

## Khavaran Nameh Poetic Causes and the Circumstances in which it was Composed

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### Abstract

*Khavaran Nameh is a religious epic composed by Ibn Hossam Khosfi, committed and able ninth century AH poet. The heart of this epic is the struggle between good and evil (Islam and disbelief) in which Imam Ali (AS) heroism leads to overcome evil in the battle field. The course of development of the national epic and heroic in the early centuries until the advent of religious epics and Khavaran Nameh poetic causes and the circumstances in which it was composed shows that in the ninth century AH, according to the political and social situation there was no words of ethnic and national issues and the religion and religious trends prevails; however, still special attention paid to the Shahnameh and Shahnameh composition in this course of history; such is Ibn Hossam Khosfi, based on society's needs, made decision to create a religious epic and due to familiarity and devotion to the great epic work by Ferdowsi, Shahnameh, created his beautiful epic poem based on Shahnameh style.*

**Keywords:** Ibn Hossam Khosfi, Khavaran Nameh, Epic, Shahnameh

### 1. Introduction

One of the world famous epics is "Shahnameh" by Ferdowsi. This eternal work has been imitated by many poets for long for its unique features, especially in the ninth century, AH (fifteen AD) when Baysunqar Mirza tried hard in collecting and correcting "Shahnameh" and ordered to be improved according to the old versions. The attention and encouragement attracted the period poet's attention to epic composing on the style of "Shahnameh". Thus, dozens of epics on the style of "Shahnameh" came into the field of literature in this period. Epics such as "Bagman Nameh" Azeri "Tamer Nameh" or (Teimor Nameh or Zafr Nameh) and "Shahnameh" by Mulana Hatefi Kharjerdi, "Ghasemi Shahnameh" and "Navab All Shahnameh" by Mirza Qasim Gonabadi, "Khavaran Nameh" religious epic by Ibn Hossam Khosfi and...

Ibn Hossam Khosfi is of ninth century AH (875-782 AD) poets with great affection and interest in Ferdowsi, Shahnameh, and has made this masterpiece as his pattern and emulated it to compose "Khavaran Nameh".

Ibn Hossam has composed "Khavaran Nameh" in Ferdowsi style. The relatively long epic of 22,500 verses is the most important very well composed and best imitation of Ferdowsi's masterpiece. Epic theme is battles of Imam Ali (AS) and Malek Ashtar, Abulmahjan, Saad and other his followers with brutal kings such as Ghatar, Qobad, and idolatry kings as Tahmas, Salsal and fight with monsters, and dragons.

This article discusses Khavaran Nameh poetic causes and the circumstances in which it was composed.

### 2. Structure, Composition and Content of Khavaran Nameh

This artwork consists of a comprehensive introduction of several stories about wars and brevity of Ali (AS) and his companions, that these stories can be, divided in five as follows:

- 1- Story of Khavaran Land
- 2- Story of Champion Land
- 3- Story of Shore Land
- 4- Story of Qam Land
- 5- Story of Zarrin city

The core of Khavaran Nameh, like other epics, is the struggle between good and evil. In this fight figures such as Ali, Malek Ashtar, Qanbar, Abulmahjan, Saad al-Waqqas, Amr Umayya, Mir Sayaf are in good front and Ghatar, Navader, Jamshid, Shahriyar ibn Nahid Shah, Tahmas, Salsal and monsters and dragons and witches are in evil front.

Khavaran Nameh is of religious epic kind, artifact of historical events and traditions that Ibn Hossam composed based on oral and written history and traditions to imitate Shahnameh in compliance with the rules governing the epic and

poetic creativity and imagination.

This epic has a high status in the religious epic works of its kind. Herman atheist had admired Ibn Hossam for the composition of this poem (Atheist, 1977: 55). Mohammad Jafar Yahaghi in this regard believes that "Khavaran Nameh long epic resembles the national epic of "Ostad Tus" among religious epics (Yahaghi, 1999: 8). It is better to know why and how such an epic poetry brought into existence in the ninth century, AH.

