BAHAR A POET AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST
A case study of Mohammad Taqi Bahar

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to provide a brief introduction to the life and achievements of one of the most important contemporary poets of recent Iranian history. He was not only a poet but also a journalist, writer, researcher, congress representative and minister. Literary scholars consider that Mohammed Taghi Bahar is the last great poet of “classic” Persian literature. It is true that Bahar is known mainly as a poet, but I wish to indicate the ways in which he was a patriot who cared about Iran, was interested in Iran’s destiny in the twenty century, who wished for an independent, globally respected Iran, who longed for the glorious past of the Persian Empire and wished for the awakening of his countrymen and on the whole a true progressive citizen. Talented as he was in poetry, his poetry was a means to express these wishes thoughts and concerns.

Since Bahar’s life was a period of turmoil and changes in Iran’s history - the constitutional revolution, a change of dynasty (Qajar to Pahlavi), World War I, World War II, the abdication of Reza Shah (the founder of Pahlavi dynasty), and his replacement by his son Mohammed Reza during WWII- Bahar’s life has traditionally been divided into four periods: first period from the death of his father until coup d’etat of 1914, second period from 1914 until 1920, third period from 1920 until 1941, and fourth period from 1941- the abdication of Reza Shah until his death. The focus of this paper, after a brief history of Bahar’s biography, will be the third period of his life from March, 1920 until September, 1941.
Dedicated to

Iranian poets and writers, who lost their lives defending
"Liberty & Democracy"
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CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHY OF MOHAMMAD TAQI BAHAR

Mohammad Taqi Bahar was great-great grand son of a famous poet; Mirza Ahmad (pen name Sabour) from Kashan, a city south of Tehran, who was a scribe and poet at the court of Abbas Mirza - the heir of Fatah Ali Shah, the second Qajar king. Mirza Ahmad was very dear to Abbas Mirza. His divan consists of 4000 bait (lines).¹ Mirza Ahmad was killed in the first Iran-Russia (Goulestan) war 1804-1813. His daughter married Abdoul Qadeer, who was a weaver of a special kind of silk fabric by profession. His son Mohammad Baqer² also had his father’s profession, but one of the Mohammad Baqer sons, Mohammad Kazem (Mohammad Taqi’s father) was a poet, who chose the pen name of Sabouri. Mohammed Kazem married the granddaughter of someone named Afrasiab, a Georgian who came to Iran during Fatah Ali Shah’s reign. He became a devout Moslem. Afrasiab was a businessman by trade. Mohammed Taqi’s mother was his granddaughter (daughter of Abbas Qoli); she was born in Tehran, but moved with her family to Mashhad the capital of the north eastern province, Khorasan. She married Mohammad Kazem- Mohammad Taghi’s father. Mohammad Kazem was chief poet at the shrine of Hazrat Reza, the eighth Shi’i Imam in Mashhad.³ He was a member of literary circle in Mashhad that taught the new young poets the theories and

² Ibid. P. 2.
³ Ibid. P. 2.
craft of poetry. The group, strongly believed in the Bazgasht-i Adabi (a return to the old style), universally used during the Samanid and Ghaznavid periods. Mohammad Kazem had four children. The eldest was Mohammad Taqi Bahar, who was born on Dec. 11th, 1886 in Mashhad.4

Bahar was four years old when he started his education at the maktab- a form of co-educational pre school in which only reading the Koran was taught. His first teacher was his uncle’s wife. When he was six years old he went to a boys’ school. He learned to read and write Persian, and to read the Koran well. He was seven years old when he started to read the Shahnameh- the foremost Persian epic, written by Ferdowsi, an 11th century poet. Bahar believed that the Shahnameh helped him greatly in enhancing his own poetic talent, his vocabulary, and his understanding of Persian history. He wrote a

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3 Ibid., p. 6.
4 Ibid., p. 8.
line in the same meter as the Shahnameh when he was seven. He was praised by his father for this line.⁵

When his parents took him along with his siblings to Iraq for a pilgrimage to the holy cities of Shi’i sect of Islam, on the way to Baghdad, they stayed in Bisotun a historical place near the border. While resting over night a serpent passed over his hand and his brother’s face, but did not bite them. Mohammed Taqi recited this line:⁶

به یستون رسدم یه عقیبی دیدم اکر غلط نکنم از لیفند فرهاد است

When I reached Bisotun I saw a scorpion,

if I am not mistaken it is from Farhad’s trousers.

Mohammed Taqi’s father recited this line many times in his poetry gatherings for fun.

Mohammed Taqi loved poetry and drawing. His father spent time developing his poetic talent until he was fifteen years old. But after the assassination of Nasir al- Din Shah, the fourth king of Qajar dynasty, his father sensed a change in the political scene. He believed that the royal court would not value poetry or poets, so Mohammad Taqi must pursue other avenues such as trade- his uncle’s profession. Mohammad Kazim curtailed Mohammad Taqi’s education.⁷ He found a bride for his son and sent him to work for his uncle at his crystal shop. However when Mohammad Taqi was eighteen years old his father died at the age of 61 during the 1904 cholera epidemic. Mohammad Taqi became head of the household and had to take care of his mother and his three siblings.

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⁵ Ibid., p. 9.
⁶ Ibid., p. 10.
⁷ Ibid., p. 10.
After his father’s death Mohammad Taqi returned to poetry. He wrote a qasida (a panegyric), and sent it to Mozaffar al-Din Shah, the fifth king of Qajar dynasty. The king liked it so much that he gave Mohammad Taqi the honorary title of his father, Malak al Sho’ara, “poet laureate”, along with 100 tomans, as his reward (1904). This title remained with Bahar, although Reza Shah, the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty, abolished all the titles. However his rivals were reluctant to believe that someone as young as he was, could write such a competent and interesting poem. They accused him of plagiarizing his father’s work or that of Bahar Shirvani, a poet who was his father’s friend. Mohammad Taqi’s choice of pen-name was a reference to this poet (Bahar also means spring).

In order to prove that Bahar’s poem was not his, his rivals arranged for a literary session in which Bahar was required to write a poem on the spur of the moment. To make it hard they offered him four unrelated words to use in a ruba’i-couplet. This was repeated four times. Each time Bahar composed a very meaningful couplet. At the end those doubting Bahar’s talent reluctantly admitted their mistake, and it was in this way that he was officially considered as Malak al Sho’ara, the laureate.

Bahar went on with his education after his father’s death. He was a student of Adib Neyshabour (1863-1926) - a well known 19th century poet. He finished his education in Persian literature, Arabic language, and poetry with Adib. However, he was not satisfied with his education. He wished to go to Europe, hoping to specialize in a specific social science subject, and learn a foreign language; but taking care of his mother

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8 Ibid., P 22.
and siblings and the out break of the constitutional revolution prevented him from carrying out his plan.\footnote{Ibid., p. 11.}

Because of Bahar’s involvement in politics and his active participation in policy decision making, a brief history of Iran at this period is relevant to his biography. According to his own words, Bahar was not able to pursue his goals, because of the constitutional revolution, and his need to take care of his family. He joined the constitutionalists of Khorasan. He was one of the writers of the group’s newspaper (Re’eas al-Tollab), which was published secretly. Bahar published his early literary works in this paper. A politically well known poem, concerned with the dictatorial behavior of Mohammed Ali Shah, (the 6\textsuperscript{th} Qajar king) was published there, he wrote: \footnote{Ibid., p. 11.}

\begin{center}
\begin{tiny}
با شه ایران ز آزادی سخن کفتی خطاست
کار ایران با خداست
مذهب شاهنشه ایرانز مذهبها جداست
کار ایران با خداست
\end{tiny}
\end{center}

\textit{It is wrong to talk about liberty with the king of Iran,}

\textit{Iran’s future- destiny is up to God.}

\textit{The religion of the king of Iran is different from others,}

\textit{Iran’s future-destiny is up to God.}

Finally when the king fled to Russia, he started to write social and political articles in Tous newspaper (published in Khorasan) and in Hablol al-Mateen published in Calcutta, India. He started his own paper Nou Bahar(1908), after he joined the
democratic party in 1910.11 He wrote about goals and agenda of this party in Nou Bahar. Because his articles set out the point of views of the Democrat party, and he attacked Russian policy toward Iran, their involvement in government affairs, and the presence of their troops in Iran, Nou Bahar was shut down as a result of direct order from the Russian consulate in Khorasan (1912). Bahar and his colleagues in the Democrat party were arrested and sent to Tehran.12

Bahar was allowed to return to Mashhad after eight months and found his friends discouraged and busy with their own works.13 He continued his writing, criticizing the government, Russians, and his friends’ indifference to the situation. His paper was shut down again, however he was elected for congress from Sarakhs (north of the Khorasan) 1914.

He went to Tehran, but his credentials were not accepted for six months due to the mollas’ opposition.14 The mollas doubted his religious beliefs. In one of his early satires, “Jahannam (Hell)”, he criticized the ‘ulama’s teaching concerning the hell and heaven, as well as their hypocrisy, pretentious behavior, and rigidity.

Bahar started Nou Bahar in Tehran (1915). The paper became very popular, but was shut down again, and he was arrested and sent into exile in Khorasan.

After six months he was summoned to return to Tehran. He was there for two years. At this period he established the Anjuman Daneshkadeh (a literary society), which was a gathering of literary scholars interested in prose and poetry. He published a
magazine under the same name (1919). The magazine featured the work of these scholars, who later became well known figures in contemporary Persian literature.15

Bahar was elected twice more for congress, but most of his colleagues and friends were either tired or discouraged by the political situation. According to Bahar "the only one who was still energetic and enthusiastic was Reza Khan (the chief of army), who came from nowhere, took control of every thing. The latter was pessimistic about literature, the constitution, media, and freedom of speech".16

When the fifth congress opened (1924), the king-Ahmad Shah (the last Qajar king) fled the country and Reza Khan took control of the government by a well planned strategy. However when Reza Khan proposed a republic, many of the intellectuals, the elite, and those who had fought for a constitution opposed him. They won temporarily, the idea of republic was dead, but Reza Khan was the actual winner; he overthrew the Qajar dynasty and created his own17, and called it Pahlavi (after Pre Islamic language). Then he was crowned as the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty (1925).

Bahar was elected as a representative of Tehran to the six congress (1927). However he was not chosen for the seventh congress (1930) due to his attacks on opposition to Reza Shah, who dictatorially controlled all aspects of politics and peoples' life. Frustrated by politics, at this period Bahar started his political seclusion, returning to poetry, literature, research and teaching. He taught the history of literature in college for

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15 Ibid., p. 13.
16 Ibid., P. 14.
17 Ibid., P. 15.
one year, but as he put it “because of the old grudges and government suspicion of me I was sent to prison for second time”.18

After being released (1931) he stayed home and continued his seclusion, avoiding conversation, involvement and confrontation with strangers, “so I could avert the government and secret service’s attention from me, avoiding their harassment”19.

It was during this time that Bahar accomplished the difficult task of editing some of the rare and important literary works of classical Persian prose, such as Tarikh-i Sistan, Majma’ al Tavarikh and Qesas, Tarikh-i Bala’mi, and the Javame’a al Hekayat.20 However at this period he had a hard time supporting his family, so he opened a publishing house, then tried to publish his own divan. He also opened a bookstore, selling some of his rare manuscripts. But he was arrested as he thought by direct order of the Shah. Bahar believed that Shah’s mind was poisoned by his opponents, and jealous rivals. These people spread the rumor that Bahar’s divan was full of malicious and profane poems about the king.21

Bahar was taken from his home just before Nou Rouz (Persian new year) 1312 (1933) and without trial sent to prison for the third time. Bahar complains about this occasion many times in his poetry. He was released after five months, but was sent to Isfahan as an internal exile (1934). He complained that because of this imprisonment and exile, he lost his capital in his publishing house as well as his rare books.

He was in exile for almost a year. The third imprisonment and exile worked as the blossoming point of Bahar’s literary life. He wrote his most valuable and meaningful

18 Ibid., p. 15.
19 Ibid., P. 15.
20 Ibid., P. 16.
qasidas at this period such as: *Karnamey-i Zendan, Emshab dr Behesht-i Khoda vayeh Pendary*.... Literary scholars believed that his literary work at this period was at its peak of complexity and beauty. At that time the government was planning to celebrate the Hezareh Ferdowsi (Ferdowsi's thousandth birthday). Bahar wrote an article about Ferdowsi and his achievements in reviving Persian history and pride in Bakhtar Magazine (1934). This article was very well received in literary circles. Bahar was invited to the occasion (1935) by the direct intervention of the Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali Foroughi, who was a poet and literary scholar (his greatest work is an edition of the Koliat of Sa'adi, a famous 13th century poet and scholar). At that event Bahar recited a poem about Ferdowsi which was very well received among the scholars.

After this occasion he was invited to teach in the College of Literature in Tehran University (1935). It was at this period that he taught the history of prose from the pre-Islamic period up to modern times. The lecture materials were collected and published under the name “Sabk Shinasi (stylistics)”, this is one of the Bahar’s greatest scholarly achievements, setting out a subject that never had been adequately explored by scholars before him.22

After his release from prison, Bahar spent his time writing poetry about social issues, publishing articles in “Mehr” ; and editing articles sent to the latter magazine for publication. He wrote more on political topics after the downfall of Reza Shah in 1941.

