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**“WHEN PERSIA MEETS THE CAUCUSES THROUGH POETRY”: ASHRAF OF  
GILAN’S ALLUSION TO MIRZA ALAKBAR SABIR DURING THE IRANIAN  
CONSTITUTIONAL ERA\***

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**Abstract**

Mirza Alakbar Sabir was one of the pivotal literary figures during the Iranian Constitutional revolution in 1907 and the unsuccessful revolution of 1905 in Russian, which affected the Caucasus. He was a role model of many poets of his time including some great Persian poets. In this article, T.S. Eliot’s famous stance towards borrowing from other poets “Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal” has been adopted as the basis of our survey of some of the borrowings of one of the Persian political poets during the Iranian Constitutional revolution namely Ashraf to see if he has allusions to Mirza Alakbar Sabir. The results of the paper show that Ashraf’s poem is a pastiche of Sabir’s style. He is the translator of Sabir, but he makes some alternations of detail, arrangement, and number of lines tending to play down the presence of Sabir in his work remaining “auditory imagination”.


**Keywords:** Azerbaijani Turkish literature, Persian literature, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Ashrafedin Hosseini Gilani, Molla Nasraddin magazine.

**“İRAN, KAFKASYA İLE ŞİİR ARACILIĞIYLA BULUŞTUĞUNDA”:  
İRAN ANAYASA DÖNEMİNDE MIRZA ALAKBAR SABİR’E  
ASHRAFEDİN HOSSEİNİ GILAN’IN GÖNDERMESİ**

Mirza Alakbar Sabir, 1907 İran Anayasa devrimi ve Rusya’daki başarısız 1905 devrimi sırasında Kafkasya’yı etkileyen önemli edebi figürlerden biriydi. O zamanın birçok şairi, bazı büyük Fars şairlerinin de arasında yer alan Sabir’in rol modeliydi. Bu makalede, T.S. Eliot’un diğer şairlerden ödünç almayla ilgili ünlü duruşu "Olgun olmayan şairler taklit eder; olgun şairler çalar" yaklaşımı temel alınarak, İran Anayasa devrimi sırasında Fars politik şairlerden biri olan Ashraf’ın Mirza Alakbar Sabir’e göndermeler yapılıp yapılmadığını incelemek için bir anket yapılmıştır. Makalenin sonuçları, Ashraf’ın şiirinin Sabir’in tarzının bir pastiş olduğunu göstermektedir. Ashraf, Sabir’in çevirmeni olsa da, işinde Sabir’in varlığını "işitsel hayal gücü" ile bastırmak için bazı ayrıntı, düzen ve satır sayısı değişiklikleri yapmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Azerbaycan Türk edebiyatı, Fars edebiyatı, Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Ashrafedin Hosseini Gilani, Molla Nasraddin dergisi.

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## Introduction

Mirza Alakbar Sabir (1862-1911) was a poet of social movements, and he had special ability to criticize his society through writing satire. He is widely regarded as the greatest satirist in Azerbaijani Turkish language and one of the major satirical writers of the Turkic world who was also well-known in the Persianate satire world. His poems and poetic style attracted the attention of many Iranian poets and critics during the Constitutional era of Iran and many people in the Caucasus and Europe found his poetry interesting. Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, Mohammad Taqi Bahar, Nima Yushij, Mohammad Hossein Shahriar and Yahya Arianpour are among the Iranian poets and scholars who referenced to Sabir and his significant effect on Persian poetry in their poems, letters, books, and critiques. “Sabir is a generous poet”, a quotation ascribed to Shahriar, whose heavy influence on Persian poets of his time is undeniable. “Sabir was a prophetic poet who walked the hundred-year-old path in one night and was centuries ahead of the thoughts and writers of his day”, another quotation ascribed to Dehkhoda, also proves Sabir’s crucial role in the poetry of Iran. A review of the Persian literature shows that the more gap widens between Sabir’s time and our own, the more it seems crucial to see his vital role in the poetry of the Iranian Constitutional era. That is why Arianpour declared that the way Ashraf has borrowed from Sabir is elaborated in his book entitled “Az Sabā tā Nimā” to “remain in the history of literature in Iran”. Bearing these in mind, the present study aims to find the effect of Sabir on Persian literature specifically Ashraf’s poetry and consider how Ashraf and Sabir’s poetry are related.

