nuwās was also in search of him and desired to go to Kufa for taking the same from him. Accordingly he went to Baghdad along with him and quenched the thirst of his earnest desire for thirty years. In fact, he accompanied there the poets and took lessons from the scholars till he became one of the best poets of his time having overflowing knowledge and awakening name to them. His information reached to Hārūn al-Rashīd who gave him permission to praise him; thereby Abū Nuwās made good communication with him and obtained livelihood provisions from him. He also established relation with the Banu Hashim and their commanders and secretaries in view getting support from them. He said qasīda in their praise that resulted in him to be an administrating official in Egypt. Thereafter, he paid attention to Muḥammad al-Amīn; having his company started drinking and praising him. As the caliph found necessary Abū Nuwās was sent to prison for a period. After his acquittal he died in 199 A.H. / 815 A.D. in Baghdad. (34)

It is imperative to know that as Abū Nuwās received his education at Basrah, therefore he regarded it as his native land and on the other hand, he studied poetry and philology under the learned scholar Khalaf al-Ahmar at Kufa at Kufa. After passing a period among the Arabs
of the desert, he proceeded to Baghdad for rest of his life and remained there till his last breath. (35)

As per his position goes in poetry, Abû Nuwâs was a strong one in language and narrator of poetry and information. The distinguished litterateur al-Jâhîz said about him as follows:

(I have not seen any one to know more in language than Abû Nuwâs; and more eloquent in dialect than him in sweetness and parallel aversion, and he submerged into every chapter of poetry; moreover he made mixture of all poets with obscene jokes, and transparent statement, and truthfulness in making picture of character and situation and his praise of wine song......)

In respect of eulogy, he made compositions a little and most of which complimented to the caliph Hârûn al-Rashîd and his son al-Amîn. In fact, Abû Nuwâs is considered as the second Bashshâr in matters of his purpose of words and meaning. Furthermore al-Jâhîz says about him as follows:
(Bashshār and Abū Nuwās their meaning is same, and the number is of two; Bashshār met natures, so that he did not affect speech or hardship in a poetical action; and Abū Nuwās met natures, so that his poetry reaches the heart without permission.)

It is imperative to know that Abū Nuwās was famous in correction of his qasīda that after composition it was left for one night and then it was brought to rechecking, most of which was shortened for keeping the best part thereof. Therefore, we find most of his qasīda as a short one consisting of delicateness, fun and joke of his words. In fact, it created his poetry excellent style and more extraordinary. Certainly he invented many things in the case of poetry, although it was denied by the intellectuals. In this connection, other poets are supposed to accept some sort of poetical art from him like thoughtlessness in debauchery, elaboration in impudence, and transformation of ghazal from female characters to male characters. No doubt, this method was started by this saucy poet and it was a preparation of crime in literature and a shortcoming to the history of Arab poetry. (36)

It appears from his Dīwān of Abū Nuwās that it contains poems in many different styles like (1) Madīḥ (Panegyric), (2) Hijā’ (Satire), (3) Ṭardiyyāt (songs or the chase), (4) Marāthī (Elegy), and (5) Zuḥdiyyāt (religious poems), but his ghazal (love) and khamriyyāt (wine) poetry were the two motives by which his genius was most brilliantly
inspired. In fact, his khamriyyāt (wine songs) are generally recognized as unique style in Arabic poetry as well. In this connection, we may cite the style of his khamriyyaāt as follows:

1. Thou scolder of the grape and me,
   I never shall win thy smile!
   Because against thee I rebel,
   'Tis churlish to revile.

2. Ah, breathe no more the name of wine
   Until thou cease to blame,
   For fear that thy foul tongue should smirch
   Its fair and lovely name!

3. Come, pour it out, ye gentle boys,
   A vintage ten years old
   That seems as though 'twere in the cup
   A lake of liquid gold.

4. And when the water mingles there,
   To fancy's eye are set
   Pearls over shining pearls close strung
   As in a carcanet.
The poet Abû Nuwâs says more about the wine songs as follows:

 zaman asta' na rooh ehdina feh laftif
hata 'anibat wali rohan feh jessi
ma zalt asta' rooh ehdina feh laftif
walhdna mantrah jemswa blaa rooh

He further says about the drinker as follows:

w mastebel uli esheba bakhera
fi nteba basataba al-sara hadac
w kll sharh roah zene asil (38)
fi nteba basataba al-sara hadac
w kll sharh roah zene asil (38)

