

Review Fake Narratives about Prophet Mohammad (Pbuh) in Mathnavi

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Abstract

The story of divine prophets' life in Quran has almost been told briefly and due to emphasizing on issues including edifications and lessons, there are not any details or marginal subjects in it. A brief review of many books written in this topic confirms this claim that many events and happenings related to divine prophets and key characters are being inspired from other sources than the Word of God, and many ornaments have been added to them in the passage of time. Due to the same reason, a great part of Israelites is related to the prophets' story of life. Rumi is among the poets who use the prophets' story of life in different parts of the Mathnavi either in a direct way or in a mysterious form and parable. But, this great book is not also saved from some fictitious stories of the prophet's life. In this research, Israelites about Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) are extracted from six books of Mathnavi and reviewed. The fictitious stories about Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) throughout the book are just three stories. These three stories include the story of Prophet's cleavage of chest, legend of the Gharanigh (satanic verses), and the story of Prophet's decision of committing suicide. The research method is descriptive analytical. Regarding the stories and the way of applications of these legends by Rumi, it can be understood that although the fictitious stories are limitedly found in Mathnavi, this limited number has been also used in order to teaching and expressing mystic thoughts and delicate issues of spiritual journeys.

Keywords: Israelites, Mathnavi, Islam Prophet (pbuh), holly Quran, Rumi.

1. Introduction

"Israelites are the plural form of Israeli and attributed to Israel, the prophet Jacob's title". (Haj Manouchehri, Bita: 290) Israel is a compound form of two words in which "Isr" means overcoming and "ael" means a perfect power, and in Hebrew, it is the name of a person who overcame the perfect power, i.e. God. (Dehkhoda, Israelites).

The word Israelites, sometimes in a specific meaning, is attributed to those narratives which have a Jewish nature and have entered into Islamic realm from Jewish culture, and sometimes in a broad meaning, it includes whatever that have a Jewish and Christian nature and have entered into Islamic sources. As "Van Flouten", in the definition of Israelites say: "Islamic scholars have attributed the word "Israelites" to all non-Islamic ideas and especially to those ideas, legends, and superstitions which Jewish and Christians have imported into Islam since the first century hegira". Al Jafar PH.D also says: "in the commentators and traditionists' term, "Israelites" includes superstitions and mythical stories which have been entered into traditions and interpretations, although they do not have a Jewish or Christian source". (Mohammad Ghasemi, 1999:89)

Story has been always an efficient tool in influencing the addresses. So, Israelites makers have also used this tool in reaching their goals and turned to an important hub of creating and distributing fictitious and superstitious stories. Before the advent of Islam and in the age of ignorance, there were many myths and legends among ignorant Arabs, but the great interest of common people and even sometimes the companions of the prophet (pbuh) to stories and narratives of other countries and nations led to increasing growth of storytellers' activities after the advent of Islam. (Same, 1999:96)

By spreading the preaching culture in the Orient, a good situation was created so that in written works, which had no commitment to mentioning the narrative sources, some examples of Israelites such as stories and concepts being proposed. (Haj Manouchehri, Bita: 292)

Rumi's Mathnavi, which is an infinite ocean of stories, is no exception. Many rafting rivers flow in to this ocean and stay still there. It is a mine of beauties in which nobody can find himself strange and portion-less. This valuable work used many sources and was written by their inspiration.

Many of stories in Mathnavi are not Rumi's invention. He took many of stories from other sources. Although, like the tradition of authors in the middle period of Iran, he does not mention the name of his sources mostly or he points them less, just a relatively small part of stories of Mathnavi was created by him. The interpretations of Quran, which include the stories of prophets and the former nations – particularly, Tabari Commentary, written by Mohammad ibn Harir Tabari – are among the main sources of Rumi's inspiration in most stories which are in Mathnavi as parable or education. (Zarrin Koub, 2005:262)

Mathnavi, which is also known as Ajam (Persian)'s Quran, follows the frame of Quran. In fact, many stories, tales, parables, and its phrases are rooted in Quran and the collection of Hadith. The presence of the prophets and their related stories are also considerable in Mathnavi. In his work, Rumi, besides different addressing to the stories of the former prophets, uses the stories of the former prophets as they are recorded in famous texts of Muslim's Qisas al Anbia or old interpretations. (Din Lewis, 2000:379) Among the most important Rumi's sources of the prophets' life are the interpretations of Quran and especially Tabari Commentary about which some information are given.