Seyed Ashrafedin Hosseini Gilani or Ashraf of Gilan (1870-1934) known as Ashraf is believed to be one of the figures of the political and patriotic poetry of Iran. Like many intellectuals of his time, he rejected the Shah’s policies and was instead convinced that Iranians need to unite and fight against internal tyrants and foreign enemies and wrote some political and social poems to support people of his time. About eight poems from Nasim-e Shomal, one of the widely-read weekly newspapers founded by Ashraf, are reported by Browne to be penned by Ashraf himself mostly bearing the signature *Faqir*, and in one case the signature *Fikri-yi-Barzgar*. The poems are related to the events connected to what Browne calls “abortive coup d’état”, appeal to the clergy, the Deputies and Mohhamd Ali Shah to “observe the Constitution, enforce the laws and guard the country from the designs of foreign foes”, and “form of a letter of remonstrance emanating from an imaginary reactionary”. Browne points out that Ashraf’s poem alludes to Molla Nasraddin; One of the “chief” papers “published at that time” (Browne, 1914, p. 185). An intriguing point is that Edward Browne himself was interested in Molla Nasraddin that he included some of the cartoons appeared in the magazine in his seminal work *The press and poetry of modern Persia*. He writes: “... its (Moll Nasraddin’s) influence in Persia was so great, and the artistic merit of its cartoons is so considerable, that I have included six typical specimens of the latter in these pages (Browne, 1914, p. xl).”

### 1. Literature Review

There is a dearth of scholarly material treating “Ashraf’s borrowing techniques from Sabir” and to our knowledge the concept of his allusion to Sabir using T.S. Eliot’s famous stance towards borrowing from other poets has not been touched so far. In addition to the seminal works of Browne (1914), Arianpour (1372) and a more recent work (Seif & Bakhshi, 2012), the idea of Ashraf’s borrowing from Sabir is also mentioned in both Persian (Shahriar, 1387) and Azerbaijani Turkish poems of Shahriar (1377): *The Molla Nasraddin which moved*

*the East / With its caricature which is unique in style! / She was the mother from whom Sur-e Esrafil was born/ Pioneer in poetry, drama, and journalism.* Or in another poem: *What do I say about her poets? Oh God! / Her Sabir who wrote on all issues/ He was the leader in the First Constitutional Revolution, / Awakened all sleeping thoughts with his pen!* In his Turkish poem Shahriar writes: *The Persian poet has taken much of his words from us! / A generous poet like Sabir may not be stingy!* The conclusion to be drawn from the poems of Shahriar is that Ashraf's poetry is a pastiche of Sabir's style. That is why he is in real trouble. According to Bahar (1336), the well-known Iranian poet, scholar, politician, journalist, historian, and professor of Persian literature, he is accused of plagiarism: *Ashraf's versification was modern and unique! / But he took Hophopname in his arms! / His poetry was a plagiarism!* It should be noted that *Hophopname* is Sabir's poetry collection. According to Bahar, Ashraf has plagiarized from Sabir. But why is that? Shall we agree with Bahar and call Ashraf's poetry 'a plagiarism'? If we compare some poems of Ashraf with those of Sabir side by side, it is clear that Ashraf has taken some images, vocabularies, styles and in some cases the whole poem from Sabir or at least we see Ashraf's "insatiable appetite for allusion" from Sabir. Then, is Ashraf an imitator or a plagiarist?

This paper seeks to address Ashraf's allusion to Sabir as his poetic potency. It aims to shed light on Persian poetry studies in an attempt to consider the interactions of Persian and Turkish poetry in the Constitutional era of Iran which is among the works of the world literature that have been undeservedly ignored. In line with this aim, the following research questions will be considered: 1. Has Ashraf plagiarized or borrowed from Sabir in creating his influential poems during the Iranian Constitutional era? 2. What kinds of borrowing techniques have Ashraf applied in his poetry?

## 2. Method

Allusion is a reference to another literary work. One of the well-known definitions of allusion or literary borrowing is that of T. S. Eliot. According to Haughton, the context of Eliot's aphorism about quotation tends to be forgotten:

"One of the surest of tests is the way in which a poet borrows. Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different. The good poet welds his theft into a whole of feeling which is unique, utterly different from that from which it was torn; the bad poet throws it into something which has no cohesion. A good poet will usually borrow from authors remote in time, or alien in language, or diverse in interest. Chapman borrowed from Seneca; Shakespeare and Webster from Montaigne" (Haughton, 2011, p. 158).

Haughton points out that the study of allusion is not only about literary sources or influences, but about what Eliot called the "auditory imagination": That is to say "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling ... sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back" (Haughton, 2011, p. 158). In the current study, T. S. Eliot's aphorism about quotation is used as a tool to assess Ashraf's poetry to see if he has allusions to Sabir.