As a poet Abû Nuwâs preached his philosophy and hypocrisy at any rate which, according to some scholars, can not be laid to his charge. We find in his poems the moral and religious sentiments which are regarded as the utterance of sincere though transient emotion he had. Usually he felt and avowed that pleasure was the supreme 'business of his life, and those religious scruples could not be permitted to stand in the way. He even urges others not to shrink from any excess, and he says that the Divine mercy is greater than all the sins, committed by human being. In this connection, Abû Nuwâs says as follows:

"Accumulate as many sins thou canst:
The Lord is ready to relax His ire.
When the day comes, forgiveness thou wilt find
Before a mighty King and gracious Sire,
And gnaw thy fingers all that joy regretting
Which thou didst leave thro' terror of hellfire!" (39)
In fine, we need to mention the description (wasf) of Abū Nuwās who says about the world as follows:

ألا كل حي هالك و ابن هالك
إذا امتحن الدنيا لبيب تكشفت
و ذو نسب في الهاكين عريق
له من عدو في ثياب صديق

(Behold! Every living being will die and he is son of destruction, the noble descent is of destroy; if the world examines a wise-man, it discloses him out of enmity in truthful dresses.)

Abū al-ʿAtāhiya (أبو العتاهية):

Abū ʿl-ʿAtāhiya Ismāʿīl ibn Qāsim ibn Suwaid (748 828 A.D.) came of Arab stock belonging to the tribe of ʿAnaza. He was born at ʿAyn al-Tamar, a village located in the ʿHijāz, lived at Kūfā, took his way to Baghdād, when his poetry had already made him a name, and there fell in love with one of Mahdī’s slaves, named ʿUtba. In this connection, it is known that the slave girl did not return his passion or take any notice of the poems in which he celebrated her charms and bewildered the sufferings that she made him endure. He was despaired of winning her love that led him to assume the woolen garb of Muḥammadan ascetics and left writing amatory verses. From then onwards, he devoted his powers exclusively to those joyless meditations on morality which have struck a deep chord in the hearts of his countrymen. In profession, he ran his livelihood as a young man by selling earthenware. That’s why; he was surnamed as Al-Jarrār, “the jar seller”, because he had originally piled that trade. Men used to go
and listen to his verses, and wrote them on the fragments of broken pottery they picked up on the ground.

It is imperative to know that the prominent characteristic of his style is his use of simple expressions which every one can understand, because his poems are sermons in verse on the instability of the things of this world. In this connection, he is the ancestor of that long series of hortatory works which flourish more especially in Persian literature. He avoided all studied forms of expression, so that he might be understood by the populace. In fact, Abū‘l-‘Atāhiya was capable of composition of verses as he wishes and he considers himself as above all prosody. “As a matter of fact he did use certain metres of his own invention, which do not follow the classic rules. (43)

As his poetic talent goes, he was rewarded by the Caliph Mahdī, who richly rewarded him; and Hārūn al- Rashīd afterwards bestowed on him a yearly pension of 50,000 dirhams in addition to numerous extraordinary gifts. (44) In addition to this, he was also rewarded richly by ‘Umar ibn al-‘Alā, Governor of Ṭabaristān, for some verses written in his honour. Here one thing may bring into account that the poet Abū‘l-‘Atāhiya in respect of eulogy used his prelude (nasīb) in few lines only for his beloved and other all lines were devoted to his patrons, while other poets of his times were seen to express their nasīb with about fifty lines for devoting to the celebration of their mistress’ charms. At the point of his death, his desire was expressed in such a way: “When my life closes, the sorrows of the women who weep me will be short. My mistress will cease to think of me. She will forget my love, and will soon find another
lover.” His last desire was that the following words should be inscribed on his tomb: “A life which ends in death is a life filled with bitterness.” (45)

As the intellectual philosophy goes in the life of the Abbasid poet, Abū’l-‘Atāhiya, he was said to have adopted the views of the Greek philosophers, because in his lines he spoke of death, and made no mention of the Resurrection and the Judgment. (46) Although the bulk of his poetry is philosophical in character, there remains much especially Islamic doctrine, in particular as regards the Resurrection and the future life. According to literary historian al-Ṣūlī (d. 946 A.D.), Abū’l-‘Atāhiya believed in One God who formed the universe out of two opposite elements which He created from nothing; and everything would be reduced to these same elements before the final destruction of all phenomena. He believed in the threatened retribution (الوعيد) and in the command to abstain from commerce with the world (تحريم المكاسب). In fact, he professed the opinions of the Zaydites, as that sect of the Shi‘a was named which followed Zayd ibn ‘Alī ibn Husayn ibn ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. In addition to this, the poet Abū’l-‘Atāhiya is said to hold the doctrine of predestination (حُجَر). (47)

