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## The Poetics Of Imagery In The Praise Poems Of Abu Al-Atahiya

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### Abstract

The artistic image is one of the most important pillars that the poet relies on to express the feelings and ideas within himself, he uses extreme degrees of imagination, which goes beyond all limits, to achieve the intended meaning and produce an artistic image in which the features of modern poetry emerge through the use of words, imagination, and connotation in a linguistic template that holds an abundance of significance. The poetics of the artistic image appear in the use of words and connotations to depict a fictional scene in which the poet exceeds the limits of reality to the world of wild imagination. It became clear to the researcher that the features of poetics were represented in the artistic image of Abu al-Atahiya, which he used in praise poems, as the poet excelled in selecting his artistic images, which carried many connotations that foretell the status and position of the one praised, which is evident in his praise of the Abbasid caliphs al-Mahdi, al-Hadi, and al-Rashid. He transitioned to the world of imagination to select some connotations of praise that existed in his time and mix them into an artistic image in which his poetic ability was highlighted.

**Keywords:** Poetics of Imagery in the Praise Poems

### Introduction:

Poetry is considered one of the literary arts that express the components of the human soul, and the ideas and feelings it contains that are manifested by the poet in a literary form that has an impact on the soul of the recipient, with the stylistic and artistic means it contains that the poet includes in his poem. The most prominent of which is the poetic image, in which he depicts and expresses what is on his mind, drawing inspiration from his environment, and formulating them in an interesting style that reflects the poet's high taste. As such, he can illustrate the meaning in a way that carries an aspect of privacy and influence on the recipient through the integration of a set of colors and graphic formulas, which illustrate the meaning and show it in the most beautiful way.

This study tries to explain the poetic methods that poets use in their poetic images, and the researcher chose the Abbasid poet Abu al-Atahiya since he held a literary status among Arab poets in general, and the poets of his time are in particular. The researcher explains the reason for his choice of the Diwan (collection of poetry) of Abu al-Atahiya that most of the studies that dealt with the poet's Diwan did not address the praise poems and was limited to asceticism.

The problem of the study and its importance is shown in its attempt to highlight the features of modern poetry in the poetic image that Abu al-Atahiya used in his poems and praise poetic texts that was mentioned in his Diwan, especially after what the researcher found after studying his poetic Diwan, as he was confined to a group of people, especially the Abbasid caliphs who lived in his time. This study also aims to explain how the poet was able to express the most prominent meanings that were mentioned in his poetic images in the praise poems and texts that appeared in his Diwan, in addition to its attempt to present a new scientific study that takes the praise poetry in the Diwan of Abu al-Atahiya as a subject for research. The researcher did not find any study that dealt with praise in his Diwan.

Among the questions that the study attempts to answer are: What are the most prominent features of the poetics of imagery that were evident in the praise poetry of Abu al-Atahiya? How could the poet express the poetic meanings and connotations in his poetic images? To answer the questions of the study and achieve its objectives, it will use the descriptive and analytical approach by describing the poetic images that Abu al-Atahiya used in his poems in which he praised the Abbasid caliphs, and some of the prestigious men of the Abbasid state, and analyzing these images.

### First: The Poetics of Imagery:

Imagery or artistic image is a literary and poetic term which simply refers to those methods that literary and poetic texts have known in ancient and modern, such as analogy, metaphor, simile, and allegory, and the issues that revolve around them related to the meaning, language, creativity, aesthetic value, and literary function. The term is a modern term created by romantic poets, whose influence was clearly affected by the critics who dealt with the concept of the image, and the poets who used it. The romances have exaggerated in estimating the value of the image in poetry when they made it a standard for the authentic poetic genius, and that "when it is formed a prevailing emotion or a series of ideas and images were born by a prevailing emotion, and when the abundance turns into unity and the sequence into one moment, and when the poet reveals a human and intellectual life upon them from his soul"<sup>1</sup>. The artistic image, according to the Romantics, is a series of ideas that are generated as a result of the poet being affected by a situation that generates a prevailing emotion in him, through which he reveals a kind of his spirit and his human and intellectual life.

The modernity of the terms (Imagery) or (Image) does not mean that the ancient Arabs did not research the artistic image, as imagery and creativity in it were and still are present in ancient Arab critical studies, because it is the means that the poet uses to express his vision of reality through depicting his feelings and thoughts, which help him achieve himself objectively. One of the first Arab critics to address the artistic image was al-Jahiz, who said: "The meanings are laid out in the way and are known to the non-Arab and the Arab, but the matter is in establishing the meter, choosing the word, ease of output, and the abundance of water, rely on the correctness of the form and the quality of the structure, for poetry is an art, a type of illustration, and a type of depiction." Jahiz referred to -In his defense of word and its position in relation to meaning, al<sup>2</sup> imagery, which he considered part of the production of poetry which requires the poet to be able to use words, formulate them well, and have good quality in their structure. Therefore, he produces poetry that delights the ear, and expresses the inner soul of the poet with all the feelings and thoughts it contains. According to al-Jahiz, the image is based on: "Mastering the craft of meanings that all people know and relying on the power of imagination in imagery." That is, the poet must<sup>3</sup> select some of the meanings that all people know, and formulate them in a form based on his creative imagination to create an artistic image of aesthetic value that expresses a meaning.

