

Love in the Poetry of Saib Tabrizi

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Abstract

Love is one of the major literary themes which has been abundant in almost all poetic periods and as it is the expression of human feelings and emotions and also thinking and is associated with the human soul and mind, throughout history it has always emerged in the works of authors in the field of literature. Saib Tabrizi is a poet who has also made use of this ever fresh theme as well as the other themes in his poetry and has examined it from different perspectives. In this paper, following an introduction on love in literature, the use of this theme in Diwan-e-Saib Tabrizi (Divan of Saib Tabrizi) is explored and his views on love in physical-virtual and mystical-heavenly terms are analyzed by citing several examples from his poetry.

Keywords: Saib, poetry, love

Introduction

One of the central themes that has been largely reflected in the works of poets and writers from the beginning of literature is the theme of romantic love, since love is a theme which deals with humans and their innermost feelings and emotions and is in fact humans' joint emotional characteristic which, since the beginning of creation, has not waned in its effects, but has rather become more popular and overwhelming over time.

Thus, from the very beginning anyone who has been good at writing has spoken of humans and therefore their feelings and emotions, especially as this theme is integrated with the concept of the ghazal and the ghazal is one of the most extensive literary genres which overflows in almost all poetic periods.

It would not be wrong to regard poetry as the highest artistic creation, since poetry is nothing but the crystallization of human existence. In fact, the poet is someone who appropriates existence and takes charge of the world order and so powerfully rules the material world that he/she changes the pre-determined laws of nature according to his/her own taste. In this transformation and re-creation of the world, the poet needs no devices since he/she is provided with the endless treasure of words; a treasure which was created before existence and which will be the last thing to fade after existence and it is with the help of these immortal words that the poet can portray the glamorous world of his/her spirit and soul; a soul full of emotion which is presided over by the god of love or Eros (Madani, A., 1992:24), and an emotion full of love which contains aestheticism, affection, etc (Siyasi, A., 1992:24).

Love and poetry are born unconsciously and are both powerful and unique forces that establish communication between the poet and existence and also between reality and unreality.

Gaston Barry, a contemporary French critic and an expert in medieval literature, defines love as a passionate and mystical force which can be at once physical and material (Claude Wade, 1993:9).

Accordingly, what are also expressed in Persian love poetry are either expressions of earthly love, such as Saadi's ghazals, or heavenly and spiritual love, such as Mawlana's sentimental ghazals, or both heavenly and earthly love (neither the former nor the latter), such as Hafiz's integrated ghazals which accurately portray this theme.

Therefore, love, this most burning human melancholic passion and infatuation and frenzy, which is the fountainhead of the ghazal and the lyric poetry, is perfectly evident in the Divan of Saib, as a prolific writer of the ghazal, in its both limited and unlimited or earthly and mystical forms. However, he can't parallel with great Persian poets of romantic love such as Mawlana and Saadi.

Compared with Mawlana's rich love that says:
 Love deluged my walls again
 My untamed camel broke loose again
 A new month has come, it is time to lose mind
 Alas, my great knowledge came to nothing at all
 Mawlana

His love in the mystical sphere is waning, or compared with the expression of love specific to Saadi's language, as in:

He that returned, caused me anguish and sold me out
 I shall not for the whole world sell out
 Saadi

It does not seem very pleasant but is not devoid of beauty either, and in his Divan couplets can be found in which the sparks of ecstasy and passion and love are also quite evident, for he has called himself a lover since he was a child.

In childhood love was evident from my forehead
 The cradle was a litter for my impatience

Vol. 4/ p. 2124/ Gh. 4433

This theme has such a strong role in the making of his poetry that he uses "love" and its derivatives such as "the lovers" and "the beloved" as the "Radif" (the repeating of common words in poetry) and describes love and the beloved with his special writing from different perspectives, and sometimes appeals to hyperbole in his descriptions, which is a prerequisite to poetry, to such an extent that he attributes the perfection of love to his own love-making.

In the past love and madness were children's plaything
 What made love complete was Saib's love-making

Vol. 1/ p. 51/ Gh. 96

And he believes that from the first day, love has been his profession and that he has had no other calling but love.

