INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

The subject of the present essay is Sa'di as a Humanist and a Lyricist. Our charted course lies through the lands of Sages to the land of song, from musing to music. And it is better so, for if in the earlier part of our journey, we get bored of the dreary waste of abstract thinking, in the end, we shall be recompensed by a right-about turn into the pastoral landscape of fresh beauty and innocent love, of melodious reeds and sweet symphonies—sure remedies of boredom and fatigue. And we shall be in the best company all through. It will consist of gentle souls and kindly hearts, of cherubic singers and solitary soloists—some of gentlest souls and sweetest singers of the world.

The essay will fall into two parts, each being again subdivided into chapters. The first part will be about Sa'di the Humanist. We shall begin it by trying to define humanism, so that when later, we attribute it to Sa'di, the reader may be reasonably sure that our assertion is true
and that we are not imposing upon him one of our pet and personal fads. We shall examine the nature of humanism and shall wonder at the result. For we shall not see a phantom of metaphysical haunted-house, instead, there shall lie before us our own image, life - size and life - like, with light and shadows, pining and smiling, petty and pretty, stumbling and carrying along. Heavens, what a manly and a godly picture - and no wonder it is! For man in his fullness is the true reflection of gods. He loves and he hates, he makes and he breaks, he is jealous and magnanimous, he is vengeful and he is forgiving at once. But, overall, he is for Good and loves Beauty like God Himself ( ).

In our next chapter we shall see the picture of just such a man, the ideal of humanism. He was neither the product of Renaissance nor a disciple of Erasmus. He lived centuries before those two. His name was Sadi of Shīrāz. We have said, he was not the product of Renaissance, he was not a product of his own vicious times either. He was like a latter - day Jewish prophet sent from above to advise a degenerated people. But there was a difference here. The prophet of Jehovah preached by threatening with the destruction of the Dooms day; but this Iranian reformer pleaded by holding and the hope of regeneration. The glittering decorations of humanism filled his proud lapels.
He was considerate and compassionate. He was understanding and tolerant. His tears were not tainted with cant. His laugh was not inhibited by glum sobriety. He honoured virtue and detested vice. But his broad vision could distinguish between a devilish sin and a human lapse. He could preach and sermon or cut a joke with equal felicity. He was an admirer of beauty and a votary of love, for he knew that without beauty and love the horizon of humanity would be bleak indeed. In short, he was a wise and good man. His wisdom taught him that the good of mankind lay in the fulfilment fruition of man himself — in the uniform progress of all his faculties, in the balanced growth of all his nature. This was the aim and ideal of Sādi, and this is the aim and ideal of humanism as well.

In the next chapter, we shall try to seek a peer for this Sādi the humanist. Rank after rank of Persian mystics and moralists, writers and poets, will come under our review. But our choice will fall on the old stalwart of Tūs — Mīrdāwī. The discovery will amaze us who would have thought of the delicate flowers of humanism blossoming in the craggy battle-fields of Shāhnāma? And who would have beheld an epic-writer to water those flowers with his bloody inkpot? It is unbelievable, but we shall find that it is just so. He who made the affectionate Širāź fall victi to his fratricidal brothers, he who killed the young Suhrāb by the hand of his own father, he who cut the
throat of the gentle Siyawash with the sparkling dagger of Guruy-i-Zirih, he was the man who had the kindest heart in his bosom and who uttered the most anguished cry against bloodshedding:

Like Sadi, Firdawsi also based his moral philosophy on human nature. The abstract principles of Gulistān and Bustān are seen in concrete shape in Shāhnāma. A careful study of Firdawsi's heroes will lead to the deduction of Sadi's maxims. The difference between them is only that of practice and theory. Firdawsi could illustrate the abstractions of Sadi as none has done before or since. But in the matter of theorising the aged Dihān was handicapped by his garrulity. This is an art in itself, a kin to the nag of turning, an epigram. And it is just here that we shall see Sadi steal a sly march on Firdawsi. So in the end we shall have to allow a victory on points to the elect Shirāzīān.

The same order will be followed in one next part dealing with Sadi as a Lyricist.

First we shall discuss the nature of Lyricism and the definition of a lyric of all poetical forms, perhaps
the lyric is most akin to the spirit of poetry. We the ignorant commons feel in our hearts, though the Aristotelian knowledgeable may not say so in their books, that the essence of poetry lies in Beauty Love and Music. The idea may be logically wrong, but it is not wrong in so much as it represents the opinion of millions and millions of normal human beings. So perhaps it is the whispering of Nature the declamations of the pedants not with standing. And if the essence of poetry is Beauty love and Music, then it is best manifested - in the form of lyric. For a lyric is a short poem, with musical expression centred on same personal emotion - usually love for human beauty. And if this be the lyric, then the Persian Ghazal of the old style is one of its best manifestation. Then we say the old style, we mean the style of the old masters, the ٗ of Persian. For during their time the Ghazal, had not lost its purity and simplicity. Its origin had been in love and beauty and those ٗ followed that tradition. Its pollution with metaphysics and morals, with the meteoric dust by the heavens and the black mud of the earth, was of later date.

