Converging Zones

Persian Literary Tradition and the Writing of History

Studies in Honor of

Amin Banani

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Love, Separation, and Reunion: The Master-Narrative of the Human Condition in Persian Mystical Poetry

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In September 2007, at the University of Maryland's International Conference on Rumi, Amin Banani ended his keynote address on the Persian mystic poet Rumi with an impassioned plea to his colleagues to rewrite the history of Persian poetry with Rumi at its center. His paper, titled "Rumi the Reluctant poet," painted a vivid portrait of the major differences and distinctions that separate Rumi's notion of, and approach to, poetry from the poets he attacks as mindless (hollow-brained to be precise), too preoccupied with the craft and outward trappings of poetry, and much too formalistic to make poetry the arena for the expression of the innermost emotions lying latent in the recesses of the human soul.

A different kind of history of Persian poetry, one which would take sufficient note of the internal systemic changes in this amazingly rich aesthetic tradition, has been a part of this researcher's agenda for over three decades, and this essay addresses another aspect of that project. It is based on the fundamental contention that the classical tradition in Persian poetry is one of the most illustrative instances of gradual evolution of an aesthetic tradition over time and it argues that there are clear advantages to foregrounding the internal history of the changes that have occurred in that tradition. Fully acknowledging the sociality of all literature, it nonetheless reiterates that such an approach,

while giving full and due consideration to the ontological status of literature as an aesthetic system, elucidates more clearly the complex systemic changes that the tradition under examination has gone through over the centuries. It thus further advances the argument, begun elsewhere, which states that the aesthetic system underlying the expressive devices of the Persian poetic tradition began to take shape in the ninth century CE[1] in response to momentous yet specific socio-cultural events and that it remained qualitatively unchanged up until the middle of the nineteenth century when it was challenged and eventually recast by the Persian-speaking world's encounter with Europe and Russia.[2] Between the tenth and thirteenth centuries this system gradually became more and more elaborate, a development that has been observed and acknowledged but, in my opinion, not yet fully explained, analyzed or understood. It reached its zenith of complexity and the height of its beauty in the genre of the ghazal, or short love lyric, as practiced in the century or so that separates the poetic careers of Rumi (1207-1273) from that of Hafez (1320-1388), and most particularly in the works of these two master ghazal composers.

Historians of Persian poetry have traditionally articulated this evolution in terms that are informed neither by close readings or discussions of stylistic nuances and close textual analyses, nor anchored in an understanding of generic conventions, diachronic developments, or a historical understanding of the nature of change in aesthetic systems. Their work, essentialist in conception and vague in its articulation, posits western and eastern regional poetic styles or school in the Persian poetry of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, anchors this distinction largely in dialectal differences in the Persian language, and produces ~~to~~ ossified stereotypical notions contrary to our modern understanding of constantly changing social phenomena. Zabihollah Safa, who in many ways epitomizes this trend in traditional scholarship, envisions an initial Khorasani (i.e., eastern Iranian) period style or school gradually changing first into an 'Eraqi (i.e., western Iranian) style followed by an Indian or Esfahani style.[3]

He bases his discussion of the later transformation that which occurred following the devastations wrought by Mongol and Tartar invasions of the thirteen the fourteen centuries, gradually devolving into an Indian period style on many events external to the literature itself, such as the officialization of Shi'a

Islam in Iran, paucity of court patronage in the Iranian heartland and the resultant emigration of many poets of Iran to northern Indian cities and courts. Characterized stereotypically as featuring a bombastic diction, distorted or exaggerated metaphors and conceits, and ever lengthening chains of far-fetched similitudes or resemblances, this last development is said to have turned Persian poetry into a riddle-like discourse understandable to and interpretable only by a shrinking elite, presumably separated from the masses who are assumed to have been intended audiences of poetry in centuries past. This succession of period styles is then viewed as having begun to change with the Literary Return Movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, eventually making room for a modernist aesthetics whose essence and contours are still being debated.

This essay, premised as stated above on very different assumptions, works toward the type of history that attempts to anchor observable changes in the tradition to demonstrable textual differences; it ultimately extends the line of thinking in my previous work to an earlier transition, namely the changes that occurred in the period between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries.[4] A central contention of the essay's argument rests on the view that what has been seen as stylistic differences rooted in geographic or regional characteristics (Khorasani, 'Eraqi, or Indian) were indeed temporally driven – i.e., the result of concrete historical changes in the aesthetic and intellectual milieus of the Persian-speaking world. As such, they ought to be understood as expressing themselves along the diachronic dimension. This is particularly visible when we compare changes that occur within the generic boundaries of a particular type of poetry, such as the short love lyric known as the ghazal. In the case at hand, certain characteristics and capabilities of the Persian language, the primary system on which Persian poetry stands, coupled with the rise of Sufism and emergence of mystically inclined poets in the period under consideration converged to make possible greater systemic elasticity, complexity and cohesion at the level of signification and communication on the part of the poets, which in turn paved the way for remarkably higher hermeneutic fluidity and enhanced interpretability on the part of readers.

Historically, at least three major processes contributed to the growth of complexity and elaborate expression in the Persian poetry of the period. First, a node conceived and executed by the best court poets of the Ghaznavid era and evolving throughout the twelfth century, between the lyric and the panegyric genres. To begin, because the Persian language is gender-free, it was and is possible to cloak lyrical expressions in ambiguities and equivocations wherein the lover and beloved, the patron and the poet, or man and God, could conceivably be imagined by the mere grammar of the language involved as male or female. This is not to say that other linguistic or poetic allusions do not clarify this point; they often do. Long tresses, pomegranate breasts, silvery palms and forearms, and numerous other lexical elements describing the body parts or facial expressions of the entity textually occupying the position of the beloved combine to determine the extent to which classical – or modern – readers end up reading gender into the Persian ghazal. Add to this the complementary gestures of total needlessness and absolute authority vested in the position of the beloved as opposed to that of the lover, characterized by utter helplessness and total submission to the will of the beloved, and you have behavior matching the appearance to complete the picture of actants and agents in the poem that could be seen as a woman facing a man, a despotic king facing the poet (or his mouthpiece in the poem), or God almighty facing the creatures into whose souls he has breathed life. In short, a single entity of unidentified or unidentifiable gender can be loved, worshipped, praised, appealed to, cajoled, educated, even criticized in one and the same textual space, at least as far as the genre of the Persian ghazal is concerned.

