

The Function of Education in Codification of Radif in Iranian Dastgahi Music

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The goal of this research is to investigate the ideas that functioned in shaping thought of Radif in Iranian Dastgahi music. In this regard by preparing the reasons, we pay attention to the function of education in codification of Radif. Although Iranian traditional music has long history but its codification to seven Dastgah-s and five Avaz-es in the format of Radif is attributed to Qajar Dynasty in the 19th century. In this transformation, Mirza Abdollah, Tar-Player of the Nasser al-Din Shah Period, has played an important role in final codification of Radif. Due to the truth that the past masters scrimped in music education, and Mirza Abdollah had encountered with problems to learn music, hence he has mostly cared about music education in adulthood, and it is probable that one of the reasons in collecting Gusheh-s (approximately a small piece of the Iranian Dastgahi music) and organizing them into coherent sets was making simplicity for the students to learn. Furthermore, masters who seriously and continuously have taught after Mirza Abdollah, left a narration (version) of Radif. On the other hand, definite patterns in placement of Gusheh-s and phrases of the Radif have been organized in a manner that makes educational function for it.

Keywords: Iranian Dastgahi music, Iranian traditional music, Radif, Persian classical music, Mirza Abdollah, music of Qajar Dynasty

Introduction

Although the concept of Dastgah has been definite gradually in a long period of time, but its codification to seven Dastgah-s and five Avaz-es also appearance of the Radif concept is followed to Nasser al-Din Shah Period (1831-1896 A.D.). After this time a new concept, named Radif is observed in Iranian music, and the tunes are collected in codified Radif, under seven Dastgah-s and their subsets (or the five Avaz-es). To investigate the ideas that functioned in shaping thought of codification the Radif, in first, we will review the situation and development of the Qajar music and then deal with the role of Mirza Abdollah in this codification.

Music View in Qajar Dynasty

Qajar Dynasty is one of the most important periods of Persian music history from various aspects. Development of relation between Iran and the western countries in Qajar Dynasty caused Persian music receives direct and indirect influence from western music. Some outcomes of this influence are shaping military music, funding school of music, knowing western instruments, entering European teachers to Iran, using

western notation method and music theory that followed by writing Iranian Dastgahi music, coining new terms and making new musical forms, and also different shape of ensembles. Usage of phonograph and gramophone are another effects of the west influence on Iran. Of course cultural impact is a separate issue that has not placed in this article. The important phenomenon of this period is appearance the idea of Radif by the musicians.

Generally in Qajar dynasty, there are average stability and security from political and social development view. From 1722 A.D., fall of the final Shah of Safavid Dynasty as the result of Afghans' attacks, until establishing Qajar Dynasty by Agha Muḥammad Khan in 1794 A.D., Iran was in chaos and encountered with tragic events. Ending wars and chaos also making political and social stability caused promotion and development of art fields. On the other hand, dating reign of the Shah-s and their support to artists help to develop and promote art fields. For example, reign of Fath-Ali Shah (1772-1834 A.D.) dated 38 years and one of Nasser al-Din Shah was 50 years that totally caused a secure environment to emerge well-known artists in various fields.

The Qajar Shah-s' interest in art and being supporter of the artists, make suitable environment for the musicians to codify and develop Dastgahi music so that Fath-Ali Shah had poem initiative also Nasser al-Din Shah had some interest in poem and art fields that caused the development of poem, music, and painting. In general, the items effecting in promotion, development and transfer of Iranian music in Qajar Dynasty include:

(1) Favorable situation of society and political stability: with establishing Qajar Dynasty by Agha Muḥammad Khan in 1794, average stability comes back to the country and eighty-year-old conflicts end. Noticeable that Iran enters into a new period of its history from this point.

