

## The Contribution of Iranian Scholars to Arabic Grammar

The most important aspect of Arabic literature which reached perfection through the expansion of Riwāyah (رواية narrative) are: ‘Ilm Al-Nahw (علم النحو syntax), ‘Ilm Al-Ṣarf (علم الصرف morphology), ‘Ilm Al-Lughah (علم اللغة lexicography), ‘Ilm Al-Balāghah (علم البلاغة rhetorics) ‘Ilm Al-Bayān (علم البيان expression) and ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūd (علم العروض prosody) etc. During the Jāhilīyyah period in Arabia, the ‘Arabs did not feel the need of research and compilation of the sciences of syntax, lexicography, grammar etc. but in the Islamic Era, the necessity for the compilation of their rules and regulations became necessary. The most important of these causes are as following:

1- Requirement of the non-‘Arab Muslims to understand the Arabic Language for understanding the **Holy Qur’ān** and the Holy Prophet’s traditions and relevant information.

2- Need of some non-‘Arabs, particularly the Iranians, for learning the Arabic language and entering the political, social and public services in the courts of the Caliphs, Amīrs, and other dignitaries.

3- Migration of the ‘Arabs to big cities and their interaction with non-‘Arabs and the spread of the accent and faults in the pronunciation of the Quranic verses, commandments, etc.

Due to these reasons, the attention of the Muslims was drawn towards the extraction and compilation of grammar and its rules.

Martyr Muṭahharī [مطهری] says:

"خدمات ایرانیان به زبان عربی بیش از خود اعراب به این زبان بوده. ایرانیان به حکم یک انگیزه مقدس دینی به خدمت زبان عربی همت گماشتند. ایرانیان مانند همه مسلمانان باک نهاد دیگر زبان عربی را زبان قوم عرب نمیدانستند، آنرا زبان قرآن و زبان بین المللی اسلامی میدانستند. لهذا بدون هیچ تعصب و با شور و نشاط و علاقه فوق العاده ای به فراگیری و ضبط و تدوین این زبان پرداختند."

*"The contribution of Iranians in this sphere (grammar) is greater than that of the ‘Arabs themselves. The Iranians have served the Arabic language as a holy duty to Islām. The Iranians like all other pure-hearted Muslims, never thought that Arabic was the language of the*

*‘Arabs alone. They recognized Arabic as the language of the **Holy Qur’ān** and as the international Islamic medium. That is why, without any kind of prejudice, they learnt, taught and engaged themselves in the compilation of the grammar rules of this language with extraordinary enthusiasm, interest and passion.”<sup>1</sup>*

### **Morphology and Syntax [علم الصرف و علم النحو]**

The ‘Arabs did follow the I‘rāb [اعراب] (signs representing sounds of vowels in Arabic pronunciation) to some extent at the time of the advent of Islām as they are now seen in the text of the **Holy Qur’ān**. But the Mawālīs and other aliens even during the days of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), used to make mistakes in the pronunciation of the I‘rāb of Arabic words.

Once a man had made such an error in the presence of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), he had ordained, [ارشدوا احاكم فقد ضل] *“enlighten your brother who has erred.”*<sup>2</sup> This problem of incorrect pronunciation became more acute after the conquests when Islām had spread to other territories. So the preachers, guides, and other Quranic scholars were worried about the correct recitation of the **Holy Qur’ān**. This resulted in an urgent need of making rules for the Arabic language.

There is a lot of disagreement regarding the personalities who compiled the rules of grammar (‘Ilm Al-Naḥw). However, the Islamic historians are unanimous on the point that the compiler of the ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw was Abū Al-Aswad Al-Du‘alī [ابو الاسود الدؤلي] (d. 9 A.H.) who was from the Sādāt (descendants of the Holy Prophet) and the friend of Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (A.S.) [حضرت علي<sup>(ع)</sup>]. The narrators differ as far as the reason of their indulgence in this work of building grammar is concerned. Even Abū Aswad Al-Du‘alī [ابو الاسود الدؤلي] himself says that “he learnt ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw from Ḥaḍrat ‘Alī (A.S.) [حضرت علي<sup>(ع)</sup>].”<sup>3</sup> But the rules framed by Abū Al-Aswad Al-Du‘alī [ابو الاسود الدؤلي] were not adequate as they were only distinguishing the Manṣūb (منصوب erected) from the Marfū‘ (مرفوع elevated), and similarly differentiated the noun from the verb etc. Therefore, Abū Al-Aswad Al-Du‘alī [ابو الاسود الدؤلي] founded the premise

of grammar with the help of other scholars from Baṣrah and Kūfah in this compilation and all of them did their best in perfecting this science. In a way, Abū Al-Aswad Al-Du'alī [أبو الأسود الدؤلي] is the lawmaker of 'Ilm Al-Naḥw.

عبدالله [“Abdullāh Ibn Abī Ishāq Al-Khaḍramī  
[ابن أبي إسحاق الحضرمي] is the first man who presented Ḥurūf Al-‘Illah (letters of causes)”<sup>4</sup>, “‘Isā Ibn ‘Umar Al-Thaqafī [عيسى ابن عمر الثقفي] (d. 149 A.H.) is also the first scholar who wrote a book entitled **Al-Jāmi‘ wa Al-Ikmāl** [الجامع والاکمال]”<sup>5</sup>. “And Hārūn Ibn Mūsā [هارون ابن موسى] was the first to register the rules of ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw, and Sībawaih Fārsī [سيبويه فارسي] is the first man who made separate chapters of this subject and authored a complete book named **Al-Kitāb** [الكتاب]”<sup>6</sup>.

Up to the ‘Abbāsīd period, Arabic grammar was taught in the mosques of Baṣrah and Kūfah. The scholars of these two cities used to engage themselves in research of the rules and regulations of this science and record them in books. Though the people of Kūfah had learnt grammar from the people of Baṣrah they differed with them in some matters. Those from Baṣrah believed in Tawātur (تواتر frequency) and Qiyās (قياس inference), whereas the people of Kūfah relied on the way the ‘Arabs spoke. Lengthy discussions and dialogues used to be held between the two schools and both became the owners of their own paths. In this connection the dialogue between Sībawaih [سيبويه] and Kasā’ī [كسائي] (both were Iranians) in the matter of Zunbūrīyah [زنبورية] has become very famous.

The great scholars of ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw were mostly from the Mawālīs (masters) of Iran or they were from the ‘Arab stock who were brought up in the Iranian atmosphere of Baṣrah and Kūfah.

R. N. Frye ( Professor of Iranian history at Harvard University) says: “*Apart from the influence of the Persians on the contents of Arabic letters, both prose and poetry, mention must be made of their decisive contributions in both Arabic grammar and lexicography. When one considers that the greatest name in Arabic grammar belongs to Sībawaih [سيبويه] (d. 180 A.H. / 796 A. D.), the Persian Muslim whose work entitled*

*Al-Kitāb* [الكتاب] occupies a unique place even to the present day, and that he is the first of a long list of Persians over the centuries who have left their mark on Arabic grammar, the question arises why a Persian, and not an 'Arab, was so instrumental in crystallizing Arabic grammar in such a magisterial fashion.”<sup>7</sup>

Then he continued: “*Ibn Al-Khaldūn* [ابن خلدون] is quite right when he credits the Persians with the foremost role in the development of the philological, grammatical and other Islamic disciplines, while reserving for the early 'Arabs a sort of political eminence. The implications, here, are in accordance with his well-known theories about the interplay of sedentary and nomadic cultures, the former possessed all the trappings of civilization, the latter having none but the characteristic nomadic virility. The Persians were the cultivated city-dwellers, with the arts and sciences at their disposal; the early 'Arabs the virile, nomadic group without the refinements of learning at their disposal.”<sup>8</sup>

On the other hand the people of Kūfah also succeeded in compiling grammar. “It is believed that the compiler of grammar in Kūfah was Ma‘ādh Ibn Al-Harrā’ [معاذ ابن الحرّاء] (d.187A.H.)”.<sup>9</sup> Many more grammarians and lexicographers rose thereafter under the shade of the teachings of Ma‘ādh Ibn Al-Harrā’ [معاذ ابن الحرّاء] on top of whose list is ‘Alī Ibn Ḥamzat Al-Kasā’ī [علي ابن حمزة الكسائي] who is the leader of the Kūfīs and one of the world famous Seven Recitors.

### **Most Distinguished Grammarian Scholars**

#### **1- Sībawaih Abū Bushr ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Uthmān**

سبيويه [

ابو بشر عمرو ابن عثمان] Well-known as Sībawaih, “he was born in the year (140 A.H.) in Baiḍā [بيضا] near Shīrāz [شیراز]. He was of Iranian descent. He was brought up in Baṣrah. He had acquired the knowledge of ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw from Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Al-Farāhidī [خالد ابن احمد الفراهيدي] (d. 170 A.H.) and Yūnus Ibn Al-Ḥabīb [يونس ابن الحبيب] (d. 183 A.H.) and ‘Īsā Ibn ‘Umar Al-Thaqafī [عيسى ابن عمر الثقفي] (d. 149 A.H.) and became prominent in Baṣrah. In the days of Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد], he had gone to Bagḥdād and had a dialogue with Kasā’ī [كسائي] (from Kūfah) who asked him: “O Baṣrite! What is your opinion about this sentence?

[قد كنت اظن ان العقرب اشد لسعة من الزنبور فاذا هوهي او فاذا هو اياها .]

*I thought that the sting of a scorpion is more lethal and painful than that of a wasp. Suddenly, The wasp is the scorpon. ( the sting of the wasp is as painful as the scorpion's).*

Because the chapter of **Idhā** [إذا], in **Al-Mughnī** [المغنى] written by Ibn Al-Hishām [ابن الهشام] (b.708 A.H. d.761 A.H.), clearly discusses the matter by concluding,

[والعرب قد يحذف الاخبار بعد اذا اذا عنت فجأة الامر الذي دهما]

*Arabs, something, drop the predicate of a sentence which begins with 'Idhā' [إذا] when narrating a sudden development or urgent matter. In such a sentence, the object of the sentence is elevated (مرفوع Marfū') and not erected (منصوب Manṣūb)".<sup>10</sup>*

Sībawaih replied: “[فاذا هوهي]. Kasā'ī said: Both the usages are correct. The audience also agreed with Kasā'ī though his view was not correct. In these circumstances Sībawaih returned to Shīrāz, and, apparently, did not live for long and passed away at the age of about 40 in the year (180 A.H.).<sup>11</sup>

Sībawaih is one of the greatest grammarians and the first scholar who had discussed this science in an organised manner and authored a complete book **Al-Kitāb** [الكتاب] which drew the attention of scholars from the day of its publication. Sībawaih also trained many persons, most famous of whom is Abū Al-Ḥasan Al-Akhfash [ابوالحسن الاخفش] (d.211 A.H.).

2- **Abū Al-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Ḥamzah** [ابوالحسن علي ابن حمزة], well-known as Kasā'ī [كسائي] is of Iranian lineage, who became the leader of the grammarians of Kūfah. “He was born in Kūfah and was a student of **Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad** [خليل ابن احمد]. He learned the science of Qirā'at (قرءات) recitation of the Holy Qur'ān) from Ḥamzat Ibn Ḥabīb Al-Zīyāt [حمزة ابن حبيب الزييات] (d. 156 A.H.). Thereafter he took up the profession of Qirā'at and became one of the seven famous recitors in the world (Al-Qurrā' Al-Sab'ah (القرءاء السبعة).<sup>12</sup>

“He had come to Baghdād at the time of Mahdī the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph and recited the **Holy Qur’ān** in his court during the Holy month of Ramadhān [رمضان]. Thereafter he was made the tutor of the two princes Amīn [أمين] and Ma’mūn [مأمون] (who were sons of Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد]). During a journey, Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] had taken both Kasā’ī [كسائي] and Qaḍī Muḥammad Ibn Ḥasan [قاضي محمد ابن حسن] with him to Khurāsān. Both of whom passed away during that journey in the year (189 A.H.) at a place called Zunbūrīyah [زنبورية] near Ray [ري]. Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] wept over their demise and exclaimed: I have buried the jurisprudence (Fiqh) and literature (Adab) of the ‘Arabs in Ray [ري].”<sup>13</sup>

Kasā’ī [كسائي] drew the attention of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs and of the Barāmīkah [برامكة] to the extent that in one of the dialogues, regarding the Zunbūrīyah issue, the prejudice on the part of Amīn (son of Hārūn Al-Rashīd) brought the downfall of Sībawaih. Kasā’ī [كسائي] has written some books most of which are not traceable. Only Laḥn Al-‘Āmmah [لحن العامة] is available now.

3- **Badi’ Al-Zamān Al-Hamadhānī** [بديع الزمان الهمذاني]: Abū Al-Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn Ḥusain Hamadhānī [ابوالفضل ابن حسين همذاني] better known famous as Badi’ Al-Zamān [بديع الزمان] was born in the year (358 A.H.) in Hamadhān [همدان].

He took his education from Aḥmad Ibn Al-Fāris [احمد ابن الفارس] and ‘Īsā Ibn Hishām Al-Anṣārī [عيسى ابن هشام الانصاري]. Then he left Hamadhān [همدان] a famous city of Iran, and joined Ṣāḥib Ibn Al-‘Abbād [صاحب ابن عباد] in Ray [ري] and earned much honour and fame. But this relationship did not last long. Badi’ Al-Zamān [بديع الزمان] travelled to Gurgān [گرگان] and Nīshābūr [نیشابور] (cities in Iran).

“There he dictated 400 **Maqāmāt** [مقامات] and entered into a debate with Abū Bakr Al-Khwārazmī [ابوبكر خوارزمي] in that city. Then he joined Khalaf Ibn Al-Aḥmad [خلف ابن احمد] in Sīstān [سیستان]. Finally he went to Harāt [هرات] and in the year (398 A.H.) when he was not even 40 years of age he passed away.”<sup>14</sup> Badi’ Al-Zamān’s [بديع الزمان] memory was very powerful. He was able to recollect lengthy Qaṣīdah (قصيدة)

panegyrics) by hearing them only once. His translation too was so swift that when a Persian poem was read out to him, he could instantly translate it into Arabic. He could begin writing a long letter from the end and could reach its beginning swiftly. “He was proficient in both prose and poetry; but he is well-known for his prose. A volume of his verses is also available.”<sup>15</sup>

### **Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘ [ معاني ، بيان و بدیع ]**

All the aspects of linguistic science in the Arabic language like *Lughah*, *Ṣarf*, *Tafsīr*, *Ma‘ānī*, *Bayān*, and *Badī‘* [ لغة ، صرف ، تفسير ، معاني ، بيان و بدیع ] were the result of the appearance of Islām and the **Holy Qur’ān**. Therefore they are considered the different aspects of **Holy Qur’ān**. The **Holy Qur’ān** which is the foundation of the religion of Islām deals with the worldly life and Hereafter. It has been revealed in the eloquent Arabic language and has earned excellence in the matter of accuracy and rhetoric.

و إنه لتنزيل ربّ العالمين ... (سورة الشعراء الآية ١٩٢)

*“And [O, Messenger] verily, this [Holy Qur’ān] has been sent from the Creator of the worlds.”*

و هذا لسان عربي مبين (سورة النحل الآية ١٠٣).

*“And this Qur’ān is in Arabic, simple and clear for the natives.”*

The Traditions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), which are considered the second primary source of the Islamic Sharī‘ah [شريعة] is also in the Arabic language. Thus the entire base of the affairs of the Muslim society is on the **Holy Qur’ān** and *Sunnah* [سنة] (tradition) and since both of them are in Arabic, the Muslims had no options but to learn the Arabic language in order to carry out their duties concerning their worldly life as well as life after death. In spite of all the books written in Persian and all other languages about Islamic ordinances, the aforesaid need still persisted especially since the advent of Islām. Those speaking Persian and all others accepted Islām as their religion and even those speaking Arabic faced great difficulties in rightly pronouncing its words. The matter became worse under the influence of those who mingled native words

with Arabic thus forgetting the intricacies of the original and ancient Arabic language. Because of these reasons, the rule of grammar and other subtle linguistic aspects were highlighted in different compilations in the field of Arabic philology and Grammatical resolutions. Of course the Muslims of the first period of Islamic Era were not so much in need of the literary and linguistic compilations because Arabic was their own language and hence they knew it well; in case of any doubt they were able to approach the Holy Prophet (PBUH) or his reliable companions for clarification and necessary corrections.

“ The sciences of Ma‘ānī [معاني], Bayān [بيان] and Badī‘ [بدیع] came into being in the period of the Umayyads or a hundred years after the era of the rightly-guided Caliphs, between (40 A.H.) to (140 A.H.), and these sciences reached their climax and perfection during the reign of ‘Abbāsīds.”<sup>16</sup>

The three important divisions of grammar which have now become separate entities viz. the sciences of Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘ [معاني، بيان و بدیع] were, in the beginning, amalgamated with one another. Thereafter when the progress and expansion took place, they became independent aspects. Similarly different aspects of the Arabic language like ‘Ilm Al-Ṣarf [علم الصرف] and ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw [علم النحو] and ‘Ilm Al-Lughah [علم اللغة] did not initially have an independent existence which developed later on.

“It appears that the complete analysis of different literary disciplines is a result of researches made during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H.”<sup>17</sup>

### **Founder or Compiler of Ma‘ānī and Bayān**

It is well-known that the first person who initiated the science of Bayān and who separated it from the sciences of Ma‘ānī and Badī‘ and compiled the rules of Ma‘ānī and Bayān was Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني], the author of **Asrār Al-Balāghah wa Dalā’il Al-I’jāz** [اسرار البلاغة و دلائل الاعجاز]. “He was one of the most famous scholars of Arabic literature in the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.H. He passed away in (471 A.H.). He was undoubtedly of Iranian descent.”<sup>18</sup> The rules of Ma‘ānī and Bayān, before Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني], were a part of the other literary disciplines like ‘Ilm



Al-Naḥw and Ma‘ānī Al-Qur’ān [علم النحو و معاني القرآن] and they did not have an independent title. They had, on the whole, passed through two different stages until the advent of the days of the Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني].

1- The first stage was from the beginning or appearance of the sciences of literary language or the Quranic literature. This period lasted from the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.H. till about the year (274 A.H.), i.e. the time of the compilation of the science of Badī‘ [بدیع] by Ibn Al-Mu‘tazz [ابن المعتز] (d. 296 A.H.).

“During this period the subject matter of Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘ did not have independent disciplines. But these rules were also referred to while discussing other subjects. The most important subjects mentioned in the discussions of these sciences were that of Balāghah wa Faṣāḥah wa Ma‘ānī Al-Qur’ān wa Naqd Al-Shi‘r wa Asrār Al-Naḥw wa ‘Ilal Al-Naḥw wa I‘jāz Al-Qur’ān wa Qawā‘id Al-Shi‘r, etc.”<sup>19</sup>

[بلاغة و فصاحة و معاني القرآن و نقد الشعر و اسرار النحو و علل النحو و اعجاز القرآن و قواعد الشعر].

The books containing these discussions titled as following:

Ma‘ānī Al-Qur’ān [معاني القرآن]. Many writers have given this title to their compilations including Kasā’ī [كسائي] Ra’āsī [رؤاسي] Mubarrad [مبرد] Akhfash [اخفش] Farrā’ [فراء] etc. These names are mentioned in **Al-Fihrist** [الفهرست] of Ibn Al-Nadīm [ابن النديم]. The subject of Ma‘ānī Al-Qur’ān [معاني القرآن] was different from Lughah, Tafsīr, Tajwīd, [تجويد، لغة، تفسير] etc. What has been mostly discussed in these books is the debates concerning Balāghah, Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘ [بلاغة]. The technical terminology of the science of Ma‘ānī sprouted from these books. “However Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني] and a group of the experts had named this science **Fannu Aghrāḍ Al-Naḥw** or **Asrār Al-Naḥw wa ‘Ilal Al-Naḥw** [فن اغراض النحو يا اسرار النحو و علل النحو]”<sup>20</sup>.

2- Around the year (274 A.H.), the three linguistic subjects (Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘ [معاني، بيان و بدیع]) were separated from the other subjects but they remained attached and each other, for example: in the science of Badī‘, the topics Ma‘ānī and Bayān were also discussed like Balāghah, Faṣāḥah, Majāz, Tashbīh, and Kināyah [بلاغة، فصاحة، مجاز، تشبيه و كناية].

“The first person to author the study of Badī‘ which included the topics of Bayān is Ibn Al-Mu‘tazz [ابن المعتز]. His book was written in (274 A.H.). This trend of intermingling of the subjects in the Arabic language continued till the time of Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني], after which they were separated and got the status of independent disciplines.”<sup>21</sup>

Ustādh Jalāluddīn Humā’ī [استاذ جلال الدين همائي] says:

"سرمایه های علوم و فنون ادب عربی از قبیل صرف و نحو و لغت و معانی و بدیع و بیان و نقدالشعر و نقدالانشاء و امثال آن نیز بدست امثال سیبویه و کسایی و ابن قتیبة دینوری و شیخ عبدالقاهر جرجانی، ابو عبیده معمر بن مثنی، ابن فارس احمدي فارسی، فیروزآبادی، ازهری هروی و سکاکی و خطیب قزوینی و تفتازانی و امثال ایشان تهیه شد و اکثر علوم ادبی لسانی و فنون بلاغت عربی را اگر ایرانیان اختراع نکرده بودند لااقل اولین کسی بودند که آنرا تدوین یا تألیف کردند."

“The treasures of knowledge and sciences of the Arabic language like ‘Ilm Al-Şarf, ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw, Luġḥah, Ma‘ānī, Badī‘, Bayān and Naqd (criticism) of verse and prose, etc. were also produced by scholars like Sībawaih [سیبویه], Kasā’ī [کسائي], Ibn Qutaibat Al-Dīnwarī [ابن قتیبة الدینوری] (b.213 A.H./d.276 A.H.), Shaikh ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [شيخ عبدالقاهر الجرجاني], Abū ‘Ubaidah Mu‘ammar Ibn Al-Muthannā [ابو عبیده معمر ابن المثنی] (b.114 A.H./d.210 A.H.), Ibn Fāris Al-Aḥmadī Al-Fārsī [ابن فارس الاحمدي] (b.729 A.H./d. 817 A.H.) Al-Azharī Al-Hirawī [الازهری الهروی] (d.370 A.H.) Al-Kasā’ī [الكسائي] Kātib Al-Qazwīnī [کاتب القزوینی] and Al-Taftāzānī [التفتازانی]. Even if most of the sciences of literature and arts of oratory of the Arabic language were not exactly invented by Iranians, they were, at least, the pioneers to compile them.”<sup>22</sup>

### Great Scholars of Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘

1- ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Ibn ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān Al-Jurjānī [عبدالقاهر ابن عبدالرحمن الجرجاني] was a distinguished scholar of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.H. “who expired in the year (471 A.H.). He is one of the scholars of ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw, Ma‘ānī and Bayān. He was one of the prominent Islamic-Iranian literary critics. ‘Abd Al-Qāhir [عبدالقاهر], in his sincerity and obedience (to the Divine directions

and spirit) was so great that, there is a narration about him which is mentioned below:

Once a thief entered the house of ‘Abd Al-Qāhir [عبدالقاهر] while the latter was offering prayer. The thief collected all that was in the house. Al-Jurjānī saw all that, but did not give up prayer.”<sup>23</sup>

As has been said earlier he was the founder or compiler of Ma‘ānī and Bayān, and has, in this field, authored two very famous and important books viz. **Asrār Al-Balāghah** [اسرار البلاغة] and **Dalā’il Al-Qur’ān** [دلالت القرآن]. Apart from these two great works, he also has other books to his credit:

**A- Al-Mughnī fī sharḥ Al-Īdāh**, [المغني في شرح الايضاح].

**B- Al-Muqtaṣid** [المقتصد].

**C- Al-‘Umdah fī sharḥ Al-Taṣrīf** [العمدة في شرح التصريف].

**D- Al-‘Arūḍ** [العروض].

**E- Kitāb Al-Ṣaghīr wa Al-Kabīr** [كتاب الصغير والكبير].

**F- Al-‘Awāmil** [العوامل].

**G- I’jāz Al-Qur’ān** [اعجاز القرآن].

**H- Sharḥ Al-Fātiḥah** [شرح الفاتحة].

**2-Sa‘duddīn Mas‘ūd Ibn Al-‘Umar** [سعدالدين مسعود ابن العمر], was also known as Al-Taftāzānī [التفتازاني]. “He was born in the year (722 A.H.) in the village of Taftāzān [تفتازان] which is one of the hamlets of Khurāsān in Iran. He died in (792 A.H.).”<sup>24</sup> He was an expert in various fields of knowledge like: Tafsīr, Manṭiq, Falsafah, Kalām, Fiqh, and ‘Ilm Al-Lughah [تفسير، منطق، فلسفة، كلام، فقه و علم اللغة], hence he was called ‘Allāmah (علامة great scholar). He has authored two very well-known books: **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] and **Al-Mukhtaṣar** [المختصر]. Both these books are commentaries on Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī’s [خطيب القزويني] **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح] and are among the books on Balāghah, i.e. they deal with Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī‘. Many ancient and modern authors are of the view that the above-mentioned books of Taftāzānī [تفتازاني] are among the chosen Balāghah books. “Taftāzānī [تفتازاني] completed the book **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] in six years. he began writing it on Monday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Ramadhān

[صفر] 11<sup>th</sup> of Şafar [رمضان] (742 A.H.) and completed it on Wednesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of Şafar [صفر] (748 A.H.).”<sup>25</sup>

Taftāzānī [تفتازاني], in his work **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] does not limit himself only to the explanation of **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī**’s [خطيب القزويني] **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح] and Sakkākī **Khurāsānī**’s [سكاكي خراساني] (d. 626 A.H.) **Miftāḥ Al-‘ulūm** [مفتاح العلوم] but has also discussed the views of his predecessors and of the scholars of the sciences of Balāghah and also of the other Arabic linguists. He has also referred to the views of Al-Mubarrad [المبرّد], author of **Al-Kāmil** [الكامل], of Al-Zujjāj [الزجاج], author of **Ma‘ānī Al-Qur’ān wa I‘rābiḥ** [معاني القرآن واعرابه], of Al-Jawharī [الجوهري] (d. 398 A.H.), the author of ‘**Ṣiḥāḥ**’ [صحاح] of Al-Marzūqī [المرزوقي] the commentator of **Dīwān Al-Hamāsah** [ديوان الحماسة]. While explaining their viewpoints he also paid attention to the stands taken by ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [عبدالقاهر الجرجاني], Al-Zamakhsharī [الزمخشري] (b.467 A.H./d.538 A.H.), Imām Fakhr Al-Rāzī [امام فخر الرازي] (b.544 A.H./d.606 A.H.), Abū ‘Alī Sīnā [ابو علي سينا] (b.370 A.H./d.428 A.H.) and Ibn Al-Athīr [ابن الاثير] (d.637 A.H.). He has often showed a preference to their viewpoints in the Balāghah issues. Over and above he followed Sakkākī [سكاكي] and **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī** [خطيب القزويني] in the Balāghah issues and pursued them, because, he is the commentator of **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī**’s [خطيب القزويني] **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح]. It was he who made the name of Taftāzānī [تفتازاني] immortal through the said commentaries of **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] and **Al-Mukhtaṣar** [المختصر] in his own book **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح]. He performed this work in such a grand way that though more than eight centuries have passed since the compilation of these two books, **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] and **Al-Mukhtaṣar** [المختصر] are considered the source of the course in Balāghah and are being taught in educational institutions, especially, in Iran and other Muslim countries of the East.