The next king, Mohammed Reza Shah (Reza Shah’s son), was favorable toward him at the beginning, but when the king ruled (rather than reigned) as his father had done,

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21 Ibid., p. 16.
and was disrespectful to the constitution, he also became the target of Bahar’s sharp
tongue, and the King’s attitude changed toward him. Bahar did not go into prison during
his reign, although he had a difficult time economically; this is the subject of many
complaints in his poetry at this period. He contracted tuberculosis and this added to his
considerable difficulties. Although he was sent to Switzerland for treatment, he never
recovered from the disease and he finally died in May 1951 after a week of high fever
and suffering.

The death of Bahar was also the end of classic panegyric poetry, the death of last
master of this style of poetry, and finally the death of the last Malek al Sho’ara, who
never was a court poet in the true meaning.

Because of Bahar’s involvement in politics and his active participation in policy
decision making, before I start to write about his poetry in the third period of his life, I
believe it would be relevant to write a brief history of Iran at this period.
CHAPTER 2

Historical background of Iran between 1896-1941

Mozaffar al Din Shah (the fifth Qajar king) was crowned after his father’s (Nasir al-Din Shah) assassination (May, 1896). Under pressure from a reform group he dismissed his father’s reactionary, unpopular prime minister (Amin al-Sultan), and appointed Mirza Ali Khan Amin al-Daula - a bright scholar to this position in Aug. 1897.23 One of the Amin al-Daula’s programs was to invite a group of Belgian administrators, headed by Naus, to organize the customs in Iran. Naus’s task was more or less successful. He then acted as the finance minister. However Naus was later dismissed, due to pressure from the British and the merchants who accused Naus of favoring the Russians.24

Despite his weak character, the king was open to reformist ideas; however he soon dismissed Amin al-Daula, because he was unable to borrow money from foreign powers; the king needed the money for funding his European trip’s expenses. ‘Ulama and courtiers were also opposed to Amin al-Doula financial and educational reform. The king appointed Amin al-Sultan again (1899).25 But the opposition to the king, his extravagant trips to Europe and his inability to run the country increased. Some of the king opponents were arrested. A coalition of the leading ‘ulama, elite and secular progressives was

24 Ibid., 200.
created. The group was especially keen to have Amin al-Soltan dismissed. The latter was seen as responsible for a huge debt to Russia that Iran had accumulated. This group also demanded the dismissal of Belgian custom officials and closure of a newly established modern school. This opposition group was united in their anti-foreign and anti-minority feeling (especially against Baha’i).26 Under public pressure Amin al-Soltan resigned. Mozaffar al-Din Shah appointed E’in al Doula (Fatah Ali Shah’s grand son). At first, the latter tried be both on the side of ‘ulama and reformist, but being an ignorant person27, changed his strategy and became as cruel and ruthless as his predecessor was. The opposition to the king and the ways that his different prime ministers were running the country increased. Many Iranian intellectuals living abroad were writing about the constitution, democracy, and freedom of expression. Their publications were sent secretly to Iran. People read them, and their eyes were opened on what was going on in Europe. This led them to demand basic rights that were lacking in Iranian society. The increasing awareness of Iranians fostered partly by these publications, led many of them to begin to plan revolutionary action. The sentiment was especially increased by the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-190528, and later by the Russian revolution of 1905 that kept Russia occupied with its own problems and prevented them from interfering in Iran’s affairs. Thus the initiating action for the constitutional revolution was almost prepared. In the meanwhile, the high price of sugar was seen as the merchants’ monopoly of the commodity with the government’s blessing, and resulted in the beating of the merchants by a series of mobs. The merchants expressed their anger and protested openly. The

merchant also along with 'ulama took sanctuary (bast) in the Royal Mosque of Tehran. The group was dispersed by government troops and followers of the Imam Jum'a of Tehran (Mozaffar al-Din Shah's son-in-law). The group went to the holy shrine of Shahzade Abd al-Azim, south of Tehran by suggestion of a high ranking reformist mulla, Sayed Mohammed Tabataba'i. The group was joined by religious students (tollab) and many middle and low-ranking religious clerks. The "bast" continued for twenty-five days; it was financed by anti government groups and merchants.29

These people at first (1905) demanded the dismissal of E'in al-Daula, and the establishment of an "Edalatkhaneh" (the house of justice).30 The "bast" was finally dispersed after the king promised to fulfill their demands31. But after the bast was over, the king did not take any action either to dismiss his prime minister or to establish Edalatkhaneh.32 Unrest was increased by the popular preacher, Sayyid Jamal al-Din Isfahani and Shaikh Mohammed Va'iz. The government expelled Sayyid Jamal from Tehran. In attempts to expel Va'iz, one of the religion students (tollab) was killed. The movement went out of control, a large number of 'ulama went to the holy shrine of Hazrat-i Maesoumeh in Qom and a large number took sanctuary in the British embassy in Tehran (July, 1906). The group's demands were now not only dismissal of E'in al-Daula, but the establishment of a "Majles" or house of representatives. The latter idea was propagated by the constitutionalists.33

29 Ibid.,203.
31 Ibid., P. 366.
Finally the king gave in to their demands (Aug. 1906). The Prime minister was dismissed and the first assembly was set up. A number of experts were chosen to write the constitution. Different interest groups such as: the reformist, the ‘ulama, the court, and elite were trying to influence the assembly members to put forward their point of view so their interests could be protected. However the reformists won the race.

The election was held and the Majles was opened in Oct. 1906. The constitution was signed by the king after many months delay at the time that he was fatally ill in Dec. 1906. The longer supplementary law was signed by the new king, his son Mohammed Ali shah in Oct., 1907. Both documents are largely based on the Belgian constitution.

The clear intention of the constitution was for the king to reign rather than to rule, and Majles approval would be necessary for important financial and political decision making. Two important laws passed by the Majles were for a free press and compulsory education, both of which were opposed by the ‘ulama as anti-Islamic.

The freedom of the press allowed the creation of many new publications, to name a few Sur-i Israfil by the poet and scholar Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, and Nou Bahar by Mohammad Taqi Bahar.

The weak, inefficient king Mozaffar al-Din Shah having died, he was replaced by his cruel and ruthless son Mohammad Ali, who although promised to be loyal to the constitution, not only did not invite any of the Majles representatives for his coronation.

34 Ibid., 203.
37 Ibid., 203.
38 Ibid., 204.
but also did not consult them over his choice of prime minister, the corrupt, hated, and previously ousted Ali Asghar Khan Atabak, who was traveling in Europe.  

The confrontation of the Majles with the king began under the leadership of the two prominent ‘ulama, Sayed ‘Abd’Ilah Bibbahani and Sayed Mohammad Tabatabai. They were joined by the liberal representatives of the Majles, and by a small group of democrats among whom was Bahar. They were also joined by the representative of Azarbaijan province, and liberal democrats. Attaback was not able to suppress the opposition, as he promised the king. He finally was assassinated by a radical group on Aug. 31, 1907.  

The important event at this time was the signing of the treaty of 1907 between Russia and England. Under this treaty Iran was divided between the super powers, in order to secure the British influence in Afghanistan and to prevent the German influence in Iran. Also it would protect Russian interest in the Caucasus area and Azarbaijan. The treaty divided Iran into three zones. The north and central of Iran including Tehran and Isfahan was in control of Russia, south east of Iran for British, and central part of Iran plus the south west, which included the province of Khozestan where oil was first discovered, were in the neutral zone.  

Iranians were furious. They attempted to assassinate the king unsuccessfully (1908). The king retaliated by closing the Majles. Many revolutionaries, elite, and liberal reformists were either arrested or executed. Some were able to flee the

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39 Ibid., 204.
40 Ibid., 204.
41 Ibid., 205.
42 Ibid., 207.
country for the time being, among them was the famous poet, singer, song writer, and composure Aref Ghazviny.\textsuperscript{43}

While many gave up resistance and complied with the King’s will, the city of Tabriz (capital of Azarbaijan), not only did not yield, but under the leadership of Sattar Khan staged a resistance and fought with government troops for months despite a blockade of food and supplies.\textsuperscript{44}

The hardship of the war against the government troops and blockade did not break the Tabrizian resistance until the Russians entered the city and broke the blockade under the excuse of saving the lives of Russian citizens.\textsuperscript{45} In the meanwhile the freedom fighters joined the constitutional forces in Gilan province. They marched toward Tehran. The Bakhtiyari tribes, who had some liberal leaders and had some old grudges against the Qajars, were able to liberate Isfahan province form the Qajar loyalists and started marching toward Tehran.\textsuperscript{46} The king was afraid for his life and took sanctuary in the Russian embassy. The united troops: Bakhtiyari tribes, constitutionalist and Tabrizian fighters, liberated Tehran and chose the King’s minor son Ahmad as the new king of Iran. They also picked a regent (Azad al-Malek the head of Qajar tribe) to run the state. After the death of the latter Nasir al-Malek became the regent.\textsuperscript{47} Some of the high ranking religious leaders who had opposed the constitution, such as Shaykh Fazlo\i\ Allah, were hanged. After the latter’s execution, ‘ulama who secretly or openly opposed the constitution became frightened and stopped doing so. However, the religious leaders and


\textsuperscript{44} Reza'i, Abdol Azim. \textit{Tarikh-i Dah Hezar Saleh-i Iran} IV:135.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., P.179.

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Cambridge History of Iran} VII:206.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 208.
‘ulama that were pro constitution at the beginning shifted sides when the liberal groups’ position became secure and polarized the movement in their own favor.

At this period Iran’s chief problem was its finances. In order to address the issue, Iran hired an American financier-Morgan Shuster, who was not associated with any neighboring country or with England. Shuster was successful in improving the financial condition relatively soon, but his mission was interrupted under direct pressure from the Russians. Some of the Shuster’s improving plans failed due to the foreign interference and return of conservative politician; but the effects of these land and financial reforms on the feudal system were substantial. These events caused an awakening on the part of the People. Many different anjuman (societies) were created. For the first time women entered into the political scene. They started a few publications. Their activities increased greatly; thus women became actually liberated from the walls of the harem.

At this point a brief look at the oil concession is also necessary. Iran granted the oil concession to an Australian-named William N. D’Arcy in 1901. Oil was officially struck in 1908. The British navy switched from coal to oil in 1912. In 1914 the Great Britain government bought a majority shares of the British Iranian Oil Company, which had the concession. In order to exploit the natural resources in the south, the British backed the autonomous Shaykh Khazal, the most prominent Arab leader in the south. As has been explained, the British were exploiting the south and the Russians the north of Iran. Therefore it came as no surprise that Iranians turned to the Germany as a savior in WWI, as Germany’s main enemies at this time were Britain and Russia.

48 Reza’i, Tarikh-i Dah-i Hezar Sal-i Iran, IV: 203.
49 Cambridge History of Iran, VII:207.
50 Ibid, 208.
The young king Ahmad Shah was officially crowned in 1914, just a week before the outbreak of the WWI. Although Iran declared neutrality in the war, Iran was the scene of super powers’ struggles to exploit and expand their territorial plan. According to a secret treaty of 1915 between Russia and Britain, the former was supposed to added Istanbul and the Bosporus strait to its territory in the north of Iran; in return the British added the neutral zone of Iran to their southern territory.\textsuperscript{51}

Meanwhile Germany, under the leadership of Wassmuss and using German financing, was busy organizing the nationalist deputies and tribal leaders against British influence\textsuperscript{52}. Also different local nationalists and reformists had control of different parts of Iran, such as Mirza Kucheck Khan who had control of Gilan, and Shaykh Mohammad Kheyabani who controlled Azarbaijan.\textsuperscript{53}

WWI brought misery: epidemic disease, economic crisis, devastation and more or less the collapse of Iran’s infrastructure. At this period although Ahmad Shah was the king and the Majles was supposedly in session, but country was in reality run by a military colonel- named Reza Khan, whose position was chief of staff of the military. Reza Khan had a limited education, but his military ability, courage, and bravery promoted him in to a high rank in the Cossack Brigade.\textsuperscript{54}

World War I was a period of almost lawless anarchy and disorder in Iran. Iran was on the verge of disintegration. At this point, Reza Khan was approached by Major General Ironside, the head of the British force in Iran. The British government had reached the conclusion that the existence of a united strong government in Iran would

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 210.  
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 208.  
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 209.
serve their purpose more in exploiting Iran; therefore, the British backed Reza Khan in his coup d'etat attempt, and Britain accomplished her goal.\textsuperscript{55}

Reza Khan staged his coup d'etat by occupying Tehran with his Cossack Brigade. While Ahmad Shah was still the King, the prime minister's position was assigned to Sayed Zia Tabatabai and Reza Khan was war minister as well as chief of staff. The latter through his military capability, politics, forcefulness, bravery, and ruthlessness demolished the autonomous governments of Gilan, Azarbaijan, and Khuzistan. These achievements brought him fame, and the support of most Iranians. However, most of the intellectuals were skeptical of his dictatorial and cruel behavior.\textsuperscript{56} In 1923 he took control of the government and became prime minister while still war minister. Finally in 1925, through maneuvering, politics and foreign support, especially that of Britain, the overthrew the Qajar dynasty, established the Pahlavi dynasty, and declared himself Reza Shah.\textsuperscript{57} His act was not greatly challenged because people were frustrated and angry at the Qajar kings, the abundant number of corrupt princes, their inability to run the country, their lavish life style, expended harems, and their exploitation and waste of national wealth and resources. Iran had lost its independence and integrity during the Qajar period. Also Iran lost a large part of its territory to Russia during two wars (Turkman and Golestan). Therefore, in a sense people welcomed the new dynasty, especially when Reza Khan through his dictatorial acts and ruthlessness got rid of all minor autonomous governments and united the country, though he did this by disregarding democracy as well as respect for the law and the constitution.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 211.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 210.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 211.
The Pahlavi period was a more rapid changes in all different sections of society. The middle class acquired more prosperity; women acquired more freedom and entered into main stream of the society. However abolishing “hejab (veil)”, which was brutally enforced (women could not appear in the street with “hejab”), created much resistance and grief for some women and the opposition of ‘ulama and religious leaders, who under Reza Shah lost many of their privileges, influence, and authority in the society. Nevertheless Reza Shah accomplished many tasks that given the economic situation of Iran seemed impossible.

