

SUFI POETRY: A PEARL OF THE MIDDLE EAST CULTURE

The purpose of the study is to identify the content and characteristics of Sufi poetry and its influence on the culture of the Middle East in particular and the world in general. **The methodology** of the research is based on the complex use of methods of analysis, synthesis and generalization that made it possible to characterize Sufi poetry in the diversity of its content and style. Historical and retrospective methods provided disclosure of the peculiarities of poetic searches of Sufi philosophers through specific examples. **The scientific novelty** of the study consists in an integrated approach to the analysis of the heritage of the Sufi poets-philosophers, based not only on genre and stylistic characteristics, but also on meaningful and philosophical interpretations. **Conclusions.** The Sufi poetry has had a significant influence on the development of the socio-political thought of the East, full of deep philosophical content, unique style and rebellious spirit. It has left a profound sense in the world culture and has become the heart of the culture of the Middle East

Keywords: Sufism, Sufi, Rumi, Rudaki, Khayyam, Hafez, Nasimi, ruba'i, ghazal.

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Суфійська поезія: перлина культури Близького та Середнього Сходу

Метою дослідження є виявлення змісту та характерних особливостей суфійської поезії та її вплив на культуру Близького та Середнього Сходу зокрема та світу взагалі. **Методологія** дослідження ґрунтується на комплексному використанні методів аналізу, синтезу й узагальнення, що дало змогу охарактеризувати суфійську поезію в багатоманітності її змісту та стилі. Історичний та ретроспективний методи забезпечили розкриття особливостей поетичних пошуків філософів-суфіїв на конкретних прикладах. **Наукова новизна** дослідження полягає в комплексному підході до аналізу доробку суфійських поетів-філософів, виходячи не лише з жанрових та стильових характеристик, а із змістовно-філософських трактувань. **Висновки.** Суфійська поезія здійснила значний вплив на розвиток суспільно-політичної думки Сходу, сповнена глибоким філософським змістом, неповторним стилем та бунтарським духом залишила глибокий слід у світовій культурі і стала серцем культури Близького та Середнього Сходу.

Ключові слова: суфізм, суфій, Румі, Рудакі, Хайям, Гафіз, Насімі, рубаї, газелі.

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Суфийская поэзия: жемчужина культуры Ближнего и Среднего Востока

Целью исследования является выявление содержания и характерных особенностей суфийской поэзии и ее влияние на культуру Ближнего и Среднего Востока в частности и мира в целом. **Методология** исследования основана на комплексном использовании методов анализа, синтеза и обобщения, что позволило охарактеризовать суфийскую поэзию в многообразии ее содержания и стиля. Исторический и ретроспективный методы обеспечили раскрытие особенностей поэтических поисков философов-суфиев на конкретных примерах. **Научная новизна** исследования заключается в комплексном подходе к анализу наследия суфийских поэтов-философов, исходя не только из жанровых и стилевых характеристик, а с содержательно-философских трактовок. **Выводы.** Суфийская поэзия оказала значительное влияние на развитие общественно-политической мысли Востока, полна глубоким философским содержанием, неповторимым стилем и бунтарским духом, она оставила глубокий след в мировой культуре и стала сердцем культуры Ближнего и Среднего Востока.

Ключевые слова: суфизм, суфий, Руми, Рудаки, Хайям, Гафиз, Насими, рубаи, газели.

Depending on the basic views secular philosophy of the Middle East, as well as secular culture in general, is formed in two directions – Aristotelianism in which particular importance was given to the views of Aristotle and Sufism, as the refraction of Plato's and Neoplatonism teaching, ascetic, contemplative and negative attitude toward rational forms of cognition. All world religions have the areas of mystical nature. In Islam, the teachings of Sufism professed mysticism as a form of revelation, conversation with Allah, the program principle of which was the principle of cardinal faith, not reason. The starting point of the mystical path of the Sufi becomes a special state of mind aimed at Allah and comprehending its truth.

Sufism (also Sufi Islam or Tasawwuf) – is a mysticism in Islam, one of the main directions of classical Arabic-Muslim philosophy. Under this term all the Muslim doctrines are united, the purpose of which is to develop the theoretical foundations and practical ways of comprehending the God by a person. Sufism is a way of purifying the soul from bad qualities (nafsa) and instilling praiseworthy qualities of the spirit (movement).