In logic, Al-Taftāzānī has written **Sharḥ Al-Risālat Al-Shamsīyah** [شرح الرسالة الشمسية]. It is a commentary on the **Al-Shamsīyah** [الشمسية] treatise which is known in India by the name **Al-S‘dīyah** [السعدية].

3-**Jalāluddīn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān Al-Qazwīnī** [جلال الدين] popularly known as **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī** [خطيب] was “born in the year (666 A.H.) in the city of Mūsīl [موصل]. He died in (739 A.H.). He became famous for making a scrupulous condensation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of Sakkākī’s **Miftāḥ Al-‘ulūm** [مفتاح العلوم].”<sup>26</sup> **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī** [خطيب القزويني] has mentioned in the introduction of this book which is one of the most outstanding works in the field of Balāghah that it contained supplementary material and required explanations. Therefore, he abridged it and added some guidelines to it and named it **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح].

**Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح] has an introduction wherein Faṣāḥah and Balāghah have been defined. Moreover the introduction of **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح] is based on the three branches of knowledge: First, one deals with the science of Ma‘ānī and contains eight chapters; second one deals with ‘Ilm Al-Bayān and speaks about Tashbīḥ, Isti‘ārah, Majāz and Kināyah; and third, it is about the science of Badī‘.

**Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī** [خطيب القزويني] felt it necessary to explain the details of what was made concise in **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح]. He wrote a commentary thereon resulting in **Al-Īḍāḥ** [الايضاح] in which he re-narrated extensively what was already present in **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح].

When the text of **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح] drew the attention of the learned, they wrote notes on it and such notes or commentaries included the two mentioned earlier, i. e. Taftāzānī’s **Al-Muṭawwal** [المطول] and **Al-Mukhtaṣar** [المختصر], which, in the words of Ḥājī Al-Khalīfah [حاجي الخليفة] are “the most famous commentaries on **Talkhīṣ Al-Miftāḥ** [تلخيص المفتاح].”<sup>27</sup>

The viewpoint of **Khaṭīb Al-Qazwīnī** [خطيب القزويني] is to some extent nearer to ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [عبدالقاهر الجرجاني] and he has taken many ideas from ‘Abd Al-Qāhir Al-Jurjānī [عبدالقاهر الجرجاني] and Sakkākī [سكّاكي]. But in some matters he has also differed from the beliefs of Sakkākī [سكّاكي] and at some places raised objections to them. At the same time he has also quoted him. Moreover it is to be mentioned that he is the best follower of Sakkākī [سكّاكي].

4-**Abū Al-Faḍl Jalāluddīn ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān Al-Suyūṭī** [ابوالفضل جلال الدين عبد الرحمن السيوطي]. He belonged to an Iranian family which had

settled in Egypt. “He was born in Cairo in (849 A.H.). Before reaching the age of eight years he had memorized the entire **Holy Qur’ān**. Thereafter, he learnt the texts of Fiqh and ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw and studied various sciences from the learned people of his time. He even travelled to Syria, Ḥijāz, Yaman , India and Morocco for gaining higher knowledge. He attained the rank of a genius in **Tafsīr, Ḥadīth, Fiqh, ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw, Ma‘ānī, Bayān and Badī’**.”<sup>28</sup>

“Al-Suyūṭī [السُّيُوطِي] began to write books at the age of seventeen. He wrote more than 300 volumes. Most of his works are very valuable and it can be said that a single book of his was enough to make him famous.”<sup>29</sup>

Al-Suyūṭī [السُّيُوطِي] wrote 23 books on the Tafsīr of the **Holy Qur’ān** and related themes, 95 titles on Ḥadīth, 21 volumes on Lughah, 43 books on Unitary components, 35 volumes on Arabic linguistics, 21 books on Uṣūl, Bayān and Taṣawwuf (Sufism), 50 books on history and literature etc. He, thus, by his grand scholarship and anthorship made himself immortal. Al-Suyūṣī [السُّيُوطِي] is one of those scholars who cleared the path for the study and research for future generations.

The books listed below can be called Al-Suyūṭī’s [السُّيُوطِي] masterpieces:

**A- Al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm Al-Qur’ān** [الاتقان في علوم القرآن].

**B- Al-Muzhir fī ‘Ulūm Al-Lughah** [المزهر في علوم اللغة].

**C- Ṭabaqāt Al-Mufasssirīn** [طبقات المفسرين].

**D- Tafsīr Al-Jalālain** [تفسير الجلالين].

“Al-Suyūṭī [السُّيُوطِي] went into isolation in the last years of his life and engaged entirely in worship and research, and finally passed away in the year (911 A.H.).”<sup>30</sup>

### **‘Ilm Al-Lughah**

The science of linguistics which culminated in the lexicography in the ‘Abbāsīd era reached perfection in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H.

R. N. Frye ( Professor of Iranian history at Harvard University) says that “*it was not only in grammar that the Persians, the inheritors of an*

ancient civilization, made their presence felt but also in Lexicography in Arabic. In that science, Haywood, J. A. (1960) affirms that one must take note not only of Persia, but also of the province of Khurāsān. He sees certain resemblances between the alphabetical order of the dictionary *Kitāb Al-‘Ain* [كتاب العين] composed by Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] (d. 175 A.H./791 A.D.) and that of Sanskrit, and attributes this to the Indian influence in the eastern areas of Iran. Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد], though an ‘Arab from ‘Omān, is said to have produced the first Arabic dictionary while he was in Khurāsān. Indeed, because of the predominant part played by the Persians and others in Arabic lexicography, not only in early but also in later times, Haywood J. A. concludes that the lexicography was undoubtedly in Arabic; but it was not ‘Arab.’”<sup>31</sup>

It is interesting to observe that the Persians of eastern Iran had maintained a very high degree of religious scholarship from the early days of Islām till the coming of the Saljūq Dynasty (1029 A.D. to 1092 A.D.). This was applied even to their handling of Arabic language. While it is true that the presence of an Arabic-speaking agent, here and there, in Iran had as much influence on the dialects of the Persians (as that of the English agents on the languages of modern India), nevertheless, amongst the Persian Muslim scholars, there existed a tradition of pure Arabic speech, with complete inflection.

I‘rāb (اِعراب), was maintained even when it was no longer used in the Arabic-speaking urban centres outside Iran. As mentioned earlier, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.H., the inflection and other peculiarities of good Arabic speech were considered a mannerism in the Arabic-speaking world. But the Khurāsānī Persian scholar could not be ridiculed by the ordinary Persian for giving his Arabic the inflection and Umayyad overtones that he used, for the ordinary Persian national knew only Persian. It is because of the Umayyad purity of his style that Al-Jāḥiẓ [الجاحظ] remarked that when a Khurāsānī spoke Arabic, “in spite of his inflecting Arabic and choosing his words, you know by his articulation that he is a Khurāsānī.”<sup>32</sup> This tradition continued into the 4<sup>th</sup> century, A.H. when in

the urban centres of the Arabic-speaking world, different dialects had arisen.

The geographer Al-Muqaddasī [المقدّسي] (d. 390 A.H./1000 A.D.) says that *“the Khurāsānīs used the purest Arabic he had occasion to hear in his long journeys throughout the Muslim lands of the East and West. But he is clearly not saying that the Khurāsānīs were ‘Arabs. The only ‘Arabs who had an inflection in their speech in the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.H. were the pure nomads in certain regions of Arabia and elsewhere; these came due to their good Arabic by birthright and therefore effortlessly. Elsewhere in the Arabic-speaking world, regional dialects had arisen.”*<sup>33</sup> Al-Muqaddasī [المقدّسي] is referring to a minority of cultivated and erudite Persian Muslim scholars who, to use his words, (went to great pains) to learn that correct Arabic. These were undoubtedly the religious scholars, or ‘ulamā, of Khurāsān, for he says that *“they were highly honoured in that area and had a notable past tradition of Islamic studies, whereas in the western part of Iran it was the scribes who were held in high esteem”*.<sup>34</sup> When Al-Muqaddasī [المقدّسي] says that the Khurāsānīs used the purest Arabic he had heard, he meant not only their inflection of Arabic but also, perhaps, their use of it with traditional, or Umayyad, nuances.

#### **Great Scholars of ‘Ilm al-Lughah :**

1- **Khalīl Ibn Al-Aḥmad** [خليل ابن الاحمد] (d. 175 A.H./791 A.D.). The first person who compiled a dictionary of Arabic language is Khalīl Ibn Al-Aḥmad [خليل ابن الاحمد]. He, who was of ‘Arab descent, had really a great capability in making research. It is said about him that, “when he heard the sound of a hammer hitting a barrel, he found out by intuition the laws of ‘Arūḍ (prosody) and then compiled them.”<sup>35</sup> His fame is mostly because of his novelty which he has shown in writing a kind of dictionary titled **Kitāb Al-‘Ain** [كتاب العين]. ‘Ain is the name of a letter in the alphabet which has found place at the beginning of his dictionary. In this book, letters of alphabets have been arranged according to the rules of phonetics and linguistics known to Al-Khalīl Ibn Al-Aḥmad [خليل ابن الاحمد].



2- **Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Duraid Al-Azudī Al-Baṣrī** [ابوبكر محمد] (b. 223 A.H./d. 321 A.H.) known as Ibn Al-Duraid [ابن الدريد] is one of the famous literary scholars. He was the tutor of Ustādh Abū ‘Alī Al-Qālī [استاذ ابو علي القالي] and Abū Sa‘īd Al-Sīrāfī [ابوسعيد السيرافي]. Abū ‘Alī Al-Qālī [استاذ ابو علي القالي] has quoted his (of Ibn Al-Duraid ابن الدريد) published literary stories in his (Al-Qālī’s القالي) book **Al-Amālī** [الامالي]. As pointed out by literary scholars, he is the first man to introduce essay-writing in Arabic literature. Among his works are **Al-Jamharah fī Al-Lughah** [الجمهرة في اللغة], **Al-Maqṣūrah** [المقصورة] and **Al-Ishtiḳāq** [الاشتقاق].

3- **Abū Sa‘īd Ḥasan Ibn ‘Abdullāh Al-Sīrāfī** [ابوسعيد حسن ابن عبد الله السيرافي] is one of the leading writers of ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw, ‘Ilm al-Lughah, ‘Ilm al-Fiqh, ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth and Quranic knowledge. His father had formerly been a follower of the Zoroastrian religion but later embraced Islām. Abū Sa‘īd himself was famous in Arabic philosophy, religious devotion, morals and chastity. Among the most important books written by him is the commentary on Sībawaih’s **Al-Kitāb** [الكتاب], He expired in (368 A.H.). Abū Ḥayyān Al-Tawḥīdī [ابويحان] a famous writer in literary arts was a student of Al-Sīrāfī [السيرافي]. Abū Sa‘īd Al-Sīrāfī [ابوسعيد السيرافي], due to his prestige, became an authority in the eyes of nobles and scholars of his time. “One of them Nūḥ Ibn Naṣr Al-Sāmānī [نوح ابن نصر الساماني] wrote a letter to him and asked him four hundred questions most of which were etymological words. Bal‘amī [بلعمي] the minister had written to him a letter containing questions about the **Holy Qur’ān**. Marwān Ibn Muḥammad Al-Malik Al-Dailam [مروان ابن محمد الملك الديلم], from Ādharbāyjān (آذربايجان a city in Iran) sent him one hundred and twenty queries regarding the **Holy Qur’ān** and Ḥadīth. Similarly, Abū Ja‘far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Al-Ṣaffārī [ابوجعفر احمد ابن محمد الصفاري] had put before him seventy problems about the **Holy Qur’ān**, a hundred questions regarding Arabic words, three hundred couplets of poetry and forty issues concerning religious dictums and he had answered all of them.”<sup>36</sup> Among the books of Al-Sīrāfī [السيرافي] only **Akhbār Al-Naḥwīyīn Al-Baṣrīyīn** [اخبار النحويين البصريين] is available.

4- **Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan Ibn Aḥmad Al-Fārsī**

[ابو علي حسن ابن احمد]

[ابن الجني] (b. 307 A.H./d.377 A.H.). He and his student Ibn Al-Jinnī introduced new chapters in ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw and Tafsīr. “Abū ‘Alī [ابو علي] was born and educated in literature in Fārs province. Thereafter, he stayed with Saif Al-Daulat Al-Ḥamdḥān [سيف الدولة الحمداني] for some period in Ḥalab (Syria). There he had entered into a discussion (munāzarah [مناظرة]) with Al-Mutanabbī [المتنبي].<sup>37</sup> Then he returned to Fārs and became a companion of ‘Izzuddaulah [عز الدولة] and compiled the book **Al-Īdāḥ wa Al-Taklimah fī Al-Naḥw** [الايضاح والتكملة في النحو] for him.

5- **Ṣāḥib Al-Kāfi Ismā‘īl Ibn Al-‘Abbād**

[صاحب الكافي اسمعيل ابن]

(d. 385A.H.) a famous minister of Dailamī dynasty and a great writer among the scholars of ‘Ilm Al-Lughah and ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw. His well-known work in literature is the book **Al-Muḥīṭ** [المحيط] in Arabic which is considered one of the most prominent Arabic grammar books.

6- **Abū Ḥusain Aḥmad Ibn Fāris Al-Rāzī**

[ابو حسين احمد ابن فارس الرازي] (d. 390 A.H.) was one of the great lexicographers of his time and he has written **Al-Mujmal** [المجمل]. He stayed for quite a long time in Ray and Hamadhān [همدان a city in Iran] and Badī‘ Al-Zamān Al-Hamadhānī [بديع الزمان الهمداني] is one of his students. One of his books which is available now is **Al-Ṣāḥibī** [الصاحبي] in the name of Ṣāḥib Ibn Al-‘Abbād [صاحب ابن عبّاد]. This book contains very precious discussions about the origin of Arabic and its specialties and also the differences in pronunciation of Arabic prevalent in different tribes.

7- **Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Al-Azharī Al-Hirawī**

[ابومنصور محمد ابن احمد الازهري الهروي] (d. 370A.H.) is one of the greatest scholars of Arabic literature. His birth and death took place in Hirāt [هرات]. He was busy compiling a dictionary for a long time in Iraq and Jazīrat Al-‘Arab [جزيرة العرب] and was also arrested for a short period by the Al-Qarāmaṭah [القرامطة] in Arabia whereby he obtained a lot of knowledge regarding words and technical terms of actual Arabic in the ‘Arab society. His famous book in Lughah is **Al-Tahdhīb** [التهذيب]. “Ibn Al-Manzūr [ابن المنظور], the author of **Lisān Al-‘Arab** [لسان العرب] has

mentioned in the preface of his book that Azharī's **Al-Tahdhīb** [التهذيب] is one of the best books in **Lughah**.<sup>38</sup>

8- **Ismā'īl Ibn Ḥammād Al-Jauharī Al-Fārābī** [إسماعيل ابن حماد الجوهري الفارابي] is another scholar of Arabic literature. He stayed with several Arab tribes for quite a long period to collect information about dialects and went to Nīshābūr [نيسابور] with a huge treasure of knowledge. He taught and compiled his book **Al-Ṣiḥāḥ fī Al-Lughah** [الصحاح في اللغة] which is also considered as one of the most important dictionaries. He passed away in (398 A.H.).

### Most Famous Arabic Dictionaries Iranian Scholars

1. **Al-Jamharat fī Al-Lughah** [الجمهرة في اللغة] written by Ibn Al-Duraid [ابن الدريد] (d. 321 A.H. )

2. **Al-Tahdhīb** [التهذيب] authored by Al-Azharī [الازهري] (d. 370 A.H.),

3. **Al-Muḥīṭ** [المحيط] compiled by Ṣāḥib Ibn Al-'Abbād [صاحب ابن العباد] (d. 385 A.H.)

4. **Al-Mujmal** [المجمل] by Ibn Al-Fāris [ابن الفارس] (d. 390 A.H.)

5. **Al-Ṣiḥāḥ** [الصحاح] by Al-Jauharī [الجوهري] (d. 398 A.H.)

6. **Al-Mukḥaṣṣiṣ** [المخصّص] by Ibn Al-Sayyidah [ابن السيّدة] (d. 458 A.H.)

7. **Lisān Al-'Arab** [لسان العرب] by Ibn Al-Manzūr [ابن المنظور] (d. 711 A.H.)

8. **Al-Qāmūs** [القاموس] by Fīrūzābādī [فيروزآبادي] (d. 817 A.H.)

Many of the linguists are Iranians like Jauharī Nīshābūrī the author of **Al-Ṣiḥāḥ**, Rāghib Al-Iṣfahānī [راغب الاصفهاني] (d. 565 A.H.) Majduddīn Fīrūzābādī [مجدالدین فیروزآبادي] author of **Al-Qāmūs** [القاموس] as described earlier, Maidānī Nīshābūrī [میدانی نیشابوری] the writer of **Al-Sām fī Al-Asāmī** [السام في الاسامي] and **Majma' Al-Amṭhāl** [مجمع الامثال] (d. 518 A.H.) etc.

### 'Ilm al-'Arūd [علم العروض]

Among the sciences relating to Arabic grammar, especially those which concern linguistics and terminology, 'Ilm Al-'Arūd has a distinct

place. Other sciences related to this knowledge, such as the science of ‘Ilm Al-Lughah in its special meaning, ‘Ilm Al-Ṣarf, ‘Ilm Al-Naḥw and the arts of ‘Ilm Al-Balāghah came into existence gradually. Their foundations made solid through the efforts of many scholars gradually. Thus they gained perfection. But, the ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūd, did not have any precedence in the Arabic language and literature and was the effort of a single person and gained popularity among the learned in a way that was unprecedented. Its foundation has remained as popular and as compact as before.

The inventor of this science is a scholar from Baṣrah whose full name is Abū ‘Abd Al-Raḥmān Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Tamīm Al-Baṣrī Al-Farāhidī [ابو عبد الرحمن خليل ابن احمد ابن عمر ابن تميم البصري الفراهيدي]. This scholar was born in Baṣrah about the year (100 A.H.) and he died in (170 A.H.) in the same city.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the above statement, two questions arise in the mind of every person who knows this science: One, whether Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] had really seen a dream in the second century of the Hijrī Era and that this science, that is ‘Arūd, was revealed to him or, in the words of Ibn al-Khallikān [ابن الخلكان], “Since he was a man of God and a very pious person, his prayer during his pilgrimage (Ḥaj) of the House of God, viz. his request for such an unparalleled knowledge which might not have been given to anyone before him, was accepted” and God revealed to him the knowledge of ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūd.”<sup>40</sup>

The fact which prevents one from believing the above statement, in addition to the fact that, never in the history of science, had it so happened that a person could single-handedly invent a science and he alone could also carry it to perfection. But every science takes birth in the course of many years and gains growth over many years, taking time before becoming perfect. The importance and value of poetry is from the viewpoint of the religious leaders of Islām who always had a dislike for it. And the poets of the Pre-Islamic Era of ignorance have opposed the Islamic beliefs through poetic language, and have employed this noble art (‘Ilm Al-‘Arūd) for slandering and defaming the religious leaders of Islām. However, some of the poets stood up to defend the leaders of Islām in its

earlier phase and gave perfect replies to the enemies of religion through odes of battle. Though the Prophet of Islām (PBUH) had encouraged some Muslim poets who used to praise and appreciate Islām, and also utilized their poetry for the propagation of the true faith of Islām, yet, mostly, followed the essence of Islām, which was against the rhymed language of the monks and the self-glorification of the vainglorious poets who used to praise their innovative superstitions. It is due to these circumstances and principles that Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد], who was one of the devotees of the early days of Islam, could not be the initiator of the science of ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūḍ and if he had the knowledge of this art it was, under the influence of his association with new converts to Islām and with Indian traders; If this science was also known in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century of the Hijrī Era, it was perfected gradually during the following centuries, the second question is: Whether in the Pre-Islamic culture of Iran with all its vastness and perfection, this art was unknown to them. And whether a nation that was far ahead in the art of poetry and music and all other fine arts for centuries, and which had so great a heritage that had remained intact even after the invasion of the dreadful storms of prejudices for thousands of years, revealing an enormous aptitude and a lofty spirit, was really unaware of this art and did not possess a methodical system for arranging her poems? Had they, after the advent of Islām, following the rules of the ‘Arab poetry, begun to sing songs and set rules for this art? Could not Iranians who possessed the most perfect standards of arts and sciences in the field of music which is higher than poetry and which requires more attentiveness of thought than poetry, do much in poetry? And all this with the students who were busy with poetry and music while music itself is made for expressing the appropriate words which spring up from the above arguments. Though music was being played without words in Iranian concerts, it appears impossible that music which was being played in the Iranian concerts was without uttering words therein. The legend which has been attributed to Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] about the initiation of the science of ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūḍ in itself is the evidence of the admiration with which the contemporaries of Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] and of those who came after him had for Khalīl’s Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] unprecedented talents. But it is strange that it has not been hinted at in any place as to which field of knowledge of any other language Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] might have extracted the rules of ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūḍ. The only author who has raised any

doubt about the genuineness of the initiative of Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] is Abū Raiḥān Bīrūnī [ابوریحان بیرونی] who in his book **Taḥqīq Mālil Hind** [تحقیق ماللهند], while discussing the rules of Hindī (Indian) poetry, measures and compares them with Arabic ‘Arūḍ has raised a point which is meaningful. And what is astonishing is that this word of his has not been quoted in any other book and that it has not become widely known . But, in addition to the hint which this great scholar has given regarding the possibility of Khalīl Ibn Aḥmad [خليل ابن احمد] making use of the theoretical principles of the Indian ‘Arūḍ, had also described many examples of the similarity between ‘Arūḍ of India and ‘Arūḍ of Arabia in the **Taḥqīq Mālil Hind** [تحقیق ماللهند]. What, is clear, today, to the researchers in this science is that: In Pre-Islamic Iran there were sources of research in the arts and sciences of poetry and grammar (linguistics) which have been destroyed as a result of the ransacking and book-burning by the invaders. But, luckily, in another rich branch of the Āryān language, i.e., in Sanskrit, the essence of thought of this nation has remained alive in the form of codified and well-arranged books. What is to be stated here is that this knowledge ‘Ilm Al-‘Arūḍ, like all others, possessed ancient roots which gained perfection over centuries and passed on from one people to another, and that the people have applied these measures to their verse. They also adjusted them to their own poetry. What can be derived from what is mentioned in Bīrūnī’s book **Taḥqīq Mālil Hind** [تحقیق ماللهند] is that it can be imagined that the ‘Arabs got these measures from the poetic measures of India and, thereafter, from Iranian poetry. After the advent of Islām, the experts in this knowledge, again applied those measures to Persian poetry and the science or art of ‘Arūḍ. Arabic measures, have been used in Persian poetry for judging the correct from the incorrect.

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## Chapter II

### Enrichment of Arabic Literature through translation of Persian works

The 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> century of the Hijri Era (A.H.) witnessed an unparalleled progress made by the Muslims of the world in the scientific and intellectual spheres. Though the maximum points of these efforts had manifested during the Umayyad Caliphate, it can be said that much progress had emerged in these fields in the first century of Abbāsīd Caliphate so much so that the early Abbāsīd Caliphs were the prominent examples of these cultural pursuits, and have inspired others to follow

them. They mobilized all their talents for collecting and blending the varying cultures of different communities which had accepted Islām. Thus, a new culture emerged out of this synthesis. The striking feature of this cultural dynamism was the abundance of resources, variety in findings deep thoughts and abundance of subjects. It was a veritable renaissance of human culture and civilisation apparently unparalleled in history. The Iranian, Indian and Greek cultures mingled with Arabic culture and enriched it to an extent that had never been done before. Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] describes the factors behind this great transformation which had appeared in the life of the Arabs during Abbāsīd Caliphate. He says:

"و تمّ هذا التحوّل عن طريقين: طريق النقل و الترجمة ، و هو طريق عني به الخلفاء العبّاسيون و وزراءهم و خاصة البرامكة الي أبعد حد ممكن ، كما عني به أفراد مختلفون مثل ابن المقفع و آل نوبخت. و طريق ثانٍ لعلّه كان أوسع مجرى ، هو تعرب شعوب الشرق الأوسط و انتقالهم إلى العربية بكل ما ورثوه و ثقّفوه من فنون المعرفة."