That third textual entity – God – appeared in the text of the Persian ghazal as a potent, and I might add ultimate, referent only after the Persian Sufi poets began to direct the expressive resources of their tradition to religious or philosophical purposes. Because their ideology encouraged them to articulate the relationship between God and man as governed primarily by love rather than by fear, and because their language and poetic system allowed them to do so in the lyrical mode, they could and did so. This development made it possible to compose poems in which, to limit ourselves to instances of apostrophic rhetorical postures, the speaker and the addressee could be seen simultaneously as the lover addressing the beloved, the poet appealing to the patron, and the Sufi seeker speaking to God. This change suited the purposes of the Islamic mystics and mystical poets especially well, as they tried to distinguish themselves from the orthodoxy

in the way they articulated the relation between man and God, and do so through positing an eternal, everlasting and unchanging love, more a sign of God's unalterable grace than the vicissitudes of man's capacity.

Historically concurrent with the gradual ascendance of Sufi institutions and power structures and the rise of Sufi poets throughout the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a second process was underway, one marked primarily by a grand internalization of poetic machinery in the Persian aesthetic culture. Mystically inclined philosophers, theosophists, and poets redirected many archetypal and primordial mythical and historical figures of the pre-Islamic Persian past to their purposes, making narratives, anecdotes, even images qualitatively different from that which marked them in the epic and romantic traditions. It is through Attar, most illustratively, that the figure of Simorgh changes into the non-existent, yet ever so passionately sought-after, bird living on top of the mythic Mount Qaf.[5]

Let us recall that in the *Shahnameh* Simorgh – the word connotes initially a bird the size of thirty birds put together – is a real, albeit supernatural creature. She nurses and raises the hero Zal and leaves her feather with him to set on fire if he needs help. When he needs her to heal the mortal wounds of his son Rostam, she appears at his behest, the wind from her feather moving the dust into an all-encompassing cloud. Everything in this articulation privileges the mythical bird's corporeality as a manifestation of her matronly nature.[6] In Attar's mystical narrative, *Manteq al-Tayr* (The Conference of the Birds), written about a century and a half later, this mother of all birds turns into an ethereal creation of the human imagination that the other birds long for and seek, only eventually to be faced – at least the thirty most steadfast ones who survive the ordeals of the avian quest – with a mirror-like surface that reflects their own likeness.

The transformation, achieved in a coup de grace that plays on another aspect of the same connotation of the word si-morgh, is the most illustrative among myriad textual maneuvers that the poet, a master of many meaningful puns in the Sufi discourse, harnesses in the service of his own story. Instead of using the number thirty ("si" in Persian) in the way it has been used by Ferdowsi to denote a very big bird, Attar uses it to correspond with the number of the birds, very few indeed when compared with the thousands of birds that set out on the journey, who have

managed to survive the rigors of the journey to the top of Mount Qaf. Their quest then comes to correspond with the path which every novice Sufi must tread on in order to deserve to be called a Sufi-ye Safi (a pure mystic). Attar thus redirects the connotation of the word "si" toward the attainment of a condition of spiritual purity and enlightenment that only a few are capable of obtaining through the rigors of the Sufi path and practice. This internalization in turn makes it possible for him – and in various ways for many other Persian Sufi poets – to conceive and describe the battle for the purification of one's soul as by far greater than that which may have wounded Rostam in his desperate old-age encounter with the young invulnerable prince and hero Esfandiyar.[7]

Articulated in the fullness of their significance, strategies of this internalization of poetic machinery, most based on word plays that Persian Sufi poets are known to delight in, are too many and too varied to even allude to here. One that must be mentioned here, because it bears on my argument in this paper consists of the shift in the semantic realm of the archetypal crystal ball known as Jam-e Jam (Jam's cup), a sort of crystal ball into which legendary King Jamshid, or as we have it in the *Shahnameh*, the enlightened monarch Keykhosrow), is said to have peered to see the workings of the world. The mystical discourse ascribes this capability to the heart of the illuminated Sufi. When utterly polished by constant remembrance and repeated utterance of the name of God, it is polished to the extent that it becomes a mirror into which the adept Sufi looks to see the whole of human history and destiny. The equivocation through which this transformation is achieved is illustrative in its utter simplicity and iron-clad certainty. Here's Sana'i's articulation of the node:

Qesseh-ye Jam-e Jam basi shenavi
v-andar an bish o kam basi shenavi
beh yaqin dan keh jam-e jam del-e to-st
mostaqarr-e sorur o gham del-e to-st
chun tamanna koni jahan didan
Jomleh ashya dar an tavan didan[8]

(You will hear many tales about Jamshid's cup
And in each telling something added or left out
Know this for certain: Jamshid's cup is your heart
The seat of joy or sorrow is your heart.

When you desire to view the world
You can see all things inside it.)

The kind of equivocation we have here, "know this for certain: Jamshid's cup is your heart," is a hallmark of the makers of the Sufi discourse in Persian poetry. What facilitates the node produced by it is a two-stage process that works first through a readjustment of the hermeneutic apparatus assumed to be already in operation in the mind of the reader, that which depicts the cup as an actual object in the material world. The initial acknowledgment of the diversity of the tales about the object prepares the mind for a plunge from that which the tellers of the tales may add to or omit from their version of the story, the "bish o kam" (more or less) of the second hemistich, to a non-material realm where the true meaning of the cup, now divorced from the various narratives, can be tied to a sense that is independent of all external narration. In light of that initial divestiture and the subsequent reinvestment of the word with a novel sense, the emphatic iteration, "beh yaqin dan" (know for certain) begins to make its impact as a true statement based on a plane of understanding separate from, and superior to, all the stories that one may hear about the cup as a material object.

