This chapter will trace the Sufi elements in Emerson’s Poetry. Furthermore, it tries to indicate the influence of Persian poets especially Hafiz and Sa’di on Emerson’s works. To begin with, let us mention two ideas of Emerson about poet and poetry.

In his ‘History’ he gives his impression about the relation of true poem and poet:

“The true poem is the poet’s mind; the true ship is the ship-builder.”

About poet Emerson says,

"Let man's language spring from his true self, and then there will be poetry. Rhyme is unnecessary and is not sanctioned in nature. The poet should be free and unshackled as an eagle.”

Emerson about truth among poets says,

There is in all poets wisdom of humility which is superior to any talents they exercise. The author, the wit, the partisan, the fine gentleman, does not take the place of the man. Humanity shines in Chaucer, in Spenser, in Shakespeare, in
Milton. They are content with truth…. Converse with a mind that is grandly simple, and literature looks like word-catching. The simplest utterances are worthiest to be written.³

Emerson accepts the definition of poetry as

…all those illustrations of truth by natural imagery which spring from the fact that the world is a mirror of Him who made it. Poetry, not finding the actual world exactly conformed to its ideal of good and fair, seeks to accommodate the shows of things to the desires of the mind, and to create an ideal world better than the world of experience.⁴

Though Emerson is not known as a great poet, his achievement is not inconsiderable. His existing poems envisage reality and ecstasy and most of them are about God and nature.

**Sufi Elements in Emerson’s Poetry:**

Emerson after so many philosophic readings and meditations about nature, in 1831, wrote ‘Gnothi Seauton’, a poem in which he sought to define the tenets of his evolving philosophic system, advancing towards the prose-poem genre by creating a "traditional poem." One can see the following doctrines of nature, which appeared in ‘Gnothi Seauton’:⁵

1. Spirit (God) actually dwells in man's Soul; therefore, man's own Soul is the ultimate source of fulfillment. (As mentioned in chapter two, one can be a complete man through one’s own capabilities and knowledge).
2. Man does not know that God dwells within each man (as he is not a perfect man and his knowledge about himself is imperfect).
3. Each man should be great (Sufism also mentions that one can be a Sufi, - a friend of God and Great)
4. Each man is capable of knowing and responding to God (as Mansour Hillaj and other Sufis did it)
5. Each man should "build his own world and act like a king (As Prophet Mohammad did).
6. Man and nature are created by God (The Holy Koran also has mentioned that).
7. Nature’s laws correspond to the inner laws of man. Man can know nature because God is within him (equally, Sufism also says that nature and elements of it are clear signs of God and man should understand them).
8. Man is law unto himself; he should practise self-reliance (A Sufi should pass near about 40 states, which are hard and rigid, to get his own confidence)
9. There is unity in variety (absolute unity).
10. A fundamental truth "classifies" all pertinent facts (truth is one of the important elements of Sufism).

Emerson in ‘The Informing Spirit’ states that the Soul is the greatest of all things and it is soul only which makes all other things and it is available in here and there. Soul has come from the Greatest One for us and it is extremely valuable and even by that one can be as like as its Owner – a Perfect one. Soul is the feather for flying up to the Real Peak and Real Nest and one who makes his soul pure and neat can fly such long distances towards his Origin without any exhaustion and hardships.

THERE is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all:
And where it cometh, all things are;
And it cometh everywhere.
I am owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Caesar’s hand, and Plato’s brain,
Of Lord Christ’s heart, and Shakspeare’s strain.

Similarly he says in his poem ‘Spirits’:

Brother, we are no phantom band;
Brother, accept this fatal hand.
Aches thine unbelieving heart
With the fear that we must part?
See, all we are rooted here
By one thought to one same sphere;
From thyself thou canst not flee,--
From thyself no more can we.

Emerson’s intimations of inner revelation were revealed in an art notably independent of the tradition in which a polished performance is sacrificed to spontaneity.

As Cook states, Newton identifies the shells of truth on the wide beaches of the world of natural phenomena; Emerson identifies and communicates the operations of the moral law in the Natural History of the Soul. Emerson in ‘Sphinx’ a poem by him, lists and elucidates one thing by the other in a pluralistic world. He says:

The lethe of Nature
Can’t trance him again,
Whose soul sees the perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain.