### 3. Results

Before presenting the results and comparing some poems of Ashraf with those of Sabir (1914) side by side it is worth pausing to consider Arianpour's quotation on Ashraf's poetic style. According to Arianpour, when Ashraf noticed Turkish poetry, he translated many of Sabir's poems into Persian because he knew what enthusiasm he would raise and he succeeded in doing that (Shams Langaroodi, 1377, p. 44). One of the best examples of Ashraf's allusion to Sabir's versification is the Persian translations of his revolt poetry (Ashraf, 1371, p. 56). It can be stated that in Sabir's time, Molla Nasraddin, the magazine to which Sabir was contributing actively, in general and Sabir in particular had a tremendous impact not only on Iranian press but on the Constitutional movement as a whole.

After comparing the works of both poets, 21 poems of Ashraf were found to be the translations of Sabir's versification; Arianpour (1372) listed 15 translations and Seif & Bakhshi (2012) added 6 more poetic translations by Ashraf to the list. In addition to the 21 translations, 2 response poems and a theme borrowing were also extracted. The number and percentage of Ashraf's allusion to Sabir's poems are shown in table (1):

Table 1: Ashraf's Allusion to Sabir's Poems

Type of allusion	Number of poems	Percentage
Translation	21	87.5%
Response poem	2	8.33%
Theme borrowing	1	4.16%
Total	24	100%

The results of table (1) indicate that there are 24 cases of Ashraf's allusion to Sabir among which 87.5% occurrence belong to his translations of Sabir's poems. Also, his response poems obtained 8.33% and his theme borrowing obtained 4.16%. The intriguing result to emerge from the data is that Ashraf's translation obtained 87.5%. It can be argued that he is sort of the translator of Ashraf's poems. The first lines of Ashraf's translations and the original poems (written by Sabir) are shown in the original languages in table (2) to have a closer look:

Table 2: List of Ashraf's Translations (Extracted from Arianpour (1372) and Seif & Bakhshi (2012))

	Sabir's poem	Ashraf's translation
1	- نه خبر وار مه شه دی؟- ساغلقین- از چوق دا گنه؟ - غزیت آلمش حاجی احمدده- با! اوغلا، نه منه؟	- کبلا باقر- بلی آقا- چه خبر؟ هیچ آقا. - چیست این غلغله ها- غلغل نی پیچ آقا.
2	پاه! آتونان نه آغر یاتدی بو اوغلان اولو به! نه ده ترپنمیور اوستنده کی بورغان اولو به!	وای بر من مگر این ملت نادان مرده! داد و بیداد مگر این همه انسان مرده!
3	فعله، اوزیوی سنده بر انسامی صانیرسان! آخماق کیشی، انسانلقی آسانمی صانیرسان؟	ای فعله! تو هم داخل آدم شدی امروز! بیچاره چرا میرزا قشتمش شدی امروز؟
4	سن بیله سنمش بالام؟ آی باراکاللاه سنه، فسق ایمش امرین تمام؟ آی باراکاللاه سنه	اشرف والامقام، آی بارک الله به تو! شاعر شیرین کلام، آی بارک الله به تو!

- 5  
 چاتلیور خانباچی غمدن یورگیم،  
 قاوشوب لاپ آچقمدان کورگیم
- 6  
 آخ نجه کیف چکملی ایام ایدی!  
 اوندا که اولاد وطن خام ایدی؟
- 7  
 آلتمش ایل لک عمریم اولدی سنده بر باد اردبیل!  
 برده نامردم اگر ایتسه م سنی یاد اردبیل!
- 8  
 ملا، سنه ایلیورم مصلحت:  
 سویله گوروم ایولنوم، ایولنمیوم؟  
 آلتمیسی سینم ایلیو بدر گشت  
 بر قز آلوب ایولنوم، ایولنمیوم؟
- 9  
 وکیل- حقسزی حقلی دیوب بر چوق گناهه باتمشام  
 حکیم- دردی تشخیص ایتمیوب قوم اقربا آغلاتمشام
- 10  
 کوچه ده توللان ای اوغول، صنعتین اولمور اولماسون  
 صنعته، درسه، مکتبه، رغبتین اولمور اولماسون
- 11  
 اشهدبالله العلی العظیم  
 صاحب ایمانم آشیر و انلیلار!  
 یوق ینی بیر دینه یقینیم منیم  
 قائل قرآنم آشیر و انلیلار؟
- 12  
 گورمه! باش اوسته، یومارام گوزلریم  
 دینمه! مطیعم کسه رم سوزلریم
- 13  
 مولدانی! سالمادی ایل دیل بوغازا  
 عیبی یوق گرچه قوبولنو لوغازا  
 یاز بو اعلانی سن بر کاغازا  
 آچمیشام ری ده گیش بر ماغازا  
 چوق اوجوز قیمته هر شی ساتیرام  
 آی آلان! ... مملکت ری ساتیرام!
- خانباچی، غافل از شوهر من  
 که چه آورده بلا بر سر من؟
- آخ عجب ایام خوشی داشتیم!  
 صحبت و احکام خوشی داشتیم!
- هست اندر شهر مسکو خاطر من شاد ای پدر  
 احکم من گر ز قزوین آورم یاد ای پدر
- شب عید است، ای ملا ندانم  
 زر از مخزن بگیرم یا نگیرم؟  
 بود عمر من از هفتاد افزون  
 بفرما زن بگیرم یا نگیرم؟
- وکیل- من وکیل از همه عالم وکالت می کنم  
 حکیم- من طبیبم اندر این طهران طبابت می کنم
- اگر علم و صنعت نداری به من چه  
 به تحصیل رفیت نداری به من چه
- باز شده وقت سخنپوری  
 جعفریم جعفریم جعفری  
 اشهدبالله العلی العظیم  
 در خط اسلام منم مستقیم
- دست مزنی! - چشم، ببستم دو دست  
 راه مرو! - چشم، دو پایم شکست
- حاجی، بازار رواج است رواج  
 کو خریدار؟ حراج است حراج!  
 می فروشم همه ایران را  
 عرض و ناموس مسلمانان را  
 رشت و قزوین و قم و کاشان را  
 بخیرید این وطن ارزان را  
 بزد و خوانسار حراج است حراج  
 کو خریدار؟ حراج است حراج!

