

SA'DI SHIRAZI IS A PROMINENT REPRESENTATIVE OF WORLD DIDACTIC LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the role of Sa'di Shirazi—an accomplished poet, writer, and thinker, as well as a pioneer and master of the ghazal genre—in world literature, his creative legacy, and the moral and philosophical ideas presented in his work “Gulistan.”

Keywords: World literature, Sa'di Shirazi, “Gulistan”, moral, social, philosophical, educational, anecdote.

INTRODUCTION

Sa'di Shirazi was a distinguished poet, writer, and thinker, as well as a pioneer and master of the ghazal genre. His status in world literature is exceptionally high. His works “Bustan” and “Gulistan,” created on the basis of his rich life experience, brought him worldwide fame and were translated into numerous European languages.

“This man, known in the East as Sheikh Sa'di, had already attained fame during his lifetime. The works of this wise poet, enriched by vast life experience and filled with profound wisdom, spread from Shiraz to Kashgar, and from China and India to Egypt and North Africa. Therefore, although Sa'di never sought disciples nor acted as a spiritual leader, he was respectfully given the title ‘Sheikh,’ meaning a teacher and guide”¹.

Sa'di's works not only continued the traditions of classical Persian-Tajik literature but also exerted a significant influence on the development of both Persian-Tajik and Turkic literatures.

“Sa'di is regarded not only as a philosopher of Iran, but also as a respected thinker throughout Asia and Africa. The elegance of his style and the value of his expression have long been recognized by European scholars and men of letters,” wrote the renowned Hungarian scholar Herman Vambery. The great German poet and thinker Johann Wolfgang von Goethe considered Sa'di to be “highly prolific and graceful,” and “a truly fine poet enriched by life experience”.

The famous French philosopher and writer Voltaire was familiar with “Gulistan” and made use of it in some of his poems. The well-known French fabulist Jean de La Fontaine also drew upon the anecdotes and parables from “Gulistan” in his fables. The great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin wrote: “Until I grasped the hidden essence of the works of Sa'di and Hafez, my poetry rarely contained joyful elements and a love of life”², –he stated .

¹Shomuhamedov, Sh. Classics of Persian-Tajik Literature. – Tashkent: O ‘zadabiynashr, 1963. – p. 114.

² Shomuhamedov, Sh. Classics of Persian-Tajik Literature. – Tashkent: O ‘zadabiynashr, 1963. – p. 114.

Sa'di is the author of a large number of works written in various genres. His collected works (kulliyat) consist of 19 sections organized according to genre. The poet's kulliyat was compiled 37 years after his death by a person named Ali ibn Abu Bakr Besutun.

Among the literary works included in the kulliyat, the most famous are "Bustan," written in 1257, and "Gulistan," written in 1258.

"Gulistan" is considered the pinnacle of Persian-Tajik didactic literature. It gained fame as a "book of advice, wisdom, and ethics... Sa'di, who spent much of his life traveling, observing the lives of many peoples, nations, and social classes, and interacting with people from various walks of life, summarized his experiences and life observations. He expressed them in a highly artistic form, decorating them with short but deeply expressive rhymed prose passages and poetic verses, thus creating a unique collection of anecdotes"³.

In this didactic work, the author reflects the most important political and social events of his time, interprets moral standards, and creates diverse characters representing the people of that era. The generalizing power and influence of these characters extend beyond the limits of the poet's homeland and epoch. His progressive ideals are in harmony with universal human aspirations. Therefore, this work is regarded as one of the rarest masterpieces in world literature.

"Gulistan" consists of eight chapters, and its structural composition is as follows:

- Preface;
- Chapter I – on the conduct and character of kings;
- Chapter II – on the morals of dervishes;
- Chapter III – on the virtue of contentment;
- Chapter IV – on the benefits of keeping silent;
- Chapter V – on love and youth;
- Chapter VI – on old age and weakness;
- Chapter VII – on the influence of education;
- Chapter VIII – on the etiquette of companionship and conversation.

Sa'di's works have long been well known among the Uzbek people as well. His "Bustan" and "Gulistan" have traditionally been used as main textbooks in madrasahs. Our classical poets learned from and were influenced by this great master of the art of words. Works such as Alisher Navoi's "Mahbub ul-qulub," Khoja's "Gulzor," and Abdulla Avloni's "Turkiy Guliston yoxud axloq" were directly created under the influence of Sa'di's "Gulistan."

