

# A Review of Shahnameh from the Perspective of Daqiqi Tusi Murder in Iran

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## Abstract

In Shahnameh, we cannot see any express statement about Daqiqi Tusi murder. Ferdowsi's narrative about the murder of Daqiqi is such vague and unclear that has attracted researchers' attention. Based on Ferdowsi's opinion, initially, it seems the incentive of Daqiqi murder to be a dramatic process than being a predetermined approach. In another hand, Shahnameh points to the Daqiqi's bad tempered character. In this regard, Daqiqi murder that is done by his bondservant might have got an interpersonal incentive. The main purpose of the paper is to study the incentive of Daqiqi Tusi murder in Shahnameh context while comparing it with other evidence like Daqiqi's opposition to a political governing system and appearance of this opposition in his poems. The method used in the study is a descriptive-analytical approach. We conclude that closed tips about the incentive of Daqiqi Tusi murder pointed out in Shahnameh might be misleading indications; thus, further research in this area is highly needed.

**Keywords:** Shahnameh, murder of Daqiqi Tusi, Ferdowsi, Iran

## 1. Introduction

After Ferdowsi described the matter of Daqiqi's murder through some verses, however, there is no further considerable comment in this regard by other biographers. For all that, some resources have alluded to a romantic relation as a motivation for murder, yet this thesis is rejected definitively by some researchers such as Yan Ripka (Ripken, 2006). In analyzing the murder of Daqiqi, the same verses of Ferdowsi are examined and this matter is neglected for many reasons not least because of the immediate rise of Ferdowsi. In fact, it is not clear why the majority of researchers have left behind such important issue. It is quite naïve to consider that murder of Daqiqi was due to its bad-tempered disposition and to be of this opinion that his slave intended to kill him all of a sudden due to vexing of his lord toward him. However, most of the researchers have addressed more trivial subjects, such as the dream Ferdowsi had about writing thousands of verses of Daqiqi, and they assessed it, and some others even deemed the murder of Daqiqi as something pleasing because this event results in Ferdowsi undertook the task of composing Shahnameh and without addressing the reason for Daqiqi's murder paid attention to rising of Ferdowsi as the result of this murder. Similarly, these researchers were of the opinion that the Daqiqi's Shahnameh would fail to reach the splendid position of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. For example, Jalal Khalil opined that: if entire Shahnameh was composed by Daqiqi, we had an epic poet that was very poor in terms of literary and epic value, however far heavier in terms of volume (Khaleghi, 2007). Qolamhossein Yusefi is also of the same opinion. Relying on a critique of Ferdowsi that Daqiqi is introduced as a eulogist poet, believes that Daqiqi failed in epic work and it is not certain if he was not murdered, to which extent was the value of Shahnameh he would compose (Yusefi, 2007).

Century Daqiqi led his life, was prone to decent and indecent events. Once in a while, a prince, novel or not novel rose from some angle, making an inroad to seize independence or whether he may be the prey of sword of someone or as a part of the center of power commanded the attention of history for a while to himself (Nadim, 1999). Daqiqi, in such circumstances, undertook the mission of composing Shahnameh. He was well-suited in

every aspect. An eloquent and potent poet that according to Ouffi, his word is quite accurate (Daqiq means accurate) (Ouffi, 2010) and he is a researcher who studied the epic works before himself and has a valuable book like Abu-Mansur Shahnameh at hand and is prone to use it in composing Shahnameh. From another side, he knows well the origins of Zoroastrian faith. This fact that his more than thousands of verses is cited in Shahnameh, is not least because of his good familiarity with Zoroastrian faith so that convinced Ferdowsi to live behind the description of Gashtasp kingdom (Khaleghi, 2007).

For all that, Daqiqi's murder has changed the circumstances. His death was deemed as a failure a mission undertaken by him. Negligence to the reason of this murder whose cues are distinct within his works is a matter of astonishment. In this paper, one attempted to challenge this notion that murder motivation of Daqiqi was sudden and due to merely his ill-tempered disposition toward his slave through relying on some parts of his works. It is clear that challenging the mentioned assumption calls for raising reasons and other factors which prove that his murder can be emanating from some other hidden conditions.

