

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LOVE IN WRITINGS OF BAKHARZI AND JAMI BY FOCUSING ON THE ANALYSIS OF *LOVE TRACT* AND *THE SEVEN THRONES*

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Abstract

*Saif Al-din Bakharzi and Abf Al-rahman Jaami are two of well-known mystics who were born with the time distance of two centuries in the same geographical region, Iran's Khurasan. These two had enormous impact on the viewpoints of Persian speaking mystics. In Islamic mysticism, love is one of the concepts which heavily influences other issues. It has also been a sparkling issue in the oeuvre of these two famous mystics. Saif Al-din Bakharzi in *Love Tract* and Abd Al-rahman Jaami in *The Seven Thrones* have discussed these topics, and comparatively studying them can lead to a better understanding of the concept of love. In Bakharzi's system of thought, love is the humanity's essences in humans, and due to the hardship that the love of a human being to another human being (virtual love) can inflict, it may lead to the refinement (=keeping purity) of the self (=the self that invites the one to commit sin=ego), and transform into the God's love. According to Jaami's viewpoint which is indebted to Ibn Arabi's thoughts, love is the cause of creation all over the universe's phenomena, and virtual love (human's love toward God's creatures) can act like a bridge to the real love (human's love toward God).*

Keywords: *love, Saif Al-din Bakharzi, Abd Al-rahman Jaami, Love Tract, The Seven Thrones.*

Introduction

In Islamic mysticism and Persian mystic literature, love is a basic concept that plays a major role in understanding other concepts. The importance of attaining an appropriate understanding of this concept becomes clear when we realize that despite some general similarities in Islamic mystics toward this concept, each mystic had a distinct and special perspective about love. Learning the similarities and differences between the well-known mystics' understating of love can help us with a better appreciation of love.

In this study, the writers have put their efforts in exploring love from the two viewpoints of the two leading and influential mystics of Khurasan, Saif Al-din Bakharzi (586-629? AH) and Abd Al-rahman Jaami (817-898 AH), who were both from the same geographical area, and eke out the similarities and differences of their understating of love. Saif Al-din Bakharzi in *Love Tract* and Abd Al-rahman Jaami in *The Seven Thrones* have put forward their ideas about love in their own way. Thus, these two works can act as a mirror reflecting the two Khurasani mystics' ideas about love.

Literature Review

In Islamic mysticism, love has been a popular topic for scholars, and many papers and books have been written on the subject. Although papers and books which discuss love are too many to be put into a single paper, works which have discussed love based on the viewpoints of these two authors are not much in number, and especially in the case of Said Al-din Bakharzi, no work was found with such a topic. The works which have explored love based on Abd Al-rahman Jaami's ideas include: papers "Jaami's Thoughts in the Seven Thrones Couplets" by Hossein Sedghi (Sedghi, 1380: 119-154); "Jaami and the Problem of Love" by Baha Al-din Eskandari (Eskandari, 1390: 37-68); "Zoleykha's Love Pain; the Study of the Narratives of Yousef and Zoleykha in Three Works: Yousef and Zoleykha of Ferdowsi, Jaami and Khavari Shirazi (Jaami's work as the pivot)" by Zahra Hosseini (Hosseini, 1386: 77-87), "Love's Gold in Abd Al-rahman Jaami's the Seven Thrones" by Taghi Amini Mofrad

(Amini Mofrad, 1384: 134-144); “Divine Love in Jaami and Ibn Farez’s Poetry” by Vadad Al-zemousi (Al-zemousi, 1331: 167-178), “Love in Islamic Mysticism based on Abd Al-rahman Jaami’s Viewpoint” by Susan Ale Rasoul (Ale Rasoul, 1385: 157-177); “The Fire of Love in Five Persian Poem Collection” by Maryam Jalali (Jalali, 1389: 40-45).

There has been no comparative study of love from the perspectives of these two writers; furthermore, no study has been done on the love based on Saif Al-din Bakharzi ideas. In this respect, present paper is the first study which discusses love in Bakharzi’s view, and gives a precise understanding of his thought about love by a comparative study.

Basic Questions and the Methodology

The basic questions which have laid the foundation of this study include:

- a. What are the characteristics and attributes of love based on Saif Al-din Bakharzi’s viewpoint?
- b. What are the characteristics and attributes of love based on Abd Al-rahman Jaami’s viewpoint?
- c. What are the similarities and differences of these two perspectives regarding to love?