Abu Hilal al-Askari shows the clearest level of the rhetorical image by saying: "The rhetoric is all the meaning that reaches the heart of the listener, so it resides in himself as it resides in yourself through an acceptable image and a good exhibition, but rather we made the good exhibition and the acceptable image as conditions in the rhetoric because if the poet's words are shabby and his exhibition was not eloquent, then the meaning is not rhetoric, although the concept of meaning is exposed clearly." Askari makes the quality of the word, its good formulation, the quality of the structure, and -Abu Hilal al<sup>4</sup> the good and correct description of the composition of speech the criteria of comparison between poets.

Abdul Qaher al-Jurjani goes further than what al-Jahiz and Abu Hilal al-Askari did, as he believes: "There is no doubt that the artistic image is the product of the faculty of imagination; the dynamism of imagination does not mean imitating the outside world, but rather means innovation and creativity, and highlighting new relationships between contradictory, discordant elements. On this basis, the artistic image cannot be limited to visual patterns only, but rather it goes beyond this to the point that the image's production is related to all possible feelings that make up human perception itself." The image<sup>5</sup> is the result of the imagination, it is the poet's creativity for a new artistic creation.

From the above, we can say that the artistic image was present in the old criticism as the tool of delivering the meaning, because the old critics did not provide an accurate idiomatic concept of the artistic image, but they were satisfied with the linguistic significance, and some of them based its definition on the formal side, so they linked the image and the form.

Among the modern critics is Izz al-Din Ismail, who believes that the artistic image is an emotional composition because it belongs to the imagination which turns it into an image that embodies this reality. He says: "The image is an emotional composition that, in its essence, belongs to the world of imagination more than it belongs to the world of reality."<sup>6</sup>

Jaber Asfour took a moderate position regarding the artistic image, as he did not support the old, nor abolish the new, that is, he did not give each of them their due. He says: "The artistic image is a modern term, formulated under the influence of the terms of Western criticism..., but the problems and issues raised and proposed by this modern term exist in the heritage, even if the method of presentation and handling differs, or aspects of focus and degrees of interest are distinguished." It is<sup>7</sup> a term that blends ancient rhetorical types with modern concepts, as it stood among the proponents of the originality of the image in the Arab critical heritage.

Mustafa Nasef agreed with him in this when he said: "I only seek from the simple pages that lie in your hands, that you share with me the feeling of all those issues that ancient criticism knows." Mustafa Nasef also paid attention to the beauty of<sup>8</sup> imagery, as he defined the image by saying: "The image in literature is usually used to indicate everything has a connection with sensory expression, it is sometimes used as a synonym for the metaphorical use of words." As such, the image is linked<sup>9</sup> to the ability to express and convey the poetic experience, and it is equivalent to the metaphorical use of words and concepts.

The artistic image has a special place among poets, as it is considered the constant and permanent essence of poetry. Whenever the concepts of poetry change, the poetic image changes, in addition to the fact that the poetic image is an expression of the poet's vision of reality, and a depiction of the ideas and sensory experiences that are going on within him. So, the artistic image is the tool which the poet uses to convey his poetic experience. In this regard, Medhat al-Jayar says: "The image is the essence of poetry and its tool which is capable of creation and innovation." Likewise, there are critics<sup>10</sup> who link the image and the experience, as Muhammad Ghoneimi Hilal says: "The essential artistic means of conveying the experience is the image in its partial and total meaning, the entire poetic experience is nothing but a large image with several parts, which in turn is a partial image that arises from the total image."<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Ghoneimi Hilal proves that the image is the means that the poet uses to transfer his experience into meaning, working to illustrate the artistic image in a comprehensive way.

The importance of the artistic image is due to the method of presentation, as Jaber Asfour says, "It is the way in which a kind of attention to the meaning is presented to us surprises us with its way of presentation." Therefore, the image is a<sup>12</sup> special means for the writer to form his vision, determine his position, and present his experience in a special, meaningful way to affect the recipient.

### **Poetics of Imagery:**

In the title of the study, the viewer will find the word "poetics" in "the poetics of imagery," meaning that the study examines two areas, trying to connect them, namely: the concept of poetics and its characteristics, and the artistic image. It studies the most prominent poetic features and characteristics that are present in artistic images; however, it is necessary to delve a little into the concept of poetics first to deduce its most important features and characteristics that are available in the artistic

image, especially since the term poetics is considered one of the critical terms used by critics and those working with literature. It is the translation of the Greek term (Poietiqe), which means the sum of the components, features, and <sup>13</sup> relationships, and everything that makes any text a poetic text, and includes studying the history of poetry, its techniques, and the categories and laws that organize this field of knowledge and establish its identity.

