

Social and Cultural Manifestations of "Mehregan" and "Sedeh" Celebrations in Kerman Folk Art and Culture

Abstract

The element that creates a dissimilar spirit of a nation or folk is their common history and memories in a common territory. Thus, the folklore or popular culture of that people, not only the usual and simple rituals and literature, but also expresses the most fundamental principles of insight, way of thinking and how they understand the universe. In fact, folklore describes the social life of that nation. In the territory of Iran, there is a rich heritage of folklore and popular culture that have accumulated and evolved as sedimentary rocks since ancient times. It is imperative for us to identify the roots of popular cultures and the connecting elements of folklore in every corner of this vast land with the fundamental elements of Iranian civilization. The most important document of the ancient Iranian civilization is Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme. Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme provides us with the best cognitive and comparative tools. Our aim in this study is to observe the dimensions of social and cultural effects of "Mehregan" and "Sedeh" celebrations in Ferdowsi Shāhnāme, as a report of the ancient civilization of Iran, and the effect of these dimensions on the popular culture of the people of the province of Kerman. The method used in this research is comparative accomplished via library studies. The results of this study, considering the common manifestations of Shāhnāme and folklore of the people of Kerman while studying the celebrations of "Mehregan" and "Sedeh" and the customs of the people of Kerman, indicate that Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme, over time, has introduced valuable cultures and rituals of their ancestors and has also provided a common language and understanding between them and other compatriots and even neighboring nations by influencing popular culture.

Research objectives:

1. To study the effects of Ferdowsi's Shāhnāme on the culture and popular literature of the people of Kerman province.
2. To recognize the similarities between the cultural and social elements of Shāhnāme and the popular culture and customs of the people of Kerman province.

Research questions:

1. Have the different manifestations of Shāhnāme been reflected in the popular culture and literature of the people of Kerman province?
2. Is there a similarity between the popular culture and customs of the people of Kerman and the culture and customs in the Shāhnāme?

Introduction

What is called "popular culture" in Iran today is a vast and ancient tree that has many fruits and branches that are several thousand years old. But the weakness of this tree is the lack of a kind and compassionate gardener who, over the years, recognizes its fruits, which are the same as myths, stories and songs. So every caravan below it loaded, added or looted something from it. At times the magic spells of these caravans remain on the branches of this tree and the demons poison its fruits with superstitious poison. However, the Persian folk tree took root from the beginning of its life until the 21st century; the century of philosophical conflicts. The present century is a century of social and identity crises and the neglect of the rich and millennial culture of Iran dries up the roots and cultural and literary traditions and leaves us empty-handed in the storm of the invasion of foreign cultures. Returning to the roots of Iranian culture seems increasingly vital now and at this time. Ferdowsi's Shahnameh is the source of many customs and cultural themes of Iranians, especially popular culture and Iranian folk tales, which will be a guide in reviving the cultural identity of Iranians. It is not long before fundamental efforts have been made in Iran to collect popular culture. Among the Iranians, the first person to compile folklore using the Western method was Mirza Habib Esfahani, called by Dastan. During the Constitutional Revolution, one of those who was able to establish relations with the people in his works was Seyyed Ashraf al-Din Hosseini known as Nasim Shomal, who in his newspaper paid much attention to colloquial language and used common idioms and expressions in simple poems. Also, Allameh Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, considering the popular and colloquial language, tried to write "Chand va Parand" in Surasrafil newspaper and searched for proverbs, allegories and wise words in all literary books (Bayhaqi, 2010: 69). In addition, Abdullah Mostofi in his book "Biography of My Life" or "Social and Administrative History of the Qajar Period" which is a good