There is no doubt that he was a nationalist and cared about the well-being of the country. One would be ungrateful to disregard his accomplishments; unfortunately his dictatorial reign, resulted in almost abolishing the constitution and freedom of speech, as well as a crack-down on political groups, the imprisonment, abduction, and assassination of many writers and poets. These acts discredited him.

The life period of Bahar that is the focus of this paper fell mostly during Reza Shah’s reign. In order to cover the poems of this period, I have divided them into nine categories, according to their themes as, following:

I- Poems about Reza Shah.
II- Iran’s social condition.
III- Political situation in the third period of Bahar’s life.
IV- Denunciation of Tehran and its inhabitants.
V- Poems about Bahar’s imprisonment.
VI- Panegyric poems.
VII- Moral poems
VIII- Personal poems.
IX- Praise of authorities or scholar.

\[57\] Ibid., 2
\[58\] Ibid., 213.
After discussing each chapter of poetry, I will finish this paper with two more chapters: What scholars think about Bahar and final note.
CHAPTER 3

Poems About Reza Shah

The first poem of this series is a mossamat called Movashah. In this Mossamat (a poem made of many couplets with different rhymes, but fourth hemistich of all couplets share the same rhyme), he expresses his objection to Colonel Reza Khan’s idea about a republic. He refers to Reza Khan’s ideas as shameful, not being in the best interest of the society. Bahar believes that the constitution is in danger, because Reza Khan’s republic is a cover for his dictatorial ambition to become a king. In this poem that I think is one of his masterpieces, at first glance it seems that he approves the idea, but if the first beginning word of each hemistitch along with the last hemstitch of each couplet are put together, it makes a ghazal (usually erotic love poem), in which Bahar expresses his objection to the idea of republic very sharply. Following is the complete reconstructed from the full text of the Mossamat.  

The republic of the chief of staff is shameful,
this subject is not for the improvement of the country but it is a war (declaring a war against the people).

With what his troops have done, don’t expect happiness and approval from us, because, these people are not a shepherd for the flock but a leopard.

There’s no knowledge or fame in the republic of Iran!
in this country these words are nonsense.
That man who claims to protect you, his hand on his rifle, has plundered your wealth, and you are sleep!

Freedom and the constitution are in trouble.
this radiant jewel is in the crocodile’s mouth.
in the name of republic, he knocks down the kingdom, besides being greedy the enemy is avert, but we remain ignorant.
As long as that pagan hooligan is running the passion play,
this lame caravan will wander far, lost in the desert until the day of judgment.
For our childish nation, the tale of the republic is entertaining as a magic lantern show!
Nahid’s (Venus) bag is full of colorful jewels, gold, and silver.
The same as Reza Khan’s words, which are ever changing.
As it could be seen Bahar expresses his opposition to the republic that Reza Khan advocates. The idea of a republic in Iran received momentum when neighboring Turkey changed its system from a dynasty to a republic system. Bahar’s awareness of Reza Khan’s intention is remarkable. He and many of other scholars were aware that idea of a republic government is another form of dictatorial regime, and he doesn’t believe in democratic system; his real intention is to become a president and have the ultimate authority.

The next poem of this series is called Estehza (derision). In this poem he refers to when Reza Khan had just defeated Shaykh Khazal (the autonomous ruler of Khuzistan), and the capital was preparing to welcome him as the hero and savior of Iran. His followers forced people of Tehran to pay for the victory celebration. The following are selections from this long (eighty two lines) qasida:

9. عكس سردار را به هر طاقی
11. بنده سردار را فقط بر عكس
24. پای هر طاق در ذهاب و ایاب
16. طاق نصرت سنه شد با زور
17. وجه بر قیاصه هم کفته شده است
20. اهل ری را از این چراغانی
25. با چنین نوکران خوب ای چرا
36. اجنبی را به خطه ایران
38. تا رعیت خر است رنده را

I see the picture of the chief of the staff every where.

Ibid., 402.
Like a splendid mural on the wall.

Unlike others I see the chief of staff-
as a crowned father of Iran.

Next to the triumphant arch,

I see a group of vultures coming and going.

The triumphant arch set in place by force,

I see as worse than a gibbet.

Money has been collected from the people,

but I don’t see any receipt being given to them.

I see that income of the government’s supporters,

has been increased a thousand fold.

I see the people of Tehran are ashamed and unhappy,
because of this festivity and illumination.

With lackeys like his,

I see Reza Khan famous through out the world.

I see foreigners in the territory of Iran,

busy plundering and exploiting the national wealth.

As long as people are donkeys,

I see the unscrupulous riding rough - shod over them.

In the second part of the poem, Bahar expresses his opinion about the people of Iran. He writes:

44  کویی اسفندیار رویستن تن فاتح از کارزار می‌آیم...
He is as if he were invisible Esfandiar,
returning victorious from the battle field.

You the people are dumb and stupid,
that's why you have been exploited.

For this old woman of Iran,
a passionate husband is coming.

He has not done anything yet,
but he is after name and fame.

He is coming joyful, happy, and is not ashamed of it,
despite of the people's misery and unhappiness.

In the last line of the poem, he expresses his disappointment of obedient people and their stupidity. He writes:

Long live vultures' festivity,
because the vulture is coming.
In this poem he criticizes supporters of Reza Khan and the way that they have collected money from poor people to celebrate his victorious return to the capital. Bahar condemns the way that festivity has been planned, especially imposing unnecessary expenses to the people, who are struggling with economic hardship along with dictatorial regime. Bahar also expresses his disapproval on the idea of republic very clearly, he was aware that Reza Khan has some mischievous intention and was not genuine in proposing republic. Bahar states that the constitution, reform, and democracy are in danger.

In the second poem he criticizes those Iranian people, who help to implement Reza Khan’s ambitious plan. Bahar states that Reza Khan’s real intention is to become the king. The public display (triumphant return) is another way to attract public support for his real intention.

After assuring himself of foreign help, Reza Khan was able to bring about the downfall of the Qajars; he established his own dynasty and was later crowned king. In this poem that is called: *Tadj Gozary-I Shah*61 (The Crowning of the King) Bahar writes:

\[\text{ venez آن تاجک‌ذاری قدکه برداری ست }\]
\[\text{ الحق این خوشتین شبیه مرم‌داری ست }\]
\[\text{ که چو نیکو نگره نایب مرم‌داری ست }\]
\[\text{ بی سب طاس میفیکن که حرف آزاری ست }\]
\[\text{ بیلک‌بازی و دوزو کلکو عیانی ست }\]
\[\text{ خواری وی‌بی‌سرفی همچون نظام اجباری ست }\]
\[\text{ شرف از وحشت این بی شرفان متیاری ست }\]

\[\text{ ۱} \] بهلوی ناج به سر کر نهاد از بدکاری ست
\[\text{ ۲} \] ملکت مفس و مرم همه بیزار از شاه
\[\text{ ۳} \] تاج شاهی نبود لایق آن سرداری
\[\text{ ۴} \] مالمه سبب طس میفیکن که حرف آزاری ست
\[\text{ ۵} \] طشت رسوائیت از بام درفتد ای شاه
\[\text{ ۶} \] خلق را کشت و پس منتفخ خلق شدن
\[\text{ ۷} \] به کچا شکوه توان برک در کشور ما
\[\text{ ۸} \] را از وحشت این بی شرفان متیاری ست

This coronation proves the evil intention of Pahlavi (Reza Khan).

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61 Ibid., 410.
this is not coronation but cheating and a fraudulent act.

The country is indigent and broke, people hate the king.

my god, this is the best way to take care of people!

The crown is not becoming on the commander,

who if we look at him carefully, he deserves to be a bandit.

Your disgrace has become obvious to all,

it is bothersome, don't put a trap to capture people—it's bothering don't fool the people.

Killing the people, then being elected by them,

it's only monkey business and deceitfulness.

Where can I take my grievances, for in our country,

being dishonest and contemptible is a obligatory as military service.

One can not find nobility in this ruined land,

because nobility is concealed out fear of these corrupted one.

In this poem Bahar mentions that being a king needs qualities that Reza Khan lacks. He refers to the latter as a commander in chief, whose behavior is more like a bandit than a dignified, respected king. He criticizes Reza Shah’s enormous greed for wealth. He refers to him as a low class, poor soldier whose goal is to become wealthy, so he could gain respect and power and be accepted by people.

The next poem is: Andarz Beh Shah62 (Advice To the King)In this long poem of 99 lines written by Bahar in 1928, he is either threatening the king, criticizing his

62 Ibid., 470.
improper behavior, expressing his own opinion about the king’s conduct and policy, or advising him how to run the country. In the first few lines of this poem he expresses his wondered how a king - Reza Shah could be so greedy and vicious. In the first two lines that he directly asks Reza Shah “what’s the point of collecting so much wealth?” He compares him with Qajar kings, stating: “They spent their life collecting wealth, but being unwanted by the people were forced to leave it behind.”

In another part of the poem, Bahar blames Reza Shah for having no respect for the constitution and ignoring the law of the land for his self-serving projects. He also criticizes his choice of uneducated, low people that he has promoted to high positions, as a reward for their supports.
O king, give up greed and quarreling,

because nothing is worse than greed and quarreling.

You have become the king, don’t snatch your subject’s bread from them,
you have become full, don’t pressure those who are still hungry.

Finally you will have one of two ends:

either you remain king or you will be dismissed as the Qajars were.

If you would remain a king, you will not need gold or silver,
if you are deposed, then neither fertile nor barren land will remain.

The king interferes in all kinds of business,

He pokes his head into every one’s affairs.

Who ever the king wants, his name comes out of the voting box,

Shemr, Kholi, Sanan, and Mokhtar ⁶³ (the good and bad ones).

the king has become the director of a Ta’zieh- passion play and congress is his stage,

God knows one should cry at this unsuitable play,

Where ever the law is suitable for the king,
it is respected and no one can evade it.

But whenever it doesn’t suit the king,
the law is worthless and the shah’s will prevails.

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⁶³ Shemr and Kholi are the ones who killed Housain (prophet’s grand son and third Imam of Shi’i sect), his family and followers in city of Karbala in Iraq in 7th century. Mokhtar and his followers later killed the former group. In the next line Ta’zieh refers to the play that every year commemorate this occasion, which is called Ashora in Shi’i calendar.
A noble person will promote the nobility,
but a base person will promote those who are base.
Although no body has voted, yet from the voting box,
automatically 50000 votes have appeared.
Do you think you can fool the Russians,
and the British will do what you want them to do?
The policy that you’ve chosen is one mistake after another,
O king, may God be my witness, take my words as true!
O king do not act silly, be aware of the result,
you’re darkening your day and the country’s future.
The trust that you’ve put in foreigners’ support,
will not benefit you, the day that things go wrong for you.

In these two poems Bahar’s prediction has come true. Reza Khan has established
a kingdom through any possible means: Vanishing or imprisoning his opponents. Bahar
expresses his anger and frustration, referring to Reza Shah’s act as self serving, inhuman,
cruel, and ruthless. The public festivity and celebration, whose budget has been provided
by the people, a heavy burden especially for the poor ones. Bahar refers to Reza Shah’s
behavior as banditry and not appropriate for a king. In the second poem he directly
compares him to the Qajar kings, who were corrupt and spent the national wealth on their
foreign trips or expanded harem. He directly asks Reza Shah about his greed (this is the
time that Reza Shah—a poor Cossack soldier suddenly owned many estates and
properties). He tells him: “If you’ll stay a king, you would not need wealth and if you
have to leave the country as your predecessor did, you can’t take any lands and properties with you.”

These last two poems are the best representation of how daring and brave Bahar was. He expresses his opinion, very clearly and openly not through allegory or metaphor. He especially advises the king not to rely on foreign assistants to hold on the power.

In the last poem of this series about Reza Shah, which is called: *Gorusneh* ⁶⁴ (Hungry) Bahar talks about himself and other honest dignitaries, who are hungry and poor, but the pretentious and dishonest ones have been wealthy and have a comfortable life. He writes:

1. شاهان تا کی بود بهار کرستنه؟ خان سیمر و دستکاری کرستنه؟
2. آنکه کند سفلكی شعار بود سیمر وانکه کند راستی شعارا کرستنه
8. دزد وطن هست سیر و آنکه همه عمر بهس وطن بوده جان نشان کرستنه
11. دشمن ایران به یک قفرار بود سیر مات ایران به یک قفرارا کرستنه

*O king, for how long will “Bahar” go hungry, the traitors and plunderers live comfortably? But why are the honest in need?*

*The one whose slogan is “ignoble-mean” is well fed, and the one whose slogan is honesty is in need and hungry.*

*The countries’ thieves are well fed and comfortable but, the one who sacrifices his life for the country is hungry.*

*The enemies of the land are promised to be well fed, but people of Iran under the same arrangement are hungry.*
As it is seen, Bahar again reminds Reza Shah that his entourage are opportunists, whose support has been bought with money and positions, while honest, educated and literary people are needy ones that have to work hard to earn a living.

