

Semantic Evolution of Rogue Rend in Mystical Persian Literature

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Abstract: The word “Rend” is widely used in mystical literature, triggering a host of studies by poets as well as critics. Mystic poets Render the word Rend differently, sometimes negative yet other times positive, giving it a wide range of meanings, such as love-stricken, aversion from asceticism, shrewdness, hatred of fame and libertarianism. The present study traces the semantic evolution of Rend in the works of Saadi, Hafez, Attar, Sanaei and Khajo Kermani to reveal the depth of variations in its meaning. Undoubtedly, a close analysis and comparison of the meaning of rend as employed by different mystic poets will help critics avoid hasty interpretations and misunderstandings of social and mystic teachings of mystic poets. Thus, the present study examines semantic variations of rend and their acceptability in mystic poetry.

Key words: Literature, mysticism, poet, rend, semantic evolution

INTRODUCTION

A correct understanding of the meaning of Rend is the key to a grasping better insight into mystic poems. The present study investigates the meaning of Rend in Persian literature and mystic tradition which is found to undergo drastic changes. However, positive interpretation of the word where it is used in negative denotation leads to misunderstanding of the text. Thus, it is essential to see the word in its historical context in order to catch what the poet intends. This explains the fact that poets and mystics presented varying perceptions of the word in different times and places. Accordingly, to decode mystical terms it is essential to evaluate them in the context they appear. This paper is an attempt to trace how the meaning of Rend transforms through history.

Rend is used in Persian literature in a wide range of meanings and poets have felt free in devising crafty meanings for it, such that no subtle and precise meaning is attributed to it. However, an analytic reading of the works by poets and mystics can guide us to its fittest meaning. Rend denotes a set of different meanings which seem to be correct and appropriate but it is Rendered differently in the works of Sanaei, Attar, Hafez, Saadi and Khajo Kermani, signifying negative and positive meanings as the occasion demands. Rend in some poems means drunkard, lustful, libertine, reckless, abject and evil person.

Rend is a central figure in Persian literature and frequently appears in mystic tradition, inspiring a great deal of critical investigations. Nevertheless, it seems Rend is predominantly studied in the works of Hafez. A Rend in mystic and Sufi literature is the one who cleanses himself off any outward pluralistic embodiment of

necessary and possible worldly affairs and reaches such a lofty position where no other creature can attain (Sajadi, 1996).

The word Rend undergoes a three stage developmental phases in literary history. In the first phase, it takes up a negative meaning. However, in the second phase it shakes itself off negative connotations such as debauchery, intoxication, light-mindedness and unruliness and takes up a more positive character. The highpoint for this word is in the poems of Hafez. In the third phase, the negative meaning resurfaces and persists. Today, a Rend is an opportunist engaged only with his own benefits. Persian literature gives a contrasting image of Rend as a lout, pious, libertine and brigand (Anosheh, 1997). The present study seeks to find what poets mean by the word Rend, how it develops through time and how it is perceived by readers.

The concept, traits and social role of Rend is extensively studied in Persian literature. Mahmoud Hounna states that ordinary people call Rend as the one who follows only individual benefits, knowing him as a trickster and deceitful man. Similarly, in *Fantastic Tricks*, Ahour defines Rend as a person who sets himself free from any typical and superficial bonds and engages only with the truth (Ahour, 1984). The present study benefits from research attempts on semantic development of Rend in Persian literature, including an article by Khoramshahi (1996) entitled “Hafez and Rendi”. Moreover, some thesis studies are used as references including, “A comparison of the character Rend in mystical Persian literature” by Leyla Mansouri; “Hafez’s Rends” by Mahnaz Bazgir; “Passing alleys of Rends” by Ehsan Ahadi; and “Evaluating teachings on Rend and malamtian in the poems of Sanaei” by Shahla MohammadReyhani.

REND IN PERSIAN LITERATURE

The word "Rend" in Persian has collected different meanings over time. However, in both spoken and written language, it denotes a negative meaning and implies a lustful, vile and lout despised by the community. It is defined in Borhan Qate as a deceitful, shrewd, oppressor, reckless and free person with a rough appearance yet clean inside. In Farhang Moein it is a shrewd, trickster, libertine and an outcast that avoids any social codes of behavior.