example of a social history, many customs, thoughts and ideas, jobs, food, clothing and housing of the Qajar people (Bayhaqi, 1389: 70). The movement of folklore research in Iran began after the publication of the book *Nirangestan* by Sadeqh Hedayat (1312) (Hedayat, 1342: 227). Hedayat has not only brought the beliefs, customs and folk songs in "*Nirangestan*" and "*Osaneh*", but in all his stories he has paid special attention to Iranian customs and the way of thinking and speaking and life of ordinary people in Iran (Hedayat, 1342: 228). Moreover, Hedayat spoke for the first time about the scientific method of folklore research and established this knowledge in Iran. Despite Hedayat's activities in the field of Iranian folklore, he believed that the method of compiling it was still problematic; "So far, the research that has been done on Iranian folklore is very limited and incomplete; Because in no way did it rely on the exact scientific method. It can only be used as a preliminary plan for serious and scientific work" (Hedayat, 1342: 239). Other people and personalities also tried in this way, which are mentioned below; Kohi Kermani collected and published seven hundred songs and fourteen legends. Sobhi Mohtadi also worked in the field of collecting folk tales and, through radio programs, introduced people to popular culture and encouraged them to collect it. Later, Anjou Shirazi continued his path (Bayhaqi, 1389: 73). For many years, he has been inviting people to collect folk tales and songs and local customs through radio, and the result of these efforts has been published in the form of four books from the "*Treasure of People's Culture*" (Ruholamini, 2005: 651). Amir Gholi Amini is another person who has made significant efforts in the field of collecting words and slang. Jalal Al-Ahmad has also worked hard to collect folklore and research in villages and cities of Iran and publish several monographs. Simultaneously with him, Gholam Hossein Saedi, Sirus Tahabaz, Javad Safinejad and several others presented valuable monographs and researches on understanding the life and thought of people all over Iran. Mohammad Jafar Mahjoub's efforts regarding popular culture, especially popular literature, are of great value. Ahmad Shamloo also followed the work of the past in collecting and explaining words, terms, stories, proverbs, etc., by publishing the book "*Alley*". Katirai, Shakurzadeh, Homayouni, Faqiri and Blokbash explained and clarified some aspects of the life, customs and thought of the Iranian people. In addition to literary figures, several centers are concentrated in the field of popular culture. One of them is the Institute of Social Studies and Research, University of Tehran, which has conducted regular scientific research in the field of tribal and rural studies in Iran for the last twenty years, and the results of this research have been published as a series of useful scientific journals. Other institutions include the Anthropological Center of Iran and the Radio and Television Organization. Also, among the magazines and publications that have been published only in connection with anthropology and popular culture, two publications can be named; The first is the "*Anthropology*" magazine, which was published by Ali Hannibal and by the General Directorate of Fine Arts. Another journal of "*Anthropology and Popular Culture of Iran*" published by the Anthropology Center of Iran.

Conclusion

For centuries, Ferdowsi's profound worldview and high wisdom have made the eternal work of *Shahnameh* the answer to the "hopes" and "pains" of the conscious and unconscious integrity and the herald of the dignity and individual and collective lineage of Iranians in their great cultural-historical field. "Order and innovation are the most necessary subject and matter, the most appropriate way of expression and enjoyment of the gift and luck of the public and properties, during a millennium, are the three unique points of this world masterpiece" (Mortazavi, 2012: 16). *Shahnameh* book all over the world Islam has been the main example and perfect example of epic poems. In Iran, the most powerful factor that has

always honored the Shahnameh is the national pride of Iranians towards this book, which is considered to represent their ethnic glory. The people of Kerman, as one of the oldest heirs of the Iranian tribes, have sincerely passed this precious work as a guide to cultural, moral and social life for many centuries. The harmony of the life of this people with the simple, unpolluted, epic and dynastic way of life of the heroes of Shahnameh, on the one hand, is the instructions and regulations of their real life in feasts and battles, in leisure and work, in culture and customs, etc. On the other hand, it has been the channel and communication platform of this people with other Iranian people. In other words, Ferdowsi's Shahnameh has acquainted the people of Kerman with the history, culture and valuable rituals of their ancestors, and on the other hand, has provided a common language and understanding between them and other compatriots and even neighboring nations. While there is less work in the history of a single such practice. Although today, due to transformational socio-economic events and the variety of new tools and technologies, the functions of the Shahnameh have almost diminished, but no effect has as much power as the Shahnameh to identify current and future generations. The reason for the success and appeal of Shahnameh among Iranians, especially the people of Kerman, is that Shahnameh speaks of our resources. Shahnameh is the myth and history of Iran and carries the message of freedom, benevolence, patriotism, resistance and courage for the people. The study of "Mehregan" and "Sedeh" celebrations in Shahnameh and its social and cultural manifestations in the folklore culture of Kerman people, shows that there is a deep connection between Kermanian folk culture and Shahnameh stories and this connection has been preserved for many centuries. Since the city of Kerman is one of the few cities that still practices these festivals and is brilliant and distinctive in celebrating traditional Iranian folk rituals.

References

Books:

Azargashsab, Ardeshir (1979), Zoroastrian religious ceremonies and customs, Tehran: Forouhar Publications.