The work was first translated into Turkic in 1390–1391 by Sayfi Sarayi, one of the prominent representatives of 14th-century Uzbek literature, under the title "Gulistan bit-turkiy" in Egypt. In the 19th century, it was translated into Uzbek for the second time by the talented poet and skilled translator Muhammadrizo Ogahi, at the order of Khiva Khan Muhammad Rahim Khan II – Feruz. The third translation of "Gulistan" belongs to Mulla Murodhoja Salihkhoja o'g'li, a Tashkent-based teacher and poet, and was titled "Shavqi Gulistan." Murodhoja, taking into account the needs of madrasa students, explained difficult words and expressions and published the original Persian text alongside the translation at the "G'ulomiya" printing house in 1909. In 1968, the fourth translation of "Gulistan" was

³ Sa' di Shirazi. A Handful of Pearls (Narratives). – Tashkent: Saodat, 2005, No. 1. – pp. 3 – 4.

published. The poetic parts were translated into Uzbek by Gafur Gulyam and Shoislom Shomuhamedov, while the prose sections were translated by Rustam Komilov.

“Gulistan” is a collection of didactic stories and poetic aphorisms. In its preface, the poet states:

No matter how any flower may fail to delight your heart,
take at least one leaf from my “Gulistan.”

The season of flowers lasts only five or six days,
but this “Gulistan” breathes with eternal purity⁴

he writes. For centuries, this book has been regarded as one of the masterpieces of Persian-Tajik literature. It is notable for its simple and fluent language and its profound analysis of reality. The world-traveling poet narrates events he has seen and experienced in his life and draws moral and philosophical conclusions from them.

In the short stories of “Gulistan,” vast meanings are encapsulated within concise narratives.

“According to literary scholars, if Firdawsi’s ‘Shahnameh’ is the most brilliant work of classical Persian poetry, then ‘Gulistan’ is considered the most outstanding work of prose literature”⁵.

In this didactic work, the author reflects the most important and pressing political and economic events of his time and interprets moral standards, while also creating diverse characters representing the people of that era. Due to the writer’s artistic mastery, the generalizing power and influence of these characters extend beyond the limits of his homeland and epoch. Because Sa’di’s aspirations are highly noble and universal in nature, “Gulistan” is regarded as one of the masterpieces of world literature and has been read with admiration for nearly eight centuries.

Aiming to bring salvation to humanity, Sa’di correctly understood that the most powerful force in the world—and the greatest weapon in the struggle against both natural and social hardships—is knowledge. Therefore, he calls people to seek education and enlightenment. A person who, from youth, strives through labor to acquire knowledge and skills will never face deprivation:

The wise acquire skills and crafts,
while one who is a slave to his stomach remains without any skill.

Eating and sleeping are the ways of wild animals,
such habits are followed by an ignorant person.

Happy is the one who, in solitude,
continually takes his share from knowledge⁶.

In the seventh chapter of “Gulistan”—“On the Influence of Education”—there is the following story: “A wise man once advised his sons: ‘My children, learn a craft, for one cannot rely on the wealth and property of this world. Gold and silver are also a danger in this transient world—either a thief will take it away suddenly, or the owner will gradually consume it until nothing remains. But a craft is like a flowing spring and an inexhaustible wealth. If a craftsman loses his property, it is neither grief nor disaster, because his craft itself is his wealth. Wherever he goes, he finds respect; he rises in rank and his fortune prospers. An unskilled person, however,

⁴ Injular ummoni. – Tashkent, 1988. – p. 293.

⁵ Shomuhamedov, Sh. The Shine of Treasures. – Tashkent: G ‘afur G ‘ulom Publishing House of Literature and Art, 1981. – p. 122.

⁶The source – p. 136.

always suffers hardship and collects only leftovers ”. The author concludes this instructive story with a meaningful quatrain:

If a child is not given good manners in youth,
he will grow up unhappy and sorrowful.

A green branch bends in whatever way you bend it,
but only fire straightens a dry one.⁷

From these verses, we can understand that children must be given education and upbringing from an early age.

The poet, who highly valued knowledge and skills, repeatedly emphasizes that one should not avoid any hardship in the pursuit of learning them.

Human beings attain perfection through knowledge,
while rank, wealth, and possessions in this world are of no use.

If you possess a skill, even a hundred of your faults,
will be concealed in the eyes of friends by that very skill.

If you seek inheritance from your father,
then attach yourself with devotion to his knowledge.

In conclusion, Sa'di is a distinguished and eminent representative of world literature. The fact that his name had already gained fame in Europe during the Middle Ages and inspired literary figures such as Goethe, Voltaire, and Pushkin serves as clear evidence of this. His works have always attracted strong interest due to the fact that they are based on his life experiences and observations, and that they draw profound moral and philosophical conclusions while carrying significant educational value.

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⁷Injular ummoni. – Tashkent, 1988. – p. 287.