How can he choose another profession and calling?
 Saib had the profession of love from the beginning

Vol. 5/ p. 2434/ Gh. 5054

And it is with these beliefs that he has chosen love and its derivatives as one of his main themes.

Physical and Virtual Love

According to Jacobson, if a poet writes love poems, it is not necessarily because he/she is in love; a romantic love poem is more of a linguistic design than a literary form (Shamisa, S., 1990: p. 347).

From the perspective of virtual love, Saib also has romantic poems and complaint poems addressed to an imaginary or virtual beloved, which may seem waning compared with his creativity in other themes and may not have Saadi's talent and taste and his passion and frenzy in expression of romantic themes. However, his works can't be generally considered as lacking love and although Ali Dashti maintains that Saib's couplets on love are few and powerless and can't be the symbol of the turbulence of a sea which love has excited (Dashti, p. 481), it should be said that it has its own beauty too and in his Divan there are also couplets which are expressive of romantic passion. In fact, he not only regards love as the prerequisite to life,

O' Saib, were we not in love
What would we have done with such life?

Vol. 6/ p. 3407/ Gh. 6989

But also finds love as the prerequisite to humanity.

O' Saib, love makes humans whole
How can one with no pain of love become a true soul?

Vol 3/ p. 1310/ Gh. 2684

And he finds himself, from head to toe, immersed in love, and thus says:

All over my soul there is no loveless particle
Each handful of the lovers' dust is Leily's litter

Vol. 6/ p. 2902/ Gh. 5996

And Saib believes that if we neglect love, love will come after us and find us:

If negligence hides us in the hard Granit rock
Pain of love is brave, it will find us anon

Vol. 1/ p. 173/ Gh. 338

The noteworthy point about Saib's earthly loves is that his themes of romantic love are somehow derived from the ideas in the literary school of Vasukht, or shunning the beloved. In Farhang-e Aanandraj (The Dictionary of Anandraj), Vasukht has been defined as follows:

"Vasukht, in the terminology of Iranian poets, means averting and turning away from the beloved". Quoted from: (Qafelehbashi, 2001, p. 115). Also, Saib in his ghazals somehow reacts to the beloved and pretends that his love-making has a certain limit and one day will be over and it does not mean that the lover will no longer go after another beloved.

And this is why he says recklessly:

Your tress will not be another's tress
In our heart your absence will not cause distress

Vol. 2/ p. 799/ Gh. 1614

Other examples of his expression of themes of romantic love in Vasukht style:

The giving one suffers from the needless guest
Because of our undesiring heart love is in pain
I will not give my heart unless steal one first
My hunter will become hunted by me at the outset

Vol. 4/ p. 2053/ Gh. 4272

Do not make me appeal to the sky
Put in my bow any arrows of sigh
Do not make me move away from your site
Spread in the world the sorrow of the poplar that is not mine
Do not make me put among the lovers' file
The heresy of deliverance and freedom of love
Then do not make me, like Saib, from your tress
Hold back my heart, move towards the rank of the fairest
Vol. 5/ p. 2825/ Gh. 5851

Needless fair ones are tamed with love indeed
Negligence renders the good of confusion cheap
Vol. 1/ p. 220/ Gh. 442
A hundred hearts are inadequate for seeing a fiery visage
With one heart I am a lover of a hundred fiery faced ones
Vol. 5/ p. 2561/ Gh. 5309

Such couplets are abundant in his Divan, and mentioning these suffices; but not all his love couplets are like this, since he also has poems that are expressive of a burning heart and a melancholic passion, so much so that, in description of the moods of love, the lover and the beloved, he paints beautiful imagery with words by expressing allegories and comparisons that are specific to him:

You distance me from yourself like the stone in a sling
It is not a bravery not to turn me around the head
Vol. 1/ p. 88/ Gh. 170

You are not satiated with yourself with a hundred mirrors
How can I become satiated with a glimpse of yours?
Vol. 5/ p. 2743/ Gh. 5680