On defining “absolute unity” Emerson gives utterance to what is an expression of Kantian idealism when he speaks of “absolute unity” in poems such as ‘The Sphinx’. In fact, Emerson blended together in this poem elements of Hindu philosophy, Berkeleyan idealism and agnosticism.⁶ ‘The Sphinx’ presents in romantic symbolism the fall of man from the integrity of nature. It is a fascinating debate between “the poet” and “the Sphinx”. The poet’s answer to her is that love is the first cause and man is necessarily imperfect merely because of his “infinite perfectibility”. Emerson says about unity and perfection in regard to the idea presented in ‘The Sphinx’, that if the mind lives in particulars and sees only differences, then the world addresses to this mind a question that it will never be able to answer, and each new fact tears it in pieces. The concept of variety, duality, and unity in ‘The Sphinx’ are the pictorial indications of the “boundless Over-Soul.”

In all his works lies the explanation of Emerson’s love for the Orient, with its genius for poetry and speculation. Its poetry uses absolute freedom of fancy, expressing everything in extreme terms. Its very stock of images, coming directly from its life, is colourful and poetic. Its philosophy deals only with the larger aspects of Nature. In thought Emerson uses the superlative as well as in poetry. Emerson generalized this largeness of imagination to explain the attractive quality of Oriental literature to all Occidentals.

Being a religious person and a minister of a church, he expresses thus his emotions in the following lines in ‘The Problem’:
I like a church; I like a cowl;
I love a prophet of the soul;
And on my heart monastic aisles
Fall like sweet strains, or pensive miles;
Yet not for all his faith can see
Would I that cowled churchman be.⁷

Chapter two discussed about 

Chapter two discussed about *tuwhid* – Unity and it showed impressions of various Sufis about the Unity. Hence, Emerson’s poem ‘Unity’ is very significant:

SPACE is ample, east and west,
But two cannot go abreast,
Cannot travel in it two:
Yonder masterful cuckoo
Crowds every egg out of the nest,
Quick or dead, except its own;
A spell is laid on sod and stone,
Night and Day were tampered with,
Every quality and pith
Surcharged and sultry with a power
That works its will on age and hour.

In ‘The Rhodora’ Emerson chants about the Beauty which is spread on the world and eyes which are created to see such wonderful scenes. And really everywhere and everything of the world possesses beauty if one looks at them with keen eyes. The story of *Leili and Majnoon* is one of the best known fables of love in Persian literature. It says that Leili was not such a beautiful girl as Majnoon made her out to be and always the tribe of Majnoon was
blaming him for his love for Leili, but always he would say to them:

\[
Aghar\ bar\ dideye\ Majnoon\ neshini \\
Be\ gheyr\ az\ khobiye\ Leili\ nabini \\
\text{If you see Leili through Majnoon’s eye} \\
\text{Then you can see only the beauties of Leili.}
\]

Emerson also shares such opinion in here:

\[
\text{Rhodora! If the sages ask thee why} \\
\text{This charm is wasted on the earth sky,} \\
\text{Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,} \\
\text{Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:} \\
\text{Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!} \\
\text{I never thought to ask, I never knew:} \\
\text{But, in my simple ignorance, suppose} \\
\text{The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.}^8
\]

\[\text{“alaa\ be\ zdekr-e-Allah\ tatmaenno-al\ gholob”}\ \text{said the Holy Koran}\ \text{and this} \\
\text{is the great and significant pearl of a Sufi in his life. It means that one can get} \\
calm and peace by remembrance of God. And really who is there better than God to give us everything voluntarily? He always calls us by an unknown voice which is inside of our hearts, but we are ignorant. Emerson has found the source of that voice and then in his poem ‘Self-Reliance’ he says:\]

\[
\text{HENCEFORTH, please God, forever I forego} \\
\text{The yoke of man’s opinions. I will be} \\
\text{Light-hearted as a bird, and live with God.} \\
\text{I find Him in the bottom my heart,}
\]
I hear continually His voice therein.  