*"The major factor through which the great changes took place was translation, to which, the Abbāsīd Caliphs and their viziers (ministers), especially the Barmakīs, paid extraordinary attention to this matter. Other court advisors like Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] (d.142 A.H./759 AD) and Āl Al-Nawbakht [آل النوبخت] also did the same. Moreover the people in the Middle East had adopted Arabic language to express their art and culture."*<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly, translation worked as the bridge between various communities which helped to bring together various civilisations and cultures after coming under the Islamic rule. It is important to emphasize the fact that it was the flow of translations from Persian into Arabic that enriched the Islamic culture into such a great extent. There are so many evidences and documents on this fact. The most important is the political influence of Iranians at the Abbāsīd court. As a consequence of this penetration, they followed an intermingling of languages and cultures between Arabs and Iranians. Such interaction had hitherto not taken place between them. The political influence behind the shaping of the

aforesaid cultural relations between the two nations was conspicuous from the very beginning.

“Among the first books translated into Arabic were the books on the royal politics of the Shah of Iran.”<sup>2</sup> According to Dr. Muḥammadī [محمدي], “the Persian books were the first works of foreign literature that were translated into Arabic. They provided new insights to the Arab rulers in the fields of politics, administration, literature and various sciences of that Era. These translations also enriched them culturally. These translated books were the oldest ones on the said subjects in the Arabic language.”<sup>3</sup> Thus the most brilliant works of Iranian thinkers were translated during the beginning of the Abbāsīd Caliphate. The translation of Iranian works into the Arabic language continued to get the support of Caliphs, ministers, writers and instructors. This movement was advanced through the diligence of the Abbāsīd Caliphs and their ministers. The scribes as well as translators also largely contributed to this movement to the maximum extent of their efforts during this golden period of Abbāsīd rulers. It is essential to mention the motives of translation as well as the materials which the Iranians translated from Persian into Arabic under different titles, did great service to Arabic literature.

### **The Motives of Translation:**

The first phase of the Abbāsīd rule brought into operation a vast acculturation process among different peoples in expanding the Arabic-Islamic ideals.

There are many topics of foreign thoughts which left indelible imprints on the cultural life of that age. The most distinguished and manifested ones among them are the advices and the admonitions. Rūḥī Bik Khālīd [روحي بك خالد] says:

"ترجمت كتب العلم والحكمة من خمس لغات أعجمية هي الفارسية (البهلوية) ، الهندية (السنسكريتية) ، اليونانية ، السريانية ، العبرانية."

*“The scientific and counselling books were translated from five languages into Arabic: Fārsī (Pahlavi), Hindī (Sanskrit), Greek, Syriac and Hebrew.”*<sup>4</sup>

Among them the most effective and attractive role was played by Persians because “The Iranian”, in the words of Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ]

”تجعل الكتاب في الصخور ، و نقشاً في الحجارة ، و حلقة مركبة في النبات ، إذا كان ذلك تاريخاً  
لأمر جسيم ، أو عهداً لأمر عظيم ، أو موعظة يرتجي نفعها... و لولا الحكم المحفوظة و الكتب  
المدونة لبطل أكثر العلم ، و لغلب سلطان النسيان سلطان الذكر.”

*“Believed in preserving important events and precious pearls of advice inscribing them on stones and rocks and leaves. If there had been no written compilations and preserved books, a major portion of human wisdom would have vanished and the evil of forgetfulness would have won over the god of memory.”<sup>5</sup>*

Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] was well aware of the powerful influence of wisdom and advices on the Iranians and its manifested effects on their behaviour.

This indicates that during the said period, the Persian books of admonition held a precious status. “The original texts were translated into Arabic after the end of the Umayyad Caliphate Era.”<sup>6</sup>

During this period, motives advanced towards the perfection of the movement of translation and made it expansive and all embracing. It is told in history of literature that, any nation which comes under the influence of an alien country, the resultant change is effected through the impact of alien ideas on human life and literature. The Iranian cultural impact on the Arabs got initiated through the translation of advices and admonitions originating from Persian, and allied languages. Translation got impetus owing to the interplay of various socio-cultural factors prevailing at that time. In order to expand the discussion, the major factors and motives underlying translated works are discussed below:

### **1- Impartial Service to Science and Literature**

There have always been people who were aware of the importance of science in removing the ill effects of ignorance, appreciate it and hold it high in esteem. This belief in science and knowledge is also a part of sound morality. So these people did not want the treasure of thought and literature to be left to carelessness and forgetfulness, because they

believed that the value of light remains attached to brilliant objects. A number of them felt that it was their duty to translate the precious advices from Persian into Arabic, so that their contemporaries and the readers of the **Holy Qur'ān** could benefit from it. Their main motivation was their love for the dissemination of knowledge and guidance through literature and culture in order that it may become a ladder for the upliftment of the intellect and for sharpening the power of thought and eloquence. In this connection Dr. Muḥammad Muḥammadi [محمد محمدی] says:

"خوب است به يك مسئله روشن در باره ترجمه اين موضوعات به عربي اشاره شود، و آن اينكه مقصود از ترجمه گفتارهای خسرو و يا توقيعات و پندهای سياسی و حکومتی منسوب به او فقط جنبه ادبی آن بوده نه جنبه علمی."

*"It would be better to refer to a clear issue regarding the translation of these topics into Arabic. The aim behind the translation of the words of Khusru Anūshīrwān [خسرو انوشیروان] and the political or governmental events and admonitions related to him was merely of a literary aspect and not scientific."*<sup>7</sup>

The mixture of the different motivations behind the said translation is a deterrent which prevents from pointing to any particular motivation. But this does not minimize the value and importance of the factors relating to love of wisdom and a service to wisdom and literature. Undoubtedly, giving service to science and intensifying the beauty of literature and unwinding the hidden intelligence of man had been the incentive for translating a great volume of these precious pearls into Arabic language [الحكمة ضالة المؤمن يأخذها حيث وجدها]. *"Knowledge is the lost object of a Mu'min (believer). He grabs it from wherever it is found."*<sup>8</sup>

It can, perhaps, be considered a characteristic point of admonitions that they ought to be **correct and encompassing**. One of the conditions of advices is that the subject should be universal, their meanings should be correct and conformed in such a manner that they become a source of advice and admonition simultaneously to Arabs, Persians, Greeks and Turks. For the same reason the Arabs also endeavoured to extract and

support the advices from whatever sources they could get. The main emphasis was on the pursuit of truth. The **Hādīth** refers to two important issues: Firstly, the intense need of a Mu'min (believer) for good advices which are supposed to be his or her last pursuit. Secondly, the sources of advices are unlimited and are not dependent on any particular person or community. Similarly, in distinguishing between good and bad and in discerning wisdom from foolishness, he picks up all the thoughts which are correct and precious in his point of view; whatever be the source. The purposes of translation are two-fold; the first is to present the writers' works in any language which can be understood by others, and the second is to respond to the literature-lovers' interest.

## **2-Social and Political Conditions During the Abbāsīd Caliphate**

Looking at the history of the Abbāsīd Caliphate, the extent of the transformation and of the change that took place in the appearance and contents during the Umayyad era is obvious. Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] says:

"دولة بني العباس فارسية خراسانية ، و دولة بني مروان عربية أعرابية."

*"The government of the Abbāsīd was Khurāsānī Persian and that of the Umayyad was Biyabani Arabī (Bedouin Arabic)."*<sup>9</sup>

The Abbāsīd followed the footsteps of the Sāsānīd. The influence of the Sāsānīd is manifested in many political and social styles of the Abbāsīd. Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] has pictured the impressionability of Banī Abbās by the Sāsānīd in these words:

"و لنبدأ بملوك الأعاجم ؛ إذ كانوا هم الأول في ذلك ، و عنهم أخذنا قوانين الملك و المملكة ، و ترتيب الخاصة و العامة ، و سياسة الرعية ، و إلزام كل طبقة خطها و الاقتصار على جديلتها."

*"We must begin our discussion with the kings of Iran who were the pioneers in this field and we took up the rules of government and administration from them. We learnt how to handle people. The management and administration were taken from them."*<sup>10</sup>

The Persian advices are a product of the social and the political conditions prevailing in the Sāsānīd period. The formation of similar conditions in the first phase of the Abbāsīd rule demanded that a similar kind of literature with similar motives and source basis began to arise as

well since advices always impress the heart and please the mind. While explaining the motive of the Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] in translation of **Kalīlat wa Dimnat** [كليلة و دمنة] from Pahlavī Persian to Arabic, Dr. Muḥammad Nabīh Hījāb [محمد نبي حجاب] says:

"لجأ إلى الأدب الرمزي ، فترجم في هذه الحقبة كتاب كليلة و دمنة ؛ ليصلح به من اعوجاج الخليفة المنصور ، و هو يرجو أن يقرأه الخليفة فيعدل عن غيه ، و أن يقرأه الشعب فيغضب لظلمه ، و إن كان ظاهر الكتاب اللهو و التسلية ."

*"He has used the proverbial literature and translated **Kalīlah wa Dimnah** [كليلة و دمنة] so as to strengthen the weakness of the Abbāsīd Caliph, Al-Manṣūr, [المنصور] and make him understand his faults. He had hoped the Caliph would read the book and turn back from his wrong path. He also hoped that the people would read it and become angry at the Caliph and his cruelty. However, the book is witty and entertaining."*<sup>11</sup>

It is clear that behind the social and political life during the Abbāsīd period, which was largely influenced by the Sāsānīd administration and their social life, there were many Iranian counsels and thoughts which Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘, Al-Bilādhurī, Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [ابن المقفع ، [البلاذري ، حسن ابن السهل] and others had translated from Persian into Arabic on politics and on collective and moral issues. "The most obvious proof of this statement is the fact that these translations were appreciated greatly by the kings, their ministers, writers and the masses."<sup>12</sup>

### **3-Response to the Demands for Arts and Intellect of the Time**

A survey of history in the field of arts clearly indicates that every period of the time had a particular cultural climate which made that era distinct from the earlier ones. The intermingling of intellectual and cultural relations of different communities, resulted in new types of literature. People with the ability to translate literature, took up the task of translating valuable books. Nowadays, much attention is paid to translation of foreign stories. This special attention is nothing but an appreciation of the art of story-writing in the modern age. It is not an exaggeration to say that the beginning of the Abbāsīd period played a very active role in the translation of Persian literature into Arabic. Those



who were responsible for the spread of literature were ministers, scribes, advisors and scholars in the court of the Abbāsīds. They gave so much reverence to these translations that it created a great interest amongst Arabs for reading them.

Another factor which led to an increased interest in the translation of Persian books into Arabic was the status of a scribe.

“The position of a scribe demanded that he must have an open culture and a deep intellect because the scribes were responsible for conveying the contents of letters meant for the rulers and for sending replies as well. Hence it was necessary for them to know Arabic thoroughly and to be well-versed in Persian literature. Thus they paid full attention to the Arabic wisdom as well as the Persian advice. They studied the history of Persians and Arabs and acquired the wise words of the orthodox Caliphs and Aktham Ibn Al-Ṣaifī [اکثم ابن الصيفي] on one hand and also learnt the great Advices of Khusru Anūshīrawān [خسرو انوشیروان] and Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر] on the other hand.”<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, the nature of the literary topics, especially that of the Persian Words of Wisdom and Advice was well in harmony with the nature of the Arabs in terms of their view of simplicity and adaptability to practical matters. In the words of Aḥmad Al-Amīn [احمد الامين] is,

"ولما نقلت الثقافات الأجنبية إلى العرب نقلوا الحكم أيضاً ، و عنوا بها ، و استساغوها أكثر مما استساغوا الفلسفة ؛ لأنها أقرب إلى عقول الأوساط ، و هي أشبه ما تكون بالأمثال التي اعتادوها."

*“When various cultures were translated into Arabic they also included the advice and made much efforts to understand them and get pleasure more than philosophy from them because the Persian proverbs were nearer to the sayings prevalent among them.”*<sup>14</sup>

Briefly it can be said that the main cause of translation of Persian books into Arabic was that they were appreciated by the Arabs of those days. Otherwise what else could have been the cause of this large number of Persian books and periodicals to be translated into Arabic?

With the passage of time, some of the translated pieces have been destroyed.

#### 4- Support Extended by the Caliphs and Ministers

The aid and incentive given by the Caliphs and their ministers to the practice of translating from Persian to Arabic was so great that it created a field of competition wherein the translators were able to exhibit their literary talents by translating the precious pearls from the treasures of Iranian culture which, of course, was difficult for many of them. The principal reason of the said support was that the heads of Arab governments, right from the Caliphs to the ministers and the advisors, were in need of learning the methods of politics and public administration. They were made aware of this necessity for they had to manage the state and public affairs. The translators had also tried to discover their own missing cultural heritage. In this way they kept track of the cultural heritage of the Iranian nation when their political, social, and military functioning had been disorganised. Regarding the requirements of the rulers of that time for the books translated from Persian, Dr. Muḥammad Muḥammadī [محمد محمدی] says:

"به این ترتیب دستاورد تجربه هائی بی شمار در باب حکومت و سیاست، و شاخه هائی از علم و ادب در دسترس حکام عرب قرار گرفت که خود مجموعه ای از دانشهای رایج زمان و بخش عمده ای از میراث فرهنگ بشری بود."

*"In this way, the Arab rulers gained a lot of experience in the matter of administration, Politics, Arts, Science which, in itself, was the sum total of the wisdom of the time, i.e. the cultural heritage of the entire humanity."*<sup>15</sup>

The Caliphs' attention to translation started from the time of Al-Manṣūr [المصور]. Dr. Muhammad Muḥammadī [محمد محمدی] says:

"منصور نخستین خلیفه ای بود که مترجمان را ارج نهاد و آنها برای او کتابهایی را از یونانی، رومی، بملوی، و سریانی ترجمه کردند."

*"Manṣūr [منصور] was the first Caliph to remunerate translators who could translate Greek, Roman, Pahlavī and Syrian books."*<sup>16</sup>

The translation of books from the Persian language got maximum attention and support especially from Caliph Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون]

[الرشيـد]. He had an unfathomable interest in Iranian literature and for this reason he selected mostly Iranian teachers for tutoring his children. Al-Kasā'ī [الكسائي] was one of them. Ibn Abī Al-Ḥadīd [ابن أبي الحديد] says: “Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] told Al-Kasā'ī [الكسائي]:

"يا علي بن حمزة ، قد أحللتك الخلّ الذي لم تكن تبلغه همّتك ، فروّنا من الأشعار أعفّها ، و من الأحاديث أجمعها لخاسن الأخلاق ، و ذاكرنا بآداب الفرس و الهند ."

*O, 'Alī Ibn Ḥamzah [علي بن حمزة] we have given you a position which you could not have reached by yourself. So collect the best of poetry and the purest of moral sayings so as to read for us. Also recite Indian and Iranian words of wisdom to us.*"<sup>17</sup>

Attention to translation reached its climax at the time of Ma'mūn Al-Rashīd [المأمون الرشيد]. “Al-Ma'mūn [المأمون] established a college for translators in Baghdād which was an extension of the Bait Al-Ḥikmah (بيت الحكمة) House of Knowledge) founded by Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد]. Ma'mūn Al-Rashīd [المأمون الرشيد] had granted much favour to this college and appointed Sahl Ibn Al-Hārūn [سهل ابن الهارون] as its principal.”<sup>18</sup> Ma'mūn Al-Rashīd [المأمون الرشيد] was very much impressed by Iranian writings and had much valued the translations there-of. Al-Mubarrad [المبرد] in his work called Al-Fāḍil [الفاضل] says:

"و يروى أن المأمون أمر معلمه الواثق بالله - و قد سأله عما يعلمه إياه - أن يعلمه كتاب الله ، جل اسمه ، و أن يقرئه عهد أردشير ، و يحفظه كتاب كليله و دمنة ."

*“It has been said when Al-Wāthiq Billāh's [الواثق بالله] teacher asked Al-Ma'mūn what to teach him, he (Al-Ma'mūn [المأمون]) replied: Teach him the Book of Allāh and the reading of the charter of Ardishīr and the recitation of Kalīlah wa Dimnah [كليله و دمنة].”*<sup>19</sup>

The ministers in the court of the Abbāsīd Caliphs too worked in order to enrich Persian and to accelerate translations. They always wanted to revive the works of their forefathers and to show respect to them by renewing and spreading their literature. They intended to educate people with these wise counsels so that the government could function on these policies. In fact, the revival of the said counsels was like giving life to the past glory of Iran which had vanished through time. Once it is recollected that the Barmakīs used to collect around them everyone that

was able to serve the Iranian culture and the Sāsānīd heritage. The same motivation caused them to embrace Abān Al-Lāḥiqī [ابان اللاحقي] when he versified **Kalīlah wa Dimnah** [كليلة و دمنة] for them and gave him and his family all benefits and opportunities. The motive of Yaḥyā Al-Barmakī [يحيى البرمكي], Al-Khālīd's [الخالد], son who gave court honour to Faḍl Ibn Al-Sahl [فضل ابن السهل] was that he had translated a book from Persian to Arabic for him. When Yaḥyā Al-Barmakī [يحيى البرمكي] found out that Faḍl Ibn Al-Sahl [فضل ابن السهل] had understood the contents of that book well and had translated it so beautifully, he was surprised at his talents. It is important to know that most of the Caliphs of that era showed their concern to Persian Wisdom and Advices and acted the same as Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] and Ma'mūn Al-Rashīd [مأمون الرشيد]. Moreover, most of the ministers, like Barmakīs and those belonging to the family of Al-Faḍl [الفضل] were Iranians and they never lagged behind in serving and supporting the Iranian culture and its propagators. One should realize the significant influence of the Abbāsīd Caliphs and ministers on the movement of translation from Persian into Arabic.

#### **The prominent Iranian translators and their works :**

Everyone who considers the personality of those who had participated in the movement of translation in that period, has no doubt that the pioneers in the field of translation and its preservers were Iranian. There are two reasons for this claim:

1- The job of translating Persian language to Arabic required people who had a deep knowledge of both these languages and, for various reasons, they happened to be Iranians because, though the Arabs were successful warriors and expert politicians and also had much attachment to their religion and language they did not have the urge to learn the Persian language.

2- As it has been mentioned under 'The Motives of translation' the most important factor which propelled the translators to work was the motive of reviving Iranian civilisation, thought and culture. Obviously, Iranians were more merited for it.

Al-Nadīm [النديم] has, in his book Al-Fihrist [الفهرست], listed names of those who had translated books from Persian into Arabic. His list has more than twenty names of those that played an outstanding part in the educational and cultural movement in the Abbāsīd Era. The persons who were named by Al-Nadīm [النديم] have translated different topics. Therefore, this section is focussed on the most reputed translators and the titles translated by them in the field of literature. In this brief survey special attention will be paid to the conditions of time and place which each of these authors survived and how they were influenced by the dominant atmosphere.

### 1-Abdullāh Ibn Al-Muqaffa': [عبدالله ابن المقفع]

Abū 'Amr 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابوعمر عبدالله ابن المقفع], was an Iranian whose original name was Rūzbih [روزبه], son of Dādwhāh [دادويه]. His father had acquired the title 'Abdullāh Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [عبدالله ابن المقفع] when he was incharge of the public treasury in the city of Jor in Fārs province. He drew some amount from the king's treasury for his own use. He was caught and whipped for this lapse. Since then his hands started trembling and could not be cured. Therefore he was called Al-Muqaffa' [المقفع]. He was brought up in the Zoroastrian faith. But, he joined the office of the Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Manṣūr [المنصور], and after sometime he converted himself to Islām. There is a witty story about his accepting the faith of Islām which shows that he was very far-sighted and a strict follower of his Faith. There was a very friendly relationship between Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] and 'Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد], a scribe in the service of Marwān Ibn Al-Muḥammad [مروان ابن محمد]. Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] served as secretary in the court of a few rulers. They included Yazīd Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Hubairah [يزيد ابن عمر بن الهيرة] (the last Umayyad governor in Kirmān), and 'Īsā Ibn 'Alī, [عيسى ابن علي] (another governor of Kirmān).

As the representative of 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Alī [عبد الله ابن علي], he imposed his conditions upon Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] the 'Abbāsīd Caliph and displayed so much intelligence that there was no way for Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] but to make use of him to act against Abdullāh Ibn 'Alī [عبد الله ابن علي]. Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] was looking forward to an opportunity to punish him and also to enlist him as the head of enemy's vanguard. Karl

Bruklaman [كارل بروكلمان] says: “Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] ordered the governor of Baṣrah, Sufyān Ibn Mu‘āwīyah Al-Muhallabī [سفيان ابن معاوية المهلبی] to execute Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] in the year (142 A.H. / 759 A.D.).”<sup>20</sup> But it is understood from the words of Al-Nadīm [النديم] that Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] was not killed at the instance of Al-Manṣūr [المنصور]. He says:

"فلما قتله سفيان بن معاوية حرقاً بالنار ، وقع ذلك من المنصور ، بالموفق ، فلم يطلب بشأه و طلّ دمه ."

*“When Sufyān Ibn Mu‘āwīyah [سفيان بن معاوية] burned Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] in fire and killed him, Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] was observing the scene with tearful eyes. Al-Manṣūr [المنصور] did not demand blood-money from the executor and so his blood went in vain.”*<sup>21</sup>

The question that arises here is: How can a Caliph take action against a killer who had acted according to his (Caliph’s) wish?

Our point of consideration is that, Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع], in the words of Al-Nadīm [النديم] “was one of the translators who was an expert in both the languages and also an elocutionist.”<sup>22</sup> This is not the sum total of his abilities. It can be said that he added new gems to the crown of the Arabic-Islamic culture and beautified it, by his translations and his works. This culture is incessantly indebted to the new wealth of flourishing and blossoming which Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] bestowed upon it.

**Translations of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘:** Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] translated a number of Persian books related to royal politics (diplomacy) and socio-moral counsels into Arabic. His literary works, in the words of Muḥammad Ghufrānī Al-Khurāsānī [محمد غفراني الخراساني] is:

"بزرگترین کوره ای است که دو فرهنگ عربی و فارسی در آن ذوب شده اند و بزرگترین رودی است که جریان فارسی و عربی، یکسان در آن جاری است ."

*“The biggest furnace in which the two cultures of Persian and Arabic have melted in it and the biggest river in which Persian and Arabic flow together in equal measure in it.”*<sup>23</sup>

It has been mentioned in Al-Fihrist [الفهرست] that: “Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] translated a number of Persian books on literature including

(**Kalīlah wa Dimnah** [كليلة و دمنة], **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير], **Adab Al-Ṣaghīr** [ادب الصغير], and **Al-Yatīmah fī Al-Rasā'il** [اليتيمة في الرسائل]).<sup>24</sup> The following are some of the other books of literature translated by him :

A- **Khudāināmah** [خدائنامه]:

Al-Nadīm says: “ this book has been named **Sīyar Al-Mulūk Al-Furas** [سير الملوك الفرس] after translation.”<sup>25</sup> Noeldeke [نلدكه] says that “Unfortunately Ibn Al-Muqaffa’s [ابن المقفع] translation of the book **Khudāināmah** [خدائنامه] has disappeared (lost). Similarly the original Pahlavī version of this book is also not traceable except fragments in the works of the later writers, especially in **Al-Aghānī** [الاغاني] of Ḥamzat Al-Iṣfahānī [حمزة الاصفهاني] wherein it is mentioned that the date of its writing goes back to (350 A.H.).”<sup>26</sup>

B- **Ā'in Nāmah** [آئين نامه]: It contains the words and rituals of kings.

C- **Kitāb Al-Tāj fī Sīrah Anūshīrwān** [كتاب التاج في سيرة انوشيروان].

D- **Tansar or Tansarnāmah** [تنسار يا تنسارنامه]. It should be emphasised that only a little part of the total translations of Ibn Al-Muqaffa’s [ابن المقفع] is available today which includes **Kalīlah wa Dimnah**, **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr**, **Al-Adab Al-Ṣaghīr** and **Al-Yatīmah fī Al-Rasā'il**

[كليلة و دمنة ، الادب الكبير ، الادب الصغير و اليتيمة في الرسائل] .

From his other works only some scattered and worn out fragments have remained and most of his original works have disappeared.

## 2- **Muḥammad Ibn Al-Jahm Al-Barmakī**

[محمد ابن الجهم البرمكي]

Biography of Ibn Al-Jahm [ابن الجهم] is in the era of ambiguity. In the view of Karl Brukalmann [كارل بروكلمان]: “He was one of the contemporaries of Ibn Al-Muqaffa’s [ابن المقفع] who was also killed in the year (142 A.H./759 A.D.).”<sup>27</sup> Ibn Al-Khallikān [ابن الخلكان] who lived during the reign of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph Mu‘taṣim [معتمد] who became Caliph in (218 A.H.) says:

"و كان المعتصم قد اشتد غيظه على محمد بن الجهم البرمكي ، فأمر بضرب عنقه ، فلما رأى السيف ، قال ابن أبي دواد ذلك ، و أنه لا حيلة له فيه ، و قد شد برأسه ، و أقيم في التّطع ، و هز له السيف ، قال ابن أبي دواد للمعتصم: و كيف تأخذ ماله إذا قتله؟ قال : و من يحول بيني و بينه ؟ قال : يأبى الله تعالى ذلك ، و يأباه رسوله (ص) و يأباه عدل أمير المؤمنين ... و خلص محمد."

