
“Sustainable Development Dimensions in Poetry of Mutahar Al Eryani”

Jihan Abdul Rahman Ali Oshiesh

Department of English, Faculty of Education and Sciences,
Albaydha University, Yemen
joshiesh2019@gmail.com

Abstract:

Yemen, as it is known, is an agricultural country, and it has been called Happy Yemen since ancient times because its people are busy with agriculture and farming. Its poets and wise men praised their dependence on agriculture and their ability to confront hunger and poverty. Among the goals of sustainable development are improving the quality of the environment and the natural resource base on which the agricultural economy depends, preserving the viability of the field economy, and improving the quality of life of farmers and society as a whole. Considering these facts, this paper will work on studying the poetry of the poet Mutahar Al Eryani, which urged agriculture and farming as a source of livelihood, combating poverty and hunger, and decent living, with the goals of sustainable development, which urged agriculture as a means to combat poverty and destitution. Despite our differences with his extremist political orientations, this does not prevent us from praising his agricultural poems, which called for love of the land and concern for agriculture as a basic resource for living in dignity and bliss.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Agriculture, Mutahar Al Eryani, Yemen.

Introduction

Agriculture in Yemen

The agricultural sector is one of the most important productive sectors in the Yemeni national economy. and this importance stems from being one of the main sectors contributing to the gross domestic product, as its contribution to the gross domestic product ranges between (10-12) %, in addition to being the productive sector for food commodities and raw materials needed for many industries. It comes first in absorbing employment, as the vast majority of the population depends on the agricultural sector, by about 74%, and it contains nearly 2 million workers, constituting about 53% of the total workforce in the country.

Agricultural land resources used in agricultural investment constitute 3% of the total lands of the Republic. The agricultural sector in the Republic of Yemen is characterized by using the capabilities of the natural resource base of water and land in a limited manner. The average cultivated area is about 94% of the total arable area.

(https://yemen-nic.info/agri/agrin_yemen/#:~:text=)

Sustainable Development Second Goal:

As is known that the second goal of Sustainable Development in Yemen is to end hunger and ensure that everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable, including infants, has access to enough safe and nutritious food all year round by 2030. Also, it is to double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists, and fishers, including by ensuring equal access to land and other productive resources, inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets, value-adding opportunities and

access to Non-farm employment opportunities, by 2030. (Source: United Nations Sustainable Development)

As the world's population continues to grow, more effort and innovation will be urgently needed to sustainably increase agricultural production, improve the global supply chain, reduce food loss and waste, and ensure that all those who suffer from hunger and malnutrition have access to nutritious food. Many in the international community believe it is possible to eradicate hunger in the next generation, and are working together towards this goal.

The Sustainable Development Goal of “ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture” (Goal 2) recognizes the interlinkages between supporting sustainable agriculture, empowering small farmers, promoting gender equality, ending rural poverty, ensuring healthy lifestyles, and tackling climate change, among others. Issues being addressed within the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the post-2015 development agenda. (<https://sdgs.un.org/ar/topics/food-security-and-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture#:~:text=>)

This paper highlights sustainable development in the poetry of the Yemeni poet Mutahar Al Eryani and tries to illustrate some of his verses that call for and encourage the agriculture in Yemeni countryside as a way to defeat hunger and the need and the possibility to live in dignity and pride by growing and agriculture.

The Poet Mutahar Al Eryani

Mutahar bin Ali Al Eryani was born in 1933 in Al-Qafr, within the governorate of Ibb, Yemen, and received his education at the hands of the jurists of his village and his older brother, Fadl bin Ali Al Eryani. In 1953, he moved to Aden,

then to Cairo, and joined the Faculty of Dar Al-Ulum, Cairo University in 1955, from which he graduated in 1959.

Al Eryani contributed to many publications, most notably the “Yemeni Dictionary of Language and Heritage,” which contains thousands of vocabularies in Yemeni dialects that are not included in other dictionaries.