Based on these basic questions, and for acquiring the proper answers, three steps have been taken. First, the ideas of Saif Al-din Bakharzi about love is discussed; second, ideas of Abd Al-rahman Jaami about love is explored; and finally, the conclusions are drawn according the similarities and differences in the ideas of these two well-known mystics.

1. Exploring Love from Bakharzi’s Point of View by Focusing on *Love Tract*

Saif Al-din Bakharzi, born in 586 AH in Bakharz and died in 659 AH in Bokhara, was one of the well-known mystics and Sufis of the first half of seventh century. He was also the famous Sufi Khalifa, Najm Raazi (573-654 AH) (Afshar, 1341: 28). His birth place, Bakharz, is located in Khurasan, and west of Jaam (Moien, 1363: 226). As such, Saif Al-din Bakharzi and Abd Al-rahman Jaami both belonged to the same geographical area, and the understanding their differences and similarities with regard to love can be of interest. Especially when we consider the fact that Jaami wrote about Saif Al-din Bakharzi and his status in mysticism in his *Nafahat Al-ons* (Jaami, 1386:433). This shows that Jaami knew Bakharzi, and was well aware of his ideas.

About his education and learning, it has been said that Saif Al-din Bakharzi learned the basic sciences in Bakharz, and Fiqh, reading and interpretation in Haraat and Neishaboar. Later, he went to Kharazm to learn from Najm Raazi. In Kharazm, after proving his abilities to Najm Raazi who was the head of the Path of Kebrooyeh, Bakharzi became the Khalifah, and was sent to Bokhara as a representative of Najm Raazi¹. Evidences show that Saif Al-din Bakharzi lived in Bokhara until his death, and everybody in that city, ordinary people and royals, respected and believed in him (Afshaar, 1341: 35-36). Bakharzi’s influences in Bokhara was such that Atamolk Joveini (623-681 AH) in his book *The History of Imperialism* gives a glimpse of this issue. In it, he alludes to the fact that despite being a Christian, Mankugha An’s mother, Serghooti Beiki², dedicated a part of her wealth to the construction of a school in Bokhara, and made Saif Al-din Bakharzi its manager and mentor (Joveini, 1391: 605).

¹ Najm Raazi’s influence on the ideas of Bakharzi about love is also clear. Najm Raazi has a work called *Love and Thought Tract* in which he tries to discuss love like speakers, and as an anti-philosophy mystic, he takes love’s side by insisting on intuitive understanding (Mohedi, 1288: 167).

² Mankooqha An was the son of Tooli and grandson of Genghis, the Mongol prince who inherited kingdom from Giuk Khan in 648 AH, and ruled until his death due to illness in China in 657 AH (Azadmehr, 1382: 353-354).

The works which have been related to this eminent mystic are *Sharh Asma' Al-hosna*, *Vaga'e Alkhalva*, *Rasalat Vasia Al-safar*, a collection of quatrains, and *Love Tract* (Afshaar, 1341: 43). Here, we focus on *Love Tract* since its topic is love, and there is unshakable evidence that Bakharzi has written it. So, it can help us in appreciating this well-known mystic's ideas about love.

It can be inferred from *Love Tract* that Bakharzi's mysticism is related to love. This kind of mysticism was prevalent in fifth century and early sixth century in the East of Khurasan, and Bakharzi himself was the founder and preacher of such a mysticism. In this kind of love, love is not merely between humans and God, it includes the love between humans too. Bakharzi thought that the love differentiates humans from animals, and if humans could not appreciate love, even virtual love, they would be still animals. Thus, we read love stories between humans in *Love Tract*. It is due to his attention to human love and its acceptance that his mystic followers viewed love and loving as an acceptable issue and behavior as far as the chastity was preserved (PoorJavadi, 1380: 13-15).

Love Tract opens with a Hadith related to the Messenger of Islam, which confirms Bakharzi's idea that contrary to the viewpoint of mysticism, love is acceptable: "Anybody who falls in love and preserves his chastity, denies it and dies, will be a martyr" (Bakharzi, 1385:93). Based on Shafi'e Kadkani's book *Mysticism in History*, we should definitely consider Bakharzi a mystic who relied on Bayazid Bastamtami's method of Sufism. For more clarification it should be mentioned that Kadkani writes about four systems of thought which were prevalent in third century in Khurasan, and we can take them as the foundations of different types of mysticism and Sufis:

1. Keramiah Faith (Mohammad Ibn Karam as the leader, died in 255)
2. Malamatih Faith (Hamdoon Ghassar as the leader, died in 271)
3. Soofiah Faith (with full representation of Bayazid Bastai, died in 261)
4. Ashab Fotovvat Faith (Nuh Ayyar Neishaboori, died in second half of third century) (Shafi'e Kadkani, 1387: 22)