*Insan* and *Insaniyat* – Humankind and Humanity, is the sunshine of Sufism and in it *Insan* means a God-like person. Is it possible to find such a person? How long should one search? In which country or society is *Insan* available? *Insan-al-kamel* is the visible face of God and is not it a rigid task to find such a face? Mowlavi always was searching the said One but in vain. Then he cries aloud in these words:

\[
\text{Dey sheikh ba cheragh hami ghasht gherde shahr} \\
\text{Kaz divo dad malolamo Insanam arezost.} \\
\text{Ghoftand yaft minashavad josteim ma} \\
\text{Ghoft anche yaft minashavad anam arezost.} \\
\text{Last night the sheikh searched the whole city with a light} \\
\text{I am bored of demon and beast and I am searching *Insan*} \\
\text{They said that you can not find we have searched already for it} \\
\text{Sheikh answered I desire such a thing which is unfoundable.}
\]

In his ‘Astrae’ Emerson like Rumi –has written:

\[
\text{I saw men go up and down} \\
\text{In the country and the town,} \\
\text{With this prayer upon their neck,} \\
\text{“judgment and a judge we seek.”}
\]

As chapter two explained, a Sufi puts away all mundane things, because they are hindrances for his perfection. One can reach to Truth, only if one goes deep and deep in the ocean of Sufism. Emerson in his poem ‘Blight’ gets tired of surfaces and desires to find only truth among the woods and nature in such
brilliant words:

Give me truths,
For I am weary of the surfaces,
And die of inanition. If I knew
Only the herbs and simples of the wood.

Fate is the predestined events and portions of any body in this temporary world and all Sufis believe the destiny or fate as predetermined things. For any one there is identified portion and it is enough for one. Khayyam in his quatrain mentions it beautifully:

*Choon roziy-o-omr bish-o-kam natvan kard*
*Del ra be kam-o-bish dezham natvan kard*
*Kare man-o-to chenanke raye man-o-tost*
*Az moom be daste khish ham natvan kard.*

One cannot increase or decrease one’s portion of life
One should not make oneself gloomy for less or more provision
If yours and mine job go with our minds
Even we cannot melt wax in our hands.

Emerson the worshipper of nature also in his poem ‘Blight’ expresses the same idea:

“the day’s ration”
When I was born,
From all the seas of strength Fate filled a chalice,
Saying, This be thy portion, child; this chalice,
Less than a lily’s, thou shalt daily draw
From my great arteries, nor less, nor more.

These buildings and houses, these palaces and edifices, these mundane things, and all of these universal properties can not deceive the man of God, and as his Soul belongs to the Almighty, always he complains about these things and he wanders here and there to find the eternal peace place and palace. As chapter two stated, Sufis constantly search for the quiet place where nobody is there except their Beloved and that is why they always say good bye to the world and hello to the jannat. Hafiz in most of his ghazals has shown this sense remarkably well:

Chenin ghafas na sazaye cho man khosh alhanist
Ravam be rozeye rezvan ke morghae aan chamanam
   Such a cage is not fitting for such a sweet-voiced as me;
   I will proceed to the heavenly garden, for, I am a bird of that sward.

Or

Khorram aan roz kazin manzale viran beravam
Raharate jan talabam vaz peye janan beravam.11
   Blessed will be the day when I depart from this ruined abode;
   I would, then, seek ease of life, and follow the beloved Ones.

Sa’di the author of Gulistan also, recommends to leave the triviality of the world and to seek for the Creator.

Jahaan ey baradar namanad be kas
Del andar jahan aafarin band-o-bas
Makon tekye bar molke donya-o-posht

11
_Ke besyar kas chon to parvard-o-kosht_.\textsuperscript{12}

O brother, the world not remain for anyone
Only love the Creator of the world, this is enough
Do not depend on the property of the world, deny them
The world has bred and killed so many like you.

It is not surprising to find such words in the poem of Sa’di and Hafiz’s ardent follower which is entitled as ‘Good-bye’. Emerson in this poem gives up all the secular things and seeks the real place and hates all wrong and devilishness.

Good-by, proud world, I am going home,
Thou’rt not my friend, and I am not thine;
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
long I’ve been tossed like the driven foam,
but, now, proud world, I’m going home.
Good-by to flattery’s fawning face,
To Grandeur, with his wise grimace,
To upstart Wealth’s averted eye,
To supple Office low and high,
To crowded halls, to court and street,
To frozen hearts, and hasting feet,
To those who go, and those who come,
Good-by, proud world, I’m going home.