As a poet, he began writing vertical poetry in 1947, and his poems were published in Yemeni newspapers. He published a collection of poetry, titled *Above the Mountain*. He has studied ancient Yemeni literature and history. He died on February 9, 2016, in the Egyptian capital, Cairo. (<https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

Mutahar Al Eryani’s Agricultural Verses:

Dr. Abdul Aziz Al-Maqaleh said:

“What is on the mountain? *Above the Mountain* is poetry whose poems sprout on paper, just as farms grow in mountain terraces, and bloom on mouths, just as (coffee) trees bloom on peaks and slopes. (*Above the Mountain*, p. 28)

The poet Mutahar Al Eryani “in the Countryside Epic, and even in his other poems about the soldier and the worker, all of them have something big and a lot of this love and this worship for the countryside, with great care to record pictures of rural life before it becomes extinct. The poet grew up in the bosom of the village and was raised among its fields and under its trees, therefore, for him, the countryside is beauty, health, poetry, and a comfortable life, and his rusticity did not stop at the aesthetic and poetic form of the countryside, but rather prepared it to invite the city, which takes over the bounties of all the countryside until it overflows on the villages from some of what it takes from them, but the city not only was it - in the past - stingy with the countryside, but it used to send it from time to time someone who

would frighten its security and disturb the comfort of its chicks and roosters (Above the Mountain, p. 39)!

Ahmed Afif, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Afif Cultural Foundation, stated:

Undoubtedly, the Yemeni reader has the right to crave a Diwan (*Above the Mountain*) because he hears through his songs himself, in words that express his feelings and conscience, which makes him say: This is what I would have said if I had broached this subject. And this is only because the words of the poet Mutahar Al Eryani stem from the heart of the Yemeni personality and from the deepest depths of the soil of the Yemeni land, in which there are authenticity and peasant hopes, the vitality of his workers and the valor of his soldiers, the loftiness of his mountains, the splendor of his plains and valleys, and in them the colors of the golden ears of wheat, and The colors of the onyx of Yemeni coffee, ... (*Above the Mountain*, p. 6)

Mutahar sang for the seasons, for the lowlands, and the mountains and birds sang with him, and the echo of his songs echoed the night and the day and the wedding of the crescent moon to its rich bride. Mutahar soaked with dust, haunted by the love of the homeland, the hermit in the niche of the earth, the lover of the limit of devotion and worship.

من سلف الأرض حبه تمنحه من وفاها.. مقضى ومكسب وربيع
منابت الأرض خصبة من غرسها جناها.. والأرض نعم الوديع
ما تعرف الأرض كذبة أو تخيب رجاها.. من حبها ما يضيع
اضرب على الأرض ضربه وانتظر من وراها.. جزاء مضاعف سريع

Who borrows the earth a grain, it gives him from its fulfillment a reward and gain?

The earth has grown fertile, whoever planted it, reaped it, and the earth is the blessing meek.

The earth does not know a lie, or disappoint its hopes, whoever loves it, couldn't be wasted.

Hit the ground, hit it, and wait behind it ... A quick double reward. (*Let's Sing for Seasons*, p.78)

He is the expert with the secrets of the earth's treasures; its goodness, giving, love, and overflowing. There is no Yemeni poet who celebrated the farmers like him, and Yemen is nothing but these farmers who are the builders of civilization and the builders of goodness. Al Eryani monitors the lives of peasants: their values and customs, their valleys and their homes, folk dances, songs of drought, rain, sowing and boiling, harvesting, various working hours, primogeniture, songs of alienation, and the grief of peasant women. Objectively, the poems which are included in the Diwan "Above the Mountain" (Al Eryani, 1991) are glorification – that is, the glorification of the values of work, beauty, love, and life, and the values of patriotism and defending dignity and ideals:

يا الله رضاك يا معين للصبح ما قال: - واصل
إلا انطلق للعمل باني وفلاح وعامل
ما نسمع إلا المطارق أو هدير المعامل
وفي الحقول والجبال تسمع صرير المعاول
لكل عامل وباني اليوم تحلى الأغاني

Oh God, your satisfaction, O supportive (1) to the morning, what he said, reached (2)

Unless he sets out to work as a builder, farmer, and worker

We only hear hammers or the roar of factories

And in the fields and mountains, you can hear the creak of hoes

For every worker and builder today, songs are sweetened. (*The Bell Has Rung*, pp. 118-19)

Like a farmer, he immerses himself in rural life and portrays the details of the life of the farmer, fruits, and good things. He goes with them to the field and lives with the details of their work during the day, their constant anxiety about the rain

delay, and their overwhelming joy in the light of dawn. He loves nature and is a deep believer in the breeze and smiling flowers to witness the making of the great God.

من يشهد الكائنات في الفجر

يبصر ويسمع بديع صنع الإله

يشاهد اليقظة الكبرى مع

الفجر تصنع ليوم حادث رؤاه

Whoever witnesses the beings at dawn sees and hears

The wonderful creation of God

He watches the great vigilance with dawn being made.

The day its vision happened. (*A Countryside Epic*, p. 125)

The poet dictated the songs (Mahajil) of the peasants and the sayings of the farmers and reformulated them into songs for all Yemenis, and he immortalized them in melodies that enriched the conscience and overwhelmed the feelings. Consciences are awakened and filled with pride and sublime human joy.