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64 Divan-i Bahar VI p. 523.
CHAPTER 4

Iran’s Social Condition

The theme of the poems discussed in this chapter is the expression of the personal feelings of Bahar under the influence of a political situation of unrest, and anarchy in the capital. The first of this series is called Damavandieh⁶⁵/ this is the highest peak of Albourz mountain- a volcano in the past located to the north of Tehran and always covered with snow). This is one of the most famous poems of Bahar. In the preface of the poem that was composed in 1923, while the capital city of Tehran was in anarchy, some people of the pen were attacking and dishonoring each other, special the patriots and those who cared for independence of Iran. Foreigners also instigated anarchy and agitated the situation. The federal government was weak and could not do anything about the disturbances.

In this poem Bahar first describes the mountain. He refers to it as a trapped giant that has put a silver hood on, and has covered its face with clouds, in order to protect itself from the animal nature of evil people. He refers to Damavand as one who had punished a devil once before; so it has to erupt again and punish the people of Tehran. However a few line later he refers to it as the heart of the earth that is swollen because of its pain and suffering; thus it has to erupt to free itself from its pain and suffering. Bahar advises Damavand not to hold on to the fire, otherwise fire will burn its inside out. Then

⁶⁵ Ibid., 356.
he offers his help to open up Damavand, even though it costs him his life. the following is a few lines of this poem:

ای کتیای دماوند
بر ری نبناز ضریبی چند
افسرده میانش میخون همی خند
ژین سوخته جان شنو یکی پند
بنهان مکن آتش دل درون را
بکسی ز هم این نزاد و پیوند
از ریشه بنایی ظلم برقند
داد مدرم خردمند

Oh captive white giant,

dome of the world, oh Damavand.

You are a fist of the earth,

erupt and give a few blows to Rey, pour lava over the city.

Don’t remain quiet, say a few words,

don’t be depressed, laugh a little.

Don’t hide the fire in your heart,

take the advice of one who has a seared soul.

Erupt and destroy the base of this hypocrisy.

tear apart the union of this corrupt race.

Ruin from the base this foundation,

destroy the root of this oppression.

Take revenge on this foolish people,

for the sake of the wise.
Babar refers to Damavand as the heart of Iran, that is sick due to being enraged and inflamed; thus it should erupt and free itself from its pain. Babar reminds the mountain that its mouth has been closed, and he—Babar will open it, even if the act costs his life. In the last section of the poem, he refers to the mountain as a mother, who should express her displeasure and erupt, pour its liquid chemical substances over the city, as Vezou volcano did to the city of Pompeu, Italy in 79 BC., then the weak and oppressed people would take their revenge.

In the second of this series in a poem called Kohneyeh Shesh Hezar Saleh (A Six Thousand Years Old Rag), at first he refer to Iran as an old rag that is destined to be destroyed. He refers to Iran as a yellow withered flower, or a depressed nightingale that has become quiet, or one who has gone through a glorious period or many ugly revolutions. Then he reminds Iran that the time of modernity and changes has come, so it must get rid of old lost bonds and escape. He writes although the old are destined for death, but if one (meaning people of Iran) wishes to revive their old friend, they must unite to correct, treat and reform her. The following are a few lines from poem:

1. آی گل‌دن زرد نیم‌می‌رده
2. ی باغچه خزان رسیده
3. آی گودک عهد به‌هوائی
4. ی بچه روزکار سیروس
5. که پیر شد یک‌هد
6. آن پیر که گنده شد بعیضه
7. که پیر شد بگنده
8. در نهاد شد بعیضه
9. نهاد یک‌هد به پیر در نهاد

16. خواهد کر این کسل یخند
17. ز اصلاح مزاجی و اداری
18. پایست نخست کردش احبا
19. با تقویت درست‌گمار
20. اصلاح عقیدتی و کاری

66 Ibid., 423.
Oh you the yellow, half dead flower.

Oh you the autumn stricken garden.

Oh you the baby of a heroic time,

you the child of the age of Cyrus.

Wake up it’s spring time.

Whatever gets old will become rotten,

and what is old and rotten will die soon.

Ornaments are not becoming for the old,

the old will not take advice.

However, if you want this listless patient to laugh,

if you want this old one not to die!

Its treatment is very obvious.

First, you must revive it,

free it from all sickness.

Then try to make it strong,

by strength and honesty.

Then renew its crafts and sciences,

then improve and adjust its beliefs and way of thinking.

That’s the way to renew and revive an old rag.
In this poem Bahar’s reference to an old rag is the ancient land of Iran which holds a glorious past, but is deteriorating; nevertheless he is still hopeful. He believes people should not give up and look at it as a sick dying patient. They should all cooperate together and with love, attention, and caring this old rag could be revive again. On the whole Bahar keeps this pessimistic view through out of his poetry; however usually he finishes it with an optimistic view.

Another poem of this theme is called *Khush Ra Ehya Konim*[^67] (Let’s Revive Ourselves). Despite the fact that he was a devout Moslem, he criticizes the religious zeal and bigotry of young people of Iran in *azadary* (religious performances of shi’i sect) in the month of Moharram[^68]. Bahar calls on the young one to do something so that they can find the thief that has robbed them. He also writes that with a little zeal and enthusiasm they can change their old rag clothes to silk. He states that the oppressor has destroyed their home, and at least they must express their frustration by yelling. Then he reminds them that any type of improvement of congress or mollahs is useless; they must fight the oppressor. He goes on that the law has been broken and they must revolt. However, in the last part of the poem, he become disappointed that there is no ear for his advice, so he finishes, “when there is no listener, I better to be quiet”. Here are a few lines of the poem:


[^68]: Moharram is the first month in lunar calendar; on the tenth day of Moharram (Ashora) Imam Housain and his family and friends were martyred. Since then Shii’s for two months commemorate the event, with the greater fervor on Ashora. This religious activities are referred to as Azadary. This poem is in page 429 of his divan.
این کروه بین‌وا و سفه را رسوا کنید
هی به ضد یکدیکر هنگامه و غوغا کنید
مسبدین از شما یکیک کشیدند انتقام

The king of the martyred was killed, so that this would be a lesson to you,
to be persistent and resist the oppressor.

It is self destruction to stab yourself with a dagger,
stab the enemies’ head and revive-free yourself.

You young educated ones, the illiterate are your ruler (this refers to Reza Shah),
show these helpless stingy low ones for what they are

Congratulations to you old fighters for the constitution,
constantly tricking each other and making a noise.

Because you didn’t respect the law and yourselves,
the dictator took revenge on you all.

In the second part of the poem he continues:

من با کیم؟

ندست کوشی تان ای گرزدن من با کیم
سینه‌زن زنجبرزن قنارهزن من با کیم
لیک شبانه وی‌یک‌ش بش خود برزن من با کیم
هی زند زنجیرها را بر خویشن من با کیم
او همی بلعد بیم آب دهن من با کیم
بر ظهور مهدی صالح‌زن من با کیم
مستمع چون نیست باری خامشی باید گرید

1. رفته حس مردمی از سرد و زن من با کیم
2. خلق ایران دسته‌ای دزدندو بی دین دسته‌ای
3. گویم این قداره را ببر کردن ظالم بزن
4. گویم این زنجیره بهتر قفبد دزدانست و او
5. گویم ای واعظ دهانت را لبیمان دوختند
6. گویم تدین رفته از کف برید این باشد دلیل
7. پس همراه بهتره لب برید از کفت وشنید
8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16.
People have lost all human feelings, who am I talking to?

There's no ear that would hear my advice, who am I talking to?

The people of Iran are either thieves, or non believer,

or they are the ones that hit their heads, and chest with daggers, who am I talking to?

I tell them knock down the enemy with this dagger,

but satan tells them, hit yourself, who am I talking to?

I tell him use this chain for the thief,

but he constantly hits himself with it.

I tell the molla, the enemy has shut you up,

but out of fear he bites his lips.

I tell the mulls the religion is in danger,

he says that's the sign for the appearance of the savior.

Then it is better that I become quiet,

when there are no listeners, it is better to shut up

In the poem, Bahar refers to religious zealots as ignorant ones; that they should revolt against the tyranny and oppression as "the king of the martyrs- Imam Housain" 69 did, not just mourn, hit and self inflict themselves.

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69 Third Imam of Shi'a sect that was martyred fighting the unjust oppressive regime of Caliph Yazid ibn Ma'weya, second Caliph of Omaya dynasty.
CHAPTER 5

Political Situation in the Third Period of Bahar’s Life

In this chapter a few poems that discuss the political situation of Iran during the third period of Bahar’s life will be analyzed. The first one is called: “Shab-i Shoom”\(^70\) (A Bad Omen Night). It was composed at the time that the issue of the republic was the center of public attention. The subject was discussed in the congress. The majority were supporting the issue. The speaker of the minority group who objected to the idea was Bahar. On the night of October 30, 1924, Bahar expressed the opinion of the minority against the subject of the republic. It was harsh. He attacked the idea of the republic, and he asked the congress to reject this idea. The substance of Bahar’s speech was relayed to the intelligence and information agency. The head of the agency decided to get rid of Bahar once and for all by assassinating him. The assassins were waiting for Bahar outside of the building. They did not succeed in their plan, but unfortunately Vaez Ghazvini (editor of the Ra’i-d-i Ghazvin newspaper) who was taken for Bahar, was killed that night, while Bahar was outside of the building smoking.

In this poem Bahar describes the night this: “there were fifty of them and only five of us. The evil ones had planned to shed my blood, but they killed poor Vaez mistakenly”. Then he goes on and talks about the assassins, how they have been promoted to high positions, because of their vicious acts. He describes them as inferior

\(^70\) Divan-i Bahar, P. 400.
mean people who plunder the national wealth and are rewarded, while the respected dignitaries are poor and have to beg for their daily needs. Then he expresses his sorrow for the innocent victim. The following are a few lines of the poem.

The demon king was told that Bahar has been killed,
all the young demons became happy and celebrated the news.

Then came the news that Bahar is alive,
the news of the failed plan brought a chill to the demons.

A robber steals to provide for his needs,
these thieves steal for high position and jobs.

They willingly accept their bad reputation among people,
but they handcuff liberty fighters and lock them up.

They call themselves the chief and khan, or even higher than this,
so that they could cheat and plunder others’ wealth.

My heart aches for you, poor Vaez, because,
these bloody ones hit you really hard.

As Bahar states in the poem, an innocent man was in the wrong place at the wrong time, and how similarity between two of them cost Vaez his life.
The next poem of this series is called the “Enqeraz-i Qajarieh” (Overthrow of the Qajar Dynasty”). When the Qajar dynasty was overthrown and the Pahlavi was established, Bahar felt a responsibility to advice the new king. He warns him against making the same mistakes, so he would not have the same fate as the Qajars had. He refers to the Qajar rule as a period of laziness, backwardness, and sickness that brought death on the dynasty and misery for the people of Iran. In the first line he says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{1. بدرود گفت دولت قاجاری} &\quad \text{مرک اندر آمد از پس بخاری} \\
\text{2. وحشی دید ست پادشاهی کار را} &\quad \text{تنون نکاه داشت به عباری} \\
\text{3. باریکتر ز میو بسی راز است} &\quad \text{زیسر کلاهداری و سرداری} \\
\text{4. آرامش به به فطرة داداری} &\quad \text{آرامش به به فطرة داداری} \\
\text{5. بهباده کارها همه با فاتون} &\quad \text{وز قهر و خشم یافته بیزاری} \\
\text{6. وان پادشاه که باشد خودکامه} &\quad \text{باشدش کارکرد به دشواری} \\
\text{7. در دفع خصم آنچه سرا بیند} &\quad \text{باشدش کارکرد به ناجاری} \\
\text{8. لیکن حذر بیابدش از این سه} &\quad \text{بخل و دروغگوئی و غداری} \\
\text{9. چون گفت کاخ دولت آماده} &\quad \text{عشق آید و جوانی و ميخواری} \\
\text{10. رندان چیبالوس فرار آنند} &\quad \text{بهنهته تن به جامه درباری} \\
\text{11. هر یک هواى خطر خود جسته} &\quad \text{یعنی ز شه کنیم هواداری} \\
\text{12. چون سفلكان شوند فرنگون گردند} &\quad \text{فرزانکان و پاکان متواری} \\
\text{13. شه چون زیون و زار شود خیزند} &\quad \text{فوگلاینان و مسیرند بازاری} \\
\text{14. هنگام ضعف و پیری پیش آید} &\quad \text{زان پس زمان مرک و نگونساری}
\end{align*}
\[

The Qajar dynasty said good bye,

finally death came after long sickness.

The kingdom is like a wild animal.

\[71\text{Ibid., 405.}\]
it can not be kept by cunning.

There are many tiny secrets,

which are under the crown.