(2) Long-term reign of the Shah-s, followed by continuing situation of the musicians in long time: After Agha Muḥammad Khan, his nephew, Fath-Ali Shah reigned. His empire dates 38 years. After the fourteen year-old reign of Mohammad Shah, Nasser al-Din Shah reigned that his one dates 50 years. Relation between Iran and Europe develops further in this period also his chancellor, Mirza Taghi Khan Farahani (known as Amir Kabir) begins reformations in different aspects of the country and does valuable works such as funding Dar al-Fonun¹ including military music field that training the specialists in music is one of its outcomes.

(3) Shah-s' notice to their encouragement and support of the artists, and granting special social class to them: Similar to the other arts that are dependent to socio-cultural situation, music changes in Qajar Dynasty. The author of *Tarikh-e Azodi* book, Mirza Ahmad Azod-al-Dowleh (son of Fath-Ali Shah) explains about two music ensembles in Fath-Ali Shah court that were been mastered by Ostad Zohre and Ostad Mina (Azod-al-Dowleh, 1988, pp. 46-47). Furthermore, he notes some other players who did not have any relation to these players (Azod-al-Dowleh, 1988, pp. 26-27). There were various song ensembles, also player and artist ones in Nasser al-Din Shah Period too, such as "Gole Rashti", "Tavoos", "Masha-allah", "Karim Kur", and "Momen Kur" (Moayyer-al Mamalek, 1993, p. 63). Furthermore the well-known player ensembles of Nasser al-Din Shah's court, there were players, named "Amale-ye Tarab". The title "Amale-ye Tarab-e Khasse" was an honor one, given to the player who could sit near the Shah and play for him (Khaleghi, 1999, p. 23). Some of these players during the fifty year-old reign of Nasser al-Din Shah includes: Agha Ali Akbar Kahn, Agha Gholam-Hosseini, and Mirza Abdollah who played Tar; Santur Khan, Mohammad Sadegh Khan, and Sama Hozour who played Santur; Khoshnavaz, Motaleb Khan, and Javad Qazvini who played Kamanche. Nasser

¹ Polytechnic.

al-Din Shah had a special interest in music so that the players performed at his bedroom in addition to the banquets (Moayyer-al Mamalek, 1993, pp. 24-25). Accordingly, the musicians of this period were under the encouragement and support of the Shah-s.

The Role of Mirza Abdollah in Codifying Radif

Although the emerging situation of the Dastgahi Music comes back to pre-Qajar time, however, codifying and organizing Radif under seven Dastgah-s and their components are done by the musicians of Qajar period (Binesh, 2001, p. 150). The role of Mirza Abdollah (Mirza Abdollah Farahani, 1843-1918) is very crucial in this process. Between the players of early reign of Nasser al-Din Shah, Agha Ali-Akbar Farahani (Father of Mirza Abdollah) had a great reputation and was benefited from the King's encouragement and support. Comte de Gobineau following his three-year residence in Iran of Nasser al-Din Shah Periods has written an itinerary and pointed to the musicians of the time: "The best-known Tar-player between average social classes is Ali-Akbar, who plays very well, and I have seen the Europeans who do never notice to east music, has been affected during hearing his instrument" (Gobineau, 2008, p. 24).

Furthermore, Aref Qazvini says about Agha Ali-Akbar Khan's playing: "The only person who can be the master of art music in Iran from past century to the now is Agha Ali-Akbar Farahani" (Aref Qazvini, 1976, p. 606).

After Agha Ali-Akbar, his nephew, Agha Gholam-Hosseini was the most prestigious player of Nasser al-din Shah Period. For early death of Agha Ali-Akbar, his sons, Mirza Abdollah and Agha Hossein Qoli learnt music with his cousin, Agha Gholam-Hosseini, who was one of the students of Agha Ali-Akbar and well-known masters at the time. For this reason, it's said that Radif truly is narration of Agha Ali-Akbar Khan that was transferred to his sons by Agha Gholam-Hosseini and has come down to us. Hassan Mash'hun says about the importance of Farahani family:

The things that makes the fundamentals of our national music now, approximately are the same that artist people of this family learnt from Agha Ali-Akbar and transferred to their descendants and relatives, and have taught to the students of this art. (Mash'hun, 2001, p. 56)