### **3. Khavaran Nameh Poetic Causes and the Circumstances in which it was Composed**

If we study the epic growth and development that is since early medieval heroic and national epics until the rise of religious epics as the causes of poetic works such as Khavaran Nameh, we can see a type and theme of the saga emerged depending on the social, cultural and political system, or sometimes there were not any ground for art creation, as the beginning of the Umayyad period since political and social conditions were not allow the creation of a national epic in Iran. But after this period, with the rise of Abbasids, Iranian gained a better situation for the national epic creation. In the course of epic creation, Avesta was born in as the first national and heroic work, later emerged Pahlavi literature in various fields, religious books and historical works such as "Yadegar Zar Iran", "Bandheshen", "Ardivirafnameh", and "Khodaynameh". These works also became high and stable grounds for heroic works in later periods such as Ferdowsi's Shahnameh mastery of Persian literature.

We know that: "a huge movement happened in the late third century in Khorasan to collect ancient traditions and the writing and editing of Iran history and some Shahnameh were emerged, even the idea of setting this epic came to minds and Masoudi Marvazi was the first and then Daqiqi and eventually Ferdowsi composed old traditions in poems and until the late fifth and early sixth century, AH, a large part of the ancient traditions were composed and what has been started was almost finished" (Safa, 1999: 167). Since the end of the third century to the late eighth century, the stars shone in various fields of poetry and literature whether in the field of epic arts or in other areas, so that at this glorious time, great figures such as Ferdowsi, Nezami, Saadi, Rumi, Hafiz and others emerged. After the Mongol invasion and destruction of scientific centers, libraries and cultural destruction and burning of the precious scientific heritage, there was no ground for the emergence of other writers and artists, and although literature was a weakness, but Iran knowledge and science did not fade, and the trend continued this time again different from the past.

Ibn Hossam Khosfi, the ninth century, AH poet (782-875 AH.) coincided with the Timurid government in Iran. Ninth century or Timurid period in Iranian history, is a very eventful time, just when the witness of history "still was not healed the injuries of the Mongol invasions, Timur attacked Iran in Transoxiana" (Haqiqat, 1982: 371). This period, especially during the reign of Timur, who always thought of invasion and conquer a place, had been one of the hardest periods politically and culturally. Any researcher who stepped in introducing, first talked of instability and distress of the time, so that Saeed Anvari in the introduction of Khavaran Nameh says, "thirty-year period of Timurid reign was the period of terror and disruption in Iran, and in most cities, affairs failed and many people lost their lives (Khosfi, 1991: 366). We know that after the Mongol invasions the two main pillars of the country's national life and culture had reached its ultimate weakness (Bayani, 1991: 366), this means that when the country was at verge of overcoming political and cultural problems, another distress was imposed on Iran.

Timur, have invaded Iran several times and each time caused many destruction and losses of life since 782 AH until his death at 808 AH; even according to historians, "he ordered to place nearly two thousand rebels inside wall of the tower and buried them alive" (Haqiqat, 1982: 359); and after his death, Timurid princes were in such disputes and conflicts to gain power for years. We, browsing history books and examine reflects on the pages of the ninth century, discern that this difficult and adventurous period was a landmark in the literature and culture of Iran. Much evidence is that great attention was paid to science, literature and art in the Timurid time, (especially Shahrokh). Abdul Hossein Navaee in his book titled "Iran and the world" about Timor, writes: "We must not imagine that Timur was completely ignorant of science and art, but he had great interest in scholars and scientific meetings,... whenever he conquered a land, he would celebrate scientists and artists with grace" (Navaee, 2008: 83), and a further evidence of the book "History of the Timurid period" reads: "there was significant progress, especially culturally and in the field of arts and thought during the reign of Shahrokh" (Azhand, 2000: 114). Persian poetry and literature nurtured and flourished due to Shahrokh interest in arts and literature despite the ravages of internal conflict regaining its position and the creation of literary and arts works, Shamisa says: "Epic of every nation expresses the aspirations of the nation and narrates the nation's efforts in the dignity and independence for future generations" (Shamisa, 1996: 47).

In this period, speaking of the situation of the old days and drawing ancient people and other national championship issues and to address the national ancient myths has no place in people's minds. Now, people require new

ideals, and this demands for new other epic and heroic myths of other kind, the new poet and artist who can be powerful and with the Ferdowsi same mission, to be the voice of the people to the revival of Iranian culture as whatever Rustam did.