In criticism of the poetry of Abū’l-‘Atāhiya, here it may be noted that much of his Diwān is not strictly religious in the Muhammadan sense and may fairly be called ‘philosophical’. This was enough to convict him of infidelity and atheism in the eyes of devout theologians who looked askance on normal teaching that was not cast in the dogmatic mould. The pretended cause of his imprisonment by Hārūn al-Rashīd in matters of that he refused to make any more love songs; it is known as a popular version of the fact that he persisted in writing religious poems were supposed to have a dangerous bias in the direction of freethinking thought.
It appears from the spirit of his poetry that melancholy and pessimism exist in the consistence of his poetry referring to death which comes after death, the frailty and misery of man, the vanity of worldly pleasures and the duty of renouncing them – these are the subjects on which he dwells with monotonous reiteration, exhorting his readers to live the ascetic life and fear God and lay up a store of good works against the Day of Reckoning. His poetic style finds acclamation as it has simplicity, ease and naturalness. In fact, his religious poetry was not read at court or by scholars who demanded rare and obscure expressions. In fact, the poet, Abūl-‘Atāhiya appealed to common feelings and matters of universal experience. In the domain of classical literature, his poetry consists of plain and ordinary language that may be regarded as a distinct mode of style. (48)

The grammarian Al-Aṣmā‘ī said about the poet Abūl-‘Atāhiya: “His lines are like the public square in front of the King’s palace, whereon fall pearls, and gold, and dust, and potsherds, and fruit-kernels.” (إن شعر أبي العتاهية كساحة الملوك ، يقع فيها الجوهر و الذهب و التراب و النوى) In this connection, the poet, Abūl-‘Atāhiya says: “Men lie in apathy, while the mill of Fate grinds on.” In fact, this statement of Abūl-‘Atāhiya has been regarded as his masterpiece. (49) It has been observed that Abūl-‘Atāhiya could compose poetry without pain-taking trial and whenever he spoke anything expressed in the rhyming form, people might deem his speech as prose, but in reality that was of poetry. In this connection, Abūl-‘Atāhiya says as follows:

((لو شئت أن أجعل كلامي كله شعرا لفعلت )) (50)
(If I would desire to make my speech, I would have turned all into poetry.)

Here an attempt has been made to shed light on the style of poetry of Abū’l-‘Atāhiya, who says about his beloved ‘Utbah as follows:

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In fine, it has been noticed that Abū’l-‘Atāhiya’s reputation spread far and wide as and when his poems were sung by the singers and thereby the ascetics exchanged ideas, and by all people irrespective of their different classes. In fact, the scholars and the transmitters paid heed to have collection of his poetry; his livelihood continued to the period of Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Amīn and al-Ma’mūn. Abū’l-‘Atāhiya found little favour with his contemporaries, who seem to have regarded him as a miserly hypocrite. He died, an aged man, in the Caliphate of Ma’mūn in the year of 211 A.H.

(51)

Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbi (أبو الطيب المتنبي):

Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad al-Ḥusayn (915 – 965 A.D.) was born and bred at Kūfa, where his father is said to have been a water-carrier. As the custom prevailed there, he went to Syria and studied at Damascus; during which he was able to visit other towns of Syria. Having a research based mind, he passed much of his time among the Bedouins; thereby he
learnt the usage of appropriate terms of Arabic language, of which testimony finds in his poems accordingly. As such, he flourished as one of the famous Abbasid poets. He died at the village Kinda in Kufa.

He was surnamed as Mutanabbi and became famous over the Arab world; in fact, there lies an account about his surname as follows: As a young man, he fancied himself a prophet, founded a new religion in the plains round the little town of Samâwa on the Euphrates, received revelations after the manner of the Qur’ân, and collected a few followers about him. But in a very short space of time he was overthrown by Lu’lu’, the Ikhshidite general in command at Ḥimṣ, and was cast into prison. Under such circumstances, he was surnamed as al-Mutanabbi means pretender to the prophecy. In fact, his prison, which did not open its doors till he had acknowledged the true Faith, revealed his poetic gift to him.

As and when Mutanabbi was released from his prison, he wandered to and fro chanting the praises of all and sundry, until fortune guided him to the court of Sayf al-Dawla at Aleppo in 337 A.H. There he stood high position in the favour of the cultured prince for a period of nine years long from 948 to 957 A.D.; Mutanabbi sang virtues of Sayf al-Dawla in a series of splendid eulogies, and with whom he lived as an intimate friend and comrade in arms.

