

Anti-Woman Issue and Its Manifestation in Persian Literature

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Abstract

The issue of woman, her personality and aspect in family and community is such an issue that is reflected in the literature and the nation's culture and finds an obvious aspect. So one of the ways to achieve a community's attitudes towards women and deal with her presence is to study literary works. An important point to be mentioned here is that writers and poets of ancient texts have expressed different and sometimes controversial opinions about women in various situations based on prevailing conditions and different results extracted from the narratives, of course, these opinions have sometimes been expressed by the author and sometimes through various characters having different roles. This article briefly tries to outline examples of anti-woman manifestations in Persian Literature.

Keywords: woman, anti-woman manifestation, Persian literature

1. Introduction

Depending on political, cultural and religious interactions, the subject of woman and her issue differs from one community to another one. So it is quite natural that firstly their approach to this issue and secondly their way of interaction with it is different. However, discussion of the origins of this subject leads us to the traditions and heritage of communities and makes the issue be shown older so that one can not simply ignore it. Although the issues of women have highly been paid attention in recent decades, its history and origin can not be confined to these years. But the fact is that it is rooted deep in history which is completely natural. For woman historically exists. If her matter has not been mentioned in this way over the years, it is not due to her absence from the world, but other additional and excessive trouble which has tightened the opportunities to propose the related matters.

Therefore, unlike this simple but radical notion that believes woman faces problems only in theocracy communities or suffers only in traditional and reactionary societies. The fact is that woman and her existence in all societies over the history has been questioned and disputed. As humanity has had problem with half of his existence of course there is no guarantee that these problems will be resolved in the future.

Aristotle considered woman as incomplete. According to him, when nature is unable to create man, it creates woman. Women and slaves are naturally sentenced to imprisonment, and they are not entitled to participate in public affairs (Durant, 1991: 148). They lacked freedom in this civilization and their determination was withdrawn. As they had no competence and right, they were sold in markets (Ezaz,.....17).

In Roman civilization established on the base of blessing, she was also deprived of her civil rights (Abdolhalim mahmoud, 2001:41). Even her husband had the right to issue her execution for some charges, even he could kill or trade his children, wives and all her belongings were considered her husband's and he manipulated in all her affairs as he liked. According to one of the sociologists, in this culture marriage was the treaty of being slave and servants; however, she was considered her father's as before (Mohammad al ramani, 2001:23).

Indian civilization which was founded on the base of moral system of "Dharma" has a close relationship with social class system. In this civilization, woman did not have the right to choose her husband let alone the right to think of divorce. A group of women who were "the servants of God" or "temple servants" were obviously at the service of priests. There were various marriages among the priests such as conquest marriage (aggression),

married on love, "purchased" marriage, marriage in childhood and polygamy. In this civilization, woman was always villainous. The man was her husband, father, or son.

In ancient Chinese books, woman was called painful water that washes the society and makes property and wealth is gone. Man also regarded woman misery, and kept her as he desired and he could get rid of him as he wanted and liked (Durant, p.19).

In recent times, there has been nonsense about woman and her status that all their meaning was saturated instincts and unbalanced desires, which annoyed the spirit of fairness and generosity. A conference was held in France so that the true nature of woman could be discovered and they tended to find if woman belongs to human species or other groups (Rosseau, 1958:247).

Church community also raised a question on this subject. Now that woman does not have a soul like the one man does, should she be placed among savage creatures or thinkers? As Wester Mark states:

"One of the greatest priests in the Macon assembly reiterated that woman neither belongs to human kind nor is associated with it" (Ibid, p.254).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau believed that woman is naturally weak and unable to develop her ideas widely (Ibid, p.244). According to him, studying the absolute truth is out of their hands and all their education should be science-focused, because invention and innovation are out of their reach (Rosseau, 1958:247). In another part he says: woman exists just for men that mean she is created to be loved by man and obeys him. Those who advocate the equality of men and women say nonsense (Homaie, 1982:285). Consequently he believed that all women's training must be only paying attention to man.

2. Anti-Woman Manifestations

Anti-woman or "misozhionary" means hatred or aversion of woman, often applied to women. In the history of human societies, anti-woman notion has been observed. In the first and extreme type, some men suffering this illness hate woman because of their gender (being female). The second type that is softer and more hidden is that men hate women who do not tolerate men's defined behavior including housework, silence and beating.

Anti-woman notion's history goes back to Aristotle and ancient Greece. From his time to present these kinds of ideas were common and because of the dominance of patriarchal society over the times, it has been turned into an ancient mental and intellectual pattern of men and women. Even many of men who have tried to promote human society have not judged women well.

In anti-woman literature, you often face two types of expression and translation about women. These two interpretations arise from two similarities and analogy between woman as a human creature and shrew like Satan. The nature of anti-woman idea is the fact that it considers woman and Satan the same. But sometimes expression of this matter is obvious and the narrator masters it yet sometimes it is unconscious and written and a poet and writer use these types of metaphors, similarities or codes unconsciously. For example, in the first case that includes clear anti-woman notion it is said that "women are like Satan". But in the second case where anti-woman notion is hidden, it is said that "Satan appears in the board of women". You may find examples of these two categories in Persian literature.