The first Persian poet who uses the word in a positive way is Sanaei, Burn all material objects and settle pleased:

The Rend and the poor are prized in judgment day. Likewise, Attar looks at Rend as a true lover, Painstaker and Qalandar: I see these poor Rends as lovers. Show any such true lovers if there is (Attare, 2006)

Like Sanaei, Attar and Sanei, for Saadi a Rend is a drunkard, pan-taker, unintelligent, love-stricken, voyeur, anti-asceticism and anti-fame person:

Your face lights the feast of mystics tonight
Slow! Lest the voyeur Rend may hear of that

In the poems of Hafez, a Rend is paradoxical in appearance while moderate inside. A person who believes in the Hereafter and reflects over hat but is not thoughtful because he assumes that divine love and blessing will save him. He abides in the monastery as a combination of mosque and tavern. For Hafez, a Rend is libertine, sublime and wonderful and open to criticism who manifests a set of different traits. Sometime, he detests fame and reputation:

If I be moved by the words of rivals. I never
abandon the creed of Rends and intoxication

In other occasions, he is introduced as a sublime and honorable personality:

Qalandar Rends are at the door of the
tavern: Who give and take crowns of
kingdom

Ali Dashti argues that despite the common and vulgar understanding of Rend, it implies liberal-mindedness and in the poems of Hafez it is developed to refer to those who abandon devotional piety at face value and adopt a superior perception of religion beyond its common practices. These people respect commandments as far as they serve and preserve social system but in

ordinary affairs where they deal with God almighty do not observe the routine (Dashti, 1978). Rend is the one who submits no ones; fears nothing; and detaches from all worldly wealth. They pay no heed to their appearance nor to what others say. Who dares to do so? Hossainy (2008) refers to the meaning of Rend in Borhan Qate as an intelligent, shrewd person who is vigilant enough to discern the true face of hypocrites.

HosseinAli Heravi states that Rend is a key term in the poetry of Hafez, portraying a shrewd, lout and unconventional figure. However, Hafez uses the word differently and describes it as the ethical codes of freemen and the needless mystics:

I followed the religion of the Rend for years.
By wisdom I confined greed

In "Who is the beloved of Hafez?", MohammadAli Eslami Nodushan explains that Rend is an individual who knows all religious doctrines and does not indulge one of them; rather, he adopts a collective approach towards them which Nodushan believes to be a sort of skeptic attitude on all religious beliefs (Nedoshen, 1999).

Nevertheless, if a Rend is a true-hearted vigilant person who defies traditional and superstitious commonplace beliefs, he can be considered to be a devoted believer who avoids pragmatism and opportunism while practicing virtues and combating hypocrisy. A Rend seeks reputation in notoriety and disgrace, paying no heed to what people judge of him. He pretends to be a drunkard to defame imposter ascetics in power. Before Hafez, Khajo Kermani plays with the word Rend in his sonnets:

Walk gracefully in the ring of paintakers and
unveil your locks. See fierce lions in the
rings. I am infamous in the town for being a
Rend. Give that cup of hemlock to this Sufi

Rendi for Hafez is the doctrine of mystics, Sufis and wayfarers and reaching the exact meaning of Rend in the words of Hafez is beyond the scope of the present study to solve the problem. Mohammadreza Barzgar Khaleghi believes that Hafez used the word to describe a shrewd, lout, libertine who abides in no social norm and tradition and enjoys the most of his life while being carefree of his immediate surroundings. He is familiar with secret of the sky and keeps away from pragmatism:

As the intoxicated Rend of the secrets
behind the veil. For no dignified Zahid finds
way there

Here, we study the most essential meaning Hafez uses in his poetry: Rendi which is key to understanding his teachings and spiritual wisdom of Persian mysticism. Hafez defines his existence and the essence of his poetry as Rendi, where his art manifests and flourishes. Attare (2007) calls Rend a rogue, needy, qalandar, lover, lout and drunkard:

Though I m a Rend
I am not a thief nor a bandit
I am not the man of hypocrisy
I am free from fame and notoriety
I carry no gem within me
I pretend to be vicious

Nevertheless, Saadi portrays a negative character for Rend as a drunkard, unwise, voyeur and anti- ascetics. Rend and Rendi are frequently (more than eighty times) used in the poetry of Hafez such that many critics call his oeuvre the School of Rendi. In his perspective, Rendi is the most appropriate ideology and Rend is the best person in mystic literature. He raises Rend to the highest point of perfect man:

Nobody waters thirsty Rends. As if no
disciple abides in this province

Hafez uses Rend and Rendi to criticize moral and religious decay and the corrupt community of his time. His Rend is a seemingly paradoxical persona who is balanced inside. He is lover-stricken, hedonistic and a lover of wine while combating false piety, hypocrisy and pragmatism. Love for a Rend is key to salvation.