Mutanabbi had a dispute with the Persian philologist, Khālawaih, of Susaina, who so far lost his self-control as to strike his adversary in the face with a key, the Mutanabbi quitted Aleppo and offered his services to foes of the Hamdanić dynasty, Kâfûr, a negro eunuch, and Anûjûr, both of them ministers of the Ikhshidite princes, who had made
themselves independent in Egypt. But this attempt ended in disappointment, and Mutanabbi, in a rage, fled to Baghdad, where the real ruler was the Vizier Al-Muhallabi, who would fain have been the object of the illustrious poet’s praise. But this honour the poet would not grant him, and so departed to Shirâz in Persia. On the other hand, the Buwaihid ruler ‘Aḥdud al-Dawla heaped generous rewards upon him. On his way back, from Persia, Mutanabbi fell amongst a marauding band of Bedouins, and was killed, not far from Baghdad in 965 A.D. (55)

In appreciation to this great poet of Arabic language, Ahmad Husain al-Zayyât gives opinion about the poet Mutanabbi as follows:

"Mutanabbi is one of the good poets, who brought a relation between poetry and philosophy and gave more carefulness to the rhetorical aspect of poetry, made poetry free from the knots of the bonds done by Abû Tammâm and his group as well, while they were the followers of the Arab
styles. In fact, he is an exponent to the innovative method in Arabic poetry. He made over-flown his poetry with admonitions and parables, having specialty to the uniqueness in describing war, amatory verses of the Bedouins, excellence of simile, forwarding of portrayal in one couplet, beautiful freedom, healthy division, depositing eulogy, attacking satire, as Mutanabbi characterizes, made specialty of the prominent personality in his poetry, his faith showed his opinion truth, power of his self reliance, his correct expression about the nature of soul, business of people, desires of the hearts, reality of the existence, and the objectives of life, for which his poetry was helpful to every period for every writer, and as for example, every orator.”

Moreover, this historian Clement Huart is of the opinion about the poet al-Mutanabbi as follows: “Mutanabbi’s poems have been inordinately praised and criticized, both in the Arab and the European world. Qāḍī Abū’l-Ḥasan boasted that he kept the golden mean between the poet’s admirers, who preferred him to every other of his time, and set him above all his rivals, and his detractors, who declared his dissertations to be empty chatter and his expressions mere barbarisms.” In fact, the author of the book (نَيْقَةَ الْدُّهْرَ), al-Tha‘labî says that regarding him the division of opinion gives an evident proof of his merit and superiority in the realm of Arabic poetry. He also praised his skill in such a way that “Rhythm is subject to his will, and thoughts are his slaves.” Avarice was the only vice with which he could be taxed. His moral conduct stood out in remarkable contrast to the looseness and debauchery of the life at the court of Saif al-Dawla. (57) In this connection, we may mention the following couplets of Mutanabbi who sang it after the demise of the mother of Saif al-Dawla,
because she loved the poet very much and offered assistance to him at large scale:

(Your share in your life is from your friend and your share in your dream is of imagination.
The vicissitudes of the difficulties have thrown lances into my heart, which is like the bow of an archer.
When I am affected with the arrows; I have been in a position that (my) spearheads have been broken.
That has discouraged (me), but I do not care of difficulties, certainly whatever came for benefit to me, I do not care.)

It is imperative to know that the poet Mutanabbi was regarded by his country men as one of the greatest of the Arabian poets, while not a few would maintain that he ranks absolutely first. According to the Europeans Canons of taste Mutanabbi stands immeasurably below the famous Pre-Islamic bards, and in a later age must yield the palm to Abū Nuwās and Abū al-ʿAtāhiyah. As the term poetry is understood in Europe, poetry lovers cannot derive much aesthetic pleasure from his writings, but, on the contrary, will be disgusted by the beauties hardly less than by the faults which Arabian critics attribute to him. (59)
Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī (أبو العلاء العری):

He was one of the distinguished poets of the Abbasid period. Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sulaimān al-Tanūkhī al-Ma‘arrī, known as Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī in the history of Arabic literature, was born in 973 A.D. at Ma‘arra. His lineage related to the tribe Tanūkh of Yemen. In fact, he lost eye sight at a very early age, but it did not deter him from the pursuit of literature. In search of knowledge he travelled from place to place of his birth of Baghdad, where he spent a few months in attending the lectures of the different Professors at the Academy of that city. There from he returned to his birth place. In his life he had to face many difficulties. He died at Ma‘arra in 1057 A.D. (60)

Here mention may be made that The life and achievements of Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī along with few other blind poets of Abbasid poets namely Bashshār bin Burd (714 – 784 AD), Ali Ibn Jabala (d. 776 – 828 A.D.), Ibn al-Ta‘āwīdhi (Abū‘l- Faḥ Muḥammad, 1125 A.D. – 1188 A.D), and Jamāl al-Dīn Yaḥyā Ibn Maṭruḥ (June 8, 1196 - October 19, 1251 A.D.); their literary credits will be discussed in the following chapter in accordance with the methodology of this research work.