The bitterness of wine is not as tasty as your swears
Stealing of kisses is not as sweet as your messages
Joseph has plundered the convoy of your beauty
No one from among the righteous ends up like you today
Turtledoves watch for their own wrongs
Otherwise no cypress in this garden has your grandeur and size
The dew's eyes have rested on rose's face
As it knows nothing of your rosy visage yet
Vol. 2/ p. 749/ Gh. 1605

Your warm look maddens the heart
Your face makes the mirror a house of fairies and sprites
Vol. 4/ p. 2022/ Gh. 4207

He uses a very plain language for expression of romantic themes:

I burned out of the delight for the beloved ones, speak up
Write a letter, find a messenger anon
Though my painful words are soaked in blood
Write on with my written bleeding heart
Though I know the retort to the letter is only war

I'm almost content, find her for this war

Here, he has used a very plain and romantic expression and language until the end of the ghazal.

Other examples:

Her beauty has rendered her so unfaithful
That even lovers will almost pray for a separation for good
Her fearless eyes have caused me confusion and turmoil
May no one be targeted with her arrows o' good my Lord

Vol. 1/ p. 223/ Gh. 449

In general, there are abundant expressions of earthly and virtual love in Diwan-e-Saib, and based on this couplet:

If poetry is a miracle it is not without its ups and downs
In the miraculous shining white hand of Moses all fingers do not make one hand

Bidel

In the imagery of this theme many ups and downs can be seen and the beauty and delight expected of love may not be seen in some of its couplets, but it also has some beautiful couplets. Although in most of his ghazals he speaks of love and the lover and the beloved, in about 15 ghazals in the fifth volume of his ghazals, with the "Radif" (the repeating of common words) of love, he focuses on the description of love from his own perspective, each of which has its own particular appeal and beauty.

Mystical and Heavenly Love

According to the Sufis and the mystics, love has a very profound meaning and all the principles, theories and thoughts of mystics are immersed in the sea of love. In the glossary of mystical terminology, love is defined as extreme passion and great desire for something and it is a fire that is set in the heart and burns the beloved. Love is the sea of disaster and divine mania and uprising of the heart with a mediated beloved, and there is no doubt that affection and love are the pillars of life, survival and existence of the universe, since all the movements and gestures and uprisings are based on affection, love and desire (Sajadi, 2010: pp. 583-588).

Real love is divine mercy and passionate inspiration and it is love for visitation of the real Beloved that is Allah's essence and the rest of the loves are virtual and Allah's essence possesses all perfections and the wise and the reasonable are essentially the lover and the beloved (Ansari, 1940: p. 125) and (Mihani, 1945: p. 224) (Sajadi, 2010, p. 584).

Saib's couplets based on romantic love themes are proof on the fact that Saib has perfectly well perceived love in an experimental and practical way and only with the guidance of pure love which is the full-length mirror and full reflection of the eternal Beloved's face.

Pure love mirrors the beloved's face
In the morning it smoothly brings out the affectionate breath

Vol. 4/ p. 1593/ Gh. 3293

In Saib's view, an honest mystic devoutly believes in the religion of love and his love for God is not for delight in paradise or for fear of the chastisement of hell. He is rather yearning for a smell of the apple of the chin of the real Beloved and this kind of love and affection is achieved only and only through real knowledge and perception (Qazali, pp. 511-512).

Our eye is not set on the fruits of paradise like the ascetic
We are thirsty for that apple of the chin

Vol. 1/ p. 144/ Gh. 281

And it is this very real love that makes the lover not take notice of any words other than love.

If shines down on you such true love
Would not heed other words, o' Saib, your thought

Vol. 1/ p. 154/ Gh. 300

In addition to the above-mentioned points, in this section it is intended to briefly express Saib's view on mystical love:

He constantly seeks for a passionate love that would discredit him in the whole world and strip him of all names and repute.