The importance of work of these two brothers especially Mirza Abdollah was codifying and completing the Gusheh-s of the Dastgah-s in addition to memorizing them so that Mirza Abdollah added to his musical knowledge, the music that heard and did not has in his mind. As a result, he prevented deterioration of many tunes that had come to his hand until that time (Khaleghi, 1999, p. 116). Although nobody knows Mirza Abdollah as the inventor of Iranian Dastgahi music, but he has codified and organized the music of his time and we can imagine him as the founder of the idea of Radif. In fact after him, the other masters interested in making and codifying another version and have tried to teach the sets, named Radif to their students.

Forsat ad-Dowle Shirazi in the second edition of *Bohour-al-Alhan* (that has published 10 years after its first edition,) has added accurate classification of seven Dastgah-s and the gradual name of Gusheh-s in the today style. The significant point is Forsat al-Dowle who declares that he has added this new content after his journey to Tehran and meet with Mehdi Solhi (or Montazem al-Hokama) (Forsat al-Dowle, 1996, p. 19). Accordingly, it is probable classifying the content of Dastgah-s and their Gusheh-s were important for the musicians who followed the Mirza Abdollah School.

On the other hand, today various versions of Radif, all have been derived from the version of Mirza

Abdollah and the other members of Farahani family. Nur-Ali Borumand who has learnt the Radif of Mirza Abdollah by Esmail Ghahremani² says about: “Mirza Abdollah, the late was a great master and higher than the others. Even his brother, Agha Hossein-Qoli had learnt the Radif-s by him. For this reason, we should set the Radif of Mirza Abdollah as index and reference” (Borumand, 2003, p. 191). As the evidence shows Radif had been taught initially using Tar and Setar instruments. Here in Talai says:

The Radif was regularly and completely taught at the Tar and Setar masters’ courses and gradually some masters such as Abolhasan Saba who firstly, was a Setar-player and the Great master of the Radif, transferred his knowledge about it to the other instruments and the Radif of the violin, Santur, Ney, and Kamancheh was made. (Talai, 2002, p. 24)

Accordingly performance of the Radif that firstly was codified in relation with Tar and Setar, became conventional on the other instruments; however, these two instruments are the best suitable ones for performing the Dastghahi music and the Radif; “Tar and Setar can play the Radif-s on the main position and in theory of the Radif, we should refer to these two instruments that are fretted” (Lotfi, 1999, p. 232).

Also it is said that applying the term of Radif in the vocal music has been more recently than in the instrumental Radif (Talai, 2002, p. 24). So teaching the instrumental Radif especially in the Tar and Setar is started earlier than the vocal Radif, and Tar is the fundament of Iranian music to the extent that the vocal Radif follows the Radif of Tar and Setar instruments (Lotfi, 1999, p. 232). Founders and codifiers of the Radif were Tar and Setar players, and this confirms the being index of the Radif of Mirza Abdollah so that the other versions of Radif such as the Radif-s of Agha Hossein-Qoli, Darvish Khan, Ali Akbar Shahnazi, Abolhasan Saba, and Musa Maroufi are codified after it.

The Reasons for Existence of Radif

Now on the base of the presented evidence also this assumption that Mirza Abdollah, himself had a main role in codifying the Radif, there is a question that what problems have caused appearance the idea of Radif? In the other words, what was the goals and motivation of Mirza Abdollah to codify a set with traits of the Radif? In the case of appearance the idea of Radif, different reasons are expressed. One of these is the view of Hassan Mash’hun. He believes the reason of organizing and dividing Dastgah-s, Avaz-s and related Gusheh-s also appearance Radif is to prevent from disintegrating also chaos that had endangered Iranian music from Safavid Dynasty (Mash’hun, 2001, p. 368). In this view the musicians of Qajar Dynasty collected and codified the Dastgah-s and the Gusheh-s in the frame of Radif so that terminate the chaos in music of their time. In another view, Mohammad Taghi Masoudieh believes the reason of codifying the Dastgah-s that followed by Radif is the lack of accordance between theory and practice in period of pre-Dastgahi music or the same music treatises of Safavid dynasty (Masoudieh, 1997, p. 8). In this context, Taghi Binesh knows the complexity of education and analysis of the old Persian music, also low number of Persian musical treatises that interpret Maqami system,³ as the reasons of change in the system of Iranian music from Maqami to Dastgahi (Binesh, 2001, p. 140).