_“ana aghrabo men hablel varid”_ And the Great God in the _Holy Koran_ said
“I am nearer than your jugular to you.” The heart of a Sufi always is the house of God and he is dwelling there as a permanent Owner not as temporary
tenant. Hafiz in his *ghazal* humbly entreats the *Al-rahmaan* to dwell in the said house.

\[
Ravaghe manzare chashme man ashianeye tost. \\
Karam nama-o-foorood aa ke khane khane tost.^{13}
\]

The portico of my eye is your nest,
Be generous and step in, for, this is your dwelling.

Sa’di also knows that the friend is always there, near him, but he himself can not recognise Him.

\[
Doost nazdiktar az man be man ast \\
Vint moshkel ke man a zoo dooram \\
Che konam baa ke tavan goft ke oo \\
Dar kenare man-o-man mahjooram.^{14}
\]

The Friend is close me than mine
The problem is that I am far from Him
What shall I do? To whom shall I say,
Who He is beside me, but I am the alien.

In ‘The Park’ Emerson also as one who seems to be familiar with the mentioned verse of the *Holy Koran* and Hafiz and Sa’di, has woven the words in some verses as below:

I cannot shake off the god; 
On my neck he makes his seat; 
I look at my face in the glass, 
My eyes his eyeballs meet.
Arrogance and haughtiness are the blemishes of the mind and humbleness and humility its decorations. One should not be proud of his advantages and should not ridicule others’ shortcomings, because once the same shortcomings would be the advantages and merits. Sufis thank God for their advantages and disadvantages, blessings and curses, goodness and badness, and all other things which are the gifts of God. They believe that everything has its own merits and demerits and these are the predestined signs of those who are rational and reasonable. Emerson in his poem ‘Fable’ sings a beautiful song which paradoxically reveals both humility and arrogance.

The mountain and the squirrel
Had a quarrel,
And the former called the latter, “little prig”:
Bun replied,
You are doubtless very big,
But all sorts of things and weather
Must be taken in together
To make up a year,
And a sphere.
And I think it no disgrace
To occupy my place.
If I’m not so large as you,
You are not so small as I,
And not half so spry:
I’ll not deny you make
A very pretty squirrel track;
Talents differ; all is well and wisely put;
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut.
“enna le-allah va enna elayhe rajeoon” – from God we are and to Him we shall return. This verse of the *Holy Koran* reveals that one phenomenon is there to lead us to the Real place and Origin and it is nothing but death. Nobody can escape or deceive it and whether one desires or not it will knock every body’s door. This is a one-way road and there is no U-turn on this road. This is the road for which passengers only can collect single ticket and neither he himself nor other force can change this rule and lucky are those who have collected the necessary provision for their unknown trip. Emerson after the death of his son could write a long poem which is entitled ‘Threnody’ and in it he has shown his ideas about death. He explains his impressions in the said poem as below:

THE South -wind brings
Life, sunshine and desire,
And on every mount and meadow
Breathes aromatic fire;
But over the dead he has no power,
The lost, the lost, he cannot restore;
And, looking over the hills, I mourn
the darling who shall not return.
And finds young pines and budding birches;
But finds not the budding man;
Nature, who lost, cannot remake him;
Fate let him fall, Fate can't retake him;
Nature, Fate, men, him seek in vain.

Emerson himself states that God is in man but imperfect. God himself said I blew up my Spirit on that clay to make him animate and human, therefore, it is
understood that one can improve oneself to remove all doubts from one’s heart about the mysteries of life and can live with God forever both in this world and the next one also. We are the creatures of Al-ghader and we own His light in ourselves then by referring to that light and praying of God one can find God. Emerson as one who knows the said element of Sufism, in his ‘Hymn’ explains the matter remarkably:

And anxious hearts have pondered here
The mystery of life,
And prayed the eternal Light to clear
Their doubts, and aid their strife.
From humble tenements around
Came up the pensive train,
And in the church a blessing found
That filled their homes again;
For faith and peace and mighty love
That from the godhead flow,
Showed them the life of Heaven above
Springs from the life below.
They live with God; their homes are dust;
Yet here their children pray,
And in this fleeting lifetime trust
To find the narrow way.
On him who by the alter stands,
On him thy blessing fall,
Speak through his lips thy pure commands,
Thou heart that loveth all.\textsuperscript{15}
**Influence of Persian Poets on Emerson’s Poetry:**

