

## The Innovation of Hafez in Religious and Social Themes

La innovación de Hafez en temas religiosos y sociales

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### ABSTRACT

The present research is based on a descriptive-analytical method, and it tends to analyze the extent and manner of innovation of Hafez in the shared social and religious themes. The research findings also including hypocrisy and pretence as well as the realization of freedom in society, which is one of the most important issues of socio-religious beliefs that was planned in a new and modern style in Hafez's poetry.

**Keywords:** Hafez, religion, society, themes, analysis, and innovation.

### RESUMEN

La presente investigación se basa en un método descriptivo-analítico, y tiende a analizar el alcance y la forma de innovación de Hafez en los temas sociales y religiosos compartidos. Los hallazgos de la investigación también incluyen hipocresía y simulación, así como la realización de la libertad en la sociedad, que es uno de los temas más importantes de las creencias socio-religiosas que se planeó con un estilo nuevo y moderno en la poesía de Hafez.

**Palabras clave:** Hafez, religión, sociedad, temas, análisis e innovación.

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Recibido: 10/02/2019 Aceptado: 20/05/2019

## Introduction

One of the most important reasons for popularity of Hafez among the Men of letters, and even ordinary people, is the eloquence of the manner which is significant in his poems. Hafez has enriched his poems using Quranic and mystical themes and issues. Regarding his high domination on matters of faith and religious issues, a number of his poems have religious concepts. Considering that Hafez is the symbol of Iranian mystical poetry, the spiritual aspects of poetry have become a major and significant feature in a number of his poems.

Beside the matters of faith and religious issues, society and social themes have also been widely reflected in the poems of Hafez. He teaches the society to have manhood and honesty, to avoid hypocrisy and pretence, to observe human values, and to respect ethics. The morality of Hafez is not limited to appearance of it. He considers the true and real truth of morality. Of course, if we look for the interrelationship between belief and society in mystical thought, moderation has been the core of the Iranian and Greek ethics and pioneer ethics; we hereby mean that Hafez concentrates on a dynamic state and a contest for the goodness, and that he emphasizes that the basis of morality is embedded in the spiritual character of human. The secret of survival and novelty of Hafez's poems are known by scholars in two matters: the first one is that the mysticism is a type of knowledge and practice; it is always like a fresh and live spring. The second one is that Hafez uses a symbolic language. Hafez uses a symbolic language in his poems; considering the nature of time, his language gives his message and remains alive.

The attitude of Hafez, from the status of society and his reliance on the matters of faith and religious teachings, has led this significant man of letter to look at social phenomena with a mystical viewpoint in a number of issues. The innovations of Hafez are considered in this regard.

### 1- The position of man in the religious and social thoughts of Hafez

Hafez lived in a period in which religious matters were of great importance. If we look at the literature of that period, we observe that the Islamic tendencies were evident during those times. Therefore, the mysticism of Islam and the Qur'an which are the path of prosperity and the achievement of divine knowledge, are reflected in the literature of the era, and in particular, in the poetry of Hafez.

According to Bahaeddin Khorramshahi, "Hafez, according to the most direct and authoritative document of him—that is, **Ghazal of Hafez Shirazi**—had been having significant place in various sciences of his time, which were common in the abode of knowledge of Shiraz, and especially in Quranic matters." (Khorramshahi, 1999, p.49)

Ghazal of Hafez Shirazi is full of cognition and knowledge that comes from the heart. The position of humanity is of a certain value in Hafez's poems. He was familiar with all literary, religious, and mystical sciences of his time; his mystical wisdom is a school for humanity, and it is full of mystical and Islamic symbolism; on the other hand, this mysticism is an Ishraqi mysticism and relies on humanity and morality (Farshidvard, 2002, p.117)

Poems of Hafez have a direct and influential relationship with religious teachings. The point of view of Mr. Motahhari about Hafez is as follows: "Hafez is a flower of the Islamic culture." The richness of Hafez's Islamic culture cannot be indicated on its own, but it should be understood and interpreted by his personality in the field of Islamic education so that both Hafez and his relationship with religious and Islamic teachings are known. Both literary knowledge and matters of faith are required to know Hafez (Razmjoo, 1969, p.41)

Hafez is the illustrator of all the aspirations, dreams and ideals of the human societies. These concepts are at their climax in his poems; a regular man sees his demand in poems of Hafez; he is not only a Sufi in the field of mysticism, nor a regular man in the field of religious mysticism.