3. Examples of Anti-Woman Notion in Persian Literature

Ghazali in *Nasihatoimoluk* states "what distress, calamity and perish come to men all are due to women and no one can reach happiness and heart desire with them"(Ibid,p.285).

"Women are not decent and wise" and he cites a Hadith from the prophet Mohammad: "manage things with women but act unlike what they say so that it can be correct"(Shoar, 2006:231).

Khajeh Rashide aldin Fazllollah Hamadan who does not consider mentioning the genital parts justifiable advises his son Kane Jallaledin, Roman ruler, in a document " don not talk much with women because their affinity ruins dignity and reputation" and states Nezami-e-Ganjavi:

Even thousands in number

woman is unfaithful

she is friend but not finding anyone except you

if she can do

she wants not to see you anymore

this is devoted women's affairs

bad women's charm is high(Hosseini,1985:313)

In Rumi's poems, woman symbolizes divine love, spirit, soul, earth, and growth on the other hand she stands for body, substance, world and greed. His curses in Masnavi are sometimes so clear and hard that makes him an anti-woman man who despises them.

Consult with her but act against what she said (Masnavi, book2, verse 2270)

Among the poets and writers, there are few ones who have resembled world, time and sky to mother, they have generally been likened to a beautiful and shrew female. But you may notice that Nasser-Khosrow in an elegiac attributes all evil characteristics to heavens, time, and resembles it to a bad-tempered mother.

Your affairsoh rust-colored dome

Are nothing except cheating and cruelty

I saw no mother like you

We feel inferior with you, without you

You look like a bad-tempered woman

Who I am neither adaptable nor reluctant with (Minavani & Mohaghegh, 2006:74)

So we should say that in Nasser Khosrow poetical works woman's presence is invisible while deploring the world and time is so much. Because of an old resemblance of world and universe to woman, and accepting the philosophical idea that woman is body (substance) and earth but man is wisdom, father and sky, there is a subtle fight against women.

Anvari has also disapproved women in some of his poems and has written parody and satire about them. He is one of the poets who have attacked women and considered them the source of passion, plot and scheme. He has advised man to avoid marriage.

Woman a cloud, man a moon

Moon seems black because of cloud

The worst man in the world must avoid the best woman

Whoever loves woman

Deserves execution (Razavi, 1993:630).

The writer of Qabusnameh seems to praise the ignorant custom of burying girls and says "it is better there is no girl, but if there is, she should be given to a man or buried"(Yousefi, 2005:116).

Mir Hossein Heravi, a 7th century writer states: "there is no sedition worse than a man's talking to a woman, and no wise guy can compete their snare and deception"(Sattari, 2001:110).

Sanaei, a philosopher whose speech bears logic refers to some verses and Ahadith whose patriarchal interpretation is male supremacy over women regards men better and follows the male chauvinism dominated in the time.

Never think of women

So that masters listen to you well

We should not waste our happiness due to female melancholy, charm and beauty (Razavi, p.438)

He believes that most women are talkative and liars and have not benefited love. They are cunning, cagey and wicked.

A lion attacks

A fox and woman are cunning (Ibid, p.576)

Saedi, a Persian poet, considers consultation with women ruined and put them against men. He applies all admired morals like courage, gallantry, generosity and wisdom to men, his other side of equation, women, do not benefit these characteristics. The word woman is put against man and his literature becomes a masculine one.

"oh men try.....or wear feminine clothes"(Yousefi, p.3)

"but any way, consultation with women is vain and generosity with corrupters is sin"(Ibid, p.180) .

Saedi's language is a masculine one. In this language woman is always worse than man.

"that is the reason he called every coward man a woman".

Hey men, you being so strong

I am afraid you look more villainous than women

These are few examples of anti-woman manifestations in Persian literature.

4. Conclusion

According to the dominance of patriarchal thinking governing the mind and soul of people (men and women) over the years, various philosophical and religious readings of Persian literature speakers have also been narrated through masculine and male chauvinism. This country's speakers (Iran's) have had this attitude sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously and have generally expressed themselves from this point of view. From the one-dimensional male chauvinism, woman has been created for men and she does not have any independent identity.

Her identity is integrated with her cunning and cheat. According to them, in creation, woman is created as passive, sensitive, bold and beaten but on the other hand man is created active, wise, violent and conqueror. For ages, male writers and poets have mainly been regarded positive, good, active and female ones evil, negative and inactive. Although these traditions and beliefs about women is rooted in the past centuries as some women have also welcomed and caused it continue, nowadays social and cultural situations have new attitudes towards woman and any rejection of woman's value and her aspect in life is inevitably the same old anti-woman subject.

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