The Persian poets probably affected Emerson more profoundly than any other Oriental writers except the Hindus— and, of course, the Neo-Platonists. He came upon Persian literature later in life than he did upon Hindu Literature, but was attracted to them more immediately. He first read selections from Persian Literature in 1841 and in 1842 he wrote his poem ‘Sa’di’ for the *Dial*, and in 1843 he read the *Gulistan*. (In the notes to Emerson’s poem ‘Sa’di’ (*Journals* IX, 447), the date is erroneously given as 1848. It is correctly given as 1843 in a note to his essay on Persian Poetry (*Journals* VIII, 414) and confided to his Journals that “In Sa’di’s *Gulistan* I find many traits which comport with the portrait I drew (in the poem ‘Sa’di’)” (*Journals*, VI, 463). In 1846-7 he read all the Persian poets more fully in German anthology of Joseph Freiherr Von Hammer Purgstall, and to some extent, perhaps, in Chodzko’s *Specimens of Ancient Persian Poetry* (*Journals*, VII, 280).

Most striking of all, however, is the fact that Emerson wrote two essays and two poems dealing with Persian poetry. First of these in importance is the essay of that title, included in *Letters and Social Aims*. Second is his poem ‘Sa’di’. Third is the Preface which he supplied to the first American edition of Sa’di’s *Gulistan*, in translation, published in 1865 by Ticknor and Fields. And the last is a group of ‘Fragments of Poet and the Poetic Gift’, which is an interpretation of Hafiz and Sa’di, a good deal idealized. Also, he made many translations of Persian poems from Von Hammer Purgstall, some of which are now published in the Centenary Edition (*Journals* IX, 298-305). If to this is added the fact that the Centenary Edition contains very full notes to his essay on ‘Persian Poetry’, culled from his Journals and Letters, it will be seen how abundant the material on this subject is.
In his essay on ‘Persian Poetry’, Emerson speaks of the “complete intellectual emancipation” which Hafiz communicates to the reader. Probably he never came nearer than this to stating explicitly his reason for taking Hafiz and Sa’di as his ideal poets. In the Journals he had written of Hafiz in the same tone:

“He is not scared by a name, or a religion. He fears nothing. He sees too far; he sees throughout; such is the only man I wish to see and to be. The scholar’s courage is as distinct as the solder’s or statesman’s and the man who has it not cannot write for me.”

Emerson loved both Hafiz and Sa’di because they were joyful. And they were joyful because, trusting in themselves and in the fullness of life. They had escaped from the ambush of fatalism. They had at least partially freed themselves from Mohammedanism. But this does not mean that they were not religious, although they seemed so at times, just as Emerson seemed to his contemporaries. Indeed Hafiz wrote:

I am: what I am
My dust will be again.(Works, VIII, 250)

And Emerson also quoted him in his essay on ‘Worship’:

At the last day men shall wear
On their heads the dust.

Usually, however, it is the use of religion of the Persian Poets to teach the meanness of the world, and so to give them the power to escape from it, as when Hafiz writes:
However, the Persian poets found the constructive and positive side of religion in their love of beauty.

Emerson tells of how Sa’di came on a man reading the Koran aloud in a harsh voice, and asked him why he was reading. “He replied, ‘I read for the sake of God.’ The other rejoined, ‘For God’s sake, do not read; for if you read the Koran in this manner you will destroy the splendor of Islamism.’” And that Sa’di felt that he himself was writing his own poetry for the sake of God is shown by the whimsical legend of one who saw “angels descending with salvers of glory in their hands. On asking one of them for whom those were intended, he answered, ‘For Sheikh Sa’di of Shiraz who has written a stanza of poetry that has met with the approbation of God Almighty.’”

Joyful humanity and love of all Nature in Hafiz and Sa’di attracted Emerson. They, too, had set up for themselves a new set of values, based on joy in life— and not on the materialism of the world, nor on the fatalism of a single religion. They, too, were happy. They had seen Nature and found her beautiful, and had expressed their joy in her beauty:

And ever the spell of beauty came
And turned the drowsy world to flame.

Hence Emerson took them as his ideal poets.

We have seen how, to Hafiz and Sa’di as ideal poets, Emerson ascribed freedom of thought and freedom of spirit, which resulted in their feeling of
absolute joy in the world; how they showed him sincerity and self-reliance, which assured them of the basic value of life; and finally how they possessed for him a perception of beauty in Nature and in Man, which inspired their poetic expression. Therefore, we can claim that the interest of Emerson in Nature and Man was aroused by Persian poets. All these qualities Emerson possessed in himself, insofar as, according to his own standard, he was a true poet.