Poems of Hafez are like a velvet cloth which is seen in a special form from every angle; it leads to challenge in minds of poets and poetic analysts because of reading his poems with a mystical and romantic view and through their compilation (Katiraei, 1969, p.42)

Hafez reflects a picture of human in his poems in a way that a part of human is from earth and another part, from heaven; the man in Hafez's poem cares both about material and worldly life, and also, values spiritual issues; one of the reasons that Hafez is known as the mirror to humanity is that he provides a rightful reflection of human.

In poems of Hafez, man has a free and lovelorn personality; the fire of love flames in his heart, and he carries the burden of the trust that the mountains and heavens have refused to accept, and he goes beyond the angels and leads them drink mystical wine with him (Molaei, 1989, p.72)

Last night I saw that the angels beat the door of the tavern,

The clay of Adam, they shaped and into the mould, they cast. (Hafez, 1993<sup>1</sup>)

In his poems, Hafez is lover, and in independent man, and noble; he looks at the beauty of the earth and sees its

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ugliness at the same time. Most importantly, he cares about a better and more respectable world. He looks for a world that it should be, not a world in its current status:

In this dusty world, to hand cometh not a man

It is necessary to make another world, and a new a man(Hafez, 1993<sup>2</sup>)

“There is a word with the same meaning of the nature of Hafez, which comes to the mind of man, is freedom and liberty, freedom from any change that his thoughts or beliefs endure, and he is tired of expressing everything inside it. It is not a question of protecting Hafiz, for example, from the “Talkhvasht”, which is regarded by the Sufis as the source of all the badness; Hafez had a drink of it, or avoided it; but it was said that they limit the human freedom and avoid men from going to bar, even if such a banned issue would be beneficial for a large number of people; such action may not be tolerated by a man who has not been surrendered by any of the creatures and he is desperate to despise this chain despite its purity and spiritual dignity, which is special to him, and he intends to give his only property to the possession of wine. (Souratgar, 1970,p.67)

Hafez hates the laity of deception, hypocrisy, lies, deceit, betrayal and ugliness. Whatever is anti-morality has no place in Hafez's approach and manner, even though this approach and manner will keep him away from the disciples and companions. This feature of Hafez is nothing but the true nature of man. Human being is intrinsically interested in morality and becomes angry with violating ethical issues.

## 2. Respecting freedom in religious and social matters

Having freedom to a degree that it does not hurt soul and society has been of the rights emphasized by both religious and social rights, and it is an important element in the community of religious and social issues.

Although during Hafez's era and a long time after his life, there has been no news of social movements, poems of Hafez is a movement in a free-thinking that goes beyond time and space and offers a culture that is an extract and abstract of the rich and everlasting culture of Iran. If we Listen to it and get ourselves free from the constraints and bounds, we will find democracy in poems according to its contemporary definition and we also find the terms for which social movements in the contemporary era are constantly trying to explain and analyze them. It is in a way that his message can be transmitted to the world. The message of humanity and humanism of a poet like Hafez bears the capability to transcend the boundaries and enchant the hearts of the world with his free thought and freedom. (Izadyar, 2013,p.23)

Social commitment is highly important in view of Hafez. One of the most important goals of composing poems by Hafez is his responsibility to society. It might be said that one of the reasons for choosing Ghazal by Hafez as the main form of his poetry is its ease in raising social issues. In the book “Gold in Copper [in Persian: Tala Dar Mes]”, Professor Reza Barahani says that:

“He [Hafez] intended to present his life and his community and history through symbol and metaphor in the most transcendental form of his age, named the Ghazal; regarding this, although Hafez has the beauty of language, he showed no responsibility for the language. Hafez has paid more attention to himself and his nature and that supreme truth within himself, or his social and historical environment, and he has also shown responsibility in other poles. “( Barahani, 1992,p.258)

When Hafez finds that a group of people are in an abundance of wealth and prosperity, even though their property has been acquired by legitimate means, but a major part of the society is in poverty, his social responsibility encourages him to use contradiction and visualization terms to describe this classification:

O potent one! Boast not all this pomp: for thy

Head and gold are in the keeping of the blessing of Darvishes.(Hafez, 1993<sup>3</sup>)

Or

O powerful one! Bring to thy hand the darvish's heart:

For the treasure of gold, and the treasure of derham shall not remain.(Hafez, 1993<sup>4</sup>)

2 - Ghazal Number of 170

3 - Ghazal Number of 49

4 - Ghazal Number of 179

Or:

He writes to give hope to the poor and to sympathize with them and as well, he validates contentment and temperance:

O God! keep for me the lot of poverty

For this blessing, the cause of pomp and of power of mine is. (Hafez, 1993<sup>5</sup>)

Or

Hafiz from thy face, the dust of poverty and contentment wash not ### For, better is this dust than the work of alchemy (Hafez, 1993<sup>6</sup>)

Free thinking of Hafez is in a way that, despite his mystical approach and his movement toward mysticism, he has not accepted all the traditions of the Sheikhs. He does not accept a number of the behaviors that he sees in the monasteries and he criticizes the austerity of the followers of mysticism.

“The difference of mysticism and Sufism is that Sufism is a deployed system and an established approach and methodology; there is a leader, a seeker, a abbey, monastery, and austerity and seclusion; this is while, Hafez believes in free thinking and free mysticism and he himself also created a mythical leader named as the mystic leader, whose origin is the mystic leader of bar; and that Moghan’s destructed areas, which is seen in the poetry of Hafez, is a literary creation of Hafez, and it has nothing to do with the monastery; it means that it is not very relevant to Bars, but it is not far from them either. (Khorramshahi, 2004,p.437)

Hafez is always struggling with social misconceptions, and regarding that he has fallen in love, he knows the path of love as a path full of hardness:

In the Path of love-play, calamity is safety and ease

Wounded be that heart that with on account of pain desireth a plaister

Hafez has been doing negation and objection to the deviations that he sees in his society. He has objected to a number of moral, social, political, religious, educational, intellectual, and other deviations. But the most important part of his objection in his poetry relates to deviations in the areas of ethics and mysticism and Sufism, which were the basic elements of the literature of that era.

“Hafez was free from organizational affiliation with Sufism; he criticized Sufism as one of the central discourses into his poetry, after which, this school established its position in Persian Ghazal as a literary school.” (Izadyar, 2013,p.36)

Freely expression of truths of the society and believing in freedom of people in their beliefs, manners, social interactions and behaviors [it means a reasonable freedom that does not harm oneself and others] is one of the most important features that are rarely seen in literary works until the eighth century.

Persian literature in the 4th and 5th centuries was highly influenced by the Court. During these years, court poetry was of great importance, and most poets were interested in composing poems to the court. Eulogy continued, and the literary scholars were trying to present their best poems to the rulers, to achieve rewards and use them for vinity and debauchery. This situation had such an influence on narratives that it could be inferred that poetry was means of beggary to poets.

