

*The pessimistic Attitude in the poetry*  
*Of*  
*Shaul Cherenkhofiski*  
*Translation and analysis of his poems*

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النظرة التشاؤمية في شعر شاؤول جير نخوفسكي

الخلاصة:-

بالرغم من أن الشاعر شاؤول جيرنخوفسكي (وهو من كبار الشعراء العبريين) عاش حياة مترفة ملئها الرخاء والترف وظهر جل ذلك في أعماله الأدبية في وصف الحياة والجمال والحب والطبيعة الخلابة إذ يعد في طليعة الشعراء اليهود في نتاجاته الشعرية الدنيوية إلا إن ذلك لم يمنعه أيضاً من كتابة القصائد التشاؤمية البعيدة كل البعد عن التفاؤل والتي تحمل في طياتها من الحقد والكراهية لغير اليهود وتأجج نار الحماس وعدم الاستسلام والموت المقدس لليهود في جميع أنحاء أوربا آنذاك، خصوصاً ما كان يواجهه اليهود من معاملة سيئة قذرة تفصلهم وإحساسهم الكامل عن الآخرين، فقد كانت قصائد الشاعر الصهيوني جيرنخوفسكي مليئة بصورة الانتقام والحقد على الآخرين وتعبر بالوقت نفسه عن ثقة عالية بالنفس بالنسبة لليهود المنتشرين في أنحاء العالم، حيث كان يطلب في قصائده "ليكن هذا ثأرنا" و "سيفي اين سيفي" و"الموتى الأوائل" من جميع اليهود إلى مقاومة كل أنواع "الاضطهاد" وعدم الرضوخ إلى أشكال الذل كافة والمهانة.

ونتيجة لنظراته التشاؤمية التي ظهرت في بعض قصائده على خلاف ما عرف به الشاعر ونتيجة لنظراته القومية التعصبية العنصرية التي يتمتع بها اليهودي فقد حدد خطأ منهجه في الحياة على اعتبارهم "شعب الله المختار" وظل متوقفاً محصوراً في عزلة تامة عن المجتمعات بالرغم من انتشارهم في أنحاء بعيدة من العالم، أن النبوة التشاؤمية في هذه القصائد واضحة كل الوضوح فالشاعر يعالج موضوعاً شائعاً في الشعر الصهيوني هو موت اليهود وإحساسهم بانفصالهم الكامل عن الآخرين حيث أطلقت عليه أيضاً "شاعر القوة" أو "شاعر الجبروت" ذلك لقوة دفاعه عن القوى الكامنة في "الشعب اليهودي" حسب اعتقاده.

## **Introduction**

Shaul Cherenkhofiski is considered one of the greatest Hebrew poets and one of the poles of the rebirth in Hebrew literature in Russia. He was born in Mekhalofica in krimia in 1875 in a conservative family.(1) he was keen on studying the contemporary Hebrew language and with drew from religious learning that he did not join “Alhaider” nor “Alyashifa”(2) his parents took him to a special religious school in which he learned the Hebrew language. At ten he attended a Russian school to get general education.(3)he is considered one of the greatest poets in modern Hebrew language and one of the contemporaries of the poet Bialiq. The upbringing of Cherenkhofiski is different from that of Bialiq because the first lived in luxury and the latter lived is poverty, destitute and suffering. His upbringing had its impact in his poetic and literary production.

In 1903 he studied medicine in Lousan and was specialized in anatomy and pediatrics. He worked during the first world war as a doctor in the Russian army and the government at that time honoured him with medals. He stayed in Berlin in 1921 and immigrated to Palestine in 1931. His poems are marked by deep duality. He imitated the western types of literature such as sonnets, epics and Greek wine and he was a follower of the Zionist philosopher Brejifski\* who called for liberating the Hebrew from its extreme spirituality and from its extreme concentration on agony and suffering and called for championing Netziean moral values like happiness, physical power, and aggression.(4)

## **The beginning of his literary work**

The poet visited Palestine in 1925 and the united states in 1930.(5)for about twenty five years moving all around the world .in the year 1936,Jenenkofiski participated in guarding the Jewish colonies after the disturbances between the native Palestinians and the Jewish new comers. on this occasion he composed poems that hails the heroism of the Jews in protecting their colonies and attacking the Arabs(6) the poet was brought up in an environment full of beautiful lands capes which imprinted his poetry with worldly tinge unlike what is known of the Jewish poets whose poetry are saturated in religious tendencies. The poet always sang for nature, love and beauty and in his secular poetry he is considered a pioneer among Jewish poets the Jewish critics see that the product of Chrinkofiski is colourful full of power and

vitality and the joy of life and beauty(7) The critics see that his product has its impact on the product of his contemporaries and he was an expert in translating into Hebrew to which he translated the best classis like the odyssey by homer and Oedipus the king by Sophocles and the poems of Houraseum from Latin and the

