SADI AS A LYRICIST

(a) Definition of Lyricism
(b) Sadi as a Lyricist
(c) Sadi and Khusraw compared as Lyricists
(d) Sadi and Hafiz compared as Lyricists
Before entering into the discussion of Sadi as a lyricist, it will be useful to have a close look at lyricism and to endeavour to know what it exactly means. The existing matter on the subject seems to be meagre and needs elaboration and supplementation. The clearest and the most appropriate definitions on which the present writer could lay hand are given below. A fuller discussion along their guiding lines will follow later:

I. Chamber's Encyclopaedia:

"Lyric: The Greeks divided poetry into Epic, Hymn, Satire, Drama and Hymn. The equivalent term 'lyric' came comparatively latter, when Greek lyric poetry was already dead."

"In practice, by 'lyric' modern usage means:
(1) short poems, often personal, generally in stanzas or pindaric meter; or (ii) all poetry...

not narrative or dramatic, or (iii) more vaguely still, poems or passages in verse or even in prose, of a specially emotional tone."

2. Encyclopaedia Americana, vol. 17

"Lyric Poetry: The origins of lyric poetry are merged with those of narration, because of the primitive conditions under which the distinction between the two types did not exist --- that is, when there was no clearly felt difference between the relating of an incident and the expression of the emotions associated with it. With the developments of art, there seems to have been a gradual differentiation of the originally united arts of poetry and music. The progress of poetry was, in general, marked by an increased emphasis on the individuality of the artist and on the personal or subjective elements in lyric poetry, further by the diminished importance of its association with music, and a corresponding growth of the reflective or intellectual element, so that modern lyric poetry is but slightly associated with actual song, though it is still centered on the expression of the subjective emotion."

"Lyric Poetry may perhaps be best described as that class of poetry which expresses emotion directly, and in this sense includes the ode, the sonnet, the elegy, the hymn, and the song. 'In lyric poetry the poet gives vent to his personal emotions or experiences — his joys, sorrows, cares, complaints, aspirations, despair— or reproduces in words the impressions which nature or history has made upon him' (S.R. Driver, Introduction to the History of the Old Testament — 1891)"

"..... Poetry may be divided into two classes: There is the poetry in which the poet goes deep down into himself and finds his inspiration and his subjects in his own experiences, thoughts feelings. There is the poetry in which the poet goes out of himself, singles with the actions and passions of the world without. The former class we may call personal or subjective poetry, or the poetry of self/delineation and self-expression. The latter we may call impersonal.

2. An Introduction to the study of Literature, by Hudson, William Henry.
or objective poetry...... To the subjective poetry, the name lyrical is often also applied
Lyric poetry in the original meaning of the term, was poetry composed to be sung to the accompani-
ment of "lyre" or 'harp'. But the use of the term lyrical is mostly applied to that kind of
poetry in which the poet is principally occupied
with himself."

"In such simpler forms, this personal poetry
is almost unlimited in range and variety, for
it may touch nearly all aspects of experience,
from those which are most narrowly individual
to those which involve the broadest interests
of our common humanity. Thus we have the lyric
which skims the lighter things of life, as in the
so-called 'verse de societe', the lyric of
love in all its phases, and with all its attendant
hopes and longings, joys and sorrows,
the lyric of patriotism, the lyric of religious
emotion and countless other kinds where personal
emotion prevails".

5. Everyman's Encyclopaedia

"Lyric: Lyre, a musical instrument with strings.

Lyrical poetry among the ancients was so called

I. Everyman's Encyclopaedia, Fifth edition, London 1967,
because it was sung or recited with the accompaniment of music. Lyric poetry may perhaps be best described as that class of poetry which expresses emotion directly and in this sense, includes the ode, the sonnet, the elegy, the psalm the hymn and the song. 'In lyric poetry the poet gives vent to his personal emotions or experiences — his joy, sorrows, cares, complaints, aspirations, despair — or reproduces in words the impression which nature or history has made upon him' (S.R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, 1891).


In discussing lyrical poetry Prof. Bradley says, "The centre of interest is 'inward'. It is an interest in emotion, thought, will, rather than in events, actions, which express and react on emotions, thoughts, will." (p123).

About the length of a lyric, Bradley sees no reason why a long poem like Spencer's ALGONIANS which contains fifty-five stanzas, should not be called a lyric. But he does not insist on this point, and accepts the generally held view in these words: "It will however be agreed that in general a lyrical poem may be called short compared with a narrative or drama." (p.189)

From all this, three central ideas emerge:

1. A lyrical poem should have WORD MUSIC for it was musical song which gave birth to it.
2. It should, preferably, be a start piece.
3. Lastly, and most importantly, it should deal with personal emotions. Even if a poet deals with ideas and events, his poem should be personally and emotionally orientated, that is, his theme of narration should be, not ideas and events, but the way in which they affect his personal emotions.

Keeping an eye on the Persian lyric in general, and on Sadi's lyrical poems in particular, the above three points may be elaborated thus:

I. Language -- It has been pointed out above that the language of a lyric should be musical. But in this context it is better to substitute 'song-like' for musical. The word 'musical' denotes simply the sweetness of words. So long as the language is fluent, its words singly not
harsh, and collectively cadent, it may be called musical.

As, for instance, this verse of Hafiz:

But this is not the language of a song. A song—and therefore a lyric should have all this—and something more. It should have a fecundity of expression which makes it fresh. Fresh, not furbished—that is the point. A song, if it is a true song, is the spontaneous symphony of the soul. It is not the product of meditation and pondering. It is the natural over-flow of a full heart and as the natural outflow of water does not follow pre-cut channels, so, the outpourings of the heart do not necessarily conform to the laws of wordy elegance as laid down in rhetorics. The language of a lyric has all the attractions and failings of free speech. It is spontaneous, direct, lively, simple, unpolished, with rough edges and unrounded corners; yet, throbbing with the emotion of the moment, pulsating with the beats of a tremulous heart. In short, the idiom of the lyric is not the idiom of the written word, but the idiom of intimate speech, the idiom of the spoken word. And for lyric, the field of this spoken word is further restricted to the type which is used—no, not 'used' with its undertone of a deliberate act of will; but simply 'uttered' involuntarily—in the

I. Diwan-i-Hafiz, p.108
song of the soul, i.e. the un-prompted outpourings of a full heart. The better to understand the nature of this lyrical language, one should refer to Ghalib's famous verse:

And the better to appreciate the sweetness of this divine symphony, one should either attend to the Lament of the Lute in Rumi:

or listen to the songs of our Shirazian Nightingale.

To select one verse from this ghazal and another from that may seem treacherous. Indeed, selection is entirely unnecessary. Almost all the verses in all the hundreds of ghazals of the Shaykh bear ample testimony to what has been written above. However, just for the sake of "good luck and a blessing" one ghazal is here reproduced in its entirety .... (p.517 8).

I. Dīwān-i-Ghalib p.153
2. Mathnaw-i-Ma'navi, p.3
3. Kuliyat, p.638
2. Extent - We should now consider the next requisite of a lyric, which is its brevity. It is not an arbitrary restriction. Nor does it derive solely from the usage of the lyrical poets of the past. Its basis is more rational. A lyric partakes of the quality of a song. And a song - to impress and to affect like a song - should of necessity be short. Otherwise - i.e. if it drags and drowls it will be a drone, and not a song. Probably, surfeit and emotional fatigue provide the bar here. We may have too much of a good thing; and our emotionally - strung nerves may get tired by prolonged stimulation.

This being the case, the length of a ghazal, with the number of its couplets usually stopping around the dozen mark, seems to be the most appropriate for a lyric.

3. Subject Matter -- the third and the most important point regarding the lyric is its subject - matter. It was briefly stated earlier that a lyric should be personally thing, orientated. That is, it should tell us, not of things and events but how these things and events have affected
its composer. Nor should it deal with the abstruse
or the abstract, but should be a plain narrative of the
poet's emotional experience. It should not be lost in
mystic rhapsodies, it should avoid doctrinaire dogma.
Its subject - matter should be the Elemental Passions, its
language should echo the Music of the sphēs. The check
here is how to raise such simplicity from the level of
the common place to the summit of the sublime. And it is
just here that true poetic genius supplies the necessary
leverage. Necessary leverage, and to spare — necessary,
that is for uplifting a love - tale to a lyric, to spare,
that is for sublimating a Human Love - Tale to the summit
of Divine Comedy.

But Mark! To substitute is not to de-humanize.
There is no sublimity above humanity-sful filled this
quintessence of Dust, when it qualifies to be called the
son of Adam, qualifies also to be called the son of God.
He cherishes and he adores, but his adornment - if pure
and true, is a mirror of the Love and Compassion of God.
And what if the centre of his love is the Divine Being
Himself? Does he then need to change his earthly lyric
to the Esytrical Rumm? No - a thousand times No! The ditty
of Rumi's shepherds is sweeter than the songs of the
angels in the celestial vault; the rapturous warble of the
skylark is heavenlier than the pantomimic Adoration of the
Magi. And hence the use of human attributes - like Jī
and ٍٓ and ٌٓ by the sufí poets of Persia for their Divine beloved. They coax Him from this heavenly throne to get enshrined in the Human Heart. The interpretation of these attributes is neither mystic nor mysterious. They stand for what they are -- a mole for a mole, and a curly look for a curly look. If thus interpreted, much of the heart - pouring of poets like Iraqi and Sadi is lyrical. On the other hand, if it is constrained to mean what it does not mean but what some súfístic pedants wish it to mean, it becomes a pack of riddles and a lifeless symbolism. Briefly and simply, to sing of Divine love is well within the reach of a lyric - the only requisite being a bold and robust act of anthropomorphio personification.

The gist of the foregoing is this: that for a lyrical poem singing of Divine Love, personification is as obligatory as abstraction and sublimation are taboo for a lyric which deals with human love. The latter-day poets of Persian are the worst offenders in this respect. They profess to write lyrics, but they only succeed in bringing out treatises on gnosticisn and platonic love. They forget their love for God in their engrossment with the Divine Essence and Attributes. Even while dealing with human love, they detach and they abstract till the chubby cupid himself becomes ethe realised and his flashing darts look like meteoric apparitions!
One last point should be noted in the discussion of a lyric's subject-matter. We have seen that it is a song, and we have also seen that generally it is about personal love. We also know that the course of love never runs smooth. There are ups and downs at its every pace. The experience is mortifying, no doubt. But is the lover to give vent to his agony in a wail of complaint? Not if he desires to sing a lyric. Bitterness is the very negation of the lyrical spirit—what is contended here does not falsify the truth of Shelley's eternal line:

''Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest though.''

There is a subtle but fundamental difference between the two positions: Shelley is talking about the 'theme of our songs' and what is under discussion here is the 'mode' of its expression. No doubt, the sadder thoughts are more delectable to a refined taste. But if they are to be served as lyric, they should have a delectable dressing like the song of a nightingale which sweetens and embitters at the same time. It is only then, that they deserve the great Shakespearean comment:

''If music be the food of love, play on.''

Here is a small snatch from Sa'di which will illustrate the point and will also serve as a befitting finale to this chapter, epitomising as it does almost all the attributes

I. The Twelfth Night; Act, I, scene, I, lines: 1-13
of a good lyric as discussed above:

I. Kulliyat, p 557
SADI AS A LYRICIST
CHAPTER V

SADI AS A LYRICIST

The foregoing chapter has introduced us to Lyricism in general and with some of its peculiarly Persian aspects. Following its guidelines if we search for the best Persian Lyricist, we shall be amazed that he is none other than the very same literary paragon in whom had ended our earlier quest for the best humanist writer of Persian language. Our amazement is not simply based on this coincidence, its roots are deeper. We see an ideal realized, a dream fulfilled. We have described lyricism as it ought to be, and we full well know that things as they 'are' seldom correspond to what they ought to be. But here, we see the eternal paradox of 'is' and 'ought' reconciled for once, "the actualized form supplying a mirror for the idealized concept." It is the Diwan of Sadi in which lyricism attains its supreme manifestation; and this manifestation is all the more staggering because of the metamorphosis which brings it about: we see our matter-of-fact, sophisticated, boldly unconventional and cunningly wise humanist turned into a tender-hearted, soft-spoken, gentle, sensitive and
compassionate 'lover'— and we love him the more for this transformation. The humanistic and philosophical maxims of Gulistan are seen replaced by the wistful and sweet complaints of a love-lorn poet. There is no longer any room for the Machiavellian precept:

\[
\text{سیر یار بیست و سیم گوی ب}$
\]

Instead, we get this cry of mercy from a bruised heart:

\[
\text{میهن در بیست و سیم گوی ب}$
\]

But before discussing Sadi's lyrics, let us first see how the spiritual, social, and economic conditions of that time conditioned literary and poetical productions of Iran.