Having discussed the nature of a lyric we shall deal with Sâdi as a Lyricist. And here for once, flinging away a cautious writer's customary restraints, we shall indulge in superlative. But our discarding of cautions and speaking in superlative will be above reprimand and denial. For,
without any doubt and demur, Sādi was the most sweet, the most aesthetic, the most lyrical poet of Persian. He drank in beauty and he lived to love it. And he had a disposition naturally suited to this double purpose. He was modest and simple. He had a receptive mind and a feeling heart. Hope was the anchor of his staunch optimism. Even if in dungeon he could see the sun through the chink in the wall. He was not a bat, but a skylark.

And the background music of this scenario was the melody of his speech. We again indulge in a sweeping generalisation and assert that, in the past millennium of its splendour, the Persian language did not produce an sweeter poet than him. It is not for nothing that Sādi's countrymen call his in the Quran. In his Ghazals he did sing like a nightingale. And the basis of this similarity was that he selected his notes from nature and not from a musical table. He did not hamper his image with the weight of elegance. His words flitted from his heart and perched on his lips. In this matter of language also he followed the old school of Ghazal writers. By his lime and even earlier, the idiom of Drī had reached full maturity. Anwari and Zahīr preceded him by a century. Kazāl was his contemporary. But as in the matter of theme so - the matter of language Sādi the Ghazal writer broke away from the present and took refuge in the distant past. He chase the model of Rūdaki and became the best lyrist of Iran.
Once again, after introducing Sādi as a lyricist, we shall compare him as such with two other celebrities the world of ghazal "Khusraw and Fāfig".

Following the precedence of time we shall deal with Khusraw first. He was as versatile as Sādi, or perhaps more so. However, we are not concerned here with versatility but with respective merit in a particular form of a particular branch of poetry i.e. with the lyrical Ghazal. Now, the Āmir's ghazals happen to be written in two entirely different styles, the one being a true and faithful copy of the Shaykh, and the other the precursor of the well-known . Without presuming to go into the question of their respective merits, we can safely say that these two styles are as opposed to each other as opposed can be. And it is to this their fundamental dualism that we take exception. As truth is indivisible so is sincerity. When we see Khusraw playing two different tunes we doubt if he is sincere in either. And sincerity being the soul of lyricism an insincere lyric is unimaginable.

A further and darker reflection is cast on the Āmir's sincerity by his excessive engrossment with words. He plays with them and he wrestles with them. Often, and oh, how sadly often he seems to take his inspiration from his words and not from his heart this is our chief complaint against him and this is the chief distinguishing feature between him and our Shaykh. The massive wordiness of the Āmir also blocks the
flow of his ideas. Here again Shaykh, with his famous
lightness and fluency of speech, scores a point against the
Amir. Between the language of Khusraw and Sadi there is the
difference of a drag and a mast the one pulls back, the other
carries along.

After dispensing with Khusraw, our comparison will
lie between Sadi and Hafiz.

A gladiatorial contest, indeed, putting the onlookers
and the umpire alike in trembling awe! It is not the case of
the proverbial \( \text{زکریا} \) each claiming a decree of
supremacy for itself. It is the case of two Suns confronting
each other from two different galaxies. Indeed, this is a
quandary in which we can echo Hippocrates exclamation of
"judgement difficult" with equal bewilderment.

"Two different galaxies" - we should be thankful for
this phrase for it points to our only escape from the above
impasse. The fame of Sadi and Hafiz rests on Ghazals of two
entirely different types. We shall expand on this difference.
It will be seen that while Sadi stuck to the old lyrical
style, Hafiz adopted and perfected the new types. By the
time of Hafiz the scope of the Ghazal had widened to infinity,
i.e. there was no limit or prohibition set for its topics.
They could be emotional or moral, mystic or philosophic,
religious or profane.

The Khawaja was like a free thinking, free-lance sophist,
and his subjects were chosen accordingly, he paid lip service
to the traditional ghazal and feigned to die with love and
and pine for beauty. But, in fact he was neither a devotee of love nor a slave of beauty. He was only a profound thinker and a great discoverer of truths - truths about God and truths about man, truths about body and soul, about human and physical nature about fate and free will. He is famous as a mystic poet. But we shall show that his mysticism was entering different form that of Sadi. It is true that they both in their ghazals wrote about Divine Beauty. But Sadi approached the subject as an ِشاعر while Hafiz dealt with it as an ِفیضی. The Shaykh loved the Divine Beauty; the Khwaja tried to understand its nature. The difference is fundamental. It will also prove to be decisive for our purpose because it will settle the question of priorities within our terms of reference. A lover's songs are better entitled to be called lyrics than the aphorism of a mystic savant. Hence we shall award the palm of the supreme Persian Lyricist to our Shaykh.

Not only a Supreme Lyricist, the Shaykh is also the most humane Humanist of the Persian language -- and this is what the present writer has tried to prove in the present thesis. She has succeeded in proving her point or not, it is for the esteemed readers to decide:

سید موسی چنگالی را
خواهان حساب کنم و بسیار

------