14	<p>بر قوجایام چاق نر کیمی یاشارم، دورت آروادی بربرینه قوشارام.</p>	<p>گر چه من بیرم خم گشته ز پیری کمرم از جهان بیخبرم چار زن دارم و در فکر عیال دگرم از جهان بیخبرم</p>
15	<p>بلای فقره دوشدون، راضی اول بیچاره صبر ایله! بوزین اولدیهسه گر کلفت پاندا قاره، صبر ایله!</p>	<p>صبر کن، آرام جانم صبر کن صبر کن دردت به جانم صبر کن</p>
16	<p>ملا دایی ایتمه شرارت بیله اورتالغا سالما لجاجت بیله</p>	<p>اشرف از این بیش جسارت مکن در سر مشروطه لجاجت مکن</p>
17	<p>ویر پولینی دادلی لذتلی زاد آل قوی وبالین یوتوما گیت آرواد آل</p>	<p>دختر پاکیزه به صد فن بگیر مشدی حسن زود برو زن بگیر</p>
18	<p>مرتجع خادملریم ها ایندی خدمت وقتیدیر یاتمایین هشیار اولون ایش وقتی غیرت وقتیدیر</p>	<p>ای ملت مظلوم، همت حالا وقته تحصیل جلال و شهرت حالا وقته</p>
19	<p>عزرائیل عرض ایده رک سویله دی ای رب انام بیر طیبیب ایشته بو گون قوللارینی قیردی تمام</p>	<p>ملک الموت رفت نزد خدا گفت سبحان ربی الاعلی دکتری هست در فلان کوچه من یکی قیض، او کند صد تا</p>
20	<p>سبحانک سبحانک سبحانک یا رب باخدیقجا بو حکمت لره حیران اولورام هپ</p>	<p>سبحانک سبحانک سبحانک یا هو ما را تو رها کن زغم ای ضامن آهو</p>
21	<p>بی مرحمت اعیانلارینا شکر خدایا بو صاحب ملیانلارینا شکر خدایا</p>	<p>بر رحمت و غفاری تو شکر خدایا بر یاری و غمخواری تو شکر خدایا</p>

It should be noted that some poems of Sabir are translated more than once by Ashraf (Seif & Bakhshi, 2012, p. 211). “Do not see! Aye! I will see no long!” of Sabir is an example of Ashraf’s translation. Since both the form and content of the poems are crucial in the present study, I will provide a free translation of the poems with an emphasis on preserving both the form and the content of the Persian poems of Ashraf as well as the Azerbaijani Turkish poems of Sabir. Sabir’s “Do not see! Aye! I will see no long!”:

Do not see! Aye! I will see no long!  
Do not speak! Aye! I will hold my tongue!  
Do not hear a word! I will close my ears!  
Do not laugh! Mornings and nights are all tears!  
Do not understand! I cannot! Pardon me!  
Forget about it! It’s impossible! You see!  
How to refuse the fact, be a liar?

How NOT to burn when you are set on fire?  
 Quench your heart's flames of passion hell.  
 Give me peace of mind and yourself as well!