Going back to the concept of poetry historically, the researcher finds, like other researchers in the term (poetic), that it signifies a wide concept that was known in the field of literary and critical research since the emergence of poetry. Aristotle Thaleis was the first to refer to the concept of poetry in his book (The Art of Poetry), when he referred to poetry as a craft, when he said "We are now talking about the manufacture of poetry and its types." Aristotle sees that the poet is a <sup>14</sup> manufacturer and poetry is his craft, which is "an imitation that is named by three means, which may unite or may be unique, namely: rhythm, harmony, and language." Poetry is a fundamental imitation that provides an aesthetic vision of the <sup>15</sup> poet's vision towards what surrounds him. Therefore, Aristotle was concerned with the form and content, as "poetry is an artistic craft, and that the art of the poet manifests itself in formulating and organizing poetic work until it becomes poetry, based on the imitation as a fundamental element in poetry." As such, the poet must foresee the future and go beyond <sup>16</sup> reality to what is possible in poetic imagination. If the poet's commitment is clear and concrete in reality without transcending it, he loses his poetic ability as a result, and his poetic product turns into a narration.

If Aristotle's poetics is the creation of poetry and its imitation of reality in a fundamental way requiring attention to the language in terms of harmony and rhythm, then it was evident among the ancient Arabs in the pillar of Arabic poetry, which contains seven chapters, which are: "The honor and correctness of the meaning, the magnificence and integrity of the word, and the correctness in description - from the combination of these three methods, other proverbs and stanzas of verses were multiplied - as well as the similarity in simile, the merging of the parts of the rhymes and combining them to choose the one with the most beautiful meter, the suitability of the metaphor to the one that it refers to, the integration between the word and the meaning, and their intense need for rhyme so that there is no dissonance between them. These are seven chapters that constitute the pillar of poetry, and each chapter has a standard." Together, these seven chapters were the foundations <sup>17</sup> that must be present in the poetic text for it to be considered poetry, and for its writer to be considered an excellent poet. One of the first Arabs to be guided by poetry was al-Asma'i in his book "The Excellence of the Poets," in which he coined the term (Excellence). He defined the poet based on it as "one who has an advantage over others, like the advantage of a stallion over a bully." Asma'i issued his critical judgments that relied on the quality of structure, the <sup>18</sup> ingenuity of meaning, and the abundance of poetry.

Recently, one of the most prominent critics who studied poetics in his studies and research was Jean Cohen in his book (The Structure of Poetic Language), which falls within the "structural poetic, which is structurally sound in formal production, that is, the search for a form th the rest of the forms." Jean Cohen made poetics a scientific aspect based on the study of <sup>19</sup> facts in a concrete way that can be supported and refuted, adopting the methods of statistics and comparison between the poetic production of classicism, romanticism, and symbolism. He took a sample of them for the research and scientific purpose that he sought. Poetics, according to Jean Cohen, is concerned with poetry only and nothing else. It is "a science whose subject is poetry," so he makes it an independent science that specializes in the study of poetry only, and nothing <sup>20</sup> other than poetry. Poetic production is the only thing that poetry investigates, and thus it excludes everything else from the circle of poetics.

Its field of work in poetry is defined as being concerned with searching for all the artistic and natural features and topics that arouse poetic emotion in the poet. "It is possible, of course, to seek to find a general poetics that searches for the common features between all artistic or natural topics that would arouse poetic emotion." However, the researcher in the concept of <sup>21</sup> poetics noted that Jean Cohen limited his study in his book (The Structure of Poetic Language) to poetic language only and did not address the common features or artistic or natural topics to find general poetics, since "this requires a purely methodological nature, we thought it would be better to limit the field of study and not currently be exposed to anything other than the purely literary features of this phenomenon, which in our view goes back to the analysis of the poetic forms of language, of language alone." The nature of the stage that Jean Cohen lived through forced him to limit the scope of his <sup>22</sup> research in poetics to language alone, without touching on anything other than language. Rather, he was not satisfied with that, as it is understood from his saying "for language alone" that research into poetics must be in one language only. From language, it is possible to move to another field from which it is appropriate to extract poetic features. "When we obtain positive results, it will be legitimate to move them to fields other than literature."<sup>23</sup>

Jean Cohen points to the necessity of "searching for the objective basis on which a text is classified into this or that category. Are there features present in everything that is classified as poetry and absent in everything that is classified as prose? If the answer is yes, then what are they? That is the question which every poetic approach that seeks to be scientific must respond to." The goal of poetics is determined in finding an objective basis in determining the characteristics of poetry that <sup>24</sup> distinguishes it from prose, which only exists in poetry, and no in prose. These are the features that differentiate poetry from prose, and thus we can classify any text according to those features to poetry or prose in an accurate, scientific manner which depends on a clear and obvious basis.

