

Al-Mutanabbi

Abu-al-Tayyab Ahmad bin Husain known as Al-Mutanabbi is a very famous Arabic poet from the Abbasid period. He was born in 915 AD in Kufa, Iraq and died in 965 AD. He was the court poet of Saif-al-Daulah of Aleppo for whom he composed most of his poems. This is Mutanabbi whose poems keep Saif-al-Daulah alive in the history of the Arab world. Al-Mutanabbi composed his best poems for him. Al-Mutanabbi is one the greatest, most prominent and influential poets of Arabic language. His poetry has been translated into several important languages of the world. Although his poetry largely comprises the odes in praise of the kings, viziers, and governors he visited during his lifetime, his greatness lies in his sharp intelligence and wittiness. He was very talented and a genius. In his poetry he has discussed topics of philosophy of life, the courage which was so favourite to Arab poets, and the description of battles. When he used to write satires, it would be very painful for the person it was intended for. One of the best examples of this type of poetry is a satirical poem which he composed in the satire of Kafur Ikhshidi, the king of Egypt. He uses beautiful similes and metaphors in his poetry. He says in one of his poems:

The watchmen are not worried about the persons who visit you in the darkness because you are so beautiful and shining that you radiate in the darkness and anybody who meets you in the darkness is seen by your radiance. My beloved is very beautiful and a very beautiful fragrance of musk is always emitted from her body as if she is made of musk. She is bright like the sun.

In another couplet he says that there is only one place of sitting in the world and that is the back of a very fast horse and the best friend in the world is a book. In another poem he says that the horse, the night, and the desert are all known to him, and so do the sword, the spear, the paper and the pen.

Al-Mutanabbi is one of the very popular poets of Arabic and his poems are still widely popular in the Arab world.