As is well known, Iran has always been the centre of revolutions. The continual uprooting and devastation at the hands of the invading foes as well as local tyrants, had become the abiding lot of that miserable people. The insecurity of life and property and their own helplessness against it had generated a sense of fatality and pessimism in the entire nation. Specially during the time of Sadi, this frustration and morbidity was at its peak. The Mongols had killed such a large portion of the population and had destroyed so much that was of economic and cultural worth that the catastrophe thus caused could not but leave lasting
traces behind it. For the people that survived the fatal blow and remained in the smouldering ruins, literature and poetry could hold little attraction. Scholars and literary men fled from the afflicted areas to save their lives. The centre of art and culture shifted from the north-eastern provinces to the South West and elsewhere. Although later on, Iran recovered from this blow to quite a considerable degree, literature and art, except historiography, never quite reached the pitch it had attained earlier, inspite of a few outstanding personalities and of a gradually increasing range of subjects.

It was not only a change of scene, but also a change in the literary and poetical trends: Till the Mongol Invasion, the two dominant features of the Persian poetry were panegyry and mysticism. Those were days of pure autocracy and the rulers were completely indifferent to the sufferings of the people; with the result that the general public was totally dissatisfied with life. This dissatisfaction made them denounce and condemn this hellish world and its despotic firebrands, and to take refuge in that other world — the Heavenly heaven, peaceful under the aegis of its Kindly King. The universal upsurge of Mysticism was the direct result of this reaction (it brought about the great mystical treatises and Mathnavis of 'Atta, Sanāi, and their likes). Besides

I. This accounts for the appearance of Rūmī in Qūniya, of Sādī in Shirāz and of Khuseraw in India.
this general revulsion to everything that was worldly and mundane and its resultant mysticism, the other incentive for poetry was مَلَك. Mysticism served only as a sort of mental refuge, but it could not provide them with their daily bread. So, when faced with the most compelling problem of day-to-day life that of earning a livelihood, they were forced to step down from their heavenly abode and to do something which was practically profitable to them. As a result, we find them writing elaborate panegyrics of those same tyrants whom they despised and abhorred. (Yes, the great age of the Persian Qasīda has origin as lowly as that) on the one hand, the poet tries to be free from all the worldly shackles, and to get merged into the One and Only Reality, and on the other, he finds it apt and proper to put كَرْسَةَ سَان under the feet of some vain and astentious patron!

Thus, the two dominant topics of the Persian poetry until the time of Sadi were mysticism and مَلَك و رُيْحٌ and the two forms of poetry that flourished most during this time were the Mathnawi and the Qasīda (The topics of these Mathnavis and Qasidas were almost paradoical to each other: one dealt with سَكَر و دُرْجَات , while the other displayed the more sordid and mercenary side of human nature, that of earning livelihood by cheap flattery.

The great upheaval caused by the Mongol Invasion resulted in a complete transformation of the Iranian literary scene: Unrest and oppression gripped the entire nation.
People in their desperate attempt to find peace and security, got more and more engrossed with religion and Tasawwuf. Mystic poems reached a new olimax, Sufi doctrines appeared in verse-forms and in general Mysticism attained its zenith in the Mongol times, (the crowning glory of these mystical productions was of course, the great Mathnawi of that great mystic - Maulana Rumi).

While mysticism prospered and bloomed, its counter-part, the Qasida, did not enjoy such fate. The barbaric Mongols, with one crushing blow, destroyed the age-old glamour and splendour of the Iranian throne. With the downfall of the Persian kings, the Qasida also lost its position. The Mongols were crude people having no taste for Persian poetry, art and literature, so, they did not encourage the Persian poets, neither did they have that splendour which could inspire the poets to compose elaborate panegyrics for them. So gradually Qasida which had reigned supreme in the times of the Seljuqs, was forced to step back in the back-ground, and mystical Mathnawi took its place.

But mark! the Mongol Period is not as barren and devoid of colour as it appears to be. In fact, it can boast of producing the most curious, most captivating and the most colourful personality of the entire Persian literature --

I. The Seljuq period had produced such magnificent Qasida-writers as Anwari and Waessi.
the Sa'di of Shiras! In that sombre atmosphere of theosophy and mysticism, Sa'di's delightful personality shines like the golden rays of the morning Sun, illuminating the whole canvas of Persian literature, and among diadctic and mystical poems of those days, his soft and melodious Ghazals are as refreshing and soothing as a breath of fresh air. As said earlier, Qasida and Mathnawi were the two chief figures of the Persian literature till the time of Sa'di, and in this neck to neck race of Qasida and Mathnawi, Ghazal was forced to lag behind. This beautiful form of the Persian poetry was almost completely neglected by the poets of those times. We see that after Rudagi not a single poet can be called a lyrccist in the true sense of the term. Poets like Anwari and Khaqani did compose Ghazals, but their Ghazals lacked simplicity and sincerity, the two most important qualities of a Ghazal.

It was that superb genius of Shiras, that master creator of the Rose Garden, who put a new soul in the body of the decaying Ghazal. He was the first man who realised that this particular form of poetry, if cultivated properly, can outshine all the others. Let us now briefly revive what we have described fully in the preceding chapter, i.e., what lyricism is. It will help us in analysing the Shaykh's lyrics because by applying it to Sa'di's Ghazals, we will be able to judge how far can he be called the best
lyricist of the Persian language.

After carefully analysing the different definitions of lyricism (as given in the preceding chapter) the following facts may be established:

1. The most important thing about the lyric is that it must be personally oriented, and these feelings, the their turn, should preferably be based on love; a lyric should have no gnostic overtones, neither doctrinaire under-currents.

2. It must have a harmony of ideas and its language should be soft and simple, almost conversational; its diction should be fluent, even musical and it should have a song-like quality.

3. The lyricist must appreciate beauty in every form; whether it is the rosy cheek of his beloved or the delicate and fragile beauty of a rose-petal, his lyric should capture the beauty of both and convey it to the reader through to verses.

4. A lyric should preferably be short.

5. Its tone should be light and cheerful.

The above five may be said to be the chief characteristics of a lyric. Let us now have a close look at the Persian poetry and see which of its various kinds can be said to the most lyrical and what topics the Persian lyric covers.

As said earlier, lyric poetry is that in which the poet is principally occupied with himself — with his own
ideas, emotions and reactions towards things. These things which impress the poet and make him express his personal emotion may be either objects, or facts, or happenings, or the relationship in which the poet stands to another person. It may be beauty, (in every shape and form), it may be a certain person, or even some abstract idea that can instigate the poets' emotions and feelings. These personal emotions and feelings of when expressed in poetry in a 'lyrical' way (i.e. in simple language and soft tone) that poetry shall be called a lyric. In this sense, lyrical poetry can be almost unlimited in its range and variety, for it may touch nearly all aspects of experience, from those which are most narrowly individual to those which involve the broadest interest of our common humanity. Thus, we may have the bacchanalian lyric, the lyric which probes into the mysteries of this universe and beyond, the lyric with philosophical and gnostic undercurrents, the lyric of religious emotion the lyric of patriotism, the lyric of love; and countless other kinds which is it unnecessary to tabulate. (In this entire emotional spectrum, it is often the emotion of love, with all its phases and with all its attendant hopes and longings, joys and sorrows that previous the Persian lyric poetry -- specially the Ghazal). The other
emotional expressions we may find in the western lyrical poetry, but it is very seldom that the Persian poet deals with emotions other than love. These rare occasions are when the poet offers his adorations at the feet of Mother Nature, or when he mourns for his dear departed (i.e. an elegy), or when he ponders over some harsh facts of life, like the futility of human existence and instability of this temporal world. These sort of poetical composition too, if they are appealing and soft, may be called 'lyrical'.

The classical Persian poetry has been chiefly divided into the following ten kinds:

Qasida, Mathnawi, Ruba'i, Git'a, Mustazad, Musammât, Rârd, Tarji', Tarkib, and Ghazal.

Lyric is a kind of western poetry and we cannot find its substitute in the above-named ten kinds of Persian poetry. The reason for this is that the western poetry has been divided into two kinds -- one division is according to its form; and the other according to its thought-content or subject-matter. Unfortunately, there is no such distinct division of the classical Persian poetry: It has been divided according to its form only and this distinction has nothing to do with the subject-matter. Thus, there is no exact substitute in Persian poetry for the lyric because it pertains to the topic of a poetical composition. But as lyric is not concerned with the form but with the thought-content of poetry, each of the above
I

ten kinds of Persian poetry may, sometime or other, deal
with lyrical topics (personal emotion) and at that time,
can be said to be a 'lyric'. Usually it is the Ghazal that
comes closest to the lyric because in most of the Ghazals,
the poet describe his feelings about love and beauty, but
other kinds of poetry also sometimes deal with the
personal emotions of the poet. For example take the
Mathnawi of Majnun Layla which has Khusraw's famous elegy
for his mother and brother:

In fact, if a poet is basically inclined towards lyricism
then all his poetical compositions will be lyrical in
essence, be it a Mathnawi a Rubai or Qit'a.

Now, who could be more lyrical by temperament than
the romantic Shaykh of Shiraz; and this is the reason that
almost every kind of poetry that he composed, is permeated
with lyricism through and through. And before entering into
a discussion of the Shaykh's Ghazals -- the best manifesta-
tion of his lyricism -- it is very necessary to first
have a cursory look at his other poetical compositions and
see how beautifully and lyrically he has described different
emotions:

1. Except the Fard ; for reasons stated here and after.
2. Majnun-Layla
Undoubtedly it is a lyric! It is not merely an objective depiction of the beauties of spring, but it is an expression -- an expression that is throbbing with emotion -- of how those beauties have affected the sensitive heart of the poet. On the contrary, read the following couplets from the famous Qasida of Qa'ani; they are matchless in their beauty and elegance and are undoubtedly, like a miniature painting of the spring itself, but they do not express what emotion that lovely spring has aroused in the poet's heart. The picture is there -- fascinating in its beauty -- but there is no one to appreciate its beauty!
Or take the following Qasida by 'Urfl,

Or another by Iqbal-i-Lahwri:

Both of these examples, though successfully depict the
vernal beauties of Kashmir, yet they do not show any
emotion on the part of the poet, hence they cannot be
called lyrical.

In yet another Qasida, Sa'di meditates over some
harsh facts of life, look how sad and soft his tone is, giving
these couplets a lyrical quality:

I. Diwan-i-Qa'awi ed. Tehran, 1322 A.H.
2. Diwan-i-'Urfl, p. 35-37
3. Kulliyat Iqbal, p. 38
4. Kulliyat p. 446
Now read the following verse of Ṣaḥīb; the idea is the same but the mode of expression, though the poet uses first person singular (تَمَعَّر) to make it all the more subjective, is far from being lyrical:

2. Mathnawi (قَدْ تَمَعَّرَ) - the poet expresses his compassion for fatherless children:

I. Dimūn-i-Ṣaḥīb, p. 186
2. Kulliyāt, p. 270
What lyric can be more lyrical than these couplets from the Shaykh's Bustan!

3. Rubai: the emotion expressed here is of love:

4. Qita: Here the poet laments over the dispersion of friends through death:

5. Mustasad: The exampled cited in the other poetical types will suffice for this also, for a Mustasad the poet only adds two feet of the same metre after each hemistich of a verse and so Mustasad is usually regarded as the same type of poem to which this addition is applied. It is because of this that in the Diwans of Persian poets, Mustasads are not given separately but under the other nine heads mentioned above (Qasida, Mathnawi etc.).

I. Kulliyat, p. 690
2. Ibid, p. 678
6. **Musammat**, I: The Shaykh composed at-least one *Musammat* (with the specific shape of \( \text{١٩} \)). Unfortunately, due, perhaps, to the oversight of the old compilers of the *Kulliyat*, it has not been given separately under its proper head, but has been included in the *ghazals* of the *Kulliyat*. It is also a very good specimen of the Shaykh's lyric. We cite two strophes below:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{دل برکت بیت کبابی} & \\
\text{زمین نورانی از کلب} & \\
\text{گیاه زنده در بند دار} & \\
\text{بیل کردن عشق شبام} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

7. **Fard** : Fard cannot be included in the lyrical poetry because lyric is defined as a kind of song and song is is usually a full poem, not a single verse (i.e. *Fard*). So *Fard* cannot be said to be a lyric.