Qualities such as honesty, wisdom and art,

must accompany the thrown.

Works must be done lawfully,

anger and cruelty must be avoided.

A king, who is a dictator,

his reign will become difficult.

When helpless, a king must do

what is needed, to repel the enemy.

But he must avoid three things,

being treacherous, a liar, and avaricious.

When the palace is free of evil acts,

then comes the time of renewal, love and happiness.

But watch out for shrewd flattery,

who is dressed in court costume.

Each one has his own plan,

under the pretense of supporting the king.

when mean spirited ones are around,

when the king becomes humiliated and contemptible,

revolt and anarchy appear everywhere.

Then comes weakness and old age.
ending up with death and a bad name.

In the poem, Bahar warns Reza Shah not to make the same mistakes that Qajar did, especially because he was not chosen by the peoples and has become a king by force. In one of the line he says: “a kingdom that was established by violence, cruelty and humility, now has vanished. Despite of the Bahar’s advice and warning in this poem, Reza Shah except at the beginning, followed in the footsteps of his predecessors, thus ending up with same fate as its predecessors. It is an irony that fifty three years later same thing happened to Pahlavi dynasty- history was repeated again.

In another poem of this series “Fetnehay-i Ashekar” (Open Vicious Plan), which was written in 1930, Bahar expresses his concern about the political situation and the elections: “I see vividly that some people have a vicious plan. This group, who are active in politics, are in control of the situation. The noble ones are in prison. The spies are busy, implementing their plan.” He also states: “People have been warned before, but ignored the advice and did nothing to prevent this situation. Therefore their fate is to drink the poison cup and commit suicide.” He continues: “This is because of their inability to distinguish between friends and enemies.” The following are a few lines of this qasida:

1. دست ها آشکار مي بينم
2. بر خر خود سوار مي بينم
3. حقي بازان و ماجراجويان
4. با به بالاي دار مي بینم
5. جد لوطى ز كهنى جاموسان
6. روز و شب كرم كار مي بینم

72 Ibid, P. 544.
I see an open vicious plan,

I see those that are involved.

The adventurous tricky one,

have accomplished their plan.

The noble ones are in prison,

or up there on the execution pole.

I see a few experienced spies,

busy here and there collecting news.

Whatever the wise one predicted,

I see coming true from now on.

In the garden instead of nightingales and heath-cock

I see alligators and porcupines.

The one who sacrifices his life for the country.

I see him humiliated and poor.

The group of useless bums,

I see them involved in the government.

The one, who cannot recognize foes and friends,
has no choice but to commit suicide.

Bahar believes that if one makes the same mistake, or commits the same sin twice, he is not forgiven by God. This poem expresses Bahar’s disappointment at the social situation, and peoples’ ignorance and indifferent reaction toward the political and social issues. He finishes: “one is defined stupid, if one does not learn from his past experience”.
CHAPTER 6

Denunciation of Tehran and its Inhabitants

In this chapter, some of the poems about Tehran and people of Tehran will be reviewed. In the first of these series. There is a poem called “Zam-i Ray” (Slander of Ray-ancient name of Tehran)”. Bahar, a Khorasanian, believed his home town people have more noble values and priorities than Tehranis. Although he had to spend most of his life in Tehran, he never felt at home there. Bahar wrote this poem in 1932; his audience is the city of Tehran. He wrote that the end of the city is close. The city has become a bad omen since the day that one of the Prophet’s grand children was martyred there. Although many noble dynasties reigned in this city (referring to the Buyids), they were destined for annihilation. Therefore the city has become the place of ruffians, who are poor in knowledge and wisdom but wealthy in material things. He continues that the Qajar dynasty that chose the city as its capital lost one third of Iran’s territory to Russia. Finally, he believes the only way that Iran could be saved is the annihilation of the city by a natural disaster such as a fire or an earthquake. The following are a few lines of the poem:

1. احیال فرستاد سوی کش‌ور ری
   که کشت روز تو کوتاه و روزگار تو طی

4. شرگرد قهر اجابت چشیده دم دردم
   پیام سخت حوادث شنیده پی در پی

7. بسا بزرگان کاندی تو زار کشته شدند
   و یا ز بی‌بی کرفتند ره به دیکر حی

73 Ibid., 584.
The angel of death send a message for Ray,
that her days has passed and end is near.

Many nobles were killed violently there,
fearing for their life, others escaped to other places.

The city is always the place for the destitute,
or it is the center of superstition.

People are poor in knowledge.
but have abundant wealth.

Remember the day that you became ruined,
when Tatar troop were roaming over you.

Remember how dictators disturbed your peace,
that your bright day became dark.

There is no remedy for Iran.

unless a fire burns out the town.

Bahar thus expresses his frustration and hatred for the city very clearly. In another poem about Tehran, which was written in 1935, entitled “Tehranis”, Bahar
expresses his deep frustration and lack of confidence in the Tehranis. He refer to them as untrustworthy people, who are cowards and disloyal in friendship. The following are a few lines of the poem:

The only true Iranians are either from Khorasan, or Tabriz.

Tehranis are never considered Iranian.

While Khorasanians were defending Iran against the Mongol invasion,

Tehranians were sleeping in the safety of their basement.

Destruction of friendship, promises, honesty, and caring will come.

If one considers Tehranis’ friendship seriously.

If you are in need, don’t request help from Tehranis,

because Tehranis are enemies in hardship, and friends in prosperity.

Since stupidity and Tehrani have the same rhyme.

A Tehrani is constantly spreading stupidity.

If a Tehrani is found to be loyal,

he must be a hypocrite, otherwise he isn’t a Tehrani.

Although Bahar was very observant, and sharp, unfortunately, he did not have a very high opinion about Tehranis. Of course this is understandable, since that he had to
go through a very difficult and rough time in Tehran, but it does not mean that he had to
generalize all Tehranis in the same categories.
CHAPTER 7

Poems About Bahar’s Imprisonment

This chapter deals with poems that Bahar wrote during his imprisonment in the third period of his life. There are eighteen of them; most complain about prison condition, his health, injustice. The first one is “Ghazab-i Shah” (King’s Anger). It was written in 1929. In this poem Bahar complains that he is in pain and agony in prison, and asks God to free him. He continues that life has become intolerable, he requests death from God. He regrets that his life has been spent fighting for his beliefs and religion. He not only has no comfort or fun in life now, but also he is not among the king’s favorite peoples. He wonders what his crime is that he is in a dark cell kept from the sunlight while thieves are free. And at the end he expresses his astonishment about the state of justice in the country. The following are a few lines of this poem:

شدهام از خدا و مرگ طلب
ای دریغا متأهل و آدر
غم فرزندکان و اهل و عیال
روز عیشام به نموده جو شیب
نانوانتر ز نارهای قصبه
کیستم؟ کاتبی به نام لقب
دوزده آزاد و اهل خانه به نبرد

Life has become so difficult,
that I ask the God for death.

Alas for knowledge, beauty and art,
alas for learning, virtue and literature.
The agony of my family's hard life,
has darkened my daylight to night.

Who am I, a weak thin poet,
much weaker and more fragile than thread.

Who am I, a panegyric poet,
who am I, a writer name "Bañar".

What is my crime? Why am I in prison?
Forbidden to see sunlight and stars.
The thieves are free and nobles in chains!
It is so difficult to judge these days.

In another poem, called "Az Zendan" (From Prison), that he wrote in the same year while still in prison, he complains about the confinement, darkness, filthiness, deafening noise of the street, and his family's well being. Therefore, in addition to his own pain and agony, he was also under pressure or concern for his family and friends; he wrote this qasida that is more or less an apology, although he is not sure what his crime is, that he deserves this fate.

This long poem of seventy five couplets starts with eleven couplets praising Reza shah and his reign, then in the following forty seven couplets, he complains about the
prison conditions; the last 17 couplets review the glorified past of Persia and her kings. Then he compares Reza Shah with some of the great kings, stating that those days have been revived under his guidance and rule. The following are a few excerpt from the qasida:

No one remembers among the long list of kings and rulers,  
a king such as Pahlavi, who is powerful, wise, and elegant.  
This king relies on his swords,  
instead of reclining on pillows and cushions.  
Oh king, the great ruler, the creator,  
have mercy on me on your servant.  
Your anger against me is your strength,  
look at your ability and my weakness.  
The falcon doesn’t hunt the sparrow,  
though, he might go hungry for days.  
What is my crime that I’ve been imprisoned,  
as if I am a criminal or a thief?

\footnote{Ibid., 507.}
In the following lines, he complains about how noisy outside of the prison, or how warm, humid, and unhealthy his cell is, or about the beggars, who yell for money or hand outs, or wandering dogs’ barking. Then he writes a few couplets about himself, such as:

 مدحت شه خواهم از خداى به هر حین
 شاهد من این چک‌رما خوش رنگین
 عزت شه خواهم از خداى به هر حین
 کشت ز توان تازه‌آن زمانه‌پذیرین
 یافته کشور ز عدل و داد تو تزین
 مدرم ایران دعا و جنریل آمین

Because of my sorrow and pain in this cell,

I try to praise you by my poetry as best I can.

O king, there are a few eloquent poet like me,

my witness is my colorful poetry.

Although I am in pain because of the king’s anger.

I pray for the king’s health and glory.

You have become the replacement for Cyrus and Darius,

the glorified past has been renewed under your reign.

As long as the world goes on, may you remain king

because the country has been made splendid by your justice.

The people of Iran pray for your life earnestly,

and angels will say amen, amen.
The next poem is called “Habsieh” (imprisonment),” written in 1929. In this long poem of forty-seven couplets, Bahar complains about his condition in prison again. He writes:

“I don’t know what is my fault that I had to be in this cage. A filthy place such as this prison is not fit for a human being, let alone for a noble poet like me. There will be no space for real criminals if the jails are kept full of people who are only guilty of expressing their thoughts. A place that one would eat, sleep, wash, live, and go to the bathroom is appropriate for animals, not for a great poet such as me. My company are mice in the cell. If a book is brought for me, it is left on the desk of the warden. Even food, which is brought for me, is checked for a hidden letter or message”.

The following are excerpts from the poem:

1. پانزده روز است تا جایی در این زندان بود
2. سرنگون کرده اکر خود رستم دستتان بود
3. کر گره پیدا بود خدمت چرا پنهان بود
4. در نفس ماند بیلی چون مرغ خوش الحان بود
5. راست کر خواهی کنایه داش و فضل من است
6. وین سخن ورد زبان مردم ایران بود
7. یافته ایوانشن بر تارک کیوان بود
8. کرامتی کر همام از سیف کر سلمان بود

I have been in this prison for fifteen days,
when was confinement and a cage ever proper for a wise person.
If a powerful one wishes revenge from the weak one,
he is doomed to annihilation, even if he were Rostam. 77

76 Ibid., 513.
If I have done any wrong, my services are also long,
why one should disclose the sin and hide the good works.
If you want the truth my sin is my knowledge and education,
that's always the case, the nightingale is kept in the cage.
It has been seven centuries since Iran has seen a poet like me,
that's the fact, it's the talk of town,
except for Saadi, Hafez, and Moulati,
who have positions among the stars.
The rest of the poets,
are all students of "Bahar".

As it can be seen, Bahar under pressure from his family and friends writes a few lines about Reza Shah, so the latter would grant him clemency.

The next poem of this series is called "Ta Kay-o Ta Chand" (Until When And How Much). Bahar wrote it in 1929 in the prison. In this beautiful "mosammat", Bahar is not complaining about his condition or why he is in jail, but complains about the political condition of the country. He asks why nobles are either wandering or migrating to foreign lands. Why has this ancient, great empire of Darius become poor and humiliated? Why a destitute, uneducated man such as Reza Shah is in power? Why is a cunning thief holding the peacock throne? He continues that the king is a thief and his police forces are his colleagues; they all are busy plundering the country. At the end he writes a prescription that the country needs a strong, caring intelligent and educated man.

77 Rostam is the legendary hero of Shahnameh, the famous poetry epic book written by Ferdowsi in 11th century.
78 Divan-i Bahar, P. 516.
to save it from the turmoil, which it has been confronted with. The following are a few lines of the poem:

O, you, the patriots, until when will you be wandering?

for how long will you remain suspicious, hesitant and depressed?

For how long will this land of Darius be poor and distressed?

For how long will Kay Khosro’s treasure stay in control of the king?

I wander how a wise person could be the toy of a stupid one!

How long can the king and his friends exploit the people?

One is fat from too much eating.

one is too pale from hunger.

The country needs a brave, warrior,

who is intelligent, understanding,

so he could revolt and save the country.

The next poem of the series is called “Ay Sa’adat (O’prosperity)”. Bahar wrote this poem, as he had others, in prison in 1929. It is a discussion between human beings
and prosperity or happiness. In the first section man asks happiness a series of questions. The essential concern of this poem is, where is happiness, or why does it not come, or why has happiness gone only to the west (Europe) and not come to the Middle East? Then happiness answers him:

"Happiness is like a light, it shines everywhere, except that some people are blind and do not see it. However the west's prosperity lies in their artillery and canon. The east's lies in their praying and hardship in agriculture. In Africa it lies in hunting and comfortable life". Then the poet complains that happiness' s favorite is the west, otherwise why is the west so full of lights while east is kept in the dark?