*"Mu'taṣim became very angry with Muḥammad Ibn Jahm Al-Barmakī [محمد ابن جهم البرمكي] and ordered Ibn Abī Al-Dawād [ابن أبي دواد] to execute him. But he was in favour of Barmakī, yet he saw no escape as Barmakī's neck was on the gallows and a sword had also been raised for beheading him. Therefore he told Mu'taṣim [معتصم]: "If you kill him, how can you obtain his wealth? Mu'taṣim [معتصم] said: Who can dare prevent me from it? He replied: God Almighty prevents this deed, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) has disallowed this deed; and the sense of justice of your honour will also disallow it. This pleased him and Muḥammad [محمد] was saved."*<sup>28</sup>

It seems Ibn Al-Jahm [ابن الجهم] had an ill-humoured nature and a disreputable character. The effects of this humour were manifested in his lust for position, narrow-mindedness, unreasonable demands and sins. These habits were seen amply on his heinous face. It is well expressed in the words of Ibn Al-Qutaibah [ابن القتيبة].

"ذكر ثمامة محمد بن الجهم فقال : لم يطمع أحداً قط في ماله إلا ليشغله بالطمع فيه عن غيره، و لاشفع لصديق ، و لاتكلم في حاجة متحرّم به ، إلا ليلقن المسئول حجة منع ، و ليفتح على السائل باب حرمان."

*"Thamāmah [ثمامة] had described Muḥammad Ibn Al-Jahm [محمد ابن الجهم] in this way: He never allowed anybody to have a look at his property except when he wanted to divert his attention; he never recommended for a friend, he never responded to the need of even a dear friend. He always exhibited his stinginess and disappointed even the alms-seekers."*<sup>29</sup>

He belongs to the Barmakīs who held high positions in the reign of Abbāsīd. This is a part of their fabrications. Al-Nadīm [الناديم] considers him "one of those writers who had translated Persian books into Arabic and entitled him as one of the Iranian translators."<sup>30</sup>



**Translated Works of Muḥammad Ibn Jahm Al-Barmakī** [محمد ابن جهم البرمكي] "It is understood from Brukalman that Ibn Al-Jahm [ابن الجهم] translated some books."<sup>31</sup> But it is indisputable that he was the translator of **Khudāināmah** [خدائنامه] which had also been translated by Ibn Al-Muqaffa [ابن المقفع]. Ḥamzat Al-Iṣfahānī [حمزة الاصفهاني] says: "When he wanted to write the history of Iranian kings, he found eight references in this regard. One of them was **Sīyar Al-Mulūk Al-Furas** [سير الملوك الفرس], a translated work of Muḥammad Ibn Jahm Al-Barmakī [محمد ابن جهم البرمكي]."<sup>32</sup>

### 3- Zādawaih Ibn Shāhwaiḥ Iṣfahānī

[زادويه ابن شاهويه اصفهاني]

Zādawaih Ibn Shāhwaiḥ Iṣfahānī [زادويه ابن شاهويه اصفهاني] was one of those who had translated Persian works into Arabic. According to Brukalman, "he was one of the contemporaries of Ibn Al-Muqaffa" [ابن المقفع].<sup>33</sup> Ḥamzat Al-Iṣfahānī [حمزة الاصفهاني] says: "Zādawaih [زادويه] son of Shāhwaiḥ [شاهويه], is one of those persons who have provided the Arabic translation of **Khudāināmah** [خدائنامه] which was titled **Sīyar Al-Mulūk Al-Furas** [سير الملوك الفرس] after translation."<sup>34</sup>

### 4- Aḥmad Al-Bilādhurī [احمد البلاذري]

Aḥmad Al-Bilādhurī [احمد البلاذري] is Yaḥyā Ibn Al-Jābir's [يحيى ابوعباس ابوبكر] son and his nicknames are Abū 'Abbās Abū Bakr [ابو الحسن] and Abū Al-Ja'far [ابو الجعفر]. "His respected grandfather Jābir [جابر] was a scribe in the service of Al-'Khaṣīb' [الخصيب], the governor of Miṣr (Egypt). He himself belonged to the Iranian origin."<sup>35</sup> Aḥmad Al-Bilādhurī [احمد البلاذري] was brought up in Baghdād and was one of the advisers of 'Abbāsīd Caliph Al-Mutawakkil 'Alallāh [المتوكل على الله].

Al-Nadīm [النديم] says:

"وكان شاعراً راوية، و وسوس آخر أيامه، فشغل في البيمارستان و مات فيه، و سبب وسوسته أنه شرب تمر البلاذر على غير معرفة."

*“He was a Rāwī poet. In the last days of his life, he had developed brain disability and died in hospital. The reason of his temptation was that he had an Bilādhur’s dates.”*<sup>36</sup>

Al-Yāqūt [الياقوت] says: “Ahmad Al-Bilādhurī [احمد البلاذري] died at the end of Al-Mu‘tamid’s [المعتمد] reign.”<sup>37</sup>

According to Ismā‘īl Al-Baghdādī [اسماعيل البغدادي], “his death and the death of the ‘Abbāsīd Caliph was simultaneous, that is, (279 A.H.).”<sup>38</sup>

Al-Bilādhurī [البلاذري] left some translation works behind. Al-Nadīm [النديم] considered “Al-Bilādhurī [البلاذري] one of the translators of Persian literature into Arabic”<sup>39</sup> and thus it is obvious that he did translate some Persian books into Arabic though “none of these translations are now traceable.”<sup>40</sup> But This is an established fact that he had translated the adventures of Ardishīr [اردشير] into Arabic verse. This version is also not available.

#### **5- Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [حسن ابن السهل]:**

Al-Ḥasan [الحسن] was the son of Al-Sahl’s [السهل]. Al-Jahishyārī [الجهشياري] in the biography of Al-Ḥasan’s [الحسن] brother Faḍl Ibn Sahl Dhurrīyāsatain [فضل ابن سهل ذوالرياستين], mentioned that he was from a village in Al-Sīb Al-A‘lā [السَّيب الاعلى] known as Al-Ṣābirnītā [الصابر نيتا]. Al-Jahishyārī [الجهشياري] narrates “how Al-Sahl [السهل], father of Ḥasan and Al-Faḍl [الفضل], who was a Dhurrīyāsatain [ذوالرياستين], converted to Islām by Salām Ibn Al-Faraj [سلام ابن الفرج], who was a slave of Yahyā Al-Barmakī [يحيى البرمكي], son of Al-Khālīd [الخالد]. Al-Sahl [السهل] was very intimate with the Barmakīs and obtained all opportunities and facilities from them. His position among the Barmakīs gave him opportunities whereby he pushed his sons Al-Sahl [السهل] and Al-Faḍl [الفضل] and Al-Ḥasan [الحسن] forward. Faḍl Ibn Sahl [فضل ابن سهل] came into the service of Faḍl Ibn Al-Ja‘far [فضل ابن الجعفر] and served him faithfully. Similarly Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [حسن ابن السهل] served Al-‘Abbās [العباس], Faḍl Ibn Al-Yahyā’s [فضل ابن يحيى] son. Al-Ma’mūn [المأمون] made his brother Al-Ḥasan [الحسن] his minister after the killing of Faḍl Ibn Sahl Dhurrīyāsatain [فضل ابن سهل ذوالرياستين] and married his daughter Pūrān [پوران]. It is said that

Al-Ḥasan [الحسن] remained minister until he became a lunatic. Apparently he died around (235A.H.).”<sup>41</sup>

Al-Nadīm [الندیم] observes: “Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [حسن ابن السهل] was one of the letter-writers whose works have been mentioned in **Ikhtiyār al-Manẓūm wa al-Manthūr** [اختيار المنظوم والمنثور] by Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Al-Ṭaifūr [احمد ابن ابي طاهر الطيفور] and **‘Iqd Al-Farīd** [عقد الفريد] by Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdrabbih [احمد بن محمد ابن عبدربه].”<sup>42</sup>

Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] mentioned in **Istiṭālat al-Fahm** [استطالة الفهم] that “Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [حسن ابن السهل] had translated a part of **Jāwīdān-i-Khirad** [جاويدان خرد] from Persian into Arabic.”<sup>43</sup> Anyhow, Ḥasan Ibn Al-Sahl [حسن ابن السهل], according to Al-Nadīm [الندیم], was “one of those who had translated Persian literature into Arabic.”<sup>44</sup>

Many books on logic, Mā ba’d Al-Ṭabī‘āt [ما بعد الطبيعات] (metaphysics), medicine, engineering, arithmetic, astronomy, astrology, chemistry, physics etc. were translated from Persian into Arabic by the above mentioned Iranians. Their translated volumes covered various sciences of great countries and the works of all the prominent scholars of the ancient countries and cities like India, Greece and Alexandria etc. As these scientific and philosophical works came into the hands of Iranian Muslims, they studied them and did a systematic research on them. In this way, they became acquainted with Greek, Indian, and Iranian sciences. After extensive discussions and experiences they invented new techniques and terminology. In this way Iranian scholars did a great service to the Arabic language and literature through several works of ‘translation’ mentioned above.

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### Chapter III

#### The Contributions of Iranian scholars to Arabic Prose

Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs had relations with the neighbouring tribes like the Tubba‘ān [تبعان] in the south and the Mundharīyān [منذران] and Ghassānīyān [غسانيان] in the north of the Arabian peninsula and because of trading somehow, they established minimal correspondence with one another which benefited them mutually. However, the Arabs in general were comparatively less acquainted with education. Their literacy rate was low and their writings were insignificant. Ibn Al-Qutaibah [ابن القتيبة] remarks that “at the time of the advent of Islam only seventeen males and very few females knew how to write.”<sup>1</sup>

Quraish [قريش] was the most powerful tribe among the Arabs but the number of literates was very low among them, and despite the progress made by Iran and Byzantium in the field of art at that time, writing did not exist among the Arabs.

Some of the researchers like Theodor Nicholson believed that “during the dark days Arabs were of course aware of poetry or verse and they were also singing songs but they had not understood the techniques of prose writing and had not benefited from it, because, in every community, verse precedes prose. Since poetry is the language of dreams and prose is the language of the mind, there is no doubt that the development of dreams in individuals and communities always begins before the development of mind.”<sup>2</sup>

Some others like Dr. Zakī Mubārak [زكي مبارك] believes:

"و في ذلك العصر كان النثر الفني موجوداً عند أكثر الأمم التي جاورت العرب أو عرفوها كالفرس و الهنود و المصريين و اليونان ، و ليس بمعقول أن يكون لتلك الأمم نثر الفني قبل الميلاد بأكثر من خمسة قرون ثم لا يكون للعرب نثر فني بعد الميلاد بخمسة قرون."

*“That Arabs of the pre-Islamic period also knew the techniques of prose, because according to him, it is unbelievable that while the Iranians, Indians, Egyptians and the Greeks knew prose writing since the fifth century B.C; Arabs did not know the same in the fifth century A.D.”*<sup>3</sup>

Anīs Al-Muqaddasī, [انيس المقدسي] one of the contemporary ‘Arab researchers, has discussed and sought out this issue in his precious book ‘Taṭawwur Al-Asālīb Al-Nathrīyah’ [تطور الاساليب النثرية].

He has presented useful information on the basis of authentic sources like the ones quoted by ancient writers, or as derived from the **Holy Qur’ān**. The main points of the said book are as below:

1- “The age of ignorance preceding the advent of Islām did possess a kind of rhymed prose which was used by the priestly class and religious institutions and hence it was known as ‘Saj’-i-Kuhhān’ [سجع كهّان]. It was of soft style which resembled the Sūrahs (chapters) of the **Holy Qur’ān**, especially the preliminary Sūrahs. And it was this similarity and



proximity which had made some of the Arabs allege that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was a Kāhin (soothsayer). This rhymed prose was a link between poetry and simple prose but had not at all attained the status of a standard prose writing.

2- It can be deduced that in this period there was a kind of simple prose which was devoid of all bounds and superficialities prevalent at the various socio-economic levels of the Arabian life, the examples of which can be seen in the prose of the early days of Islām. Nevertheless, Arabic prose writing in this age, whatever its style or custom, did not make any significant progress nor did it have any prominent influence upon Arabic life. During the entire first century of the Hijri (Islamic) Era, Arabic prose did not lose its simplicity. Writers expressed themselves in the most simple words, prevalent phrases and compositions. They did not make any concerted effort to make their writing attractive to classify their deep thoughts. In fact, Arabic prose, in those days was still passing through its natural course and did not possess any formal rules, nor did they deem it necessary to devise any linguistic convention.”

**The Period Of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd & Ibn Al-Muqaffa’** [عبد الحميد و ابن المقفع]

At the beginning of the second century, A.H. Arabic prose went through a change as a result of which the art of writing entered a new phase and adopted a method to which the Arabs were not yet accustomed. This great revolution left a deep impact on the Arabic literature during the life-time of two great writers viz. ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ [ابن المقفع]. “Arab historians and authors have also considered these two scholars, especially ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد], the most influential agents of the said change.”<sup>5</sup>

‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد], who is always mentioned as a writer, had Iranian disposition and was one of the secretaries in the court of the Caliph Marwān Ibn Muḥammad [مروان ابن محمد], the last Umayyad Caliph. “This great writer, through his new treatises written in a lively style, attained a high rank in the art of writing and became the founder of a

novel school of Arabic prose and **Sabk Al-Ḥamīdī** (mode of Ḥamīdī سبك الحميدي) also became famous in the history of Arabian literature.”<sup>6</sup>

“‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] was one of the Iranians residing in Anbār [أنبار]. From there he went to Syria and began writing first under Sālīm, the secretary to Hishām Ibn ‘Abd Al-Malik [هشام ابن عبد الملك], who (Sālīm) was also an Iranian. Then, when Marwān Ibn Muḥammad [مروان ابن محمد] was appointed chief of Armenia, [ارمنستان] he joined him and went with him to Armenia. Thereafter when Marwān Ibn Muḥammad [مروان ابن محمد] became a Caliph, ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] was in his service as before, and was working as secretary in the court of the Caliph. But he was killed due to his loyalty to the Caliph.”<sup>7</sup>

All the Islamic authors who have written about ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] have something to say about his eloquence and his ability in the art of writing and have pointed out the new style introduced by him in Arabic prose. The method initiated by ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] in Arabic prose writing was so fresh and novel that some of the writers have considered this period as the age in which the art of Arabic writing actually began.

About his ability Ibn ‘Abdrabbih [ابن عديريه] said:

[كان عبد الحميد اول من فتح اكمام البلاغة و سهل طرقها و فك رقاب الشعر.]<sup>8</sup>

“ ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] was the first one who introduced eloquence (in prose) and simplified it. Similarly, he freed the Arabic verses from the traditional bondage.”

And Ibn Al-Nadīm [ابن النديم] said :

[اخذ المترسلون و لطريقته لزموا؛ و هو الذي سهل سبل البلاغة في الترسل.]<sup>9</sup>

“ ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] was the one who made the path of eloquence easy in respect of the art of letter-writing. The scribes imitated his style in correspondence.”

Others have also said similar things about him. ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] became so well known and his prestige spread to such an extent that it was reflected in the works of ‘Arab writers. ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] uplifted Arabic literature, which was the consequence of the

simple ‘Arab environment of that time and decorated it with the beauty and spirit of words that, appear very natural and charming. Moreover he followed special norms and traditions in correspondence. Consequently, he introduced a new method of writing which was very new for the ‘Arabs and proved a novelty for them. Obviously, it also astonished his contemporaries and made them praise it. It also made scribes and correspondents imitate his style. In this way its importance and popularity was reflected in Arabic literature. A research into the factors leading to this change will bring to light many points in the history of Iranian and Islamic culture. It is certain that the birth of the technique of Arabic prose writing is the result of several factors which should be sought both in the change which had taken place within the language and out of its interaction with the ‘Arab environment. Merely the study of the history of ‘Arabs and a research into the quality of the Arabic prose in the pre-Islamic as well as the beginning of Islamic Era will not be enough to show the origin and the causes of it. Rather it is necessary to refer to the history and civilisation of Iran and, similarly, to the civil administration of Islām and its historical roots. Fortunately the authorities in history too offer us valuable information. Historian Abū Hilāl Al-‘Askarī [ابو هلال العسكري] is of the opinion that the softness which ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] employed in Arabic prose, became the cause of this great change which was derived from the softness of Persian language and literature. In this connection he says: “Anyone who uses each and every word of his language in the finest possible way gains a similar proficiency when he works for any other language. Don’t you observe that the writer ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] who has left ideas in the art of writing for the future generation had extracted the beauties from the Fārsī language and then turned them into Arabic?”<sup>10</sup>

In order to understand the extent of Persian influence on Arabic prose, it is necessary to look at the method of Iranian writing in the Sāsānīd Era in terms of the details available from historical sources.

### **Methods of Writing in Sāsānīd Period**

In the Sāsānīd period the status of scribes and secretaries at government levels were meant for nobles and high class persons. Yet it should be borne in mind that mere nobility of race was not enough for attaining the said status. Appropriate ability and knowledge in the field of writing was a must. Therefore, for taking the responsibility of a secretarial job, it was necessary to learn the essentials at a particular academy and to acquire the needed fluency in speaking and writing. One of the reforms made by Khusru Anūshīrwān [خسرو انوشیروان] 79A.H./531A.D.] after the removal of the disturbance of Mazdak [مزدك] was “the order that the children of the noble class, especially those who had become orphans after the killing of their fathers, should be sent to centres of learning so that they could learn knowledge and culture and become fit for working at the court.”<sup>11</sup> As mentioned by Firdausī [فردوسي], Ardishīr Bābakān [اردشیر بابکان] 41A.H./226A.D.] had made “it a rule always to protect and safeguard the best writers in his court. He used to send those who were very weak in penmanship to the charged affairs of the governors.”<sup>12</sup> From this it is understood that the secretaries were graded according to the level of their ability.

Historian Aḥmad Ibn ‘Alī Al-Qalqashandī [احمد ابن علي القلقشندي] has elaborated on this point:

"و كانت الملوك الفرس لرفعة رتبة الكتابة عندهم تجمع أحداث الكتاب و نواشئهم المعترضين لأعمال الملك و يأمرهم رؤساء الكتابة بامتحانهم فمن رضي أقرّ بالباب ليستعان به ، ثم يأمر الملك بضمهم إلي العمال ، و استعملهم في الأعمال ، و ينقلهم في الخدم علي قدر طبقاتهم من حال إلي حال ، حتي ينتهي بكل واحد منهم إلي ما يستحقه من المرتبة ."

*“Since the kings of Iran appreciated the job of secretaries and were giving them high positions, they expected those who wanted to enter the court to be subjected initially to a test by the court managers and if found fit they were first sent to obtain local knowledge. Thereafter, they were promoted gradually from one post to another until they reached the highest rank in the court of the state.”<sup>13</sup>*

Apart from some special knowledge which was essential from the technical viewpoint, the secretaries of the court were also required to be acquainted sufficiently with contemporary art and culture.

## Aptitude for Art

The writers of the Sāsānīd period, especially the court scribes, have imparted distinction to their works. Accordingly they have given greater attention not only to the beauty of paper, ink and attractiveness of letters but have also endeavoured to hide the meaning skillfully behind the words they used in a novel manner.

This enthusiasm for art had attracted the attention of 'Arabs in the Islamic era in a big way, as has been pointed out by some authors of that period. Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] in his book 'Al-Ḥaiwān [الحيوان] has quoted Ibrāhīm Sindī [ابراهيم سندی] who showed his displeasure over the punctilious attention by Zanādiqah (زنادقة), whose beauty of letters had encouraged the calligraphers; for selection of fine and shining paper as well as using black and bright inks:

"فاني لم ار كورق كتبهم ورقا ولا كالخطوط التي فيها خطا."

*"Till today I have not found the paper quality and calligraphy writing which is found in his books."*<sup>14</sup>

In the Islamic history pertaining to the Sāsānīd period one often find comments about certain counsels and exhortations having been written in gold water. It is well known that Khusru Anūshīrwān [خسرو انوشيروان] had passed orders that the admonitions and counsels of Būdharjumihr [بودرجمهر] should be written in gold ink. "It was the command of Khusru Parvīz [خسرو پرويز] that sheets in which requests for state finance submitted to him be moistened with rose water and saffron as Khusru Parvīz [خسرو پرويز] did not like smell of ordinary paper."<sup>15</sup>

The progress made in art and painting in this period is the best example of his love for art and is one of the consequences of it. In some of the books which reached the Arabs during Sāsānīd period, samples of this elegant taste can be found.

From the qualities narrated by Ḥamzat Al-Isfahānī [حمزة الاصفهاني], it appears that these pictures illustrating the text were made very painstakingly and they personified all the details. Ṭabarī [طبري] describes a book depicting the capture of Afshīn [افشين 226A.H/841A.D.] (one of

the famous Muslim commanders) which contained Kufrīyāt (blasphemy) [كفریات]. This book was found at his residence and it was decorated with gold, gems and brocade. “It was the book Arzhang [ارژنگ] which was considered one of the sound proofs of his atheism and heresy. It was attributed to Mānī [مانی] and was well known as a masterpiece of painting and designing in that period.”<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the outward beauty they also endeavoured to embellish the composition of text material with good phrases and meaningful words which did not violate the rules and regulations of good writing. That is why their works appear as eloquent and as graceful as possible. Very often the treatises and sermons, which were believed to be of the Sāsānīd period were accepted as most eloquent during the Islamic Era. As mentioned, Firdausī [فردوسی] too has regarded fluency and calligraphy as the two qualifications of a scribe (Dabīr [دبیر]). Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ], while comparing Arabic and Iranian eloquence together, has given preference to the Arab eloquence as it was improvised and extempored; even as Iranian eloquence had reached a high standard as a consequence of reflection, planning, composing, compilation, learning and training.<sup>17</sup>

It is equally worth mentioning that in respect of letter-writing there existed a treatise belonging to the Pahlavī Era.

Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] also speaks about a book named Kārwand [کاروند] in this context; and from it, one gathers that Iranian books were known in his time too.

Sometimes, in the Arabic works, some texts which contain the rules of writing, also found in Pahlavī books and treatises can be encountered. One of them is a passage in detail quoted by Ibn Al-Qutaibah from **Tāj Nāmāh** [تاج نامه] concerning the duties of a scribe. It also contains some rules particularly about the art of writing and correspondence. The following statement is taken originally from Ibn Al-Qutaibah [ابن القتيبة]:

"و إذا فكرت فلا تعجل، و إذا كتبت فلا تعذر، و لا تستعين بالفضول فانها علاوة علي الكفاية، و لا تقصرون عن التحقيق فانها هجنة بالمقالة، و لا تلبس كلاماً بكلام و لا تباعدن معني عن معني. اكرم كتابك عن ثلاث: خضوع يستخفه، و انتشار يشبهه، و معان تقعد به. و اجمع الكثير ما تريد في قليل مما تقول. و ليكن بسطة كتابك علي السوقه كبسطة ملك الملوك علي الملوك. و لا يكن ما

تملك عظيماً و ما تقول صغيراً، فانما كلام الكاتب علي مقدار الملك فاجعله عالياً كعلوه فانقا  
كفوقه...<sup>18</sup>

*“ When you ponder, then do not make haste; and when you writ down something, then do not plead excuse. Do not seek help from superfluous people because it is an exercise in vanity. Do not show negligence in research because it is a flaw in your treatise. Do not play words with words and do not move a meaning away from its original meaning. Honour your writing by three things: it should be covered by sincerity; it should be diffused properly and the meaning (or concept) should properly be maintained. Gather many things and say it in short. But the presentation of your writing to the readers should be like the presentation of a king to his subjects. But whatever great or small you say, the words of the writer is only like the capability of the king who can make a great thing more great.”*

For comparison, this evidence will be presented in the later part of this chapter.

From all these arguments it can be understood that, in the Sāsānīd Era, the art of writing and exposition contained rules which were in vogue and writers were learning them from such books and treatises available at that time. It is also known that among the books of the Sāsānīd Era which had reached the ‘Arabs there were treatises which existed independently as well as in books like **Tāj Nāmah** [تاج نامه]. Therefrom these passages found their way into Arabic literature. Professor Christianen comments on formal prose, stylish writing and the softness of style in the treatises of the Sāsānīd Era is reproduced here: “The Iranians have, from ancient times, given much importance to their apparent considerations and beauty. Official orders and special letters ought to be always written with artificial softness and in appropriate style. In the writings of this age words of wisdom, moral sermons, religious discourses, poems and riddles were woven together to create fine and elegant anthologies. So much effort and diligence was made in the manner of writing and addressing these letters that the position of both the writer and the receiver of those letters could be very well

ascertained merely by looking at them. In the letters which were exchanged between the Sāsānīd kings and an officer or with any neighboring ruler showed the same tendency and liking for the style of expression and the beauty of words which is seen more clearly in literary books of Pahlavī era and in coronation addresses.”<sup>19</sup>

### Arabic Prose and Iranian Secretaries

Now that some information is gained about the art of writing in Iran in the Sāsānīd era, it is time to look at the Arabic prose and the factors which played an effective role in its progress. It is stated that in the second century of the Islamic era a big change had taken place in Arabic prose writing as a consequence of which the foundation of prose technique became very sound and it made further progress. Likewise it can be said that, according to the historians of Arabic literature, the most influential source of the said change was ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd Kātib [عبد الحميد كاتب]. According to Abū Hilāl Al-‘Askarī [ابو هلال العسكري], ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] through his mastery over Persian and his acquaintance with its styles, succeeded in inventing his own supple writing in Arabic. To understand the extent of the penetration of the Iranian element into Arabic prose in order to give a new form to it, one has to look into the history of Arabic prose in the first century of the Islamic era.