Where is the passionate love that would defame me in the whole world
That would make me needless of all names and repute

Vol. 2/ p. 64/ Gh. 125

Therefore, with this view and approach that Saib has towards mystical love he elaborates on this love in his Divan, which will be briefly mentioned:

He regards love as eternal and it is love that has broken the seal of the mouth and has made him speak out:

I have devoted my heart to love from the first day on
Joseph will not be in prison for me without a crime

Vol. 1/ p. 73/ Gh. 1414

We were not the men to speak of love on the first day
Love melted the seal on the mouths fast then

Vol. 1/ p. 154/ Gh. 30

He calls himself inherently insane whom nothing even reason can't reform or set right:

Reason attempts in vain to reform us
The inherently insane does not fear his sire

Vol. 2/ p. 270/ Gh. 45

Love is the cause of passion and excitement and release from depressions.

Love stirs our cheerless heart up
The singer should keep the anchored sea safe from storm and flood

Vol. 1/ p. 31/ Gh. 56

Other than the heart-alluring profession of love in the world, o' Saib
Any profession you take up will lead to despair

Vol. 2/ p. 536/ Gh. 1059

In the stage of consummation, he believes in the union of the lover and the beloved and is annihilated in the beloved and chants "Unal Haq" (I am The Truth or God) like Al-Hallaj.

In the space of consummation it's wrong to look for the lover
It's not possible to pretend in the altar and shrine

Vol. 1/ p. 11/ Gh. 15

Mansur's wine became artful and couldn't stand still
Surged out "Unal Haq", my prideful blood still

Vol. 5/ p. 2304/ Gh. 4774

But while believing in the union of the lover and the beloved in the stage of consummation and annihilation for love, he sometimes regards love as a barrier which brings separation as well as consummation:

For how long by the barrier of love and disdain of charm and allurements
Should we and the beloved be far in the same garment?

Vol. 1/ p. 17/ Gh. 8

I burned of the barrier of love under my breath
Like the "A" in Bismillah I have the sighs hidden

Vol. 1/ p. 41/ Gh. 88

He thus refers to his inability to conceal love:

More than this, o' Saib, I can't conceal my love
I have my torch beneath my kirtle hidden for a while

Vol. 1/ p. 43/ Gh. 83

Like the other mystics Saib also considers love as a divine deposit and trust which is given only to humans.

In this regard, Saib says with humor:

There was no one else, so love accepted to speak to us
There was no one else, so the mountain of Qaf sat under the shadow of the phoenix

Vol. 2/ p. 612/ Gh. 1220

Nevertheless, despite all their smallness and weakness in comparison with the heavens and the other creatures, humans had something which made them capable of love, and this love created such passion and enthusiasm in them which aroused the Devil's (Iblis or Shaitan's) jealousy:

Love first hit Adam's burned heart
It became rich with Adam's heart and then hit the world withal
In the heart and soul of the angels a yearning for uprising would start
With the salt that it hit Adam's heart withal
The soiled body which the Devil saw in humans all
Is the handful of soil that it hit at the unlawful sight
How can Saib not bow down before such love
When the heavens have already bent down under this heavy charge

Vol. 4/ p. 1636/ Gh. 3386

He attributes divine beauty and goodness and manifestation to love, and believes that the beauty of the eternal Beloved is manifest everywhere.

Alas, love will neglect beauty in private
Zuleika is not separate from the moon of Kanaan even in prison

Vol. 1/ p. 8/ Gh. 10

Beauty and love have from one head sprung
This spark of fire in stone is speaking to the moth

Vol. 2/ p. 478/ Gh. 962

In "Kashkoul-e Sheikh Bahaei" it is written: "Love refers to the attraction of the heart with the magnetics of beauty and the reality of attraction and absorption. One should not expect full awareness and it is interpreted only with statements which increase the concealment and complexity of the issue, exactly like beauty which is easily perceived but is not interpreted"

And this is exactly what Hafiz interprets as "that":

Those that say (elegance) is better than beauty (to them, say)
This (beauty) hath our beloved and that (elegance) also

Hafiz

Like Hafiz that says:

The radiance of your goodness manifested in eternity
Love appeared and set fire to the mountain, earth and sea

Hafiz

Saib also very beautifully expresses the inseparable bond between love and goodness and beauty everywhere in his Divan, some examples of which will be mentioned below.