In order to achieve the goal of poetics, as defined by Jean Cohen, in classifying each text into the art to which it belongs correctly, according to the features it has, without having any features in common with other literary and linguistic genres, there must be a fixed standard through which different texts can be distinguished. As such, this criterion becomes the comparative approach through which classification is made, "as the approach followed in a discriminatory issue can only be a comparative approach." To achieve the comparative approach, Jean Cohen linked the poetics of a text of poetry, as it is <sup>25</sup> differentiated from prose, which he considered a criterion for the text of poetry to be poetic, with the ways it illustrates differences from the prose language, because the prose language is the most common and the most famous, as he says: "The

matter means here to confront poetry with prose, since prose is a common language, so we can talk about a criterion in which we consider the poem as displaced from it."Poetics is evident, according to Jean Cohen, in the concept of <sup>26</sup> displacement, because it is the method through which one can measure the violation and departure from the language of prose.

These are some of the opinions that the researcher selected for poetics, through which he attempts to highlight the poetic features of imagery, the first of which emerges in its being one of the most important factors upon which a poem is built, as "the artistic image is the fixed and permanent essence of poetry," as the reader rarely finds a poem devoid of artistic <sup>27</sup> images, or imagination, which is the clear basis for constructing the artistic image. Among the features of the poetics of the artistic image that Jaber Asfour defines, and is organized within the concept of poetics, is the importance of the artistic image for the modern critic, as he says: "It is the means by which he explores the poem and the poet's position on reality, and it is one of his important criteria in judging the authenticity of the experience and the poet's ability to shape it into a form that brings pleasure and experience to those who receive it<sup>28</sup>." The modern critic looks at the poet's poetry and the imagination and artistic images contained in his poems that reveal his philosophical vision of reality. In addition, they have a role in demonstrating the expressive ability through which the poet can use creative imagination in expressing the essence of himself and his goals.

Also, Russian Formalists considered it one of the most prominent differences between poetry and prose, as the followers of the Russian Formalism consider the artistic image as the third difference between poetry and prose, as "they refused to equate the language of poetry with imagination; the important thing is not the existence of imagination, but rather the method of using it. Thus, the poetic image is not a tool for explanation."The metaphor is used in prose as a kind of <sup>29</sup> artistic imagery to bring the image closer to the audience of the recipients, while it intensifies the aesthetic effect in poetry by converting the usual thing into a strange thing and placing it in an unexpected context.

This unexpected context is what stands out according to Jean Cohen, who considered poetics to be a displacement from the language of prose, since the artistic image in prose, as the followers of the Russian Formalism say, is used to bring the meaning closer. When we say: (Muhammad is the lion of the jungle) we have brought the meaning intended to show the courage of (Muhammad) closer. However, the artistic image in poetry must be built in another dimension in which aesthetic condensation is evident, as al-Mutanabbi said for example<sup>30</sup>:

**Both creatures possessed the same courage, even though the predator was different from the prey.**

**A lion sees both of his features in you, a lean body and a muscular forearm.**

al-Mutanabbi depicts the strength of al-Mamduh, which is similar to the lion in boldness and courage. Moreover, the lion sees his strength in al-Mamduh himself, and here al-Mutanabbi reached the utmost level of depiction, in making the lion realize that the prince facing him is equal to him in boldness and courage, and possesses the same strength. As such, al-Mutanabbi showed aesthetic condensation in expressing the characteristic of al-Mamduh, which, in his opinion, reached its highest extreme level and was on par with the lion.

The poetics of the artistic image is highlighted in the words of al-Mutanabbi based on the poetics of Jean Cohen in that the poet has reached the utmost depiction of the power of al-Mamduh and his courage, which is equal to the lion, to the point that the lion noticed it, as if we see that al-Mutanabbi is indicating the lion's fear from the prince.

The poetics of the artistic image is highlighted as it was manifested by Aristotle in the poet's imagination, in which he must go far beyond reality, and that it should not be limited, but rather reaches the maximum degree of poetic imagination. The artistic image greatly depends on imagination, as it helps the creator in possessing the ability to create a mental image that is absent from the sense, as his ability is not limited to the automatic restoration of sensory perceptions related to a specific time or place, but the effectiveness of imagination extends beyond this. It reshapes the perceptions and builds a distinctive world in its seriousness and composition within it, and it combines the incompatible things with the separated elements by unique relationships that create harmony and unity. This ability that imagination gives to the poet is what distinguishes him from others, as the poet's special value is inseparable from his imaginative ability that enables him to integrate elements together, enabling him to discover new relationships. As a result, the poet's creativity is often classified on the basis of his distinct imaginative ability which enables him to create poems, weave their images from event of reality, and reshape them to provide a new, distinct vision of reality itself<sup>31</sup>. This is what became clear to us in al-Mutanabbi's previous verse, as his imagination reached the point that he likened the lion to the prince in his previous depiction, especially since they were similar in boldness and courage. Furthermore, the lion noticed the strength of al-Mamduh, and the tools he possessed, so the lion was reassured when it found something similar to the power tools of the prince al-Mamduh in it.