8. **Tarji** : The Shaykh's famous *Tarji* Band with the refrain:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{بسمه لدي سلام} & \\
\text{سیر حریق به یک آتش} & \\
\text{میادین کا رؤیان ای آتش} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

is one of the best examples of a lyric ever sung in Persian, or, indeed, in any other language of the world. It is a long poem and the reader is referred for it to the Shaykh's *Biwan*.

I. *Kulliyat* pp. 548-550
2. Ibid, pp. 518-29
9. Tarkīb: The Shaykh has no Tarkīb in his Kulliyat but since till his time Tarjī' usually stood for Tarkīb also, perhaps it was because of this that he did not think it necessary to write one after his famous referred above.

10. Ghasal: After dealing with the above-mentioned nine kinds of poetry and seeing how beautifully the Shaykh has infused lyricism into each and every kind, let us now discuss — and discuss at length — the tenth and the most lyrical kind of these all, the Ghasal. In popular belief, and in fact, Ghasal is the nearest synonym to the lyric; and it is in Ghasal that the Shaykh's lyricism manifests itself most superbly, making him the best lyricist of the Persian language.

Let us first see what Ghasal is: Ghasal or lyric is a kind of subjective poetry and it means an expression of personal emotion, preferably the emotion of love, (and this love, in its turn, be platonic, ). This sense is inherent in the etymology of the term also; ( is an Arabic word and it means and Ghazal is of Arabic origin and when it came to Iran, the

I. From now onwards, we will refer to Ghasal as lyric as well because, in essence, it is almost exactly like the western lyric.
2. Misbahul-luḥūf, p. 598
the Persian poets were not very sure about its theme and form and usually it served as 

A Qasida Rashid-i-watwat has defined Ghazal thus:

Gradually Persian lyric acquired a definite and independent form and a particular style, but love, human love, remained its chief topic:

Even today the lyric is associated with love. Saynul-

Abidin Motamin, a modern critic of Iran says:

1. Madâiq-e Sehr p.85
2. Al-No'Jan, p. 306
Thus, Ghazal, or lyric, is chiefly an expression of love (that too of human love), though sometimes the poet describes in it his other emotions and observations too (specially the latter-day poets widened its scope to embrace such objective and philosophical themes as gnosticism and diadectics etc.) yet as we have seen, in its original meaning Ghazal signifies love-poetry. And it is in this very sense that it comes closest to the connotation of lyric sm (because lyric is defined as a song of 'love').

Now that we know what a Ghazal (lyric) is and what are its topical and lingual peculiarities, we can safely assert that the Shaykh's Ghazals most ideally conform to the above-given definitions. The total number of the Shaykh's Ghazals exceeds seven hundred (Kulliyat-i-Se'di, ed. by 'Abbas Iqbal) and in all nearly of these seven hundred Ghazals, we find such a fascinating, and beautiful treatment given to 'Love' that it puts us in mind of the Shakespearean sonnets or Wordsworth's Lucy poems. In the present writer's humble opinion -- though she may be subject to correction -- no other poet, be he a product of the west or the East, can

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I. Shai'ru'dab-i-'arsi, p. 218
boast of composing such a large number of lyrics.

Let us now have a close look at the Shaykh's lyrics and try to analyse why his Ghazals are called the best lyrics of the Persian language. This discussion will fall into two parts: first we will discuss the lingual peculiarities of Sadi's Ghazals and then its subject-matter.

I. Language:

Contrary to other forms of poetry where ideas are more important (e.g. Qasida) in lyrical poetry it is the language and mode of expression that counts the most. It will not be presumptuous to say that the entire effect, the whole charm of a lyric chiefly originates from its language and diction. As we have seen, there cannot be much variety in the topics of Ghazal because Ghazal, being a form of subjective poetry, cannot contain anything except personal emotion (preferably the emotion of love); and the lyricist is confined to describe only those things which affect him personally. Due to this reason, there has to be a sort of monotony in the topics of a lyric. Now, how to break this monotony? -- By the magical touch of simple language and fluent diction. Simple, soft, and melodious language and a flawlessly fluent diction can give a new freshness to old themes.
In this, particular field, our Shaykh stands unparalleled! His Ghazals are matchless in their natural smoothness, fluency of language, sincerity of expression, unaffected simplicity and an almost child like naïvety.

Let us now analyse, one by one, the chief qualities of the Shaykh's language and diction:

1. **Elocuence** and Simplicity

According to the definition of lyricism the language of a lyric should be spontaneous, direct, lively, unpolished and simple...... No other Persian lyricist can conform to this definition better than our Shaykh. His Ghazal stands out among the Persian lyrics because of this very simplicity and eloquence of his style. Sadi's lyric is not tempestuous and overpowering like a gush of wind, it is soft and refreshing like the morning breeze. It's music does not rise in a resounding crescendo, instead, it is as caressing and soothing as the incessant, tiny and tingling drops of rain. It's beauty is not dazzling like the Sun, it is tranquil and softly-luminous like the moon-beams. And the chief components of this magical potion with which that superb magician of Shiraz can transform a withered rose into a fresh and fragrant blossom are -- simplicity and natural charm of diction. Jan Rypka says about this parti-

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1. An Introduction to the study of Literature, by Hudson, William Henry.
2. History of Iranian Literature, p. 253
cular quality of Sadi's lyrics:

"One of Sadi's special attraction is his partly natural, partly extremely subtle refinement; in any case the most brilliant Sahl-i-Muntani, 'imitable facility', is in this case, quite matchless, though many and frequent attempts have been made to emulate it...

Yes, this, fascinating simplicity, this magnificent 'Sahl-i-Muntani', can never be successfully emulated. In fact, it is something so illusive that one cannot even define it, what to say of emulating. Unfortunately even the phonetics cannot help us much, because it has still not become able to define, the most striking quality of the Shaykha lyrics) in positive terms. From Sakkaki's Miftahul 'Ulum to Tayyarsani's Mutawwal, eloquence (صاغت) has only been defined negatively. Whether it is Miftah 1), Miftah or Takhisul Miftah, Mutawwal or Miftahul-Ulum, each of these books has only negative definitions to offer. They do not say that a word or a sentence possessing such and such qualities can be called (صاغت) instead they say that if a word (كلام) or a sentence (كلام) does not have

1. History of Iranian Literature, p. 253
2. Miftahul Miftah by Gurbuddin Shirazi,
3. Talkhisul Miftah by Khatseb-i-Qaswini.
The entire definition is based on negation. They tell us what qualities mar the نشأة of a لفظ or لفظ; but they do not tell us what particular qualities are necessary for نشأة, in other words, what is نشأة? This unfortunate shortcoming of our phonetics prevents us from defining the requisite lingual beauties of a literary composition and we have to rely on our own taste لذة to guid us to discover the qualities which make us like that particular composition.

Some is the case with Sa'edi's lyrics. When we go through his Ghazals, the intangible, undefinable, elusive beauty of his language instantly strikes us, and we try to understand why his Ghazals, specially his diction appeal to us to much. The task is quite difficult because even our phonetics will not help us much. However, the present writer will try to achieve the impossible, to grasp the intangible, and to capture the illusive charm of Sa'edi's lyrics; the writer succeeds in this tremendous job or not, it is for the reader to decide:

First thing which strikes us is the natural smoothness, and pure simplicity of his diction. It is surprising how in that age of ornate poetry Sa'edi could know the
after Anwari, Muezzii and their likes, the masters of elegant and decorative poetry, and even in the Shaykh's time, people were trying to copy the style of those early masters; (though most of their efforts ended up as meaningless congregation of quaint ideas and quaintier phraselogy). Sa'di, himself a simple and natural man, realizes that natural simplicity can be much more appealing than affected elegance. So he, against the general poetic trend of his days, prefer simplicity to ornamentation. The reader must not think that the Shaykh's task is easier than that of the ornate poetry composers. Not at all. In fact, he faces a more challenging problem: If those poets have to guard their compositions against bombast and affectation, then the Shaykh has to be careful lest the simplicity of his diction becomes 'slang'. Ali Dastti says: regarding this particular aspect of the Shaykh:

2. Qalamraw-i-Sa'di, p. 337
This balanced simplicity, of diction coupled with a certain serenity of expression creates an effect that can best be described by the word -- eloquence. This serenity of expression and eloquence are the two prevalent qualities of the Shaykh’s whole poetry, especially his lyrics. Whether he is describing the sweet - bitter occurrences of his love life, bewailing his separation from his dear beloved, praising the marvellous beauty of his lady-love, appreciating
the charms of Mother Nature — his language is always simple, his expression always serene. Even while dealing with the more serious and scholastic topics, like gnosticism and , he never loses his simplicity, never utters a harsh word. Usually it is observed that if the poet is dealing with some complicated and intricate subject, his diction too becomes a bit complicated shedding its simplicity. But in this particular aspect, Sa'di surpasses all. He has such a command over the language, and his diction has such intrinsic and inherent simplicity, that even in meditative and expository narrative, it does not lose its fluency.

For example take gnosticism: the Shaykh even while sojourning in the abysmal realms of or pondering over the difference of , or narrating the intricacies of never loses his balance — his diction remains fluent, smooth and simple. In fact, even his mystical couplets are so permeated with his natural simplicity, that at first glance, the reader cannot fathom the depth underlying the simple phraseology:

I. Kulliyat p. 539
سایتم ۱۰۰ اساتید هیچکس نشسته
که نیازی به گل ماندگار نداشته

سر سهیم در این دیده‌بانی که شجاعت و قدرت علمای ایران را در کلکل نمی‌کشاند.

اگر بسته دیگری به تاریخ و فرهنگ کشورهای دیگر نشان پذیرد.

علوانه بسته در مورد ناپایداری که در کلکل نمی‌پذیرد.

لواس بافن سم می‌بازد، اگری که چنگ برکت را نداشته‌اند.

1. Kulliyat p. 534
2. Ibid. p. 545
3. Ibid. p. 593
4. Ibid. p. 584
5. Ibid. p. 595
Even when Sa'di describes different facts of life his tone is soft, his language simple:

Here are a few more examples from the Shaykh's lyrics:

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1. Kulliyat p. 537
2. Ibid. p. 545
3. Ibid, p. 599
A surprising thing about the Shaykh's Ghazals is that although most of the things it deals in are not new or original in themselves, yet they acquire a new freshness because of his simple and charming expression. Nearly always, he describes the day-to-day occurrences of man's love life -- its joys and sorrows, its hopes and disappointments, the lover's longing for his beloved, the beloved's indifference and cruelty towards her lover, the marvellous beauty of his darling -- these and other such topics mostly dominate Sa'di's Ghazals. The reader may well ask, 'but these are the topics of nearly all the Ghazals and every Ghazal-writer, more or less, abides by these very traditional topics, then why pin point only Sa'di's?' The writer expresses with the reader to the extent that these topics have always been popular with the Ghazal writers and that Ghazal is nearly always based on these very sweet-bitter experiences of love; but there is one major difference between the Shaykh and the other lyricists. The Shaykh, though knowing full well that his topics are not new and original, never takes the help of peculiar similies and complicated phrases to make his verse striking and original, he leaves it to his magical simplicity to transform the old into new. While the others, conscious of the monotony of their subject -- matter, try to compensate for it either by the novelty of their expression; or by making their love-story differ from the
others' in its minute details. Ideas and events that had been expressed in Ghazals a thousand times before gain a new charm under the spell of their fantastic imagination and fanciful language; and the age-old story of love acquires a new freshness to it. As that great love-poet of Shiraz, Hafiz, remarks:

This familiar when expressed in a symbolic way with the help of original and intricate similes and metaphor, is totally metamorphosed; and as an ordinary face looks pretty and exciting behind a filmy veil, similarly, an old idea when seen through the magical mist of imagination, appears new and striking. Read the following couplets and you will notice that the same old dish has been served but with a new dressing; the effect is not only palatable, its delightful:

I. Divan-i-Hafiz - p 77

2. Divan-1- Ma'ali, Ms, Habib Garn collection.
In all the above couplets, the theme is the same: love. But the poets have tried to give their verse a new charm either by some fantastic flight of imagination:

or by making it differ in some triviality:

or by their mode of expression:

2. *Diwan-i-Hafiz*, p. 22
3. *Kulliyat-i-Oghalib*, II5
4. *Ibid*, p. 5I
Contrary to these poets, the Shaykh remains loyally adherent to the old and traditional style of Ghazal—both in ideas and in diction; and in every essential quality of a love-poem. His Ghazals have the same old ideas expressed in the same soft and sweet manner, without any razzle-dazzle of the latter-day poets' expression. His Ghazal is as simple and lyrical as those of the earlier day poets, like Rudagi. Read the following couplets of Rudagi; though they are from one of his famous Qasida, they are as lyrical as the best of the lyrics:

Does not the tone and expression of these couplets remind us of that great Persian lyricist, Sadi? All his Ghazals have the same soft expression, tender emotion and flawless diction as that of Rudagi. He never tries to change his mode of expression or to introduce fantastic similes and metaphors in order to give his Ghazals some originality. His love is

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I. Diwan-i-Rudagi, p 1029
love in its purest, tenderest and most innocent form, and his expression is in absolute harmony with his ideas.
He does not use novel and complicated similes in his verse to make it different and original. The of his beloved is nearly always ; the lips always or the eyes always ; and the is always .
But the surprising thing is that despite of its ornate language, modest similes and simple ideas, his Ghazal has a guileless charm of its own which is even more captivating in its simplicity than elegance and glamour. When we closely observe this phenomenal quality of his Ghazal, we realise that the Shaykh’s task is more difficult and challenging than of those other poets. They ‘create’ while Sai ‘revives’. They in their fervent desire to make their Ghazal striking and attractive seek the help of their imagination. They know that without it, they cannot put a new life in the age - old topics of Ghazal. So, failing to ‘revive’ they ‘create’. Their efforts are, no doubt, marvellous and we can give them the credit of being imaginative and original; but we cannot attribute to them that magical, Messianic touch of our Shaykh which can transform a withered and faded rose into a fresh and colourful blossom.