Two of Emerson’s best poems ‘Days’ and ‘Bacchus’ were inspired in part, at least, by his reading of Persian poetry. Of these, ‘Days’ is less clearly imbued with its spirit, but certainly contains Persian and Oriental elements.

DAUGHTERS of Time, the hypocritical Days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will,
bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all.
I, in my pleached garden, watched the pomp,
Forgot my morning wishes, hastily
Took a few herbs and apples, and the Day
turned and departed silent. I, too late,
Under her solemn fillet saw the scorn.

In the Journals for May 24, 1847, the first entry is the following: “The days come and go like muffled and veiled figures sent from a distant friendly party, but they say nothing, and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away.” In a note Mr. Edward Emerson has observed that this sentence was later embodied in the poem ‘Days’. And then comes this
interesting statement: “In his latter years, he said that, while he held it as perhaps his best, he could not recall the writing of it.” In other words, this poem was probably formed more or less unconsciously out of the elements in Emerson’s mind at about this time. Other entries in the Journals of this date are suggestive. The second *Journals* passage for May 24, 1847, is the translation of a long poem of Hafiz. In this occurs the following familiar motif:

Surely I have no treasure,
Yet am I richly satisfied;
God has given that to the Shah,
And this to the beggar.

This may suggest, even if vaguely, the line from ‘Days’:

To each they offer gifts after his will.

And it may be further noted that Emerson felt that the Oriental temperament possessed a special genius for gifts. (Notes to the essay Gifts, III, 165, and 327)

The next line of the poem ‘Days’ suggests a trick of Hafiz which Emerson himself remarked upon – namely, a “playing with magnitudes”:

Bread, kingdoms, stars, and the sky that holds them all.

And lastly, the second line of ‘Days’ is most clearly Persian, for “barefoot dervishes” formed a staple of the imagery of the Persian poets, and appear in many of Emerson’s translations from them.
Thus the general idea of the poem that God offers gifts “to each after his will” is largely Sufi. Emerson was translating Hafiz at the time that the idea of the poem occurred to him. And finally, the simile of the Dervishes is purely Persian. The high poetic quality of the poem, its moral and basic idea, is Oriental, and may be connected with Emerson’s reading of the Persians. The poem ‘Bacchus’ was written in 1846, at the same time that Emerson was beginning his reading of Hafiz in July of the year. He wrote to Miss Elizabeth Hoar concerning several poems which he was composing, and which he was impatient to show her, “especially some verses called ‘Bacchus’ – not, however, translated from Hafiz.” If, in a letter to a literary friend, he thought it necessary to specify that ‘Bacchus’ was not a translation from Hafiz, the implication is obvious that poem was practically inspired by his reading of the Persian.

The note of freedom and exaltation in ‘Bacchus’ is that of Hafiz. These lines of the poem are perhaps as fine as any that Emerson ever wrote, and at the same time express the spirit of Persian poetry at its best. They describe the

Wine that is shed
Like the torrents of sun
Up the horizon wall.

They connected Hafiz’s wine of freedom with his sunshine of joy. And they also recall Emerson’s comments on Hafiz, that: “He knew there was sunshine under those churlish brows…Now…the sunshine is out and all flowing abroad over the world.” (Journals, VII, 182)

Emerson has written a quatrain also for his favorite poet Hafiz:
HER passions the shy violet
From Hafiz never hides;
Love-longings of the raptured bird
The bird to him confides.

