

(Rudaki Samarqandi)

(The father of Persian poetry)

The Samanids(261-389 A.H)belongs to a war like line, who traced their origin to the great Sasanids. They proved their soldierly qualities by taking possessions of their Transoxiana *باورء* and also by their conquest of Khurasan.(1)

They not only found time to concern themselves with art and letters, but also gathered round them poets and Historians in order to sing their praise and chronicle their victories (2).

So far as the Persian language and literature of their court is concerned, there was a all round development. One may say that it reached on its highest water mark as the Samanid rulers were its great patrons. The credit of introduction of Shahnama writting also goes to Samanid King *Abu, Mansur Mohmmad Abdullah Razzak* (226 - 350 A.D). (3)

The other prose masterpeices of this period are:-

(1) *Tarikh-i-Tabri* by *Abul Fazl Balami* in (963 A.D)and *Tafsir-i-Tabri* (commentry of the Quran 962 A.D)in 14 vol. (4)

Aajaib-ul-Buldan (wanders of cities) by *Abul al Mavid* of

Balkh.(5)

Ibn Faqi Hamdani wrote *Kitab-ul-Buldan* in (290 A.D) which deals with geography.

Unlike Prose Poetry also flourished as the Samanid rulers used to shower their precious rewards to their talented poets with a result many great Poets associate themselves with the court of said rulers. Some of the worthnoted Poets among them are:-

1. *Kasai Marwazi*:- Who is alleged to have composed *Shanama* in (997 A.D) but could not complete it.(7)

2. *Shahid Balkhi*:- is another Poet who's few remaining couplets from his mathnawi "*Arin Nama*" have been recorded by *Awfi*.(8)

3. *Mansur Faralawi*:- was the contemporary of *Shahid of Balk*, few fragments survives of his poetry.

4. *Daqiqi Tusi*:- was first entrusted with the versification of epic (*Shahnama*). He stood high in the esteem of his contemporaries. (9)

Now, let us discuss the life and poetry of *Rudagi Samarqandi* at length.

His name was *Abu Abdullah Jaffer bin Mohmmad ar Rudaki al Samarqandi*.(10) He was born in a village of *Pangrud* (*Rudak*) about in 858 A.D. He learned essentials of knowledge in his native place such as Grammer, Hadith, (sayings) prosody and also memorised the holly Quran at the age of eight. (11) The

sources reveal that *Rudaki* was born blind.(12) He was a skillful performer over his musical instruments like *chang* (lute) and *Barbet* (harp) (13) as he himself says:-

رودکی چنگ بر گرفت و نواخت

باده انداز کو سر و د انداخت

(14)

The melodious voice and poetical talent urged the Amir (King) *Nasr bin Ahmad Saman ii*(914-943 A.D) to invite *Rudaki* to his court. Where he got due respect, high posts and positions as *Nizami* records:-

"وازندماء بادشاه هیچ کس مختشم تر و مقبول تر از او بود"

(15)

Rudaki was latter invited to *Bukhara* by *Abu-I-Fazl Balami*, who was a *wazir wa Mourikh* (Advisor and Historian) in the court of *Isma'ī Saman* 892-907A.D (16)

Though the poet spent most part of his life in the said court, but unfortunately suffer great hardships in his old age. (16) At last, the poet of the great repute left the world in 940 A.D and was burried at his native place. (17)

Rudaki Samarqandi is generally recknowed the first great classical poet of *Mohmmadan Persia*, with whom began the court poetry of *Iran*. (18) His *Diwan* (collection of verses) contain all sort of poems for instance, *Gazals*, *Mathnawis*, *qatat*, *Rubayat* and mourning verses.

No, doubt he has shown his mastery over all literary forms, but *qasida* remain his main domain. (19)

His famous ode قصیده Has been recorded and appreciated by all biographers and writers due to its artistic merits, which is as under:-

بوی جوی مولیان آید همی یاد یار مهربان آید همی
 ریگ آموی و درشتی راه او زیر پایم پر نینان آید همی
 آب جیحون از نشاط روی روست خنگ مارا تا میان آید هم
 میر ماه است و بهار آسمان ماه سوی آسمان آید همی
 میر سرو است و بهار بوستان سر و سوی بوستان آید همی

(20)

According to *Mohammad Aafi Rudaki* had satirical poems and mournings dedications (مرثیه) namely "*Kalila wa Dimna*", from which few verses are mentioned in *Farhang-i-Asadi Toosi*. (21)

Rudaki was not only an ordinary court ode composer, but the introduction to the ode is its main beauty. His odes are thought provoken and philosophical. The ode dedicated to the advent of old age is its best example, which is as follows:-

مرا بسود و فروریخت هر چه دندان بود
 نه بود دندان لا بد چراغ خندان بود
 یکی نمازند کنون، بل همه بسود و بریخت
 چه نخس بود همانا نخس کیوان بود (22)

Though the *Diwan* of *Rudaki* contains a few poems. But *Rashida Samarqandi* in the following verse says that he counted his verses and found thirteen times 10,000 as he says:-

شجر او بر شمر دم سیزده ده صد هزار
هم افزون نر آید از چو نمان که باید شمری

(23)

Starting from the 9th century and into the present days, all the poets had been glorifying *Rudaki*, dreaming of composing lyrics (Gazals) resembling the style of *Rudaki*. Which is evident from the verses of the poets, as *Sayyid* of *Gurgan* says:-

از چندان نعیم این جهانی
شنای رود کی ماند است و مدحش
نوا ای بارید ماندست و دوستان

(24)

"From all the treasures hoarded by the house of *Sasan* and of the *Saman* in our days.

Nothing survives except the songs of *Bareed* and nothing is left say *Rudki's* sweat lays"

Even *Unsuri* the poet laureate of *Sultan Mohmood of Gazna* admits that in *Gazals* he can not rival *Rudki*, he says:-

غزل رود کی وار نیگو بود
غزلهای من رود کی وار نیست

(25)

Abdur Rehman Jami pays his tribute to him in these verses:-

رود کی آنکه در همی سفتی
مدح ساما ضیاں همی گفتی

صله شعر های همچو درش بود در بار چار صد شترش

(26)

Rudaki in his poetry glorifies knowledge, nobleness, good health and wisdom he says:-

چهار چیز مرآزاده را ز غم بنبرد
تن در ست و خوبی نیک و نام نیک و خرد
هر آنکه ایزدش این هر چهار روزی کرد
سزد که شاید زید جاودان و غم ن خرد

(27)

That is probably why his poetry became a model for the coming generation of persian poets, which gave birth to celebrities like *Firdousi, Umar Khayam, Sadi Shirazi, Hafiz and Jami.*

As mentioned earlier *Rudki* may be said to be the greatest poet that Persia has produced. The style adopted by *Rudki* in lyrics or odes is (*khurasani*) which is highly refined and polished. (28) To sum up one may say that *Rudki Samarqandi* not only laid a solid foundation of persian classical poetry which remained unmatched to present times, but also has immortalized his name and fame.

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