Hence, the focus on love, and an artistic and aesthetic view towards religion and creed is the differentiation point of Soofiah Faith with the leadership of Bayazid Bastami (Shafi'e Kadkani, 1387: 31). Although Bastami's influence on Bakharzi ideas is clear, his reliance on Abu Saieed Abu Kheir who was one of the pioneers of regulating Malamatiyya [belief in reproach] based on Kadkani's analysis, shows that Bakharzi's perspective on love is an aesthetic view and leans on somehow Malamatiyya viewpoint. In his work, Bakharzi remembers Abu Saied Abu Al-kheir in this manner: "I do not know whether you have met Sheik Abu Saie, or have heard of his merits as the one who erected the flag of Tariq (Path) in the country, Khurasan's Sheiks were envious of this majestically young man's increasing influence" (Bakharzi, 1385: 93). Also, by putting forward the idea that love causes people's reproach and leaves the person ruined, Bakharzi accepts Abu Saied Abu Al-kheir's ideas, and this shows that he was a follower of Abu Al-kehir's Malamatiyya view towards love. (Bakharzi, 1385: 97).

Such a view towards love confirms the proposal that from Bakharzi's perspective, love is not just directed towards God since such reproachful comment on the lover cannot be because of one's love towards God. We can explore Bakharzi's *Love Tract* to see that he cites the king of messenger's lovers (Muhammad, peace be upon him) who said if anybody falls in love, becomes impatient, cries for the sake of uniting with the beautiful beloved, experiences hardships, and tolerates abjectness and suffering, he will be able to conquer his ego who is his main enemy but introduces himself as a friend (Bakharzi, 1385: 98).

It is implied that Bakharzi considers the love of beauty as a cause of the suffering and humiliation of ego and cynical since it is followed by reproach. In Bakharzi's view, because this ego is itself the source of self-

centeredness and bewilderment, earthly love, by preserving chastity³, can play a crucial role in suppressing ego, and purifying the soul.

Based on a prevalent classification, bodily love is divided into two classes of love of color and love free of color. As such, love of color is for attaining the beauty and its cause is desire and sexual instincts. Whereas, in the love which is free of color, the goal is not the ownership of beauty. Actually the lover finds the beauty of the beloved as a mirror which reflects the beauties of the Lord. That is why some wise people call beautiful beloved who represents Divine beauty, the witness (shahed). Thus, in some mystics' ideas, the love free of color is sometimes called human's intermediate love towards God (Mohammadian, 1381: 391). Based on this view of love which is derived from Ibn Arabi's theories concerning "unity of existence"⁴, the love which is delineated in Bakharzi's work can be called bodily love free of color since his reliance on chastity and denial of ego indicates the love towards the absolute beauty which is a reflection of divine beauty.

2. Studying Love in Jaami's View by Focusing on The Seven Thrones

Abd Al-rahman Ibn Ahmad Jaami (817-898) was an eminent mystic, and an outstanding poet in ninth century. He was born in Kharjerd Jaam. His father Nezam Al-din Ahmad went to Harat for some business, and hence Jaami could attend Harat's Nezamie School, and learn science and technology of the day (Editor's Introduction, Jaami, 1386: 4). It is said that he was a member of the famous mystics in his time, and had the permission of Khajeh Baha Al-din Mohammad Bokhari, the leader of Naghshbandi dynasty, to preach and inspire. However, he despised the flashy mystics' ambition, and never tried to abuse his status to become famous. Also, he preached people against pretension (ibid: 8). Jaami was always critical of some of his contemporary mystics, especially those who employed pretension and false innovation to attract people's attention (Sedghi, 1386: 139).

Jaami *The Seven Thrones* consists of seven couplet collection called "Selselat Al-zahab", "Salaman o Absaal", "Tohfat Al-ahraar", "Sabhat Al-abraar", "Joseph and Zuleika", "Leili and Majnoon", "Kheradnameyeh Eskandari".

It should be mentioned that unlike Bakharzi and other Malamatiyyas, Jaami does not define love as the tool of being reproached. Although Jaami praises Malamatiyyas, he criticizes them for considering public in their approach towards love, and moving away from the first mystics who were so entangled in Divine love that they were not aware of public opinion (Shafi'e Kadkani, 1387: 36).