Happiness advises the man: Clear your head of ignorance, try to unite together, acquire knowledge and science. Then maybe you will be successful in your goal, and misfortune will go to the west. The following are a few lines of the poem.

انسان:

1. از بehr خدا بکسوس کجایی

سعادت:

1. از نور سعادت م، چه خواهی
2. من چه طلبم در کتی جهاد
3. من چه طلبم در التماسند

انسان:

1. گر خصا غرب نیستی، هست روشن زه غرب و شرق تاری

سعادت:

1. از سر بهید جهال و اوهام
2. کوشید به علم و صنعت نو بر غرب نفاق و کذب و بهتان
3. بر شرق رسد جلال و فرهنگ

79 Legendary King of Shahnameh, Kay Khosro who gave up the kingdom and his treasure and went to a mountain (left the earth and went to heaven).
80 Ibid., 609.
Man:

Oh, happiness where are you?

For God's sake tell me where you are?

Happiness:

I am the light of happiness, what do you want?

Why do you try to look for me?

I am manifest, but these people are blind,
and they are begging for my presence.

Man:

If the west is not your favorite one,

why is the west in light and the east in darkness?

Happiness:

Try to get rid of superstitions and get education,

then maybe the east will regain its dignity.

And the west will disintegrate,

the world will not stay the same for ever.

As one can tell the substance of this poem like that of most of Bahar's poems has an advisory tone to the people who complain about their fate, not knowing that they must also actively participate in their well being. They should not just be observant of others, who are perceived by them as lucky; as the ancient Persian proverb says: If one does not take trouble, one would not gain treasure.
The next poem of this series is called “Shekveh and Tafakhhor” (Complaining and Boasting). In this poem he complains that sycophants and envious people have caused him troubles. The poem consists of forty one lines. Bahar praises his own poetic talent and ability. In the first line he writes that his tears will become a flood and will take him away. Or he is a light, but the world has hidden him under the ashes. He complains that pain and torture have been so severe and he has become so weak and thin that if it was not for his clothes, the wind would blow him away. Then he wishes that one day a strong wind would take him and set him down in his sweet home, so that he could see his beloved. But he is afraid that she might not want him, because his appearance is as a weak, sick dying man, who has been stricken by a deadly disease. He praises his talent and potential ability in a few lines that I translate below. He complains about avaricious people who are constantly speaking evil and slandering him, causing him trouble and agony in addition to the pain of being in prison. He goes on that prison is a gradual death sentence for him, so he asks to be executed immediately. He curses the envious and evil ones who have caused him pain. In the last few lines he talks about his children, his poor condition, and how his household are suffering, because they have no financial support. However, in the last line he says he could be happy despite his impoverishment if he could escape once in a while from his ill fate. The following are a few lines from this poem:

"داوستان رفتند ازین کشور، رقیبان همتی تا مکبر بیرون کند سلطان ازین کشور مرا..."
My friends have left the country, O guardian,
do something so that the king will expel me too.

If I go to Egypt, Syria or Baghdad or Deccan,
they would appreciate me more,
or if I go to Berlin, Paris, or London,
the fame of my knowledge will bring wealth for me.

If I go to Kabul, having the same language,
lovers of literature will consider me their own.

If the enemy sends me away from Iran,
I will have a high position with Uzbeks and Tajiks.

In Rome or Russia, I have friends,
who would embrace me, out of loyalty.

Whenever I pick up my pen and write down words,
the wise  will memorize my words.

Today, I am the first in the Persian language,

I have many different talents in poetry and prose.

As long as the Persian language remains, I will last too,

although an evil one might cut my throat.

I am a forerunner in different area of art like Abrash^{82},

but this world, which only values stupid people, has humiliated me.

Because of mean people and their evil words,

the king has belittled me and made me less than earth.

It will take centuries to find a poet like me,

some who could have talent in poetry and prose.

But I have been treated as an unwanted member,

because of the evil gossip of vicious people here.

I wish one day my enemy and friends would all cooperate,

and shoot me from every side, and free me from the pain.

As can be seen, this poem like the previous ones complains about the unjust world and evil people, who have brought pain and agony to Bahar, for no convincing reasons. In this poem, Bahar also praises his artistic abilities in poetry and prose.

The last of these prison poem is called “Shekayat^{83} (Complaining)”. Bahar wrote this qasida in 1933. In this poem as its title indicates, Bahar complains about prison conditions, his own situation and the hardship his family suffers without the head

^{82} Ibid., 636.
of household. He complains that he has become a hunchback, how his life has been wasted in prison, or imprisonment has separated him from his beloved, and has created hardship for his family. He said “Working for the government is like being a slave, so an intelligent person would not accept it.” He believes working for wages is more honorable than being a greedy wealthy person who is in the service of the government. He refers to Taymour Tash (court minister) once the king’s trustee and favorite, but now out of favor, passing time in prison. He compares the latter’s situation with his own. He says: “People curse Taymour in private, but praise him in public.” He writes that the world will eventually be cruel to whoever is cruel to others; or if one exploits people one will not go free, without reprisal. He believes that those did evil to him will be punished soon. Then he advises people to appreciate their freedom. He continues that he is tired of being imprisoned, although has no remedy but being grateful to God. Then he thanks God for his children. He names them one by one, mentioning that all have a good upbringing, because of their mother, who is always alert and watchful despite economical hardship and tough circumstances. He ends by talking about his pathetic condition and his weak, pale appearance.

In this poem he praises one of his family’s friends- a physician, whose care and understanding has decreased his family’s suffering. The physician was Loqman Adham, who was from a well known, prominent family. He built a hospital in Tehran that still functions under his name. Bahar praises Loqman’s ability as a physician, saying there is no one comparable to him for his ability, generosity, and humanity, in the same way that there is no one as expert and proficient as Bahar in Persian poetry and prose. He

83 Ibid., 461.
continues that it is only Loqman and Bahar who appreciate each others’ talent and knowledge. Then he thanks Loqman for taking care of his family, and continues to complain about other friends and nobles, who are afraid of being associated with him, and do not protest against the king’s dictatorial behavior. The following is a translation of a few lines of this long poem:

What is the sin of Bahar in this city,
except being wise and knowledgeable.

I was put in the prison at the season,
which is the time of picking flowers and being merry.

If the enemy kills Bahar, is not surprising,
because crows are enemies of nightingales.

If they don’t dare to kill him,
it is out of fear of people’s revolt.

Men and women are yelling, dying from hunger,
while the governments’ workers are healthy and chubby.

Generosity, caring and humanity are gone,

trickery, enviousness and fear are left.

These people are both tyrant and prosecutor,

all are both judge and slanderer.

Oh Loghman, treasure my words,

this fresh and rhymed Persian poetry.

Because Your innocent friend “Bahar”,

will be killed in this wild town.
Chapter 8

Panegyric Poems

This chapter deals directly with the panegyric skills of Bahar when describing the beauties of nature. Although Persian literature has many talented poets, who have many poems about nature, and some of them, such as Faroukhi Sistani and Manuchehry Damghani who lived in the medieval era, are well known for this skill, modern Persian poets have in general paid less attention to this subject. However, Bahar’s qasidas about nature are very tasteful and are clear proofs of his talent in panegyric poetry.

The poem that is dealt with in this chapter is called “Damanehy-i Alborz”\(^{84}\) (Alborz Mountain’s slope), mountains in the north of Iran. Tehran is located on the slopes of this mountain chain. Its highest peak, Damavand is almost 5.5 kilometers high and can be seen from most parts of Tehran, especially on less polluted days, as was the case during Bahar’s life. This mountain has a very important place in the history of mythology of Iran. It has been seen as the hiding place of heroes and the prison of evil rulers. Folk, mythological, or historical stories have been associated with this mountain. I was able to find three long poems related to this mountain in the first volume of Bahar’s divan. One associated with the third period of his life, is in two parts and consists of 55 lines. In the first part he praises the beauty of the mountain and in the second part he discusses the nature of real friends. Bahar wrote this poem in 1928. This poem takes as its point of

\(^{84}\) Ibid. P. 477.
departure to Roudaki’s poem “Bouy-i Jouy-i Mulian”; it also has the same rhyme (radif).

The following lines are the first part of it:

1. باد صبح از کوه‌های بید همی
2. پیام کویی سوی شهر آید ز کوه
3. پیام صدای در هوای کویر ری
4. جیوه یکی زیبا نگار آید همی
5. عرب‌ها در خیلی‌ها می‌می‌دانند
6. چون درخشان زرگار آید همی
7. چون تابد بر را زیر سنگ‌های زرقوی
8. رست کویی سوی دشت از کوه‌های
9. این پیام و آن سنوار آید همی
10. چون حصاری استوار آید همی

The morning wind is coming from the mountain.

it reminds me of the memory of my compassionate friend.

It seems that the beloved is coming from the mountain to the city.

one would imagine that a friend is coming back from hunting.

In the warm morning weather of Ray(Tehran),

it brings the sweet smell of the spring.

The peak of the Albourz seems,

the prettiest scenery to me.

At the top of its head its silver covering (snow),

appears as the most beautiful face to me.

When the ray of the sun shines on it,
it seems a golden glow to my eyes.

From far away, the green grass on its slopes,
seems like a very pleasant painting to me.

You are right saying that an army with their spears,
are coming from the mountain to the plain.

Wave upon wave, banner after banner,
on foot and on horses they come.

The cottages are surrounded by trees,
and seem like a strong fortress.

These trees are as a group of soldiers,
that have embraced the mountain very lightly.

Bahar continues describing streams, blue skies, sounds of birds, different flowers, their sweet pleasant smell, and the tasty delicious fruits of the Alborz mountain. In the second part he writes:

1. کارچه بسیارند بارانت ولیک
پار بایند تا به کار آید همی
پار آن باشند که روز بستگی
روز بی پاری به بار آید همی
آسمان دوسته آمد همی
دوستان را از غار آید همی
تا قیامت استوار آید همی
حاشیه که غبار آید همی
کاکحشام از اشتهر آید همی
نکته‌های شاه‌وار آید همی

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although you have many friends,

you won’t find friends like “Bahar”.

honest, alert and courageous,

friends must be useful when needed.

One must be alert in the dark days,

so that he will be ready to help needy friends.

If one plants a seed when one has plenty of friends around,

at the time that he is lonely, the seed will be fruitful.

As long as you have money in hand and strength in your body,

even the sky and stars will love you.

When your gold is depleted and your power decreases,

then people will be ashamed of your friendship.

I promise that my promises,

will remain firm forever with you.

If I sacrifice my life for you,

God forbid that I ever regret it.

Seeking fame, I gave my bread,

because glory will follow fame.

It is pride enough for me, that,

from my pen, valuable points come out.

I am servant of followers and readers,

who understand my prose and poetry.
Chapter 9

Moral Poems

This chapter deals with poems that address moral issues. Bahar expresses his talent and skill in this area very brilliantly. In this type of poem, his subjects are from all levels of society, without regard to age. He wrote poems about women, children, the elite, and people in charge of government affairs. However only moral poems of this period will be studied. The first one is called "Chieh Dari" (What Do You Have?) . Bahar wrote this poem in 1928. His subject is a is a Khajeh or Agha, referring to a wealthy person. In this twenty three line poem, Bahar lists a series of moral values and asks: "Agha besides material wealth what do you have?" Then he continues: If material objects will be taken away, what else will remain?" Although he does not give any direct advice, by naming the inappropriate traits, he outlines manners that must be avoided. The following are a few lines of this poem:

1. ای خواجه بزر سیم و زر چه داری؟
2. ای خواجه والالکهر چه داری؟
3. زر و کهرت را اکرت سنانند
4. بنسر ز علم و هنسر چه داری؟
5. از علم شود خاک بی هنسر زر
6. خیره تو در آن کام بر چه داری؟
7. از بابت خویش ای پسر چه داری؟
8. از دانش و علم پدر چه داری؟
9. تو بهسر خویش ماحضر چه داری؟

85 Ibid. P. 495.
Agha what do you have except silver and gold?

as you don’t have education what else do you have?

If your gold and jewelry is taken away from you,

O, honorable man what else do you have?

With the help of knowledge, worthless land turns to gold,

Look! what do you have of knowledge or art?

The designer of your garden had a good taste apart from walking and strolling there, what do you have?

This gold and silver are an inheritance from your father,

what have you gained from your own work?

You claim your father had all knowledge,

what have you got from it?

If gold suddenly becomes worthless,

what do you have to make ends meet?

Nowadays you are the manager and director,

what do you have if you have to be a laborer tomorrow?

You are benefitting from others craft,

what kind of craft do you know?

We gave up the arts and sciences for you,
look around, do you have any belief, humanity or generosity?

What did you study besides trickery, dishonesty, corruption,

what do you have except pride, haughtiness and boasting?

The next poem is called "Kasra Va Dehgan" (The King and Farmer). Bahar wrote it in 1928. It is formed of nine couplets. It is based on an old Persian proverb. It is a conversation between Anoushirvan the Just, the famous Sasanid king and a farmer. The whole point of the poem is that one should not pursue a life of exploitation, pollution, waste, and consumption of what have been left from one's predecessors, but one must also contribute to increasing the resources, and replace with more what had consumed for future generations. The poem is as follows:

شاه انوشیروان به موسّم دی
که در آن بود مارم بسیار
که گذشته است عمر او ز نود
دانه جوز در زمین می کاشت
که پیش از هر خاصیت کامی؟
که چرا حرص می زنی چندین؟
پای هر یا تو بر لب گور است
جوش ده سال عمر می خواهد
که قوی کرده و به بار آید
که در حال حاضر و مرد
مرد از کاشتند چکار آید؟!