In addition to the above mentioned discussion, we find few more poets; their credits have been brought to notice as follows:
Al-Buṭṭūrī (البختري):

The poet Buṭṭūrī flourished in the ninth century; and his reputation goes as that of the poets who were patronized as court poets like Abū Tammām, Mutanabbī and so on. In fact, Buṭṭūrī’s poems were compiled under the title of *Hamāṣa* like that of the anthology of Abū Tammām.

Abū ʿIbādah al-Walīd al- Buṭṭūrī al-Qaḍānī belonged to Ṭaʿī tribe was born at Manbij in 820 A.D. He travelled to Baghdad, where he long lived; being as a court poet he sang eulogy for Mutawakkil and his courtiers, and for the heads of his civil administration. He died in 897 A.D., either at his native town or at Aleppo. It appears from the characteristic of his poetry that he followed ancient style; he often mentioned Aleppo and the surrounding plain, for that country had grown dear to him. In fact, an amount of pension of four thousand *dirhems* was sanctioned for him with the recommendation of Abū Tammām, while he found him as a genuine inborn poet. The Abū al-ʿAlā al-Maʿarrī also considered Buṭṭūrī as a genuine poet. Al- Buṭṭūrī was very avaricious, wore dirty garments, and starved the brother and the servant who lived with him. He left very few satires behind him. His son relatec that his father charged him on his deathbed to burn everything he had written in anger, or with a desire for revenge, so as to save his descendants from any inconvenience caused by other men’s resentment. In spite of the endeavour that he did for making traceless of his satires, we find some of his satirical fragments, which were deemed inferior by Abū al-Faraj al-Īṣfahānī. (61)

About al- Buṭṭūrī Dr. Ḥasan Ibrahīm Ḥasan says as follows:
(Certainly he witnessed the great poets with high position in poetry, and al-Buḥturi recited poetry before his teacher, Abū Tammām, then he said to him: “You have done well after me.” It was said to al-Buḥturi: “Which one of you and Abū Tammām better in poetry?” Then he said: “His excellence is better than my excellence, and my badness is better than his badness.” It was said for the poetry of al-Buḥturi as a chain of gold, and he belonged to the first category of poets. It was said to Abū al-‘Alā al-Ma‘arrī who is the better poets among the three poets: Abū Tammām, or al-Buḥturi or al-Mutanabbi? Then he said: “Al-Mutanabbi and Abū Tammām are of the philosopher poets, while al-Buḥturi is of the poets.)

Here an attempt has been made to shed light on the poetry of al-Buḥturi who eulogized the caliph: al-Mutawakkil in his better form of qasīda and praised his procession on the day of ‘Id al-Fiṭr as follows:

الله مَكَّن لِلخِلیفَةِ جعفر فانعم بِيِّمَومٍ الفَطَر عِيناً إِنِّه
ملكيخسِنِهِ الخِلیفَة جعفر
يَوْمٌ أَوْغِرٌ مِنَ الزَّمان مُشْهَدٍ
Ibn al-Rūmī (ابن الرومي):

Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-‘Abbās known as Ibn al-Rūmī, “son of the Greek” a surname he owed to his grandfather, Juraij, or George, was born at Baghdad in 836 A.D. In fact, he was one of the famous poets of the Abbasid period. His excellence goes in creating meaning and ideas in his long poetry. He lived at Baghdad for a long period of his life and did not leave it for a while. It is known that once he travelled to Sāmrā, but he was nostalgic for Baghdad, of which testimony appears in his verses as follows:

(A city where I accompanied the youth and the childhood age, I put on the dress of life, which is new.
When it appears in my heart, here I see the branches of the youth that extends.)

It is known that Ibn al-Rūmī was not of Arab in origin, his mother was of Persian and his father was of Greek origin; in fact, this information appears in his verses as follows:
(How can I close my eyes for disgrace, while Persia is of my maternal uncles and Greek is of my paternal uncles?)