Kalevala which is the classic of the Finnish people and others.(8)

The poet read numerous literary and intellectual universal books of his reading we find the stories of Jol Fern and Alexander Du Mas the Iliad the odyssey the works of Qete and Netze

Along with the bible and Al Talmud and Jewish religious books(9)he wrote many poems in which he completely surrenders to tribalism and the traditional metaphysics without altering or changing .he also accepts the idea of the chosen people without questioning that is why we find him restricted to certain loyalties and holding on the customs of the tyrannical ancestors completely and literally(10)

The poet visited Argentina in the year 1936 and in 1937 his complete works were published entitled “the view of the earth” which was awarded bayaliq award in 1942 in 1943 he printed thirty three stories published after his death entitled “the far away planets (11)

he was called the atheist poet and atheism for him means an aggressive power in the nature of man and another nature that is in full contrast kind, loving and saving which we have to discover and manipulate for our good ,thus he believes in the power of the Jewish people whose hands are cuffed by laws and regulations that are un countable ,this is why he was called the poet of power or the poet of tyranny for his powerful defence of the inherent powers in the Jewish (12) .his nationality is shown clearly in his poems where he urges zeal, fortitude ,patience and endurance ,calling at the same time into forming a home land for the Jews .Shaul Cherinkhofisik in Jerusalem in 1943 his name was given to the house of Hebrew writers in Tel Aviv .also some quarters and streets in Palestine after his name(13)

## **Chernkhofiski between Pessimism and Revenge**

In a poem by Chernkhofiski “zot tahy a Nkmatey Nuwhich means” Thus should be our revenge which he has written after disturbances against the Jews in Ocarina where the tribal Jewish sense is apparent to be severed from the others and is considered an enemy to them(14)

Where he says that the persecution of the others to the Jews will stain them and make them lose their purity because the blood of the Jews will get into their being poisoning the basis of their existence .the poem is an incarnation of poisonous feelings that is not understood or realized by people other than the Jews and it is a feeling of pain that saps man of his humanity and deepens his hatred towards the others (15)

The day will come when you the oppressor lose your purity  
And put the blade of your knife in your brother's neck  
Your mother's son as if you were slaughtering your favorite pig  
In Easter or in the yard or in the village field  
The moaning of his death will echo like music  
Or the festival in your eager ears  
Oh the day of our revenge(16)

The day when your son plugs the hair of your beard which has grown  
grayish  
And holds up in your face his strong threatening fist and calls you from his  
animalistic voice  
"you evil" and you cry in front of all the people(17)

Oh the day of revenge and retribution  
When your beloved daughter offers herself as weak whore  
Possessed by desire and drunk by wine  
And she starts mumbling with all story of prostitution that she has  
committed(18)

Let this be our revenge

In another part which is the first part of the poem, what seems to be an  
expression of surrender and holy death, is in fact surrender and death  
saturated with hatred. The poet rings the bells drawing our attention in the  
first line of the poem

He says

Revenge for our spilled blood is coming(19)

In another part he emphasizes the spirit of revenge and  
vengeance inherited from one generation to the other,(20)

he says

this is our revenge

let it live

to be inherited from one generation to the other

Let this be our revenge(21)

In my opinion the poet tried to show the bad treatment the Jewish faced  
where ever they went in western or eastern Europe in different periods  
because they were treated in a bad way living in dirty and unhealthy  
neighbour hood full of diseases and epidemics. he describes this Jewish area  
as a hole and describes the Jewish inhabitants as trash or manure or some  
creatures that are inhuman and dirty

He describes the Jews as the living dead who are buried a live. In spite of all  
this suffering the poet emphasizes that this suffering will become fruitful in  
a new generation who carries the flag of liberty and rejects slavery, he  
describe this generation as rose bushes that have grown over the graves of  
the old generation,

He says

This hole in which you throw us

As if we were garbage or manure, human creatures

Chained to be buried a live

If over this grows flower bushes

Or a pink that tans the head with its aroma crowned by a red crown

And the blossoming shining flowers

You must learn that these flowers will not talk to you

certainly they will not talk to you.(22)

The Jewish tone in this poem is quite clear because the poet deals with a topic that is common in Zionist poetry which is the death of the Jews and their feeling of their isolation from others. Here the Jew stands confronting others without being related to them in any way

Nobody shares his suffering .the suffering of the poet remain primarily Jewish suffering enclosed within it self. He does not call us to share his special “Jewish” delights because these delights and joys according to his narrow vision belong to the Jews only. thus the poet has isolated the Jew from the rest of humanit and also separated the human beings from their humanity by making them passive viewers of the Jewish tragedy.(23)