Another view in this medium is Hormoz Farhat’s one. According to him, the reason of forming Radif is a decline of musical research in Iran during 16th to 19th centuries and the lack of playing and improvising at a Maqam with a suitable duration by musicians (Farhat, 2001, p. 42). He believes forming Radif is a good

² One of Mirza’s students.

³ Old system of Persian music.

solution for catching a suitable duration in a performance (Farhat, 2001, p. 42). Another point about codifying the Radif is presenting it as an educational syllabus for teaching music (Talai, 1993, p. 14). This point is based on the thoughts of Bruno Nettl. He also proclaims teaching music using Radif is affected by western culture in teaching music (Nettl, 1978). It is clear that different reasons are expressed in this issue that probably all would be efficient on codifying Radif.

Besides the above views, here we try to consider the goals and motivations of Mirza Abdollah that have had an important function in codify Radif. According to the evidence, Agha Gholam-Hosseini, cousin of Mirza Abdollah abstained teaching music to him and his brother; "Agha Gholam-Hosseini did not notice to musical education of his cousins and similar to many musicians of that time were jealous man and did not interest in teaching his art music to others even his cousins" (Khaleghi, 1999, p. 114). Confirming to this, Hassan Mash'hun has quoted from Haji Agha Mohammad, a student of Mirza Abdollah, that he had said about apathy of Agha Gholam-Hosseini in teaching music to his cousins:

one friend of Agha Gholam-Hosseini had come to meet him, when the cousin was supposed to play, he commanded to me to go out so that I could not benefit from the music that he would perform. [...] when he played at his room, my brother, Hossein-Qoli and I went to the roof and set our ears on the chimney hole of his room, heard the tunes that he played and memorized them. (Mash'hun, 2001, p. 567)

Aref Qazvini says in this medium:

However, Agha Gholam-Hosseini had become the stepfather of Mirza and Hossein-Qoli [...] he never had been interested in teaching any music to them even he sent them out during teaching [...]. For this reason, their mother was forced to beg her husband (Agha Gholam-Hosseini) not to kill this musical virtue of the sons and give their dream to them. (Aref Qazvini, 1976, pp. 608-609)

After that time, Mirza and Agha Hossein-Qoli through their mother, benefited from Agha Gholam-Hosseini teaching. Having distrusted and jealousy in teaching music, the masters of that time have taught a few students. Here there is another quotation. For example, it is said about Sorur-ol Molk, the Santur player of the time that he was to the extent distrust and jealousy in teaching music, even refused to teach her knowledge to his son, Motalleb Khan (Mash'hun, 2001, p. 510).

Maybe for fearing of making a rival in music, the masters had not been interested in teaching people and were pessimistic about that. Mirza Abdollah has learnt in such a situation. For this, he was determined to memorize any tune that hears until teach them to her students. He valued the education of music. "This master was very patient about teaching student. As it is known the simple-minded people who came to his training class did not become disappointed, and the master worked patiently with them and did never make disappointed music enthusiasts" (Khaleghi, 1999, p. 120). So it is probable that his interest in teaching music while the other masters abstained teaching for being jealous, he decided to collect the Gusheh-s and organize them in the joined sets of the Dastgah-s so that make it simple for the student to learn.

