

## CUISINE OF TEBRIZ IN THE POETRY OF SHAHRIYAR

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### ABSTRACT

Muhammad Hossein Shahriyar, the great Azerbaijani poet of twentieth century, in his works tried by different artistic methods to introduce to the world the history and the rich culture of South Azerbaijan, which are his native land and the part of Iran. From the description of characters and events depicted in his works, where is felt the national spirit and colorit, is clear that these characters are Azerbaijani turks, and the events takes place in Azerbaijan. The poet in his poetry, by the example of residents of Khoshginab village, shows the life, occupation, economic concerns and the traditions of his nation. Shahryar's poetry also reflects the Azerbaijany national cuisine and the rich food culture of South and North Azerbaijan. The reader easily realizes that "the strehgh of Shahryyar's lyrics is in his national character. He lives and thinks like his people, suffers hardship like them, and also fought with him, is happy with him, and expresses the public's wishes and problems, which themselves can not to express clearly"<sup>1</sup>.

**KEYWORDS:** Shahryar, South Azerbaijan, Khoshginab Village, Shahryar's Lyrics, Azerbaijan Culture

### INTRODUCTION

The master of coining verse in the XX century, prominent Azerbaijani poet Mammadhussein Shahriyar created many national poems. These poems, particularly his epic poem "Hail to thee, Heydarbaba" (Heydarbaba is the name of a mountain, the word literally means "Grandfather Heydar") is a mirror reflecting the Azerbaijani village, the life style, daily life, cares and concerns, the most noble and positive qualities of men living in them. His poetry is a genuine school of education and upbringing in the real sense of this phrase.

"Hail to thee, Heydarbaba" is the best teaching guide, manual of this school. After reading this epic poem, a man unaware of the Azerbaijani people, begins to understand that in Azerbaijan all seasons - autumn, winter, spring and summer have their own cares and concerns. As a rule, when the kitchen-garden products and vegetables grow, when pumpkin, watermelon, melon, cucumber and others are ripe, they are gathered and stored in the attic for the winter. But what remains on the plants in the kitchen-garden falls to the share of the children. Shahriyar describes with love and nostalgia how they gathered the remanants of the pumpkins and gourds. When bread was baked, they used to cook these pumpkins and gourds under the hot ashes of the hearth and ate, then they used to nibble the fried seeds. This process is described by him like this (the extracts from the poem are presented in literal translation):

*We gathered what remained*

*in the kitchen-gar den after harvest*

*Brought home and filled*

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<sup>1</sup>HamidMammadzade, Aman Ayrilig, Baku, "Yazıç1," pg.7

*the shelves and the tubs,*

*We used to cook the pumpkins in the hearth,*

*Ate them and nibble their seeds...<sup>2</sup>*

We ate a lot it seemed to us that our bellies would explode. They used to gather the ripe alycha, apples, pears, peaches, plums and others, spread them on the roof, drill and stored for the winter. They dried the fruits on the roofs, or on some awnings to protect them from the reach of the children, they never dried it in the shade, because the shade spoiled its quality and took much time:

*And we used to turn them over*

*Repeatedly as if we cared for it much*

*We ate in summer what we have stored for winter*

*And reproached the people as if they*

*Compelled us to eat the dried fruits.<sup>3</sup>*

All these memories, unforgettable moments remind the past days, the eaten delicious fruits, their irreplaceable taste:

*Heydarbaba, the horse-mint which grows by springs,*

*The cucumber, watermelon which grow in the kitchen-garden,*

*I still remember the taste of the white sugar and chewing*

*Gum sold by the travellingmerchants*

*They tell me of my past forgotten days<sup>4</sup>.*

Shahriyar glorified life in its natural colour, depicted the peculiarities, national traits of the Azerbaijani people just from this point of view. It is interesting that the richness of the nature of Azerbaijan, industriousness of its people have found their reflections in its cuisine too. Of course, in order to live one must eat. But what are the idiosyncrasies of its national cuisine from time to time Shahriyar mentions the names of national dishes of Azerbaijan as if he wants to revive the ancient traditions of cuisine. We did not use it in vain. Perhaps, in the Southern, or Western Azerbaijan there is a forgotten dish, which beautifies the table. It is gaysava. The word derives from the Azerbaijani word gaysi which means apricot. Shahriyar uses this word in his poem titled "Shahidijan" like this:

*Your sweet poetry is like gaysava*

*But ours is sour alycha, not good<sup>5</sup>.*

Thus, the poet resembles poetry to sweet apricot and highly appreciates it. In some places of Azerbaijan gaysava is made of dried white mulberry fried in butter, in other places it is made of dried apricot of a special kind which is fried in butter.

