

Religious rebellion in Ibn Bassam's poetry: an analytical study of the behavioral and moral dimensions

التمرد الديني في شعر ابن بسام: دراسة تحليلية للأبعاد السلوكية والأخلاقية

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ABSTRACT

الخلاصة

This study addresses religious rebellion in the poetry of the Arab poet Ibn Bassam, through analyzing a number of poetic verses that show his rejection of the Islamic and moral values prevailing in his society. The study focuses on exploring the contradictions shown in Ibn Bassam's poems, especially with regard to the month of Ramadan, night prayers, and the Night of Power, as well as his rebellion against religious, political, and social values. The study sheds light on how the poet exploits words and symbols to convey a state of explicit rebellion against religious norms, and provides an explanation for his relationship with the psychological conflict that he reflects in his poetry. The study also addresses the impact of this rebellious tendency on our understanding of the cultural and religious reality in the Abbasid era, and its connection to the psychological and social crises that the poet experienced.

تناولت هذه الدراسة التمرد الديني في شعر الشاعر العربي ابن بسام، من خلال تحليل عدد من الأبيات الشعرية التي تظهر رفضه للقيم الإسلامية والأخلاقية السائدة في مجتمعه. تركز الدراسة على استكشاف التناقضات التي أظهرتها قصائد ابن بسام، خاصة فيما يتعلق بشهر رمضان، وصلاة الليل، وليلة القدر، فضلاً عن تمرد على القيم الدينية والسياسية والاجتماعية. تسلط الدراسة الضوء على كيفية استغلال الشاعر للألفاظ والرموز في نقل حالة من التمرد الصريح على المعايير الدينية، وتقدم تفسيراً لعلاقته بالصراع النفسي الذي يعكسه في شعره. كما تتناول الدراسة تأثير هذه النزعة التمردية على فهمنا للواقع الثقافي والديني في العصر العباسي، وارتباطه بالأزمات النفسية والاجتماعية التي عاشها الشاعر.

Keywords

الكلمات المفتاحية

Religious Rebellion, Ibn Bassam, Abbasid Era, Islamic Values, Psychological Conflict

التمرد الديني، ابن بسام، العصر العباسي، القيم الإسلامية، الصراع النفسي

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rebellion Islam played a major role in strengthening the Arab society, which relied on the tribal values and ideals inherited by the Arabs before Islam, according to which they organized their lives. With the advent of Islam, it brought new values that had a profound impact in bringing about radical changes on various behavioral, moral, living, and ideological levels, in addition to the cultural and cognitive influence. Religion, as a comprehensive vision of the universe, life, and man, is reflected in all human activities, starting from his behavior and reaching his culture, and colors them with its own color. This reflection may appear clearly and directly, or it may be hidden and unnoticeable, and is shaped by the general environment in which people live, and the environment that affects them in all their activities[1] The value of Islam lies spiritually, mentally, and socially in the human self, as Islam came to enhance the status of man, and elevate him towards achieving his true humanity. Islam called on man to liberate himself from the worship of idols and natural forces, and urged him to use his mind and think to understand the laws of nature. It also prepared him for a spiritual,

mental and social life based on justice, and justice in Islam is based on cooperation between individuals to achieve the common good [2]. The authority of society must be just to ensure that life does not deviate towards worldly and material interests. If this balance is disturbed, a person's perceptions of religion may turn into a kind of confusion, and the poet's experience, with all its differences, remains inclined towards a continuous struggle as a result of his feeling of the bitterness of reality [3] ((Due to the emergence of sectarian rebellion groups...and ideological rebellion groups represented by the blocs loyal to their enemies such as the Qarmatians and the Zanadiqa, these groups declared rebellion and revolution[4], the populist, heretical and debauched groups had a great influence on Abbasid society, as these groups rebelled on the religious and political levels, and also deviated from the moral values prevailing in that period [5], that ((the new ideologies competing with religion, transformed religion into an ideology of conflicting political ideologies from values that traditional religious institutions remained marginal in this conflict[5], some poets rebelled against Islamic values and rejected them and underestimated them in this era, including what we find with (Ibn Bassam), as he says [6]. In these verses, the poet expresses his gratitude for the month of Ramadan, not as a month of worship and obedience, but as an opportunity to satisfy his desires at a time when people are busy fasting and praying. In the first and second verses, the poet highlights the virtue of the month of Ramadan and emphasizes his gratitude and worship of it, as the word "saqiya" is used, which includes a call without a call tool. The question also appears in his saying "How many dear ones in it..." as a metaphor for good things, as the declarative sentence turns into an exclamation and a question that embodies generality and comprehensiveness. In the third verse, the conjunction "and" is used to connect the sentence "How many dear ones" with "And who was an imam for me", which contributes to the integration of the meaning. As for the third and fourth verses, the poet addresses the imam and expresses his disregard for what Islam brought. In the fifth verse, the conjunction tool (and) is repeated to expand the meaning and increase the diversity of images, as the poet includes his licentious desires under the title "A longing friend visited you", which pollutes the honor of the Night of Decree with matters that should not be mentioned. In the sixth verse, he uses the conjunction fa with the past tense verb "So the people turned away with what they hoped for..." to emphasize the contradiction between the good deeds that people desire to do on the Night of Decree and his rebellion against that.

