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## ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE AND LOVE AS A REFLECTION OF PARADISE IN THE GHAZALS OF HAFIZ SHIRAZI

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### ABSTRACT

This article is dedicated to the analysis of the image of the people through the depiction of paradise in Eastern lyric poetry. Special attention is given to the moral aspect, the theme of inner beauty, love, and talent as reflections of aesthetic values and their interconnection with the concept of paradise.

### KEYWORDS

Hafiz Shirazi, the patterns of ghazal genre, the issues of individuality and the people, earthly hell, heavenly paradise.

### INTRODUCTION

The Eastern people represent an aesthetic and philosophical concept. The particular interest in the Eastern people has manifested over many centuries, and each time, researchers discover something new, previously unexplored, within the texts of literary works. The manifestations of the spirit of national character through the category of paradise in the ghazals of Hafiz Shirazi are especially intriguing. The poet's closeness to the people and his life entangled

with their concerns are the central motifs of his work. The unity of the subject and the object, the kinship of souls, unites the poet and the reader. There is an evident emotional compatibility, where Hafiz Shirazi anticipates the reader's mood, "meets them halfway," and achieves unity in thought and life stance.

"Strive in goodness, for sincerity gives birth to the sun,



And the bright dawn will turn away from the dark evil"

—

this is the poet's positive life philosophy. In another case, addressing a wealthy man, he says:

"See the inscription on the radiant arch: 'All that is on Earth,

Except for good deeds for the benefit of mankind, is not eternal.'

In the lines of Hafiz Shirazi, one can trace an appeal directly to the reader. However, for the Eastern lyricist, the reader is not merely an observer, but a participant in the poetic act, in the life process that the people live. One of the primary patterns in Hafiz Shirazi's ghazals is that the author leaves much to the listener's imagination, thereby leaving the ending open, which allows the reader to make their own conclusion about the fate of the people. This is one of the unique methods inherent in the pen of Hafiz Shirazi, making his ghazals endlessly close to the people, in the sense that they often lack an ending, leaving the conclusion to the reader. It is a genuine emotional, lyrical dialogue, often growing into direct addresses.

Indeed, Hafiz Shirazi frequently reflects on the intersection of the individual's issues and those of the people. He often illustrates how the upheavals within society reflect upon the destinies of individuals, with the most prominent and vivid example being his own

life. However, his honesty toward the people amidst whom the lyrical protagonist lives provides the foundation for the fulfillment of his fundamental message:

"And also, I am grateful to my weak hands:

They cannot torment the poor through force."

For himself as a poet, he offers the following self-assessment:

"He who is revived by love will never die.

To be immortal, it is my destiny until the end of my days."

These lines cast doubt upon the notion of the "end of days." If the lyrical protagonist contemplates the physical end, it refers to existence through poetry, in which the duration of life is measured by how long his lines endure. And since these lines are immortal, the author himself is, in essence, eternal.

The poetic precision and purity of Hafiz Shirazi's verses render his poetry irresistible. What is particularly significant is that each bayt (verse) possesses its own self-contained world of feelings and is often loosely connected with other bayts in the same ghazal. In other words, each bayt is a rhythmically refined and mathematically precise expression of thought, which, when considered collectively, reflects a broader idea.



His lines exhibit logical coherence, and his ghazals possess an encyclopedic breadth.

Here is a key, meaningful thought by Hafiz Shirazi:

"I send you a mirror – a poem: look upon the deeds of the Creator,

Praise, as you gaze upon yourself, the abundance of divine grace."

God has bestowed upon Hafiz his divine gifts, including poetic talent, for which the poet is grateful and praises Him. Poetry, in this sense, serves as a mirror, reflecting the soul of the poet and the life of the people, the individual, and reality itself. In the poem, as in a mirror, everything is reflected: aesthetics, the era, the author, the issue, the interaction with the people, the poetic approach to life, the humanistic perception of the events being illuminated, the education of the reader through the prism of poetry—this is why the author embodies the highest aesthetic worldview.

Hafiz Shirazi depicts the daily life of the people so beautifully that he renders it aesthetic, and if not paradise, then at least gratitude for the ability to live well. For example, we can refer to the author's observations: "A man sees better with the heart, not the mind" – this is Eastern wisdom:

"The insight of the heart is a miracle bestowed from above,

All the tricks of the mind are in vain before it."