Ashraf's "Do not touch! Aye! I will fasten my arm!":

Do not touch! Aye! I will fasten my arm!  
 Do not walk! Aye! I will do my legs harm!  
 Do not say a word! I will say no long!  
 Do not speak! Aye! I will hold my tongue!  
 Do not understand! This? Do not ask!  
 Do not want man to wear a foolish mask!  
 I may be deaf, dumb and blind  
 It's impossible to lose my mind!  
 You've been a donkey under load! But now;  
 Be human! See! How good it is! Wow!

Regarding the significance of revolt poetry, it can be stated that in the time of Sabir and Ashraf, poetry was a popular art form at protests and rallies and their revolt poetry were read in gatherings. Kasravi (1370) stated that "Sabir's poems were widely read in Tabriz and other parts of Azerbaijan. His poetry had a radical effect on the awakening of people, and the Azerbaijanis themselves added other verses to Sabir's poems and made new pieces which were imitations of Sabir's versification". From the civil rights to political movements, poetry of both Sabir and Ashraf was commanding enough to gather crowds in pubs in Iran and the Caucuses. According to Arianpour, "Honestly speaking, Ashraf has translated this poem (of Sabir) very well!" (Arianpour, 1372, p. 69). This translation of Ashraf is one of the well-known poems in Persian and some lines of it are used as a proverb. The following lines of Ashraf's translation is now used as a proverb in Persian: "*Lāl shavam, kur shavam, kar shavam/ Lik mahāl ast ke man khar shevam!*" (I may be deaf, dumb and blind/ It's impossible to lose my mind!). This amazing translation of Ashraf is one of his well-known revolt poems in Persian. On the evidence provided here the conclusion to be drawn is that a major thread running through Ashraf's revolt poetry is Sabir's aroma. That is, Sabirian allusion is a crucial thread in Ashraf's revolt poetry at the outset.

As mentioned earlier, Nasim-e Shomal was under the influence of Mulla Nasreddin, which had a tremendous impact not only on Iranian press but on the Constitutional movement as a whole and "Do not see! Aye! I will see no long!" was an example of this kind. "Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent today!" is also from the pen of Ashraf which brings to mind Sabir's poetic style:

Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent today!  
 Oh, poor! You have a vainglorious scent today?

You are not allowed to the Lords Nest!  
 Coz haven't gold and silver in your vest!  
 You have just a sigh in your kind chest!  
 Like a nonagenarian, you've bent today!

Oh, poor! You have a vainglorious scent today?

Lords and vassals are not equal, of course!  
Landowners and democracy! They divorce!  
Oh, hobo! You are flogging a dead horse!  
Coz in deep poverty, you've been sent today!  
Oh, poor! You have a vainglorious scent today?

...

Comparing this poem of Ashraf with one of Sabir's poem shows that Ashraf's opening verse seems to be a haunting allusion to Sabir's poetic style. The phrase "Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent today!" recalls Sabir's "Bakı fə'lələrində" (To the workers of Baku) where "Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!" occurs seven times. The line "dar mejles-e a'yān be khodā rāh nadāri" (You are not allowed to the Lords Nest!) associates with *social inequality*, which in turn prompts us to remember "Olmaz bu ki, hər əmrə dəxalət edə fəhlə! / Dövlətli olan yerdə cəsarət edə fəhlə!" (Into their affairs, pauper shouldn't poke his nose? / In the presence of the rich, his mouth, he should close!). Sabir's "Bakı fə'lələrində" (To the workers of Baku) is shown in the following:

Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

Into their affairs, pauper shouldn't poke his nose?  
In the presence of the rich, his mouth, he should close!  
He shouldn't lead a life of comfort! He knows!  
He shouldn't feud over his rights! Even a low dose!  
Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

Pauper! Why should you be well-liked by all?  
Why should you speak out and be on the ball?  
Give up! Serve the rich when they call!  
Thank them what they give, even small!  
Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

Oh rich! Don't get bogged down! Be bright!  
Don't listen to the pauper even though he is right!  
Don't let the poor breathe! Them you must slight!  
Stop belittling yourself for the sake of hobos! Right?  
Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

Watch! The poor not clever! He has no desire!  
Unlike you, he doesn't own appropriate attire,  
Nor shawl, nor gown, nor prosperity, entire!  
He just owns a garment and a torn cloth that are dire.



Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

Wanna a clear conscience comes true in this world?  
Not to rue the day nor to feel blue in this world?  
Don't have pity on the paupers' crew! in this world!  
Be wrapped up in yourself! 'tis the clue in this world.  
Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

See people's pain! Don't look for the cure!  
Don't treat the orphan kindly! Be dure!  
Don't start a charity! To meanness become inure!  
To recall or delight the poor, don't endure!  
Backwards is the Wheel of Fortune sent now!  
Pauper thinks he's somebody, like a gent now!