Among the Persian poets Emerson appreciated the lyric greatness of Hafiz, and would probably have acknowledged his supremacy; but he felt himself personally attracted more to Sa’di, and concentrated his interest on the lesser poet, especially in the earlier years of his acquaintance with the Persian poetry. Hafiz’s name occurs 14 times in his annual reading-lists and Sa’di’s 12. But Sa’di is among the very last authors mentioned in the Journals, being listed in the year 1872. Thus it appears that Emerson’s interest in these two Persians was nearly equal. Beyond them he only comments on Firdousi, “the Persian Homer”, once or twice. It has been suggested that Goethe first directed him to Hafiz and Sa’di. (Note to Works, IX, 500). This seems probable, inasmuch as Emerson had been learning German in order to read Goethe not many years before this, and so would have been especially apt to know of Von Hammer’s German translation, and to interest himself in it. Goethe mentioned Hafiz with particular praise. But Emerson appeared at first rather indifferent to him. In 1846 he noted in the Journals: “Hafiz, whom I at first thought, a cross of Anacreon and Horace, I find now to have the best blood of Pindar in his veins, also of Burns.”(Journals, VII, 170). The authors with whom Emerson compared his favourites are always interesting, and here we see Hafiz as a poet merely of love and wine, but later as one of the really great lyricists of the world. And Emerson coupled Hafiz and Shakespeare several times in his later writing.

Emerson felt that Hafiz had a greater poetic power and intensity than Sa’di.
Emerson always dwelt on the broad humanity and benevolent wisdom of Sa’di. He felt a more friendly worldliness in him. Again the names, which Emerson couples him with, are suggestive: “Æsop, Sa’di, Cervantes”, he wrote, “know the realities of human life.” And with greater praise: “Through his Persian dialect he speaks to all nations, and, like Homer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Montaigne, is perpetually modern.”(Preface to *Gulistan*, p. viii). Still again, in the *Journals*, he wrote: “Like Montaigne, he learns manners from the unmannerly.” And “there is the spice of Gibbon in him.” (*Journals*, VI, 463).

Sa’di really respects all people and he says that:

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   All men are the members of the same body, 
     Which is created from one essence. 
    If fate bring suffering to one member, 
       The other cannot stay at rest. 23
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Like him Emerson declares that:

“To find yourself, lose yourself in the services of others.”

The mere fact that Sa’di lived to be more than a hundred years and wrote much of his works in his later years, suggests this quality of mellow wisdom, which Emerson loved in him. In the essay on ‘Books’, Emerson mentions Sa’di twice, and passes over Hafiz. First he includes the *Gulistan* in a “class of books which may be called Table Talks.” And latter he repeats the title among “such books as have, acquired a semi-canonical authority in the world, as expressing the highest sentiment and hope of nations.”24

Emerson in his ‘Manners’ about the fable of Leila has written as below:
Was it Hafiz or Firdousi that said of his Persian Lilla, She was an elemental force, and astonished me by her amount of life, when I saw her day after day radiating, every instant, redundant joy and grace on all around her. She was a solvent powerful to reconcile all heterogeneous persons into one society: like air or water, an element of such a great range of affinities that it combines readily with a thousand substances. Where she is present all others will be more than they are wont. She was a unit and whole, so that whatsoever she did, became her. She had too much sympathy and desire to please, than that you could say her manners were marked with dignity, yet no princess could surpass her clear and erect demeanor on each occasion. She did not study the Persian grammar, nor the books of the seven poets, but all the poems of the seven seemed to be written upon her. For though the bias of her nature was not to thought, but to sympathy, yet was she so perfect in her own nature as to meet intellectual persons by the fullness of her heart, warming them by her sentiments; believing, as she did, that by dealing nobly with all, all would show themselves noble.25

Here the study would like to mention the Persian poets quoted or read by Emerson.

1. Hafiz
2. Sa’di
3. Firdousi
4. Enwari
5. Ammar Asjedi of Merw
6. Ferrideddin Attar
7. Jelaleddin Romi
8. Nisami
9. Jami
10. Omar Khayyaym
11. Ibn Jemin
12. Feisi
13. Kermani
14. Hilali
15. Seyd Nimetollah of Kuhistan

And also list of some books concerning Persian poetry read by Emerson are mentioned here:

1. Von Hammer Purgstall:
   a) Various German translations from the Persian
   b) *Geschichte der Schönen Redekunste Persiens*.

In here the study has tried to trace out some similar symbols of mysticism and Sufism in Persian literature and Emerson’s works. This can reveal also the close acquaintances of Emerson with Oriental literature especially, Persian Sufi.

A major characteristic of Persian mystics, which was greatly appreciated by Emerson, is the beauty of their pure symbolic language. Emerson perceived that the symbols used by Persian poets are not erotic; but those who are sharp-sighted may further see mystical divinity in symbols and are able to find a right ground for every symbol in their mystical statements. Here, for instance, the study would like to show how some symbols function in works of the Persian Sufis.