The first century of the Islamic era was, on the whole, not so good for the progress of Arabic prose and for the advancement of the art of writing, because, firstly, the upper class Arabs did not give importance to the job of writing and correspondence, and were of the opinion that learning was appropriate for their subordinates. Secondly, the conservative people and the ascetics among Muslims also did not consider the work of composing and compiling praiseworthy. Although, in this period, some of the methods which later on took the form of knowledge like **Qirā’at**, **Tafsīr**, **Fiqh**, and **Ḥadīth**, [قراءات ،

[تفسير ، فقه ، و حديث] etc. were being discussed in religious circles, yet they



were being narrated orally like the traditions and poems as in the days of ignorance (pre-Islamic), and had not been transformed into compositions and compilations. In this period, the only viable center of the art of writing was the court of the Caliphate which slowly developed with its organisational growth and became a great centre for writers. "The most important elements which caused the advancement and transformation of Arabic prose were the secretaries of the court. Since Arabic was the official language of the state they increased its influence and domination day by day and prepared it for further progress."<sup>20</sup> "In the machinery of the Caliphate, apart from the fact that the organisation of the court and the secretariat were on the lines of the Iranian constitution, these organisations grew under the observation and influence of the Iranian secretaries and, their source of knowledge or, in other words, their culture too."<sup>21</sup> This is how artistic Arabic prose-writing was born and thereafter began its progress towards substantial improvement by following the routes through which Iranian culture and literature had entered Arabic prose.

For further clarification, it will be fruitful to pay some attention to the works of two writers, namely, 'Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] who had brought about a similar change in Arabic prose and also look at some prose selections from their works. When study one of the treatises of 'Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] and compare them with one of the works of earlier Arabs or their contemporaries, one will find a distinct difference between the two. But if one also want to ascertain the causes which brought forth this difference, one has to undertake a more serious and deeper study. The reason for this approach is that the difference between their penmanship and that of predecessors is not limited only to a few aspects of writing. This difference is a major one and can only be understood after a thoughtful study of different works. In the works of 'Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] the elegance of art, the beauty of style, fineness of phraseology and the variety of meanings make their works much more superior and distinct from the old Arab writings.

In order to have a better grasp of this cultural impact of the Iranians on the Arabic language, one can say that the change brought about in Arabic prose was confined not only to the form and style of composition in prose writing but it also involved the deepening of the subject matter in thought and meaning. Thus, the change was two-pronged; one was in respect of meaning and thought while the other related to the style and form in composition-which would be elaborated in the subsections to follow here.

### **Transformation of Arabic Prose in Respect of Meaning and Thought**

One of the factors which made the works of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ [ابن المقفع] prominent was that both the writers had employed Arabic for presenting new themes and in this way, they advanced a new pattern of thinking. Not only did the governmental dissertations penned by them in political and administrative matters provide freshness to the language but some of their works pertaining to literary and moral themes, known to the Arabs, possessed a similarity with pre-Islamic and early Islamic works which made them wonderfully unique. Even today, when studying them, and comparing them with the works of their contemporaries, one will find that they are the fruits of a wider vision, a wider thought, a broader mind and a brighter intelligence.

The reason for this difference can be explained in this way: The knowledge of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ [ابن المقفع] was not limited only to the level of their contemporaries’ knowledge, but they were connected with a wider culture and had enriched their intelligence from another source. It is important and remarkable that “the themes and thoughts which were reflected in the works of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ [ابن المقفع] and their colleagues were picked up from Iranian works and were translated from Persian into Arabic. Likewise many of the topics, themes and treatises were imitated from the said works. Moreover, some of the scribes belonged to the same group that had translated those works into Arabic.”<sup>22</sup>

What has been mentioned in Arabic literature shows that the treatises of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع], whether they are his own works or his translations are unique in Arabic literature from the view point of theme and meaning.

Abū Al-Faḍl Aḥmad Ibn Abī Al-Ṭāhir [ابو الفضل احمد ابن ابي] Says: “It is generally accepted that no one has ever risen to the level of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] nor has anybody before him written such words and sentences.”<sup>23</sup> So, there is no doubt that the cause of the publicity of the treatises of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] was the fact that these treatises were made up of the topics which looked novel in the atmosphere of Arabia and provided freshness to the Arabs. Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] opened a new chapter in Arabic prose to employ it for various purposes. In spite of the popularity that ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] gained in the history of Arabic prose, many of his works cannot be found now. Only two treatises of this great writer are available now: One of them is the letter which was communicated by the last Umayyad Caliph: Marwān [مروان] to his successor ‘Abdullāh [عبد الله] and the other is a thesis wherein he had addressed a class of the secretaries of his time enlightening them about their duties and responsibilities.

For ascertaining the sources through which ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] derived his power of initiative and introduced new thoughts in Arabic prose, the only method is to scrutinise these two available treatises. In the first letter one will find that though this letter was penned in the Arabic environment, yet looking at its topic and themes it is of the pattern of the available Pahlavī literature. Such translations were in vogue among the intellectuals of those days, especially the secretaries and scribes. The main subject of this letter is administration of the state and the rules of governance. “ ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] through this letter, for the first time, introduced new methods of Arabic writing which, had not been adopted by any author in Arabic language until then.”<sup>24</sup>

In this treatise, he has discussed new themes like diplomacy, politics, state administration, regulations of training, especially that of elders and

princes, war techniques, comprehensive laws of psychology and the methods of dealing with subordinates and the needy among several other related topics. The language of these topics became a part of Arabic prose in official correspondence. Dr. Muḥammadī [محمدی] says:

"يك دسته كتابهاي به شكل اندرزنامه هائي بوده كه از قول يکي از شاهان خطاب به جانشينانش در موضوع هاي مختلف ، از آيين جهان داري و راه و رسم بادشاهي و مضامين اخلاقي و غيره ، نوشته مي شده كه ترجمه اين آثار در عربي با عنوان عهدود و وصايا معروف گرديد ، و چند رساله هم از اين قبيل مانند عهد اردشير و عهد انوشیروان و عهد قباد و عهد شاپور و مانند اينها را كه در كتب عربي اثري از آنها باقي مانده است مي باشد. كه تأليف اينگونه رساله ها در جامعه اسلامي هم رواج كامل يافت ، و اين طريقه تا قرن ها بعد در بين نويسنده گان اسلامي معمول بود. چنان كه كتابهاي پندنامه سبكتكين و قابوسنامه و سياست نامه و امثال آنها را در ادبيات فارسي اسلامي نيز از همان نوع شمرده اند."

"A set of books were in the form of counsels which were the words of one of the Sāsānīd kings addressed to his successors on different subjects regarding the rules of kingship, royal etiquette, ethics etc. The Arabic translation of these are known as, 'Uḥūd wa Waṣāyā [عهدود و وصايا], (Covenants and wills). A few treatises similar to them were 'Ahd-i-Ardishīr [عهد اردشير], 'Ahd-i-Anūshīrwān [عهد انوشیروان], 'Ahd-i-Qubād [عهد قباد] and 'Ahd-i-Shāpūr [عهد شاپور], and they have also left their imprint on the Arabic literature. The composition of such thesis became prevalent in the Islamic society of this period and it remained in vogue in subsequent centuries among Muslim writers. Hence the books *Pand Nāmah Sabuktakīn* [پندنامه سبكتكين], *Qābūs-nāmah* [قابوسنامه] and *Sīyāsat-nāmah* [سياست نامه] etc. written by Iranians, belonged to this category of literature."<sup>25</sup>

It may be noted that treatise of this kind which came into existence in Arabic were the outcome of the Arabic-Islamic environment in their details and petty matters and that they, basically and comprehensively, have been considered the imitations of Iranian works, rather, a continuation of them. As the treatise of 'Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحمید] was the first of its kind to be published in a novel style of writing in the Arabic society, it earned unprecedented popularity and became a model for other writers, because, in this period, the court scribes and the Caliphs

gave much importance to such themes. One such letter which was written by Ṭāhir Ibn Al-Ḥusain [طاهر ابن الحسين] to his son ‘Abdullāh [عبدالله] has been quoted by Ibn Al-Khaldūn [ابن الخلدون]. It is said that “when this letter came to the notice of Ma’mūn Al-Rashīd [مأمون الرشيد] he was so pleased and astonished that he issued orders that the letter should be sent to all the state employees in all the provinces and that they should be instructed to follow its rules.”<sup>26</sup>

In the letter written by ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] addressing the to the secretaries as a professional class of secretaries and the contain rules and regulations of secretarial practice. These letters by ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] are referred to by Qalqashandī [قلقشندي] who believes that “they have become the source of all the conduct and traditions which the secretaries in the Caliph’s court considered necessary to follow.”<sup>27</sup>

As pointed out earlier, the state administrative organisation of the Caliph came under the influence of Iranian ideas on public administration, because the court secretaries attached a lot of importance to them. Therefore, the court scribes of the Caliphate endeavoured to follow the Iranian custom by introducing them in the court of the Caliphs.

From the fragments describing the duty and conduct of secretaries, picked up from Pahlavī books like **Tāj Nāmāh** [تاج نامه] it is understood that they found their way into the works of Islamic writers. This kind of work was also found among the Pahlavī’s literature, so it can be inferred that these fragments were also translated into Arabic. It may further be stated that this type of work, which came into being in the early period of Islām, was similar to the treatise of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and also in no way different from those fragments which were translated from Pahlavī. This is in terms of thematic similarity.

Here one can say that this treatise of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] is nearer to the works of Iranians because there is a similarity between some of the parts of this treatise and some of the translated pieces from Pahlavī. Ibn Al-Qutaibah, in **‘Uyūn Al-Akḥbār** [عيون الاخبار] has copied a section of the words uttered by the Mūbadān wa Dānāyān [موبدان و دانایان]

(Priest and Savants) mentioning the attributes (qualifications) of a secretary. “Undoubtedly this writing has been picked up from a Pahlavī book because they were related to one of the Pahlavī kings or to any one of the Zorashtrian priests or savants.”<sup>28</sup> The remarkable point is the similarity that has been seen between it and a portion of the thesis of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد]. It is such that if the style of writing is put aside which varies in every period, this similarity becomes so conspicuous that it is impossible to consider them alien and must be regarded it as a case of inter-relationship arising out of mutual influence. Both these portions are presented for comparison:

1- The fragment quoted by Ibn Al-Qutaibah [ابن القتيبة] from the words of the Mūbadān-i-Mūbad [موبدان موبد] (chief priest) is the following:

"كتاب الملوك اعينهم المصونة عندهم، و آذانهم الواعية ، و السنتهم الشاهدة لانه ليس احد اعظم سعادة من وزراء الملوك اذا سعدت الملوك ، ولا اقرب هلكة من وزراء الملوك اذا هلكت الملوك ، فترفع التهمة عن الوزراء اذا صارت نصائحهم للملوك نصائحهم لانفسهم ، و تعظم الثقة بهم حين صار اجتهداهم للملوك لانفسهم ، فلايتهم روح علي جسده ولايتهم جسد علي روحه ، لان زوال الفتنة زوال نعمتهما ، وان التام الفتنة صلاح خاصتهما." <sup>29</sup>

“ The secretary of the kings had well-guarded eyes, sharp ears and tongues, because there is none greater in happiness than the ministers of the kings when the kings are happy with them; and none is closer to danger than the ministers of the kings when the kings expose them to dangers. The accusation is raised by the ministers if their advices to the kings become advice for themselves and their reliance becomes greater when their diligence for the kings becomes diligence for themselves. The spirit does not accuse its body neither body accuses its spirit, because the decline of their consideration of each other is the lack of the favour of them both. The harmony of their consideration is useful for both of them.”

2- The passage which is seen in the preface of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd’s [عبد الحميد] address to the secretaries of his time is as follows:

"بكم ينتظم الملك ، و تستقيم للملوك امورهم ، و تدبركم و سياستكم يصلح الله سلطانهم و يجمع فيئهم و تعمر بلادهم ، و يحتاج اليكم الملك في عظيم ملكه ، و الوالي في القدر السني و الديني من ولايته ، و لا يستغني عنكم منهم احد ، ولا يوجد كاف الا منكم ، فموقعكم منهم موقع اسماعهم

التي بها يسمعون ، و ابصارهم التي بها يبصرون و السنتهم التي بها ينطقون ، و ايديهم التي بها  
ييطشون.<sup>30</sup>

*“ The king organises, the affairs of (sultanate) through you (secretaries). Your planning, and your policies, may Allah rectify their authorities, unite them, and (as a result) their countries flourish. The king needs your help in maintaining the greatness of his kingdom and an heir for him in his old age. He can not be free from your assistance as far as his kingdom is concerned. There is no equal (for him) except from amongst you. You are like their ears by which they listen. You are like their eyes by which they see. You are like their tongues by which they speak and you are like their hands by which they derive strength or power.”*

By comparing these two passages and, by keeping in mind what has been said earlier concerning the translation of Pahlavī works can be understood as to what extent ‘Adb Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and those of his level and rank had benefited from their Iranian sources with respect to the selection of subjects and topics and also from the viewpoints of meaning and thought.

### **Transformation of Arabic Prose in The Matter of Form and Style**

Besides the changes which had taken place in Arabic prose regarding meaning and thought, in the time of ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد] and Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع], there had been, as said, a change in its form and style too which is worth a deep study from every angle. In order to clarify it further, given below are the methods of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] and ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd [عبد الحميد], who in fact were the pioneers of the art of Arabic writing:

#### **The method of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع]**

Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] is well known for his free style, that is, a manner in which the writer makes the words and writings fully follow

the meaning and keeps them in their original and simple form. This style is known in Arabic as Sabk Al-Mursal [سبك المرسل Mursal's Style].

This free (independent) form (appearance) was not an invention of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] because it is nearer to the nature of the language (Arabic), and it was in vogue in the 'Arab states even before Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع]. But the method adopted by this writer in his books was novel in Arabic literature. "Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] was the first to compose a style and a discipline for writing his books."<sup>31</sup>

In the works of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع], nothing except a strong analogy and a special feature are available to indicate as to which portions in his writings might have been taken from ancient literature or extracted from the Pahlavī books. His books are on the topic of sermons and wisdom and, he has assembled them in an organised form with his distinct mastery, abandoning the discordance seen in similar Arabic works. This novel composition in the works of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] is certainly not an imitation of his contemporaries; since books having this style did not exist earlier. Till that time, in Arabic language, compilation and composition of such subjects had not reached much fluency. Hence there is no doubt that this style is the result of his vast learning and his acquaintance with the Pahlavī works. On the basis of great similarity existing between the Arabic literature and the Iranian literary works, one can say that the change which took place in the composition and compilation in the Islamic literature in the Arab world was certainly related to the literary works of Iran.

When one says that the artistic Arabic prose came into existence under the talented Iranian secretaries and scribes who had attained excellence as a result of their acquaintance with Iranian culture and style one does not mean to suggest that all the modes of expression including the different figures of speech adopted in Arabic language and literature were taken from Iran.

It must be mentioned that every language has its own independent characteristics and structures which have a powerful influence on the beauty of its description; which is why some elements of writing considered



beautiful in one language become meaningless in another. It should also be kept in mind that after the advent of Islām, Arabic became popular among different communities and it acquired an esteem and a status which had never happened to Pahlavī or Persian. Thus, in the later centuries, in order to justify its reputation, the Arabic language got a great impetus which was not so in case of Iranian at that time.

Keeping in mind these two points, it can be concluded that one of the factors which influenced Arabic writing and which provided the background for the subsequent changes in Arabic prose, was the Iranian aptitude for art and artistic-expression. Before the advent of Islām and prior to the influence of Iranians in the regimes of the Caliphs, the work of writing, like the rest of individual as well as collective affairs of the Arabs, was very simple and unadorned. In their own lives, they had neither etiquette nor any conventional rules. In oratory too, they were almost free from every limitation except their own natural instinct. For writing too they did not have any limitations. But, contrary to it, in Sāsānīd Iran, writing was regarded as an art and the writer was bound to make the utmost effort for beautifying his works and to follow the rules framed for that purpose. During the Islamic era, when the job of Arabic writing fell into the hands of Iranian scribes of the court, this aptitude for attractive writing developed among them also. Soon the rules and regulations conforming to the structure of Arabic language developed resulting in elegance of style in accordance with the Arabic and Islamic atmosphere.

The first effect which appeared as a result of the said aptitude was to be seen in the outward appearance relating to the nicety of letters and the beauty of handwriting as well as the quality of the paper to which some of the Caliphs had paid attention. Since this was a novelty in the eyes of the Arabs it got reflected in Arabic works. It is written about Walīd Ibn ‘Abd Al-Malik [وليد ابن عبد الملك] that “he was the foremost Caliph who paid attention to the job of writing and ordered that, for this purpose, good quality paper should be used and scribes having a beautiful hand-writing should be employed and that the official letters should be adorned with appropriate captions and forms. These rules were not followed after Al-

Walīd [الوليد] because until then the taste for art had not gained roots in Arab society. Due to this the same old manner was followed during the periods of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz [عمر ابن عبدالعزيز] and Yazīd Ibn Al-Walīd [يزيد ابن الوليد]. But after the Umayyad era when the Caliphate came into the hands of the ‘Abbāsīd and the center of Caliphate was transferred to the Iranian environment, that is, to Baghdād, the inborn talent emerged and the taste for art too got a favourable ground.”<sup>32</sup>

In the works of the Sāsānīd period they have given a lot of importance to the preparation of eloquent prologues to sermons, letters etc. The specimens of such forewords which were, normally, in the praise and adoration of Allāh and thanks-giving to him, could be seen in the addresses and letters of the Sāsānīd kings in the **Shāh Nāmāh** [شاهنامه] of Firdausī [فردوسی] and some other books of history and art which were translated into Arabic. It is seen from the narration of Baihaqī [بيهقي] that such efforts were also made even in prefaces to make them equal to, if not more beautiful than, the original ones. He writes that “Khusru Parvīz [خسرو پرويز], after defeating Bahrām Chūbīn [بهرام چوبين], ordered that the scribes should pen down the events which had taken place between him and Bahrām Chūbīn [بهرام چوبين] and the secretaries too acted accordingly but when they presented the same before Khusru Parvīz [خسرو پرويز] he did not like the preface. Thereupon one of the scribes wrote a more fluent foreword which pleased Khusru Parvīz [خسرو پرويز] very much and he gave a promotion to the writer.”<sup>33</sup>

This style was not in vogue among the Arabs, either before or after the advent of Islām; letters were being written without formal prefaces and conclusions prior to ‘Abd Al-Hamīd [عبدالحميد]. They used to both begin and end with the subject matter only. After ‘Abd Al-Hamīd [عبدالحميد], the writers began to write such prefaces gradually. Before long, it became the most important duty of the secretaries to open a field of contest for beautiful and artistic writing. Of course, the prefaces written in the letters during the Islamic era in Arabic were different from those of the Sāsānīd. In any case, the Arabic writers had grasped this mode and style from the Iranian writers and their works.

In the translation of an extract from Christensen regarding the stylish letter writing during the Sāsānīd Era, one of the points mentioned in that passage was about the special case being maintained in the matter of the

ranks and the position of the writer and that of the addressee. This observance was due to the fact that, at that time, special titles were in vogue for the holders of varying ranks and positions and hence this difference was reflected in the letters too. This practice in style was so popular that it continued till the end. Somehow, this practice did not come in vogue in Arabic prose. The same style of writing continued for quite a long time even after the propagation of Islām. It was after the second century that Arabic writers began to adopt the classification of words and passages or phrases along with that of the audiences and the addressees. Gradually the usage of words suitable for the exigencies of the situation and thereafter the adoption of words appropriate for the status of the hearer became one of the essential qualifications of an orator. Then, before long, in the subsequent centuries, the court writers knew no bounds in using titles and respectful words.

This passage of Al-Jāhiz [الجاحظ] pictures the first stage of the adoption of this style in Arabic:

”ينبغي للمتكلم ان يعرف اقدار المعاني و يوازن بينهما و بين اقدار المستمعين و بين اقدار الحالات، فيجعل لكل طبقه من ذلك كلاما...”<sup>34</sup>

*“ It is desirable for the speaker to know the values of the meaning and weigh them between the values prevalent among the listeners and between the values of the conditions. So for every strata of society an expression is made out of it.”*

A study of the famous book **Risālat Al-‘Adhrā** [رسالة العذرء] written by Ibn Al-Mudabbir [ابن المدبر] makes us understand the extent of the attention of the writers and their response towards it in the initial stages. (This Paper has been published “1931 A.D.” with same name in Egypt).

As it has mentioned briefly earlier, phraseology was also one of the common features of Persian prose writing which found its way into Arabic literature. The use of, phraseology in writing and word-play was the result of amusement in the life of the Iranians and their flair for sophisticated living and love for their language.

These were some of the common general principles which found way into Arabic prose through the Iranian art of eloquence and sophisticated writing. Thereafter it was diversified into different shapes and forms according to the demands of the new environment.

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## Chapter IV

### **The Contribution of Iranian scholars to Arabic Poetry**

Arabic poetry, in the early days of Islam, was not different from the poetry of the Pre-Islamic Era with respect to language, thought and imagination. It contained all the Bedouin peculiarities and crudeness that are found more or less in primitive Arabic poetry. This kind of poetry continued till the end of the first century A.H. During that period, Arabs used to compose poems in Arabic and non-Arabs could not make any attempt to compose Arabic poetry. But from the beginning of the second century, A.H. i.e., the end of the Umayyad Era and from the beginning of the 'Abbāsīd Era, the influence of non-Arab civilizations and communities became effective and influential since Muslims had social contact and proximity with non-Arabs for nearly one century. Therefore, from the beginning of the second century A.H. non-Arab Muslims started engaging themselves in those affairs which led to the defeat of their Arab predecessors in this field. The most important element given to the Islamic civilization was a new manifestation, progress and perfection was none other than the Persian element with which the coming of the 'Abbāsīd to power, deeply influenced the pace of the Islamic civilization including Arabic literature. The effect of this influence is as apparent in poetry as it is in prose. From the beginning of the second century A.H. Arabic poetry began to have a deeper meaning and more precision in thought by virtue of it being composed by those who were well versed with the problems of knowledge, philosophy and graces of human culture. In this way, the crude and primitive expressions in Arabic poetry were made meaningful, delicate and lyrical through the use of different figures of speech, allegorical and symbolic devices. Dr. Muḥammad Nabī Hījāb [محمد نبي حجاب] wrote:

"لما كان الشعر مرآة النفوس ، و لما كانت النفوس مرآة المجتمع ، و لما كان المجتمع العباسي قد تأثر بعملية المزج هذه ، كان طبيعياً أن ينساق الشعر أيضاً في هذا التيار ، فيتأثر بهذا اللون الجديد من الحضارة و هذه الثقافات المختلفة الطارئة التي أقبلت بحكمة الفرس و مواعظ الهند و فلسفة اليونان. و من هنا كان مسلك الشعراء مغايراً - الى حد ما - مسلك الشعراء السابقين ."

*"Since poetry is the reflection of human mind, and the human mind is again the reflection of the society of a particular period that in this*



*context is the 'Abbāsīd society, it is but natural that the poetry of this period should also be receptive to the demands of the new civilization and culture. Precisely, the poetry of the 'Abbāsīd society (or period) should show a creative response to Iranian literature, Indian wisdom and Greek philosophy. Thus, the mode of the poets of this period was totally different to that of the earlier poets.*"<sup>1</sup>

Any how, Arabic poetry stepped out of the coarseness, monotony and the limited range of the nomads and the singers of prejudice and self-glorification. It adopted new words, styles and thoughts. Moreover, attention towards the simplicity of words gave it a special beauty. The subjects which, during this time, came to be used by the Arabian poets, who were mostly of Iranian lineage, were the glorification of race, heritage and nationality. The Iranian poets of this period paid a lot of attention to their great kings and their grandeur.

#### **Arabic Poems Composed by Iranian Poets:**

##### **1- Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق] (born in 221 A.H.):**

There are many reliable authorities who have talked of Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق] and have described his lifetime but his personality has remained unrecognised for unknown reasons. Dr. Dhabīḥullāh Ṣafā [ذبیح الله صفا] says:

"محمود وراق از خاندان ایرانی تبار است. در شهر هرات در شرق ایران بدنیا آمد و بزرگ شد و بسیار زود به زبان فارسی شعر سرود. و از نخستین کسانی است که پس از فتح ایران به دست اسلام اشعاری به زبان فارسی گفته و او از نخستین شاعرانی است که نامشان در متون تاریخی آمده است."

*"Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق] was an Iranian who was born and brought up in the city of Harāt [هرات] in the east of Iran. In his early age he began to compose songs in Persian language. He was the first person to compose poetry in Persian language and the first whose name has been recorded in historical texts after the Arab conquest of Iran."*<sup>2</sup>

It is said that he spent a period of his life in Baghdād and established amity with the Banī Zuhrah [بنی زهرة] tribe. This is the substance of what Nuwairī [نویری] has said about Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق]. He mentions

that, “He is Maḥmūd [محمود], son of Ḥasan Baghdādī [حسن بغدادی] who is the Maulā [مولا] (lord-master) of Banī Zuhrah [بني زهرة] and that his nickname is Abū Al-Ḥasan [ابوالحسن].”<sup>3</sup> All that is known about him and his poems, is lying scattered in books of history and literature; but, what is important is that the measure of the influence of Persian admonitions on his poetry should be discussed. In fact, the style adopted by Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود ورق] plays an important role in highlighting this wave of influence on the songs of this poet. The reason for this is described by Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] :

" أننا لانجد في عصرنا العباسي الأول شاعراً أكثر من الحديث عن الزهد واعظاً مذكراً كما أكثر محمود ورق . "

“In the first phase of the ‘Abbāsīd rule we do not find a poet who has composed admonitions better than Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود ورق].”<sup>4</sup>

He obtained this from the Persian source which was in his possession. He made selections according to his wish and also added colour and flavor to it.