The following examples will show how the Shaykh’s Ghazal, because of its simplicity and unaffected style, appeals to us more than the ornate and elegant compositions
of the other Ghazal-writers.

According to the definition of lyricism, the language of a lyric is spontaneous, direct, lively, simple, unpolished conversational with rough edges and round corners.

The language of Sa'di's Ghazals comes miraculously close to the above definition: it is simple, spontaneous, and possesses a dialogue like quality. By 'dialogue-like' we mean that his language is as spontaneous, simple and fluent as the spoken word. Not only this, it has the same casual carelessness ('rough-edges') of the spoken word. While going through his Ghazals, we do not feel that the poet has composed each and every syllable most carefully and painstakingly instead we find a kind of careless grace, a casual manner, a purely conversational style. It lacks the artificial ornamentation of every sort. The poet expresses

1. Kulliyat p. 552
2. Ibid, p 607
3. Ibid, p. 702
his genuine feelings in a simple and genuine way -- not as if he is composing poetry, but as if he is 'talking'.

Here are a few couplets to drive home the point:

1. Kulliyat p. 557
2. Ibid, p. 537
3. Ibid, p. 535
4. Ibid, p. 581
5. Ibid, p. 643
Sa'di's diction is so purely conversational that it even has the same grammatical casualness which is characteristic of the spoken word. For example, Sa'di often changes the order of words and puts them in a slight disorderly way as we normally do in our conversation:

Here he should have said, instead of splitting the sentence and putting the verb between them, as we do in our conversation (i.e.):

An intelligent and sensitive reader will feel what a great difference this small alteration has made and how spontaneous and natural the phrase has become:

Here also he splits, giving the couplet a dialogue-like quality.

The proper order of the words was: but Sa'di has changed it and said. Sometimes he changes the numbers of personal pronouns, using in the first

1. Kulliyat p. 574
2. Ibid. p. 575
3. Ibid. p. 574
hemistich and \textit{in the second, or, changing with} or changing with \textit{with} or changing with \textit{with}.

In poetry this is called \textit{and it has been used quite frequently by Urdu and Persian poets}. Says Ghalib:

\begin{quote}
\textit{\ldots}
\end{quote}

Here the poet has changed third person singular with first person plural. But Ghalib is not as natural and spontaneous as Sadi is in the following couplet:

\begin{quote}
\textit{\ldots}
\end{quote}

Sadi's change of \textit{and} \textit{is as natural and effort-less as it is in conversation} unlike other poets who use \textit{in a most inadequate and awkward way}. Sadi uses it in such an easy and casual manner that it does not seem even intentional or deliberate. It fits in so naturally with the texture of his diction and the general temperament of his poetry that he does not even

\begin{quote}
I. \textit{Kulliyat} of Ghalib, p. 53
2. \textit{Kulliyat} p. 575
\end{quote}
offer a \( y \), which is otherwise necessary for

Instead, he changes the \( y \) frequently without a

(as we normally do in our conversation) and gets away with it.

Sometimes Sadi alters the usual pattern of a sentence

and writes it exactly as it is used in conversation:

Here the correct order of the sentence is:

Sadi with this slight

In this couplet, he omits the \( \) and

\( (\) , the correct order should have been;

These changes appear to be trivial but added together,

they give his Chasal a most pleasant effect, the effect of

Sadi's passion for simple and natural diction makes

his deliberately avoid even very mild ornamentation. Take

the following example,

\[ \text{(3)} \]

I. Kulliyat p. 576
2. Ibid, p. 576
3. Ibid, p. 588
Both \( \text{r} \) and \( \text{^r} \) are a thing to be tasted and if the poet wants to verify whether the lips and mouth of his beloved are as sweet as \( \text{J} \), he can do it only by kissing them -- not by embracing. So here the poet should have said that he will verify it by kissing his beloved, instead of saying [something].

But no, the Shaykh does not want even the slightest trace of deliberate manipulation of words in his diction, so, although, the idea itself demanded it, yet he intentionally overcomes the temptation and simply says [something].

This simplicity and deliberate omission of word-play is quite a common factor of Sadi's language; (in fact, it is the recurrence of this omission which shows that it is deliberate not accidental.) Sometimes the Shaykh deliberately omits something in his couplet, as in the following [something].

Here the poet does not say that only his beloved's brows have this [something]. He simply says that the eyebrows of even the most beautifully painted faces on Satin and Silk lack this [something] -- leaving the rest to the imagination of the reader. This omission is calculated and deliberate and it serves two purposes: firstly, it gives the couplet a natural and casual effect because in conversation too we often omit certain things; Secondly, and this is more subtle point.

I. Kulliyat p. 388
he plays up to the reader's imagination and leaves it to him to understand what the poet has not said in the couplet. He knows that ـ is better than ـ and that slight vagueness makes a composition more poetic and more enjoyable. Take this couplet:

Here the poet simply inquires whether the night-watchman has struck the morning hour sooner? And whether the birds have got up early. The rest he leaves to the reader's imagination; that he is with his beloved and does not want the night to end.

Here is one more example:

In this couplet also Sadi does not say that it is his beloved's letter which the bird might be carrying. He only suggests it by ـ so that the reader may imagine the rest — that the poet is familiar with the bird so it must have brought his beloved's epistle in the past.

These were a few examples to show how the linguistic beauty of a Ghazal can be enhanced by this subtle and deliberate omission. But one thing must be borne in mind

1. *Kulliyat* p. 537
2. Ibid. 555
that to acquire the desired effect, the poet must have our Shaykh's keen, perceptive and sensitive mind so as to know what to say and what to omit; otherwise his verse will be a true example of

iii. Sincerity:

In the earlier part of this dissertation, we have seen Sa'di the humanist, possessing this basic and intrinsic quality of a true humanist - sincerity. Now we see the same quality manifesting itself most superbly and magnificently in his Ghazals as well, whether he is extolling the beauty of his beloved, describing the tortures of separation, narrating the bliss of meeting his mistress, his tone is always so transparently sincere that we cannot help being touched by it. He does not unnecessarily magnifies his feelings and his tone is always mild. In this respect, he is totally different from the other Ghazal writers who, with their fantastic similies and elaborate narration exaggerate their feelings to the point of incredibility. Their Ghazals become (what they wanted them to be), specimens of their poetic art and imagination. But the masterpieces of those master artistics lack the warmth and emotion of a pure lyric. These poets failed to appreciate
that love is the finest, purest and the most tender of all human emotions, so it must be expressed in a soft, simple and genuine way, with just a light touch of imagination. Otherwise, it will lose its naturalness, and genuinity.

Sa'di, being well aware of this fact, never spoils the beauty of these fine sentiments by over elaborating them. His Ghazals are the best specimen of sincerity of ideas and sincerity of expression. Curiously, subject matter also has a hand in increasing or decreasing word effect. If thought insincere, it clashes with the simplicity and direction of language and mars the total effect. If thought sincere, without cunning or clever turns and twists, it harmonizes with the lyric's simple and direct diction. The most striking feature of Sadi's Ghazals is this perfect harmony of ideas and emotions. He says what he feels, without any conscious or deliberate effort to beautify his expression or to introduce new and original ideas. It is because of this sincerity of tone that the reader feels closer to Sadi than to any other Ghazal writer. One may feel 'fascinated' by them, but he is 'touched' by Sadi. He does not put Sadi on a pedestal to idealise, instead, he feels a sort of mental rapport with him and this attracts him more towards the poet. Sadi's apped can best be described
the famous words:

If he says that his heart is aching for his beloved, his tone will be so soft his expression so sincere that we will feel his ache in our own hearts. Let us take the following couplet of the Shaykh:

\[ \text{کریم ایستین بیسرب دادار} \]

The idea behind this couplet — that the lover should not offend his beloved — is age-old, but here it has acquired a fresh charm by the simple and straightforward manner in which Sadi says it: why will he not offend his beloved? For the simple reason that "

or, take another couplet:

\[ \text{سُحابَتُ اوزومَ نَفْسِيَاتُ} \]

is also one of the most common topics of both Persian and Urdu poetry and one cannot really imagine how can it be described so as to appeal to the reader? But Sadi's naive query in the second hemistich

is so disarming in itself that the reader completely forgets the banality of the complaint and feels intense sympathy for the unfortunate lover.

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1. Kulliyat p. 535
2. Ibid., p. 710
This is also quite a common topic of the Ghazal: The lover always resolves that he will try to forget his cruel beloved, but he is helpless against her irresistible charms. Sadi also says the same thing here but with such simplicity that the reader, because of this very lack of any sort of elaboration, is at once convinced that the poet is really helpless. Take another example:

This entire Ghazal is the wail of the aching heart of an unfortunate lover who has been jilted by his beloved. It is obvious that he is suffering, but he never uses one harsh word, never tries to describe his pain by fantastic similies and metaphors, never even says what agony he is going through; he merely states the fact that

I, Kulliyat p. 596
2r 1344

But, in spite of this lack of elaboration, his grief and disappointment are so acute and genuine that they run like an undercurrent in the whole Ghazal and the reader cannot help being touched and feeling sorry for this simple and honest man. Just compare these couplets with the following آنات of Khaqani and the difference between the two will strike you at once:

The above couplets can be said to be a good exercise for our imagination, but they are definitely not the cry of a broken heart! One more example from Sadi's famous Tarji' Bani:

I. Diwan-i-Khaqani, p. 542
2. Kulliyat p. 536
You have seen a sad Sadi, bewailing his separation from his beloved, now see him in a happy mood also — and how he keeps his tone balanced even while drinking that most intoxicating of wines —

Another occasion where our poets lose their balance and sense of proportion is while praising the beauty of their beloved. They praise her almost to the point of dehumanizing, choosing most intricate and complex similes and metaphors. In their frantic effort to make their beloved 'unique', they come out with most for fetched -- and sometimes even absurd -- ideas! For example, take Khaqani:

I. Divan-i-Khaqani, P
I. Kulliyat1601
But even here our lyricist is not carried away, and is as sincere and honest as always. He too is fascinated by the flawless and ravishing beauty of his beloved and praises it most ardently in his Ghasals, but he always uses modest and simple similes and metaphors: The of his is nearly always or \( \frac{1}{x} \); the lips always or \( \frac{1}{y} \); the always \( x \); and the is always \( y \).