In the present research, which has been done in a descriptive analytical method, fictitious stories of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), which have entered into Mathnavi through the old interpretations, are explained.

It should be noted that the tales and narratives of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) and his situation in Mathnavi is also based on Quran and Hadith or taken from books of character mostly and few of them which have been taken from preachers and Sufi and non-Sufis' news, are not fully compatible with accepted and well known narratives. The application of these stories in Mathnavi by Rumi may be caused by his familiarity to circles of story tellers and Sufi preachers, because he had often gone to these circles and Sufi ascetics' gathering in childhood and youth periods.

Since these kinds of tales do not include rules and do not modify halal and haram (licit and taboo), and moral benefits and educational points are usually extracted from them, and also, due to their encouraging aspects, they have been looked upon with tolerance and moderation, and in telling and recording them, the preachers and story tellers did not give the same attention which they had given to the narratives of prayers and trading. Although this is worthy to objection and blame, no objection can be made on the Mathnavi's writer. Instead, versed in law preachers can be blamed for not searching the documents and texts of the Hadith, in spite of jurists' emphases. However, Rumi's narratives about the prophet's character, except in few cases, are almost always based on authentic references and include mystic points and fine moral educations. (Zarrin Koub, 1994:84-85)

A point should be mentioned about the history of research of the article subject. There are many researches which have been about both two titles – Israelites and Mathnavi – separately and mentioning all of them is not possible here. But, no book has been directly and specifically written about the subject of the present article and studying Israelites in Mathnavi separately. However, there are some books which indirectly help discussing the subject. Generally, regarding Mathnavi and stories of prophets in them, some notable books like "Sea in the Urn" can be mentioned. The "prophets' story in Kollyate Shams" written by Pour Namdariyan has also studied the prophets' story in the Rumi's idea and in another great book of him, although it is not written about Mathnavi. Some other books like "Rumi, from East to West" written by Din Lewis also provides some good information about Mathnavi and his poetic sources. Moreover, valuable books in Persian and Arabic have been written about Israelites. Also, Allame Tabataba'iy has sporadically talked about Israelites in his interpretation, whenever necessary. "Israelites and its influence on prophets' stories in interpretations of Quran" written by Hamid Mohammad Ghasemi, which is an academic research, is also one of the other precious books about Israelites. There are various articles about the different topics of Israelites, as well. But no book has investigated Israelites in Mathnavi independently. In this article, the aim is specifically extracting false stories of Islam great prophet from Mathnavi and studying them. After extracting these fictitious stories, they have been criticized regarding the opinions of the great thinkers like Allame Tabataba'iy and Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi. The research answers these questions implicitly:

1. What are the Israelites about Prophet Mohammad?
2. What are the thinkers' opinions about rejecting or accepting these stories?
3. Did Rumi use only his creative mind to write the stories of Mathnavi?
4. What is Rumi's aim of using Israelites in Mathnavi?

2. Some explanation about Rumi's the most important sources (Tabari History and Tabari Comentary)

Abu Jafar Mohammad ibn Jarir Tabari is one of the greatest Islamic scholars who was born in 839 in Amol in Tabarestan and died in 922. He has many valuable books amon which his "Tarikh Kabir" (great history) and "Tafsir Kabir" (great interpretation) are the most important which has been given much attention by Persian speakers. The knowledge of interpretation in the years of his life is accompanied by his name. His history, which is the history of prophets and kings, was translated to Persian by Abu Ali Balami, the vizier of Mansour ibn Nouh Samani, and his interpretation which is called "Jame al-Bayan" (comprehensive speech), was translated into Persian by Transoxianan scholars so that for the first time Quran has been translated from Arabic brighten the believers' heart. (A group of writers, 1980:737-738)

Tabari wrote his great interpretation in last years of 910s in Baghdad and in the disposition of the public. He is called the father of the history, but he can be veritably called the father of interpretation as well. His interpretation in the 12 century was one of the main sources for Abol al-Fath to write "Rowz al-Janani" and "Rouh al-Janani".

In Tabari commentary, and consequently in Abo al-Fotouh, we may confront to the news which are

taken from Israeli stories (Israelites), or based on sources, are taken from narratives like Kab al-Ahbar, Vahab ibn Monabeh, Ibn Jarij, and Saddi who were new Muslims of Jewish or Christian, and had a great role in creating and publishing Israelites (Same: 321-323). Some fictitious stories of Mathnavi had been given from this book.