## 2. Main Body and Examples

Definitely, there is no information about Daqiqi's birth date or the time in which he has been murdered. Zabihollah Safa by way of guess alluded to this subject and has noted that bearing in mind the poet composed by Daqiqi through which Noah ibn Mansur is praised, he may be 35 years old, however, he made clear that his murder definitely occurs within 977 through 979 (Safa, 2009). Ferdowsi in Shahnameh without uttering any name of Daqiqi, within short verses, describes beginning and end of a poet who was before him responsible for composing Shahnameh as follows:

A young man came with eloquence  
Was skilled in good speaking and great muse;

He said I will compose this book into poetry  
Thereby heart of people became happy;

During his youth he was ill-tempered  
He was fighting with bad all the way;

All of a sudden death invaded him  
Put a dark helmet on his head;

He endowed the sweet life for the ill temperament  
He hadn't during life even a happy day;

The lot turned from him immediately away  
He was murdered by his slave right away; (Ferdowsi, 2009)

Ferdowsi's narration from the murder is obscure within these verses, and this obscurity is alluded by some researchers too (Kazazi, 1989). However, by the opinion of the majority of experts, the alluded one within these verses is the same Daqiqi Tusi who Ferdowsi mentioned it at the onset of describing Gashtasp's kingdom. Relying on notification of Ferdowsi and by taking the remark of Ferdowsi as granted, Daqiqi's murder motivation is deemed rather sudden and because there is less explicitness within verses it can be doubted. The suddenness of the Daqiqi's murder as much can be obscure as tracking the murder in romantic anecdote, offered by some resources as the origin of his murder (Ripken, 2006). The matter of this paper is on uncertainty on the suddenness of the murder and this fact can be realized through examining Daqiqi's works and paying attention to the era in which he led his life. In this paper, from one side, one attempt to study the condition and era of Daqiqi and similarly his sharp and political language and the mission tasked by him, to show that his murder was expected, similarly this paper is intended to shed light on other aspects of this murder by relying on some poems and works of Daqiqi. Now we depict the era in which Daqiq led his life in brief.

Generally, when it comes to the era of Daqiqi's life, one notes that this was a time of the reign of Samanid dynasty. Dr. Zarrinkub writes in this respect that Samanid were related to Saman-Khudat. This Saman-Khudat was considered to be peasant class which originated from Bahram Chubin of Mehran dynasty and from ancient famous noble dynasty (Zarinkub, 1989). Daqiqi was known to be fond of Iran. Iranians in this era managed to develop a movement of fondness to Iran to great extent and this movement was called "Shu'ubiyya" (meaning "peoples"). Activities of poets as the cultural part of this movement were highly considerable that Homaei explained it in its work Shu'ubiyya. In Daqiqi poetry, high frequencies of words which show the glory of Iran acknowledge this claim. Daqiqi is deliberate in using terms such as Drafsh-e Kaviani (Standard of kings), a race of kings, etc. which demonstrates the fondness to Iran. He though enjoyed the Samanid openness reign, propagates his opinion, however certainly, his bluntness in stating his viewpoints was not latent by agents of Caliph dispersed throughout of the Land (and Iran too). These agents reported the diverse programs of Samanids bent on the Iranian splendid to Baghdad Caliph and it was quite natural that ruthless forces of Caliph would not be neglectful in this respect. All Abbasid Caliphs were in consensus that doctrines of fondness to Iran should be suppressed in every possible way. Essentially Abbasid Caliph wasn't bent on recognizing the Samanid reign and if he wrote reign charter for this dynasty, from another side this did everything to make division among them, and for doing this made a great effort that the matter of making division between Amr and Esmael Samanid was one of those efforts (Nadim, 1999), again, their unmatched support for Ghaznavid Turks for overturning Samanid (who were a noble and Iranian race) is another example of this claim. This is why Mahmud Ghaznavi deemed himself and his kingdom indebted to Abbasid dynasty and made great efforts for currying their favor (Edarechi Gilani, 1998). Alinaqi Monzavi writes in this regard: Baghdad Caliphs for suppressing newly independent Iranians tricked for using Turks from the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century and intended to drag them into Iran to enjoy their force as a whip against Iranian reign (Monzavi, 2008).