مرد دهبان به شاه کسی کفت
ما بکارم و دکران به خودم
که زمین حیدر خوشی که زندی زاد
بدرها یز به مرد دهبان داد
کفته دهبان ز جوز بن در عمر
برچیده است زودتر از مین!

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86 Ibid., 546.
The king went out hunting in winter time,
on his way, he saw a number of people working in the fields.

He saw an old man whose age had passed ninety,
he was planting a walnut seed, ready to grow in spring.

The king told the old man: how parsimonious you are,
you are on the edge of the grave, why are you planting walnuts.

It takes ten years for a walnut to become strong and bear fruits,
you will die in two or three days, what's the purpose of planting this nut?

The farmer said: no harm is done by planting,
others planted and I ate, now I plant so others will eat.

The king said: you have made a valid point,
he ordered his treasurer to give him a bag of gold.

The farmer said: I'll tell you another valid point,
no farmer has seen the fruits of his seed as quickly I have done.

The king, astonished of his ready wit, told him:
you'll be rewarded double from the treasury for another valid point.

In the last couplet, Bahar does not hesitate to give his advice about how the country should be run. He indirectly refers to Reza Shah's greed and cruel way of running the country, so he says:
The country will prosper, if the king treats his people kindly.

but will be plundered and destroyed by the stupidity and cruelty of its ruler.

I believe this poem is one of Bahar’s masterpieces. He teaches morality in the sweetest way, although these values are very complicated, the simplicity of the language and tone makes it easy to understand the abstract thoughts involved. This poem has been made part of the elementary school reading material, so that young children would appreciate the value of the land and its resources. Bahar also points out how a good advice is rewarded by the king, Anushiravan the Just.
Chapter 10

Personal Poems

This chapter deals with the poems that Bahar has written about his wishes and feelings. The first poem of this series is called “Arman-i Sha’er\textsuperscript{87} (The Wishes of the Poet)”. In this qasida, which consisted of thirty five lines, and was written in 1930, Bahar talks about his wishes. As one would have expected from a philanthropist like Bahar, the substance of these poems is concerned with Bahar’s wishes, how to make a difference in his own life and lives of others. He longs for liberty, freedom of expression, thought, and movement. When he writes that like the sun he wishes to shine on east and west alike, he means that his message of peace, liberty and dignity for all would be heard by everybody, or when he wishes to have a big beautiful garden so that he could invite all those who have been oppressed and exploited, so they could enjoy life and live happily there; or when he asks for strength to imprison the devil of greed and material things, or to have the ability to teach demanding people to be grateful for what they have, and not spoil the present by imaginary wishes in the future; or when he requests the power that would enable him to cut off the hand which has oppressed the reformism.; all his wishes and longings are for the well-being of human beings. This poem is a good example of his philanthropic nature. The poem is as follows:

\textsuperscript{87} Venus, also it is the star that plays roud- a two string musical instrument (Loghat Nameh Dehkhodain, V.XIV, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Ed. P. 22291.)
1. برخیزم و زندگی ز سر کیرم
با خورشید رو به خوش و در بارم
کلکی ز سختان نشکر کیرم
گیاهی را جمله در شیر کیرم
زن اخیراً زنده خبر سر کیرم
tالخی ز مناظ دهر بکریم
7. با قوت طعم کلک شکرزای
چون من سر خامه تختی گیرم
8. ناهید به زخمی تختی گردد
چون من ز خندن خامه سر کیرم
9. کلک از کف تیر سرنگون گردد
پیروایه کونه کون صور کیرم
10. از ملایم خون دل به لوح اندر
13. در عین برهنگی چو عین السمن
14. وین سر پوش سیباده بختی را
15. وان میوه که آرزو بود نامش
16. باغی ز ایادی اندیشی گیته
17. آن کودک اشنادیز را نفتشی
20. وان مادر داغخندیه را مرهم
22. نوبتی و اشک و آه را در هم
24. وان کاه به سطح طارم اطلس
25. با بال و پر فرشتگان زان جای

I should start life all over again,
first take care of this heartfelt pain.

I should become rain and pour over mountain and fields.

Or become fire, and burn everything around me.

Or stroll in the sugar cane fields,
pick up a stem and make a pen from it.
by the help of this pen,
write such words as would create a turmoil in the whole world.
Or take revenge for all the poor philosophers,
from this ugly stubborn world.
By strength of this sweet pen,
take the bitterness of life away.
Nahid\textsuperscript{88} will become sharper from each stroke,
when I trim off the head of my pen?.
With the help of my bleeding heart, I'll draw
different paintings on the canvas.
Although naked, like the sun,
I will shine over east and west.
Then I will take care of this omen of bad luck,
with strength and glory I shall wipe it from the earth.
Then the fruit that is called wishes,
I'll put it on the plate for consumption.
I'll build up a garden with friends,
then we'll all enjoy its fruits, constantly.
Then I'll bring laughter and happiness,
for the poor crying child.
I'll try to comfort the bereaved mother,
by being kind and caring to her.

\textsuperscript{88} Bahar's Divan P., 658
Then I'll wrap tears and disappointment,
and bury them all in a big grave hole.

On the night of reunion with my beloved,
I will cover the window, so as not to see the dawn.

Then on the silk carpet of the sky,
I will embrace my beloved tightly.

Then with help of angels' wings,
I will fly out toward the immortal one.
Chapter 11

Praise of authorities or scholars

This chapter deals with an actual panegyric. Bahar uses his extraordinary poetic talent and skill to praise religious figures such as the prophet Mohammed (peace upon him), or national legendary figures, who are poets, such as Ferdowsi, or Sa’di. He has written some panegyric qasida about Reza Shah too, but in such poems, after only a few lines of flattery, he tries to advise him how to be a good loving king rather than complimenting or flattering him, as Bahar considered that he did not deserve such praise or possess praise worthy qualities.

In the section of his life with which my study deals, he wrote two long poems about Ferdowsi. The first one consists of eighty one couplets; Bahar recited it at the 1000th anniversary celebration of Ferdowsi in the city of Tus (his birthplace, a city in the Khorasan province). At the session many scholars of Persian literature were present. Reza Shah also had traveled there for the opening ceremony of Ferdowsi’s Mausoleum, and his anniversary celebration. Many of the attending scholars read interesting poems or articles about Ferdowsi. Bahar recited the qasida “Afareen Ferdowsi” (Applause to Ferdowsi). The poem was well received by the audience. In this qasida Bahar presents a brief overview on Persian history and praises Ferdowsi for his life time achievement in creating the Shahnameh-, which revived the Iranian national pride and patriotism.

The first few lines are as followings:

\[\text{89. Safa, Zabihollah. "Yadi az Ostad". Iran Nameh, (Su., 1987).}\]
زندگی کشت از همین فردوسی سحرآفرین
آنچه کردند آن پرگان در جهان ازداد و دین
تازیان در سیصد سال از جهل و کین
تازه زا گل برکشیدن چون شکفت به‌اسمین
ترک‌تازی را برون راندند لاشه از کیمین
این سوار یارسی خوش فصاحت زیر دین
فرهای کز خسروان در خاوان بودی دفین
بی نسب مردم نجوا نام پور آبین
نابی مردی که زاده است ازینال و از تکین
وز برگان خراسانی‌افات پیوندی چنین

1. آنچه کورش کرد و دارا و آنچه زرتشت مهین
2. تازه کشت از طبع حکمت زای فردوسی به‌دهر
3. باستانی نامه کافشاوی‌نشد اندر خداک و گل
4. آفتاد طبع فردوسی به سی و پنج سال
5. تان ایسران رفت‌شه بود از یاد، تا تازی و ترک
6. شن درفش کاروانی باز برپا نا کشید
7. جز به‌هوه هرکز کجا در طوبران پیدا شدی
8. قصه محمود غزنوی سربه‌سر افسانه است
9. خصم نام رستم سکری و زال زابی است
10. نامده شاهان به دست موبان آماده کشت

Whatever Cyrus and Darius and the great Zoroaster did
was revived by the magic words of Ferdowsi.

What those great men did in the world,
was renewed by the wise sayings of Ferdowsi.

For 350 years the ancient letters had been dispersed in mud,
out of ignorance, by the Arabs,

For thirty five years the sun of Ferdowsi’s talent,
drew it out of mud, like a flowering jasmine.

The name of Iran was forgotten,
because of Turks and Arab invaders.

The Kavian in banner was exalted again,
because of this noble Persian rider, who saddled the horse of eloquence.

Who but he has ever found in Tus.
The glory of the ancient kings that has been buried in the east.

The story of Mahmoud is only a fable,
a lower class man who was after kings' glories.
A borne idolater from a slave family,
regards Rustam and Zal as enemies.
The history of kings was prepared by Zoroastrian priest,
then the Khorasan's nobles made it Shahnameh.

Then Bahar continues by giving Ferdowsi's biography, where he was born, who his ancestors were, and at the time of his birth what was going on in the North Eastern part of Iran. He writes about the Ghaznavid dynasty, which overthrew the Saffarid and Samanid dynasties - the Persian dynasties of Iran after Islam. He refers to this period as a turbulent era in Iranian history, which brought Turkish dynasties to power. Bahar explains the difficult era that Ferdowsi lived through when writing the Shahnameh; despite these problems he did not hesitate in his conviction that he had a divine duty to his countrymen to finish this great task. Ferdowsi refers to his work "as a high castle that rain, wind, and storm will not be able to ruin."

In the last few couplets, Bahar writes these lines:

٧٧ این قصیده ارمغان کردم به نام شهردار
تا نبوشن آفرین از شاه و از شاه آفرین
٧٨ کارهای خسرو ایران مرا کوییده کرد
زان که در هر ساعتی او راست کرد که نوین
همچون پولاد خراسانی بود شعر بهار
گر ذصح کش برگرد ز خاک و پرکشند شاه زمین

I offered this qasida to the king.
so that I'll be praised and rewarded for it.

The kings' deed made me a poet,

because he does new and appropriate works hourly.

Bahar's poetry is as strong as Khorasan's steel,

if the king would take it and promote it- if the king would appreciate it.

Bahar adds these last three couplets, so he could regain his liberty back. His friends and supporters in the government advised him to do this, since a few flattering lines about the egoistic Reza Shah would buy his freedom. Bahar only wrote three couplets in this long qasida that referred to the king. According to his son Mehrdad Bahar, another scholar of this family, his father regretted a few panegyric qasidas that he recited about Reza Shah. His justification is that he was under pressure from his friends and family, who were living in extreme economic hardship.
Chapter 12
What Scholars Think About Bahar

One significant writer who has written on Bahar’s poetry is Zabihoilah Safa, best
known for his “Tarikh-i Adabiat Dar Iran (History of Literature in Iran)”, which covers
all periods from ancient times to the present. Safa was Bahar’s student when he taught
“Sabkshinasi (stylistics)” in PhD classes.

Safa states: “Bahar writes poetry on topics such as social issues and political
problems in the best possible Khorasani style, he also composes ghazal poetry.” Safa
continues: “Although he wrote poetry in the Khorasani style, he did not hesitate to use
new styles.” Bahar remarks: “I should write in a new style, I am tired of the style that was
used by Anvary, and Ourfi; although those styles are sweet and interesting, their excessive
sugaring and praise makes me sick”. Safa argues: “Despite this statement Bahar’s style
is definitely what was used in ten-eleventh century poetry, but his subject matter is new
and interesting, and this is what gives his poetry depth and interest.”

Safa believes that Bahar repaired the pillars of Persian poetry, and with his
innovation and new ideas made it stronger and more durable.

Another scholar Abdoulhosain Zarrinkub refers to him “as a poet, who praises
liberty in all possible ways. All his life he worked hard for the laws, constitution and

90Ibid., p.633.
91 Zarrinkub, Abdoulhosain. “Selection From the Eyes of Critics”. Iran Nameh, (Su., 1987).
92Ibid. p. 661.
independence of Iran. His poetry is evidence of this claim, so it would not be wrong to call him a political poet. He follows this trend up to the end of his life. In his last qasida that he recited after WWII and is called “Joghd-i Jang( War’s Owl)”, he scolds the war, the politicians who created the war, and finally advocate peace and brotherhood, indicating his concern with world politics as well as local issues”. Zarrinkub continues it is not surprising that he is referred to as the greatest political poet of Persian language. In his divan of almost 30,000 lines of poetry, there are many poems about world political figures and historical events. However, this does not mean that he has ignored religion, philosophy or moral issues. Bahar’s Khorasani poetic style is so elegant that it reminds us of the elegant and graceful poetry of the Samanid era. Bahar’s poetry is “sahl-i momtane’a” (simple but imitable). It is full of simple words that are used in ordinary oral communication. Bahar uses his sense of humor, and illustrative anecdotes to decrease the bitterness of his criticism. As a man of politics, he could easily be considered an apostle of justice and liberty; his divan is the best evidence to this claim”.