Ḥuṣarī [حصري] writes:

" و كان كثيراً ما ينقل أخبار الماضين ، و حكم المتقدمين ، فيحلى بها نظامه ، و يزين بها كلامه . "

“ (Maḥmūd Warrāq محمود ورق) quoted vastly from the history of bygones and so also wrote their admonitions and decorated his songs with it.”<sup>5</sup>

One of his couplets presenting a Persian example of admonition is:

أراني إذا ما ازددت مالا و ثروة	و خيراً إلى خير تزدت في الشر
فكيف بشكر الله إن كنت إنما	أقوم مقام الشكر لله بالكفر
بأي اعتذار أو بآية حجة	يقول الذي يدري من الأمر ما أذرى
إذا كان وجه العذر ليس ببين	فإن أطراح العذر خير من العذر

“When it became known that my wealth and belongings multiplied and I drew more and more assets, my vices increased. In what way should I thank Allāh. It is because if it so happened I have become ungrateful instead of being thankful. As you understood I do not know

*how it is said, because, since excuse is not acceptable it is better it goes unuttered*”<sup>6</sup>

The reader finds obvious similarity between the last stanza and the words of the son of Hīrbud [هیربد] as Ibn Al-Qutaibah [ابن القتيبة] has quoted it:

"قيل لأزاد مرد بن الهربد حين احتضر : ما حالك ؟ فقال : ما حال من يريد سفرأ بعيداً بلا زاد ،  
و يتزل حفرة من الأرض موحشة بلامونس ، و يقدم على ملك جبار قد قدّم إليه العذر بالاحجة ."

*"The son of Hīrbud asked a free man, 'How are you'? The latter replied: How will be the condition of one who is on a long journey, has no provision, no companion, who camps in earthen cavities in a state of frightfulness and is proceeding toward a merciless monarch with unacceptable excuses?"*<sup>7</sup>

Iranian wisdom has put much stress on the virtue of contentment, and has condemned the state of being unworthy and honourless, as is the subject of this couplet of Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمودوراق]:

مَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ كَثِيرٍ وَلَمْ يَفْنَحْ فَذَاكَ الْمَوْسِرُ الْمُعْسَرُ  
و كُلُّ مَنْ كَانَ فَنُوعاً وَإِنْ كَانَ مُقَلّاً ، فَهُوَ الْمُكْثَرُ  
الْفَقْرُ فِي النَّفْسِ وَ فِيهَا الْغِنَى وَ فِي غِنَى النَّفْسِ الْغِنَى الْأَكْبَرُ

*"One who has much wealth but less contentment though riches, is still poor. One who rests content is wealthy even though he may be penniless. Want and wealth lies in the soul of man and the best wealth is the wealth of a content soul."*<sup>8</sup>

In many couplets of this Iranian poet the Iranian mode of thinking can be seen is reflected. Following is one of the examples:

يَا عَائِبَ الْفَقْرِ أَلَا تَزْدَجِرُ عَيْبُ الْغِنَى أَكْثَرُ لَوْ تَعْتَبِرُ  
مِنْ شَرَفِ الْفَقْرِ وَمِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى الْغِنَى إِنْ صَحَّ مِنْكَ النَّظَرُ  
أَنْتَكَ تَعْصِي أَلِيلَةَ تَبْغِي الْغِنَى وَ لَسْتَ تَعْصِي اللَّهَ كَيْ تَفْتَقِرُ

*"O you who consider poverty a defect; Will you not give up this trend? If you see with an eye of wisdom you will realize that the vice of wealth is greater. If you ponder correctly you will understand that poverty is*

*one of the blessing and honouse because you disobey God in search of wealth but never to be poor.”<sup>9</sup>*

Often the reader scrutinises himself or herself to get the point raised by the poet and to draw inference from his arguments. While the common man looks only at the dark side of poverty, the poet observes its bright side. Such a deep thinking is seldom found in ancient poetry with ever-green common views which the passage of time have rendered obsolete and their repetition has made them tedious. On many occasions, in the Persian poetry of admonitions and wise sayings, a comparisons is seen between the wise on the one side and the unwise on the other. No doubt this method of comparison has proved more effective among people, and it is one of the more successful ways of gratifying them and improving manners and thoughts among them. Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمودوراق] has employed the same style in many of his poems which, in itself, shows how much he has been influenced by Iranian wisdom and literature. This is one such example:

يُمَثِّلُ ذُو اللَّبِّ فِي نَفْسِهِ	مَصَائِبَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَنْزِلَا
فَإِنْ نَزَلَتْ بَغْتَةً لَمْ تَرْعِهِ	لِمَا كَانَ فِي نَفْسِهِ مَثَلَا
رَأَى الْهَمَّ يَفْضِي إِلَى آخِرِ	فَصَيَّرَ آخِرَهُ أَوَّلَا
وَذُو الْجَهْلِ يَأْمَنُ أَيَّامَهُ	وَيُنْسِي مَصَارِعَ مَنْ قَدْ خَلَا
فَإِنْ بَدَّهَتْهُ صُرُوفُ الزَّمَانِ	يَبْغِضُ مَصَائِبِهِ أَغْوَلَا
وَلَوْ قَدَّمَ الْحَزَمَ فِي أَمْرِهِ	لَعَلَّمَهُ الصَّبْرَ عِنْدَ الْبَلَا

*“A wise fellow portrays his calamities before they come down upon him. Therefore, if a sudden misery comes to him, it will never frighten him, as he has already prepared himself for the same. He has looked at the disaster up to its extreme and thus has turned its end into its start. But a foolish fellow makes himself carefree of happenings and takes no lesson from the ancients by forgetting them. So if a catastrophe falls upon him he becomes helpless. Had he the virtue of foreseeing things it would have taught him how to be patient in times of distress.”<sup>10</sup>*

It can be seen that the spirit of prose has prevailed upon this stanza and the comparison between a wise man and a fool has added colour and

meaning of thought to it. He has taken many of the features of its art and covered it with deep understanding and deep logic. Some times this poet aims at any moral saying or recommendation of one of the kings or savants and puts it into a beautiful poem. What follows, exhibits the same pattern to some extent.

Qurṭubī [قرطبي] says:

"قال بعض الأكاسرة لحاجبه : لا تحجب عني أحداً إذا أخذت مجلسي؛ فإن الوالي لا يحجب إلا عن ثلاث : عي يكره أن يطلع عليه ، أو بخل فيكره أن يدخل إليه من يسأله ، أو ريبة ."

"One of the *kasrāyān* [كسرايان] told one of his chamberlains: Whenever I hold a meeting, let no one hide me because a ruler does not hide himself except for three reasons: either he stammers in his talk and does not want others to be aware of his defect or he is stingy, and hence does not want others to ask anything of him or he is suspicious."<sup>11</sup> Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمودوراق] has brought all these points in his poetry when he says:

ورَدَّ ذَوَى الْحَاجَاتِ دُونَ حِجَابِهِ	إِذَا اغْتَصَمَ الْوَالِي بِإِغْلَاقِ بَابِهِ
نَزَعَتْ بَظْنَ وَأَقَعَ بِصَوَابِهِ	ظَنَنْتَ بِهِ إِحْدَى ثَلَاثٍ وَرَبَّمَا
فَفَى إِذْنِهِ لِلنَّاسِ إِظْهَارُ مَا بِهِ	فَقُلْتُ بِهِ مَسَّ مِنَ الْعِي قَاطِعٌ
مِنَ الْبُخْلِ يَحْمَى مَالُهُ عَنْ طَلَابِهِ	فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُ عَى اللِّسَانِ فَغَالِبٌ
يُصِرُّ عَلَيْهَا عِنْدَ إِغْلَاقِ بَابِهِ	فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ هَذَا وَلَا ذَا فَرِيَةِ

"Whenever a ruler hides himself from the eyes of people and drives away the needy from his doors one suspects him to be afflicted by one of the three defects. Such a suspicion may prove true. You will say that either he is unable to speak properly or else he is a miser who dose not intend to donate anything to the needy. If this too is not the case then maybe he is very much suspicious of others and therefore insists on remaining behind doors."<sup>12</sup>

The work of Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمودوراق], in this respect, is almost similar to that of his contemporary Abān Al-Lāḥiqī [ابان اللاحقي], except that he ends his argument after an extended explanation, while the latter came straight to the point without taking recourse to lengthy details. Here it may be observed that Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمودوراق] simply followed

the approach of Iranians who lived before him. It can be said that Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق], being virtuous and God-fearing, was attracted to a simple and unadorned life; therefore he based his ideas on the discipline and wisdom of the Iranians who laid stress on piety and austerity. He lent the colour of Iranian wisdom to his pious songs, admonitions and poems.

## **2- Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] (b. 167 A.H.) :**

Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] is related to an Iranian family and is originally from Takhārīstān [تخارستان] which had been a part of Iran. His grandfather, Yarjūkh [يرجوخ], along with a group who had been taken into captivity by Muhallab Ibn Abī Ṣufrah, [مهلب ابن ابى صفرة], an agent of Umayyads in Khurāsān (79-81 A.H.) were sent to Baṣrah. His father, Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] had spent half of his life in slavery serving Khairah Qushairīyah [خيرة قشيرية] wife of Muhallab [مهلب]. Khairah Qushairīyah [خيرة قشيرية], there after presented him to a woman of the tribe of Banī ‘Aqīl [بني عقيل]. His son, Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] was born in the mid-first century A.H. “He was born blind and therefore could never see the world.”<sup>13</sup>

Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] learned a lot about the sciences as well as culture of his own time. He started participating in the mosque of Baṣrah and listening to the words of advisors and priests. Then he began to debate among the audience. He also started visiting Mirbud [مربد], who was the source of inspiration for those who wanted to get expertise in eloquence, and getting guidance from him.

Besides pure Arabic culture, Bashshār also possessed the cultural heritage of his own community, i.e. he selected the Zoroastrian duality as his religion, because, had he not been well aware of the disciplines and culture of his own community, he would not have been attracted towards this religion. It must also be noted that he did not have a belief in free-thinking and liberal thoughts, be it religious or any other.

According to the Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف]:

"و ليس من ريب في أنه اطلع على ما نقله ابن المقفع الى العربية من الآداب الفارسية و غير الفارسية و من الآراء المزدكية و المانوية ."

“There is no doubt that he had gained full knowledge of Persian and non-Persian literature and the thoughts of Mazdā and Mānī [مزدآ و مانی] which were translated into Arabic by Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع].”<sup>14</sup>

Whatever the beliefs of Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] and whatever the roots of his culture, it is certain that the wise counsels and the manners of Persians found a remarkable place in his poetry. Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد], as it is observed by researchers, is amongst the well-recognized personalities “who had the ability of mixing Persian culture with the essentials of Arabic language.”<sup>15</sup>

One of his couplets in Iranian style is:

يَعِيشُ بَجْدٍ عَاجِزٍ وَ جَلِيدٍ      وَ كُلُّ قَرِيبٍ لَا يَنَالُ بَعِيدٍ  
وَ فِي الطَّمَعِ التَّنْصِيبُ، وَ الْيَأْسُ كَالْغَنَى      وَ لَيْسَ لِمَا يُبْقَى الشَّيْخُ خُلُودَ

*“The powerful as well as the weak live by their own sustenance. And all unattainable near things are far. There is sorrow in greed. The cutting off of desires is like needlessness. Whatever a miser leaves behind is not everlasting.”*<sup>16</sup>

His intention is to show that, a person who takes responsibility of his own work will benefit not only himself but also others while covetousness brings only sorrow.

Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] says real wealth lies in contentment and that the treasures of a miser and a lustful man are bound to perish. Researchers easily connect these counsels with the Iranian ones of that era.

It is said that Khusru Anūshirwān [خسرو انوشیروان] wrote to Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر] who was in his prison:

“نتیجه دانشت آن شد که اکنون سزاوار زندان و مرگ شوی.”

“Your wisdom and knowledge have brought in prisonment and death to you.”

Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر] replied:

"تا آن هنگام که امکان کوشش داشتم از میوه دانش بهره بردم و اکنون که امکان کوششی نیست از میوه صبر بهره می گیرم افزون بر آنکه هر چند اینک خیر بسیاری را از دست داده ام از شر بسیاری نیز آسوده ام."

*"So long as I was able to work, I got the fruits of my efforts and now, when there is no possibility of making effort I am tasting the fruits of being patient. Moreover, though I have missed much of the desirables, I have also been spared from lots of undesirables."*<sup>17</sup>

Shahriyār Hūshang [شهریار هوشنگ] was also of the same opinion:

"آرزوها برنده هر خوبی است رها کردن از جلوگیری هر ترسی است صبر به ظفر می انجامد و نفس آدمی را به شر می خواند. و طمع را از دل خود بیرون کن تا زنجیر از پاید باز شود و نت بیاساید."

*"Desires are the destroyers of virtue. Giving up desires removes all fear, patience ends in success, and passion drives man towards vice, and drive out greed from your heart to free the fetters from your feet, and your body gets relief."*<sup>18</sup>

Persian advisors have narrated many subjects about friends and friendship with long explanations about the mode of behaviour. Perhaps these ideas and thoughts reached Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] and attracted him.

Thereafter he wrote like his predecessors:

أَخَوَكَ الَّذِي إِنَّ رَبَّهُ قَالَ إِذَا كُنْتَ فِي كُلِّ الذُّنُوبِ مُعَاتِباً	أَرَبْتَ وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتَهُ لَانَ جَائِبُهُ
فَعِشْ وَاحِداً أَوْ صِلْ أَخَاكَ فَإِنَّهُ	صَدِيقَكَ لَمْ تَلَقَ الَّذِي لَا تُعَاتِبُهُ
إِذَا أَنْتَ لَمْ تَشْرَبْ مَراراً عَلَى الْقَذَى	مُقَارَفُ ذَنْبٍ مَرَّةً وَ مُجَائِبُهُ
	ظَمِئْتَ، وَ أَيْ النَّاسِ تَصْنُفُو مُشَارِبَهُ

*"Your friend is the one who, if you doubt him, says 'it is merely a misunderstanding' and if you blame him, he becomes mild. But even if you become harsh to him about every offense, you would not find any body else harsh to him. So either you live alone, or remain far from it. If you do not drink at all from the water which is polluted you will remain constantly thirsty and where is the man who always gets pure and transparent water?"*<sup>19</sup>



Obviously the poet has picked up most of the subjects of these couplets from words of wisdom and good guidance that were Iranian originally and were then translated into Arabic, particularly from the translations of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' like **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr**, **Al-Adab Al-Ṣaghīr**, and **Kalīlah wa Dimnah** [الادب الكبير ، الادب الصغير ، و كلیلة و دمنة].

It is mentioned in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير] that: “*The ultimate aim of making friendship should be that you do not ever break it. Or You have to know that true friends are most precious in this world*”<sup>20</sup>.

One of his couplets about friends and companions is this:

خَيْرُ إِخْوَانِكَ الْمُشَارِكُ فِي الْمُدِّ      رٌّ وَأَيْنَ الشَّرِيكَ فِي الْمُرِّ أَيْنَا  
الَّذِي إِنْ شَهِدْتَ زَانِكَ فِي النَّاسِ      سِ، وَإِنْ غَبْتَ كَانَ أُذُنًا وَعَيْنًا

“*The best friend is a person who remains with you in bad times. A friend in need is a friend indeed. He is your ally in your presence and in your absence he is your eye and your ear.*”<sup>21</sup>

It is clear that Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] has followed the same path of the Iranian sage who wrote in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير]: “*If you see your friend with your enemy don’t revolt because it is he who is honest to you, the closer he is to your enemy, the more you benefit. He may be keeping a secret hidden or he might reveal one to you. Why at all should you care that a trustworthy friend should go only to another friend (better, he goes to the enemy).*”<sup>22</sup>

Consultation and thinking are the other topics on which the Persian poetry of advices has much to say. Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] said:

إِذَا بَلَغَ الرَّأْيُ الْمَشُورَةَ فَاسْتَعِنْ      بِرَأْيِ نَصِيحٍ أَوْ نَصِيحَةٍ حَازِمٍ  
وَلَا تَجْعَلِ الشُّورَى عَلَيْكَ غَضَاضَةً      مَكَانَ الْخَوَافِي قُوَّةَ لِلْقَوَادِمِ  
وَحَلَّ الْهُوَيْنَا لِلضَّعِيفِ وَلَا تَكُنْ      نَوُومًا فَإِنَّ الْحَزْمَ لَيْسَ بِنَائِمٍ  
وَأُذُنٌ عَلَى الْقُرْبَى الْمُقَرَّبَ نَفْسَهُ      وَلَا تَشْهَدْ الشُّورَى أَمْرًا غَيْرَ كَاتِمٍ

“*Whenever you intend to undertake a work, do take the help of the farsighted advisers. Never be ashamed of taking consultation as the quill. Leave laziness to the inactive and do not become sleepy because sleep does not behave a farsighted man. Say only confidential things to*

*the reliable person, and do not present a thing which is not secret before the advisory meeting.*"<sup>23</sup>

In this couplet Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] has composed the same theme as Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] in Al-Adab Al-Ṣaghīr [الادب الصغير]:

"الملك الحازم يزداد برأي الوزراء الخزمة ، كما يزداد البحر بموآده من الأنهار . و الظفر بالحزم ، و الحزم بإجالة الرأي ، و الرأي تكرار النظر ، و بتحسين الأسرار . إن المستشير ، و إن كان أفضل من المستشار رأياً ، فهو يزداد به ، كما تزداد النار بالودك ضوءاً . و على المستشار موافقة المستشير على صواب ما يرى ، و الرفق به في تبصير خطأ إن أتى به ، و تقليب الرأي فيما شكاه منه ، حتى تستقيم لهما مشاورتهما."

*"A far-sighted king takes benefit of the farsighted ministers just as the ocean enriches itself from the rivers. Success is the result of caution, which is the fruit of the churning up of thoughts; and thoughts are born out of the repetition of views and the concealing of secrets. Though the counsel seeker is more thoughtful than the advice-giver, the former gets the benefit just as fire gets brightness from oil. It is the duty of the consultant to agree with the correct views of the advice-seeker, and to show the remedy if he goes wrong, and even if he does not like his viewpoint he should modify it in a soft manner so that his advice may gain ground."*<sup>24</sup>

In this sense Al-Jāhīz [الجاحظ] has been influenced by the great Iranian sage Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر] who says:

" حسب ذا الرأي ، و من لا رأي له ، أن يستشير عالماً و يطيعه ."

*"It's enough for both the discerning and the unwise to seek advice from a wise man and to follow him."*<sup>25</sup>

One of the other couplets wherein Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] has employed the style of the Iranian savant showing the superiority of wisdom over wealth is:

لَا يَنْفَعُ الْمَرْءَ مَالُ وَالِدِهِ      عَدَا عَيْباً وَ يَنْفَعُ الْأَدَبُ

*"The wealth of the father helps only a weak son but wisdom is always helpful to all."*<sup>26</sup>

In this stanza Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] has repeated Buzurgmihr's [بزرگ مهر] words:

"پدران چیزی برتر از دانش برای فرزندان به ارث نهند. زیرا با دانش ثروت به دست آری؛  
و با نادانی از کف بدهی؛ و از هر دو بی نصیب مانی."

*"A father never leaves any heritage more precious than wisdom because you gain wealth through wisdom and lose it with your ignorance, and thus lose both."*<sup>27</sup>

Also observes this:

و لَا يَدْفَعُ الْمَوْتَ الْأَطْبَاءُ بِالرُّفَى  
وَسَيَانِ نَحْسٍ يُتَّقَى وَ سَعُودٍ

*"Doctors cannot defer death by their knowledge and people remain away from both its inauspiciousness and its auspiciousness."*<sup>28</sup>

This is very much similar to this Persian advice:

"سه چیز است که با سه چیز به دست نیاید: ثروت با آرزو، جوانی با حنا، و سلامتی با دارو."

*"There are three things which are not obtained through three means: Wealth by wish, youth by henna, and health by medicines."*<sup>29</sup>

To summarize, one can say that Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] has quoted extensively from the Persian words of wisdom and has enriched his poetry with it. But he has not followed the concise verse, as Abān Al-Lāḥiqī [ابان اللاحقي] has done in his poetry; he does not deal with all the sides of a subject but takes the original topic and according to his wisdom changes it with his special art. The result shows a content, familiar with a new style. The thoughts and the writings of Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] are based on oral derivations and do not contain a planned study. It is so written that if the reader ponders deeply over all his words it encourages him to delve into the aim behind such quotations. He could handle any topic which his contemporaries could not do.

### 3- Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعताهيّة] (d. 211 A.H.):

Qāsim Ibn Suwaid Ibn Kīsān, [قاسم ابن سوید ابن کيسان] father of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعताهيّة] was a Nabī [نبطي] and from the Mawālī lords of the tribe of Banī ‘Anzah [بنی عزة] who lived in ‘Ayn Al-Tamr, [عين التمر] near Anbār [انبار] city. In the year (130 A.H.) his son Ismā‘īl, whose nom de plume was Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعताهيّة] was born. Poverty and monetary

hardships compelled the father of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية] to migrate from his motherland and come to Kūfah [كوفة]. Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية] spent his youth in this city where the spring of poetry began to flow within him. When he was able to win the praise of the Caliphs and understood that he could obtain gifts and awards through his poetry, he moved to Baghdād, which was the centre of hopeful poets and the Mecca of wealth-seekers. He spent half of his life by the side of his patron Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد]. Bru kilman writes:

*“Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية] used to sing lyrical odes in his youth and pleased Hārūn and his companions. He never remained away from him either in or out of station except during the pilgrimage. When Hārūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] went to Al-Riqqah [الرقعة] Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية] became a pious man donning a robe, gave up singing and left the company of the Caliph. Then Harūn Al-Rashīd [هارون الرشيد] ordered his arrest for compelling him to sing but he did not sing.”<sup>30</sup>*

The reader of the poems of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية] finds himself in the midst of an environment full of wisdom, admonition, moral warnings and advices aimed at highlighting the fact that desiring the material world is fruitless. In his poetry, he persuades people to look at the future and to ponder over the punishment for his deeds in his worldly life. Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [أبو العتاهية], in dealing with this piousness, is unique among his contemporaries. This distinction bestows a special colour to his poetry and places it in the context of hope, fear, and aloofness; perfunctory cautions and worldly pictures which show the suffocating bottlenecks of human life. His aim was that people should refrain from drowning in the pleasures of this world and from committing sins; that they should keep in mind the day which they are bound to see finally; the day when neither sons would be of any use nor the wealth of this world except him who appears before his Lord with a pious heart.

If one pursues the factors which turned his life towards this route and fixed the thoughts and topics of his poetry, will not find much evidence about his being so. The reason for this lack of evidence is the peculiar condition of Abū Al-

‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهية]. He always kept his creed and religion a secret so as to avoid the cruel lashes of the rulers. Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] says:

"إن مذهبه كان القول بالتوحيد ، و أن الله خلق جوهرين متضادين لا من شيء ، ثم إنه بني العالم هذه البنية منهما ، و كان يزعم أن الله سرّد كلّ شيء إلى الجوهرين المتضادين قبل أن تفتى الأعيان جميعاً."

*"His religion is Tawhīd [توحيد] (monotheism) and he believed that Allāh created two opposite essences from nothing. Then built the building of his universe with these two essences. He thought that after these two, Allāh will recollect everything to the same two opposite essences before all the dignitaries disappear."*<sup>31</sup>

Some are of the opinion that according to his belief, "Wisdom naturally, is dependent upon the scope of thinking, discussion and argument. He believed in the Hereafter, considering some deeds to be prohibited and was a follower of the Zaidīyah [زيدية] creed and one of the innovators of Batrīyah [بترية]. He did not infringe upon anyone's rights and was a follower of the Jabrī [جبري] (fatalist) school of thought."<sup>32</sup> Brukilman explains that the influence of Christianity exists in the poetry of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهية].<sup>33</sup> But, what Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] says about Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah's [ابوالعناهية] beliefs, is correct when he writes:

"فهو ليس مانوياً ثنوياً ، يؤمن بأن للعالم إلهين ، كما ظنّ ابن المعتز و بعض معاصريه ، إنما هو مانوي من نمط جديد ، إذ يمزج بين المانوية و الإسلام ، إلا إذا كان قد موّه عن مانويته الخالصة بادعائه وحدانية ربّه."

*"He is not a Manich(a)ean, nor a Thanawī, [ثنوي] nor a believer in two Gods as imagined by Ibn Al-M‘tazz [ابن المعتز] and some of his contemporaries. Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهية] believed in a new kind of Manicha(a)eism;. He has amalgamated Manicha(a)eism with Islām, so much so that he has even expressed his distinct belief in the oneness of the god of Manicha(a)eism."*<sup>34</sup>

The good advices and admonitions appearing in the poetry of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهية] indicate the same creed and confirm the existence of the said mixing of relations in his faith. He remained steadfast in his belief. In this respect, he was different from his contemporaries. Since his faith was different from the customary creed of the subjects of the state of ‘Abbāsīd and had, because of it, suffered much, he suppressed it and employed his poetry in the service of providing and propagating good advices and admonitions and teachings of principles. It appears that due to his staunch sincerity for his faith he

constantly travelled on the distant path called piety and abstinence and never overstepped it.