It can be said that Sabir's poetry in general and his working-class poetry in particular began and flourished in this era. That is to say he used to be fascinated by the Turkish and Persian ghazels of Fuzuli and Saadi but his poetic talent flourished in proletarian poetry and outcries of workers, women and school children during 1907-1911. His poetry expressed the social inequality he witnessed in his society. With writing poems such as "Bakı fə'lələrinə" (To the workers of Baku) Sabir tried to have his people equal rights, liberties, and status. He wanted civil rights, freedom of speech, and suitable power relations. The same approach was chosen by Ashraf. He did the same thing in Iran in Persian. Arianpour (1372, p. 70) calls this poem of Ashraf as one of "his best translations of Sabir's poetry" and points out that Ashraf "has been able to preserve the poetic characteristics of Sabir well". Another Sabirian poem of Ashraf is one of his political poems criticizing the Shah of Iran:

Market's booming! Prices fall! Don't pay!  
No buyer? Last call! Don't pay!  
I sell my country! The entire Iran!  
Muslims' property and honor are gone!  
Rasht, Qazvin, Qom and Kashan!  
Buy this homeland for free and run!  
Buy Yazd and Khansar all, don't pay!  
No buyer? Last call! Don't pay!

Ashraf's political poetry responds to the social injustice in Iran. This poem carries *hot news* to his people; *Iran is on sale!* Ashraf sells the whole Iran. He sells Muslim's property! It should be noted that the poet responds to external events through writing this bitter political poem. One of the features of topical poetry, including some political poems, is its ephemeral quality. But this patriotic poem by Ashraf does not die after a century. The main reason behind this is maybe the memorial and testimonial feature of this poem as Hirsch (2022) quoted: "A political poem need not to be a didactic poem. It can be a poem of testimony and memory". The poet criticizes his society through applying conceptual metaphor. In his conceptualization, IRAN IS THING and POET IS SELLER. This amazing conceptualization is borrowed from

Sabir. A review of Nasim-e Shomal shows that “Market’s booming!” by Ashraf is alluded to Sabir’s “On sale” poem appeared in Molla Nasraddin in the beginning of 1909. Ashraf’s poem appeared one month after Sabir’s “On sale” published in Molla Nasraddin. Sabir’s “On sale” addresses the Shah of Iran which is written in the vernacular to reach a larger audience. Ordinary people in the Caucasus and Iran read this poem and were influenced by Sabir’s prophetic pen:

People didn’t hold tongue! Oh Sir!  
 No matter if ridiculed which is not fair!  
 Write down my declaration on paper!  
 I’ve opened a shop in Rey this year!  
 I sell all things at no cost! No pay!  
 Oh buyer! On sale is the entire Rey!

Dorian Rottenberg has also translated Sabir’s “On sale”:  
 People won’t be silent, uncle, when they hear the tale;  
 Bah! It doesn’t matter, does it, what sneers it may entail?  
 Dirt-cheap, the wares my shop displays for sale;  
 Come buy! The whole of Rey today’s for sale! (Faghih, 2017, p. 63).

Sabir’s pen did not miss a single social or political event in the Caucasus and Iran. According to Arianpour, in “On sale”, he “portrays the tyrant Shah of Iran as a bankrupt merchant” (p. 67). In the same vein, Ashraf in “Market’s booming!” addresses Sheikh Fazlollah (pp. 67-68) and criticizes the existing political institutions in Iran. Arianpour calls Ashraf “the translator of Sabir’s poems” and adds:

“But the translator in another part of his translation - both in form and in quantity of poetry – is somewhat freer than the original poem, for example, Sabir’s 24-line poem entitled ‘Olmur olmasın’ has been appeared as a 42-line translation. ... the translator has added a lot of contents to the original text, and as a result, the poem, which was originally 35 lines, has doubled in translation, i.e. 70 lines” (Arianpour, 1372, p. 70).

*Gocalar Marşı* (anthem of the old) is another poem of Sabir which is the target of Ashraf’s allusion. In the following poem, Ashraf depicts an old man who is bending down:

Though I am old bending down  
 I am ignorant about the world!  
 I am married to four women and looking forward to the fifth  
 I am ignorant about the world!  
 ... I am ninety! I am like a healthy lion  
 I am ignorant about the world!  
 .... I wear a beard dyed in henna and color!  
 I lead a healthy life...

This poem is taken from the following poem by Sabir entitled ‘*Gocalar Marşı* (anthem of the old):

I am old! I lead a healthy life like a hero!  
 I am married to four women!  
 I get married and divorced three or four times each year!