The result of such situation includes the limitation of the poetic themes, as it could be said that the coquetry of the beloved, disloyalty of the sweetheart, candle and flower and butterfly, spring and fall, youth and aging, and wine and beloved, were the main themes of the poetry of the era, which were mostly superficial. This situation was of the poetry tradition in the fourth and fifth centuries, and poetic thoughts often were limited to this narrow circle of expression and meaning. (Rooholamini, 1996,p.63)

Though the sixth and seventh centuries, when the Iranian governments fell one after another and the Mongols dominated the land, the sad space, the pain of losing loved ones, the destruction of the homeland, the domination of foreigners on the country as well as the poverty and poorness of society, caused the Iranian community and more especially, the men of letters of this land, go toward internalism and isolation, through which, mysticism and Sufism got flourished, and this also dominated literature, in a way that through these two centuries, Persian

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5 - Ghazal Number of 52

6 - Ghazal Number of 451

literature moved toward mysticism and Sufism, and such themes dominated the Persian literature.

Unfortunately like the era of vinosity and debauchery, the mystical literature did not care much for the suffering of the community. The mystical men of letters mostly expressed spiritual and intellectual states, as well as passing the stages of mysticism and attaining their mental happiness, and along with it, they have sought to develop their thoughts and guidance to their disciples and henchmen and their enthusiasts. For this reason, the social dangers and the crises that confronted society, and the suffering of the community, have been ignored by them. Although among such mystics, poets such as Molana [i.e. Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī] sometimes referred to social affairs beside his mystical states, and during his poems, he composed poems related to the movement of society towards the goodness and the denunciation of misconducts, or a poet such as Saadi, during the expression of his travels, expressed valuable moral messages to his audients, but the majority of the poems of the era were mystical and Sufi poems.

None of the poets before Hafez, as much as deserved, has not reflected social and political pains in his works and has not depicted the anxieties and crises that were involved in the society of those days; they did not free their new concepts, emotions and thoughts from religious beliefs; therefore, a clear picture of the sense of despair, agitation, and perplexity of those times cannot be expected in their poems, and that Hafez is the only poet who freely contemplates various subjects, along with expressing candles and flowers and butterflies and the love and drunkenness, anxiety and excitement, despair and hope, and corruption of man, and etc., and he provides new concepts and interpretations with more depth in poetry. It goes to the point that Hafiz can be a true representative of human dreams throughout the past era of Iranian poetry and thought, which seeks to show the people a clear and accurate picture of social truths (Dubrovin, 1999,p.135).

In the night of darkness and in the desert, where can one arrive,  
Unless, in my path, the lamp, the candle of His face hath?  
I and the candle of the morning, 'tis fit if went together:  
For, we consumed; and no solicitude for us, our idol hath.

In another poem, he says:

Mohtaseb became Sheikh and forgot his own sin.  
Our tale is that which, at the head of every market, remained.

Of course, Hafez is merely an illustrator of the grief and affliction of society, he sometimes offers approaches and resolutions to social crises and problems, and sometimes reflects the spirit of hope and optimism to the future. He deeply believes that, despite the fact that the society suffers from severe hardship and that the ship of the society is badly damaged, the society can, with a massive rise and movement, bring this broken ship to the shore of safety and health:

We are boat-stranded ones! O fair breeze! arise:  
It may be that, again, we may behold the face of the Beloved.(Hafez 1993<sup>7</sup>)

### 3. Criticizing Hypocrisy and Pretence

Hypocrisy and pretence are of the matters that destruct societies. Therefore, it has been severely criticized in religious teachings. Through the era of Hafez, for some reason, this problem was spreading and it severely hurt the spirit of men of letters like Hafez. Hafez illustrated this dilemma in various aspects of social and religious beliefs and sought to rid the people of this disgraceful behavior.