3. Fictitious stories of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) in Rumi's Mathnavi

3-1 Cleavage of the Prophet's (pbuh) chest:

In fourth book of Mathnavi, there is a story of the Prophet's lost and the cleavage of his chest in the childhood in details. In the story of Mathnavi, Halime, Mohammad's (pbuh) nurse, took him to the desert to grow him up. When she took him back to Mecca to give him to his grandfather, Abd al-Motalleb, a nice voice was heard from the air who enunciating a dear new comer. When Halime got puzzled of the voice, she looked for it. But she searched everywhere and found nothing, and when she came back, she could not find the child on his place. So, she started crying of the fear of losing Mohammad (pbuh). An old Arab man took her to Kaabe to get help from "Uzza". But as soon as he said the name of Mohammad (pbuh) in front of "Uzza", that idol and all other idols of Kaabe overthrew. The old man got anxious, because at this time, voices came out of the stones and blamed him for saying the name of Mohammad in front of the idols. The old man gave Halime comfort and said that such a child would never get lost, but world would be lost inside him. (Zarrin Koub, 1994:85-86)

The story of the Prophet's cleavage of the chest in Mathnavi, was also written among these events. The following poems are pointing to this story:

My child was stolen by those who are absents

Green wing absents of the sky

Of whom I can complaint? To whom I can say the groan?

I am totally mad now

I cannot talk about it in detail

I just tell you that my child has lost

(Rumi, 2010, fourth book: 971-973)

Some have mentioned the first verses of the surah Al-Inshirah, as a confirmation of this story. But these verses have no relationship to the Prophet's cleavage of chest. Because opening of chest here is a metaphor of being patience, and it means resistance and tolerance of difficulties and problems.

But the story tellers of this story say that this action had repeated five times in the Prophet's (pbuh) lifetime. The Prophet's (pbuh) childhood, before the age of five (when he was with Halime), in the age of ten, in the age of twenty, and in the night of ascension; and they believe that this repetition is a sign of his great honor and dignity. (Karbala'iy Pazouki, 1999:108)

Tabari also quoted Umar ibn Arve ibn Al-Zobayr who said: "I heard Arve ibn Zobayr (narrator's father) quoted Abouzar Ghaffari in which he asked Mohammad (pbuh) how you understood that you are the Prophet and believed in it for the first time? The Prophet said: Abouzar! When I was in a place in Mecca, two angels came to me. One of them came on earth and the other one was between the sky and the earth. One of them told the other: Is that the man? And the other angel answered: Yes, he is the man. Then the angel said: Weigh him by a man! They weighed me by a man, I was superior. The angel said: Weigh him by ten men. I was weighed by ten men and I was superior. Then the angel said: Weigh him by a hundred men. I was weighed with a hundred men and I was superior. Then the angel said: Weigh him by a thousand men. I was weighed by a thousand men and I was superior of all. They were weighting me and I got increased, until one of them told the other: if you weighted him by his whole nation, he would be superior of all of them. Here, one of these two angels said: split his stomach. They split my stomach, then said: bring out his heart, or said: split his heart and bring up the devil's bait and coagulum. The other one did and threw them away. Then one of told the other: wash his stomach like a plate and wash his heart like a plate. Then the angel wanted a knife similar to a cat's face and stabbed it into my heart, then one of the angel said: sew his stomach; afterwards, they sewed my both stomach and put the seal of prophecy in my shoulder. They were just operators and I saw the process with my own eyes." (a group of writers, 1990:173-174)

It seems that the story tellers got influence from Christian's opinion about Mary's chastity and Jesus (pbuh) in developing this story about the Prophet's chastity and purity. Christians believe that all mankind are guilty and Jesus (pbuh) is super human and he sacrificed himself for guilty mankind. But Quran has a clear and explicit expression in this matter. Quran says all the prophets are mankind and they are not super human, but all the prophets are at the top of the sincere servants of God. (Seyyed Alavi, 1991:18)

Allame Jafar Morteza also believes that this story belongs to the time of ignorance and he says that there in a legend in Aghani book which says: "Ommie ibn Abi Selat dreamed that two birds came, one of them sat on the door and the other came in. He split Ommie's heart and then returned. The other bird asked: did you get it? He said: yes. He asked: did it purify? He said: She did not accept, and then he returned the heart and put it in its place. Then the act of splitting repeated four times for her (Ommie)." (Karbala'iy Pazouki, 1999:111-112)

It is clear that the story tellers did not have any shame or barrier to stop them making some stories of

the prophets based on some historical myths. The story of Prophet Mohammad's cleavage of chest is one of these innovations.