The old man never sleeps alone!  
 ... I wear an agate stone ring!  
 I wear a beard dyed in henna!  
 I look at every woman I see  
 The old man never sleeps alone!  
 ... I am a rooster who has coops everywhere!  
 The old man never sleeps alone!

As seen, in most of the studied poems, Ashraf's allusions were not orchestrated rather they were translations. Ashraf does not borrow Sabir's aroma he rather 'steals' his poem, as T. S. Eliot says, and translates them into Persian. So, we can "hear" Sabir clearly in Ashraf's poetry. A review of Ashraf's poetry shows that most of Ashraf's poems are references to Sabir's poems and that is why Ashraf's poem is Sabirian. Another example of translation is "The Angel of Death to God went" by Ashraf:

The Angel of Death to God went:  
 "Glory to my Lord is sent!"  
 There's a doctor in the ally! See!  
 I take one life! A hundred takes he!  
 Let me take his soul too!  
 Or give me another job to do!

Sabir's parallel versification for this poem of Ashraf is his "Azrael, the Angel of Death, to God said":

Azrael, the Angel of Death, to God said:  
 A doctor visited Your slaves and made them all dead!  
 Before I take the soul of a moribund sick  
 He takes one thousand of healthy souls with a trick!  
 All the souls You gave, the tyrant will take!  
 Say! Who will remain as Your slave for Your sake?  
 Let me start the Judgement Day and take his soul!  
 Unless he'll take the slaves' souls whole!  
 Accept my request now! If not, a curtesy I bob,  
 Do me a favor! I wanna resign from my job!  
 Give me another job to serve You! Thank you!  
 Alas! Give the doctor the Azrael's job to do!

In this particular poem, Sabir complains about a doctor's medical error. An inaccurate diagnosis or treatment of a disease is why thousands of people lost their lives. The same social problem which is criticized by Sabir is also seen in Ashraf's versification. Moreover, Ashraf's verses, although not having identical rhyming pattern, recall Sabir's "Azrael, the Angel of Death, to God said", and the phrase "give me another job to do" is fully Sabirian.

It is worth noting that publication of such poems by both Sabir and Ashraf was followed by a storm of criticism (mostly by officials) on the one hand, and a hearty welcome (mostly by ordinary people and intellectuals) on the other. People in Iran and Azerbaijan used to wait for Molla Nasraddin and Nasim-e Shomal to be appeared in cities such as Baku, Tabriz, Rasht, Tehran and some other regions in the Caucuses. Dekhoda and Bahar were among the

intellectuals who praised the magazines and Dehkhoda wrote a poetic response to Sabir poems called *Şeyxolislam Əzasında Cənab Molla Nəsrəddinə Təziyə* (Sincere condolences to Molla Nasraddin who lost Sheykhuislam) which appeared in Sure-e Esrafil.

Despite the fact that only two or three poems of Sabir suffice to convince that his views on social movements were thoroughly influential, or even highly eccentric for Ashraf, his Hophopname is replete with other influential poems. In some poems, Ashraf has borrowed some lines from Sabir: *In Moscow, I'm leading a good life! oh Father! /I swear not to think of Qazvin's strife! oh Father!* The “leading a good life in Moscow” in the first line and “swearing not to think of...” in the second line of Ashraf's poem allude to Sabir's poetic style: *I waste my life here for sixty years! oh Ardabil! /I swear not to think of your affairs! oh Ardabil!* Regarding the mentioned allusion of Ashraf, in his translation (*In Moscow, I'm leading a good life! oh Father!*), since it recalls the syllable and rhyming pattern of Sabir's poetry, it can be categorized as what Eliot calls “auditory imagination”. That is to say when reading the Persian versification of Ashraf one feels the Turkish syllable and rhythm pattern of Sabir. It penetrates “far beyond the conscious levels of thought and feeling” and it returns the reader to the original text namely Sabir's poetry.

In addition to the discussed translations, in some other cases, Ashraf has also borrowed a line or some lines from Sabir and recontextualized the poem and has a conversation with him. This kind of versification which is called “response poem” is also found in Ashraf's poetry as shown in table (2). Seif & Bakhshi (2012) reported two response poems by Ashraf. One of them is a poem addressing *Molla Nasraddin* or simply *Molla*: *Do not gallop through this field, oh Molla! / Bullshit! Do not write to Muslims, Oh Molla! / ...What happened to Iran? None of your business! Oh Molla! ...* Sabir has a criticism about the Shah of Iran and calls him “Məmdəli” and addresses the Iranians ironically. Ashraf does not get Sabir's implied meaning and as a result he does not accept his criticism and responds by writing the following poem. He first addresses Molla Nasraddin with respect and calls the magazine “Pioneer of the Nobles”. He appreciates Sabir's “constructive criticisms” and calls the magazine “candle and light in the Caucuses” and the “Nightingale of Tiflis”. Then, he has a few criticisms to make about Sabir's poem: *... We are off the hook! Oh Molla! / Do not argue about it that much, oh Molla!...* After criticizing, Ashraf praises *Sattar Khan*, the pivotal figure in the Constitutional era of Iran, and calls Sabir's versification “sweet” and like a “rock candy”.