Safa also, about the evolution of the epic in this period of time (ninth century), believes that "in this period despite successive failures of Iranian at hands of Mongoloid and Chagatai Turkish government .... No one could speak of national epics in the presence of such passions and the attention paid by some interested groups to the poetics former masters, especially Ferdowsi may be considered as a great gift, but on the contrary, the epic challenge in the description of people rebellion and great religious figures was common among poets (Safa, 1993: 189). Thus, under such conditions that the Epic, wore other clothing coated with a different color to complete the heavy mission, the preservation of culture and nationality, as a robe to wear and an operation according to their dignity and independence for future generations. But to what extent has succeeded in this, it is another matter. Vaezi, Iranian scholar and researcher, writes about Khavaran Nameh poetic causes and the circumstances in which it was composed: "Ibn Hossam lives at a time when national epics have no place. Iranian national epic had reached the peak of perfection by Ferdowsi and social situation in the ninth century in such a way that there is no incentive to engage in national epic, but all are available for creating religious epics, because the ninth century cultural, political and social condition is such that people should take refuge from the calamities of the time to sacred and religious beliefs and what can alleviate confusion and reduce the time tension is to strengthen piety and religious beliefs. Ibn Hossam follows the path to salvation and calls others to it with religious epic Khavaran Nameh, dealing with religious themes (Vaezi, 1999: 102).

It should be said, though in this period, there is no speak of national and ethnic issues and religious tendencies prevail over national interests, this does not mean that the two are separated from each other and against each other, but both as a mind in two bodies as are required by the situation of time to manifest differently, with the explanation that in Ferdowsi Shahnameh, according to the conditions, national issues are highlighted and most of the issues are on the Iranian national problems in different periods, but religious issues, doctrinal and moral theology, including the creation of the world and man, good and evil, and so are no pale and are with attention paid to. Khavaran Nameh is the same, it is though a religious epic and selects religious hero instead of national hero, both the Heroes are not against each other and both pursue a single purpose and that purpose is only being against evil and completely destroying it.

Mohammad Behnamfar, after analyzing the relationship between these two epics concluded: "Khavaran Nameh is not composed in contrast to Shahnameh, but to continue the same way and with the epic mission that had begun centuries ago by Ferdowsi, and Ibn Hossam did in the ninth century the same that was done by Ferdowsi in the fourth century to revive Iranian culture and identity... so as Ferdowsi attempts to restore Iranian national epic but his total devotion to the Prophet (PBUH) and Imam Ali (AS) in every parts of Shahnameh shows that Ibn Hossam built on religious epic in different circumstances in which it was composed, in which Ferdowsi and Rostam's have great places." He knows both goals the same, and says, "Both are a side of a coin and show national culture in the face of both national and religious ideal hero" (Behnamfar, 2007:182).

#### 4. Khavaran Nameh Poetic Causes And The Circumstances in which it was Composed by Ibn Hossam

Ibn Hossam, has spoken in detail at the beginning of Khavaran Nameh after, pray to God and praise of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), to express themselves and Khavaran Nameh poetic causes and the circumstances in which it was composed: "on a night of nights, worried, thinking, the world is not a permanent for anyone, and he says to himself, it is better to write a story of "ancient" and share its legacy, "in such a way that makes the old young/the mind freshens as well as the psyche". This grateful poet, recall Ferdowsi and the value of his work in the beginning of the speech, and: Ferdowsi Pak Zad ke rahmat bar an torbat-e pak bad

<i>Bepardakht an name-e namdar</i>	<i>vazo mand ta javedan yadegar</i>
<i>Sokhan ra bolandi ze goftare ost</i>	<i>sokhan ra shoar andar ashare ost</i>
<i>Bar o khatm shod goftane masnavi</i>	<i>azo beh nagoyad kasi Pahlavi</i>

(Khosfi, 2007: 32)

As Ferdowsi are at Heaven for composing this verse "Jahan ra bolandi o pasti toee/ Hame nistand anche hasti toee," I perhaps can say a point that is accepted, but hesitated a moment, and said:

<i>Che goyam ke nagofte digar namand</i>	<i>dar in bab na softe gohar namand</i>
<i>Sokhan parvaran hich nanhoftand</i>	<i>sokhan har che bayad hame gofteand</i>
<i>Be khubi nadanam to ra an majal</i>	<i>ke bar roye khoban keshi khat o khal</i>

But in the end he says determined:

*Be an kari ke azmat baran shod dorostnatarsi ke taba o kherad yare tost  
Sokhan goftanat hast o tabe ravan a gar bakht yari konad mitavan*

And after the final decision in order to compose the work says:

*Bekhanam ze har dastan sokhon                      keta dastan bar che ayad be bon  
Saranjam khosh kardam in dastan                ke bardokhteand az lab rastan  
Dar in dastan dastanha basist                    na dar khorad dastan o harkasi ast  
Nadidam kasi marde meidan o                    ke arad cho man paye dastane o  
Bar asbe sokhan gashtam aknon savar        nadanam che bashad saranjame kar  
Agar khod be maqsad resad paye man        bar ayad be dollat tamanaye man  
(Khosfi, 2007:34)*

But our work is far from perfect, and knows, in the beginning, and informs readers, to remember that:

*Bozorgi kon ey nokte dan dar sokhan        bar in kame khord khordegiri makon  
Agar eib o reibi ravad dar sokhan            qalam darkesh anja o eibam makon  
Ke bi eib kas nist joz qeibdan                be joz qeib dan jomle ra, eib dan  
(Khosfi, 2007:34)*

Ibn Hossam, when gets tired of composing Khavaran Nameh, even asks Ferdowsi for help. One night he dreams of Ferdowsi, he praised his noble position and seeks his help:

*Haman shab yeki khab didam shegeft        che golha kaz an khab bar man shekoft  
Kharaman be paye gol o narvan                hami gasht Ferdowsi andar chaman  
Beraftam be nazdik o biderang                dar avardam o ra be aqosh tang  
Be do goftam ey ostad sokhan                bedadi be shahnameh dade sokhan  
delat makhzane ganje daneshvari ast        to ra dar sokhan paye bartari ast  
baram bar bare khish lakhti bemal        ke dar sineye tost aqde laal  
be goftarha khateram shad kard            ze yadam beraft anche o yad kard  
delam makhzane ganje asrar gasht        kherad ra sare khoft bidar gasht  
(Khosfi, 2000: 48)*

Ibn Hossam mentioned Ferdowsi's leadership not only at the beginning and mid-way, but until the end. Describing Khavaran Nameh and its similarity to Shahnameh and its imitation at the end of composing says:

*Be payan rasanidam in dastan                be sar bordam in nameh bastan  
Agar begzari bar golestane man                gol o laleh bini be bostane man  
Bahari cho baq e eram taze roye                cho ferdose ferdosi az rang o boy  
Cho ferdosi amad dar in bostan                beheshti behest az peye dostan  
Mara niz andishe shod rahnama                bedin rozeye khorame delgoshy*

And after thanking God, also refers to the book closing date:

*Cho bar sale hashtsad beyafzod si            shod in name taziyan parsi  
Man in nameh ra khavaran nameh nam        nahadam ke dar khavaran shod tamam  
(Khosfi, 2000: 552)*

And in the end mentions the difference with Ferdowsi's epic hero:

*Agar tusi az shahname sokhon                be arayesh Rustam afkand bon  
Sokhan dar bolaandi be jae resand            ke andishe az dark an bazmand  
Vali nameh man be name Ali                    meye safi man ze jame alist  
(Khosfi, 2000: 553)*

These verses indicate that Ibn Hossam could satisfactory comply with the heavy burden of the responsibility despite the conditions of political, social and religious issues in the ninth century with pride.

## 5. Conclusion

Basically, the epic has emerged as struggle between good and evil forces. The forces that always have put against each other in different forms of human life.

Khavaran Nameh is a good battle with evil aims at dissemination of good, justice, fighting against oppression, fairness expansion and spread of Islam to save mankind from the tyranny of kings and other cruel and cannibalistic creatures and evil.

Khosfi emphasizing on the fact "respect for truth and the emphatic recommendation to avoid cruelty and the fact that, human history has always unveiled ugly face of the oppressors and perpetrators and always represented supporters of justice proudly over time" (Khosfi, 2003: 17) with the main attention to good forces in Khavaran Nameh that are always victorious and came out proud in all hard battles and that frees people from evil and destructs the evil.

Accordingly, the reason behind the composition of religious and historical epics such as Khavaran Nameh order is clear; it is clear that the noted ninth century poet, Ibn Hossam Khosfi carries the heavy burden of a mission to compose the epic, Khavaran Nameh, in accordance with the community. He composes this famous work when Iran, especially Khorasan, was exposed to invasion, killing and looting and the struggle for power and in such circumstances in which it was composed the poet spoke with weapons of words to defend goodness and fight evil.

Moreover, the poem and verses composed by Ibn Hossam on the reason behind Khavaran Nameh show his full devotion to Ferdowsi; and his affinity with Ferdowsi precious and timeless work has made him think of composing such an epic work as Khavaran Nameh.

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