Here it may be noted that Ibn al-Rûmî was influenced by the Greek philosophy, in fact, he dared to indicate this matter in his poems, recorded by al-Masûdî in his Murûj al-Dhahab.

Regarding the poetic merit of Ibn al-Rûmî, Ibn Khalîkân mentions as follows:

(He belongs to wonderful poem, extraordinary production, submerges into the rare meaning, then he brings them out from their place, scintillates them in the best form of picture, does not leave the meaning until and unless fulfills to the last one, there remains no any thing as rest.)

The death of his wife and three sons exerted greatly infliction on his life, and he did not merry. In this connection, we find his elegy as an excellent masterpiece work in the domain of Arabic poetry literature. In fact, his elegy qasîda composed for his middle son, has been considered as a treasury of passions that a father sang for his beloved son. Here an
attempt has been made to shed light on the elegy of the poet Ibn al-Rūmī as follows:

It is imperative to know that we find the political and historical account in the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī, while his qasida speaks of the influence caused by the Negro authority that made a military occupation over the city of Basra. In fact, his qasida consists of happenings leading to the destruction of the important historical sources under the Negro movement for which the Abbasid administration was engaged for fifteen years long from 255 to 270 A.H. Here an attempt has been made to highlight thereupon with the poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī as follows:
It has been informed that Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 897 A.D.) was poisoned by Abūʾl-Ḥusain Qāsim ibn ‘Ubaid Allāh, Caliph Mu’tadid’s vizier, who dreaded his satires. The minister suborned a servant, who served the poet with a poisoned biscuit. When Ibn al-Rūmī had eaten it, he perceived he had been poisoned, and rose to depart. “Where are you going?” said the minister. “Whither you have sent me.” “Very good,” replied the vizier. “Present my duty to my father.” “I am not my road to hell!” answered the poet, who forthwith retired to his own house, sent for a physician, who is said to have used the wrong drugs, so that the patient died within a few days. (65)

Alongside, here it may be added that as and when Ibn al-Rūmī was asked about his ailment by Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Arafa al-Azādī, then the poet said as follows:

(The physician committed wrong to me with a wrong supply (of drugs); his supplies were unable from export. While the people deemed the physician to be an intelligent, but the wrong of the physician inflicted the measure of treatment.)
Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī al-Khuzaʿī:

Amongst Semitic extraction of the Arab poets who flourished at Baghdad, we find another poet namely Diʿbil ibn al-Khuzaʿī (765 – 860 A.D.). He was born either at Kūfa or at Karkīsiya (Circesium). For some time he discharged administrative functions as governor of a small town in Tūkhāristān, in North-Western Persia. He died in Babylonia. As a poet his fame goes a satirist, in addition, he collected information about the life of other poets and prepared a volume of biographies thereof. He had a spiteful tongue which spared no one, not even the Caliphs. As a result of which, he was in a constant condition of flight and concealment. He wrote his satires beforehand. The position of the poet Diʿbil ibn al-Khuzaʿī may be judged with the preference of al-Buḥṭurī who considered his language as superior one as to the taste of the Arabs in the realm of Arabic literature. (67)

Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī (أبو فراس الحمداني):

Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī was of the princely family, and the cousin of Saīf al-Dawla. He was born in al-Munbij in 932 A.D. Saīf al-Dawla appointed him governor of the town of Manbij, and had him with him all through his wars with the Domesticus, general in-chief of the Roman troops in Asia. In fact, Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī was of different tempers, and worked accordingly in different capacities as well. He was made prisoner in 959 A.D., when the fortress he commanded fell, was conveyed to Constantinople, and there remained till he was set at liberty in 965 A.D. During this captivity he wrote many elegies addressed to various members of his family. When Saīf al-Dawla died, in 967 A.D., Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī claimed the sovereignty of Ḥimṣ (حمص), a city in central Syria.
But his claim came in vain; troops were sent against him and perished accordingly by the son of Saif al-Dawla. It is a matter of fact that Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī’s contribution to the field of poetry is a remarkable aspect in the domain of Arabic poetry literature, because of its devoid of any pedantic affection, expressed in noble and elevated language. His poems form a diary of his eventful life. 