Besides translations and response poems, theme borrowing is another technique used by Ashraf to allude to Sabir. In most of his poems, this kind of allusion is used by Ashraf. One of the best samples is that of “modern school” poems. Some poems by Ashraf incorporate two or more Sabirian allusions relating to topics such as modern schools, education, women, workers etc. Considering these allusions, the conclusion to be drawn is that Ashraf's poems are somewhat Sabirian as Arianpour (1372, p. 64) wrote: *Ashraf, in this part of his poems, was in fact a translator and transmitter of Sabir's thoughts to the Persian speakers and even most of his original poems were somewhat “Sabirian”*.

To sum up, both Sabir and Ashraf's works are invaluable. They are as “mirrors” of their society as Sabir wrote in one of his poems. Ashraf preserves the poetic characteristics of Sabir and in some cases when reading his Persian versification, you feel the Turkish syllable and rhythm pattern of Sabir and it penetrates “far beyond the conscious levels of” your thought and

feeling. He also has some response poems and theme borrowings from Ashraf. Moreover, when Ashraf translates Sabir into Persian, he recreates Sabir's sentiment.

#### 4. Discussion

One of the main goals of this paper was to assess Ashraf's borrowing from Sabir based on Eliot's well-known remark on the "way in which a poet borrows". Our data suggests that much of Ashraf's poetic potency comes from the numerous allusions to and in most of the cases translations from Sabir and despite the fact that Ashraf was under the heavy influence of Sabir and his poetic style, there is no work of Sabir to be directly quoted in Nasim-e Shomal. This is criticized by Arianpour (1372, p. 64): "Although it may be said that Ashraf did not know that the poems published in Molla Nasraddin magazine bearing unknown signatures were from Sabir, according to the code of ethics [for poets], he should indicate the source of the content of his poems at least once in Nasim-e Shomal. And in any case, this negligence is considered a weak point for him."!

Regarding Arianpour's quotation, it is worth noting that Ashraf knew Sabir or at least he was familiar with his poetry since he has some response poems. In addition to Arianpour, Bahar points out that Ashraf is accused of plagiarism. On the other hand, Shahriar believes that Sabir is a generous poet and his poetry is set on the Literature Table and all poets are served (including Ashraf) with his poetic heritage. Some scholars of Persian literature believe that we cannot even imagine Ashraf without Sabir: "It is certain that without Sabir, Ashraf would not have existed" (Seif & Bakhshi, 2012, p. 204). Based on what is mentioned, it leaves no room for doubt that Nasim-e Shomal of Ashraf is marinated in Sabirian allusion.

To answer the research questions about Ashraf's poetic style, as far as the findings of the current study are concerned, Ashraf's poem is a pastiche of Sabir's style. In some cases, mostly in his translations, with changing the names and adding or omitting some verses Ashraf tends to play down the presence of Sabir in his work remaining "auditory imagination". That is, in some of his translations, Ashraf makes some alternations of detail, arrangement, and number of lines. It can be argued that studying Sabir's poem in Molla Nasraddin was a pivotal moment in Ashraf's literary life, and later he had a heavy influence on the social and political movements during the Iranian Constitutional era through his translation of Sabir's revolt and social poetry.

Regarding the borrowing techniques of Ashraf and their relation to T. S. Eliot's quotation, Tearle's exploration of T. S. Eliot's quotation is helpful. He concluded that immature poets imitate "because they want to be like other poets" and mature poets steal "because they want to be themselves and assert their own originality in the context of the 'great tradition' of previous poetry". It can be argued that Ashraf is a mature poet since he wants to be Sabir. He does his best to be Sabir of Farsi language. He wants to contribute to the Iranian social and political movements through his versification just as what Sabir does in the Caucasus in general and in Azerbaijan in particular. So, Ashraf can be seen as the Iranian Sabir whose pen does not miss a single social or political event in Iran. As mentioned earlier, in "On sale", for instance, Sabir "portrays the tyrant Shah of Iran as a bankrupt merchant" and in "Market's booming!" Ashraf addresses Sheikh Fazlollah and criticizes the existing political institutions in Iran.

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