In Sufi literature **nightingale** stands for the divine music of a mystical journey which a Sufi makes along an allegorical path; **night** stands for the
world or for this material life, a dark night through which all must pass before
the light can be reached; **days** stand for illusion, **autumn** presents the
termination of physical light; **the voice of the reed** (Rumi uses it in ‘The Song
of the Reed’) or the melody of the harp are taken as an echo of the voice of the
Over-Soul leading Sufis in the right direction; **tresses** are the symbols of all
that conceals the divine. In a symbolic lyric, entitled ‘Tresses’, Hafiz relates
the concept of “tresses” to joy:

Hafiz, thy suffering is great
In thy so sore distracted state,
Yet through the tresses of the friend
In joy shall thy distraction end.\(^{28}\)

**Veil** is the next symbol, which is the symbol of any kind of hindrance,
which falls between man and Over-Soul and stifles desires; **the eyebrow of
the beloved** is the symbol of the arched recess of a mosque; **musk** is the
perfume of the beloved; and the **mole** stands for the attractiveness of God.
**Two bacchanalian** symbols are tavern and the wine, which are the place and
the material through which a Sufi becomes intoxicated and then enable him to
be absorbed by the divine.

Emerson’s use of symbolism is similar to that of the Sufis. He believes that
every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual one. In ‘Nature’ he suggests
that words are symbols and are finite organs of the finite mind. He adds that a
**lamb** stands for innocence; a **snake** is subtle spite, **flowers** express to us
delicate affections; **light and darkness** are our familiar expressions for
knowledge and ignorance. Mansure Ekhtiar has mentioned some common
symbols between Emerson and Persian Sufis.\(^{29}\) They are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White dove</td>
<td>peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The owl</td>
<td>Satan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the pelican</td>
<td>Christ’s sacrifice on the cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the stage</td>
<td>piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the stork</td>
<td>chastity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the swallow</td>
<td>incarnation of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sleep</td>
<td>pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the almond</td>
<td>divine approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the cedar</td>
<td>Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the clover</td>
<td>the Trinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the mirror</td>
<td>Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the sponge</td>
<td>the crucifixion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the lion</td>
<td>fire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the crater</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the serpent</td>
<td>the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raven</td>
<td>the air</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arthur Christy also cites a list of common symbols between Emerson and Persian in *The Orient in American Transcendentalism*. A few of them are as follows.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>symbol</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nightingale</td>
<td>a moral pilgrim, as one who travels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in allegorical path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a soul in body bound by earthly ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>God’s dawn or awakening to the true life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Camel driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fate of destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Voice of the reed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>melody or the instruction of a spiritual guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attraction of God’s grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conceal the divine (just as a tress of hair may have perfume)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The veil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>anything which hiders union with the beloved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As already mentioned Emerson was an ardent follower of the Hindu scriptures and he had read so many of them diligently. ‘Brahma’ is almost a paraphrase of some lines from the Bhagvad Gita. Here the study would like to add this poem as the last element of this chapter:

IF the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.  

Far or forgot to me is near;  
Shadow and sunlight are the same;  
The vanished gods to me appear;  
And one to me are shame and fame.
They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Emerson thus unites in himself three traditions – Christian, Hindu and Islamic. He finds similarity of outlook on life, similarity in symbols and metaphors used in the literature of these three cultures. Emerson thus becomes the most significant representative of 19th century American writers who were interested and influenced by the Orient. The other major figure is of course Thoreau, who is the subject of the next two chapters.
Notes and References:

1. Brooks. P. 131
3. Lewis. Pp 105-6
4. Regan. P. 5
5. Ibid. p. 8
6. Mansour Ekhtiar, p. 83
7. Brooks. P. 762
8. Ibid. P. 766
9. Ibid. P. 815
11. Pazargadi. P. 449
13. Pasargadi. P. 43
15. Brooks. P. 811
16. Carpenter. P. 164
17. Pazargadi. P. 426
18. Carpenter. P. 172
19. Journals, VI, 465
20. Carpenter. P. 178
21. Journals: May 24, 1847
22. Carpenter. P. 189
24. Carpenter. P. 192
25. Brooks. P. 399
26. Carpenter. P. 194
27. Ibid
28. Mansour Ekhtiar, p. 107
29. Ibid, p. 108