On the other hand, according to the old records of Mirza Abdollah on the phonograph, it is said: "In instrumental and vocal chamber music, he played a Zarbi (rhythmic piece) after playing some Gusheh-s of a Dastgah [...] sometimes he answered the song in the various manners that caused the diversity in his playing" (Sepanta, 1990, pp. 46-47). Playing Zarbi with some Gusheh-s of a Dastgah shows Mirza did not settle down the music of Radif. Furthermore, this points that he did not play the Gusheh-s according to their gradual order in the Radif, it is probable he has utilized the Radif for educational goals.

Majid Kiani who has learnt the Radif by Esmaeil Ghahremani (one of the students of Mirza Abdollah) says about various versions of Radif in a personal interview:

Radif is codified in an order so that can sooner be memorized and stay longer in mind. The Radif of Mirza Abdollah is very successful at this point, and I memorized it sooner than the other ones. In the other hands, the school of Sama Hozur (Habib Samai) does not have any codified Gusheh-s also any order because of his Radif is improvised, and the student must try very years at this school to learn totally his Radif. (Zaker Jafari, 2004, p. 100)

According to this quotation we can know, firstly, in the other schools of that time the continuum or order of the Gusheh-s of each Dastgah was not important and secondly the Radif, codified by Mirza Abdollah was more efficient than the other Radif-s from the educational view point. This is another reason showing Mirza Abdollah has arranged the Gusheh-s of a Dastgah-s as the Radif because of believing in the importance of teaching while in the other master's school such as Sama Hozur, the quiddity of arrangement and codifying Radif was not important. Correspondingly, Dariush Talai who has learnt the Radif with Nur-Ali Borumand and Ali-Akbar Shahnazi declares about the past masters that the ones who had a well-ordered course have left a Ravayat of Radif and the masters who did not have any course so have not left any Radif (Talai, 2002, p. 23). It is clear that Mirza and his brother, Agha Hossein-Qoli has taught to many students so that if we mention only top rated people who have become masters themselves, we can order a long list of Iranian music masters such as Darvish Khan, Montezem al-Hokama, Esmaeil Ghahremani, Arfa al-molk, Haj Agha Mohammad Irani, Yahya Khan Ghavam al-Dowleiy, Hossein Hang Afarin, Ali-Naqi Vaziri, Abolhasan Saba, Morteza Neydavoud, Fakham al-Dowle Behzadi, Ali-Akbar Shahnazi, Yusef Forutan, Sa'id Hormozi, Musa Marufi and many others. Apart from Mirza and Agha Hossein-Qoli, the other masters who have left a coherent Radif include Darvish Khan, Abolhasan Saba, Ali-Akbar Shahnazi, and Abdollah Davami, who each one had a well-ordered course. For example, Darvish Khan dedicated gold hastate to the students who finished educating the Radif in his school.

Thus the masters who had a well-ordered course have left a version of Radif, and the others only had a special style in playing it. This shows the importance of music education in codifying the Radif. Correspondingly Majid Kiani says:

Many Radif-s, narrated by the past masters are very general and summary while any tunes or Gusheh-s can be lasted more, however, this is occurred during a performance and a special position and time if it is necessary. Furthermore, memorizing and repeating Radif is gradually caused knowledge about and understanding of the music as well as the quiddity of its structure within the mind of the player or the musician. (Kiani, 2003, p. 54)

None of the contemporary masters do not negate the educational aspects of Radif. It is a comprehensive set that works as an encyclopedia. For this reason, it is not to be seen only as a pure music work but as a mine and treasure of understandings about Iranian music that has a summary shape (Talai, 2002, p. 25).

Overview Some Patterns in Radif and Their Function in the Music Education

Here using the traits and patterns of the Radif, some properties will be cleared that reinforce the function of education in codification of Iranian traditional music. One of these traits is the naming of Gusheh-s. There are the names in the Radif that point to a place, tribe, and well-known clan, for example, Bakhtiari, Shushtari, Gilaki, Qajar and so on. Some Gusheh-s are named as a person; for example, Mehdi Zarrabi, Nasirkhani, Moradkhani, and Haji Hasani. This naming was useful to learn easily the tones and tunes in the absence of

notation (Talai, 2002, p. 20), especially sometimes the phrases and elaborates of the Gusheh-s were named to butterfly, the wing of pigeon, shorebird, like a nightingale and so on. Hossein Alizadeh declares this naming can be a kind of sign to help learning and memorizing the phrases and Gusheh-s (Zaker Jafari, 2004, p. 242).