In the Voice of Love, Anvari believes that Hafez introduces Rend as a perfect and wonderful man described by words such as lover, hedonistic, drunkard, anti-ascetics, wayward, devoted, content, painstaker, modest, true-hearted and pious. Thus, a Rend pretends to be sinful and Hafez defines his lifestyle as the best model of honor and greatness.

REND IN CLASSIC PERSIAN LITERATURE

The word Rend usually shows similar behavior in ethical and social prose writings. But in poetry, a Rend appears differently based on content and genre. For example, in Khoarasani form which is natural and explicit, Rend is more sociable and economic. Yet, in Araqi form where the poet has deep insights into objects, Rend is more frustrated, fatalist and determinist. Anvari, in his odes in 6th century writes:

At doorway free abject men are sad and
confused. At the floor, righteous Rends are
imprisoned and distressed

Here, Rend refers to Gaza Turkmen, the most vile aggressors before Tartar invasion. The same attitude is approved by Sanaei:

Some Rends were appointed for my guard.
No creature is so vile and disgusting

Hafez is the voice of truth and blames ascetics for their arrogance and boastfulness and repeatedly advises them to be careful while passing the alley where Rends abide:

Zahid! Pass the alley of Rends untainted.
Lest some notorious fellows spoil your fame
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The guardian of Shiraz, the city where Hafez lived, is an accomplice to the governor but sometimes comes across. Hafez and blames him. Occasionally, Hafez complains of him:

For some little things which offend no one.
I have to strive among the foolish. Zahid
leave us for this great wine. Takes away
your belief and heart

Sanaei extracted many social and literary words from this cultural and linguistic context and reloaded them with new meanings. When he admires wine, saki, drunkard, Rend, cup, tavern and rank with a paradoxical tone, the words deter from their real denotations. The poet contrasts these words which are seemingly against religious value system with symbols such as altar, rosary, mosque and asceticism to criticize moral religious decadence. Sanaei redresses negative words and uses them in positive sense in mystic-Islamic doctrines. Others follow the new devised meaning by Sanaei. Rend in his poetry is the opposite of asceticism:

Rendi in asceticism and disbelief in faith. Set
darkness in light and good in bad

In another occasion, Rend is a theist:

You may not release yourself from worldly
attachments. Until you take up the radition
of Rendi

Later, Rend is used in the meaning of a social critic:

He is so called because he is known. As nothing other than ridicule, Rend and wicked

Historically, the highest point of mystical poetry after Sanaei is found in the poetry of Attar, followed later by Jalal-Aldin Molavi. Attar significantly developed Persian sonnet, whose main character is an insane Rend. The insane Rend is a lover who is not bound by reason and achieves wisdom. Attar has a completely different representation of Rend.

Attar narrates mystical painstaking and his poetry, despite its simplicity and lack of artificial complexity, is the reason to narrating stories of great men of conduct. Attar is the poet of human sufferings book of conduct. His poetry is full of mystical stories and in introduction to his *Tazkirat al-Awliya* he explains his and both his romantic and mystic poems arise from a true spiritual or heartfelt experience. In some of his poems he stops seeing with mind's eye and relies on mystical experience, leaving faith and infidelity behind and calling superstitious whatsoever else than love. However, like many other poets, Rend in his poets is used in different meanings:

Attar was covertly doing acts of devotedness in an abbey. When the sky called him the painstaker Rend (Attare, 2007)

Rend is also used as itinerant: last night his love flamed and called stop it you itinerant Rend some other times, Rend refers to destiny:

The pen determined my destiny a Rend I wish the pen never wrote

Rend also means a man whose low profession is to put firewood in the fireplace of the bathroom to heat water:

You turned old and trotted on the way. Still you carry the heart of a fireplace Rend

Attar introduces Rend and zahid as two opposing characters in mystic tradition. Zahid is the one who practices personal and conventional asceticism but Rend feels free to commit sins. Sufis believe in the dooms day but hold that human acts count for nothing to God's favor. Zahid is suspicious of his final destiny but Rend hopes for God's forgiveness:

Sometimes Rend, sometimes, zahid, sometimes intoxicated. Sometimes I am, sometimes not, sometimes I am not (Attare, 2007)

When Rend appears as a negative beggar and lover he is a lout and poor. For Attar, Rend is synonymous with freedom, inner and outer congruity and patience:

What is a man? A Rendi gambler. Who is free from this and that. To be the same in nature and appearance. To observe, keep silence and be patient (Attare, 2007)

In Saadi's poetry a Rend is loaded with both positive and negative traits. His Rend, as that of Sanaei, is unwise, intoxicated, love-stricken, voyeur and anti-ascetic. For Saadi, a Rend is pervert, self-sufficient, negligent, usurer and talkative. "Dervishes practice scarification, contentment, service, obedience, trust in God, patience, gratitude. But those pervert unfaithful people who are slave to their passion in the day and sleep in negligence at night and talk without thinking are Rend". Rend as reflected in Saadi's poetry and prose shows that the concept of Rend develops greatly in his sonnets. That unfaithful non-prayer (so called in Golestan and Boustan) in his sonnet turns to a virtuous lover who befriends the friend of his enemy. In Saadi's works Rend is sometimes taken as the true lover:

I appreciate those Rend and righteous folks. Who take out of affection as their friends the friend of their enemy. A Rend is never conservative and pragmatist. Do not decorate the heaven. For a Rend is never hopes for Houris. Rend is anti-ascetic: The disheveled unfortunate Rend Never strives as much as a Zahid

Khajo Kermani lived after Saadi and was highly influenced by him and his poetry later influenced Hafez. A sonnet with the theme of Rendi explains the school of Rendi which was essentially expanded by Khajo and later perfected by Hafez. This school has its own specific language and philosophy, expressing themes and messages of Rendi in an artistic, ambiguous, metaphoric and symbolic language (Dabbeh, 1992).

Rend in the poetry of Khajo is used in its initial meaning, denoting a lout, qalandar and one who seeks no name or shame. However, Khajo bestows his Rend with lofty human values, who never deceives nor is deceived, does not use Quran as a tool for hypocrisy and is blessed by God.

Khajo develops the concept of Rend introduced by Sanaei into mystic literature. Rendi is the key concept of Kermami's poetry and precisely illuminates his thought. However, Rend is once again used in different meanings. Sometimes, he is a free and chivalrous man who combats hypocrisy and cleanses himself off any self-centeredness while abiding in Kahrabet (a mixture of mosque and tavern). He is a painstaker, rejecting aloof Sufis and never accepting pragmatism. He calls all to join him in Kharabat and dusts the tavern with his eyelashes:

If painstaking Rend men feel offended at heart. Why the pious are offended by Rends

Rend is a social critic who never compromises with materialists and pragmatists, never afraid of inspectors. He loves beauty and with a sharp sarcasm criticizes religious superficiality while disapproving hypocrites:

Our Pir is wearing the cloak of the tavern.
Beware you disciples of the sakir pir

Rend abandons worldly treatments and seeks it in Rendi and painstaking. He considers Rendi a divine blessing, reaching salvation by abandoning worldly interests and intoxication, leading finally to his inexistence before God and their union:

Like Khajo we have mastered the practice of Rendi. Our order is the lock of Saki and cup of wine

A Rend is a theist. He is a self-conscious and moderate theist and knows some ways to follow his lord and never forgets human values. He keeps secrets and implicitly reveals the corruption of hypocrite Sufis:

If painstaking Rend men feel offended at heart. Why the pious are offended by Rends

Repentance and piety are allowed in Rendi. A Rend treats the world and hereafter with indifference and never takes up advice, disavowing what others say about his conduct. Name and shame for him are concepts that block his way to reaching the Lord. However, if he fails to achieve his goal, at heart he is satisfied and pleased:

I am infamous in the town for being a Rend.
Give that cup of hemlock to this Sufi

In the poetry of Khajo, Rend is a self-conscious man and his intoxication is the result from knowledge not escaping it. He is painstaker and astute, a pious man concerned deeply with religion. He is whole heartedly ready to sacrifice his life for the beloved:

If painstaking Rend men feel offended at heart. Why the pious are offended by Rends