A smooth heart's beauty and love mirror each other
The beloved's sincerity makes love sincere and honest

Vol. 1/ p. 5/ Gh. 96

One can't bring beauty and affection into conflict
How can sweetness and sugar be distinguished?

Vol. 4/ p. 2030/ Gh. 4221

Saib strongly believes in the relationship between virtual love and real love. Ayn al-Quzat Hamadani says: "Alas, love is a prerequisite of the way for everyone. Alas, if you don't have love for the creator, then provide love for creatures of God" (Hamedani, 1377:.p 196).

Mawlana also believes that:

If loving is from this head or from the other head
We are all ultimately led by that head

Saib also, like Mawlana and Ayn al-Quzat and many other mystics, regards virtual love as permissible and considers it as the bridge to real Love.

And he beautifully portrays this relationship and bond with his poetic writing:

True love's space lies in wait for you all
Pass through the virtual bridge like the spring flood

Vol. 4/ p. 1942/ Gh. 4036

The same way the flood took thistles and thorns to the sea
Virtual love led me to real love indeed

Vol. 5/ p. 2313/ Gh. 4791

Only with the light of this divine luster
I can appear in the presence of Truth through the virtual way

Vol. 5/ p. 2312/ Gh. 4790

Virtual love leads to the real Beloved
On this side of the bridge the thirsty ones have drowned themselves in water

Vol. 3/ p. 1221/ Gh. 2487

I washed the language of virtual love off the tablet of passion and warmth
I spread worldwide the upheaval of real Love

Vol. 5/ p. 257/ Gh. 5329

He considers the heart as the site of divine love and believes that God has provided a safe carriage for the unparalleled treasure of love, which despite its placelessness is considered as its seat

like the throne, and that is the gift of the heart which He has bestowed on every loving mystic and owner of the heart.

Eternal beauty both appears in the heart and also views its beauty in the human heart. This is why the heart has been described as the mirror and the mirror is reflective when it is polished off every rust.

Saib has also beautiful couplets for the expression of this theme, only some of which will be mentioned as follows:

The heart is the House of God, value it like the Qur'an
Before the flood of wine destroys it all

Vol. 6/ p. 3549

Many loves would not try to ruin the hearts
If they had that other destructive treasure withal

Vol. 5/ p. 2249/ Gh. 4662

If you want your journey of beauty in our heart
You will take the journey of the mirror far behind

Vol. 4/ p. 1627/ Gh. 3366

The gentle beauty of the beloved is not practicable
Why is it that the heart has been created as a mirror-maker?

Vol. 4/ p. 1998/ Gh. 4154

Conclusion

Based on the studies conducted on the theme of romantic love in Saib's poetry, it can be concluded that Saib, along with the other themes in his poetry, has used love as a good theme for making of his subjectivities and has excellently benefited from this feature like the other lyric and mystical poets in the field of Persian literature.

His approach to this theme is very pervasive and covers mystical and heavenly loves as well as earthly and virtual loves.

In the field of virtual love, he has romantic poems and complaint poems addressed to an imaginary or virtual beloved. Although these are waning in comparison with his other poetic themes and he does not have the talent and taste of Saadi, as the master of romantic ghazals, in expressing earthly loves, they still have their own beauties. The noteworthy point about Saib's earthly loves is that his themes of romantic love are under the influence of the ideas in the literary school of Vasukht, or shunning the beloved, and sometimes somehow react to the beloved, but along with this approach, poems which are expressive of a burning heart and a melancholic passion are also found in his Divan and he creates novel imagery in expression of love, the lover and the beloved with the help of allegories and comparisons.

- He speaks of heavenly and eternal love in the style of mystics, in such a way that he considers pure love as the full-length mirror and full reflection of the eternal Beloved and like Hafiz and Mawlana and the other mystical poets, he regards love as a divine deposit and trust, introduces beauty as the cause behind love and believes in the union of the lover and the beloved and the romantic consummation and annihilation. He has also written beautiful couplets on the confirmation of his beliefs.

- Saib believes in the communication between virtual and real love and considers virtual love as the bridge to real Love.

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