The main object of Sufism is a man and his relation to God. It was associated with the weakness and irrationality of Islamic dogmas, which constantly stressed the impotence of a person who lives on earth and must be returned to the divine bosom through a righteous life, but did not mention the code of conduct that underlie at the heart of this righteous life and what should guide a man if he wants to live a righteous life. In contrast to Islam, with its idea of supernatural being, Sufism forced God to descend from heaven and dissolve in the Universe. Sufism believed that earthly life is a bustle, an illusion in which man cannot achieve true happiness. True good is only in the world, where a person, who lives an ascetic way of life, merging with God, can attain this eternal bliss. Mergence with God is an absolute good and a man can only achieve it through moral self-improvement. [4, 132]. Hence the practice of Sufism: the establishment of a system of certain code of conduct the purpose of which, according to Al-Ghazali, is to eradicate the passions of the soul, liberating oneself from bad inclination and other similar properties.

Being a Sufi meant being constantly loyal to God, living in peace with people, treating them politely, not shifting own burden to others' shoulders, but to take them in accordance with the desires of people. Poverty in Sufism is man's decoration, patience – his guide, pleasure – horse and trust – dignity.

Sufism received artistic incarnation mainly in lyrical poetry that served as an important form of expression and in the XII-XIII centuries flourished and dominated the poetic genre until the XVIII century. Sufi poetry is full of richness of symbols and double meanings. Sufi poets often mention in their poems the curls of Favorite. Why? Because God is the Favorite for them. God appears for the poet in the image of the Beloved. The poet cognizes God in his father or friend. Every moment he repeats the name of God and therefore every breath for him is the most important in the world. Only by repeating the same thoughts a man can adjust own consciousness to reunite with the source.

Keeping yourself calm – it is a true honor.
Not offending deaf and blind – it is a true honor.
Not an honor – to step on the chest of a poor who fell,
No, to give a hand to fallen – it is a true honor! [1, 167].

Though, maybe my composition is vague, I say
“I found out truth”, I say.
“I said what I realized”, I say.
“That God is inside me and I am God”, I say. [6, 534].

The peculiarity of Nasimi Imadaddin's views on the world, God and man reveals his following statement: “There are both worlds inside me, but I do not fit this world. I am the essence, I have no place and I do not fit the being. All that has been, is and will be all this is embodied in me... Look deeper into my image and try to understand the sense: I am body and soul, I do not fit into the soul and body... Though I am great and boundless, but I am Adam, I am a man, I am the creation of the universe, but I cannot fit into creation. All times and ages are me. Soul and the world – all this is me”.

Nasimi believed that one, who wants to comprehend the truth must seek to understand the man, his motivation and the desire for beauty and goodness. Because a man for Nasimi is the center of the universe, its crown: “Oh you, who was looking for treasures among the stones and metals, yet there was no worthiest treasure than a man!” Nasimi's humanism is related with his perception of the high purpose of man, the feeling of his infinite possibilities: “The world does not stand still, so let your days come in motion, the world covered with shine and tinsel – they are deceptive. Time will not wait for you, it will go on, oh sagacious, look deeper into this world. The wealth of all the land – is futility, understand this, oh master! Take away all the goods of the world from yourself with contempt! But if you are in love, you will either give yourself to an executioner or will punish for her, for the chosen soulmate” [6, 537].

Nasimi's creativity was rebellious, it called for the fight against social injustice, violence against the personality, tyranny and cruelty of the rulers. His verses chanted beauty and reason of man, served as the liberation of an individual from all kinds of conventions, the refusal of asceticism, fanaticism and religious dogmas.

Sufi's purpose is to achieve a feeling in which there is no feeling in the usual meaning of the word. We could not enjoy the better if there is no worse; could not enjoy the pleasure if there is no bitterness. If everything was the best we would not be happier. If there was only one color we would not be glad of diversity.

My flesh is small, insignificant and perishable,
So how, my Lord, your love fits into it?
Your eye, for instance.
Nature gifted a small lens
With ability to fit a diversity of world [7, 128].