On the other hand, definite patterns of the placement of each Gusheh-s and phrases of a Radif have a special code (rule) that should be observed. Analysis of the Gusheh-s and the Dastgah-s of Radif include details and tips that can be a separate research but some of these traits in codifying Radif are common to all the Dastgah-s and function as a pattern in teaching music. One of these traits is the modulations of a Dastgah. In all Dastgah-s after introducing the main mode at the Gusheh of Daramad, the subsidiary modes are heard one after one at a few Gusheh-s and finally the music returns to the main mode of the Dastgah, heard at the Gusheh of Daramad.

Hossein Alizadeh says in this medium:

The function of Dastgahi system is to use the modes away from the mode of Daramad. [...] for this reason in some Gusheh-s such as Delkash that are different from Daramad and suddenly occurs, there is not an introduction to make it familiar for its back. Here we need some preparations, named good Forud. [...] the best patterns for performance and improvising are hidden in the Radif itself and when it is said that one Iranian music player should know Radif, it means he (she) should learn the key techniques of transfer between these Gusheh-s and Dastgah-s. (Zaker Jafari, 2004, p. 226)

Thus modulation and return to main mode of a Dastgah are the crucial traits of Dastgahi system and the ways for doing modulations are presented in various patterns of Radif. A student after learning these patterns can utilize them for improvising. The pattern, used to return to main mode of Gusheh of Daramad is named "Forud". The role of Forud is very important in some Dastgah-s because of the modes' diversity, and it clears the identity of the Dastgah (Farhat, 2001, p. 98). For example, in Dastgah of Rast-Panjgah, dependency of some Gusheh-s to the Dastgah is vague and the definite Forud of Rast-Panjgah can only clear the dependency. It is interesting that Rast-Panjgah contains a set of different modes of the other Dastgah-s and for this reason, it has an important educational aspect to teach modulations to the students (Farhat, 2001, p. 161).

Therefore, it can be concluded that being used different modes at a Dastgah had an educational function so that the students could be able to learn various ways for doing modulation also return to main mode of Gusheh of Daramad (or of the Dastgah) via Forud (a kind of Cadence In Dastgahi Persian music), for example, in Dastgah of Mahur that is very different from Shur, it is possible to modulate to Shur using Gusheh of Delkash. As Forud has an important function, as the ways for doing modulation have criteria that the students can learn them in Radif and utilize them while improvising. The contents of Radif have the patterns and criteria that seeking them needs a separate research in future.

Conclusion

As the evidence shows the idea of change in the system of Persain music dates back to pre-Qajar Dynasty that during a process finally the music was fixed in seven Dastgah-s and five Avas-es (Dastgah's subsets). Codifying Radif is done by the musicians of Nasser al-Din Shah Period that the role of Mirza Abdollah is very outstanding in this process. Having distrusted and jealousy in teaching music, the masters of that time have taught a few students, and Mirza Abdollah himself had problems in learning music from his masters. For this reason, he cared about music education. It is probable that his interest in teaching music, made him collect and codify the Gusheh-s so that the students easily could learn. In his Radif, the order of the Gusheh-s is very important and for this reason it is more efficient from educational view. Furthermore, the masters who seriously

and continuously have taught after Mirza Abdollah, left a version (narration) of Radif and the others only had a special style in playing it.

On the other hand, according to the patterns and criteria of Radif, we can research on its educational traits; as naming the Gusheh-s also the phrases and Tahrir-s (Melismas), the modulations, and Forud-s of each Dastgah. These facts, also the truth that today Radif has educational functions and is less used in performances and inspiring improvisations or compositions, the function of education in codification of Radif is clear.

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