### 3. Discussion

Daqiqi showed his fondness to Iran in his other works too (except Gashtasnameh), and this paper first examines them. One of these works is an unmatched poem that Beihaqi mentioned it in his history, for this poem according to Homaei; one cannot find a counterpart (Homaei, 1996). Daqiqi in this poem implicitly and by the climax of art asks Iranian to pay the cost for expelling Caliphs out of Iran. However, at first look, it appears that Daqiqi is composed a poem about how to seize the power and one can deem this delicacy as his artistic skill because he managed to describe his viewpoint so obscurely in this poem. There is no doubt that Daqiqi is highly supported by Samanid reign in composing this poem. If one pay attention more closely in this poem, it is revealed that in the same poem, Daqiqi notes that if Iranians want to see their Land once again, they should have a great willpower:

Everyone who wants to see his Land again

One should have a great resolution;

For Daqiqi, the notion of protecting the land against caliphs tyranny calls for attributes such as rationality, generosity, and bravery, otherwise, the land never comes to safety from foreigners' threats. He made use of an eloquent meaning for conveying this notion (in the distortion of an interrogation of effect):

It requires rationality, generosity, and bravery

Does heaven endow the land at no cost?

This poem is replete of enthusiasm and zeal and comes up with a specific solution for emancipating Iranian from the sovereignty of Arabs: preparedness that means carrying a sword which necessarily calls for financial support of Iranian rich people to result in the expulsion of caliphs' threats who were daydreaming to put Ghaznavid Turks on the throne.

The throne is a prey no one can seize it

Neither by the flying eagle nor by the strong lion;

Only two things can seize it

One is Indian (sharp) sword, another is precious gold;

Baghdad Caliphs as a part of reigning Arabs were aware of the effectiveness of poetry more than everyone on achieving goals and objectives. Being Arab, even if they fail to get familiar with other features of foreigner

culture, they were conscious of poetry and its effectiveness and went through its influence on people. This poem cannot be least an example of Iranian enthusiasm. One can recognize that Daqiqi as a candid for composing Shahnameh should bear some attributes acknowledged by Samanid reign. It is not unlikely that by setting the mission of composing Shahnameh to Daqiqi, a plan for murder is devised by agents of Abbasid Caliphs.

Interestingly, this murder was done as soon as he set about composing Shahnameh. The defeat of Khosravi (royal) book mentioned by Ferdowsi can be considered as the ultimate objective of Abbasid caliphs to devise such murder. Proposal of composing such a book to Daqiqi is taken place from a noble Iranian named Noah ibn Mansour (Moein, 2008). Caliphs figured out that this dynasty is highly active in realizing Iranian splendid in an effective manner that in the field of culture the mission is tasked to Daqiqi. It was in this manner that they launched a thorough effort for overturning Samanid reign and putting Ghaznavid dynasty on the throne.

Here mentioning another fact is necessary. One can consider that cultural programs of Samanid were monitored closely by Abbasid caliphs and as a consequence, it is not unlikely for them to uncover the mission Noah ibn Mansur set Daqiqi to accomplish. Since then the notion of murdering Daqiqi is more distinct. Thus its unplanned occurrence is quite questioned. Once Ferdowsi uses the term “immediately” cannot necessary imply the suddenness of Daqiqi’s murder, rather suddenness of this murder can be interpreted so that Daqiqi is murdered in a sudden attack that it was not predictable and this is not a murder without planning.

