

Studying the Similarities of Opinions in the Works of Naser Khosrow and Ahmad Kasravi

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ABSTRACT

Article type: Research Article	Naser Khosrow is an Ismaili sage and poet who tries to express his Ismaili thoughts and beliefs in the form of poetry and prose.
Article history: Received:	Ahmad Kasravi is also a contemporary thinker who founded the socio-political movement of "Pakdini" to cleanse the Iranian masses of intellectual pollution and published his beliefs and thoughts first in the magazine "Peeman" and then in the newspaper "Parcham". When we examine the works and lives of Naser Khosrow and Ahmad Kasravi, we see that the two are similar in various aspects. More precisely, it seems that
. ۲/۱۱/۲۰۲۴	in some of his thoughts, Naser Khosrow is one of Ahmad Kasravi's intellectual pioneers. It is as if Kasravi has made Naser Khosrow his model. The aim of this article, which is compiled using a descriptive-analytical method and using
Accepted: . ۷/۰۵/۲۰۲۵	library resources, is to criticize and examine the common views in the thoughts of Naser Khosrow and Ahmad Kasravi.
Keywords: Naser Khosrow	Criticism and protest, internal transformation, authoritarianism, committed literature, exclusivism,
Ahmad Kasravi	rationalism, and reformism are common elements that can be seen in the thoughts of Naser Khosrow and Kasravi. They
Ismaili	never turned back from their thoughts. In the end, one became a refugee in Yamgan and the other died in court.
Pure Believers	
Reformism	

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Introduction

Nasir Khusraw Qubadiyani (394–481 AH) was a philosopher, poet, and Ismaili missionary of the fifth century AH. Following a seven-year journey to Egypt, he attained the rank of *Hujjat* (Proof) and returned to Khorasan to propagate Ismailism, eventually fleeing to exile in Yumgan due to relentless persecution. Ahmad Kasravi (1269–1324 SH), a contemporary intellectual and former judge, founded a political-intellectual movement in 1312 SH aimed at purifying the Iranian masses of intellectual corruption, publishing his ideas in the journal *Peyman* and the newspaper *Parcham*; he too sacrificed his life for his beliefs, assassinated by members of the Fada'iyān-e Islam in the Ministry of Justice. Despite the millennium separating them, a remarkable ideological affinity links these two figures—so much so that Nasir Khusraw appears to be a leading intellectual precursor of Kasravi, serving almost as his model. This study, employing a descriptive-analytical method based on library resources, addresses the question of which common viewpoints exist between the two thinkers. Prior scholarship on this connection is scarce, limited to a brief reference by Homayoun Katouzian in his article “Kasravi and Literature.”

Method

This research adopts a descriptive-analytical and comparative methodology, relying on documentary and library-based sources. The thought systems of the two figures were examined across multiple thematic axes—social criticism, inner transformation, rationalism, free will, committed literature, and reformist exclusivism—and their correspondences were systematically identified and analyzed.

Results

The analysis reveals profound correspondences across six principal axes:

1. **Criticism and Protest:** Both employ an aggressive tone in criticizing all pillars of society—rulers, the general populace, social classes, other religions, public morality, and poets. Nasir Khusraw is regarded as the “father of social and critical poetry,” while Kasravi labels figures like Forughī and Hakamat the “company of treason,” denounces Hafez, Sa’di, Rumi, and Khayyam as “bad teachers,” and even holds a book-burning

ceremony. Notably, a valid critique of Kasravi is his admission of never having read the *Masnavi* and having read little of Sa'di's poetry. Both consequently made enemies and suffered persecution.

۲. **Inner Transformation:** Nasir Khusraw's life changed after a transformative dream; Kasravi likewise describes an inner experience in 1307 SH as the "lifting of a veil from his vision," adopting the title *Rahnama* (Guide), which bears semantic proximity to Nasir Khusraw's title *Hujjat* (Proof).
۳. **Rationalism:** Both regard reason (*khirad*) as the criterion for distinguishing good from evil and as the path to faith. Nasir Khusraw likens intellect to a ship, torch, and rampart; Kasravi, in his treatise *On Reason*, replaces faith with reason and insists that even poetry must submit to rational scrutiny.
۴. **Rejection of Determinism:** Both believe in free will. Nasir Khusraw considers blaming sin on divine predestination the act of the foolish; Kasravi asserts that destiny lies in human hands and counts Hafez's fatalism among the greatest "bad teachings."
۵. **Committed Literature:** Both advocate "art for society," insisting that poetry must serve the awakening of the masses or else be mere idle talk. Although critics branded Kasravi an enemy of poetry, he respected only Ferdowsi—for his service to the Persian language.
۶. **Exclusivism and Reformism:** Nasir Khusraw locates truth exclusively in Ismaili doctrine and the Fatimid Caliph al-Mustansir; Kasravi finds salvation solely in "Pure Religion" (*Pak-dini*), a continuation of Islam stripped of creeds and accretions—a "this-worldly" religion, rationally comprehensible and compatible with modern sciences. Both sought an ideal society; the difference being that Nasir Khusraw was a propagator, whereas Kasravi was a creative producer of thought.

Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that the thought of these two figures converge intensely across the six identified axes, to the extent that Nasir Khusraw seems to have found a rebirth in Kasravi. Neither ever abandoned his ideals: one died in exile in Yumgan, and the other perished in the Ministry of Justice. The value of this research lies in illuminating the connection between tradition and modernity, and in tracing the footprint of ancestral beliefs within contemporary Iranian intellectual history.