Semantically, the verses show the poet's rebellion and contradiction; he realizes the value and virtue of the month of Ramadan, but he insists on indulging in his licentious acts that pollute the sanctity of the month. The contradiction also appears in his treatment of the night prayer and the imam, as he refers to an indefinite "imam" instead of a definite one, which reflects the generality of the idea. In the fifth and sixth verses, he shows his rebellion against the Night of Power with expressions that are not befitting of its sanctity, as he admits that people compete in worshipping God during this night, while he is immersed in his sins and pleasures. The poet used a distinctive poetic style through the repetition of words and phrases, as he repeated the conjunction (waw) to link sentences together, which enhances the continuity of meaning and adds to the contradiction present in the text. He also repeats the letter "ra" with the kasra in the rhymes, which reflects the state of rebellion and disobedience that the poet is experiencing. This rebellion is present in every aspect of his life. We saw it in the month of fasting and in the night prayer, and we also saw it on the Night of Power. This represents one of the various rebellions that the poet experienced. He did not rebel against one situation, but rather his rebellion was comprehensive in all aspects of his life, especially his religious rebellion. He also rebelled against time, and we see him

يَخْلُطُ مَيْسُورًا بِمَعْسُورٍ	كُنَّا نَقُولُ الدَّهْرُ فِيمَا مَضَى
فَنَحْنُ فِي عَسْرِ وَتَقْتِيرٍ	فَانْقَطَعَ الْمَيْسُورُ فِي دَهْرِنَا
يَكُونُ فِيهَا غَيْرُ مَيْسُورٍ	مَا دَرَكَ الْإِنْسَانُ فِي عَيْشَةٍ

say (Diwan 43):

We notice that the poet complains and rebels against time and is not satisfied with what God has decreed of fate, and this is contrary to the laws of Sharia and what our true religion has urged, which urges satisfaction with what God has decreed for man and not to complain; therefore, based on the saying of the Messenger (peace be upon him): ((Let none of you say: Oh, what a disappointment time is, for God is time)) (Abu Abdullah Al-Bukhari, d. 256 AH). We notice that the psychological crisis of our poet (Ibn Bassam) did not stop at limits, but rather exceeded them to criticize time, exploiting the issue of ease, hardship and stinginess, trying to manage the conversation around it to conclude that ease has been cut off and he lives in hardship and stinginess to point to the issue of his struggle with reality and to draw for us a psychological indication that highlights the difficulty of the reality in which he lives as if it reflects his state of deprivation that he lives in, based on the fact that poetry is a psychological reflection of the personality of its author. We see the poet continuing his rebellion by using obscene words that contradict Islamic values and the customs and traditions of his people, society, and community. He uses obscene words, including his use of obscene and vulgar words in his satire. This is what we find in his satire of one of the people, as he used the words (son of the hallways, son of the prostitutes, son of the commoner), and other words that are not acceptable to the Islamic religion and society. We notice

that the poet uses many obscene and vulgar words in his poetry, especially in attacking honor and dignity (Diwan 52). We also notice that our poet openly declares his debauchery and recklessness, as we see him rebelling and going against the norm and the prevailing, and against everything that is customary, which contradicts Islamic values. We see him going against the norm in his love poetry, and we see him taking love poetry with young men as a path for him, as he says (Diwan 52):

وأهوى المرد والشبان طرّاً ولا أبغي مواصلة الكعابِ

We notice in the aforementioned verse a clear revolution and rebellion against the familiar values, which contradict religion and the morals of society. Ibn Bassam did not stop in his rebellion at this point, but we find him going far in his rebellion as we see him daring even to challenge the Qur'anic text as is evident in his saying (Diwan 62):

مَنْ هَجَانِي مِنَ الْبِرَّةِ طَرّاً وَتَسْغَى فِي مَسَاءَتِي أَوْ لِحَانِي
فَاللَّوَاتِي عَلَيْهِ حَرَمَهُنَّ الدَّ هـ فِي سُورَةِ النِّسَاءِ زَوَانِي