One should notice that Daqiqi Tusi’s murder took place merely two years after Noah ibn Mansur came on the throne. The onset of the kingdom of Noah ibn Mansur was simultaneous with commanding the mission of composing Shahnameh to Daqiqi. During these two years, Daqiqi managed to compose the topic related to kingdom of Gashtasp in thousand verses. Interestingly this in under conditions that we deem incorrect the belief of some like Ouffi who believes that he composed 20 thousand verses about Gashtasp (Ouffi, 2010). This short interval (from beginning of Shahnameh till his murder) is highly meaningful and challenges the claim of an immediate feature of his murder. As Zabihollah Safaa alludes in the biography of Daqiqi that he started to compose Shahnameh at his youth and he was murdered at his very youth can be interpreted that there was some association between composing of Shahnameh and his murder. This claim is more prominent when we understand the slave murdered Daqiqi was himself from Turk origin (Homaei, 1996). Then it is likely also he is linked to this murder. In fact, the Turk origin of Daqiqi’s slave set the stage for attempting to this murder. Murdering the lord by the slave is an intrusion of Abbasid agent in some part of Daqiqi’s assets which from a long time ago was one of the methods of threatening. It seems that the matter of killing noble Iranians by their Turk slaves was considered as a strategy because other Turk slaves took their Iranian lords’ lives. The point is that satisfaction of Abbasid caliph for such murders such as that of Daqiqi cannot be concealed. Now we refer to Daqiqi’s Gashtasp book to find some hints showing why his murder was planned.

Generally, researchers discussed over 1000 verses or Gashtasp book by Daqiqi, compare it with Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh and considering the literary value of Shahnameh, they conclude that the value of Ghashtasp book of Daqiqi in comparison with Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh is an as little drop in an ocean. However, the case is the same. Shahnameh of Ferdowsi soars the heaven of eloquence when it comes to epic features. Fruzanfar compares these two works: verses of Daqiqi’s Gashtasp book, when compared with Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh is not of high value (Fruzanfar, 2004). Ripka confirms the same view: if we see that the composer of Shahnameh refrains from praising art of Daqiqi, it is not without reason: the style of this piece (Gashtasp book) is imperfect, rigid and monotonous and doesn’t reach the delicacy and imagination of Shahnameh (Ripken, 2006). The majority of researchers are of this opinion that remark of Daqiqi in Gashtasnameh carries a kind of serenading that can be perceived in the framework of metaphors. This paper aims to consider the same point. Anyone among researchers didn’t attempt by contemplation in verses of Gashtasp book to detect the points that as the Daqiqi’s view didn’t cease to be uttered by him, so that as this paper argues, made his murder inevitable.

Daqiqi at the very beginning of Gashtasnameh brings up in a delicate and implicit manner the necessity of unity for expelling enemy (Arabs and Abbasid caliph). The initial part of Gashtasp book is among most beautiful parts of his thousand verses: Lahrab, gives the throne to his son Gashtasp and he put the kingdom crown on his head. Once putting the kingdom crown on his head, Gashtasp point out that god endowed him the throne for expelling wolfs out of flock of ewes:

Since he granted us the great crown

To expel the wolves out of flock of ewes;

Then he calls Iranians as free people which the world should not be tight for them and reminds that:

If we seize the tradition of kings

Then we can well overwhelm evils (Daqiqi, 2007).

In the following, the introduction that Daqiqi presented on putting Gashtasp on the throne is a distinct hint that astonishes any curious mind. Daqiqi compares Gashtasp's success with Freidun's act of organizing kingdom and dubs the Gashtasp as another Freidun:

Once the world became organized for the new king

Another Freidun has risen; (Daqiqi, 2007).

The point is that Freidun is a king that managed to overturn the thousand year reign of Zahak with Arab origin and endowed Iran land the previous splendid and prosperity once again. Ferdowsi in Shahnameh considered Zahak with origin backed to Mordas from the desert of riders with spears (i.e. Arabia):

There was a man at that time

From desert of riders with spears;

There was a son from this good-hearted man

Who the son had no lot of kindness

The ambitious boy was named Zahak

He was brave, autonomous and bold; (Ferdowsi, 1999).

