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Poetry of Mahmud Sami al-Barudi.**

ABSTRACT

Mahmud Sami al-Barudi (1838-1904) was a significant Egyptian political figure and a poet of eminence. He served as Prime Minister of Egypt from February 4, 1882 until May 26, 1882. He was known as (رب السيف والقلم) ‘master of sword and pen’ as well as the pioneer of Modern Arabic poetry.

Though the Egyptian society started to come out of the darkness of illiteracy and poverty – inherited from the Turkish era – during the reign of Ismail, the condition of the common people remained almost the same. Al-Barudi - as his poetry depicts - always felt grieved and concerned about that phenomena. So he worked hard to bring about a change in the society and made many reforms as a politician, and as a poet, he devoted the biggest part of his poetry to his **mission of reformation**. He persuaded the people to get **education** as the dignity and the honour of a nation can be achieved only through spreading education in the whole society. The poet believes that **if the rulers as well as the politicians are reformed, the whole society will be reformed**. In his poetry he addresses the people in easy and simple language to urge them to acquire knowledge. In this respect he adopts various styles like maxims, satire and admonition etc.

The period of Mahmud Sami al-Barudi was greatly affected by the developments relating to the struggle between England and France (French Occupation of Egypt 1798-1801) to monopolize Egypt. **This struggle awakened the Egyptian people from a long slumber, filled in them the spirit of resistance and struggle against tyranny and led to the development of great nationalism, which in turn led them to drive off the French and then the British from Egypt.** Hence Mohammad Ali was able to establish himself as a ruler under the direction of the leaders of the Egyptian people. But his stand against Ulama and massacre of Mamalik **terrified and demoralized the Egyptian people with the result that**

they lost their revolutionary spirit. Al-Barudi worked hard to awaken as well as incite the Egyptian people to rise up against the tyranny throughout his life. He started to encourage them to resist the tyranny and injustice and to rise up for struggle and heroic deeds as that was the only way - in that painful situation – to defend their honour.

When the Egyptian army revolted (1882) under the leadership of Urabi, al-Barudi reminded the people of their past glories and **started awakening their revolutionary spirit which they had lost during the rule of Mohammad Ali. He urged** them to join the Urabi revolution. They were defeated due to the treachery and fleeing of some officers from the battlefield, hence he repented his joining the revolution. He describes their treachery, cowardice , breaking the oaths and fleeing from the battlefield and so on. There were people who accused him of joining the revolution to achieve his own ambitions. So he justifies his role in joining it.

After the defeat, he was **sent to exile and lived there for more than seventeen years but never ceased composing political as well as revolutionary poetry, more and more excitedly and vehemently**, though it led the rulers to extend the period of his exile.

Al-Barudi loves nature and skillfully paints it live, but we have to concentrate in it on psychological themes only, which he has depicted beautifully. For example, when the poet looks at a water wheel in a calm field between trees and plants, it seems to him like a slave mother who has lost her sons and is weeping over them with tears continuously flowing from her eyes. He describes his psychological state as well as that of his fellow countrymen as they are bundled on board a ship bound to sail to exile and is about to leave their country in a moment and they are looking at their homeland the last time and so on in a very moving style.

In short, the major part of al-Barudi's poetry is devoted to **his mission of reformation and to revive the revolutionary spirit of resistance and struggle among the Arab nations in general and the Egyptian people in particular.** Thus he deserves to be called **“A POET REFORMER”** or **“A REFORMER POET”** and **“A REVOLUTIONARY POET”** as well.