The following examples will suffice to prove this:

\[
\begin{align*}
1. & \quad \text{Diwan-i-Khaqani, p. 48} \\
2. & \quad \text{Kulliyat p. 611}
\end{align*}
\]
1. کلیه‌ایت پ. 681
2. همان، پ. 681
3. همان، پ. 683
These are just a few examples, picked up from the Shaykh's Diwan, but these will suffice to prove that Sadi never exaggerates even the beauty of his beloved; he uses nearly the same similes of et cetera. Over and again, but with such genuine emotion that the reader can almost visualise his beloved. A thousand verses glorifying the beloved's beauty cannot equal this simple, innocent, and honest statement of the Shaykh:

But even here Sadi is delightfully different! He wonders whether his beloved is really matchless in beauty or is it that she has got a special appeal and attraction for him?

1. Kulliyat p. 772
2. Ibid p. 683
His charmingly naïve query is most captivating in its sheer sincerity:

He is so honest and sincere that he himself realises that it is his love and affection for his beloved that makes her so attractive to him:

Two more examples to prove our point:

iv. Word-Play

Another important factor of Sa'di's Ghazals is his marvellously controlled word-play - the most common and the

1. Kulliyāt p. 682
2. Ibid, p. 565
3. Ibid, 568
4. Ibid, p. 534
most favourite device of the poets to beautify their verse.

Unfortunately, word-play is one of those beautiful arts of poetry that has suffered most wretchedly at the hands of most of our poets. It is a fine poetic quality which if applied intelligently and proportionally can really enhance the beauty of a poetic composition. But our Persian and Urdu poets in their over-whelming zest for this particular style got so obsessed with it and carried it to such an extent that it became a blemish, not a beauty-spot for their verse, specially the latter-day poets were the worst victims of this inadequacy, and their verse—instead of being piquant and interesting, became almost funny! Take the following couplets:

In all the above couplets, the language overshadows the thought. The poet has been so engrossed in 'Wordy concept' that he has overlooked the 'thought concept'! This misbalance of language and ideas is the worst defect of a poetical composition. In poetry, as indeed in all literature,

I. Diwan-i-'Urfi, p. 423
balance means a harmony of word and idea, of expression and subject-matter, of form and concept. The verbal covering should not stretch. Under the stress of an expansive idea, and, conversely, the concept should not be allowed out from the centre of attention by an unproportional strutting of words. An over-stuffing of meaning results in vague connotation; an over-stressing of words lessens the thought content. Then words, apart from their denotations, have suggestive values also. These values count very much in poetry. They should neither be over suggestive, nor under-suggestive but should cut the right balance between these two opposites. This is what we mean by poetical balance.

The Shaykh's Ghazal is a beautiful manifestation of this harmony of word and idea and of this poetical balance. His idea never strained his language, his language never overshadows his thought and his poetry is the most happy combination of the requisite gracefulness of 'word' and 'meaning'. This same sense of poetic balance makes the Shaykh to apply word-play to the best advantage. His word-play is so restrained and natural that instead of stifling his thought, it adds to its beauty, giving his verse a fresh glow - a glow as natural and charming as the beautiful blush of a rosy-cheeked maiden. He uses the word-play only
to the extent where it ornaments his poetry and assists in bringing out the hidden beauties of a particular idea; his keen and sensitive mind knows where to draw the line -- where to elaborate and when to stop. 'Ali Dihiti, that famous says:

This characteristic control over his word-play makes the Shaykh delightfully different from other poets. In fact, the word-play in Sa'di's verse is so natural and spontaneous and so much in harmony with his ideas and emotions that at first glance, we may even altogether miss it in his couplet. And it will be only after analysing it critically that we will notice or some particular phrase or word having a special significance there. But even then it seems as if the poet has not consciously and contrived it, and it is there just as a happy coincidence. For example, take the following couplet:

The word has been used thrice here and the words of are complimentary to each other, bid this

1. Qalamraw-i-Sa'di, p. 339
2. Kulliyat p. 573
never interferes with the idea the Shaykh wants to convey (that he never wanted to fall in love but now, after falling for his beloved all that conceit has gone out of his head) because not a single word is superfluously used, all of them have a direct bearing on the central idea of the couplet. Compare this couplet with the following of Khaqani and you will notice the difference. It has been taken from his famous Ghasal which he composed in memory of his deceased wife:

What the poet wants to say is that his wallings are like the crying of a dove in the morning. The phrase of and the word of are totally useless here because they have nothing to do with the idea of the couplet; has been used for for its contrast with , and the phrase of is only to provide the requisite words for this particular rhyme.

In the following couplet, Sa'di used the words of in their genuine meanings and they are so necessary for conveying his idea to the reader, that one cannot notice the in this couplet:

1. Diwan-i-Khaqani p.
2. Kulliyat p. 378
This restrained word-play shows us one more quality of Sa'\dii: avoidance of in his poetry. He himself takes pride in it, and says:

He uses only those words and phrases which are necessary to express his idea -- not a single word more, not a single word less; and his couplets are so complete in themselves that if we want to describe the same idea in prose, we will not be able to do it as effectively and in so few words, as the Shaykh has done. Take the following couplets:

Here are some more couplets to show Sa'\dii's beautifully natural word-plays:

1. Kulliyat p. 809
2. Ibid, p. 545
3. Ibid, p. 677
4. Ibid, p. 693
1. کلییات: صفحه 539
2. همان جمله: صفحه 570
3. همان جمله: صفحه 570
4. همان جمله: صفحه 548
5. همان جمله: صفحه 718
6. همان جمله: صفحه 718
7. همان جمله: صفحه 718
1. Kulliyat p. 335
2. Ibid. p. 714
3. Ibid. p. 567
4. Ibid. p. 557
2. **Subject - Matter:**

After discussing the lingual qualities of the Shaykh's Ghazals, let us now see what is the prevalent topic or subject matter of his lyrics, (i.e. his Ghazals).

Love is the one and sole topic of Sadi's Ghazals.

As 'Ali Djusti says:

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But before entering into the discussion of the forms of love he deals with and the manner of his dealing, we should first understand the nature of that love itself.

Sadi is the lover of Divine Beauty. But in his case both that Beauty and love appear in entirely human forms. He applies the attributes of human beauty to his Divine Beloved in such a way that often the reader falls in doubts about his real intent. Occasionally, he is somewhat merciful; he writes a series of many verses in this strain and in one of them he puts in a clue as to his real meaning. As all those verses are topically connected, when one is seen to relate to محمد، the rest are also assumed to be so. For example:
In the above piece upto the fourth verse we do not know if the poet is driving at \( \text{XXX} \) or \( \text{YYY} \); he may be talking about either. Then comes the fifth verse, supported by the sixth, which resolves our doubt and assures us that we are in the world of Reality.

But from this a bewildering question arises. What are we to say of those ghazals -- and they form the majority -- which lack any explaining hint? Are they to be taken in \( \text{XXX} \) or \( \text{YYY} \)? They are extremely passionate and the passion seems earnest and sincere. There is no historical basis to suppose that the Shaykh was an amorous man in the carnal sense. On the contrary, notwithstanding an occasional passage of love-play as in the mosque of Kashghar or an affair in the early youth, the internal evidence of his works and the testimony of his contemporaries are assurances enough of his piety and chastity. A voluptuous libertinus, as his ghazals would

I. Kulliyat p.601
represent him to be if they were related to carnal love - we say such a libertine could never be honoured like the Shaykh in the assemblies of nobles and kings. A galliard could not be the conscience-keeper of the Sahib-Diwân; nor would he dare to give lessons in piety to Ankâyânû and the Atâbâk. Such fearless preaching needs matching practice. Indeed, Sadi’s preachings would have lacked their universally-acknowledged ring of sincerity had he been a loose man.

So, what are we to conclude from all this? First, let us briefly re-state the case. We see that most of Sadi’s ghâzals are intensely amorous in the carnal sense, without the least hint that in reality their subject is mystical love. Secondly, we hope we have proved that Sadi was an extremely chaste and upright man. Then how are we to reconcile these anomalous facts? To the present humble writer the obvious and the only answer to this riddle is that, hint or no hint where the balance of probability does not palpably incline to النَّطَاقُ، we should regard all such ghâzals as relating to الرَّحْمَةُ. The Shaykh’s Divân of Ghâzal is nothing but a collection of short allegories about man’s love for God. And as it is not necessary for an allegory to contain its own interpretation — some of the most famous and most successful ones like those of Swift do NOT contain their explanation within them — we should not seek this interpretation in Sadi’s ghâzals as well. Indeed, the most successful allegory is that which makes itself
understood without such aids. An explaining clue takes away from its reality and mars its effect.

These allegorical productions of Sadi are entirely different from the minories of the other mystic poets. Their make-belief efforts with their ﷺ and ﷽ and ﷱ and ﷵ and do not succeed in humanising the Divine Beauty; their portrait only resemble a canvas of Abstract Art. It is not so with the Shaykh. He is a man of clear vision. His eye penetrates to the fundamental dualism of God and man. He knows that the end of all true love is unification or ﷤. He realises that so long as the duality of divine and human natures remains, there can neither be any love nor hope of ultimate unity between them.

So he destroys that duality. To a devoutly pious man like the Shaykh it was irreverent to raise humanity to the level of Divinity. But it was permissible theology and praiseworthy Sufism to conceive a human manifestation for God. From the above dualism this latter was the escape chosen by the Shaykh. He thought there was no irreverence implied in this. In his eyes, for his Precious Beauty his own heart was a better throne than the Eupyrean. There was no question of higher and lower levels, but of less and more befitting habitation.

And lyricism should rejoice at the Shaykh’s solution of this conflict. For the metamorphosis of the Divine into human love enriched the world literature with some of its
best lyrics -- not some, but many hundreds. It also eased
the way for the Shaykh's critic. For now, instead of dealing
with love under the two subdivisions of human and divine,
he can fuse them into one. And the result of this fusion
should be simply called Human Love -- a thing more understand-
able by the human mind, more agreeable to the human heart.
Obviously, this same head will also cover those occasional
verses in which, as was pointed out earlier, the balance
of probability palpably inclines to ٣٠٠٠٠٠٠٠. Because of his
intense passion for God, Sadi's anthropomorphic seal is so
full and final that it transforms ٣٠٠٠٠٠٠٠ into ٣٠٠٠٠٠٠٠ and
leaves any effort to deal with them separately. So, in
our following discussion as well, it will be Human Love which
will be dealt with as one of the topics of Sadi's ghazal.
Of course, the reader should everywhere keep in mind the
Shaykh's allegorical sense and the essential dualism behind
this apparent unity.

I. In the cautious world of scholarship eye-brows are
always - and rightly-raised at oddities. The present
writer confesses that the opinion expressed above is
unconventional. She also does not insist on its correctness, but she humbly yet strongly insists on one seminal point. In all the ghazals of Sadi, with very few exceptions, the beauty as well as the love is of one uniform kind. The two may be everywhere real, or they may be everywhere allegorical. But whether real or allegorical, they are everywhere the same. So either the Shaykh was most fervent mystic, or the most licentious libertine, ever produced by Persia. Perhaps the devotees of this pious soul would prefer to subscribe to the former view.
Now that we have established the nature of love dealt with by Sadi, we should discuss the object, the forms and the constituents of that love.

I. Beauty - After dilating on Sadi's love, the first thing to be considered, and considered carefully, is the Beauty which is the centre of that Love. We have written the initials of both these words in capitals here. For in Sadi's case it is not common love and common beauty with which we are dealing. As his Love is a unique mixture of the mystic, the platonic and the passionate, so the Beauty which is that Love's object is singularly compounded. It is of the flesh, yet has a spiritual airiness about it; it is of the earth, yet is surrounded by the moon's halo; it is human, yet seems beyond the reach of man. Indeed, this matchless portrayal of Beauty is a miracle of Sadi's lyrical pen. He has given us Beauty the most superb, the most perfect, in flesh and blood, inwardly and outwardly human. But it is not approachable. You may love it, but you may not touch it. You may adore it from afar, but you cannot press it in your embrace. It is not holy by any means, but it cannot be polluted by profane passion. And the Reason? Because it is the abstraction of all that is graceful and handsome, dainty and delicate, pure and bright, soft and sweet, angelic and heavenly in the world. It is not a beautiful
person, but the very Idea and Ideal of Beauty which the mighty genius of this painter has portrayed. Persian poetry has a galaxy of the great and the famous. Ransack their books; rummage through their leaves for a parallel. your search will be in vain. This is a fully considered claim and stands proof. In the following pieces three poets describe beauty. The first is a ghazal by Sadi, selected at random as the proverbial The second and third are famous pieces from Nizâmi and Khusrav respectively praising the beauty of Shirin.