In his poem “My Sword. Where Is My Sword” the poet depicts the vengeful Zionist personality who holds the sword to defeat the enemies and beat them cutting them to pieces making him drink from their blood(24)

My sword .where is my sword, my vengeful sword

Give my sword to defeat my enemies

Where are my enemies? I will destroy them

And smash them and tear them to pieces

I will stop their memory from the mind of the people

I will extend my strong right arm and rebuke my enemies

And my sword drink proudly of their blood

My steps will bath in the blood of the slaughtered

My feet will stop on their hair  
I will cut from right and reap from left  
Because my anger is raging and turning into hell  
Many have bothered me but nobody will be left after the massacre  
Yes I will truly destroy them  
My sword ,where is my sword my warning sword?  
Give my sword I will never with draw it  
Until I kill all my enemies  
I cannot bear it any more ,my soul is shining  
My anger is burning and my heart is a moving mountain  
My blood in my veins is a fiery on going current(25)

My sword, where is my sword

It is a hard to call that a poem because it contains piles of words that indicate the barbarism of the poet.(26)the poet is satisfied by unleashing his anger in clear and direct pictures “a fiery on going current” “my feet step on their hair”. He did not attempt to convey to us this anger through complex poems of certain forms to make us understand them.(27) But these images are marked by this vengeful tribal spirit that was incarnated in the Zionist character after bringing all that huge amount of compiled hatred and spite and the desire to revenge from other people other than the Jews as a reaction for this long history of humility and slavery.

In another poem by Shaul Chernkhofiski “hametym hareysh onym” (the first dead)which was written in 1942.The poet depicts the plague that struck Europe in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century and the Europeans pointed their fingers



accusing the Jews of poisoning the water which caused a violent reaction against the Jews because the plague did not strike the Jewish neighbourhood.

The poet says

He is coming! To reap

In the city between the walls

In the village and field

But not in the Ghettoes<sup>(28)</sup>

The poet expresses the happiness of others because the disease ,as he claims in his poem, has also spread among the Jews and he shows this happiness in non Jews saying

Until there was relaxation

And happiness in their homes also

There is a dead man in the Ghetto

Thanks to the God of heavens

#### The first Dead

The poet wants to show in this part of the poem how others feel happy and overjoyed when some thing bad happens to the Jews to the extend that the thank God for what befell the Jews.<sup>(29)</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

In spite of the fact that the poet Shaul Cherenkhofiski lived a well of life as was reflected in his works in depicting life, the beauty of nature and love. Thus he is considered a pioneer in secular poetry but this did not stop him from writing pessimistic poems deprived of optimism full of hatred for non Jews and setting the fire of enthusiasm and never to surrender and the holy death for the Jews all around Europe at that time especially what the Jews faced of bad filthy treatment that separates them completely from the others the works of the Zionist poem Chernofiski were full of images of revenge and hatred for others and express at the same time a high sense of confidence concerning the Jews who spread all around the world. he called in such poems like “let this be our revenge” and “ my sword where is my sword “ and “the first dead”, on all the Jews to resist all kind of oppression and never to surrender to humiliation

As a consequence of his pessimistic view that appeared in some of his poems contrary to what he is known of and according to his national racist and biased point of view which the Jews have thus defined his steps in life considering the Jews “the chosen people of God and he remained engulfed and utterly isolated from other societies in spite of spreading all around the world

### *Notes*

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- 4- Dr Rashad Al Shami,the Jewish personality and the aggressive spirit,Kuwait,1986,p.79.
- 5- Khalid Ismail Ali ,modern literature texts
- 6- Dr Ribhi kemal ,p.59
- 7- Dr Nazik Abdulfatah,p.86
- 8- Waxman Meyer, A history of Jewish literature, new York ,vol 4 part one,1960,p.160
- 9- Dr Abdulwahab Almisiri Judaism Zionism and Israel, Beirut 1975, p.174
- 10- ibid p.181
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- 13- Ifriem and Manahem Telmi ,Diction of Zioniost idioms translated by Ahmed Barakat Al Ajrami,Dar AlJalil,Amman, 1988,p.218
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- 15- Abdulwahab al Maseeri p.182
- 16- Shaul Cherinkhofiski. Love poems, "Let this be our revenge" Shawqnan press, Jerusalem,1988,p199
- 17- Dr Rashad Al Shami p.60
- 18- Dr Abdul wahab Al Musiri p.p182-3
- 19- He says
- 20- cherenkhofiski,love poems p.197
- 21- Abdul wahab AlMusayry,p.184
- 22- cherekhofisiki,p.199
- 23- Ibid p.185
- 24- Dr Rashad Al Shami, p.62
- 25- Chernkhofiski, p157
- 26- Rasha AlShami,p.63
- 27- Dr Abdul Wahab Al misiri,p.193
- 28- Hebrew verse ,London,1981,p.520
- 29- Ibid

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