

IDC Arabic

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Abu Ala-al-Marri

Abbasid period is regarded as the golden period in Arab history. This is the period in which the Arab world produced a very good number of scientists, scholars, poets, philosophers, and writers. Al-Marri, a celebrated poet and philosopher, also belongs to this period. His name was Abul Ala Ahmad bin Abdullah. He was born in 973 in Aleppo's locality Marrat-al-Numan, that is why he is called Al-Marri. He died in 1057 at the age of 83 in Aleppo. He was blind. Al-Marri was very sensitive, he never took food in front of others, his servant used to keep his food in the basement where he used to take it so that no one could see a blind (Al-Marri) taking food. He is regarded as one of the celebrated Arab philosophers, poets, and writers. He is known for having controversial religious views. In fact he was a free thinker. He was against the institution of marriage and begetting of children. He says in one of his couplets that:

*This is the crime committed by my father against me
And I did not commit this crime against anyone*

So he ever married. He attacked religious dogmas, he was equally critical of every religion whether it is Islam, Judaism, Christianity or any other religion. He advocated social justice. He was a pure vegetarian and never ate non-vegetarian food. Once he was ill, the physician prescribed chicken soup for him. When the chicken soup was served he started weeping and refused to take it.

Al-Marri is one of the important poets of Arabic language. He left two poetic collections one is called *Saqt-al-Zand* (The Tinder Spark) and the other one is *Luzum Ma La Yalzam* (Unnecessary Necessity). His work in prose is known as *Risalah-al-Ghufran* (The Epistle of Forgiveness). This work is compared to Divine Comedy of Dante, which came hundreds of years after Al-Marri. In this book Al-Marri visits Paradise where he meets Arabic poets belonging to pre-Islamic period. This is contrary to the Islamic faith that only the persons having belief in Oneness of God will enter paradise. Further Al-Marri is secular in comparison to Dante. In Divine Comedy, Dante sends everyone who is against Christianity out of paradise. But Al-Marri meets all poets, most of them non-believers, in paradise.

In short, Al-Marri was one of the celebrated poets, writers, and philosophers who contributed a lot in the development of Arabic literature during the Abbasid period.