



BAHĀR, MOḤAMMAD-TAQĪ II.

BAHĀR AS A POET

ii. Bahār as a Poet

Bahār is probably the most significant writer of *qaṣīdas* since the end of the 6th/12th century, and no doubt the last great poet of this genre. His masterful manipulation of Persian language and dexterity and ingeniousness in molding it into eloquent expressions for treating a wide variety of subjects and themes (social, philosophical, political, personal, etc.) are surely unmatched by any other writer of *qaṣīdas* in the 20th century. His style has the unmistakable imprint of the 4th-5th/10th-11th-century masters, yet it exhibits a certain modernity of thought and expression which makes his poetry more than an imitation of past masters, and he convincingly (*Bahār wa adab-e fārsī* II, pp. 195-96) refuted A. Kasrawī's accusations that he in his early career had plagiarized Bahār Širvanī's *qaṣīdas* (J. Matīnī, *Īrān-nāma* 5/4, p. 557).

Bahār was directly involved in the political events of his time and his poetry often turns into a vehicle for conveying personal opinions on political and social issues. Despite his generally lofty style, he was hardly shy of using popular and "unpoetical" expressions in his poetry; even loanwords of European origin were not foreign to him and he used them with the same mastery that he showed in reviving archaic and obsolete words. On the whole he adhered to the Khorasanian style (q.v.) but also believed that young poets should be free to experiment with new and unconventional modes of poetical



expressions, including free verse (*Noḡostĭn kongra*, p. 302). Bahār can justifiably be called the poet who, while himself advocating and practicing classical-style poetry, did much to help advance new genres and expand the horizon of Persian poetry, thus contributing to the eventual emergence of modernist poetry.

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Īrān-nāma 5/4, 1366 Š./1987, was dedicated to Bahār on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birthday; it includes two letters by him, articles by J. Matīnī, Ḥ. Mo‘ayyad, D. Šafā, M. Bahār, and P. Bahār, and comments by Persian scholars and litterateurs.