The Shia scholars have three viewpoints about this story:

A- Most of them consider this story as fictitious and from Israelites, like Tabrasi in *Majma al-Bayan*. In this regard, Tabrasi says that the reason of invalidity of the Prophet's cleavage of chest and washing it from sins and evils is that the Prophet (pbuh) was created clean and pure of all evils. Moreover, the heart will not be clean of sin and evil, which are an inner and spiritual fact, just by appearance washing.

B- Some scholars like Allame Tabatabaii have accepted this from parable point of view, but they reject an actual happening of the phenomenon. Allame adds that the long debates of the scholars, all, were based on the opinion that this event is something materialistic and factual. So, the basis of aspects which were mentioned by them is invalid.

C- Some others, like Allame Majlesi, narrated this story due to its surprising events, and it seems that they somehow accepted it. (Karbalaiy Pazouki, 2006: 114-115)

3-2 Legend of Gharanigh (Satanic Versed)

Rumi, in the sixth book, besides some couplets about unity of servant with God and obtaining the status of selfless, briefly express some couplets which remind a legend called Satanic Verses in the Prophet's life. The legend is explained completely under the verses of the surah Najm, in some interpretations and religious books. Some forgers attributed the story to the Prophet and say the Prophet admired pagan's idols to have their companionship and unity. This fictitious story is in the *Mathnavi*. This will be discussed in the following:

Our *Mathnavi* is a place of unity

Non-united is a just an idol

Praising idols is a trap for common people

It is like the Satanic Verses

He read it in the surah Al-Najm

But it was not in the surah, it was a devilry

All pagans prostrated that time

They all did it

After that, there is a complex and far saying

Be with the Solomon and go away from demons

(Rumi, 2010, the sixth book, 1528-1532)

"Gharanigh is the plural form of Gharnigh and Gharnough which means black or white long neck redshank". (Zamani, 2010:433) "This is the same bird bittern that has long feet and long featherless neck. It is piscivorous and makes net on tall trees. In today Arabic, it is called Malik al-Hazin (Sad owner)." (Ramyar, 1990:161)

In the translation of Tabari commentary, under the translation of surah Najm, there is a story of which the summary is: Abu Jahl said Mohammad is mad, and the Quran he claims is the God's word, is his own words. Then Gabriel (pbuh) came and brought surah Najm. So the Prophet wanted to read the surah for the unbelievers. When the Prophet wanted to read the verse "Is the male for you and for Him the female? That, then, is an unjust division." (Quran, Al-Najm: 21-22), the Devil (cursed by God) came and made him forget the verse, and put this on his mouth: They are the high-flying redshanks, and they will be intercessors. And this means that the idols are great Gods, and everyone must be hopeful for their pleading. So, when Mohammad (pbuh) read it, all unbelievers prostrated him and said Mohammad praised our Gods. And Mohammad (pbuh) was so sad and regretful to express such a thing and said to himself why I said those words? (Tabari, 1977:1768-1770)

The stories of this legend are so disordered. Based on these narratives, the Prophet added those two sentences in surah Najm, himself. The other says the Devil gave him tongue or the Devil, himself, said it loudly, and the other says one of the pagans next to the Prophet expressed them in the middle of the verses. Another narrative says they were said in the time of descending and....

Those two sentences related to this legend have also narrated in eight different types. Absolutely, more investigations in the narratives will add other various examples on it and apparently it was a song which was sung by Quraish while circumambulation of Kaabe. (Ramyar, 1990:158) Since the ignorant Arabs knew the idols as their intercessor to God, while circumambulation of Kaabe praised them and sang: "Lat, Uzza, and Manat are like white high-flying redshanks and we hope they become our intercessors." (Zamani, 2010:433)

But, regardless of various narratives of the Satanic Verses, and although a group of Islam opponents pretexted it to weaken the Prophet's (pbuh) programs and narrated it with plentiful ornaments, many sources show that this is a fictitious Hadith made by devilish people to invalidate Quran and the Prophet's (pbuh) words, and all the Islamic scholars, including Shia and Sunni, have rejected this Hadith and attributed it to the forgers, because:

1. As scholars say, the narrators of this Hadith are weak and unreliable people.

2. There are several Hadiths narrated in many books about revealing of surah Najm and then prostration of the Prophet and Muslims; and the Satanic verses are not among them, and it shows that this sentence were added later.
3. The first verses of surah Najm - Nor does he speak from [his own] inclination. It is not but a revelation revealed - (Quran, Najm: 3-4) explicitly say that the prophet does not talk of his passion, and whatever he says is just the God's oracle. So, this verse is not compatible to the above legend.
4. The verses which came after the name of the idols in this verse are all about reproaching them and their meanness. Therefore, the admiration of the idols is not acceptable just a few sentences before them.
5. Quran explicitly reminds that he keep his book away from any distortion and deviation. As it came in verse 9 of surah Hajar: "Indeed, it is We who sent down the Qur'an and indeed, We will be its guardian."(Quran, Hjr:9).
6. The Prophet's battle with idols and idolatry was his main program and it was a continuous and uninterrupted struggle in his whole lifetime. The Prophet (pbuh) never showed any compromise and flexibility toward idol and idolatry. Therefore, it is not possible that he said these words. (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, v14:142-144)

3-3 Decide of falling from mountain

In the time of the Prophet (pbuh), there happened a pause in revealing the oracle. Rumi, describes the story of Mohammad's (pbhu) sadness and nostalgia of stopping oracle and says for a short time of imagining the separation, he decided to throw himself down from the top of the mountain. Rumi has written these poems in clarifying the seizure mood of isolated people in the first days of isolation and says when the truth is discovered inside, the anxiety and distress of this mood will fade away.

When Mostafa was extremely heart by the separation

He decided to throw himself down of the mountain

Until the Gabriel told him stop!

You are so blessed of the things in the world

Mostafa regretted from throwing himself down

But he was being attacked by the separation again

Again he was climbing the mountain

Due to his great sorrow and sadness

Again the Gabriel appeared and said

Do not do it, you, who are a unique king

The story remained until

He discovered the jewel of the truth inside

(Rumi, 2010, the fifth book: 3535-3540)

In Tabari History and Tabari Commentary, there is a total of ten Hadiths related to the beginning of the oracles among which the below story is related to the story of the mentioned couplets.

Tabari quoted Mohammad ibn Shahab Zahri who says: "No oracle came to the Prophet for a while. He got so sad that he climbed the mountains every day to throw himself down. As soon as he reached to the top, Gabriel appeared and said you are the God's messenger; and this caused that he feel relax and comfort". (A group of writers, 1990:175)

The decision of committing suicide seems odd about a great messenger like the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh). In a short reference to this story, Ayatollah Makarem has also written in his interpretation that there is an inharmonious story about the Prophet's life in some interpreters' book or historical book. For example, they have said that the Prophet decided to throw himself down from the mountain several times! and other similar nonsenses which are absolutely fictitious hadiths and Israelites. (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, Vol.27:154)

But as it was said, this story in Mathnavi is mentioned to describe limitless love of Mystics to the God. In this story, Rumi emphasizes that the divine lovers cannot tolerate the separation of Beloved.

4. Conclusion

In Rumi and his proponents' point of view, Mathnavi is thoroughly about delicate points of Quran and the mysteries of spiritual journeys. These points are told in a form of story in Mathnavi. In order to talk about these delicate points and spiritual journeys, Rumi chose the traditions and the prophets' lifestyle and characters and because of this, the prophets' stories of life can be found all over the Mathnavi. Among these real stories, there are also some fictitious stories which are told in a parable and educational way. There are some legends and fictitious stories about the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) which have been mentioned in some interpretations or the book related to the prophets' life. Among these fictitious stories, three stories have been entered in the Mathnavi which have been discussed here. But it should be said that ideas that were being told in Mathnavi about the

prophets' life is something beyond just story telling or what common preachers or commentators tell, and they indicate an originality in thought and an independency in sense inferences. The stories related to the Prophets in Mathnavi have a special flavor. The stories of Mathnavi and even sometimes the fictitious stories can be a gateway to open new mystic meaning which have been told in parable and storytelling form in his poems.

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