The other maneuver that is often at work in the process of internalization of poetic devices has to do not with equivocation but with the outcome of the act of seeing. Someone looking into Jamshid's cup may be expected to see a picture of the external world or of some event – past, present or future – that may be actually happening in the world. That at least is the use that personages of epic and romantic tales have made of Jamshid's cup. What Sana'i's wording suggests has to do not with the act or object of seeing but the effect that the process of seeing produces in the person looking into it. With impressive deftness, the poet buttresses that meaning when he speaks of the heart as the seat of joy and sorrow. Indeed the word "mostaqar," Persian of Arabic origin meaning "seat," connotes the resting spot, the point at which human emotions like joy and sorrow appear to settle as a result of that which one has seen or contemplated. While the hero or king seeing flames of war or the likeness of a beautiful woman in Jamshid's cup, the Sufi wayfarer looking into his heart may see that which causes him to "feel" joy or sorrow. The subtle distinction becomes most consequential in the later generations of Sufi poets and those who adopt the language of Sufi poetry even though they may not be Sufis in practice, particularly in a master of poetic diction like Hafez. When he wants to wish shame on his cruel beloved for listening to those who may have tried to badmouth him to her, Hafez evokes the injustice that Prince Siyavash, a *Shahnameh* hero, suffered in the hands of the impressionable and cruel Turanian King Afrassiab, because ~~of~~ those who felt themselves overshadowed by the Iranian Prince gave malicious reports about him to the king:

Shah-e torkan sokhan-e modda'iyan mishenavad
Sharmi az mazlameh-ye khun-e Siyavush-ash bad

(King of the Turks listens to the words of the false pretenders
May he/she feel shame for the injustice handed to Siavush!)[9]

In alluding to *The Shahnameh* episode, he bypasses the narrative to focus on the feeling that recalling the story should give rise to in the heart of his beloved: shame! What fortifies this sense is the phrase "Shah-e Torkan," which, in his discourse, is the perfect analogue for the immensely impressionable and utterly cruel despot of the Persian epic.[10]

Such signification strategies became predominant only after the full fruition of a third all-important process, namely when mystical reorientations of ancient Persian legends and the exegetical activities performed selectively on certain Qur'anic passages demonstrated the vast potential of a plethora of narratives as sources of poetic enrichment and layering. From these two sources – namely reorienting the narratives of pre-Islamic legends toward esoteric interpretations and of mystically inspired exegesis of the Qur'an and the *Hadith*-Persian Sufi poets harnessed the aesthetic potential of their tradition's most foundational texts to develop ideas that served their cause very well. In doing so, they gave rise to a new understanding of the human condition from the day of creation to the mystical ascent and immediate union with God that the Sufis believed awaited them upon departure from the material world. For instance, Shehaboddin Sohravardi, known as Sheykh al-Maqtul (the assassinated Sheykh), did much to re-channel a whole array of Persian legends toward mystical readings. Most famously, in his *'Aql-e Sorkh* (The Red Intellect), he offers a reading of the episode of Zal and Simorgh in which the Qur'anic notions of miracle, of divine providence, and of free will come together to make a nar

rative of human existence. There, we have an allegory put in the mouth of an angel that is at the same time a guide to the narrative's central personage, itself an eagle.[11]

Such interpretive strategies, increasing manifold through the eleventh and twelfth centuries, provided the Sufis and the Sufi poets with numerous episodes and vignettes, themes and motifs to internalize the assets of the heroic and romantic tales in novel ways capable of moving connotations based on them to an abstract level capable of accommodating the dynamic concepts of the exegetical tradition as they attempted to relate the journey of the spirit toward perfection and ultimately toward the encounter and possible union with God.

To illustrate the suppleness and elasticity of this interpretive tradition, which at this stage was fast merging with the dominant exegetical mode of interpretation in that it integrated Islamic narratives as interpreted by mystically inclined commentators, I have selected Imam Mohammad Ghazali's interpretation of a key Qur'anic passage central to Sufi conceptions of the process by which the human soul purifies itself. Here are the verses which will form the focal point of my argument:

> God is the light of the heavens and the earth.
> The parable of His light is as if there were a niche
> and within it a lamp, the lamp enclosed in glass,
> the glass as it were a brilliant star lit from a blessed tree,
> an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,
> whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it.
> Light upon light.
> God doth guide whom He will to His light.
> God doth set forth parables for men
> And God doth know all things.[12]

All intricacies of Qur'anic verses and monumental translation problems aside, the passage bears all the marks of the endless potential for interpretation that many mystic commentators saw and showed in it. Invariably, they were drawn to verses like this because the poetic potential enshrined in their abstract wording enabled them to move from the surface to what they considered the kernel of the Qur'anic utterances and exhortations. In fact, their vision of the surface of the Qur'an veiling layer upon layer of "true" meanings available only to the initiated and the adept was a main point of contention between them and the orthodox

theologians who frowned on giving primacy to certain interpretations.[13]

Ghazali begins his plunge into the esoteric by distinguishing not just between light and darkness but between a physical or terrestrial sphere for light on the one hand and a spiritual or celestial sphere on the other, distinguishing many gradations in each sphere. According to him, in the above verses human faculties or spirits find their correspondences in the niche, the glass, the lamp, the tree and the oil. The niche is the sensory spirit, whose lights come through the eyes, ears, nostrils, etc. The glass is the imagination; for it is made out of opaque substances, but is clarified and refined until it becomes transparent to the light of the lamp. The lamp itself is what can be called the intelligential spirit, which gives cognizance of divine ideas. The tree is the rational spirit which typically begins with a single proposition and branches into two, which become four, and so on. Ghazali then works through a series of equivocations that apply this complicated conception of light to the Qur'anic verses. What is symbolized by the niche, the glass, the lamp, the tree and the oil are the human faculties, the niche being the sensory spirit, the glass the imagination, the lamp is the intelligential, and the tree the discursive. As for the oil, he sees it as the type of transcendental prophetic spirit, absolutely luminous and clear, which reveals the Word of God to human beings.[14]

A note of caution before we proceed: my use of the concept of equivocation, rather than symbolism, and my emphasis on the verb "is" rather than "stands for," relate to my view that it would be erroneous to state that the niche symbolizes sensory perceptions or that the oil represents the prophetic spirit; indeed, the niche or the oil partake of a single substance with what they are equated with; they are not external to them. Ghazali develops an elaborate scheme of shared properties between the objects in the Qur'anic verse and the ideas they epitomize. The niche, he says, is sensory perception because, as a recess in the wall high from the ground, it spreads light from the lamp through the chamber, minimizing the shadows at the same time. If it is whitewashed, its wall also acts as a reflector. The lamp is the core of the niche, the niche being nothing without it. In fact, God has created the senses in us solely for the purpose of spiritual illumination in the same way that niches are used solely for lamps to be placed in them.