Despite being sinful, a Rend is hopeful for God's forgiveness and blessing. He worships at night and finds his salvation in Rendi, though he is disappointed and in pain. Though seemingly unwise, a Rend is knowledgeable and artistic, understanding his share in the world and finding salvation in Rendi:

Come to the ring of Rends. To save yourself from for a short time

Rendi has another popular aspect and it is "T" in the poems of Hafez. Rend is opposed to Sufi, Sheikh, Zahid, Mufti and synonymous with Pir and Hafez. Rend in the poetry of Hafez is not a marketplace greedy and hypocrite man but an intellectual teacher. He is voyeur, lover, drunkard and kharabati, yet more reckless and loud, neither exactly a pious nor pragmatist. Thus, a Rend is infamous, disheveled and painstaker. Hafez makes personal symbols by using words like Rend, qalandar, Pir, monastery, kharabat, intoxication and etc. Hafez personifies honesty and sincerity and perfects the status of Rend as an honorable person who is guarded against hardships and knows alchemy while being a low man and finds treasure while in poverty (Dabbeh, 1992).

Hafez uses the word Rend when disappointed with other names in his times and uses it as an ideal symbolic name. Rend, before Hafez, used to refer to a group of people who paid little attention to social customs, good and bad and other established norms. In Hafez: Pious Rend, Kamrani argues that Rends didn't have enough to eat and fate fed them. A Rend was a combination of qalandar and pahlavan. Khajo prefers Rends to those hypocrite zahids who despised sins in public but did sinful things in private (Kamrani, 1984). Zarrinkoub states that a Rend did not pay attention to fame and set only on their goals. They were loud and malicious, observing no religious rules nor public advice. However, they occasionally showed fair acts. They mostly did evil things like looting, threatening and killing people.

Rend in the poetry of Hafez is a pious and freeman, on the one hand and lover, hedonist, trickster and qalandar, on the other. Rendi is at the heart of his real life and mysticism is the core of his poetic career. Through poetry, Hafez passes from the world of tangible things to the world of soul. Nevertheless, by Rendi he returns back to reality of earthly life and experiences its beauties, while shunning asceticism. Hafez uses the concept of Rend and Rendi to teach us the way of escaping the world and reaching final salvation. By looking at his self and others, a Rend observes human pleas arising from material

demands. However, he doesn't kill his demands and, rather, he purges and chisels them. The Rend never stops his quest for truth until he regains the harmonious relationship his lord. In his relationship of love with his lord, a Rend reaches such a lofty position which is denied to many Sufis and zahids.

Hafez uses the word Rend with a load of meanings such as happiness, opposing hypocrisy, trickery, avoiding formal religious rituals, disregarding benefit and loss, honorability, freedom of greed, high-mindedness, perfect man, hedonistic, infamous, revolutionary and anti-pragmatism, to name but a few. Hafez, while being intoxicated if he did, is more honest with his lord than zahdis and Sufis are.

Ezzaldin Mohammad Kashani argues that "Malamiyan were those strived for sincerity and observing religious rules in secret and hiding their acts of virtue. They were criticized for that because the very idea of hiding one's acts shows how he cares about people and others and this is against the idea of theism.

CONCLUSION

The word Rend has taken different meanings in different literary periods. In the first phase, it has negative connotation, except in mystical and romantic poetry. A Rend is a lout, pervert and libertine that is slave to his passion and lust. In *Tarikhe- Beyhaghi*, Rend is synonymous with qalandar, lout who sells himself for low price. Similarly, Khayyam uses the Rend to demonstrate a reckless and libertine character. However, Rend is given a high position in the poetry of Salman Savoji. In its second phase, Rend is painted with positive meaning in mystic poetry who personifies perfect man characterized with righteousness, honor, union and an embodiment of the Lord. In Saadi's *Golestan* and *Bustan* the same image is portrayed, an intoxicated lover who bids farewell to fame and piety. This is also seen in the poetry of Attar

and Sanaei where Rend is depicted as qalandar, poor, love-stricken and drunkard. Hafez provides a seemingly paradoxical yet internally balanced figure of Rend who believes in the judgment day. In fact, Rend reaches highest positive attitude in the poetry of Hafez. He calls himself a Rend and teachings the school of Rendi.

In the third phase, Rend is redressed with negative meaning. After Hafez, Rend refers to a trickster who is concerned only with his own benefits. The present study traces semantic evolution of the word Rend through different literary periods in Persian mystical poetry.

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