## **Second: Praise in the Poetry of Abu al-Atahiya**

The observer of the Diwan of Abu al-Atahiya notes that his praise was limited to three of the Abbasid caliphs who lived in his time, and they are: Muhammad al-Mahdi, Musa al-Hadi, and Haroun al-Rasheed, in addition to his praise for three of his companions, namely: Yazid bin Mazyad, al-Fadl bin al-Rabie, and Amr bin al-Ala' Mawla Omar bin Harith, the companion of al-Mahdi. Thus, the researcher finds that the praise poetry in the Diwan of Abu al-Atahiya is very few when compared to the poetry of asceticism, which dominated his Diwan.

As for his artistic images in his praise of a number of the Abbasid successors, they are the images that were used to express the poetics in his poems praising them, as we refer to the following examples:

One of his artistic images in praising Muhammad al-Mahdi, when he said:

**You are al-Muqabil (the confronter) and al-Mudabir (the man of honorable lineage) on many occasions.**

**Among the uncles, the fathers, and the grandfathers.**

**If you are linked to your father, then you rise to highest rank of glory,**

**And if you are linked to an uncle, then no uncle is more honorable than Yazid<sup>32</sup>.**

Here, he describes him with two qualities: al-Muqabil, which means the confronter, and al-Mudabir, which means the honorable one of his lineage, as the poet expressed by saying: You are the one who confronts by his honorable lineage, which means that the Caliph al-Mahdi can be openly proud of his honorable lineage. Here, the poet uses the word (al-Muqabil) in the sense of the confrontation, and the confrontation is only in the battle or fighting, and the confrontation between the right and the falsehood, as if the poet wanted the Caliph al-Mahdi to face people with his origin and his good lineage as he faces enemies in the battle.

Also, he praised al-Mahdi when he said<sup>33</sup>:

God knows that the causes of death listen to your commands against whoever disobeys you.

If you direct them towards a tyrant, they will come back to you, bleeding<sup>34</sup> of his red blood.

Even if the wind had left you in a graceful day, it would have failed to obtain your generosity.

Here lies the poetic of imagery in that the Caliph al-Mahdi is like the Prophet Suleiman, whom God has harnessed all of what is on earth to serve him, to the extent that God has granted him all the causes of death to be his weapon which he uses against his enemies. Here, the poet portrayed the causes of death as the man who obeys the command of his master in the same way they obey the command of al-Mahdi to eliminate his enemies by death.

In addition, he said the following, praising the Caliph al-Mahdi<sup>35</sup>:

The Caliphate came to him, led by him, walking on its feet

It was only suitable for him, and he was only suitable for it.

If someone other than him had sought it, the earth would have been shaken by an earthquake.

The hearts did not obey him deep within out of their own good deeds accepted by God.

And the Caliph, out of hatred and not because of it, will hate whoever says it to someone else other than him.

The depiction here lies in the caliphate, which he likened to a walking human being, as the caliphate walked on its feet, seeking the Caliph, and its submission to the caliph was intensified by making it subservient to him, obeying his command, and it was not permissible for it to disobey him.

He also said the following in praise of the Caliph al-Mahdi<sup>36</sup>:

**A barren desert which I crossed its erased traces carefully and with difficulty.**

**With a camel that was Jasra, Adhafra, Khawassa, Ayrana, Alandat**

**It rushes forwards, facing the sun as it rises, seeking my good pleasure<sup>37</sup>.**

**Oh my camel, do al-khabab<sup>38</sup> (walk fast), and do not promise yourself that there is a resting place from what you see**

**Until we reach a king whom God has crowned with gifts.**

**He has two crowns above his head, the crown of majesty and the crown of Ikhbat<sup>39</sup>.**

**He says to the wind whenever it blows: "O wind, can you keep up with me?"**

**I am the one whom uncle is the Prophet, and whom maternal uncles are the most generous and the most honorable.**

Here, the depiction lies in expressing the status of the Caliph al-Mahdi, whom God crowned with gifts, and here also he is likened to the Prophet Suleiman, son of David, who has the wind under his command, so he addresses it, saying: Can you keep up with me? But what kind of keeping up did the Caliph meant? It is keeping up with lineage and closeness to the Prophet - Peace be upon him - and the lineage of his honorable maternal uncles.