As a poet, Abū Firās al-Ḥamdānī was a generous and pleasant with his poetry; sang poems of pride regarding his originality and tribe, and disinclined to drinking and impudence, and having been aloof from such type of characters, he says as follows

\[
	ext{لنّ حلّق الأنانم حسمو كأس} \\
	ext{لمّ أو لبأس أو لجمود} \\
\]

‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mu‘tazz (عبد الله بن المعتر)

The son Caliph al-Mu‘tazz, ‘Abd Allāh (863 – 909 A.D.) was seen to dabble in poetry and led the unfettered existence of a poet and man of learning under the reign of Al-Mu‘tāṣid. He was born in 863 A.D. in the house of the king and caliphate; and obtained nourishment in the space of comfort of life. He grew up with noble heart, minute and strong feelings inclining to beauty, fond of literature and music. He was educated by the distinguished litterateurs of that contemporary period like al-Mubarrad and Tha‘lab and he used to participated in the classes of traditional and rational sciences. After the death of that Caliph, he was mixed up in the court intrigues. The party which was discontented with the policy of Muqtadir,
who was ruled by women and eunuchs, chose ‘Abdallah to be Caliph, under the title of Al-Murtadî (December 17, 908 A.D.). But the reigning Caliph’s guard overcame ‘Abdallah’s partisans. His sovereignty lasted one day only. He fled to the house of a jeweler, but was soon discovered and strangled (29th December) by the Caliph’s chamberlain and treasurer, Mu‘nis, a eunuch. In fact, it reveals from the characteristic of his poetry that his poems may be compared with that of Abû Nuwas, contained no imitation of the ancient styles. He composed charming little occasional poems, full of aristocratic grace. Besides this, he took an interest in literature, and was the author of the first great Arabic work on rhetoric entitled Kitâl al-Bâdi‘ (كتاب البديع). In fact, he formulated the rule for healthy rhetoric in the following dictum: “Eloquence is the accurate expression of ideas, in few words.”(71)

As a poet, he made usages of language in simple way and easy touch of understanding, clear and appropriate words with rhetorical approach. He composed poems to have satisfaction for himself, having portrayal of feelings, and was aloof from false eulogy and low minded satire; he inclined to describe the nature, people seating, chasing after fishing and corresponding to the brotherhood. Here an attempt has been made to shed light on his style of poetry as follows:

كَنْ جَاهِلًا أَوْ فَتْحَاهِلْ تَفْزِر
لِلْجَهَلِ فِي ذَا الْدُّهْرِ جَاهِضٌ
كَمَا تَرَى الْوَارِثَ عِينَ المَرِيضٍ
وَالْعَقَلِ مُحِيْمَةَ يُرُى مَا يَسَرُّ
The poet says more as follows:

و لقد قضت نفسي مآريها
و غار شيب الرأس يوقظ من قد كان في ليل الشباب رقد

(72)

Al-Sharīf al-Rādiy (الشيريف الرضي):

Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusain al-Mūsūwī (970 – 1013 A.D.) was born at Baghdad and brought up there in the lap of his father. He obtained learning in childhood, and became expert in al-fiqh and al-farā’id; having skilled in knowledge and literature. In fact, he was capable of composing poem even at his age of 10 years only. When he attained 29 years of his age followed his father in respect of the student union in 388 A.H.; and then for all other unions after his father.

In fact, he continued his activities of the various unions till his accusation made by the Fatimid upper hands in Egypt, for which he was bound to leave them. After that he led his life with noble forbearance. He died in 404 A.H. / 1013 A.D. and was buried at his abode.

As for his character is concerned, Al-Sharīf al-Rādiy was lofty-minded and high spirited, strong resolution and free from any greed shown by others even in great relation and obtaining prizes. His chastity in multifarious characters of life made him aloof from keeping relations with the kings and commanders as well. In this connection, we may cite the endeavour of the Buwaihid that they tried their level best to bring him to their terms.
As for his poetry is concerned, he followed the earlier poets’ styles in respect of selecting pure words and brilliant ideas in the consistence of his poetry. In fact, his poetry may be compared with that of al-Buṭṭurī; only there is exception in case of his *fakhr* and *hamasa*, having been free from childlike jokes and impudence. In matters of rhetorical usage of language, he had great hand and reputation just after the Holy Qur’ān and the Noble Hadith.