Similarly, the glass is the imagination, says Ghazali, because it is made of opaque substances like sand, soda, potash, etc., but is clarified and refined until it becomes transparent to the light of the lamp. Furthermore, the glass protects the lamp from being put out by the wind or a violent jerking. In the same way imagination, originating in ideas of grosser substances, becomes clarified and transparent to ideas of intelligence and to the light from them. It also serves to hold the light of knowledge together and prevent it from being disturbed, unsettled, or extinguished. The tree, Ghazali asserts, is the rational spirit. Like a tree, reason begins with a proposition, subsequently to multiply into numerous points, before leading to conclusions which in turn germinate new conjectures. Being susceptible of continuation, discursive conclusions and conjectures in turn support the faculty we call intellect.

Ghazali maintains that the beauty to which the human spirit can aspire is not in what is realized in the physical world but in the pure desire, urge, passion, that includes but is not limited to all the human attributes – i.e., the senses, the imagination, the intellect, and speech activities – and that ultimately is nourished by, and comes to aspire to, the knowledge of the Divine. Thus, the sensory spirit is fed by and reaches out to the imaginative spirit, which in turn is supplied with and longs to become the intellectual spirit, hoping to find expression in the discursive spirit. Following up the ascending ladder, the discursive spirit combines the data of pure reason, fitting them in the garb of speech, hoping to approximate the transcendental or prophetic spirit. Meanwhile, the prophetic spirit remains the only open gate toward the perfection of the divine.

Commentaries of this sort quickly gave rise to a crucial paradigm for Sufi poets like Attar and Rumi that depicts the human race as originating from God in cosmic descent and returning to God in mystic ascent. The central personage of this descent / ascent paradigm is the Perfect Man, endowed by a spirit that, through ethical conduct and ascetic discipline, has realized his essential oneness with God in whose likeness he was made on the day of creation. Through experiencing God in daily life, this new hero comes to endow himself with the certitude of faith in his own immortality. While the roots of the idea can be traced back to elements from the Hellenistic notion of the first man as well as to the Jewish kabalistic mysticism and Christianity's assimilation of the *homo imago Dei* with a logos Christology, the notion evolved, at least in the Persian poetic tradition, largely within the intellectual developments of Islam.[15]

Not surprisingly, mystically inclined Sufi exegetes writing in Persian based their commentaries on the verses preceding or following those, like the one where God is described as the light of the heavens and the earth, cited above, perhaps because in them the poetic diction, the imagery, or the narrative allowed full flights of fancy. In the parable that follows the verse of the light, for example, God is depicted in the act of entrusting "the likeness of his light" to "the guided ones" in a "niche" holding a "lamp." Having equated the niche with the heart of the believer and the lamp with the light of prophecy, many such commentators combined the verse cited above with one from another sura, namely Al-Najm (sura 53) to focus on the impression the Prophet Mohammad received in revelation. There, we see the Prophet of Islam standing in a "column of light" (*'amud an-nur*), his face radiating with the light of prophecy kindled from a sacred tree called the *sedrat al-muntaha* (The Lote-Tree of the Boundary).[16] Mystic exegetes interpreted this scene as the Prophet Mohammad in a face-to-face encounter of his heart with the divine light, standing erect in a pre-existential adoration of God and receiving direct divine illumination.

Finally, there is the exegesis of a most famous passage in the Qur'an, one that places the image of the lamp in the niche, the vignette of Mohammad standing in a column of light, and a myriad other images in the context of cosmic time that defined the whole of human existence. The ensuing dialogue between God and the spirit of man defines the relationship between the two for the whole of human history. We learn that, before creating bodies for the souls he contemplated, God turns to the spirits and asks: "*alastu bi rabbikum*?" (Am I not your lord?). To this the as-yet unembodied spirits-of-humanity respond in the positive, or as the Qur'anic verse relates it: "*qalu bali*" (they said yes!). Here, in full, is the verse wherein this all-important exchange occurs:

Wa ida akhada rabbuka min bani adam
Min zuhurihim durriyyatahumu
Wa ashhadihumu ala anfusihim
Alastu birabbikumu
Qalu bali

Shahidna
An taqulu yaum alqiyamatih
Inna kunna anu hada ghafilina. (S7: V172)[17]

[When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam –
from their loins – their descendants,
and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying:)
"Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?" –
They said: "Yea!
we do testify!" (This).
Lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment:
"Of this we were never mindful."]

Known in Persian as the *'ahd-e alast* (the Covenant of "am I not"), this axiomatic pre-eternal exchange between God and man, with its intensely personal nature, becomes the focal point that draws together all the important, yet disparate imaginings of the Persian mystic poets about the relations that bound man and God in Islamic cosmology. What all commentators of the Qur'an agree on is that, by the affirmative answer the souls of human beings of all time gave to God's question, they acknowledged an everlasting duty to worship him as Lord over humanity and assumed an obligation from its very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted. Where the exegetes differed most widely was in the vast area that lay between the abstract collectivity we detect here and the nature of each individual human being. Pondering that all-important difference, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, the translator-commentator whose edition I am using in this essay, concludes thus:

> The words in the text refer to the descendants of the children of Adam, i.e., to all humanity, born or unborn, without any limit of time. Adam's seed carries on the existence of Adam, and succeeds to his spiritual heritage. Humanity as such has a corporate aspect.[18]

As can be imagined, mystic commentators and poets, as well as those who used the language of Persian mysticism in their poetry without necessary subscribing to its tenets, had their field day with such supple and commodious utterances. Indeed, the topic of this exchange between God and man, as well as the covenant in which the divine question and the human response constitute the central verbiage, have through the centuries become part of

the stock-in-trade of Persian poets when contemplating the human lot. Some, like Hafez, reworked the meaning of the exchange between God and man as primarily a manifestation of God's effort to bind humanity in a covenant of love. As exemplified by the following ghazal, such poems are most relevant to this essay's argument, as they set the scene for an intensely intimate emotional bond between God and the best that man has to offer:

> On the day of azal rays of your beauty broke forth
> love emerged and set the world afire;
> your aspect shone forth, angels unable to love saw it,
> and, moved by the fire of jealousy, fell upon Adam.
> Reason, meanwhile, set out to enlighten itself, using the flame
> but the fire of zeal turned into bolt lightning, stirred up the world.
> The pretender moved to enter the site of secrets
> the invisible hand struck his chest, for he was the outsider.
> All others cast their lot in pleasures pure
> but my heart cast hers in far more sorrow.
> The celestial soul desired water from the well of your dimple
> and tried to go down, hanging upon your curly hair.
> Hafez composed the joyful book of your love
> on the day when he abandoned all pretence of a happy heart.[19]

Through the chiaroscuro of the divine beloved's eternal beauty breaking forth through the dense clouds of an imperceptible dawning of human existence, the poem sets up an initial cosmic drama of a conflict that comes to embrace angels and human beings both good and evil, all the way down to the person of the poem's speaker. At the same time, by excluding or marginalizing not just all pretenders, whoever they may be, but also such heavenly creatures as the angels and such human faculties of reason and intellect, the poem foregrounds humanity's fate as personified by a lover who has to willingly forego all possibility of emotional bliss in order to be able to become worthy of the kind of exclusive love that the divine beloved demands of the lover in his earthly existence:

Gradually, the force of poetic creativity centered on the theme turned the analogy of the lover-beloved into a series of sophisticated conceptualizations of the man-God relationship into an intensely subjective personal affair. In these conceptualizations, man sees himself as the eternal lover in desperate need

of union with God as his beloved. Professionally inspired by of a solid sense of mission dictated by the art and craft of poetry and personally possessed of a strong urge to demonstrate an abundance of public morality, many Persian poets affected by the discourse of mysticism set themselves the mission to proclaim the centrality of love, occasioned by the covenant of *alast*. Some even elevated or extended this impulse to the universal condition that governs human life in this world. As the idea of a lovely and loving God continued to breed an ever more intense, at times unbearable, human desire to seek proximity, perhaps even union with him, partaking of the love of all divine creation turned into the rehearsal for that consummate eventuality. In this historical process, the twelfth century romancer Nezami of Ganja (1140-1202) provided the most crucial link between the hoary tradition of epic and romantic narratives and the mystical utterances of later centuries. In a crucial part of his preamble to the Romance of Khosrow and Shirin, he states his unabashed devotion to love, now understood both as a seminal earthly attraction and a central human preoccupation with the divine:

> The skies possess no altar but love,
> the earth is beautified by naught but love.
> Enslave yourself to love; therein lies the idea
> and occupation for those who have a heart.
> The world is love, the rest only guile
> all is a game save the game of love.
> If the world's soul were devoid of love
> who would live in it through the ages?
> Those devoid of love lie lifeless in bed
> with a hundred lives the loveless are dead.
> . . .
>
> Should love enliven a mere boulder's heart
> lovingly it will hold on to a gem.
> If the lodestone had not been in love,
> how would it have grabbed the iron ore so tight?
> If love did not fill the space between the amber
> and the straw, how would this attract that?
> Many a stone and many a gem are in place
> that draw neither the iron ore nor the straw.
> All the substances, too many to count,
> pull to some center, each one its own.
> If flames find no hollow void in earth
> they would tear it up and rush on out

> And water – should it dally in the sky
> its nature inclines to the nether parts.
> Dispositions have no function save attract
> sages have given this the name of love.
> By way of vision if you stop to think
> love is what keeps the creation standing.[20]

Nezami's articulation is doubly significant in that he is primarily a romancer – i.e., a weaver of love stories. To begin by describing love as the glue that holds the universe together, illustrate that idea through seemingly inanimate natural objects, and conclude by a poetic appeal to the idea of "vision" as the pillar that holds up all of creation may well have imposed a pattern on the romance as a narrative that parallels the story of man's everlasting love for God. It is only a short step from here to speculating on the reason why the structure of so many classical Persian romances posit an initial glance and exchange of vows or diverse scenes of initial intimacy between the lover and the beloved, followed by an abrupt and long-lasting separation featuring excruciating suffering in the lover. Throughout this period of intense suffering, what drives the lover forth is the consoling thought, reinforced through dreams, visions and fanciful thoughts dictated by a lover's singular obsession, that reassures him of the beloved's attention, though union may be far away. It is also telling that classical Persian romances do often feature an eventual reunion, albeit not always in this world and during the lifetime of the lover and the earthly beloved. Both in their progression as well as in their conclusion, these romances seem to replicate the structure and basic thematic landmarks of the mystical narrative of human beings inhabiting a universe moved and motivated by love.[21]

That this idea of love as the motivating force in the universe, so close to the heart of great mystical poets like Rumi, comes from the pen of a man who has given us some of the best-loved romances in the Persian language, provides the first tell-tale sign of historical and thematic links. In fact, the passage above appears at the head of the story of "Khosrow and Shirin," as Nezami is trying to justify the writing of love-stories as distinct from didactic tales such as we see in his earlier works. It follows the poet's justification of the love tale he is about to spin on grounds that in his time everyone feels inclined toward love stories. Even though he has an accomplishment behind him as an

pressive as "Makhzan al-Asrar" (Treasury of Mysteries), he says, he wishes to direct the riches of the story toward exciting his readers' intellect:

> I have a treasure as priceless as the Makhzan al-Asrar
> Why should I labor to produce a tale of desire
> Yet, none can be found in the world today
> Who covets not to tell a tale of love and desire
> I nurtured the desire to tackle the tale of Shirin
> To tend to the cares of those who seek sorrow.
> I wove the image of desire so pure
> That intellect itself would be motivated by desire.[22]

In the above exhortation on love immediately preceding this passage, he relates the story of the friend who, having heard that the great poet and man of religion and ethics was composing a romance, pays him a visit hoping to dissuade him from wasting his talents on what he calls "renewing the customs of the Magi." When Nezami recounts some glimpses of the story he is working on, however, the friend is persuaded that if anyone can make love dignified in a spiritual sense, it would be Nezami, and he urges the poet to bring the romance to its conclusion just as soon as possible. Having concluded his tale of the unique love that inflames Shirin's desire for Khosrow, Nezami returns to two central Sufi notions, love and death. In doing so, he comes very close to the articulation of death in Sufi understanding of the place of death in the human life cycle as related by Rumi in *The Spiritual Couplets* some eighty years later. In fact, by alluding to a well-known story already incorporated into the canon of Sufi narratives and to be retold later most famously by Rumi in his most celebrated account of death, he makes clear his intention to bring death into the orbit of a mystical understanding of life:

> And if in knowledge you consider yourself the great Galen
> When death approaches you too will fall like Galen
> When we must all die utterly helpless
> Whether the Greek Plato or the common Kurd
> It would be best to hearken this advice
> To die once before the approach of death.
> He who closes his eye is delivered from pain
> That's how the parrot freed itself from the cage.[23]

It remains for the proselytizing Sufi poet to sense the mission not just of himself having been called by God to a cosmic covenant of love at pre-eternity, but of his charge to proclaim the glad tidings to the novice wayfarer who may have just set out on the path of perfection and eventual union with God. The proclamation explains all the major milestones in human existence in a way that remains commensurate with the spirit of Islamic dicta, but takes the emphasis away from the day of judgment as postulated in Islamic orthodoxy, positing in its place the concept of reunion with the face of the divine (laqa allah) immediately upon death. In reversing the image of Adam's fall, this signification turns death in the ascent that signals the accomplished Sufi's final triumph over the human condition. Life, then, appears as a brief sojourn – some Sufi masters would call it a blink of an eye – when compared to the eternal bliss that is his to enjoy in the presence of God. Instead of suffering the pain of separation for the entire duration of human time as he understands it, the mystic is only going through a momentary excursion in an alien atmosphere where he experiences the full range of human emotions and witnesses death and destruction, suffering and sacrifice around him, while all the while imagining himself a soul marked for everlasting bliss in the afterlife. Stemming from the mystic's willingness to nurture his capacity for love, that sense of superiority allows him to tolerate the ordeal of earthly existence in the certainty of total bliss, lasting for an eternity to come, in the proximity or presence of – even in oneness with – God.

The Sufi wayfarer is sustained through this arduous ordeal by the focus he proves capable of maintaining on the divine beloved. It begins by always expecting the beloved's joyous arrival through the threshold of whatever space the lover may be in at any moment, imagining the ecstasy of actually seeing him before his eyes, or the eye of his mind. The smile on the beloved's face may well signal the lover's release from all anchoring in time and space, from necessity of communicating through earthly language, or from the bondages of his time-bound terrestrial existence. The ghazal that opens the Rumi's nearly 4,000 love lyrics articulates one such moment, powerfully casting it in a rapturous address to the beloved:

> Sudden resurrection, boundless bliss!
> Bonfire in the thicket of our thoughts!

Smiling, you've arrived today like God's bountiful grace,
upon the lowly in the soul, opening our prison gates.
You are doorkeeper to the sun, reason for hope,
the one we seek, the one who seeks us, origin and end,
you are the swelling in our chests, ornament to our minds,
you ask after our desires, and grant them too.
O unique soul-giver, joy of knowing and doing,
the one with no pretext and no fraud, both the illness,
the other the cure.
Look upon our intoxicated intellects, read our sweet stories,
and see all this babble after daily portions of bread and vittles.
Silence, poet! Fly along with me, straight to the banner!
Put down the paper, break your pen, cupbearer is here – Salute![24]

Such pure rapture, of course, almost never results from an actual appearance, either by the divine beloved or the palest earthy shadow of it; nor are the emotions it gives rise to likely to be as translucent or unadulterated. Far more likely, the same fertile fancy that causes the epiphany, fills the lover-poet with a mix of emotions, including simultaneous joy and sorrow, that he bursts into song, trying to express an emotional state utterly inaccessible to him in his normal state of consciousness. Dreams or dreamlike states of this type confirm the poet-lover in achieving an acceptable level of concentration by allowing him to see apparitions or epiphanies of the beloved in fleeting forms whose impressions can be recorded in lyrical utterance alone. To be able to record the experience in language, the lover-poet endeavors to keep his eyes on the beloved, absorbing every observable movement by memorizing the details of the joyous appearance. There are expressions and motions in the beloved's face, figure, and form that signal acceptance or lack thereof. To read them constitutes the highest accomplishment of an adept Sufi master.

Not only Rumi for whom such states constitute the kernel of the poetic experience, Hafez too, who uses the language of Islamic mysticism for a purpose that cannot always be said to be commensurate with any mystical belief system, expresses this

heightened emotional state in many of his ghazals. His depiction of a midnight visitation by the beloved's apparition while the lover is lying in bed is only one of the more famous iterations of this:

Hair dishcveled, sweating, laughing, drunk
Shirt torn, mouth full of song, cup in hand,
her eyes bellicose, her lips pouring charm
at midnight last she came and sat by my bed.
She lowered her head to my ear, whispered in a doleful voice:
"Are you fast asleep, my ancient lover?"
Lover who receives such strong wine at dawn
would be unfaithful to love should he not worship wine.
Pious ascetic, do not seek fault in dreg-drinking men
they gave us naught but this on the day of *alast*.
We drink what he has filled our cup with
be it the mead of heaven or the drunkard's dreg.
The smiles on the cup's lip, those knotted curls
Failed much repentance like that of Hafez. [25]

Such is the state of the Sufi poet, or at least thus he wishes it were through his depiction of a persona in the poem, until death arrives, not to end life, but to make it whole and eternal by catapulting him into a plane of existence previously unimaginable. As the final stage in the journey of the mystic to regain his proximity to the divine fountainhead of all existence, it is the event that fulfills the promise implicit in the covenant of the *alast* at pre-eternity, or the day of *azal*. Once again, Rumi has left us the most memorable articulation of the experience, one clad in what to the modern eye may appear as a literal ascent upward in a ship not unlike a modern spacecraft:

A luminous vessel appeared at dawn in the sky
it descended from the sky and looked upon me
then like an eagle picking up a bird in the hunt
that vessel picked me up and sped across the sky.
As I looked inward at me I did not see my self
inside that vessel my body had turned tender as the soul
and as I traveled on in my soul I saw nothing but the vessel
until the mystery of the pre eternal epiphany was re vealed to me.