The mind and the heart are two great criteria for the people. Regarding the absence of earthly hell in Hafiz's paradise-like soul, the poet expresses this in the following line: "In the mirror of the soul, I see nothing that I have seen in life." The explanation for these lines lies in the description of Hafiz's unique soul, which is naturally shaped by the poetic gift he has received from above.

Reading the ghazals of Hafiz Shirazi in their original Persian edition reveals that the lines are composed harmoniously, balanced, with equality and proportionality of the bayts. The ghazals are crafted with mathematical precision, a difficult feat in poetic form. The difference between the original Hafiz and the translations lies in the melodiousness, musicality, and the richness of meanings in the former.

The lyrical protagonist, who not only represents Hafiz Shirazi but also the entire Eastern people, is not only deeply lyrical but also courageous, approaching the hardships of life with ease. Moreover, it is the people who strive not only to conceal the flaws of existence but also to praise the achievements of lived days, ennobling actions in an attempt to improve life on Earth—this represents the broader context of describing the Eastern national character.

The people's life can be portrayed with fluctuations, indicating that, in an indirect sense, it would not have



been difficult for the lyrical protagonist to imagine earthly hell. Much of this perhaps bears a poetic parallel to Hafiz Shirazi's own life. It is known that the author of these lyrical lines was a court poet and declaimer, with ample opportunities to live a life of luxury, without financial worries, while singing the praises of his ruler and the ruling elite—something typical of that time. However, Hafiz did not deem it necessary to accumulate such wealth, which indicates that he was a poet dedicated to his beliefs and views. Thus, the poet chose a different subject for his ghazals—the artistic portrayal of the people. This was an Eastern people distinguished by their aesthetic perfection, living in a world of love and harmonious relationships.

His poetic mastery in creating paradise is unparalleled:

"Yesterday, when in the earthly paradise the dawn breeze

Scattered the wreath of her tresses at the will of passion..."

Hafiz was a devout man and held theological views that were worthy of debate among his contemporaries:

"I recalled the arch of your eyebrows just before prayer,

And groaned, forgetting all my prayers at once."

It required great courage in medieval Iran to even contemplate, let alone write such lines, placing earthly love for a woman above the heavenly love for God (which corresponds to the time of prayer). Hafiz was an advocate for breaking the old order, which no longer satisfied the people who longed for a new life:

"Come! Let us fill the cup with crimson nectar,

We will break the old arch of heaven and build a new one in its place!"

In his verses, one can also detect a rebellious spirit. For instance, in one of his ghazals, he contrasts his beloved with the prophet Joseph, a bold artistic move that not every poet would dare to make:

"You are as beautiful as Joseph! – claims all of Shiraz.

People lie – I am convinced: you are a hundred times more beautiful!"

These lines may not be seen as disrespecting the prophet but rather as an exaltation of earthly love.

The poet holds his beloved in the highest regard, thus not hiding the fact that:

"I would not trade your street for eight paradisiacal pavilions,

Freed from both worlds, by your love I am great." The poet emphasizes that love frees the people from the burdens of both worlds.



A very high, idealized assessment of the beloved is found in this bayt:

"At the threshold, the dust of the moon-faced is dearer to me than the gardens of paradise,

I would give up all the houris for it, and all the palaces as well."

Given that hur (or houri) refers to a heavenly being or angel, it can be concluded that the poet offers a very lofty, truly poetic evaluation of his moon-faced lover. This sentiment is continued by Hafiz in other ghazals. Here is an example of his preference for earthly paradise over the heavenly one.

The description of rainbow-colored imagery, bright hues, flowers, and gardens is elemental in the depiction of the concept of paradise and the artistic portrayal of the people and love. The poet's craftsmanship is revealed through his portrayal of the material world, shaped by essences manifested by the masses, the people, as well as the image of the people as a representation of their culture and views, expressed in the melody of sound and the softness of the depiction. Hafiz Shirazi recreates the earthly paradise of the common people, who seek truth and inner peace in the paradise they have created themselves.

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