It is obvious that Jaami was influenced by Ibn Arabi's idea of unity of existence, and such an idea is all over *The Seven Thrones* (Sedghi 1380: 129). His view about love is also heavily indebted to Ibn Arabi's idea. He considers love as "the essence of creature's life" (Mofrad, 1384: 136). In the sixth throne of *The Seven Thrones*, "Leili and Majnoon", he speaks of the creation of the world by the means of love, and thinks that all the skies and the elements of earth are born of love (Jaami, 1386: 758).

For Jaami, love is the cause of humanity, and the heart without love's pain would be insignificant and useless (Amini Mofrad, 1384: 137). Therefore, in "Joseph and Zuleika", he poses that a heart free of love is not a heart, and body free of love's pain has no merit (Jaami, 1386: 593).

According to Jaami, logic cannot understand love (Amini Mofrad, 1384: 138), and intuition is the only path leading to the appreciation of love. So, he believes that thinking about love has not result but despair (Jaami, 1386: 208).

³ "The symbol of love in and the mask of chastity on face" (Bakharzi, 1385: 100).

⁴ Based on Ibn Arabi's ideas, unity of existence means the unity of the truth of existence, and the multiplicity of appearances and representations of this single truth (Rahimian, 1388: 120).

Another concept which has been stressed in *The Seven Thrones* is that God's love towards His creature is superior to that of His creatures towards Him (Amini Monfared, 1384: 139). As such, In "Selselat Al-zahab", Jaami takes God's love towards humans to be superior to human's love towards God, and called human's love towards God the shadow of God's love towards human (Jaami, 1386: 250). In fact, according to Jaami's view, it is God's beauty that is reflected in on the face of beautiful beloveds (Sedghi, 1380: 127). That is why all earthly love in Jaami's *The Seven Thrones* end up in divine love. It can be assumed that using Ibn Arabi's idea of unity of existence, Jaami believes every colorful and beautiful face to be a tinge of the real Beloved's light (Amini Monfared, 1384: 141).

If love does not lead to the divine love, it will not acceptable for him because he believes that "Nothing but Him should find home at heart" (Sedghi, 1380: 129). However, virtual love is a bridge to real love in Jaami's *The Seven Thrones* (ibid 135). In order to transform virtual love into real love, there are three stages in Jaami's work: a. the stage of self-love, b. the stage of loving the beloved, c. the stage of loving Love. In the first stage, the lover loves himself, desires the beloved for his own enjoyment, and is not freed of vanity. In the second stage, the lover learns to put away his self-centeredness, and desire what the beloved desires. Here, he is happy when the beloved is happy, and he is sad when the beloved is sad. The third love is such that the lover forgets himself and the beloved. He is so drowned in Love. It is in this stage that the lover reaches the highest form of love which is the divine love (Al-zeimoosi, 1331:169-171).

3. Conclusion and the Comparative Study of Love from the Viewpoints of Jaami and Bakharzi

To pinpoint the main difference in Jaami and Bakharzi's ideas about love, we should consider Bakharzi's focus on the disgrace caused by earthly love, and as a result, the suppression of ego. This is because Bakharzi is devoted to Malamatiyya and for him, earthly love causes the humiliation of ego and leads to people's reproach. In turn, the humiliation of ego results in purification and preparation for accepting God's love (Bakharzi, 1385: 98). Although Jaami praises Malamatiyya, he criticizes their thinking system and avoids their methods (Shafi'e Kadkani, 1387: 36).

Insisting on Ibn Arabi's theory of the unity of existence, Jaami thinks that love is the essence of the flow of existence in the universe (Jaami, 1386: 758). He stipulates that divine love enjoys a higher status compared to earthly love, so that humans' love of God is inferior to God's love of humans (Jaami, 1386: 250). Humans' love towards other humans, in Jaami's idea, can lead to the divine love, otherwise, it should not be considered at all (Sedghi, 1380: 129). This perspective is evident in *The Seven Thrones*, where in the love of humans toward each other, there are clearly three transitory stages of love: a. the stage of self-love, b. the stage of loving the beloved, c. the stage of loving the Love (Al-zeimoosi, 1331: 169-171).

It is true that Jaami's idea about love, being influenced by Ibn Arabi, is more systematic than that of Bakharzi, but we should take it into consideration that Bakharzi lived two centuries before Jaami. In fact, Bakharzi played a major role in spreading the idea that love is the pivot and center of humanity, and it is the differentiating point of humans and (PoorJavadi, 1380: 13-15). Since these two famous mystics were of the same geographic region, it can be also said that Bakharzi has helped to form a system of thought which was preached by Jaami.

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