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi is the most prominent Sufi-poet. Admiration of the Sufi ideology has radically changed his way of life. He is a protagonist of the pantheistic teaching that raised man and nature to the level of deity. Rumi created a new way of artistic thought in the Middle East countries. He became the Sufi Sheikh (leader). His highly humanistic poetry became an example for many generations of poets.

A question of free will is important for Rumi: does every person have own fate, according to which lives, or his life is a blank sheet of paper on which he writes a story of own life based on his own discretion? The poet assumed that disputes between the protagonists of both points of view would never be resolved, because it is impossible to find an answer by logical reasoning. Rumi is confident that this question must be shifted from the realm of reason to a place where “the heart reigns”. A person that is full of love merges with the comprehensive ocean of life. Then any act committed by him, any action “no longer belongs to him, but proceeds from an ocean”. A man is just a wave on its surface that considers himself to be something separate. But as only he shifts his view from the external to the internal, from the periphery to center it becomes clear that deep inside everything exists as a single and indivisible whole. Comprehensive and overall love transforms a person so much that all questions disappear. He feels the inseparable union with Being, which gives rise to the feeling “I am God”.

Rumi himself summed up his life with a couple of lines: “Don't look for me in the ground after my death, you can find me only in the hearts of enlightened people” [4, 154].

The prevailing artistic principle of Sufi poetry was an allegory, through which philosophical ideas were expressed or mystical feelings were described. Gradually a range of stereotyped allegories developed and became traditional. The allegories most often were based on the usual forms of Arabic poetry that received an additional semantic meaning, such as wine and love. Sufi terms are constantly found in verses of this kind.

Do you see that caravan of camels,
Loaded with sugar?
His eyes are just as sweet,
But don't look in his eyes,
If you are not ready to lose
Own eyesight [7, 216].

This allegory can be expressed laconic in the following way: “Tell them directly and they will prevent themselves perceiving the truth” [12, 83].

Another characteristic is musicality. The Quran is read aloud – this sacred text is meant for this, if you take into account phonetic features. It was believed that in this way it was possible to achieve an ecstatic state, which was considered divine mercy. One of these audio tools could be considered effective – it was music, instrumental and especially vocal. Listening to music was introduced by a number of sheikhs and received the technical name sama' (from Arab. sama'a – to listen).

Thus, the Sufi verse can be perceived as a song. The notion of the “righteous way” of an orthodox Muslim and the Sufi itself is different, since from the point of view of orthodox Islam the Sufis were considered almost heretics. For a Sufi, this way is identified with the practice of self-cognition as the cognition of the Divine essence through mystical practices.

Since the sun is shining in the sky,
There was not anyone who needs no knowledge.
Whatever oldest ages we would take –
Intelligent people in all the languages
Looked for knowledge, did not spare their strength
And stamped the sentence in a rock:
“Knowledge is the brightest light for the heart,
Knowledge is the strongest armor for the body” [4, 151].

The medieval scholars defined Rudaki's style the “light” one. It has a vivid imagery with no affectation and excessive complexity, an active perception of nature and its humanization, popular simplicity and chilling musicality. The beauty of simple and ordinary dominates all his artistic means.

Rudaki's verses are distinguished not only by high art. They expressed advanced humanistic ideas. Rudaki was the first in Farsi poetry, who turned his attention to a man, introduced it in literature. Rudaki expressed nature and philosophical ideas through the vision of ordinary, “earthly” man that thinks clearly, but simply. His verses are imbued with humanity and unique emotional expressiveness.

In philosophical-allegorical lyrics, many Sufi thinkers expressed their views that appeal not only to intelligence, but to imagination. Therefore, its peculiarities are, first, allegory and interpretability (because of this the works of most poets are misinterpreted, in particular, this concerns drinking wine and love as something that is far from the common sense). Second is melodiousness, because the Sufi verses are intended for singing and musical accompaniment. And third, the Sufi poetry is an example of “expression of the indistinct”, when the poet tries to describe his mystical experience.

For example, “Divan-e-Hafez” (“Collection of poetry”) offers the reader two types of the most widespread lyrical Sufi poems – ghazal and ruba'i. They represent two classic Arab forms of versification in which the worldview of that times man, his mental vision of life's problems and his musical system was surprisingly specific. Usually they were performed with the accompaniment of trumpet and stringed instruments, which corresponded to the structure of the verse.