I. Sâdi

I. Kulliyât p. 666
2. **Nigsâmi**

3. **Khusrawi**

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1. *Kulliyât, Khamse-i-Nisâmi, p. 371*
2. *Shirâzen Khusrâw Aşâr Khusrâw Dehlâvi, pp. 303-305*
It is a waste of breath to stress the obvious. The Idol of Sadi, despite her \( \text{س} \) and \( \text{س} \), seems as aloof as the gods themselves. Even desire falters to approach her sublime purity. The whole piece is nothing but an elaboration of her innocent simplicity mentioned in the last line.

To compare with this, what have we in Nizami and Khusraw? we have beauty voluptuous, not sublime; be decked and adorned, but hardly adorable; a thing for the senses, not for the soul. And in spite of the freezing of lust in the one (\( \text{س} \)), and the flourish of a soaring mace by the eyelashes in the other \( \text{س} \), their fair enchantress seems NOT unapproachable, but only standoffish. And how could it be otherwise when it willingly surrendered herself to a confirmed voluptuary like Parwis?

So far we have only dealt with the outward form of Sadi's Beauty. We should now try to discover its nature and character. Here we find a conflict. After painting his Beauty in such sublime colours, tradition compelled the poet to give her a stony heart. But the wonder of the thing is that in spite of this commingling of opposites we do not feel any collision of ideas. All the colours blend into a pleasing and convincing uniformity. The secret of the poet's success lies not far to seek. He so sublimates Beauty and invests it with such glory that he raises it to
the plane. He further buttresses its position by his own uncomplaining, nay, thankful, acceptance of its unjust oppression. Where there is no injustice felt, there will be supposed to be no injustice done. So there can be no decree of cruelty passed against Sadi's Fair oppressor.

An explanation is needed in the end. In the discussion of Sadi's Love we had conjectured that its centre was the Divine Beauty to which he had given the human form so that he could humanly fondle and adore it. But now we say that the Beauty which Sadi loved was unapproachable on account of its sublimity. Are these two statements incompatible with each other? We think not. When Sadi humanised the Divine Beauty he found the result to be more than human, if less than divine. He was attracted by its humanity, but its Divinity overawed him. So he became a passionate lover and a devout worshiper at one and the same time.

2. Sincerity — Perhaps the simplest and shortest definition of sincerity is Active Truth. Truth is a passive fact. To act along or upon that fact — if only to believe in it firmly — is sincerity. Being a truth, it has no inside and out, but only an open transparency. As a truthful activity, it has no gyrations or twists. It is like a meteor, luminous in itself and illuminating its straight path.

In Sadi this sincerity of belief and action reaches its culmination. We had touched upon it when we were
discussing his language. We pointed out there that Sadi's language bore witness to the fact that he was a sincere man. Here we shall deal with the nature of his sincerity. It is a unity of thought and deed and word. It is the surrender of his entire self to a firmly held belief. No matter of his belief be false in its own nature; he subscribes to it so earnestly that it appears as an evident truth.

This better effect of Sadi's sincerity has made his lyrics what they are. It makes his wildest claims about the excellence of Beauty sound plausible. It makes his fondest extenuations of that Beauty's contrariness seem justified. It makes us not to laugh but to pity at his declaration of his own utter unworthiness for his Fair Love. This is the burden of his whole Diwan from which one specimen will suffice:

3. Surrender:

Another aspect of Sa'di's love is his unconditional and total surrender before his beloved. It is one of the

I. Kulliyāt p. 768
traditional qualities of the Ghasal writers of the Persian language, but Sa'di surpasses them all in his total self-abnegation and complete surrender. Sadi's beloved is lovely, delicate, charming innocent, but like the traditional of the Persian poetry, she is indifferent, rather cruel to her lover. She does not reciprocate his tender feelings, neither does she soothe the lover's bruised heart by her kind words. But Sadi has drank the cup to the full; he is so charmed by his beautiful beloved that even if she breaks off all ties with him, he cannot imagine of leaving her because:

This total self-surrender is the chief characteristic of Sa'di. He never complains, never utters one harsh word. The poet is deeply in love with his beloved and this overwhelming passion has taken hold of his whole existence. His beloved is to him, not less than a god and he bows before his loved-one with all the humility and fervour of a worshipper. He has reached the stage when the conception of 'self' is lost and the lover completely identifies

I. Kulliyat p. 613
himself with his beloved:

Sadi knows that his beloved is beyond his reach:

But the fact does not sadden his noble heart. To him even this satisfaction is enough that he is one of her thousand lovers. To him even this surrender, this longing for his beloved is pleasurable. He is willing to tolerate all the cruelties of his beloved, not because he is helpless, but because he does not think them to be cruelties; he thinks that the beloved has got every right to behave as she wants to and that her true lovers, like he himself, should never complain against her.

Even when he complains, he immediately compensates for it by some redeeming verse, such as this:

I. Kulliyāt p. 562
2. Ibid. p. 813
3. Ibid. p. 574
4. Ibid. p. 574
5. Ibid. p. 583
Love has given him such an eternal joy, such a sublime happiness that it cannot be abated by the worldly sufferings:

He inspires the beloved to be as cruel as she wants to be because:

His whole Diwan is permeated through and through with this spirit of self-abnegation and surrender. One cannot find even a single verse where the poet's tone is harsh or bitter. He is always happy, always smiling, always serene, loving his beloved, loving her cruelties, surrendering himself completely. He has done what he could to get the of his beloved, but he knows that he will never succeed in his aspirations, his beloved will never come to him. But the fact does not dishearten him, his is a selfless love, oblivious to any rewards, he is content with what he has -- the love for his beloved; he does not aspire for more, he has merged himself completely with his loved one so now what every she wishes for him is for the poet the height of happiness; and this surrender is not less intoxicating to him than

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I. Kulliyat p. 539
2. Ibid, p. 574
3. Ibid, p. 574
4. Patience:

In the Shaykh's Diwan this particular virtue attains its zenith and appears in its best form — thankfulness. As said in a previous discussion, Sa'idi raises his beloved to such a plane where even her cruelties are transformed into kindness. To Sadi, his beloved is a personification of beauty — beauty of form as well as beauty of ideas. She symbolises goodness and virtue. But, like every traditional beloved of the Ghazal, she is not kind to her lover. Inspite of all her softness, charm and loveliness, she is not soft and tendre towards her lover. She does not take pity on her love-lorn poet, neither does she comfort and console his aching heart. Instead, she showers her precious love on his rival and tells the lover to go away from her. But even all this cruelty and indifference cannot dishearten or sadden the poet and even when his beloved asks him to to away from her, he does not protest, the only thing he does is that he asserts his loyalty and tells her in a very soft and tender tone:

This softness is always there when the Shaykh talks about the cruelties of his beloved. In fact, the Shaykh does not
even consider them to be cruelties. He has sublimated his beloved and glorified her almost to the point of making her a goddess. How can a worshipper say that his goddess of love and beauty lacks kindness and compassion? The Shaykh too is so intoxicated with the ethereal beauty and illusive charm of his lady-love that he loves even her cruelties! He patiently, nay, not only patiently but thankfully tolerates her unkindness. He thinks that even this unkindness is a sort of link between him and his beloved, so he is thankful that at least she is not indifferent to him and there is some thing which links him humble self with his beloved. Sadi is like those who having faith in the theory of never complains to God for their miseries. They think that whatever God gives them, they must accept it. Same is the case with our Shaykh, he has total faith in his beloved so he never complains. The rather, he is thankful to her that at least she thinks him to be worthy of her cruelties -- and he takes pride in it:

He knows that ultimately this love will destroy him, but

I. Kulliyat p. 574
Even when he says how he is suffering for his beloved, his tone is mild, his expression soft -- he is not complaining, he is simply stating the fact:

His suffering does not even sadden him. Why should he be sad? He knows that love means suffering and this suffering is given to him by his beloved, so it is as dear to him as the beloved herself. He says that every man has some hope or happiness in his life, but to him enough to inspire him for living:

He says that even if his beloved kills him, he will not accuse her, not only in this world, but in that other world too:

Why? Because:

I. Kulliyat p. 574
2. Ibid, p. 571
3. Ibid, p. 559
4. Ibid, p. 583
5. Ibid, p. 585
To him a true lover is that who is so absorbed in his beloved that he neglects his own self:

غزه مباد شیوا با کریکا ای که از من با کافی که بودٌ

He further defines who can be said to be a true lover:

ز عاشقانی که شیرادی سرایی که شیرادی باشد امش ایم

In yet another Ghazal he describes how a lover should behave. The entire Ghazal is a lesson of surrender and patience:

یاز خواد چن بود که

He does not even tell his beloved what tortures he is going through in the love of her fair face. He only says:

سُر دوستی چون یک ترکیز نشینه که باشد پیش خودت باشد

Let us end this discussion by quoting from yet another Ghazal of the Shaykh. Every verse is a proof of his meek submission and total surrender:

I. Kulliyat p. 595
2. Ibid, p. 595
3. Ibid, p. 595
4. Ibid, p. 534
5. Ibid, pp. 638-39
5. Modesty:

As we have seen in the first part of the present essay, our lyricist was a humanist as well, and as the reader must be remembering, modesty and humility are two chief characteristics of a humanist — hence of the Shaykh too. To him modesty and humility are the two most remarkable qualities of a man. He is the poet who does not hesitate to teach the lesson of modesty to the crown Prince himself:

[Translation or transcription of the poetic fragment]

I. Kulliyat p. 226
Both his Gulistan and Bostan are full of such anecdotes that extoll the virtue of modesty. (The Shaykh has devoted two full chapters to , telling us to be modest and humble in life). In Gulistan and Bostan we find him to be an extremely refined man, possessing all the requisite qualities of a fine human being, and with a highly developed conception of 'self' -- a 'self' which enfolds the entire humanity in its vastness. A man who exalts man and has faith in the basic goodness of man, who thinks that man is a measure in himself and is the vicegerent of God on this earth. And the chief responsibility of this Son of God is towards his fellow beings: he must love them and care for them, he must be kind, compassionate and humbly modest.

A man who appreciates modesty so much and tells others to be modest, what heights of modesty he himself must have achieved! He is extremely humble and unassuming. And his modesty reaches its culmination while dealing with his beloved, his modesty becomes total self-effacement. As we said earlier, Sadi's beloved is to him an ideal of beauty and goodness. What can our Shaykh do (who is modest to wards even lesser individuals) but bow most humbly before this

I. Kulliyat p. 309
goddess of Love and Beauty.

This 'shyness' and modesty runs like a stream all through the Shaykh's Ghazals. Here are a few more examples:

I. *Kulliyat*, p. 778
2. Ibid., p. 781
3. Ibid., p. 672
4. Ibid., p. 580
5. Ibid., p. 544
6. Ibid., p. 537
Here the writer wants to draw the reader's attention to a very subtle point: The Shaykh often describes the beloved's cruelty and unkindness towards him. That cruelty never disheartens or discourages the Shaykh, neither does his intense love think it to be a blemish on his beloved's beauty. But the reader does not have that emotional attachment with his beloved which the Shaykh has; so he can see and feel how unkind and cruel she is. And when, in contrast to her indifference and cruel behaviour, he sees the Shaykh's unfailing loyalty and meek modesty, he loves and respects this humanist Shirazian all the more!

6. Optimism:

This is one of the most striking aspects of the Shaykh's personality, both as a humanist and as a lyricist. We have discussed his optimism as a humanist, now let us see how cheerful and optimistic is Sadi the lover and the lyricist.