We notice the arrogance, conceit, and haughtiness towards the Creator and the Qur'anic text, and his use of offensive satire throughout the Holy Qur'an, which reflects a clear moral and religious dissolution. He defends himself even at the expense of the Qur'anic text by rebelling against it, saying (those whom Allah has forbidden) and here he includes Qur'anic verses from Surat An-Nisa, as those whom Allah has forbidden and accused of adultery, and also his use of (the letter ya) in (he satirized me, my misery, my tunes), he is talking about himself and emphasizing the meaning he wants from these verses to indicate arrogance, ego, self-esteem, and haughtiness, as ((excessive freedom and its unrestrained release have undoubtedly had a clear effect in abandoning religion, belittling faith, and weakening religious restraint)) (Muhammad Zaki Al-Ashmawi, 1981), and the poet (Ibn Bassam) also declares his rebellion against religious values; because he sees that they restrict his freedom, which forces him to adhere to the religious and moral aspect in his poetry; Therefore, we see him clearly rebelling against religious and moral values in a blatant manner, saying (his Diwan 43:)

لعنَ اللهَ الَّذِي قَدْ لَدَ عِبَاسَ الْوَزَارَةِ
وَالَّذِي وَلَّى ابْنَ عَمْرٍو يَهْ بِبَغْدَادَ الْإِمَارَةِ
فَوْزَيْرَ شَنْجِ الْوَجْهِ هـ بَطِيمَ كَالْغُرَارَةِ
وَقَفَى فِيهِ سَنَامَا نَ وَرَأْسَ كَالْخِيَارَةِ
.....
رَحَلَ الْإِسْلَامَ عَنَّا بِتَوَلِيهِ الْإِدَارَةَ

In this piece of poetry, Ibn Bassam rebels against the rulers and incites people to reject and rebel against them, which is contrary to the Sharia, as well as rebelling against the prohibition of cursing and satire. We see the poet proceeding with his purpose without any introduction, opening the first verse with cursing, clearly declaring his religious rebellion despite the existence of an explicit text on the tongue of the Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) in which he says: ((The believer is not a slanderer, nor a curser, nor an obscene, nor a vulgar person)) (Abu Issa, 1975), and in this hadith that sets for us the limit of the believer and whoever goes beyond this limit, has gone beyond the circle of correctness. The poet did not care about this clear religious ruling, but rather he began to sympathize with the curse that he first launched on the one who appointed (Abbas) as minister and the one who appointed (Ibn Amrueh) as emirate, so he presents us with deplorable images. This emphasis by repeating the curse is an insistence from the poet who rebels against Islamic teachings, and the poet quickly moves on to highlight some of the sarcastic qualities of them that do not conform to Islamic teachings (having a sallow face, a belly, a nape like a hump, a head like a cucumber, a foreigner, a donkey son of a donkey). If we contemplate those qualities that the poet presented, we find them to be moral qualities, and we find him frank in his sarcasm and his evocation of curses on others, which are blameworthy for a person, as if the poet did not find moral qualities or reprehensible behaviors for those he satirized, so he satirized them with what a man would not be satirized with. If we contemplate the last verse:

رَحَلَ الْإِسْلَامَ عَنَّا بِتَوَلِيهِ الْإِدَارَةَ

We find the poet trying to show his concern for Islam when he described his satirist as having assumed the position of administration causing the departure of Islam, not Islam itself which cannot be departed, but here he did not provide any evidence to support his claim. Ibn Bassam also rebels against permissible foods and drinks when he says (Diwan 28):

خل عني لست من إربي
دونك العذب الزلال ولي
إربي في الكأس والطرب
سعة في صفوة العنب

He rebels against the permissible drinks (water) in a society governed by religious controls. However, he prefers between water and wine. This rebellion has its roots in the poets who preceded him, such as Abu Nuwas, who loved wine and devoted himself to it. Dr. Taha Hussein pointed to this fact when he read the verses of Abu Nuwas (Dr. Taha Hussein, without an apology), in which he says (Dr. Bahjat Abdul Ghafour, 2010:)

أئن على الخمر بالأنها
وسمها أحسن أسمائها

He rebels against religious values through the word (Athan), because praise and sanctification are only for the blessings of God Almighty, in addition to the fact that our poet openly praises wine in a rebellious manner, and in his frequenting of places of drinking and music, he does not attach importance to the prohibition of wine, and he refers to his immersion in pleasures to the point that he declares that his reputation is linked in (Safwat al-Anab) to drinking and wine, and this clearly indicates that our poet is not restricted by the limits of custom and religion, as his reputation has been linked to drunkenness, wine and music, and perhaps he resorts to proving his personality and trying to fill the complex of his feeling of inferiority by turning to a life of amusement and debauchery.

2. CONCLUSION

Ibn Bassam's poetry showed a unique case of religious rebellion that reflects a struggle with social and political reality. His rebellion was not limited to the individual aspects of his life, but extended to include his criticism of religion and political authority in his time. Through his poetry, we can see the impact of cultural and religious tensions in the Abbasid era on literature and poets, and how poetry can be a means of expressing rebellion and challenging prevailing systems. This study opens the way for further research into the impact of religious rebellion on Arabic literature and how it influenced the formation of intellectual culture in that era.

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