When the nine heavenly firmaments sank into the luminary vessel
the whole ship of my being hid beneath the ocean
and as the ocean's waves heaved, reason reared its head
roaring about how things were and what things became.
And when the ocean's waves made foam, each piece
made manifest the likeness of this, a body of that
Every foamy particle that took in a glimpse of the ocean
melted at once, flowed, and became one with the ocean.
Without the fortune of serving the true Sun of Tabriz
you neither can see that luminary vessel nor can be one with the ocean.[26]

I hope what I have presented in this essay goes a step beyond both abstruse points of contention between orthodox and mystic interpretations of Islamic texts or the ways in which Persian poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries codified their messages. In fact, I tend to view the essay's ultimate contribution neither to Qur'anic exegetical traditions nor to aesthetic signification per se. What lies between the early Sufi ideas and the poems I have cited here is at least two centuries of reworking of religious ideas developed by the early Sufis, primarily through paradoxical anecdotes, hagiographic narratives, and interpretive speculation, in Arabic and Persian languages. In this historical process, Persian mystic poets were driven as much by the need for an atmosphere of tolerance as for utterances signifying the utmost humility they felt as friends and lovers of God. At the same time, they upheld the notion that every Sufi, indeed every human being, can aspire to unite with God, indeed to feel himself with God, in his company, even for a fleeting moment. In their pursuit, the later Sufis saints and poets related experiences anchored in dreams, visions, or epiphanies, real and significant life experiences that could neither be dismissed as meaningless nor disparaged as blasphemy.

Among the many communicative strategies they used to achieve this end, two techniques most instrumental in anchoring mystical thought in an ocean of aesthetic ideas deserve special mention. First, the technique of developing discourse through the pairing of corresponding or contrary images, concepts or modes of existence, allowed them to create the perennial nodes between

the tradition of Persian poetry and their personal metaphysical yearnings. Second, the equivocations they concocted and communicated, either expressly or by allusion, created sense-based perceptions where apparent objects are immediately equated with abstract notions, even in the realm of the unseen. Together, the two techniques helped to create a literary discourse uniquely suited to the articulation of mystical thoughts in poetry. Because the Sufis believed that man's greater struggles lay within his soul rather than in the world external to him, the twin techniques led them to internalize many aspects and stages of man's earthy existence, as well as important icons, emblems and other signs and signifiers of the earlier poets. The mythical bird Simorgh, the world-revealing cup belonging to Jamshid (or Keykhosrow), and the ordeals that a narrative's hero or protagonist has to go through are only a few among a whole host that can be identified, examined, and catalogued as their stock-in-trade.

From the beginning of Persian poetry in the tenth century, coordinates and binaries had formed the struts and beams of its rhetoric. It was through binaries such as "tokhmeh" (seed in the sense of seminal, i.e., related to semen, and germinating entity), versus "tokhm" (seed in the sense of seeds strewn in a field) that Ferdowsi had helped change the pre-Islamic paradigm of the racial superiority of Iranians over others into the common endeavor of Persian-speaking peoples into a linguistic entity open to all races.[27] It was through the binaries between the lover and the beloved that the Persian ghazal had found its way from the kind of lyricism that depicts the nightingale /poet/ lover/ human as forever singing songs of desperate love to the rose/ patron/ beloved/ God. Walk these ideas through Sana'i, Attar, Rumi, and Hafez, and you will see the step-by-step process through which the feat was achieved. That's why I began this essay by stating the contention that the literary tradition enshrined in the Persian language is one of the most illustrative instances of the incremental growth of literature in and through various social configurations.

Most specifically, as heirs to this discursive tradition, and regardless of whether they were Sufis or not, the poets of the later centuries could appropriate this incremental accumulation of the poetic energy and potential meaning thus achieved in pursuit of their various philosophical or ideological purposes. Allowing this strategy to often predominate both their emotional outbursts

and their measured discourses, poets like Rumi and Hafez gave rise to a dialectic that best serves their divergent purposes, both as means and as the ends to which poetry may serve as a means. In them, typical Sufi experiences and intensely personal expressions not only occupy the same textual space but are wedded together, as if they were one and the same thing. We can, as readers have done through the centuries, admire the uncanny, almost unexplainable, sophistication that results from this cohabitation; yet without anchoring it in the discursive traditions which these poets and many others like them had inherited, the manner of presentation prevalent in the Persian poetic tradition and the many epic and romantic narratives that made it possible will not be understood adequately. Where they may use such techniques to expose, say, the illusoriness of sense perceptions, Rumi and Hafez ultimately register the recognition that all transcendence will have to be worked out through the very illusion they have laid bare – i.e. apparent dichotomies and divisions.

That, in fact, is where both poets ~~these~~ begin to look for solutions to an existential, as well as experiential, dilemma. Rumi's famous story of men gathered in a dark room around an elephant, trying to define it through their sense of touch, is world famous. What Rumi does with it is, characteristically, to direct the moral toward some higher purpose. Similarly, Hafez's treatment of dream-like state cited above enables him to work his way through temptations of the flesh to the transcendence of the kind that is exemplified in the sense of submission he works out in the penultimate line. The seemingly sensuous scene he has painted and the specific attributes he has given to the apparition of the beloved collude to move the speaker from the plain of carnal desire to re-imagining the human experience of an un-individuated humanity on day of *alast*, thus helping him to transcend all earthly temptations. While the path is neither easy nor clear-cut, the measure of each individual spirit is determined ultimately by its capacity to transcend all the temptations – and limitations – of earthy existence, even mortality. If it is there at all, the aspiration would be adequate to move the seeker along this path – the rest are only sights seen, sounds heard, and lessons learned along the way.

Notes and Bibliography:

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[1] While this date reflects the general critical consensus, Rypka dates the development even earlier, stating that in Khorasan "there were already signs of [literary] activity at the beginning of the 2nd/8th century." See Jan Rypka, et. al., *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1968), 113.

[2] See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995).

[3] Zabihollah Safa, *Tarikh-e Adabiyyat dar Iran: az mianeh-ye qarn-e panjom ta aghaz-e qarn-e haftom-e hejri* (Tehran: Ferdowsi Publications, 6th print., 1363/1984)), 2: 335-344. In this discussion, Safa, while acknowledging that the style (*sabk*) of Persian poetry fell into a particular evolutionary path in this period, cites vague reasons for this, including "new literary and intellectual factors" (*'avamel-e jadid-e adabi va fekri*), the inevitable movement of time and natural changes in ideas (*sayr-e jabri-ye zaman va tahavvolat-e tabi'i-ye afkar*), and the evolution and expansion of the 'Eraqi School (*takmil va towse'eh-ye maktab-e 'Eraq*). These developments, he concludes, gave rise to the new style named for the urban centers in which it is supposed to have originated, i.e., Isfahan, Hamedan, and Ray: "if we accept the division of those who believe in the three styles of Persian poetry, Khorasani, 'Eraqi, and Indian, we must say that the style of the poets of the sixth century (hegira) heralds the appearance of the 'Eraqi style in Persian poetry" (344).