بلادنا يا سهول اتوسعي للمعاول

بلادنا يا حقول اتموجي بالسنايل

يا دايم الخير دايم.. على الجبال والتهائم

شنت عليها الغمام.. بالجود رايح وغادي

Our country, O lowlands... expand for hoes

Our country, O fields, wave with crops

Oh, my permanent goodness, permanent, on mountains and hills

Blindfolds mounted on it, with good, going, and coming. (*A Countryside Epic*, p. 149)

Mutahar's reverence for the farmer, the giver of life, the reviver of the earth after its death, and the renewal of its blood circulation does not come from meditation, reading, or acculturation. The poet has immersed himself above the ear and is skilled in embroidering the earth with peace, just as he is clever in composing poems, and drawing poetic images filled with the breezes of love, longing for growth, and the certainty of victory.

نيسان والنجم الأحمر والثريا ومبكر
وفي الخريف التعب فالخير مازال ينظر

April, Red Star, Pleiades and Mubakr (3)

And in the fall, tiredness in goodness is still looking. (*A Countryside Epic*, p. 149)

Perhaps the first thing that comes to mind when talking about Mutahar Al Eryani is his colloquial poems, which are widely preserved in Yemen, in which he mixed love and national affiliation and wrote for the soldier, the farmer, and the worker, and among the most famous of all is the song "Love and Coffee" performed by the artist Ali bin Ali Al Ansi, It is a lyrical "epic", urging the cultivation and care of the "coffee tree."

The song deals with the simple Yemeni man, who loved and seeks to connect with the one he loves, so he waits for the period of reaping the fruits of "coffee" to pay the dowry of his beloved. And in it, he says:

هيا بنا يا شباب الريف من كل بندر
نحيي ليلي الهنا والحب والخير الأوفر
بألوان من فن هذا الشعب من عهد حمير
(باله) و(مهيد) و(مغنى) دان والليل داني

Let's go, rural youth from every place

We live the nights of blessing, love, and the most abundant goodness

In colors from the art of these people from the era of Himyar

Bala, and Mahid Maghna.. Dan wa Lil Dany (4) (*Good Meeting and Evening*, p.51)

Thus, in a few verses, history, agriculture, and the colors of Yemeni singing (Bala, Mahid, Maghna, and Dan) are collected.

There is hardly a Yemeni morning without a radio or channel broadcasting his joyful morning song, which excelled in its melody and performance by the artist Ahmed Al-Snidar:

وأرسل روائع ضياءه	ما أجمل الصباح في ريف اليمن حين شعشع
من الخمائل شذاة	جوه مضمخ بعطري النسيم المودع
من منبعه في صفاه	نوره مصفى من الأدران، نهره تجمع
سحره وما أصفى هواه!	ما أجمل الريف! ما أحلى كل ما فيه ! ما أبدع
في الصنع، وأعجز سواه	امنت بالريف حيث الخالق افتن وأبدع

How beautiful is the morning in the countryside of Yemen when it shines and sends masterpieces of light?

Its atmosphere is infused with aromatic breeze deposited from lots of bushes fragrance

Its light is purified from impurities, and its river is gathered from its source in its purity

How beautiful is the countryside! What sweet is everything in it! How creative is its charm, and how pure is its passion?

I believed in the countryside, where the Creator is fascinated and creative in making, and He weakens anything else. (*A Countryside Epic*, p. 147)

Mutahar Al Eryani's poetry is related to the countryside and agriculture, and that key is apparent in a duality consisting of two letters: love (الحب) (by joining the ha), and grain (الحب) (by opening it), and he sees that they are complementary, and each leads to the other and summons it, so the meeting of the two lovers and their love will not be achieved except at the end of the season. The coming love and goodness with all its consequences, which means the life of the farmer and the course of his life, and we have witness and evidence for that from his poetry, and it is clear in almost all of his poems and operettas; (http://ibraheemabotalib.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post_6.html). Where he says:

يا حبيب اللقاء في الحقل نغلف ونطرب
طاب وقت اللقاء في موسم الحب والخب

O beloved, we meet (5) in the field, we feed and we sing

Good time to meet in the season of love and grains (*Stover and Fodder*, p. 100)

So, love is the food of the soul, and grains are the food of the body, both of which are indispensable in the life of the farmer, and from here we find most of the masterpieces of Mutahar Al Eryani's poetic content that does not deviate from this duality. As it is apparent in his poetic immortals, it is also apparent in what he considers one of the three immortals. When he says on the tongue of Humaid bin Mansour – and he and his companion Ali bin Zayed are among the companions of the poet and his lieutenants whenever he grabs the creativity pen – Humaid says, acknowledging Ali bin Zayed's gratitude:

أخي علي بن زايد
أثنى عليّ كما حبّ
وانا كما الله شاهد
أقول وما انا مُكذّب
علي أخي في الخوالد
الأرض، والماء، والحبّ

My brother Ali bin Zayed
He praised me as he loved
And I, as God, am a witness
I say and I am not lying
Ali is my brother in immortals
Earth, water, and love

And if Ali bin Zayed and Al-Humaid bin Mansour were the wise men of agriculture and its poets, then Mutahar Al Eryani became the third of them, as he re-read their heritage and produced lyrically, so he was reminded of them and mentioned with them. (http://ibraheemabotalib.blogspot.com/2012/09/blog-post_6.html)

Ebrahim Abu Talib said:

When I was asked to bear witness to this scholar, I did not have the right to delay it or hide it, because he who conceals it will have sinned in his heart. How could he not, and the one who is acclaimed is the one who opened our creative and poetic perceptions to the rhythms of his words, and we saw the countryside with his eyes sweeter and fresher than what we lived and saw with our own eyes. we, the people of the countryside, and how not when he is the one who renewed the popular heritage with the wisdom of the expert, the experience of the wise, and the breath and ability of the specialist,

and this was evident in the most important of his works, which are undoubtedly among the most important contemporary Yemeni lyrical works of all, are (*The Canna Branch Passed, The Bala, Above the Mountain, We Salute You, Eternal Goodness, A Voice Above the Mountain ...* and others) where the poet tended to renew it - As the great Abdullah Al Baradouni, may God have mercy on him says:- “From the spirit of the people, its language, and the formalities of its chants, and it caused a popular lyrical transformation because it was issued in its creations from the creativity of the people, and its uniqueness is manifested in the revival of the people’s art”. (<https://www.diwanalarab.com/>)

Regarding the subjective and artistic inclinations towards the rural, which imprints the Diwan Above the Mountain – language and content – with its authentic rural character, Dr. Al Maqaleh said: “I do not know whether the poet Mutahar Al Eyrani while writing his beautiful rural, was aware of that rural doctrine that appeared in Europe at the beginning of this century, and found that it has echoes and disciples in our Arab world. It is the doctrine of the rural city or rural civilization, whose most prominent advocate was a struggling Irish poet, George Russell. (Abdul Bari Taher, p. 38)

He is fully confident that the Yemeni farmer is a safety valve for the economy of this country because his labor force can overcome difficulties and hardships.

ما لليمن غير فلاح اليمن في المصاعب.. مهما تضيق الشدائد أو تكون المتاعب
يعيش فلاح هذي الأرض للأرض صاحب.. يزرع ويحصد ويجزل بالعطايا للعوالم

What is there for Yemen other than the farmer of Yemen in the hardships...

No matter how narrow the hardships or the troubles

The farmer of this land lives a friend of the land.

He sows, reaps, and rewards gifts to the world. (*A Countryside Epic*: p.148)

He calls on the farmers to get up early and rely on God in their endeavor to cultivate their lands, valleys, and gorges. Whoever works in agriculture never knows hunger or misery.

(و احنا طلبنا عظيم الشأن.. كريم يفتح لنا أبوابه)
يا الله طاب العمل يا إخوان.. والرزق يأتي لطلابيه
يا الله رضاك يا الله رضاك.. وارضي علينا برضاك
يا الله بانزرع الوديان.. حتى الجبل نحرث اشعابه
من يزرع الأرض ما يهتان.. ولا يدق الشفا بابه
يا الله رضاك يا الله رضاك.. وأرضى علينا برضاك

(And we asked for Almighty... Generous to open his doors for us)

Oh God, good work, brothers... and sustenance comes to its seekers

Oh God, your satisfaction, oh God, your satisfaction... and be satisfied with us

Oh God, we plant the valleys... Up to the mountain, we plow its lands

He who cultivates the land will not be lost... and misery will not knock on his door

Oh God, your satisfaction, oh God, your satisfaction... and be satisfied with us. (*Let's Sing for Seasons*, pp. 66-7)

He never ceases to praise his country and its farmers while they take care of the land during the sowing season and how they deposit in the womb of the earth those seeds that they hope to plant and reap after a while.