Read his entire Diwan from page to page, may, from verse to verse, and you will find not even a single vista of gloom or darkness. The Shaykh's outlook is cheerful and optimistic, his vision clear and bright, and the things which are reflected in it, also partake of it brightness. He looks at this world with a sympathetic humour. He is never gloomy, never depressed, neither the miseries of
this world nor the cruelty of his beloved can dampen
his cheerful spirits. But this cheerfulness should not be
misunderstood as insensitivity. Sadi is an extremely
sensitive man and the miseries of this world and the fate-
licity of human existence affect him deeply. But it does not
make him an incoerigible pessimist like Khayyām, who in
helpless frustration, lost his faith in man and God, in
this world and in existence and turned a complete cynic.
His poetry is a cry of anguish from the poet's bruised
heart:

We find an undercurrent of this fatalism even in the Ghazals
of the Bulbul-i-Shirāz, though not as pronounced as in
Khayyām. Ḥāfīz too ponders upon the unpleasant realities
of this wretched world and his heart aches for the woeful
plight of man on this earth. He is also a pessimist, though
he does not cringe in front of this pessimism like Khayyām,
and tries to take the miseries and sufferings of man on
a more philosophical plane. He tries to forget it by
involving himself in wine and his beautiful beloved;
so the undercurrent of his pessimism and gloom when comes
on the surf ce, is not more than a soft ripple. But that

1. Rubā'iyat-i- khayyām, p. 29
ripple IS there — in the whole of his voluminous Diwan;
mostly in the form of a helpless resignation on one's
fate:

and sometimes resulting in a philosophic indifference for the
Imponderables:

But one does not find even this ripple of pessimism in our
Shaykh's Diwan. He is delightfully different from both
Khayyam and Hafiz. He too is affected by the apparent
anxieties of this world, by its miseries and sorrows by its
pains and tortures, but there is great difference between him
and the others: he never loses faith either in God or in man.
He never panics like Khayyam, never escapes from the
reality like Hafiz, he sees it all, feels it all, met with
a helpless detachment, but with a sympathetic smile on
his lips and an undying hope in his heart.

This cheerful outlook and optimism asserts itself
even in his relationship with his beloved. Inspite of her

I. Diwan-i-Hafiz, p. 69
2. Ibid, p. 106
3. Ibid, p. 18
cruel behaviour and indifference, the flame of hope never dies in his heart. He has total faith in his beloved (as he has faith in God.) However humiliating her behaviour is, the Shaykh is never disheartened or depressed. His tone is always cheerful, his hopes always high. Even when the darkness is complete and the gloom prevailing, he discerns a light, somewhere, somehow:

He is away from his beloved, she is not willing to even grant him a glimpse of her fair face, this tortuous separation, this painful indifference of the beloved is killing for the lover. But, in spite of all this he hopes against hope and thinks that one day he will be together with his beloved; he himself realises his folly but he cannot suppress his bubbling optimism:

He seldom complains, and even when he does, his tone is never bitter or harsh. He complains with a smile on his lips and a sweet and innocent wistfulness in his eyes:

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1. Kulliyat p. 534
2. Ibid, p. 554
3. Ibid, p. 552
Sadi is definitely not among those who say that 'our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts.' He, like a true lyricist knows that a good lyric is always cheerful and light in its tone. So he maintains the same light, soft, cheerful and melodious tone throughout his Diwan -- not a single harsh word is there to mar the sustained effect of cheerfulness and optimism.

Let us now end this discussion by quoting a few couplets from Sa'di to enjoy his cheerful and meadow tone:

1. Kulliyat p. 553
2. Ibid, p. 779
3. Ibid, p. 715
4. Ibid, p. 534
This was Sadi's love and how he dealt with it. His wonderful appreciation of beauty, his quiet and patient love, his total self-surrender, his sincere modesty, his cheerful and soft tone make him a lovable lover and his lyric, a charming song of love — the total effect is of sustained loyalty and boundless love. This effect is enhanced by one more fact to which attention must be drawn at this point:

Sa'di, unlike most of the other Ghazal writers, often dwells on a single subject throughout a Ghazal, or at least in two or three consecutive couplets. Generally in Ghazal all its couplets are an entity in themselves; usually an idea is initiated in the first hemistich, and developed and finished in the second hemistich; it has no link with the preceding or succeeding verse. In one verse the poet may be jubilant that his beloved is near him; in the next one he may lament the separation from his loved one; in yet another he may praise the beauties and charms of his lady-love, or may complain to the Saqi for not filling his cup; or he may even affect a complete round-about and may ponder over some gnostic or philosophical point! Surely the reader will be familiar with this traditional style of the Persian Ghazal, but here we are reproducing a
Ghazal each from Hafiz in its entirety to make our point clear:

As the reader must have noticed, each and every couplet of the Ghazal contains a new and different idea; and there is no continuity between them.

This age-old tradition of the Persian Ghazal which switches from one topic to another in every verse may be striking in itself and may capture the reader's attention momentarily, but it fails to sustain that attention and to touch the deeper core of the human heart and to retain a permanent place there. For instance, while going through a Ghazal, first we read a couplet in which the poet is bewailing his separation from his beloved, his tone is so sad and depressing that we feel a pang in our heart and prepare ourselves for a fuller and more pathetic and heart -

I. Divan-i-Hafiz, p. 32
rrending account of the poet's tragic love. But lo!
suddenly in the very next verse that sad and forlorn
lover is transformed into a happy and smiling man,
rejoicing that his beloved is near him! Our half-uttered
sighs die on our lips and for a moment we are totally
bewildered — and then we too, like the poet himself, forget
about his past misery. Like wise, the mood keeps changing
with every verse of the Ghazal. This constant change of mood
does not leave any sustained effect of particular feeling
and the reader begins to doubt the sincerity of the poet.

On the contrary, if there is only ONE prevailing
and dominant emotion in a Ghazal, (e.g. unrequited love,)
its intensity and poignancy increase and the reader is
convinced about the poet's sincerity.

Our Shaykh, being a lyricist to the very core of his
heart, realised this, so he often maintains a single mood in
his Ghazals or at least in two or three consecutive verses.
(In the opinion of the present writer, no other poet of the
Persian language has got such a large number of the single-
theme - Ghazals as the Shaykh). For example if he is de-
scribing his separation from his beloved, he composes couplet
after couplet expressing his hopelessness in love, his
agonies and his sufferings; he keeps on elaborating on them. A storm of unsuppressed emotion gushes forth from his heart, till the reader feels almost a physical pain; and when the Ghazal ends it leaves an everlasting impression of the poet's sincerity. Take the following example:

When the poet happily penned down his much-loved for meeting with his beloved, he persists on it till the very end, putting such intoxicating excitement and thrill in his poem that it literally thrives with emotion:

I. Kulliyat p. 596
2. Ibid, p. 601
We are writing below the Matl'as (along with the prevalent theme) of a few of Sadis Ghazal which run on a single theme (or at least have more than two couplets of the same topic):

I. Beauty of the beloved:

We are writing below the Matl'as (along with the prevalent theme) of a few of Sadis Ghazal which run on a single theme (or at least have more than two couplets of the same topic):

II. Separation from the beloved:

We are writing below the Matl'as (along with the prevalent theme) of a few of Sadis Ghazal which run on a single theme (or at least have more than two couplets of the same topic):

I. Kulliyat p. 541
2. Ibid, p. 576
3. Ibid, p. 548
4. Ibid, p. 556
III. Unrequited Love:

IV. Mysticism:

I. Kulliyat p. 748
2. Ibid. p. 587
3. Ibid. p. 633
4. Ibid. p. 678
5. Ibid. p. 564
6. Ibid. p. 564
SAĐI AND KHUSRAW

Compared as Lyricists
CHAPTER VI

SADI AND KHUSRAW COMPARED AS LYRICISTS

It is a study in comparison and a study in contrast. Between the Shaykh and the Amīr similarity and dissimilarity seem to attain their respective extremes. From about one half of the Amīr's Odes if we smuggle but one verse into the Shaykh's collection we are sure to be caught out. But we may judiciously assimilate the entire remainder of the Amīr's Diwan into the Shaykh's Kulliyat and no one would be the wiser. We shall discuss below the subject in this same order; i.e. we shall first point out the dissimilarities between these two master ghazal-writers, and then we shall dwell upon their similarities, while we shall defer to the last the question of how Khusrav's diversity of style has back-lished on his lyrical productions.

Now first take up the dissimilarities between Sadi and Khusrav. Broadly speaking, they are two in number: one belonging to the style of expression; the other related to the art employed in versification. We shall deal with them in this same order;
**Style** — By now we have become fairly well acquainted with the style of Sadi's ghazal. It represents the perfection and consummation of an evolutionary process. It is the finale of the same symphony which Rudaki in his 'ٟ٢٦٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢٢‌٢ at played so softly and so sweetly, and which was later taken up by the father and son - Jamal and Kamal. But with Khusraw it was otherwise: He played with Sadi, and he played on his own. And when he was working independently he was laying the foundation of a new poetical school. He was the sower of seeds, not a collector of harvest. It was he who originated the much-maligned still - admired أَنْ - And it is the intrusion of this أَنْ (and something else besides, of which more later) which destroys the unity of effect in his Diwan. With one hand he gently plays over a lovers guitar, and with the other he skilfully constructs the groundwork for the above-mentioned literary curiosity. Just as we have been bullied by the musician, the change and clatter of the mason shocks us out of our reverie. It need not be emphasised how essentially the أَنْ with its pioneering seal for the new contrasts with Sadi's mellow and almost archaism. But the point which needs stressing is that the originator of this أَنْ is neither Nasiri, nor Zuhuri, nor Nadjî nor any other latter-day poet of Iran or India. It has older and much more respectable credentials, for its inception can be traced right back to the Amir's Diwan. No doubt, it was
then, but in a rudimentary and undeveloped stage. Yet the same embryo was there and it only needed time to grow up into a full organism. A few verses from Khuzraw, each typifying some special and well-known feature of the above... will suffice to prove the point.

1. **Sibilal** - with a blend of the real and the fanciful;

2. **Sibilal** - entirely, and wildly fanciful;

3. **Elegance of Diction**

4. **Simulated Pothos**

5. **Impeleicious word collection**

Certainly these fanfares are a far cry from Sadi.

But equally certainly, these are the original notes whose echo we can hear in the verses of the...
The debut of such verses as well as their continual recurrence is the first characteristic which distinguishes the Amir from the Shaykh.

**Art** - The other point of difference to which reference was made earlier is the art of poetic ornamentation. Sadi uses it as a spice, for Khusrav it's often the food. Indeed, because of the Amir's hyperbolic zeal for it, the Art of words in him frequently degenerates into word-play. And he plays this game in every field, whether it be in prose or poetry, whether it be in a lyric or panegyric, a moral exhortation or an elegy, a tale of romance or a historical masnavi. Truly, the simplest way to express the difference between these two masters in the particular field is to point out that the prose master piece of the Shaykh is *سُلَامُ،* while that of the Amir is the *فِنْتَهَا.*

There is many a verse in Khusrav's Kulliyat whose origin seems to be not a 'thought concept' but a wordy concept. Even when dwelling on a topic as somber a mysticism and even when striving to rival a poet as sober as Nizami, he can be to frivolous as to write:

![](image)

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Occasionally when writing some superb lyric in the best tradition of Sadi, he suddenly catches sight of some particular word, having quipping possibility. He pounces upon it and "consigns the lyric to the limbo". He opens the following Ghazal with dulcet tones and touching wistfulness.

And all of a sudden his mind remembers:

Again, this Indian Sadi takes up his lyre and pours down this pathetic melody:

Till the fifth verse, all goes well, then he happens to write:

The mention of the fire and the burning and hissing firewood are irresistible temptation. His appetite for word play is excited and it cannot be appeased till he has served himself and the reader with this spicy fare. Sometimes his heated imagination works like an atomic reactor and world breeds word till we have a chain which seems to be endless. In a well-known ghazal the fifth verse contains the

1. Matla'ul Anwar, p
2. Divan-i-Khauraw, p.75
3. Ibid, p.392
Thus:

Now hear the sixth and seventh lines:

Khusraw's command of language has been unrivalled before or since, and he had an overbearing power of versification to boot. Sometimes this mighty combination leads him to excess. One sad and typical example will suffice. Everyone knows the superb compound simile which Nizami employed to describe the quivering speckle of the

Khusraw tries to surpass, or rather, to correct the Moulana and say the same thing in more appropriate words. In describing the vernal beauties of a garden, he writes:

No doubt, so far as literal exactitude is concerned he has outdone Nizami. The letters' has no comparable concept in the first hemistich, while Khusraw's well balances with the earlier . But has he really excelled Nizami? This is not a dissertation or Khusraw, as we need not enter into the minutiae of the case. It is sufficient.

1. Dahan-i-Khusraw, p. 471
3. Sharafuna, p. 169
4. Amanu Sadeq, p. 40
to point the difference between the phonetic values of Nizami's elegant خَبَط and سَبَط on the one hand and Khusraw's clumsy ْكَفَّار and ْكَفَّار on the other. Nizami has offered us a graceful verse; Khusraw challenges us with a tongue twister. The art of poetry consists partly of matching the words with the ideas. Both Nizami and Khusraw have set themselves to depict the image of constant, rhythmic motion. With the natural flow of words in Nizami that end is fully achieved with his halting verse Khusraw is self-defeating in his appointed task. There is a further point to note here. Both these masters desire to depict a regularly-beating light presenting a pretty visual pattern with the balanced rhythm of his verse Nizami has fully succeeded to produce this effect. But Khusraw with his jars and jolts miserably fails in the attempt.