<sup>2</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.160.

<sup>3</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.160.

<sup>4</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.167.

<sup>5</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., pg.39

One may suppose that the word gaysava has derived from gaysi which means apricot. Shahriyar used gaysi as a synonym to arik, both meaning apricot. It becomes clear that the people of Khoshginab, whom he describes, used to make gaysava from apricot. Then he uses the word govut. What is it?

Historian H.Havilov writes that "sometimes people made govut out of fried in the pan wheat. They added boiled grape juice, honey, or syrup to that. It was sweet and very delicious"<sup>6</sup>. Shahriyar considers this meal to be the ornament of a shepherd's table. He writes:

*On the breasts of mountains the shepherds lay their breakfast tables.*

*May your flocks of sheep be milky and your govut delicious<sup>7</sup>.*

Patriotic men-of-letters of other nations also give a good space in their works to the description of the national colour, national imprint in detail. Among them we can mention the names of the Brazilian writer G. Amadu, Georgian writer N. Dumbadze, Kyrgyz writer Ch. Aitmatov, Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, USA writer TH. Driser, Azerbaijani writers S. Rahimov and I. Shykhly. The abundance of the national colour in their prose and poetry excites the reader all the time.

Shahriyar speaks of two kinds of bread-Sangak and Nazik which are distinguished with aroma and taste. He even describes how Sangak is baked in his poem devoted to a boy who sells this bread. He writes that Sangak is baked out of spring wheat of amber colour, the bread is aromatic, soft and as if it melts in the mouth while eating it. In a poetic way he describes the process of baking it.

*Bake a lot, bake it well, wave it in the air,*

*Take them out of the hearth, pile them in a heap<sup>8</sup>.*

Sangak is baked out of the flour of the amber colour spring wheat. It must be baked so that it should melt in the mouth like an apricot. Shahriyar also revives the peculiarities of the bakers in the mind, glorifies them like this:

*The boy sells it, may the God make it abundant,*

*Sieve the flour better, let the dough be mixed well!<sup>9</sup>*

The hearth, in which the bread is baked, is called firin by the bakers. The walls of the hearth are laid with small pebbles from the river (in Persian sang is pebble). The dough for bread is stuck on the pebble wall, the bread baked in this way is called sangak bread, that is the bread baked on the pebbles. Shahriyar describes another kind of bread called nazik, which literally means thin. In the example of these two kinds of bread Shahriyar speaks of the Azerbaijani bread skillfully like this:

*My aunt Sitara used to stuck the thin dough to the hot wall,*

*Mirgadir used to snatch a loaf furtively,*

*He used to eat it and gallop like a colt*

<sup>6</sup>Havilov H.A. Azerbaijanetnoqrafy. Baku, "Elm", 1991, Pg.182.

<sup>7</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., pg.34.

<sup>8</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.96.

<sup>9</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.96.

*It was funny how he snatched the nazik,  
And my antflang the scraper after him<sup>10</sup>.*

In the commentary the "Hail to thee, Heydarbaba" Shahriyar says that this kind of bread is called nazik in Tebriz, in its central part. It is just a round loaf of bread baked in villages.

Shahriyar was a connoisseur of the national poetry and cuisine, he consciously compares them in queer manner and recommends to treat both of them carefully. He writes like this in his poem "The Language of the Turk":

*Like any meal poetry must also have its taste and salt as a meal  
The villagers know that it is impossible to have Khashyl without syrup<sup>11</sup>.  
(Khashyl is made of flour, which is mixed with water and cooked).*

As meals are not eaten unsalted and khashyl is not eaten without syrup, the poet attaches great importance to the fullness of the meaning, to the content, to superiority of the content over the form. In his poem "I made a sea out it" he speaks of the peculiarities of of halva which is the beauty of the tables. He declares that he has raised high his native Turkish language banned by the despotic regime, made it sweet as halva in the tongues of his compatriots, made millions of his countrymen read fiction in their own native language, and he feels proud for doing it:

*In the bitter tongues the Turkish became sweet,  
I mixed it with sweet and turned it to halva<sup>12</sup>.*

In his poem "Sahandiyya" the poet makes the readers know that halva is cooked with syrup from grapes, and such kind of halva is called terhalva (fresh halva):

*Wear your white fur coat in spring, you will wear your green clothes  
and eat halva with grape syrup then<sup>13</sup>.*

When we read these lines, we remember this popular saying at once. Be patient, halva will be cooked with the grape syrup. We encounter the names of many dairy products in "Hail to thee, Heydarbaba" and in his other poems. He mentions the names of such products as agiz, bulama, milk, butter, shor, yogurt, cheese and others. Agiz is the first often milk of the animal, bulama follows then. Shor is resembled to cottage cheese, but, differs, because it is not made of milk, but of the liquid which remains after separation of butter from milk.

He also mentions the names of traditional drinks: cool drinks, hot drinks, medicinal tea, orchis, syrup, fruit juice, juices from quince, and medlar, sherbet, sherbets from fruits and finally, buttermilk.

Shahriyar was born and grown in the country, therefore, "he knew that buttermilk is an irreplaceable drink in the harvest period"<sup>14</sup>. He described it skilfully like this:

<sup>10</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False wold, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page., pg.163.

<sup>11</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., pg.211.

<sup>12</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., pg.94.

<sup>13</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., pg.53.

<sup>14</sup>Havilov H.A. Azerbayjanetnoqrafy. Baku, "Elm", 1991, Pg.182.

*The mowers used to drink butter milk,*

*It cooled them a little, then they continued to mow again<sup>15</sup>.*

Tea and various sherbets were the ornament of the tables from the ancient times. The grave problems of his time, the painful events, division of the nation into two miserable life of people enraged him. He used sherbet figuratively. He wrote that the people tasted the bitter sherbet of departure.

Shahriyar mentions the names of the national dishes in his poem written in Azerbaijani: bozbash (soup with any kind of meat), piti (soup cooked in a special clay pot with fat ram, onion, pea and others for one person), pilaf, kebab, pilaf cooked in the hearth, etc. In general, the Azerbaijani people was engaged in husbandry since the antiquity, therefore meat products occupy a special place in the formation of its cuisine. Of course, the tables of the rich were always abundant with various dishes, dessert and drinks in comparison with those of the poor. If we review the history of our nation, we can revive it more clearly in the imagination of the people.

The English traveler and diplomat A. Jenkinson, who came to Azerbaijan on August 20, 1561, to hold negotiations with Abdulla khan Ustachy, ruler of Shirvan, wrote: "When dinner time came, they laid cloth on the floor and various dishes were served, they lined the dishes due to their kinds. According to my calculations there were 140 dishes. When they were eaten, the servants cleared the table together with the cloth, a new cloth was laid. Another 150 dishes and fruits were brought. Thus, for one dinner we were given 290 dishes, including the fruits"<sup>16</sup>.

The rich people have greatly contributed to the formation of our present cuisine, which is very rich and variegated. Shahriyar tried to describe the tables of all the layers of the population. His poems clarify the situation, whether the man is rich, or poor. The pilaf with melted butter is not destined to be eaten by the poor with all its ingredients.

*Let him have only bread and do his work<sup>17</sup>.*

*Or;*

*If the nation doesn't find pilaf with melted butter,*

*let it have bozbash,*

*Do not complain, it is also good, because there is a relative*

*equality between*

*pilaf and bozbash<sup>18</sup>.*

Piti is also an ancient national dish of our nation. Shahriyar describes not the dish, but the pot in which it is cooked. "The pot of piti is put into the hearth"<sup>19</sup>.

The poet presents to his readers a number of kitchen utensils. Such as sieve for flour and sieve for grain, wooden tub for bread, guvdush, scraper, spade, saj (a round cast iron buldging disk on which a thin loaf of bread is spread and baked, on its other

<sup>15</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. Baku, "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.53.

<sup>16</sup>Mahmudov Y. Mahmudov Y. Travelers, discovers. Azerbaijan. Baku, Ganjlik, 1985, 136 page. Pg.141.