In the words of Brukilman: “Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة] has tried the path of his predecessors but in a new way.”<sup>35</sup>

However the task of identifying the courses of thought which contributed in giving shape to the mind of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة] and found the pillars of the structure of his signs of Iranian culture, especially in the admonitions found in his songs. Following is a clear example of the same:

مَنْ سَابَقَ الدَّهْرَ كِبَاكِبُهُ      لَمْ يَسْتَقْلْهَا مِنْ خَطَى الدَّهْرِ  
فَاخْطُ مَعَ الدَّهْرِ إِذَا مَا خَطَا      وَاجْرِ مَعَ الدَّهْرِ كَمَا يَجْرِي  
لَيْسَ لِمَنْ لَيْسَتْ لَهُ حِيلَةٌ      مَوْجُودَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ

*“The one who overtakes the current trend does not rise after falling down. So take steps with the trend of the time in the way time proceeds. If there is no remedy, patience is the best remedy.”*<sup>36</sup>

The original thought behind this couplet of “Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة] which many have adopted from Iranian wisdom, include kindness, softness, compromise and patience under stress. For example an Iranian wise man has said:

"سست ترین چاره سودمندتر از قویترین سر سختیهاست."

*“The mildest remedy is more effective than the strongest toughness,”*  
and

"آیین و آداب روز را به عقل خویش بیاموزید و با مردم هر زمان به شیوه ایشان بروید تا دشمنانتان اندک شوند و آبرویتان محفوظ ماند."

*“Learn the rules and discipline of your time and behave with people according to their custom so as to minimize the number of your enemies and safeguard your honour.”*<sup>37</sup>

So also these words of Anūshīrwān [انوشیروان] which says:

"چون آنچه را می‌خواهی نیست آن را بجواه که هست."

*“If what you want is not available, desire whatever is available.”*<sup>38</sup>

He also insists on the same qualities of a fast friend whereupon Persian advices have put stress and says:

عَذِيرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ، لَا إِنَّ جَفَوْتُهُ      صَفَا لِي وَلَا إِنَّ صَرْتُ طَوَّعَ يَدَيْهِ  
وَإِنِّي لَمُسْتَتَقٌّ إِلَى ظِلِّ صَاحِبٍ      يَرِقُّ وَ يَصْفُو إِنَّ كَدَرْتُ عَلَيْهِ

*“My complaint from mankind is that when I hurt him, he is untrue to me and even if I am his slave, he is still untrue to me. I seek the shadow of such a friend who may treat me nicely even when I may behave badly*

*with him.”<sup>39</sup>*

Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعتاهية] has an **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] (Kind of writing in the metre of Rajaz), by the name **Dhāt Al-Amthāl** [ذات الامثال] about which the author of **Al-Aghānī** [الاغانى] writes:

"إن هذه الأرجوزة من بدائع أبي العتاهية ، و يقال إن فيها أربعة آلاف مثل."

*“This **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] is one of the novelties of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعتاهية] and it is said that it contains 4000 proverbs.”<sup>40</sup>*

It does not appear far from truth if it is said that the poet has obtained most of the proverbs of this **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] from the garden of Iranian advices and sayings.

Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] says:

"و لا نشك في أن أرجوزة أبي العتاهية ، لم تكن أمثالها كلها من صنعه ، و أنه استقاها من أمثال الفرس و الهند و اليونان ، أو على الأقل ، استقى كثيراً من جوانبها."

*“Undoubtedly all the proverbs in this **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] are not manufactured by the mind of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعتاهية] himself but he has taken it mostly from the Iranian, Indian and Greek proverbs, or at least, he has taken maximum benefit from them.”<sup>41</sup> Anyhow, this **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] has disappeared and a very little part of it is traceable. Whatever is available indicates that they are closely related to Iranian wisdom and discipline. The most important example of which is this couplet:*

إِنَّ الْقَلِيلَ بِالْقَلِيلِ يَكْثُرُ      إِنَّ الصَّفَاءَ بِالْقَذَى لِيَكْدُرُ

*“Little added to little becomes more; cleanliness loses its purity, when added dirtiness.”<sup>42</sup>*

These words are exactly like those of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] in **Adab Al-Ṣaghīr** [ادب الصغير]:

"و على العاقل أن لا يستصغر شيئاً من الخطأ في الرأي ، و الزلل في العلم ، و الإغفال في الأمور ، فإنّ من استصغر الصغير أو شك أن يجمع إليه صغيراً و صغيراً ، فإذا الصغير كبير. و لم نر شيئاً قط قد أتى إلا من قبل الصغير المتهاون به ، قد رأينا الملك يؤتي من قبل العدو المختقر ، و رأينا الصحة تؤتى من الداء الذي لا يحفل به ، و رأينا الأمار تنبئ من الجدول الذي يستخفّ به ."

*"A wise man should always be aware of his mistakes. He must never belittle a lapse in thinking or laziness in work. If a man underestimates little defects, the same will overwhelm him and becomes big. The only danger seen by me had resulted out of my belittling a little danger governments are in danger from enemies which were considered insignificant. Ignoring small illnesses turn into deadly illnesses and floods arising out of small rivers become disastrous."*<sup>43</sup> Another advice in the **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] containing clear influence of Iranian admonition is:

لَمْ يَصْنَفِ لِلْمَرْءِ صَدِيقٌ يَمْدُقُهُ      لَيْسَ صَدِيقُ الْمَرْءِ مَنْ لَا يَصْنَدُقُهُ

*"A friend who does not become sincere with his friend is unpleasant. One who is not sincere with you is not your friend."*<sup>44</sup>

The topic of this couplet is within the field of the counsels covered by Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير]. For example:

"إذا نظرت في حال من ترتبته لإخائك ، فإن كان من إخوان الدين ، فليكن فقيهاً ، ليس بمراء ، و لا حريص ، و إن كان من إخوان الدنيا ، فليكن حرّاً ، ليس بجاهل ، و لا كذاب ، و لا شرير ، و لا مشنوع ؛ فإن الجاهل أهل لأن يهرب منه أبواه ، و إن الكذاب لا يكون أحداً صادقاً ؛ لأن الكذب الذي يجري على لسانه ، إنما هو من فضول كذب قلبه ، و إنما سعى الصديق من الصدق."

*"If you are searching for the conditions of an intended friend they ought to be these: If he is your coreligionist he should be an expert in jurisprudence and not quarrelsome or covetous; If he is one of the world lovers, he should be a free man, broad-minded, not unwise, a liar or of a bad character because it is advisable even for the parents of a fool to be away from him. A liar can never be a true friend because whatever untruth comes on the tip of his tongue is an overflow of the untruth tied in his heart whereas the root of Ṣadīq (صديق friend) is Ṣidq (صدق truth)."*<sup>45</sup>



Similarly in **Urjūzah** [ارجوزة] Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهيّة] says:

إِنَّ الشَّبَابَ ، وَ الْفَرَاغَ ، وَ الْجَدَّةَ  
مَفْسَدَةٌ لِلْعَقْلِ ، أَيْ مَفْسَدَةٌ

*“A youth who is unemployed and careless gets his mind destroyed which is a terrible disaster.”*<sup>46</sup>

His views regarding the losses resulting from idleness, undoubtedly, are synonymous with these words of Ardishīr [اردشیر]:

"بيكاري چون در ميان مردمان گسترش يابد توجه به مسائل و اندیشه در اصول از آن زايد. و چون در كارها نگرند هريك با سرشت ويژه خویش نگردد و رأى ایشان مختلف شود، و از پراكنده گي مذاهب دشمنی و كينه خيزد."

*“When unemployment spreads in the society, it creates doubts in various issues; everyone looks at them from his own angle and style. Then the differences in the outlook result in communal enmity.”*<sup>47</sup>

When he says:

أَصْحَبْ ذَوِي الْفَضْلِ وَ أَهْلَ الدِّينِ  
فَالْمَرْءُ مَنُصُوبٌ إِلَى الْقَرِينِ

*“Be in the company of the learned religious men because man is identified by his company.”*<sup>48</sup>

Definitely this is the same style Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] in **Adab Al-Ṣaghīr** [ادب الصغير] has used.

"و على العاقل أن لا يخادن ، و لا يصاحب ، و لا يجاور من الناس - ما استطاع - إلا ذا فضل في الدين و العلم و الأخلاق ، فيأخذ عنه ."

*“It is desirable for wise men, as far as possible, to be friendly with only the learned men of good character and to learn virtues from them.”*<sup>49</sup>

It has come in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير]:

"اعرف أهل الدين و المروءة في كل كورة و قرية و قبيلة ، فيكونوا هم إخوانك ، و أعوانك ، و بطانتك ، و ثقاتك ."

*“Find out the faithful and upright people in every place so that they may be your brothers and your reliable friends.”*<sup>50</sup>

Evidently, The influence of Persian admonition is seen in this couplet of Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة], about which it is said that a wise man who attended the burial of Alexander commented:

"شاه ، دیروز با هیبت تر از امروز بود و امروز پند آموزتر از دیروز است ."

*"This king was more frightening yesterday than he is today, but he is more of a guiding source today than he was yesterday."*

Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة] grabbed the same meaning and composed a poem; mourning the death of his friend ‘Alī Ibn Thābit [علي بن ثابت] :

وَ كَانَتْ فِي حَيَاتِكَ لِي عِظَاتٌ      فَأَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ أَوْعَظُ مِنْكَ حَيًّا

*"To me there was a source of knowledge when alive, now I have learned more from your death."*<sup>51</sup>

It is clear that Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابوالعناهیة], every now and then, looked at the good advices lying in the treasure of Iranian literature which was full of wisdom and extracted gems of practical morality out of them.

#### 4- Abū Nuwās [ابو نواس] (b. 195 A.H.):

A researcher who reads the Dīwān of Abū Nuwās [ابونواس] finds himself face to face with the obvious signs of the influence of the Iranian maxims. These influences show that in those days not only were Persian counsels the major factors in contributing towards the culture of writers and authors, but it is also a proven fact that Abū Nuwās [ابونواس] himself possessed some aspects of them which enabled him to appear distinct from other poets and writers of his day.

This is primarily because, his father Hānī [هاني] was one of the Iranian lords in Khurāsān province during the reign of ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Azīz [عمر ابن عبدالعزیز]. His mother too was an Iranian serf named Jalbān [جلبان].<sup>52</sup> So Abū Nuwās [ابونواس] is truly Iranian. The memory of Persian emperors used to overwhelm him with a sense of pride. He believed that the community which is known in the world in causing all aggressors to yield were Iranian and so he was one of them. If Khusru Anūshīrwān [خسرو انوشیروان] could come to life he would certainly join his court. Abū Nuwās [ابونواس] himself says:

بَنَيْنَا عَلَى كَسْرَى سَمَاءً مُدَامَةً      مُكَلَّلَةً حَافَاتُهَا بِنُجُومٍ  
فَلَوْ رُدَّ فِي كَسْرَى بْنِ سَاسَانَ رُوحُهُ      إِذَنْ لَأَصْطَفَانِي دُونَ كُلِّ نَدِيمٍ

*“We raised a sky on the head of Khusrau, an ever raining sky, a sky decorated in every direction with stars. If Khusrau can get another life he will select me as his companion.”*<sup>53</sup>

He was against those who had composed poems of praising and mourning for their bygoners.

It is believed that, his motive behind adopting this method was that in their deeds he beheld the colour of purely Arabic culture. This, he did not like and hence fled from everything which hinted at it. Conversely, indulgence in wine and pleasure, which he propagated, showed him the signs of Persian wealth and power, a power that had gone away with the wind. He found himself uneasy in work and life and pined for the earlier atmosphere. To prove this, there is no better evidence than this:

طَاسَاتٍ تَبْرُ، خَمْرُهَا يَفْهَقُ	نُزُوجُ الْخَمْرِ مِنَ الْمَاءِ فِي
تَسْمَعُ لِلدَّاعِي، وَلَا تَنْطِقُ	مَنْطِقَاتٍ بِتِصَاوِيرٍ، وَلَا
مُخْتَفِرٌ مَا بَيْنَهُمْ خَنْدَقُ	عَلَى تَمَاثِيلِ بَنِي بَابِكِ
كِتَابٌ فِي لُجَّةٍ تَغْرَقُ	كَأَنَّهُمْ وَالْخَمْرُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
يُهَيِّمُ فِي أَطْلَالِهَا أَحْمَقُ	فَالنَّعْتُ ذَا، لَا نَعْتَ دَارِخَلْتُ

*“We mix wine in golden cups with water so much so that it overflows. The cups having paintings thereon begin to talk with you in such manner that you neither hear a voice nor speak a word. These cups standing upon the legs portraying the sons of Babak have waves engraved on them. When you fill them with it appears that princes of Babak are soldiers who are drowning in the depths of an ocean, so this is the tale. It is not the story of the vacated house around which a fool should keep wandering.”*<sup>54</sup>

He saw a place of pride in his forefathers, which was destroyed by the cycle of time. Yet the echo of grandeur and glory rose up to the Pleiades. On the other hand, Abū Nuwās [ابن نواس] was fully aware of the losses of

his forefathers. Anyone, who reads the Persian words appearing in between his poems, feels sure that his acquaintance with Persian is almost equal to his total knowledge of Arabic. It is but natural that a person with such a distinction be compared to poets of Iranian culture, literature and wisdom, for he is quite different from others, because, contrary to what can be imagined about his contemporaries, nothing could come in his way. According to a deeper interpretation, the colour and fragrance of Iranian literature must be found more in the poetry of Abū Nuwās [ابو نواس] as compared to that of others.

Whatever is said so far does not mean that he was totally independent and had never looked at the books of advice and admonition because, his poetry makes it clear that sometimes he had made use of these advices too and had used this eternal and everlasting knowledge. Such as this couplet:

وَأَمَضِ عَنْهُ بِسَلَامٍ	خَلَّ جَنْبَيْكَ لِرَامٍ
لَكَ مِنْ دَاءِ الْكَلَامِ	مَتَّ بَدَاءِ الصَّمْتِ خَيْرٌ
حِ مَغَالِقِ الْحِمَامِ	رُبَّمَا اسْتَفْتَحَتْ بِالْمَزْ
لَ نِيَامٍ وَقِيَامِ	رُبَّ لَفْظٍ سَاقٍ آجَا
جَمَ فَاهَ بِلِجَامِ	إِنَّمَا السَّالِمُ مَنْ أَلَّ
ةٍ مِنْهُمْ وَالسُّقَامِ	فَالْبَسِ النَّاسَ عَلَى الصَّحَا
قَصَدَ أَبْقَى لِلْجَمَامِ	وَعَلَيْكَ الْقَصْدُ إِنَّ أَلَّ

*“Keep a distance from the one who aims at you and passes away safely. Dying with the pain of loneliness and quietness is better than dying of the sickness of talking. It is likely that a witty talk might open up the closed doors of death. It is also likely that some words might move even a dormant person to awaken. The one who keeps his mouth shut will remain safe. So keep yourself aloof. You should maintain the middle path which is the best guarantee of comfort”<sup>55</sup>*

The original spirit of this stanza is Iranian. It is inclined towards softness and humility; and does make one feel any difficulty in bearing

insult. These are the topics of this couplet which are not different from the nature of those translated by Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] from Persian and also in his own work. It is similar to this one in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير]:

"إن غلبت على الكلام وقتاً ، فلا تغلبن على السكوت ؛ فإنه لعله يكون أشدَّ همًا لك زينة ، و أجلبهما لك مودة ، و أبقاهما للمهابة ، و أنفاهما للحسد."

"though they can deprive you sometimes from speaking but they can never take away your silence. Possibly silence is more beautiful in attracting friends, and preserving safety and dignity. It is also stronger in removing malice and jealousy."<sup>56</sup>

The topic of the following couplet:

عَلَيْكَ الْقَصْدُ إِنَّ الْاُ      قَصْدَ اَبْقَى لِلْجَمَامِ

"You should maintain the middle path which is the best guarantee of comfort "

has been undoubtedly lifted from these words of Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] in **Adab Al-Ṣaghīr** [ادب الصغير]:

اِقْصَادُ السَّعْيِ اَبْقَى لِلْجَمَامِ      وَ فِي بَعْدِ اَلْهَمَّةِ تَكُونُ التَّصَبُّ

"Regular efforts in maintaining equilibrium are more effective and what one gains out of prolonged desires is only sorrow."<sup>57</sup>

Another couplet wherein Abū Nuwās [ابن نوّاس] has drawn idea from Iranian admonition is the one regarding friendship and brotherhood:

لَا اُعِيرُ الدَّهْرَ سَمْعِي      لِيَعِيبُوا لِي حَيْبَا  
لَا وَ لَا اُذْخِرُ عِنْدِي      لِلْاُخْلَاءِ الْعُيُوبَا  
فَإِذَا مَا كَانَ كَوْنُ      قُمْتُ بِالْغَيْبِ خَطِيبَا  
أَحْفَظُ الْاِخْوَانَ كَيْمَا      يُحْفَظُوا مِنِّي الْمَغِيَا

"I never listen to one who backbites about any friend. I do not compile the defects of my friends in my heart, even if they have any defect, I defend them in their absence. I say I take care of the honour of my friends so that they too may preserve my honour in my absence."<sup>58</sup>

It is obvious that the subject matter of this couplet has been taken up from the table cloth spread by Ibn Al-Muqaffa' [ابن المقفع] and his like for presenting Persian fruits of admonition to the Arab society. It is recorded in *Al-Adab Al-Kabīr* [الادب الكبير]:

"استحي الحياء كله من أن تخبر صاحبك أنك عالم ، و أنه جاهل ، مصرحاً أو معرضاً ."

*"Be ashamed of making your friend think through clear indications or by signs that you are wise and he is unwise."*<sup>59</sup> and

"تحفظ في مجلسك و كلامك من التناول على الأصحاب ، و طب نفساً عن كثير مما يعرض لك فيه صواب القول مداراةً ؛ لئلا يظن أصحابك أن ما بك التناول عليهم ."

*"Beware never praise yourself while talking with friends. Keep mum by the way of compromise, even if you think it is correct so that they may not imagine that you are becoming proud."*<sup>60</sup>

Another proof of Abū Nuwās [ابن نوّاس] being influenced by the culture and literature of Iran is that he employed many words of wisdom and proverbs which were being used by Iranians in their conversation. For example:

كُنْتُ مِنَ الْخُبِّ فِي ذَرَى نَيْقٍ      أَرُوذُ مِنْهُ مَرَادَ مَوْئُوقٍ  
حَتَّى نَفَانِي عَنْهُ تَخَلَّقُوا      شِ كَذْبَةٍ، لُثُّهَا بِتَزْوِيقٍ  
كَقَوْلِ كَسْرَى ، فِيمَا تَمَثَّلَهُ :      مِنْ فُرْصِ اللَّصِّ ضَجَّةُ السُّوقِ

*"I was following him from the summits of love until the slander of his words drove me away. Khusru has said : The bustle in the bazar gives an opportunity to the thieves. "*<sup>61</sup>

The proverb employed in the last stanza is the translation of an Iranian saying which is in vogue even today: **"A thief desires a chaotic market."**

Another example in this couplet is romantic:

سَأَلْتُهَا قَبْلَةَ فَفُزْتُ بِهَا      بَعْدَ امْتِنَاعٍ ، وَ شِدَّةِ التَّعَبِ  
فَقُلْتُ : بِاللَّهِ يَا مُعَذِّبَتِي      جُودِي بِأُخْرَى أَقْضِ بِهَا أَرْبِي  
فَابْتَسَمَتْ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَتْ مَثَلًا      يَعْرِفُهُ الْعَجَمُ ، لَيْسَ بِالْكَذْبِ  
"لَا تُعْطِينَ الصَّبِيَّ وَاحِدَةً،      يُطَلِّبُ أُخْرَى بِأَغْنَفِ الطَّلَبِ"

*“I asked her for a kiss, and after a prolonged denial I was successful. Thereafter, I told her: O source of my troubles ! In the Name of God, I request of you a kiss once more and oblige, she smiled, and then told a proverb which is true and of which the Iranians are well aware “Do not give the first one to a child, he will ask for the second with perseverance.”<sup>62</sup>*

In this task, of giving circulation to the proverb he has used the style of **Irsāl Al-Mathal** [ارسال المثل] who uses an individual to explain or gives an example. This is still known to the Iranians of today.

Abū Nuwās's [ابونواس] poetry clearly shows that he has been influenced by the Persian proverbs, advices, and other words of wisdom. These signs of Persian admonitions in the poetry of Abū Nuwās is due to his uniqueness among other linguists and writers who proclaim a place of pride for Iran.

#### **5- Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] (b. 167 A.H.) :**

He was born and brought up in Baṣrah. In fact, there is a difference of opinion regarding his origin and race. Some have said he is an Arab of the Azud [ازد] tribe.

But Dr. Shuqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] prefers the view that “he is originally Iranian and that his relation with the Azudīyān [ازديان] is by the way of Wilā (religious friendship).”<sup>63</sup> Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] had faced the charge of being a Zindīq [زنديق] (atheist). This indicates that he is a co-religionist of Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد] in the creed of ‘Thānawīyat’ (ثنوئية duality). Since his faith in this creed had crossed his individual belief and he had indulged in an open propagation of it, it is understood that this belief had taken roots in the depths of his heart and had made him a staunch believer of it.

In the words of Brukliman: “Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] had conducted classes in Baṣrah to explain the virtues of ‘Thānawīyat’ faith.”<sup>64</sup> Naturally he had to suffer since he indulged in propagating other creeds and group religions. Therefore he escaped to Damascus. Caliph Maḥdī [مهدي] sent someone to arrest him. Most of the

narration indicate that he was hanged in Baghdād in (167 A.H.) on the charges of religious offence.

Though there is a difference of opinion regarding the real reason of him being killed and the year of his death, all the researchers and historians agree that he had discarded faith and had become an atheist.

Dr. Shauqī Daif [شوقي ضيف] writes:

"و مما لاشك فيه أنه كان زنديقاً مانوياً كبيراً ، بل لقد كان رأس المانوية ، و الجادل عن عقيدتهم في البصرة حقاً متظاولاً ."

*"There is no doubt that he was a kāfir (كافر) and a great Manich(a)ean, and had defended this belief for several years."*<sup>65</sup>

Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] obtained not only his beliefs from Iranians according to which two powers of good and evil are fighting one another in the universe but, it seems, he also read books of good advices and had also studied the thoughts of Iranian knowledgeable men and extracted many topics therefrom.

Abū Hilāl Al-‘Askarī [أبو هلال العسكري] says:

"و سمعت أبا بكر ابن دريد يقول : اجتمع في ديوان صالح بن عبد القدوس - وهو رجل من شعرائهم - ألف مثل للعرب و ألف مثل للعجم ."

*"I have heard from Abū Bakr Ibn Al-Duraīd [أبو بكر ابن الدريد] who said that in the anthology of Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] who is a poet, I found 1000 Arabic proverbs and 1000 Iranian sayings."*<sup>66</sup>

This statement appears to be correct because naturally, one who believes in Iranian religion and has faith in their creed should also be well-versed with their culture and wisdom as these advices had been derived from the ‘Thanawīyat’ [تنويعات] creed and people from far and near had respected it. A decisive proof of this claim is the trial of Afshīn [افشين], a commander of the army of M‘utaṣim [معتصم], who was a Majūs [مجوس] (Magian) by faith. In this connection. Aḥmad Amīn [أحمد أمين] writes:



"و اتهم كذلك بأنه عثر في بيته على كتاب قد زين بالذهب و الجواهر و السدياج فيه كفر بالله. و ردّ على هذه التهمة بالإقرار بها ، و أنه ورث الكتاب عن آبائه ، و الكتاب فيه أدب من آداب العجم ، و فيه كفر ، فانتفع بما فيه من أدب ، و ترك ما فيه من كفر."

*"He was charged that a book was seized from his house which was decorated with gold and jewels and silk. It contained blasphemy of God. In his reply he confessed and said that he had obtained that book from his father and also said it contained both Iranian admonitions as well as Kufr (كفر) admonitions. But he took benefit of only the good advices and left the blasphemies unattended."*<sup>67</sup>

The element of Iranian culture has played a big role in forming the thoughts of Ṣālih and it has given its colour and fragrance to his poetry which is mentioned in historical texts.

"Available sources indicate that Ṣālih had left a volume of fifty pages"<sup>68</sup> and had decorated it with rules and regulations worthy of a decent society. The same distinction raised the status of his poetry, which indicates his high thinking.

The view of Al-Jāhiz [الجاحظ] in this respect is as follows:

"و قالوا: لو أن شعر صالح بن عبدالقدوس و سابق البربري ، كان مفرقاً في أشعار كثيرة ، لصارت تلك الأشعار أرفع مما هي عليه بطبقات ، و لصار شعرهما نواذر سائرة في الآفاق. و لكن القصيدة إذا كانت كلها أمثالاً لم تسر ، و لم تجر مجرى النواذر. و متى لم يخرج السامع من شيء إلى شيء لم يكن لذلك عنده موقع."

