

THE CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF GARDEN IN SUFI LITERATURE: GULSHANI RAZ BY MAKHMUD SHABISTARI

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Abstract. The current paper discusses the denotation of the notion of garden in Sufi literature. Moreover, the article covers some information about one of the masterpieces Gulshani Raz analyzing selection of the title and its importance in the interpretation of Islamic culture.

Key words: garden, paradise, Gulshani Raz, symbol, mystery, political territory.

Introduction. The garden has always had a special meaning for Persian (Iran). The Persian garden, with its flowing pools, fountains, waterways, rows of tall trees, rich arrays of fruit trees and flowers, and cool pavilions, has represented an image of paradise. *Persian Gardens & Garden Pavilions* is both a comprehensive survey and an appreciation of this Persian tradition of gardens and garden pavilions. The text traces the historical development of Persian gardens, describes their basic features, presents existing examples, and discusses the literature and tradition behind them. Originally denominated by a single noun denoting “a walled-in compound or garden”, from “*pairi*” (“around”) and “*daeza*” or “*diz*” (“wall”, “brick”, or “shape”), philosopher and historian Xenophon of Athens translated the Persian *pairidaeza* into the Greek *paradeisos*. This term is used for the Garden of Eden in Greek translations of the Old Testament. In Persian, the word *pardis* means both paradise and garden. The idea of the enclosed garden is often referred to as the paradise garden because of additional Indo-European connotations of “paradise”.

The quadrilateral Charbagh concept is interpreted as the four gardens of Paradise mentioned in Chapter (Surah) 55, Ar-Rahman “The Beneficient”, in the Qur’an:

And for him, who fears to stand before his Lord, are two gardens. (Chapter 55: Verse 46) *And beside them are two other gardens.* (Chapter 55: Verse 62)

One of the hallmarks of Charbagh garden is the four-part garden laid out with axial paths that intersect at the garden’s centre. This highly structured geometrical scheme, called the chahar bagh, became a powerful method for the organization and domestication of the landscape, itself a symbol of political territory.

Literature review. It is obvious that, the word Gulshan is one of the synonyms that is used to emphasizes to express the peaceful and blossoming place. Gulshan is a masculine name of Indian origin. It means “rose garden” and is often used for boys in Hindi-speaking countries. In Hinduism, roses symbolize spiritual joy, faithful divinity, and growth. The feminine variant of Gulshan is Golshan, allowing you to honor a loved one from previous generations or start a new family tradition. Whatever you take from Gulshan, this name will inspire baby to express their

beliefs and thrive in life like a flourishing bloom. Thus, Sufi writers address the word Gulshan to express specialty of soul as mystic garden in Islam culture. One of these literal works Gulshani Raz by Mahkmud Shabistari, in poetic form.

Gulshan i Raz was composed in A.H. 717 (A.D. 1317), in answer to fifteen questions on the doctrines of the Sufis, or Muhamrnadan Mystics, propounded by Amir Syad Hosaini,¹ a celebrated Sufi doctor of Herat. The authors name was Sad uddin Mahinud Shabistari, so called from his birth-place, Shabistar,² a village near Tabriz, in the province of Azarbaijan. From a brief notice of his life in the Mujalis ul Ushshak, repeated in substance in the Haft Iklim, the Sajina i Khushgu, and the Riaz ush Slniara, it would appear that he was born about the middle of the seventh century of the Hejira (A.D. 1250), and that he died at Tabriz, where he had passed the greater part of his life, in A.H. 720. The only particulars of his life recorded in these Tazkiras are, that he was devotedly attached to one of his disciples named Shaikh Ibrahim, and that in addition to the Gulshan i Raz he wrote treatises entitled Hakk ul Yakin and Risalai Shahid. No further information as to the circumstances of his life and times is to be found in the poem itself or in the commentary, but we know from the Habib us Siyar and other chronicles that his birth was about contemporaneous with the incursion of the heathen Moghuls under Hulaku Khan, the conquest of Persia, Syria and Mesopotamia, and the downfall of the Abbaside Khalifs, or Vicars of God. And living as he did 1H is life is given in the Nafliat ul Uns of Jami. This name is sometimes written Jabistar or Chabistar. The Persian cliim is usually expressed by the Arabic shin. Ouseley, Ibn Haukal,