Afterwards, Abu al-Atahiya moves to the praise of Musa al-Hadi after the death of al-Mahdi. He praised him once when a child was born to al-Hadi on the first day of the Caliphate; Abu al-Atahiya entered his room and said<sup>40</sup>:

**Musa infuriated people who were envious of him as he adorned the earth with his children.**

**A master from his descendants came to us who was Asiad<sup>41</sup> of his ancestors.**

**The earth was covered with joy and the king rejoiced because of his birth.**

**And the pulpit smiled with a joy which rose to the peaks of its sticks.**

**It is as if I will soon see him among his comrades and leaders.**

**In a gathering whose banners flutter, as he conquered the earth with his armies.**

In this text, the poet wanted to congratulate the Caliph with the new baby, in which he spoke about what was achieved by the Caliph al-Hadi of matters such as the Caliphate and sons, which made other people envious, and they were hiding their envy and hatred for the Caliph; when the Caliph al-Hadi had all of this, their anger increased. Here, the poet likened the Caliph al-Hadi and his brothers, the Hadis, to adornment, in which the girl is adorned, due to the traits that distinguished them from other people, such as good lineage, and the proximity to the Prophet - peace be upon him -. So, he depicted the earth as a girl who wears the best adornment she has, and the adornment of the earth, in the eyes of Abu al-Atahiya, are the Hadis, who raised their head with great pride. An image drawn by the poet to bring joy and happiness to the soul and heart of the praiseworthy, and to be influential in a way that he admires.

He also said the following about Musa al-Hadi<sup>42</sup>:

**Fear and hope would tremble as Musa moved the rod or thought<sup>43</sup>.  
How clear is the merit in the unseen of what he reported of his opinion and what he issued!  
How many people were proud of their people, and others humiliated by their own?  
The stick produces fruit when the rod touches it, and it would not bear fruit if someone else touched it.  
Tell me then, who is like Musa, his father, al-Mahdi, or his grandfather, Abu Jaafar?**

Here, the poet talks about the Caliph al-Hadi and the miracles he possessed. The rod, which is the king's scepter, was depicted as bearing fruit, as God Almighty provided the Caliph al-Hadi with miracles just like His righteous followers. It is as if the poet made the Caliph reach the status of the righteous whom God distinguished from the rest of His creation with these miracles, such as the stick in his hand would bear fruit, whereas it would not bear fruit if it were in someone else's hand. Here, the poet likened the scepter to a tree, because fruit is a prominent characteristic of the plant, and this meaning is an exaggeration, because he was pleading for his compassion as he was dissatisfied with him.

Among his praises of Musa al-Hadi after he was pleased with him was what he said in his poem at the beginning:

**I long for the short time between al-Khwarnaq and al-Sadeer**

There are many artistic images in this poem, which he begins by saying<sup>44</sup>:

**They were young who ruled the reins of time like hawks**

Here, he talks about the Abbasid, so he makes them young, and (al-futuwa) means youth, and the word (young) has its indications in the poetry of praise, and the permeation of that age phase of activity, strength, and vitality, which helps the young to achieve what they aspire to. The Abbasid were like this, as they possessed the strength and determination that helped them in achieving what they aspire to, so they obtained the Caliphate, expanded the Islamic state during their reign, and they had prestige and strength which preserved their position among the kings of other countries and the Emirates at that time. So, the Abbasid were likened to hawks, since they characterize prestige and strength. The Abbasid were like this, since they were known for their strength, prestige, and being fierce against their enemies, and they were<sup>45</sup>:

**They drink the finest red wine, extracted from the grape tree  
Which was like a virgin raised by the sun rays during the hot weather  
It was not touched by fire, nor was the stain of pots attached to it.**

The Abbasid lived their lives that they were distinguished from others in selecting the best of everything, in their sessions and evenings, they tend to offer the finest and best types of wine, as they drink the varied wine of the finest types of grapes. Here, the tree is likened in its freshness to the virgin girl who has not been touched by a person; likewise, the grape tree, which grew on the sun rays, gained the color yellow from it. This also has a close connection to their lives before Islam, which demonstrates their adherence to their Arabism and its authenticity, as the ancient Arabs before Islam were proud of serving the finest types of wine in their private evenings for their guests. Moreover, it was the Caliph's custom during his evenings to carry a bottle of wine made from the finest types of grapes and sway, like a new robe, to the tunes of music with girls dancing, so he said<sup>46</sup>:

**A king with fine clothes who walks in front of the people like a new robe.  
With a bottle that extracts the hidden secret from the conscience  
It was red like the bright star in the palm of the king  
It makes the honorable man unaware of what lies ahead  
And dancers with slim waists who danced around us in dark, hidden chambers.**

After the death of Musa al-Hadi, the poet Abu al-Atahiya was associated with the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid. Abu al-Atahiya had his own adventures with him, as sometimes al-Rashid would get angry with him and put him in prison, and sometimes he would be satisfied with him and honor him with an abundance of gifts. Among his words in praise of Haroun al-Rashid when al-Rashid appointed the crown prince to his three sons, al-Amin, al-Ma'mun, and al-Mu'tamin, Abu al-Atahiya said at the beginning of his poem<sup>47</sup>:

**I departed from the remote desert, sitting down, as many soldiers marched ahead.**

In this verse, he praises Haroun al-Rashid's three sons, al-Amin, al-Ma'mun, and al-Mu'tamin, and describes them by saying<sup>48</sup>:

**They look at each other with look of majesty, like the eyes of antelopes that possess the hearts of lions.  
Their ancestors are like the sun that came in the crescent moon and appeared for the watcher brightening  
other stars in the sky.**

In this artistic image, the poet proceeded from describing the sons of Haroun al-Rashid to describing the Abbasids, the ancestors of the sons of Haroun al-Rashid. He likened their eyes and their majesty to the eyes of beautiful-looking antelopes, and he likened their hearts to lions in their strength and ability to withstand hardships and difficulties. There are two connotations in this image, the first is the beauty of these young men's facial features, as their eyes were like the eyes of an antelope. As we know, Arab poets in ancient and modern times used the connotation of antelope's eyes to express beauty, so they were the most beautiful eyes. As for the second connotation, it is evident in the hearts of the lions that the sons of Haroun al-Rashid possessed. Their solid, strong hearts, willing to fight in the midst of adversity and wars, were a source of their determination and perseverance.

The poet was not satisfied with that, but rather likened their Abbasid ancestors to the sun, due to the purity of their conduct in front of the people, until they became those who illuminate the earth with their light. It is an indication that the qualities that the sons of al-Rashid possessed that indicate their strength and determination were inherited from their ancestors, the Abbasids, who were distinguished by strength, determination, and courage, and thanks to the qualities they possessed, they achieved what they always wanted.

Among the places in which he praised Haroun al-Rashid was when he said<sup>49</sup>:

**O Haroun, like the water of the clouds which cures the sickness when the sickened have swollen throats out of thirst.**

**And armies, with swords that strike like lightning, and horses whose hooves make loud sounds like thunder.**

In these two verses, the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid is praised with the two most prominent qualities that are known to the Arab person, which are generosity and strength. The evidence of Haroun al-Rashid's generosity was the gifts he bestowed on the people of the nation, and its goodness was transmitted to every place it settled, like the clouds that rain in various parts of the earth, and do not wait for anyone who drinks their water to thank them.

In the second verse, he describes Haroun al-Rashid's army, its strength, and its equipment. He drew an image of its strength when he described swords and their brilliance when he likened them to lightning; this is a metaphor for their strength, solidity, and the sharpness of their edge. As for the horses that carry the knights, they are strong, raw, bold, and fast, as they rush to confront the enemy. Their fast hooves make terrifying sounds like the sound of strong thunder.

In another place, he praised Haroun al-Rashid when he said<sup>50</sup>:

**It is as if all creation are gathered within a body in which there is a soul, and you are its head.**

In this verse, the poet likens the Islamic nation and its people in their rallying around the Caliph of the Muslims, and the Commander of the Faithful, Haroun al-Rashid, to a body, and he likens Haroun al-Rashid to the head controlling the body, which orders it to do everything, and the body only has to obey the command of the Caliph.

The image here indicates to the recipient the unity and interdependence between the leader and the people. If the people are the body, then the praised one is the thinking head who directs it towards everything that is good, safe, and strong, and thus becomes the state's pride and protection.

Also, he praised Haroun al-Rashid when he said<sup>51</sup>:

**O the Abbasids, among you is the king from whom all the good deeds spread.**

**Haroun is among you like the dew of rain that waters the leaves.**

**Haroun is all good, as evil within him was killed on the day he was born.**

The poet describes Haroun al-Rashid and the security, pride, and strength that existed during his rule of the Islamic State as the weapon that eliminated all evil, and with its grace, goodness spread to everyone who lives on the land of the Islamic State. Among his praise of Haroun al-Rashid was his statement when Nikephoros, the Roman king, broke the covenant of obedience he had given al-Rashid, and al-Rashid prepared for his invasion; as a result, he invaded him on Heraclius and entered it by the sword<sup>52</sup>:

**Did Heraclius call for its destruction by the king who succeeded in doing what was right?**

**As Haroun thundered upon it with all the causes of death and flashed the sharp swords like lightning.**

**And the flags which promise of victory passed by as if they were cutting the clouds.**

**Commander of the Faithful, you have been victorious, so feel peace as you will be granted with the spoils and returning safely.**

Here, the poet depicts Haroun al-Rashid in his intense anger as the sky which flashes and thunders when the rain is intense, but Haroun al-Rashid's lightning is manifested in the strong, sharp swords that he and his soldiers carry, while his thunder is in his voice and his threats to Nikephoros and his supporters who broke the covenant with him.