يا بلادي: هذي الحقول وفي ساحاتها.. للمزارعين جموع
يحرثون الثرى ب (ثيرانهم) يعلو.. لإطرائهم بها ترجيع
انه موسم (البذار) وقد دمدم.. رعد ولاح برق هموع
ها هم يودعون في رحم الأرض.. بذورا والأرض نعم الوديع

ويغنون للسحاب وللطيور.. وهذا غناؤهم مسموع

Oh, my country: These fields and their yards... Farmers have multitudes
They plow the soil with their bulls rising... to flatter them with rewind
It is the season of (seeds), and there was a murmur of thunder, and then lightning, and teardrops.
Here they are deposited in the womb of the earth... Seeds and the earth is the best of the meek
And they sing to the clouds and the birds... And this is their singing audibly. (*Let's Sing for Seasons*, p.71)

He knows that those who practice the agricultural profession will not experience hunger or hardship. He considers that the soil of his country is a mine of gold for those who work in agriculture and farming.

يا تراب الهناء.. يا مناجم ذهب
أنت كنز الغنى.. كيف ترجع صلب.. يا تراب اليمن
زارع ارض اليمن.. ما لجهدته مثيل
من يساويه من.. في الجبال والسهول.. يزرع ارض اليمن.

O dust of bliss... O gold mines
You are the treasure of wealth... How do you return solid... O soil of Yemen?
A farmer of the land of Yemen... his effort is unparalleled
Who is equal to him who... in the mountains and plains... cultivates the land of Yemen? (*Let's Sing for Seasons*, p.82)

Abdullah Al Baradouni observed,

In any case, the text of "Mutahar" as a whole is closer to the language of the nation... Perhaps "Mutahar"... is in this color until the language of the nation's son revealed its secrets to him. The depiction is as

simple as the life of the nation's son, and the thinking is of the type
of thinking of the nation's son... (Abdullah Al Baradouni, p.350)

Conclusion

He is Mutahar Al Eryani, a scholar on his own. A scholar who is purified, who gave himself and his knowledge and shed his loving tears for his country and its citizens.

He is considered to be among the sages of agriculture (Ali bin Zayed and Al-Humaid bin Mansour), but Mutahar surpassed both in everything. Because Mutahar Al Eryani is the one who touched our wounds, spread his medicines and balm over them, and made us run continuously towards the future, life, freedom, and love as long as our generations passed.

It is noticeable how not a poem or a verse of Mutahar Al Eryani is devoid of mentioning agriculture and caring for it as a source of living in dignity and bliss. This is what makes his poems closely linked to the second goal of sustainable development, which calls for attention to agriculture, ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

At the end of this research paper, it is necessary to refer to the wise government's directions, which took the return to agriculture and caring for peasants and farmers as a solution to the country's suffering in the current period of economic blockade.

Yemenis today, as they live through global crises and various challenges, need more than ever before to correct their policies about agriculture, and to focus on raising awareness of its importance and adopting action mechanisms that address this problem, in which the reality of the nation has become a tragic reality!

Agriculture and agricultural production are among the most important huge resources that move and revitalize the economy. A broad economic activity is produced in many aspects based on taking care of it. They realize this aspect's importance and pay great attention to it.

Notes

- (1) Oh God, your satisfaction, oh supportive: is a Yemeni expression of early work and asking God for help.
- (2) Reached – It was hardly resolved.
- (3) Agricultural month in Yemen.
- (4) The *Bala* and the *Mahid* are the colors of popular singing.
- (5) Meet – A Yemeni formula that means a request to meet, as if he says: meet me, or let us meet, or the meeting will be.

Work -Cited

- *All the quoted verses* in this paper are taken from the poems which are included in the *Diwan Above the Mountain*. (Translated)
- Abu Talib, Ebrahim. (Oct. 2010) *Study of the Great Yemeni Poet Mutahar Al Eryani*, Diwan Al Arab. <https://www.diwanaalarab.com/>
- Al Eryani, Mutahar. (1991) *Diwan Above the Mountain*, Archive Al Yemen, 2nd Edition, Sana'a, Yemen. (Translated)
- Baradouni, Abdullah. (1978) *The Journey into Yemeni Poetry, Ancient, and Modern*, Dar Al Awdah, 3rd Edition, Beirut, Lebanon. (Translated)
- Taher, Abdul Bari. (June 2006) “*Mutahar Ali Al Eryani .. a creative poet and the most brilliant archeologist*” article in the press, Nabaa News. (Translated)
- [https://sdgs.un.org/ar/topics/food-security-and-nutrition-and-sustainable agriculture#:~:text=](https://sdgs.un.org/ar/topics/food-security-and-nutrition-and-sustainable-agriculture#:~:text=)
- <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/>