Get out of here preacher! I'll listen to another!
I've lost my heart, what's your business?

Until the lips of the beloved will quench thirst –
Definitely I don't need your advises!

You cannot find another beauty on the Earth,
Her thin waist is the true creation of God.

The dervish will not go to paradise from your captivity:
Because will never find a shelter generous, sanctuary.

A heart intoxicated with passion will fly to abyss:
And fallen will find the basis of unearthly Paradise.

Don't moan due to oppression, heart, don't swear derision:
You'd rather accept an advice of dear friend.

Let Hafez stop singing us his chaff:
We are fed up with old fables! We want new. [3, 74].

Hafez's ghazal reached a higher level of poetic perfection, became a sample of Persian poetry, as well as ruba'i. Ruba'i is a verse of four lines, three of which have a common rhyme, and in general these lines formulate deep folk, philosophical wisdom or some kind of moral maxim that is directed to the mind and heart of a listener. Hafez's ruba'i in regard to their ideas and images are much like Omar Khayyam's ruba'i. [9, 5]

Characteristic of Sufism is the use of the symbolic language, which was reflected in the work of Khayyam, because he professed the teachings of Sufism. Thus, Khayyam succeeds the Sufi metaphor about a drop that dissolves in the ocean, which shows the connection of an individual with Allah. The same is metaphor about a butterfly burning in a flame of candle. The same metaphoric senses have eyes, lips, locks, birthmarks, belt, wine, interweaving of erotic and humble motifs in literature. However, Khayyam is part of secular-philosophical direction in Sufism, which reflects the thoughts of rational-thinking stratum of Persian society.

Khayyam has chosen the “popular” form of poetry for his aphoristic thought. His quatrains reveal not only his pantheistic outlook, but also the most characteristic features of a scientist, wise man, a person, who lives the life of a

simple people, his pains and hopes. Being a person with a self-contemplated character he was frankly harsh in his speeches and actions, when it came to hypocrisy, frank lies, injustice.

A stranger whom you trust – it's like a brother,

And treacherous brother – is a foe, enemy.

So cure sometimes is worse than poison,

But sometimes poison will cure the disease. [8, 29].

Having lost the support of “the most powerful” Khayyam becomes a target for reactionary clerics, who did not like his unorthodox views and “poetic arrows” of ruba’i. No wonder that his contemporaries compared the hidden true meaning of poetry with poisonous snakes for Sharia. Khayyam definitely was not an atheist in the modern sense of the word. He was a deeply religious person, an imam, but he was considered a freethinker in the conditions that he wrote ruba’i. He became the only poet, who set himself and the sky painful questions and was the pioneer of this topic in ruba’i: putting into the four lines a serious conversation with God about the place and destiny of man in the Universe.

Creator knead a man out of clay,

Alas, he has deprived him of Immortality.

If he's a perfect – why to die?

And who made us imperfect? [13, 15].

Tradition of aphoristic wisdom was inherent in Persian classical poetry and Khayyam fully mastered this tradition. Relying on analytical mind, using folk eloquence he created such a poetic form that was able to keep the depths of philosophical thought, scathing epigram, feast speech and love sketch.

Though nothing new I remind you

Before the face of friend and foe,

You're master of unsaid word,

But you're a servant of the said. [13, 11].

In ruba’i Khayyam has fully manifested not only his deep rationalist outlook, but also the characteristic features of his personality: humanism for an ordinary peasant, sincere openness in relations with ordinary people, rejection of the incurable defects of social and spiritual system of his times, hypocrisy of the servants of Islam. [10, p. 108]. Belief in man is leitmotif of his poetic reflections, his intellectual poetry. His ruba’i got the world fame after their translation in 1859 in English by Edward FitzGerald.

Everything will go – and grain of hope won't rise.

Everything you've collected – will not disappear.

If you don't share in time with a friend,

Everything suddenly without a trace will go away to foe. [11, 92].

Conclusions. It is impossible to overestimate the influence of Sufi poetry on the culture of the Middle East and the world in general. Deep sensuality, philosophical component, unique style, anthropocentrism and humanism – all this is Sufi poetry. It is no coincidence that this poetry is called “classical poetry of the East” and Omar Khayyam is one of the most issued and quoted poets of the world.

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