Other scholars have different opinion about Bahar. Yahye Arianpour believes that Bahar did not have any specific style or did not open any new way, or create any new significant content. He says: “ Bahar is not able to go too far away from his predecessor’s style”. However Zarrinkub thinks Bahar has a specific style. This style is a combination of Khorasani-Iraqi and some elements from the styles of western literature. Zarrinkub states: “ Bahar was not successful in combining them well; his qasidas are heavy, and strong, he uses an aggressive tone most of the time, but sometimes his lack of success is apparent in his tone, so that he seems doubtful and shaky, that’s why his poetry

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93 Ibid, p. 651
occasionally seems inferior". With all respect to Dr. Zarrinkub's opinion, I should say that for various reasons, including political caution, many of Bahar's poem were not published in his lifetime, and were left in an incomplete or unedited state. The inclusion of these poems in his divan means that critics are often referring to poems that Bahar had not brought to a state in which he considered them fit for publication; I am sure if he had given the opportunity, we would find a more flawless divan.

Gholam Housain Yousefi is another contemporary scholar of Bahar's era, who appreciates Bahar's work, but this does not prevent him from writing his honest opinion about Bahar's poetry. He points out that Bahar's work must be evaluated on the bases of what was going on during the specific period that the work was created, since many of the concerns discussed in the poems are no longer topical or of contemporary importance. Yousefi states: "Bahar was a writer and poet who did not like to imitate. Bahar adored Persian history, heritage and literature, and was also worried about western influence on Persian literature, so he constantly warned Iranians to avoid imitating or yielding to the western values, styles or ways of life". Yousefi continues: "Bahar believed that Iranians have not yet acquired educational maturity, thus they are susceptible to imitation". Yousefi especially appreciates Bahar's prose. He states: "Bahar's style in prose is clear and understandable, he avoids too much explanation or repetition, his sentences are simple and short, his usage of language makes his prose alive and warm". Yousefi, especially praises Bahar's achievement in distinguishing different types and styles of

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95 Yousefi, Gholum Housain. "Selection from the eyes of critics". Iran Nameh, (Su., 1987).
96 Ibid, p. 669.
97 Ibid, p. 669.
writing. He states: “No previous writer had paid attention to different styles of prose in the Persian language. In his remarkable work Sabkshinasi (stylistics), Bahar contextualizes the development of Persian prose, by giving a brief historical survey of the various periods in which differing prose style were developed”. Yousefi believes that Sabkshinasi is sufficient to place Bahar among the greatest Persian writers of all time.\textsuperscript{100}

Michael Loraine is the only significant western scholar who has written at length about Bahar. He sees Bahar as a nationalist who through his political poetry during the constitutional movement was able to reach people, awaken them, and involve them in the movement\textsuperscript{101}. He points out that although Bahar is famous for his panegyric poetry, he was a capable political agitator and successfully increased people’s patriotic fervor through his satirical poems\textsuperscript{102}. Loraine states: “Bahar lived during a period of rapid changes, but never abandoned his training and never broke with the past. Although contemporary poets were influenced by changes in Europe, and tried new ideas, Bahar was not interested in their innovations”. Loraine continues: “Bahar remained a classical poet all the way through into modern times, while the world was going through many changes, inventions and innovations”.\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{100} Loraine, Michael B. “Bahar in the context of Persian constitutional revolution”. Iranian studies. (Sp., 1972).
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, p. 83.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{103} Bahar, Mohammed Taqi. Divan-i Ash’ar-i Shadravan Mohammed Taqi Bahar, “Malik al-
Final Note

Mohammed Taqi Bahar, a court laureate, a talented capable poet, was (there is general agreement), the last great poet able to write in mono rhyme mono meter form of qasida. He did not waste his gifted God given talent and enormous panegyrical ability praising kings or elite. However, he does have a few qasidas eulogizing or elegizing Mozaffar al-Din Shah, his son Mohammed Ali Shah, or Reza Shah. The first this kind of qasida was the one that he composed after the death of his father. He sent this elegy poem, called "Madh-i Mozaffar al-Din Shah" (praising) to Mozaffar al-Din Shah to Tehran. This qasida won him his position as court laureate of Astanah-I Quds-I Razavi. Another poem about Mozaffar-i al-Din Shah is called "A’dl-i Mozaffar- Mozaffar’s justice". Bahar praised the latter when he signed the declaration of constitution. He wrote another one when the King died and his son succeeded him, hoping he would follow in his father’s footsteps. However when Mohammed Ali Shah’s real intention became clear, he wrote "A’inh-i Ebrat" (the Mirror of Warning). In this long strophic

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104 Refers to the court of the eighth Imam of Shi’a sect, Hazrat-i Reza, who was Caliph Ma’mon’s heir; he was residing in Mashhad. Therefore, he is considered the King in Iran, his mausoleum is the most important religious pilgrimage in Iran.


107 Ibid, p. 56.
verse, which consists of 158 stanzas each having a four-line (bayt), he criticizes the
dictatorial role of Mohammed Ali Shah. He starts the poem reviewing the whole
history of Iran. He ends the poem with this stanza:

*O king all these signs of the past kings are not just a story,*

*the king can’t disregard the kingly manner.*

*The position of a king is not appropriate for insane or drunken people.*

giving light is appropriate for a candle not butterfly.

*Now there is no one except you as the head of this ancient house.*

*O king no house is as ruined as yours,*

*get up and rebuild it with justice and fairness,*

*and slowly push away the foreigner from this land.*

There are a few more panegyric poems in his divan about the elite, Atabak-i Azam
(prime minister), and friends; however, I found only two about Reza Shah. He did not
receive any patronage for these poems. In one of them, titled “Vares-i Jam and
Tahmoures (Heir of Jam and Tahmoures)’’108, a tarjihband consisting of twelve stanzas.
*“the great king of the land Pahlavi, the heir of Tahmores and Jam, Pahlavi” is repeated*
after each line. In the last stanza he talks about Reza Shah and the positive deeds he did
for Iran, as follows:

*“he tried very hard to modernized the country with basically no means, because*
*at the time Iran was almost economically broke; his courage and bravery*
*suppressed all the rebels and united the country under one flag”*

and .... However, in the latter poem in its first five stanzas, he complains about his life
and condition in exile, and his loneliness in Isfahan. In one stanza he addresses his friends:
“O friends commemorate me, I am the nightingale, events have kept me away from my nest”.

As it is said in the preface, this poem was composed under pressure from his family and friends in order to buy him (Bahar) his freedom. Nevertheless, he never praised Reza Shah publicly, as was customary for poets to do, nor did he recite a poem on behalf of Reza Shah at a public gathering.

Bahar, a court laureate of Astanb-i Quds-i Razavi, has composed many panegyric poems about the Prophet, God, and other saints. These poems were composed when he was young and was living in Mashhad.

Bahar, the populist, constitutionalist, champion of liberty and social justice, did not use his pen and talent to praise a tyrant. As the great Egyptian neoclassic poet Barudi said: 109

“The most fatal disease is for the eyes to see a tyrant doing wrong, yet having his praise sung at public gathering”.

Bahar, the great poet of the period, did not sell his poetry to a high bidder as any craftsman does, a practice that was usually normal for his predecessor. He did not compose poetry as a mere eloquent form of rhyming metrical speech. In his poem “Sha’r va Nazm( poetry and verse)"110, he states:

Wisdom is a sea and its pearls are poetry.

The poet is the magician that pierces these pearls,

otherwise a series of words, artistically put in rhyme and meter.

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108 ibid, p. 645.
is just a verse not a poem.

Sometimes what is said in eloquent verse is nothing but nonsense.

There are poets that in their life,

did not compose a verse, while

there are composers that never wrote a poem.

Bahar did not follow complicated Persian prosody rules to compose verses, but he created poetry that has points and purpose, that could arouse attention and convey a message. He expresses his points, offers his advice and wisdom in the form of satire, metaphor, scolding and criticizing his countrymen, dictating what they should do; however, his tone is as a caring, concerned father who worries about the future of his children and his beloved country. In the third period of his life that is the focus of this paper, I found 74 poems out of 151 that had a political theme, the rest of them were either concerned with social issues such as: Behesht o Douzakh (Hell and Heaven), Shoja’t-i Adabi (literature Bravery), or were panegyric poems. Considering the fact that this is the period that Bahar was almost silent in order to avoid any confrontation with the government, nevertheless, the theme of almost 50% of his poetry is political.

Bahar’s awareness of the past history of Iran, and its position in the world, is clearly recognizable in his poetry, but he constantly reminds his countrymen that living in the illusion and glory of the past is wrong, they must recreate the past glory through awareness, education, knowledge and hard work, through nobility not dishonesty, through openness, not trickery, with dignity not shame.

Bahar’s poetry is warm, sincere, full of artistic craft. He uses the poetic language to fight the imperialistic policy of foreign governments, or the dictatorial behavior of Reza Shah, oppression of people, and exploitation that they receive from the elite. Through his poetry he expresses people’s agony, frustration, humiliation, and helplessness.

A few poets flourished during the historical era of constitutional revolution, but none of them composed such highly sophisticated poetry as he did or wrote as extensively as he did, or produced poetry on so many different themes as he did. Ali Akbar Dehkhoda—another nationalist, a responsible and devoted scholar, has a few poems that he composed at the time of constitutional revolution, but he never considered himself a poet. He spent his entire life writing “Loghatnameh” (a fifty volume dictionary/encyclopedia) in Persian language.

Another contemporary of Bahar was a young poet known as Mirzadeh Eshqi, who also composed poetry on social issues, injustice, liberty, and dictatorial government of Reza Shah. Eshqi had a sharp tongue; he criticized every one including the Shah. However, the life of this sensitive, enthusiastic poet was short, he was assassinated, as it was rumored by the direct order of Reza Shah.

Another contemporary of Bahar is Aboulqasem Lahoti, who also composed poetry in defense of the constitution, liberty and the law. His satirical poetry is interesting and appealing. Lahoti’s sharp tongue also caused him trouble and forced him to flee Iran for his life, and spend rest of his life in exile. However, none of Bahar’s contemporaries were as well known as he was, or received the fame and notoriety that he did while still alive.

Bahar, a classical poet, has many poems in his divan that are very personal. In these poems, he talks about his family members, friends, also his inner self and feelings of
pain and agony, including his frustration or hopes about future of Iran, and many other personal issues. In these poems he seems a modern romantic poet. In reality, his style is mostly in the mono rhyme, mono meter from of qasida, while his theme is modern; he talks about liberty, the glory of Iran, people’s problems, the hard life and agony of his countrymen. As Islami Nadoushan states: “While his poetry has the glory and firmness and freshness of the Samanids era, its theme is daily life, political issues; the combination of them is amazing”.

Although Bahar composed in the Khorasani style, his awareness of scientific progress, the democratic government of the west, his love for liberty and justice, his strong belief in the constitution, changed the theme of his poetry from repetition of the old subjects—love, separation from beloved, lamentation, elegy and eulogy—to the every day problems of modern life.

Bahar did not know a European language, his familiarity with their prose and poetry was through translation of Russian, French or English literary works into Persian. There are poems in his divan that are Persian versions of Arabic, Turkish, French, English, and Russian literary works that have social theme.

Bahar wrote a few poems in western style; an example of them is the poem titled “Kabutarha (Pigeons), which is a very touching poem( Bahar was fund of Pigeons). In general, he strongly followed the classical style, he argued his point on classical form in a response poem to Sadegh Sarmad (a contemporary poet), who asked Bahar to come up with a new style, so it would be a model for the younger generation. Bahar states:

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111 Islami Nadoushan, Mohammed. “Selection from the eyes of critics”. Iran Nameh (Su. 1987).
I have been following and imitating the previous style.

however, I composed poetry in many styles, old and new.

The newest form in your hand, was my idea, my poetry is witness to this claim.

The old style had its own faults, I open-mindedly took care of it.

Bahar is among the first intellectuals who talked about women's education, their rights and their important roles in society. He believed that as long as half of a population are kept secluded, any hope for progress and development is wishful thinking. He composed a poem about women named “Zan she’r Khodast( Woman is God’s poem)”.  

Woman is God’s poem and man is His prose.

though prose is great, it will be better accompanied by a poem.

Woman is as sweet as sugar, but the wise one should not take too much of it (not more than one: a reference to polygamy).

One woman, one man, one God: if any of these three become more, it’s an invitation for trouble.

He ends the poem, stating that as long as women are wrapped in the veil, problems and difficulties will continue in our country.

Besides being a great poet, Bahar was an alert and responsible researcher. He edited Tarikh-i Sistan (History of Sistan)- one of the oldest Iranian historical works. He wrote Tarikh-i Ahzab-i Siasi Iran(The history of political parties in Iran), a very valuable and informative reference book about modern parties after the constitutional revolution. However, even had he written no literary work, or composed any poetry, his three volume

113 Ibid, P. 459.
work, Sabk Shinasî(Stylistics), would have put him among the great scholars of modern Persian literature. In this work, he writes about different styles of Persian prose from the beginning to the present time. He also writes about the history of each era in which particular prose style was popular. This work is a great reference for scholars of Persian prose.

Bahar had plans to write the same type of work for poetry, but his serious sickness prevented him. The life of this last court laureate, "who never served any royal court"\textsuperscript{114}, ended on April 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 1951 after a long struggle with tuberculosis, at the age of 64. Although the Persian language has produced many more great poets after him, literary scholars generally believe that so far, no contemporary has been a match for him.

\textsuperscript{114} Loraine, Michael B. "Bahar in the context of Persian constitutional revolution". Iranian Studies. (Sp., 1972).
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