[4] In addition to *Recasting Persian Poetry*, above, see Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Revolutionary Posturing: Iranian Writers and the Iranian Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23: 4 (November 1991): 507-531; idem. "Preservation and Presentation: Continuity and Creativity in the Contemporary Persian Qasida," in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, eds., Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 2 vols., 1: 253-280 and 2: 192-215; and idem "From Translation to Appropriation: Poetic Cross Breeding in Early Twentieth Century Iranian Culture," *Comparative Literature* 47: 1 (Winter 1995): 53-78.

[5] All this, although well documented in recent scholarship, has been described as a part of a "transition" from one mode of articulation "the

epic," to another, "the mystic." It has not been examined as an aspect of the internal growth of Persian poetry in time or through deliberate exploitation of the system's resources. See Taqi Purnamdariyan, *Ramz va dastanha-ye ramzi* (Symbolism and Symbolic Stories in Persian Literature) [English title provided in the book] (Tehran: 'Elmi va Farhangi, 1364/1985).

[6] For an English translation of the story of Rostam and Esfandiyar, see Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *In the Dragon's Claws: The Story of Rostam and Esfandiyar from the Persian Book of Kings,* trans. Jerome W. Clinton (Washington, DC: Mage, 1999).

[7] Rumi's use of this manner of punning is well-known, is perhaps best illustrated through his use, in the opening of *his Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*, of the Persian phrase "nist bad" in two different senses, 'is not wind' or 'may it not be.' See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Beyond Translation: Interactions between English and Persian Poetry," in *Iran and the Surrounding World, 1500-2000: Interactions between Iran and the Neighboring Cultures*, eds. Nikki Keddie and Rudi Matthee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 36-60.

[8] Sana'i Ghaznavi, Abol-Majd Majdud, *Masnaviha-ye Hakim Sana'i*, ed. M.-T. Modarres-Razavi (Tehran: Entesharat-e Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1348/1969), 347.

[9] Instances of Hafez's use of this trope abound in his *Divan*. See "*ma qesseh-ye Sekandar o Dara nakhandeh-im / az ma beh joz hekayat-e mehr o vafa mapors*" (we have not read the narrative of Alexander and Darius/ ask us about naught but the tale of love and loyalty), *Divan-e Khajeh Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafez*, ed. Parviz Natel Khanlari (Tehran: Kharazmi, 1362/1983), 544; or the lines in another famous ghazal where both Keykavus the foolish king and Keykhosrow the wise king are both contrasted with a heavenly prince Jesus evoked in the act of ascension: "*an chonan ro shab-e rehlat cho Masiha beh falak / k'az cheragh-e to beh khorshid resad sad partow // tekyeh bar akhtar-e shab-dozd makon k-in 'ayyar / takht-e Kavus bebord o kamar-e Keykhosrow*" (on the eve of your passing go heavenwards like the Christ / such that a hundred rays should reach the sun from the light that's you // rely not on the night-snatching star, for this thief / stole the throne of Kavus as well as Khosrow's girdle). See *Divan*, 814.

[10] One scholar records three occurrences of "*shah-e torkan*" in Hafez's *Divan* with specific reference to Shah Shoja', the famed ruler of Shiraz in Hafez's time; other phrases referring to that ruler and their occurrences are as follows: *shah-e jahan-setan* (1), *shah-e khodaygan* (2), *shah-e khuban* (3). See Bahram Ashtari, *In Rah-e binehayat: vazhehnameh, vazhch-nameh va farhang-e tarkibat, ta'birat va estelahat e Divan-e Hafez*, 2 vols. (Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Daneshgahi, 2000), 1: 664-665.

[11] See an account of this in Purnamdariyan, *Ramz va datstanha-ye ramzi*, 164-165.

[12] *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*, ed. & trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 2 vols (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-Masri, 1934), 1: 907-908. In the discussion that follows I am heavily indebted to Yusuf Ali's interpretation of Ghazali's *Mishkat al-Anwar* (Niche of Lights).

[13] See, for example, the unabashedly axiological articulation of the way in which the mystics justified their appropriation of esoteric meanings of Qur'anic verses through the analogues of a nut's pith and the shell: "*Ma ze qur'an maghz ra bardashtim/ pust ra bahr-e kharan bogzashtim*" (we took the pith from the Qur'an, and left the shell for the asses), attributed to Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi (Rumi).

[14] For a fuller treatment of these equivocations, see Yusuf Ali's itemized comments under the passage sited above (numbers 2996-3003) in *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 1: 907-8.

[15] *Encyclopedia Iranica*, s.v. "Ensan-e Kamel" (written by Gerhard Bowering).

[16] *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*, 2: 1443-44.

[17] Ibid., 393-94.

[18] Ibid., 393.

[19] *Divan-e Khajeh Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafez*, 312.

[20] *Koliyyat-e Divan-e Hakim Nezami-ye Ganjeh'i*, ed. Vahid Dastgerdi (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1956), 144-145.

[21] Interestingly, the more we move from the earthly romance to the mystical romance, the more the ultimate union becomes a feature of the earthly existence of the lover, as if it were there to provide a foretaste of the ultimate union between the mystic lover and the divine beloved.

[22] *Koliyyat-e Divan-e Hakim Nezami*, 143.

[23] Ibid, 414.

[24] Jalal ad-Din Mohammad Balkhi, *Koliyyat-e Shams ya Divan-e Kabir*, ed. Badi'oz-Zaman Foruzanfar, 10 vols. (Tehran: Entesharat-e Daneshgah-e Tehran, 1957-67), 1: 4 (ghazal # 1). For another recent translation of this poem, see Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi, Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (Oxford, OneWorld Publications, 2000), 336-37.

[25] *Divan-e Khajah Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafez*, 60.

[26] *Koliyyat-e Shams*, 2: 65-66 (ghazal # 649).

[27] See Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Nejad, mazhab, zaban: seh engareh-ye hoviyyat dar Iran," *Iran-Nameh* 11: 4 (1993): 599-620.