In another place, he praised al-Rashid after his invasion of Nikephoros when he said<sup>53</sup>:

**O the Imam of guidance, as you are related to religion and watered every person longing for rain with your blessings.**

**You have two names, associated with maturity and guidance. You are the one who is called al-Rashid and al-Mahdi.**

**If you are displeased from something, it becomes displeasing, and if you are pleased with something, it becomes acceptable among people.**

**You have spread our to the far East and West and included everyone under your reign.**

**You filled the earth with your goodness and generosity, so that the earth itself became good.**

**You are the Commander of the Faithful, so you have been pious. You have spread goodness that was hidden.**

**God decreed that Haroun would remain a king, and God's decree will always be fulfilled among His creation.**

**Life was pleased with Haroun, and Nikephoros became a disgrace in front of Haroun.**

Here, the poet praised Haroun al-Rashid after his victorious return from his war with Nikephoros, King of the Romans. al-Rashid became, in the poet's eyes, the Imam of guidance concerned with the matter of religion. The Islamic state expanded during his reign and the conquests reached the farthest borders of the East and West. It was as if he was spreading the land under his rule. His last praise of Haroun al-Rashid was when he said<sup>54</sup>:

**The winds have breathed for my need, and I felt the breeze of your palms.  
I have drunk from your hope, as I was walking towards your trace.  
And I cast my gaze towards the sky of your goodness, and I looked at the shadows of its lightning and I was dreaming.  
Perhaps I became discouraged, but then said no, for the one who guaranteed success is generous.**

Here, the poet talks about Haroun al-Rashid, praising his generosity and giving, which made him a destination for the needs of every person in need. The poet who is looking for giving from Haroun al-Rashid is among them. He likened Haroun al-Rashid's giving to the water from which people drink, and the poet who drank it for himself is among them, so he began to walk to him, aspiring to his giving.

Among others praised in his Diwan is Yazid bin Mazyad, to whom he said:

**It is as if you were fleeing from the line behind you when you thrust so fast in war.  
It is as if death does not flow in battle when heroes meet, until you say so.  
Since you are the lesion of destinies in the battlefield, and your modesty is the lesion of wealth.**

Footnotes:

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  - 12Bin Mufarreah, Muhammad Bin Yahya, The Image is the Saif al-Dawla in the Poetry of Abu Firas al-Hamdani, MA, Faculty of Arts, Umm al-Qura University, Saudi Arabia, 1429: 210.
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  - 14Thaleis, Aristotle, The Art of Poetry, translated by: Abd al-Rahman Badawi, Beirut: Dar al-Thaqafa, 2nd edition, 1972: 85.
  - 15Thaleis, Aristotle, The Art of Poetry: 40.
  - 16Al-Sabbagh, Ramadan (1998), in criticism of contemporary Arabic poetry, an aesthetic study, Alexandria: Dar al-Wafa for Printing and Publishing: 25.
  - 17Al-Marzouqi, Abu Ali Ahmed bin Muhammad bin Al-Hassan (421 AH), Sharh Diwan al-Hamsa, published by: Ahmed Amin and Abdul Salam Haroun, Beirut: Dar al-Jeel (1991): 1/9.
  - 18Al-Asma'i, Abu Saeed Abd al-Malik bin Qarib bin Abd al-Malik bin Ali al-Asma'i al-Basri (225 AH), The Book of the Excellence of Poets, edited by: The Orientalist Sh. Tori, presented to her: Dr. Salah al-Din al-Moghadar, Beirut: The New Book House, 2nd edition, 1980: 5. Al-Hiqaq: the plural of Hiq, which is a camel in its fourth year.
  - 19Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 5.
  - 20Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 9.
  - 21Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 10.
  - 22Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 10.
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  - 24Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 15.
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  - 26Cohen, Jean, The Structure of Poetic Language: 15.
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  - 31See: Asfour, Jaber, The Artistic Image in the Critical and Rhetorical Heritage of the Arabs: 13-14.



- 32He is referring to: Yazid bin Mansour al-Himyari, uncle of al-Mahdi. Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 155.  
33Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 318.  
34Bleed: dripping blood.  
35Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 375.  
36Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 103.  
37Al-Jasra: a huge camel. Al-Adhafer: a strong camel. Al-Khawassa: with a sunken eye. Al-Ayranah: a fast camel. Al-Alandat: the thick camel.  
38Al-Khabab: a fast walking.  
39Al-Ikhat: humility.  
40Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 156.  
41Al-Asiad: The one who raises his head proudly.  
42Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 211.  
43He meant the king's scepter referring to the rod.  
44Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 212.  
45Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 212.  
46Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 212.  
47Al-Qaoud: The camel that the passenger seizes in every need. Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 156  
48Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 156.  
49Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 213.  
50Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 233.  
51Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 296.  
52Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 65.  
53Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 489.  
54Abu Al-Atahiya, the Diwan: 407.