

Poetry

The reverend Shaykh was very interested in mystical and ethical poetry. His sermons were, most often, given along with instructive poetry. He especially valued the *Ghazals* of Hafiz and the Mathnawi of Taqdis; he would cry when hearing their poetry.

He was very fond of Mathnawi of Taqdis and would say: "If there were only one copy of Taqdis in the market, I would give anything I had in order to buy that book"¹

Dr. Abul Hasan Shaykh, a close acquaintance of the Shaykh for many years, said: 'The Shaykh was an expert on Hafiz poetry and interpreted his poems quite well.

About the reverend Shaykh's viewpoint concerning poetry and poets, particularly Hafiz, Dr. Hamid Farzam had this to say: 'Since 1954, when I found the honor of friendship with the Shaykh through Dr. Guya, rarely a session would have been held in which I would not hear relevant, timely, and beautiful poetry from him. He was really fascinated by Hafiz. Once I asked him why he was so deeply interested in Hafiz. He replied:

"In spiritual and mystical aspects, Hafiz has really done his best and expressed all spiritual truths and mystical-intuitive findings in his poetry."

The Shaykh was more dedicated to Hafiz than to other poets, and would always recite his poems even when he wished to warn or reproach someone.²

He always referred to the world as a "hag". Sometimes facing a disciple he would say:

"I see you have fallen again in the trap of this 'hag!'"

And then, he would recite this poem of Hafiz:

'There is none who is not entangled in that curling ringlet,

Who is there in the way of whom lies not such a snare of tribulation?'³

He would also say ironically:

"Most often they get entangled in it, and very few are the ones who are detached from this hag!"

He would recite this fine couplet in condemning self-conceit:

'Being self-conceited and self-opinionated is infidelity toward being a *dervish* recluse,

The command is what You (God) ordain, the opinion is what You think of.'

Reciting (singing) Poetry in a Delightful Voice

Dr. Farzam said in this respect 'The late reverend Shaykh would recite poetry in a pleasant melody, for instance, certain poems of the late Fayz-e Kashani, such as the following couplets which would highly impress the listeners.

'I seek Allah's forgiveness of whatever (I have done for) other than the Beloved,

I seek Allah's forgiveness for my fictitious existence

If a moment elapses without remembering his (beautiful) countenance,

I seek Allah's forgiveness myriad of times for that moment'

One afternoon we were in the company of the Shaykh in one of his disciples' house. It had a very large guestroom and the Shaykh was sitting near the doorway singing the following couplet of Hafiz.

'Who is the one who, out of loving kindness, may practice sincerity to us?

(And) may do benevolence in lieu of ill-doing to such ill-doer as me'

He sang some couplets of this *ghazal* with a very beautiful and pleasant melody while weeping and making others extremely overwhelmed and tearful. It was so extraordinary! I said to Dr. Goya 'The reverend Shaykh has got such a lovely voice and sweet breath!

He replied. 'It is a pity you made such belated acquaintance with him He used to sing so beautifully that when he recited such poems in a mystical state, the doors and walls literally vibrated.'

A Poem by the Shaykh and Reminiscence

It seems that the Shaykh himself used to write poems occasionally. One of the contemporary *maraji'* who was a student of the great jurist and mystic, the late Ayatollah Qadi (Allameh Tabataba'i's teacher) answered to my inquiry about Shaykh Rajab Ali Khayyat as follows: 'I met him in a session with Ayatollah Qadi in Najaf. In that session, he recited some poems in praise of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a

each couplets beginning with the letters of *abjad*.⁴ He then recited another of his poems as follows:

'Whatever Bounties You have granted to the whole Universe, All have You granted to me, plentiful and diverse.'

"I was thinking that this was the most sublime interpretation of Divine Bounties and thanksgiving to Him, until I came across this statement in al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya:"

شكري أياك من انعاماتك

"*Shukri iyyaka min in 'amatika* (I am thankful to You for all Your Bounties)⁵

An Amazing and Instructive Miraculous Act⁶

At the end of the weekly session of "ethics" lesson⁷, a young man came forward and, referring to what was mentioned at the footnote No. 1 of this page, stated: "I am coming from Yazd. This issue was brought up in a meeting where some of those present ridiculed and said it was because of the Shaykh illiteracy that he did not know this phrase is not found in al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya! At that night, I saw him in a dream. He said:

"What is quoted from me is not right. What I have said is as follows: 'And let my attitude to Thee for what Thou hast not granted me be more abundant than my gratitude to Thee for what Thou hast bestowed upon me!'⁸ And this content does exist in supplication number 35 of al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya!"

No doubt, this has been a true dream, since it is extremely important and essential to note that "it is a great blessing for man not to attain various worldly pleasures and luxuries which may divert him from sublime human goal; it is a great blessing that deserves much more gratitude and gratefulness than gratitude for the bounties that man has attained in the world." Also, finding such an issue from al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya in a dream without connection to the Unseen world is usually impossible.⁹

^{1.} One of Shaykh's devotees said: ' He recommended reading of "Taqdis" of Mulla Ahmad Naraqī and "Kimiyye Sa'adat" of Ghazali.'

^{2.} See "You Lose Temper too quickly!" Chapter Three, Part 2.

^{3.} All the poems and ahadith in this volume are rendered into English by the translator, except the ones adopted from other translated works which are referred to in the footnotes.

^{4.} An arithmetical arrangement of the Arabic alphabet.

^{5.} Despite all the efforts made to identify this phrase in al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya. However, all the phrases in Supplication 37 and the "Whispered Prayer of the Thankful" of Imam al-Sajjad (a) do testify to this notion.

^{6.} This title was later added to the eleventh edition of the Persian Version.

^{7.} Weekly sessions of teaching ethics is held for a group of talabas (seminary students) from Hawzah 'Ilmiyya (Islamic Seminary) of Hadrat Abdul Azim al-Hasani (a).

^{8.} The Psalms of Islam, (al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyya), supplication 35, p. 121, translated by William Chittick, Muhammadi Trust, London, 1988.

^{9.} It can be even said that this true dream somehow implicitly confirms other issues quoted from the reverend Shaykh in

this book.

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/elixir-love-muhammadi-reyshahri/poetry#comment-0>