As a writer, he had contributions to the field if the Qur’ānic commentaries, grammar, language, and religious principles. He wrote a book on the miracles of the Qur’ān. His essays were compiled and poems were brought to preservation in a Dīwān; he also compiled the book entitled Nahj al-Balāgha of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

Here an attempt has been made to show his style of poetry as follows:

الله يوم اطلعتك به العلا
لما سمت بك عزة موموقة
والشمس تبهر بالضياء وتومق
وبرزت في بر النبي وللهدى
نور على أسرار وجهك مشرق
وكان دارك جنة حسباؤها الجا

(73)
Al-‘Amîd Abû Ismâ‘îl al-Ḥusain ibn ‘Alî (1063 – 1120 A.D.) was of Persian descent and a native of Iṣfahān. He is known as al-Ṭughrā‘î in the history of Arabic literature due to his first profession of chancellor. He held the office of kātib (secretary) under the great Seljuq Sultans, Malikshâh and Muḥammad, and afterwards became Vizier to the Seljuqid prince Ghiyâth al-Dîn Mas‘ûd in Mosul. He derived the title by which he is generally known from the royal signature (tughrâ) which it was duty to indite on all State papers over the initial Bismillâh. (74)

His bad time came with the war that broke out between the Sultan Mas‘ûd and his brother al-Sultan Mahmud in the vicinity of Hamdhan. Due to his assistance for one of them caused his imprisonment. The minister Niẓâm al-Dîn emphasized the Sultan to kill al-Ṭughrâ‘î and then accordingly he was killed with a great oppression in 513 A.H.

As for his poetry is concerned, he was one of the great poets of the Abbasid period, his fame rests on the characteristic of fakhr (glorification) and hikma (gnomic) verses. He had a great Dîwân of poetry, most of which were sung in praise of the Sultan Sa‘îd ibn Malik Shâh and Niẓâm al-Malik. His poem Lâmiyyatu‘-l-‘Ajam (لامية العجم) is considered as the best of his poetry. It was chosen by the great poets and compilers. In this poem he lamented at Baghdad on the time and made complain to the brothers during the period remaining from actions. Here an attempt has been made show his style of that very poem as follows:
Abū Tammām (أبو تمام):

Habīb Ibn Abī Aus, al-Ṭāʾi, surnamed Abū Tammām (804 – 846 A.D.) was born at a village Jāsim, one of the circles of Damascus. His father left for Damascus where he was engaged in the profession of weaving works, and Abū Tammām also helped in the service of his father. As he grew youth departed to Egypt getting engaged in supplying water for the ‘Amar Mosque and for the scholars thereof. Alongside, there he started getting poetry by heart; and imitated the other poets as well. As he earned mastery on the poetry, no one of his contemporaries could compete with him. His poetry was displayed in the markets of literature around the country. He left Egypt for the houses of nobles and sought gracious patronage. In fact, the literature and praise lovers accepted him and no one remained except him to earn dirhems with poetry in his life. Then he had a connection with Aḥmad ibn al-Muʿtasim and praised him. As a result of which he was awarded to run the postal department at Mosul. In fact, he ran it two years long, and then he took the course his earlier life till fulfilling the forty of his age.

Abū Tammām was a tall figured man having brown colour in body. He was eloquent in speech, and intelligent in nature, keeping presence of mind and strong memory. He kept 14000 poems of razaj metre in memory except qasidas and fragments.
In fact, the credit of Abū Tammâm goes with his compilation of Ḥamāsa. Towards the end of his life he visited ‘Abdullāh ibn Ṭāhir, the powerful governor of Khurāsān, who was virtually an independent sovereign. As Abū Tammâm was on his journey to arrive at Hamadhkān, the winter had set in, and as the cold was excessively severe in that country, the snow blocked up the road and obliged him to stop and await the thaw. Here during his stay he resided with one of the most eminent men of the place, who possessed a liberty in which were some collections of poems composed by the Arabs of the desert and other authors. In fact, he selected many poems of the poets belonged to the periods from the pre-Islamic to Islamic and this compilation was entitled as Ḥamāsah. The collection of this anthology is so called from the title of its first chapter Ḥamasah. It contains poems descriptive of constancy and valour in battle, patient endurance of calamity, steadfastness in seeking vengeance, mindfulness under reproach and temptation, all which qualities make up the attribute called by the Arabs (حماسة). It consists of ten chapters (ابواب), containing in all 884 poems or fragments of poems. (77)

Here an attempt has been made to show his style of poetry as follows:

\[
\text{نقل فؤادك حيث شنت من الهوى ما الحب إلا للحبيب الأول} \\
\text{كم منزل في الأرض يلفظه الفقى و حنينه أبدا لأول منزل} \quad (78)
\]

In fine, we have noticed that a good number of poets and their poetry have touched the towering position in the realm of Arabic literature.
Undoubtedly their works and diwan of poetry have the modern approach as compared to the earlier works and their position of Arabic poetry. Many critics dared to opine on the Abbasid poetry as of the new poetry. According to the methodology of this research work, we would mention a few blind poets who flourished in the Abbasid period and highlight their credits as required in the respective chapters as well.

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