<sup>17</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.96

<sup>18</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.71.

<sup>19</sup>MuhammadhuseynShahriyar. False world, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page.,Pg.51.

side anything may be fried), teapot, badya (a copper dish with a wide orifice), gazan-gablama (pot for cooking pilaf), knife, spoon, gubul-mangal, teshi (both of them will be explained later), usturlab (monocular), lantern, candle, chandelier, etc. Perhaps, the readers know for what purposes these utensils are used. But not everybody knows much about teshi, usturlab and gubul-mangal. Shahriyar treated the heritage, and beliefs of the people with great respect and tribute. He reminded the things which were going to be forgotten, wiped out of memories!

*When the old granny continued her work*

*She used teshi (the knitting needles) as if the sun*

*appeared and hid in the clouds*<sup>20</sup>.

Shahriyar describes teshi in "Hail to thee, Heydarbaba" like this: "Teshi is just a knitting needle, in the form of a spinning wheel. The women in the village are used to put the white wool on their laps and spin it"<sup>21</sup>. But being a poet Shahriyar resembles the teshi to the sun which frequently appears from behind the clouds and hides again behind them.

Gubul-mangal is an ordinary, simple device for barbecue which the travellers use. Shahriyar uses the word gubul-mangal in his poem devoted to his cousin Mir Abulfaze, he admires the life style of his cousin which is as simple as a gubul-mangal:

*Thank the God, my cousin's bread is honestly earned*

*I admire him, because he is as simple as a gubul-mangal*<sup>22</sup>.

Usturlab (monocular) is an ancient tool used by astronomers to watch the sky.

The astronomers used this device to determine the time, the equinox, the arrival of the new year. The German scholar A. O'Leary was a witness how the new year Novrus (on March 21 or, 22) was met in the ancient Shamakhi and he made notes in his diary about it: "The astronomer rose several times and watched through his usturlab how the sun approached the equinox. The expected time came and he cried loudly: "The new year began". The cannons fired to herald the arrival of the new year. Trumpets were played, drums were beaten by the walls of the castle and in the towers. The holiday festivities began..."<sup>23</sup>

Shahriyar knew the history of Azerbaijan, he aspired for progress. In his poem "The revolution without men" he glorifies the Islamic revolution in Iran as a herald of novelty and freedom. He believed that the revolution will bring peace, prosperity and good life to his people. He heralded the qualitative changes, civilization in the society, cheered the progressive novelties, never forgetting the past achievements of his nation:

*We are to produce computers,*

*We are to improve our monoculars.*

*I tell you, the youth, you are to fight like in jihad,*

*Only then all the ruins will be rebuilt,*

*We are to build, we are to produce*

<sup>20</sup>MuhamadhuseynShahriyar. False world, Azerbaijani Encyclopaedy NBP, 1993, 496 page, Pg.159.

<sup>21</sup>MuhamadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.19.

<sup>22</sup>MuhamadhuseynShahriyar. Turkic divan. B., "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.128.

<sup>23</sup>Mahmudov Y. Travelers, discovers. Azerbaijan. Baku, Ganjlik, 1985, 136 page, Pg.153.

*Our shoes, socks and stockings*<sup>24</sup>.

All these evidences that only those men-of-art, who are closely connected with their own roots, nation can cultivate an aesthetic taste in the people, conquer the peaks of the universal beauty by their original, genuine national poetry.

## CONCLUSIONS

The writing of the poem in azeritürkish 'Heydar-Babaya Salam' (Hello to Heydar-Baba) and other poems in azeri-türkish language by great poet Shahriyar, in the conditions, where the türkish language was forbidden, awakened the national consciousness of Azerbaijani people. Shahriyar, who deeply understood the spirit of Azerbaijani people, has portrayed his hard-working people, their life, traditions, national cuisine, clothes and the mythological views in his persian and türkish poetry. The poet by his unparalleled poetic mastery, made clear to friends and also to enemies that, this people like other civilized nations of the world has a rich history and language, the folklore heritage, resembling the treasure, unique national cuisine, unique material and spiritual culture.

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<sup>24</sup>Muhammadhuseyn Shahriyar. Türkic divan. Baku, "Alhuda-Sabah", 1993, 217 page., Pg.187.