By this metaphor, Daqiqi intends to notify Iranians implicitly to the threat of Arabs and their reign. It is clear that Daqiqi utters these verses as a part of his viewpoint and as much is sufficient to his Turk slave to be deceived and undertake the mission of his murder. One can think that the chance was with Daqiqi that in the shelter of Samanid reign found the allowance of as Aboghasem Karkani noted to revive the Magus (implies Iranians) language and organize Gashtasnameh, however, this safety gradually changed and morphed and led to his murder. In fact, when Daqiqi was composing Shahnameh, Samanid reign was at the brink of an outbreak of disorder i.e. an extensive effort for the decline of Iranian thinking. This is over these years that Ghaznavid slaves grown in Samanid palaces were promoting. In the same era, the matter of killing one's lord was placed in agenda of Ghaznavid slaves. Ahmad ibn Esmael, Mardavej, Masoud ibn Mohammad, all being among noble Iranians have been killed by their Turk slaves (Safaa, 2009). Daqiqi's murder also was among same murders. This is then becoming more important and assumes a realistic form that is addressed by Safaa. He considers the late years of Samanid power as the era of the rebellion of Ghaznavid Turks on their lords which seem stems from an integrated basis: "slaves of Samanid and Buyid dynasty rose in rebellion at the end of the era of the dynasties" (Safaa, 2009). They made Mansour ibn Noah blind and made some activities that lead to dismissal of Sultan o-Doleh ibn Bahao-Doleh. Unfortunately, Safaa considered the cause of all murders the ill-tempered disposition of their lords. Also, when he describes the life of Daqiqi, offers the remark of Ferdowsi as the cause of Daqiqi's murder and overlooks the matter, while the decline of Iranian nobles, in one sense, is deemed as the rise of Ghaznavid Turks.

Another blame directed against Daqiqi as one of his murder motivations is his explicit antagonism against Turks which is represented openly in the description of Gashtasp kingdom. The story starts from the point that Arjasp with Turk origin refrains to follow Gashtasp and set about disobedience. In Daqiqi's poem, this disobedience is a start point of a thorough conflict in which one can track some kind of race hegemony. Safaa writes: severity of Iranian fight against Turks are such that everywhere Turks are mentioned and they are described as if one is describing demons, demon-worshippers, and wizards. Especially in Daqiqi's Gashtasnameh and Ferdowsi's Shahnameh (Safaa, 2009). This is the case. Daqiqi from the very beginning, when describing the deploying of Arjasp's army name Turk heroes as Wolfish, Demon-mind, Dirty Khashash etc.

There was a Turk, named Wolfish

He had experienced many years and old enough;

Another Turk was named Demon-mind

The Lord of Turks has sent him;

He came well-ornamented from his place

He sent Dirty Khashash before himself; (Ferdowsi, 2008).

This kind of narration can be seen everywhere in Ghashtasnameh. To the extent that not yet finished his task, he is killed. At the end of Daqiqi narration, Turanian Arjasp is set to prepare an army for another attack that Ferdowsi again resumes the poem and it appears that Daqiqi is murdered within an unpredictable attack and this is why Ferdowsi uses the term “immediately”. By this interpretation, it is unreasonable to consider that only Daqiqi’s fiery temperament brought his slave to the conclusion to prompt him to kill his lord. However, it is imaginable that Daqiqi as an Iranian who saw increasing power of Turks would become ill-tempered but cannot be argued as a sufficient and necessary reason for Daqiqi’s murder.

#### 4. Conclusion

Shahnameh in limited verses has pointed to Daqiqi Tusi murder. These verses are not clear enough and do not have the necessary enlightenment. However, description of Daqiqi murder in Shahnameh involves two points. First, Ferdowsi has pointed to the dramatic murder of Daqiqi. In another hand, Daqiqi is characterized as a bad-tempered person. The comparison of the verses with other historical documents, governing political status, Daqiqi’s ideas and appearance of them in his poems indicates that the murder of Daqiqi might be different from the description stated in Shahnameh. Thus, further research in this field is necessary.

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