Asadi Tusi, Ali Ibn Ahmad (2015), Garshasbnameh, by Mahmoud Omidasalar, Tehran: Sokhan Publications.

Izadi, Zahra (2015), Kerman Public Culture, Tehran: Kerman Cultural Services Publications.

Beyhaghi, Hossein Ali (2010), Research and study of popular culture in Iran, Mashhad: Astan Quds Razavi Museums Office.

Zolfaghari, Hassan (1398), Iranian Language and Popular Literature, Tehran: Samat Publications.

Razi, Hashem (1992), Calendar and Celebrations of Ancient Iran, Tehran: Behjat.

Roh Al-Amini, Mahmoud (2005), Field of Cultural Studies, Eighth Edition; Tehran: Attar.

Safa, Zabihollah (2002), Epic House in Iran, Ninth Edition, Tehran, Amir Kabir Publications.

Ferdowsi, Abolghasem (2005), Shahnameh (based on a nine-volume edition published in Moscow), Editor: Yevgeny Eduardovich Bertels, Third Edition, Tehran: Phoenix.

Ferdowsi, Abolghasem (2007), Shahnameh, by Jalal Khaleghi Motlagh, eight volumes (Volume 6 in collaboration with Mahmoud Omidasalar and Volume 7 in collaboration with Abolfazl Khatibi), Tehran: The Great Islamic Encyclopedia.

Ferdowsi, Abolghasem (2014), *Shahnameh*, edited by Jalal Khaleqa Motlagh, Tehran: Sokhan.

Farhoushi, Bahram (1985), *Pahlavi Culture*, Tehran: Iranian Culture Foundation.

Larimer, D.L. (2016), *Larimer Culture; Popular culture of the people of Kerman*, translated by Fereydoun Vahman, Kerman: Kerman Studies Center.

Mahjoub, Mohammad Jafar (2003), *Iranian Folk Literature* by Hassan Zolfaghari, Tehran: Cheshmeh.

Mahjoub, Mohammad Jafar (2003), *Popular Culture, Iranian Folk Literature, Vol. 1*, by Hassan Zolfaghari, Tehran: Cheshmeh.

Mortazavi, Manouchehri (2012), *Ferdowsi and Shahnameh*, fourth edition, Tehran, Toos Publications.

Hedayat, Sadegh (1342), *Nirangistan*, third edition, Tehran: Arian Kodeh.

Hemmat, Mahmoud (2010), *History of Kerman*, Tehran: Goli.

articles:

Ajakeh, Ali Akbar, Shamisa, Sirus and Modarreszadeh, Abdolreza (1398), *Islamic Art Studies*, Fifteenth Year, No. 34, Summer 1398: pp. 1-28

Afshari, Ali (2005), "Mehregan Celebration", *Hafez*, No. 19, October 2005, p.23.

Tarbiat, Mohammad Ali (1310), "Century Celebration", *Armaghan*, Volume 12, Number 11, February 1961, pp. 745-751.

Hariri, Ali Asghar (1347), "Research on the name and time of the celebration of the century", *Vahid Magazine*, No. 52, April 1347, pp. 355-373.

Khatibi, Abolfazl (1397), "Is the narration of the celebration of the century in the supplementary *Shahnameh*?", *Letter of the Academy (Iranian Studies)*, Volume 16, Number 3, Spring 1397, pp. 131-152.

Dabirsiyaghi, Mohammad (1347), "Mehregan Celebration", *Cultural Association of Ancient Iran*, Volume 6, Number 1, May 1347, pp. 5-29.

Ruholamini, Mahmoud (1374), "Celebration of the century and" burning of the century "in Kerman, *Chista*, No. 124 and 125, January and February 1995, pp. 302-312.

Safa, Zabihullah (1326), "Century Celebration", *Bahman Army*, No. 11, Bahman 1326, pp. 7-16.

Karimi, Shahrzad (2016), "Scientific Critique of the Pattern of the Century Celebration in Shah Tahmasebi *Shahnameh*", *Quarterly Journal of Narration of History*, No. 1, Summer 2016, pp. 118-133.

Grossi, Abdullah (1990), "Rituals of birth and growth in the south of Kerman", *Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities*, Volume 1, Number 1, Spring 1990, pp. 69-103.

Motakaf, Farideh (2005), "Culture: Centennial Celebration in Ancient Iran", *Padang*, No. 16, p. 8.

Minavi, Mojtaba (1306), "Iranian Celebrations (Mehregan)", *Taqdam*, No. 3, November 1306, pp. 157-200.