Of course, there are understandable excuses for this superabundance of art in Khusraw. He has made ample redections too. He was not only a court/poet but a courtier as well. He served three dynasties and about three times as many kings. And he had to amuse and dazzle and dupe them all with the magic wand of his art. Kings, perhaps because of their preoccupation with matters which help them to remain kings, are not usually favoured with refined literary taste. They can bask
in the garish sunshine; they cannot enjoy the soft
twilight. Hence the never-ending quest of ornaments and
artifices by those who want to please them. This, in
the humble opinion of the present writer (as indirectly
supported by the Amīr's own confession which will be
quoted shortly), was the real source of all the
"Quips, and cranks, and wordy wiles" which are met with
in Khusraw.

And yet the Amīr was painfully aware that poetry,
like all perfectionist occupations, was a jealous task-
master and tolerated subservience to none but itself.
It is to the eternal credit of Khusraw that he realized
all this and hated the court life all the more for this.
In his Majnum-Layla he wistfully recalls the independence
of Nisāfī from king and court and his single-minded
devotion to the poetical Muse; and with anguishing
self-pity he points to the heavy yoke on his own neck:
But, loving or hating, Khusraw had to bear the yoke and trail along his weary way. To cater for the taste of an erstwhile slave who happened now to squat on the royal throne --- this must have been the torture for a man of Khusraw's exquisite sensibility. (Need the reader be reminded here of the majestic Sadi who, in the very first verse of the royal panegyric in Persian, could drench the king with this bucket of icy-cold water:

It is a suggestive fact of Persian literary history that none of its great poetical Quintuplet --- Firdawsi, Nizami, Rumi, Sadi and Hafiz --- had a permanent serving connection with any court. But, unhappily, Khusraw was not among those fortunate few. And his misfortune was all the more pitiable for he fully realised the malevolent effect of such bondage on poetical production. Where simplicity cannot please, affectation must needs

I. Kulliyat, p. 223
he employed. It was this violence against the genius of poetry of which Khusraw was painfully conscious and about which he so openly complained. Again to quote from his Majnam-Layla:

These lines are worth a close scrutiny. They express quaintly yet intelligibly, Khusraw's views about ornate and simple poetry. Let us paraphrase them in the first person like the original. Says he:

I wanted to imitate Nizâmi. And I knew that I was quite capable of it. (This is turning indeed a full round-about; for while Khusraw indulged so much in verbal Criticises.

I. Majnûn-Layla, p
Nizāmi's haughty disdain for them is well-known.) I abandoned my own style and surrendered myself to Nizāmi's Layla-Najmā. With my pen I sketched a copy (from Nizāmi) and set aside my own affectation (of style, i.e. I discarded my own affected style for Nizami's simplicity.) With facile fluency I washed off the paint and powder of the body-poetic, for these paint and powder are (the adjuncts of) an imperfect art and they have extended their name and fame through (being related to) my style (i.e. ornate poetry became famous not because it had any intrinsic worth but because it was my chosen style.) A captivating eye needs no collyrium. Conversely, it is fruitless to pencil with indigo a mis-shapen eye-brow (i.e. good poetry needs no art, and no amount of art can make good what is bad.)

Here we see an honest man indulging in self-criticism. He acknowledges Nizāmi's ascendancy over himself. He attributes it to Nizāmi's simple and direct diction and to his own inordinate hankering after artificiality.
and affection. He resolves to renounce for once in his 
Majnun-Layla his own style and to adopt that of Nizami
instead (with what results we shall see at the end of
this chapter.) That was the beginning and the end of
Khusrav's notorious verbosity. Let others blame him for
the Original Sin; we admire him for his ultimate repen-
tance and atonement.

We have now dealt with the two chief particulars
which distinguish Khusrav's ghazal from that of Sadi. It
is better to recapitulate them briefly. First we have
noted that while Sadi's ghazal is the culmination of the
style of Rudaki, Jamâl and Kamal, Khusrav's ghazal contains
the first buds and sprouts of the well-known .
The vital import of this contrast needs no stressing.
Secondly we have found that while the Shaykh's language
is simple, direct and unadorned, the Amir's writings are
often marred with affection, quips and worldly artifices,
sarificing the natural beauty of poetry to paint and polish.

But happily our story does not end here. Khusrav
was too great an artist not to realise where he defaulted
and not to amend when he erred. And all the lovers of
the Persian language should be thankful that it was so.
Had the energies of such a potent and plenteous genius
petered out on trivialities the literature of that
ancient tongue would have suffered both in amplitude and
quality. with deep wisdom and discriminating taste he
chose his models for the different varieties of poetry.

As to ghazal he went in plumb for our Shaykh. We can easily divine his meaning from the following modest lines in

\[\text{This choice of model, and not all the stuffings for the barbaric taste of the court in his Diwan, is the true measure of his poetical greatness. And he copied his model so faithfully that the replica is indistinguishable from the original. All traces of the } \text{are sloughed off; all shattels of word-magic are thrown away; and a new poet emerges robed in the grandeur of elemental simplicity and grace. Indeed, there is such a flagrant diversity in the two styles of the Amir that it might well give rise to a suspicion of poetic schizophrenia. But a }\text{ should know better. He should be a le to make out the apparent from the real, the natural from the assumed. The supreme poetic intellect which appeared in this sub-continent during the past millennium, the fiery-hearted }\text{ whose intercession}\]

I. Mathnawi Qurânu-Sa'dayn, ð
was the hope of salvation for the saintly ـ نَفَّذَا اِلَّهَ ـ we say that if such a mighty prodigy took up pen to write ghazal, would he, could he, put it down again without having equalled the very best in the class — the very best being in this case the lyrical master — creations of our own Shaykh? When thus inspired, Khusraw gets merged into Sadi, and no eye without the blessing of a squint can see them each apart. Of course, there are minor differences in their individual styles but they are mostly insignificant and serve only to set off their essential unity.

Incidentally, this identity of style found in the ghazals of the two masters absolves the present writer from dilating on Khusraw as a lyric writer. What has been written earlier in this connection about Sadi will suffice for Khusraw as well. When we have charted the sound it is needless to map the echo. However, to round off the present discussion as well as to point out the above-mentioned individual distinctions of style met with in Sadi and Khusraw, it seems proper to append a brief note on Khusraw as a lyricist also.

We have seen earlier that the chief quality of a lyricist is an intense love of beauty. We first discussed this matter in full where we discussed lyricism in general, and then we dealt with it in its particular application
to Sadi. Now let us see what the Amir has to offer us in this field. Read this ghazal:

And again:

We find Sadi's worship of beauty here, and we find something more. We discover that in each of the above two odes all the verses are strung on a single thread. There is a unity of idea which runs through them all. We suffer no mental jolts caused byconceptually disjointed lines. There is a facile and felicitous transition from verse to verse. We had witnessed this quality in Sadi. And we find it in equal measure in

1. Diwan-i-Khusraw, p.185
2. Ibid, p.18
Khusraw as well.

And in the second of the above two odes we perceive something else. It is one of those few happy instances where both the masters have written in same rhyme and metre. Khusraw's ghazal has been reproduced above, and it is enough to quote Sadi's opening lines only:

Let others hasten with their prisms and microscopes; we confess to detect no difference in the colouring and matter of the two specimens.

We had also earlier noted that the language as well as the tone of a lyric should be soft and sweet, so much so that even if a lover complained of his beloved he should do so without any palpable bitterness in his speech. We cited some instances of this from Sadi, and we can pile up an equal number from Khusraw as well. But for the sake of brevity we refer only to the second and third lines of the second of the above-quoted two ghazals, and then pass on to our next point.

We also observed before that a lyric's orientation was always subjective, and that even when it dealt with objective nature it did so only to express or suggest the emotional effect of nature on the poet. Sadi's sovereignty is rightfully recognised over this domain. But it is a

I. Kulliyat, p. 534
diarchy and not a monarchy, for we should not be unmindful of Khusraw's equally powerful claims. On this point also the testimony of the above two odes is decisive. However, if further proof be needed, after those two songs of vernal joy read this Persian "Ode to the West Wind".

While dwelling on Sādī we had also seen that even his treatment of mystical topics was typically lyrical. He did not soar up to heaven but brought down God to earth, for adoring Him and for cherishing Him; for singing His songs and pining in His love -- just as a simple earthly lover would do for his simple earthly darling.

Khusraw follows suit but here we find a slight difference. Divine love is so thoroughly personified by Sādī that often it is after considerable groping that we catch hold of his true intent. But Khusraw sometimes puts in a pointer in the form of a suggestive word or phrase. For example, read this glorious ghalam:

**I. Dīwān-i-Khusraw, p.74**
**2. Ibid, p.341**
It is all mysticism hidden behind a material veil. But in the master-verse of the ode Khusrav uses the phrase which partly raises the curtain and enables us to see within; thus:

Likewise, in another equally famous ghazal:

The problem of interpretation is solved by the final verse:

It is a small but notable difference, originating perhaps from the antecedents of the two poets. Sādī was a single-minded votary of the poetical Muse, while Khusrav was a disciple of the as well. It is difficult to pass judgment on such fine matters of taste. However, if Rūmī's maxim:

is to be compulsorily followed generally then it must be followed in detail as well. But in that case what will happen to Rūmī's own Mathnawi which is a veritable repository of unadulterated Sufi doctrine? It is a moot and veracious question.

There is one other point which distinguishes the Amir from the Shaykh. It is not related to lyricism but we should like to mention it here. Sādī loses himself totally and irretrievably into his beloved. The metamorphosis is final; for him there is no more an "I" but

I. Diwan-i-Khusraw, p. 341  
6. Mathnawi Ma'navi, p. 29  
only a "Thou". But the Amir (perhaps as private compensation for a courtier's public self-effacement?) often
talks egotistically. For example:

\[ \text{It is a lover talking of his love in the abstract, with} \]
\[ \text{reference to no other person loved or otherwise but} \]
\[ \text{himself.} \]

To complete this assessment of Khusraw as a lyricist it seems appropriate to gratify and to edify the reader with one of the best lyrical specimens to be found either in the poetical works of the Amir or, indeed, in the entire literary heritage of the Persian language. It is not a ghazal but the piece of a Mathnawi, but even so it is a lyric in the fullest sense of the word. (we must remember that the term lyric is related not to any particular poetical form but to the subject-matter and the mode of expression of poems compare the Lament of the Reed in the Mathnawi, which is a lyric by every canons of criticism.) It is the letter of Layla written to Majnun. The reader may remember that it was in this very Mathnawi of Majnun-Layla that Khusraw declared his intention of discarding his customary ornate style and

I. Mathnawi-Khusraw, p.29
2. Ibid, p.427
writing in simpler and more natural vein. Now see the fruit. Writes the pining Layla to her wandering Majnun:

...
This music effuses not from cords or strings; it comes out from the shreds of a torn heart.

This comparative study has reached its end at last. It has been a finely balanced affair, the scale now tipping this way now that. But our main question as to who carries the lyrical pain still remains undecided. We should make a final effort and have a closer and deeper look into the matter. Thus we shall discover that regarded simply as lyricists there is nothing to choose between Sadi and Khusraw. However, it will be seen that while Sadi is nothing but a lyricist Khusraw is a lyricist Khushies and something else as well. And this appendage, as it were, to the Amir's lyricism is his recurrent engrossment with words at the expense and to the detriment of his subject-matter. At such moments he seems to forget that his affectation is clogging the fountain of his inspiration and his verse is falling into laboured ineffectuality. For lyricism with its simplicity and broad naturalness is the very antithesis of cant and artificiality. The alternation of emotional pathos and artistic playfulness in Khusraw were the total lyrical effect. It we see a person winking one moment and weeping the other the suspicion of imposture is fairly excusable. Such a double dye is calculated to put the sincerity and the integrity of the best poet in doubt.
We are not sure which window looks into the reality of his heart.

On the contrary, in Sadi we are never faced with this dilemma. There is no conflict either in his style or in his ideas. An unbroken unity prevails all round. Even where he employs art he seems to do so artlessly. A spirit of transparent and impeccable sincerity runs through his entire Kulliāt. And it is this truthful, natural and almost naïve approach to the affairs of love which makes him the supreme lyricist of the Persian language.