Gulshan-i Raz or **Gulshan-e Raz** (Persian: راز گلشن, "Rose Garden of Secrets") is a collection of poems written in the 14th century by Sheikh Mahmoud Shabestari. It is considered to be one of the greatest classical Persian works of the Islamic mystical tradition known in the west as Sufism. The poems are mostly based on Irfan, Islam, Sufism and sciences dependent on them.

The book was written about 1311 in rhyming couplets. It was written in response to seventeen queries concerning Sufi metaphysics posed to "the Sufi literati of Tabriz" by Rukh Al Din Amir Husayn Harawi (d. 1318). It was also the main reference used by François Bernier when explaining Sufism to his European friends (in: *Lettre sur le Quietisme des Indes*; 1688). In English the book's title is variously given as "Garden of Secrets," "The Garden of Mystery," "The Mystic Rose Garden," or "The Secret Rose Garden."

Sufi poet Sheikh Alvān of Shiraz translated Gulshan-i Raz into Azeri Turkish verse.

This is the opening verse of Gulshan-i Raz:

برافروخت جان نور به دل چراغ / آموخت فکرت را جان آنکه نام به
In the name of Him who taught the soul to think,

and kindled the heart's lamp with the light of soul

Shabistari was born in the town of Shabestar near Tabriz in 1288 (687 AH), where he received his education. He became deeply versed in the symbolic terminology of Ibn Arabi. He wrote during a period of Mongol invasions.

His most famous work is a mystic text called *The Secret Rose Garden* (*Gulshan-i Rāz*) written about 1311 in rhyming couplets (Mathnawi). This poem was written in response to seventeen queries concerning Sufi metaphysics posed to “the Sufi literati of Tabriz” by Rukh Al Din Amir Husayn Harawi (d. 1318). It was also the main reference used by François Bernier when explaining Sufism to his European friends (in: *Lettre sur le Quietisme des Indes*; 1688)

Other works include *The Book of Felicity* (Sa’adat-nāma) and *The Truth of Certainty about the Knowledge of the Lord of the Worlds* (Ḥaqq al-yaqīn fī ma’rifat rabb al-‘alamīn. The former is regarded as a relatively unknown poetic masterpiece written in *khafif* meter, while the later is his lone work of prose.

TEHRAN – Iran and UNESCO will jointly celebrate the 700th anniversary of the composing of “The Secret Rose Garden” (Gulshan-i Raz), a collection of poems by Iranian mystic and poet Sa’d-ud-Din Mahmud Shabistari (1288–1340), Iran’s Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) announced on Sunday.

“The book contains moral standards for the world,” CHTHO official Farhad Nazari said in a press release.

“The book was written to instill moral into humanity and also to help people achieve a balance between their souls and bodies, as well as to prevent extremism, violence and damage to the environment,” he added.

He said that the Republic of Azerbaijan also will collaborate in organizing the celebration and added that so far, over 40 books have been written about “The Secret Rose Garden”, which also known as “The Mystic Rose Garden”.

According to Nazari, the book has previously been translated into English, French, German, Turkish and Urdu.

by Mahmud Shabistari Garden of Mystery, the ‘Gulshan-i Raz’, holds a unique position in Persian Sufi literature. It is a compact and concise exploration of the doctrines of Sufism at the peak of their development that has remained a primary text of Sufism throughout the world from Turkey to India. It comprises a thousand lines of inspired poetry taking the form of answers to questions put by a fellow mystic. It provides a coherent literary bridge between the Persian ‘school of love’ poetry and the rapidly growing number of metaphysical and gnostic compositions from what had come to be known as the school of the ‘Unity of Being’. Translated by Robert Darr who has for thirty-five years been a student of classical Islamic culture.

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