In the view of Hafez, hypocrisy was of the things that were denounced by religion and, in social terms, one of the most dangerous destructors of the society. He explicitly states that he hates this action and he emphasizes on staying far from such people:

I and the fellow companionship of people of hypocrisy from us be far  
Of the weighty things of the world, the weight titles for us enough (Hafez 1993<sup>8</sup>)

7 - Ghazal Number of 5

8 - Ghazal Number of 268

The hypocrisy and pretence in the Hafez community were so expanded in a way that some scholars and Sufis were involved too; since Hafiz did not expect them to get involved in hypocrisy and pretence, he severely criticized them, and condemned their behaviors:

O Sufi come the khirka of hypocrisy, off we will draw  
On across the head of this picture of hypocrisy, the cancelling line, we will draw  
(Hafez 1993<sup>9</sup>)

Speakers and scholars, who preached on the pulpit and did not act in isolation, were hardly blamed by Hafez:

The admonishers who, in the prayer-arch and the pulpit, grandeur make,  
When into their chamber they go, that work of another kind they make.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thou mayst say, they have no belief in the day of judgment,  
That, in the work of the Ruler, ail this fraud and deceit they make.

Hafez has always been afraid of being caught up in hypocrisy and pretence; he has been looking for a safe haven to guard against this badness, and nowhere is better than Dir Moghan, where he is a friend of the Wiseman, and he calms down from the throes of hypocrisy and pretence:

The cup of wine, I take and, from the hypocrite, far I go  
That is, of the world's creation, only pureness of heart, I choose. (Hafez 1993<sup>10</sup>)

And

My heart wearied of the cloister, and of the patched garment of hypocrisy:  
The Magians' cloister; where? the pure wine where? (Hafez 1993<sup>11</sup>)

And

From hypocrisy, my heart took flight and the drum was beneath the blanket  
Come, so that at the wine-house door, I may up-lift a great standard (Hafez 1993<sup>12</sup>)

Hafez knows the hypocrisy and pretence as the destructor of religion and religiousness, and in some cases, he addresses himself and warns himself from being caught up with the hypocrisy and pretence. (Riahi, 1995,p.53)

The fire of hypocrisy and deceit will consume the harvest of religion  
Hafiz this woolen khirka, cast away and go. (Hafez 1993<sup>13</sup>)

In the society where Hafiz lives, they have opened the world of hypocrisy and pretence and closed the bars; however, Hafez considers a drunkard to hypocritical believer (Rahimi, 1992,p.60).

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9 - Ghazal Number of 375  
10 - Ghazal Number of 355  
11 - Ghazal Number of 2  
12 - Ghazal Number of 471  
13 - Ghazal Number of 407

That wine-drinker in whom is neither the face, nor hypocrisy,  
Is better than an austerity-boaster, in whom is the face of hypocrisy. (Hafez 1993<sup>14</sup>)

Hafez is pleased with his liberation and freeness, and he is proud of himself that he is not of hypocrisy and pretence:

We are neither hypocritical profligates, nor the companions of hypocrisy:  
Witness to this state is He, who “is the Knower-of-hearts.” (Hafez 1993<sup>15</sup>)

### Conclusion

Man, humanity and humanism in poetry of Hafez are among the main factors of his poetical thoughts. Hafez repeatedly portrays the desirable human qualities and mentions it in his Ghazals [i.e. sonnets], and, of course, he depicts the characteristics that challenge the humanism. Actually, Hafez is like a teacher who teaches life to the community; with literary analysis, he provides a picture of man, which is also recommended in religious beliefs, and the sociological foundations of such a human being are depicted for utopia.

Freedom, liberty and free-thinking are other bases to the poetry of Hafez. Although such a picture of liberation in poems before Hafez was not common, this sociologist man of letter, accurately and skillfully, depicts open-mindedness and freedom issues in his poems that make the audient euphonious. He is of the ones who know both the religious affairs of the world and his community and its affairs well, criticizes the beauty of the freedom of thought in terms of belief and sociology.

One of the criticized features that are blamed by both the religion of Islam and the foundations of social science is the promotion of hypocrisy and pretence. Hafiz also regards this ugly act as a badness that expands corruption and injustice and distrust. Hafez portrays various aspects of this feature, and he mostly criticizes the Sufis and religious scholars.

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14 - Ghazal Number of 20

15 - Ghazal Number of 20