*"It is said that if the poems of Ṣālih Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] and the previous natives were scattered with many other poems, his poems would rise up higher due to their preciousness and both would become famous by the title of a marvellous verse. But while his Qaṣīdah (قصيدة) odes may be full of wisdom and similes, they do not become universal and cannot be condensed in small sentences. If the hearer does not pay word to word attention it may not prove effective or impressive."*<sup>69</sup>

Among the instances showing his being impressed by the admonitions of Iran is the fact that he, followed the Iranian advice of "company of kings is both a cause for pride and danger," and preferred solitude and

abstinence and kept a distance from the pomp of the higher ups. He kept on saying:

أَنْسَتْ بِوَحْدَتِي وَ لَزِمْتُ بَيْتِي      فَتَمَّ الْعِزُّ وَ نَمَّا السُّرُورُ  
وَأُدْبِنِي الزَّمَانُ فَلَيْتَ أَتَى      هُجِرْتُ فَلَا أَزَارُ وَلَا أُزُورُ  
وَلَسْتُ بِقَائِلٍ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا      أَقَامَ الْجُنْدُ أَمْ نَزَلَ الْأَمِيرُ

*“I habituated myself to remain aloof and became homebound. Then pomp and glory ended and happiness began to arrive. Time tamed me, I wish all should leave me alone, neither anybody should come to visit me, nor should I go to see anybody. No longer till I die, shall I say the army has camped or the admiral has ascended.”*<sup>70</sup>

Persian admonitions advise men to refrain from making friends with fools and shortsighted people and say:

" دشمني با خردمندان از دوستي نا بخردان بهتر است . "

*“Enmity with the wise is better than friendship with a fool.”*

A couplet of Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] also points to it:

الْمَرْءُ يُجْمَعُ وَالزَّمَانُ يُفَرَّقُ      وَ يُظَلُّ يُرْقَعُ وَالْخُطُوبُ تُمَزَّقُ  
وَلَأَنْ يِعَادِيَ عَاقِلًا خَيْرٌ لَهُ      مِنْ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ صَدِيقٌ أَحْمَقُ  
فَارْبَأُ بِنَفْسِكَ أَنْ تُصَادِقَ أَحْمَقًا      إِنَّ الصَّدِيقَ عَلَى الصَّدِيقِ مُصَدِّقٌ

*“Man collects and time disperses. He constantly mends and time tears it apart. If he becomes inimical with a wise fellow it is better than his friendship with a fool. So be careful and never befriend a fool because a true friend recommends true friendship.”*<sup>71</sup>

Persian admonition has paid special attention to the earning of a livelihood. It says everybody’s provision is predestined. It is not proportionate with their wisdom. Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] has also composed thus:

مَا النَّاسُ إِلَّا عَامِلَانِ فَعَامِلٌ      قَدْ مَاتَ مِنْ عَطَشٍ وَ آخَرُ يُغْرَقُ  
وَالنَّاسُ فِي طَلَبِ الْمَعَاشِ وَإِنَّمَا      بِالْجَدِّ يُرْزَقُ مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يُرْزَقُ  
لَوْ يُرْزَقُونَ النَّاسُ حَسَبَ غُفُولِهِمْ      أَلْفَيْتَ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ تَرَى يَتَصَدَّقُ

*“People can be divided only into two groups of workers: One dies of thirst and the other dies of drowning in a lot of water. All men are after earning their provisions but everybody gets only up to the limit destined for him. If provision was to be given in proportion to their brains, many of those whom you now see wealthy would become penniless.”*<sup>72</sup>

The reader can clearly understand the effect on the poet. Similarly the stanza given under from the ode **Zainabīyah** [زينية] which says:

وَإِذَا عَدُوَّكَ بِالتَّحِيَّةِ وَلِتَكُنْ      مِنْهُ زَمَانُكَ خَائِفًا تَتَرَقَّبُ  
وَاحْذَرُهُ إِنْ لَاقَيْتَهُ مُبَسِّمًا      فَالَلَيْتُ يَدُو نَابَهُ إِذْ يَغْضِبُ  
إِنَّ الْعَدُوَّ وَ إِنْ تَقَامَ عَنْهُ      فَالْحَقْدُ بَاقٍ فِي الصُّدُورِ مُغَيَّبُ

*“Be the first to salute the enemy and be afraid of him constantly and hence ready for danger. If you see him smiling, take more precaution and keep safe distance because a tiger shows his teeth when he is angry. Jealousy howsoever old it may be, remains hidden in heart.”*<sup>73</sup>

It suggests that this stanza is very similar to the one of Ibn Al-Muqaffa ‘[ابن المقفع] in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير] which talks about confronting the enemy. It says:

"واعلم أنه أعظم خطرك أن تريه أنك لا تتخذة عدواً؛ فإن ذلك غرة له ، و سبيل لك إلى القدرة عليه. فإن أنت قدرت فاستطعت اغتفاراً لعداوته عن أن تكافئ بها ، فهناك استكملت عظيم الخطر."

*“Understand that your fear increases in the eyes of your enemy when he understands that you have not recognized him as an enemy. This misleads him in such a way that you can win him over. If you succeed and also have the ability to forgive him instead of taking revenge, then you have taken your greatness to its maximum limit,”*<sup>74</sup> and

"و إن ابتليت بمجازاة عدوه ، فعليك بالحدز في أمرك ، و الجراءة في قلبك ، حتى تملأ قلبك جراءة ، و يستفرغ عملك الحدز."

*“if you are caught by an enemy you should be careful in dealing and instil courage in the heart till your soul becomes full of bravery and your work full of care.”*<sup>75</sup>

The advices given by the poet here have been obtained from the fountainhead of Iranian wisdom. Another poem regarding sitting with liars is also likewise:

This stanza too gives another glaring example of Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] being influenced by the Persian advice [پند]:

لَا تَجِدْ بِالْعَطَاءِ فِي غَيْرِ حَقٍّ      لَيْسَ فِي مَنَعِ غَيْرِ ذِي الْحَقِّ بُخْلٌ  
إِنَّمَا الْجُودُ أَنْ تَجُودَ عَلَى مَنْ      هُوَ لِلْجُودِ مِنْكَ وَالْبَذْلُ أَهْلٌ

*“Do not be generous to a fool as sticking to the truth is no stinginess. To give to the suitable is true generosity.”*<sup>76</sup>

Persian admonitions have hinted to this concept. In the disciplines of Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر] one comes across:

"پنج خوی از نادان است: بیجهت خشمگین شدن ، بیدلیل عطا و بخشش کردن ، خود را خوب نشناختن ، میان دوست و دشمن تفاوت ننهادن ، و به آن کس که شایسته نیست خوش گمان بودن ."

*“Fools have five qualities: to become angry without valid reason, to donate without reason, not recognizing oneself properly, not to differentiate between friends and foes and to have a favourable opinion about an unworthy person.”*<sup>77</sup>

Al-Adab Al-Kabīr [الادب الكبير] has added to this:

"و اعلم أنك ما شغلت من رأيك في غير المهم أضرى المهم و و ما صرفت من مالك بالباطل ، فقدته حين تريده للحق ."

*“What you spend from your power of thinking in insignificant affairs reduces your ability to ponder over important things. Similarly, when you give away your wealth in wrong ways you find yourself poor at the time of doing the right thing.”*<sup>78</sup>

Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس] has composed:

إِنَّ الْغِنَى مِنَ الرِّجَالِ مُكْرَمٌ      وَ تَرَاهُ يُرْجَى مَا لَدَيْهِ وَ يُرْهَبُ  
وَ يَبْشُرُ بِالْتَّرْحِيبِ عِنْدَ قُدُومِهِ      وَ يُقَامُ عِنْدَ سَلَامِهِ وَ يُقَرَّبُ  
وَ الْفَقْرُ شَيْنٌ لِلرِّجَالِ فَإِنَّهُ      حَقًّا يَهُونُ بِهِ الشَّرِيفُ الْأَتْسَبُ

*“Among the people, those who are wealthy are considered to be honourable. You can see that other people are afraid of him and crave for what he has. When he arrives they get up to salute and pay respect to him, they bow their head at his feet so as to be near to him. But people feel ashamed of their poverty and despite being a gentleman of good lineage, a poor man in fact gets only insults.”<sup>79</sup>*

This is mentioned thus in *Adab Al-Ṣaghīr* [ادب الصغير] of Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع]:

"ما التبع و الأعوان و الصديق و الحشم إلا للمال. و لا يظهر المروءة إلا المال. و لا الرأى و لا القوة إلا بالمال ، و الفقر داعية إلى صاحبه مقت الناس ، و هو مسلبة للعقل و المروءة ، و مذهبة للعلم و الأدب ، و معدن للتهمة ، مجمعة للبلايا ."

*“The friends, followers and sympathizers gather around a rich man only due to his wealth. Generosity does not show up except with richness and the power of work and imagination too is obtained only through money. Poverty invites enemies, drives away wisdom and liberality and brings in a lot of misfortune.”<sup>80</sup>*

Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح بن عبد القدوس] composes elsewhere:

إِذَا قُلْتَ قَدَّرَ أَنَّ قَوْلَكَ عَرَضَةٌ      لِإِدَارَةٍ أَوْ حُجَّةٍ لِمُخَاصِمٍ  
وَ إِنْ أَشْرَأَ لَمْ يَخْشَ قَبْلَ كَلَامِهِ أَلْ      جَوَابَ فَيَنْهَى نَفْسَهُ غَيْرُ حَازِمٍ

*“While speaking beware, perhaps your words will evoke an angry reaction or provide a pretext. One who does not fear the response of his words is a careless person who only deprives himself of good.”<sup>81</sup>*

In this respect Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] says:

"فإن لم يخص السائل في المسألة رجلاً واحداً ، و عم بما جماعة من عنده ، فلا تبادر بالجواب ، و لاتسابق الجلوساء ثواب الكلام موائبة ؛ فإن في ذلك ، مع شين التكليف و الخفة ، أنك إذا سبقت القوم إلى الكلام ، صاروا لكلامك خصماء ، فيتعقبونه بالعيب و الطعن ."

*“If the speaker has not addressed any particular person while asking something and has put the matter before the entire gathering, do not hasten to give response, because though there is an element of humiliation in remaining silent, if you overtake others in speaking up it will anger them and your word will become the target of their taunts.”<sup>82</sup>*

Most of the poetry of Ṣāliḥ Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح] is of this kind. If his bright talent and imaginative power in employing the wisdom of Iranian themes were absent in his art, he would not have been able to expose the Iranian beauty just as the beauty of the bride is exposed by lifting up her veil on the first night of marriage.

#### 6- ‘Attābī [عتابي] (b. 208 A.H.):

The way in which words of wisdom and good advices have influenced the mind of the Kulthūm Ibn ‘Amr ‘Attābī [كلثوم ابن عمرو عتابي] is unique among the poets and authors of the ‘Abbasīd Era. While Ibn Al-Muqaffa‘ [ابن المقفع] limited his job to translation and quotation of the said admonitions, and the role of Sahl Ibn Hārūn [سهل ابن هارون] dealt with imitation and substitution thereof, ‘Attābī worked in a different way. Influence upon the aforementioned gentlemen was related more to the mould than to contents. But ‘Attābī [عتابي] has worked differently by living his life with Iranian thoughts. He nurtured those thoughts which flowed from his tongue in the form of pure and transparent words.

‘Attābī [عتابي] was so well-versed in Persian that he was able to refer to the original sources himself. Historian Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Al-Ṭāifūr [احمد ابن اي طاهر الطيفور] says ‘Attābī [عتابي] had so much attraction towards Iranian thought that he had travelled three times to Marw to make a list of the books written by the Iranians. When asked the reason he said:

"و هل المعاني إلا في كتب العجم. و البلاغة : اللغة لنا ، و المعاني لهم ."

*"Is there any meaning in non-Iranian books? Balāghah [بلاغه] (elocution) only means our word and their thoughts."*<sup>83</sup>

He was so fond of this work that he undertook painstaking journeys to alien lands. What ‘Attābī [عتابي] has said regarding the superiority of Iranian meaningful thoughts is correct to the extent that he never entertained any doubt about it. In practice too, he adopted the best and the beautiful from them and extracted a lot from their good advises. ‘Attābī [عتابي] was always eager to sing these topics. Large assemblies used to benefit from his oratory.

Ibn Al-Mudabbir [ابن المدبر] writes in his essay Al-‘Adhrā’ [العذراء]:

"حدثنا صديق للعتابي ، قال له: اعمل لي رسالة ، واستمده مرة بعد أخرى ، فقال له: ما ارى بلاغتك إلا شاردة. فقال العتابي لما تناولت القلم ، تداعت على المعاني من كل جهة ، فأحببت أن أترك كل معنى يرجع إلى موضعه. ثم أجتبي لك أحسنها ."

*“One of ‘Attābī’s [عتابي] friends told us that ‘Attābī [عتابي] was requested to write an essay for them, but each time he asked for more time. He was asked whether he had forgotten eloquence. He replied: Whenever I take up the pen to write something, words rush to me from every direction. But I like to return to each one of them to pick up the best of them for you.”<sup>84</sup>*

It seems what Ibn Al-Mudabbir [ابن المدبر] has quoted from ‘Attābī [عتابي] is a feeling which has been conveyed to him by someone who had read the original Iranian sources himself. Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ [ابن المقفع] also appears to be similar to ‘Attābī [عتابي] while presenting Iranian wisdom. He says: The words invade my heart and I begin to pick up the best therefrom.

‘Attābī [عتابي] was influenced by some of the Iranian admonitions possessing a universal meaning. He has authored two books in this field which historians say, There were **Kitāb Al-Ādāb** [كتاب الآداب] and **Funūn Al-Hikam** [فنون الحكم]. Though both of them have been missing and are out of the reach of researchers and literature lovers, some of his selected poems of admonitions have still survived giving people a clear idea about how much he was indebted to Iranians in the matter of their composing meaningful counsels. Fortunately whatever has survived pertains to the topics of wisdom, ethics and effective speaking. ‘Attābī [عتابي] has not stepped out of the original Iranian topics while presenting them in Arabic.

One of his sayings in the matter of the politics of the kings is as follows:

"مما يعين على العدل اصطناع من يؤثر التقى ، و اطراح من يقبل الرشا ، و استكفاء من يعدل في القضية ، و استخلاف من يشفق على الرعية ."

*“One of the things which helps in dispensation of justice is the employment of persons who are pious and God-fearing and to reject the corrupt ones and to obtain assistance of those who remain just in pronouncing judgments and to select, those who are kind towards people.”<sup>85</sup>*

In this advice one finds the qualities of those persons who are fit for ruling over people and for overseeing their deeds. Here the original thought has been divided into branches so as to make the intention fully comprehensible. The reader would undoubtedly pay attention to the precise balance created by ‘Attābī [عتّاي] for weighing of values and acting upon them. He also observes that the words express the meaning exactly and have been found most appropriate syntactically. Many authors tried to do so but only a few succeeded. ‘Attābī [عتّاي], in order to point out the soundness of wisdom and logic, has taken the benefit of rhythmic repetition and has created the likeness of the tolling of bells around the necks of camels by using the letter Alif and stressful syllables. The effect of Iranian culture in this advice, as a whole as well as in the branching of the original thought, of preservation of justice by a government which longs to last longer are quite apparent. There are many such counsels in the rest of the recommendations and vows of the Iranian emperors.

‘Attābī [عتّاي] takes the words along with deeds and meticulously acts upon what he has learnt from the Iranian advices. Persian advices warn men and show them the dangers of sitting with the kings. They compare this deed (nearness to kings) with journeying in high seas having no shore. The way of ‘Attābī [عتّاي], is based exactly on this thinking.

Somebody once asked him why he did not become the chief writer of the court of the king and join the royal ranks. He replied:

"لأني رأيتُه يعطي رجلاً ألف مثقال بلا خصلة ، و يرمي آخر من أعلى السور على الرأس بلا ذنب ،  
فلا أدري أي الرجلين أكون عنده، مع أن الذي أعطي في ذلك أكثر من الذي أخذ - يريد مهجته  
- و ركوب الغرر فيها معه ."

*“Because I see that he gives 1000 Mithqāl [منقال] (gold coins) to one who has no qualification at all and throws out another without any fault.*



*I do not follow who is higher in his eyes, though the one who gets gold is more after the life of the ruler than the one who has been punished. The one who got the reward is more inclined towards mischief than the one who got pushed.”<sup>86</sup>*

The explanation of such outlook is not possible except by paying attention to the advices translated in those days from Persian. Those advices tell people to abstain from getting too close to the rulers and mentions the virtues for those who want to be royal companions.

" از بزرگمهر پرسیدند کدام رنج پایدارتر است؟ گفت: همنشین بودن با شاه بد خوی . "

*“Someone asked Buzurgmihr [بزرگ مهر]: Which suffering is more painful? He replied: To sit with a bad tempered king.”<sup>87</sup>*

" پرسیدن: چه چیز زودتر دگرگون میشود؟ گفت: دل شاهان . "

And asked him: *“Which thing changes swiftly?” He replied: “Heart of a king.”<sup>88</sup>*

This type of admonitions are seen in **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير]:

" لا تكوننَ صحبتك للملوك إلا بعد رياضة منك لنفسك على طاعتهم في المكروه عندك ، و موافقتك فيما خالفك ، و تقدير الأمور على ميلهم دون ميلك . "

*“Do not be a courtier of the king except when you have prepared for it in such a way that you will obey him even in the orders you dislike, and to agree with him in the matters in which you differ and to act as per his will, not yours.”<sup>89</sup>*

Earlier, it is said that language learning and eloquence are the distinct subjects of Persian Counsels. There is a saying of ‘Attābī [عتّاي] on this topic which makes it indisputable that in this matter ‘Attābī [عتّاي] has benefitted from the words of Iranian rulers, viziers and authors. He says: *“Words are the body and meanings are the soul which can be recognized only by the eyes of the heart. If you place a word after instead of before, or vice versa you have disfigured the word and changed its meaning, just as the creature becomes distorted by placing the head in place of the hands and the hand in place of the foot.”<sup>90</sup>* The Iranian advices have done much for paying attention to both the body and the soul and for keeping them related.

‘Attābī’s [عَتَّابِي] definition of eloquence is fully concordant with his definition of Fārsī. In his view: “If the sentence is small, it should convey full meaning and if it is long, it should possess beauty of composition.”<sup>91</sup> This is similar to its Persian parallel:

"بلاغت شناختن فصل از وصل است."

*“Eloquence is differentiating separation from combination.”*

Whoever reads the morals and maxims of ‘Attābī [عَتَّابِي] finds that he has adopted a way which is different from the prevalent Arabian style that he created those wise words without believing in the values of the then prevalent Arab traditions, and that his sayings do not contain tribal prejudice. ‘Attābī [عَتَّابِي] had written to Mālik Ibn Ṭauq [مالك ابن طوق]:

"فاكتسب أدباً ، تحي نسباً ، و اعلم أن قريبك من قرّب منك خير ، و أن ابن عمك من عمك نفعه ، و أن أحب الناس إليك أجداهم بالمنفعة عليك ."

*“Learn literature to become noble. Know that your friend is the one who makes you aware of your good, your cousin is he who believes that your good is his good, your benefit is his benefit, and your most beloved is he who gives you the maximum benefit.”*<sup>92</sup>

These words originate from an Iranian spirit that depicts everything with an insight that is different from the familiar Arabic insight. This quoted maxims of ‘Attābī [عَتَّابِي] are more similar to the wisdom of Ibn Al-Muqaffa [ابن المقفع] in *Al-Adab Al-Kabīr* [الادب الكبير] and *Al-Adab Al-Ṣaghīr* [الادب الصغير]. What persuaded the Barmakīs to give great respect to ‘Attābī [عَتَّابِي] and to make his words immortal and what really captured their hearts was that he had turned away from the traditions of his predecessors and had adopted the morals and wisdom of the Iranians.

**Yahyā Ibn Khālīd Al-Barmakī** [يحيى ابن خالد البرمكي] tells his son: “You could not write in the style of Kulthūm Ibn ‘Amr ‘Attābī [كلثوم ابن عمرو عَتَّابِي], let alone his essays and poetry! You will never see anyone like his.”<sup>93</sup>

Impression of Iranian wisdom and admonition upon ‘Attābī [عَتَّابِي] influenced his prose, which was given so far. It also left an impression on his verse.

Al-Nadīm [النديم] has said:

"شعر كلثوم بن عمرو العتابي مائة ورقة ."

"The poetry of Kulthūm Ibn ‘Amr Al-‘Attābī [كلثوم ابن عمرو عتابي] is made up of a hundred pages."<sup>94</sup> But now only a few of them have survived."<sup>94</sup> Because of its beauty, meaningfulness and ease of memorising, it has become proverbial and has remained a part of peoples language. The reader of ‘Attābī [عتابي] will feel the same harmony which the reader of Persian admonitions does. For example: "Thanks-giving" is a subject which has been very much attended to in Persian advices. And mentioned earlier, the genius and elegance of the poetry of ‘Attābī [عتابي] have also pursued this topic and said:

فَلَوْ كَانَ يَسْتَعْنِي عَنِ الشُّكْرِ مَاجِدٌ      لَعِزَّةٌ مُلْكٍ، أَوْ غُلُوٌّ مَكَانٍ  
لَمَا نَدَبَ اللَّهُ الْعِبَادَ لِشُكْرِهِ      فَقَالَ: اشْكُرُونِي أَيُّهَا الثَّقَلَانِ

*"If the nobles were, owing to their power and greatness, free from want of thanksgiving by others, God the Almighty would not have ordered his servants to be thankful to Him. He has said: "O Jinns and men! Be thankful to Me."<sup>95</sup>*

A true friend in the eyes of ‘Attābī [عتابي] is he who preserves the honour of his friend, both in his presence and in his absence and never inclines towards his enemies. So ‘Attābī [عتابي] tells his friend:

تَوَدُّ عَدُوِّي ثُمَّ تَزْعُمُ أَنَّي      صَدِيقُكَ إِنَّ الرَّاْيَ عَنْكَ لِعَازِبُ  
وَلَيْسَ أَخِي مَنْ وَدَّيَ رَأَى عَيْنَهُ      وَلَكِنْ أَخِي مَنْ صَدَّقْتَهُ الْمُغَائِبُ

*"You be friend with my enemy and yet think that you are my friend. You are far from wisdom. My brother is not he who loves me face, rather it is he who supports me in my absence."<sup>96</sup>*

This couplet reminds us of the original Persian advices available in Ibn Al-Muqaffa's [ابن المقفع] **Al-Adab Al-Kabīr** [الادب الكبير].

Again, another topic of Persian advices is **to fulfill other's needs** and ‘Attābī [عتابي] has written many pieces on this topic. In his opinion fear of friends of each other is often the cause of failure. He expresses it as:

هَيْبَةُ الْإِخْوَانِ قَاطِعَةٌ      لِأَخِي الْحَاجَاتِ عَنْ طَلْبِهِ  
فَإِذَا مَا هَبْتَ ذَا أَمَلٍ      مَا تَأْمَلْتَ مِنْ سَبَبِهِ

*“Fear of a friend prevents him from proceeding to his friend’s help; since you have a desire mixed with fear, your desire will die.”<sup>97</sup>*

To clarify this couplet of ‘Attābī [عتابي]:

لَنَا نُدْمَاءُ مَا نَمَلُّ حَدِيثَهُمْ      أَمِينُونَ مَأْمُونُونَ غَيْباً وَ مَشْهُدَا  
يُفِيدُونَنَا مِنْ عِلْمِهِمْ عِلْمٌ مَا مَضَى      وَ رَأْيَا وَ تَأْدِيباً وَ أَمراً مُسَدِّداً  
بِلا عِلَّةٍ تُخْشَى وَ لَا خَوْفَ رَيْبَةٍ      وَ لَا نَتَقَى مِنْهُمْ بَنَاناً وَ لَا يَدَا  
فَإِنْ قُلْتُ: هُمْ أَحْيَاءُ كَسْتُ بِكَاذِبٍ      وَ إِنْ قُلْتُ: هُمْ مَوْتَى ، فَلَسْتُ مُقْنِداً

*“We have a companion whose sweet talk does not tire us and he is reliable in providing satisfaction both in his presence and absence. He offers us much for his treasure of literature, disciplined thought, true stories and earlier history, we never fear about anything from him even a little.”<sup>98</sup>*

The influence of Iranian culture is apparent in these verses. Its beauty is in dividing the subject and in proceeding in various directions of the same thought.

‘Attābī [عتابي] has borrowed many topics from Iranian literature and has made ornaments from it and decorated his words with the wisdom of the same. In Işfahanī’s **Muḥāḍirāt Al-Udabā’** [محاضرات الادباء] find:

"قيل لابن المقفع: لم لا تطلب الأمور العظام؟ فقال رأيت المعالي مشوبة بالمكاره، فاقتصرت على الخمول ضناً بالعافية ."

*“Ibn Al-Muqaffa’ was asked to what reason he does not pursue important works? He replied: I see that big works are full of difficulties and unpleasant things. So in order to preserve soundness I remain content with simple ones.”<sup>99</sup>*

‘Attābī [عتابي] has seized this meaning and composed thus:

دَعَيْنِي تَجِنِّي مَيِّتِي مُطْمَئِنَّةً      وَكَمْ أَتَجَشَّمُ هَوْلَ تِلْكَ الْمَوَارِدِ  
فَإِنْ جَسِيمَاتِ الْأُمُورِ مَشُوبَةٌ      بِمُسْتَوْدِعَاتٍ فِي بُطُونِ الْأَسَاوِدِ

*“Take off your hand from me so that I may not remain in fear and death may come to me easily, because big works are polluted and contain catastrophes inside their dark hearts.”<sup>100</sup>*

Now it has also been made clear that ‘Attābī [عتابي] learned and treasured the wisdom of Iranians and lived for a long period with this thinking and thus became a writer and entered the race in the field of writing. Then he got mastery over verse and progressed with the great poets of his time.

Persian advices and poetic subjects were reflected by various writers in different forms.

1- To represent different topics in poetic verses by pioneers like Abān Al-Lāḥiqī [ابن اللاحقي], Sahl Ibn Al-Nubakht [سهل ابن النوبخت], ‘Alī Ibn Al-Dāwūd [علي ابن الداود], and Al-Bilādhurī [البلاذري].

2- To convert topics which impart advice and wisdom into poetry form as done by Maḥmūd Warrāq [محمود وراق], Bashshār Ibn Burd [بشار ابن برد], Abū Al-‘Atāhīyah [ابو العتاهية].

3- To convert Persian proverbs into poetry as done by Ṣālih Ibn ‘Abd Al-Quddūs [صالح ابن عبد القدوس], Abū Nuwās [ابو نواس].

4- To give poetic form to thoughts, ideas and Iranian topics as done by ‘Attābī [عتابي].

5- To compare Arabic verses with Iranian verses which were translated into Arabic.

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