

SARDAR JAFRI*

*Hafiz Shirazi***

(1312-1387-89)

It has taken six hundred years for Hafiz Shirazi to travel from Iran to Bengal. Sultan Ghaysuddin son of Sultan Sikandar of Bengal who ascended the throne in 1366-67 had invited Hafiz to his court. The poet who had declined an earlier invitation from Mahmud Shah Behmani of the Deccan did not care to travel such a long distance, and sent a *ghazal* to Sultan of Bengal in which the following couplets were included:

*All the parrots of India will crack sugar,
Through this Persian Candy which is going to Bengal;
See how poetry travels through time and space,
See this child of one night covering the distance of one year,
Hafiz, be not heedless of enthusiasm of the court of Sultan
Ghayasuddin,
For thy affair will be furthered by thy lamentation.*

شکر شکن شوند ہمہ طوطیان ہند زین قند پارسی کہ بہ بنگالہ میرود
طی مکان بین و زمان درس لڑک شعری کاین طفل یکشہ رو یکسالہ میرود
حافظ ز شوق مجلس سلطان غیاث دین
غافل مشو کہ کار تر از نالہ میرود

The *ghazal* was enjoyed by the Sultan and courtiers but did not reach the people of Bengal. And it could not reach them. They spoke Bengali. Now the eminent Bengali poet, Subhash Mukhopadhyay, has translated the *Odes of Hafiz* from Persian into Bengali. Here the sweetness and the beauty of the souls of two distant poets meet defying time and space.

* Eminent progressive Urdu poet.

** P. C. Joshi Memorial Lecture, 1998.

Hafiz is the most celebrated poet of Iran, who died in the year 1387 or 1389 in Shiraz and is resting eternally in a beautiful tomb called Hafizyya. Thousands and thousands of lovers of poetry have been visiting the tomb for the last six centuries. His popularity has survived the test of time. He had become a legend in his own lifetime. And his name and fame had touched the far corners of the civilised world of that period, when the modern facilities of transportation, radio and television did not exist. He was aware of his greatness. And he enjoyed it:

*The black-eyed beauties of Kashmir and the Turks of Samarquand
Sing and dance on the strains of Hafiz of Shiraz's verse.*

بشعر حافظ شیرازی می رقصند و می نازند سیه چشمان کشمیری و ترکان سمرقندی

*Thou has captured Iraq and Fars by thy verse, O Hafiz;
Come, for it is now the turn of Baghdad and the time for Tabriz*

عراق و فارس گرفتگی بشعر خوش حافظ بیا که نوبت بغداد و وقت تبریز است

*Hafiz is it ghazal composed by you or a string of pearls, come and
recite it beautifully
The sky is showering stars on your poetry.*

غزل گفتمی و نثر سفتی بیا و خوش بخوان حافظ که بر نظم تو افشا ند فلک عقدش را

*Do not be surprised if the words of Hafiz in the sky
Make Venus sing and bring Christ to the ecstasy of dance.*

در آسمان نه عجب گر بگفته حافظ سرود زهره برقص آور مسیحا را

*I have never seen any poetry sweeter than thine, O Hafiz,
'I swear) by that Qra'an which thou keepest in thy bosom.⁶*

ندیدم خوشتر از شعر تو حافظ بقرائنی که اندر سینه داری

The popularity of Hafiz made his contemporaries jealous of him. They tried to find fault with his superb poetry. Hafiz only smiled and said:

*Why are you jealous of Hafiz, you writers of bad poetry,
My popularity and beauty of expression is a gift of God.*

حسد چه می بری ای سست نظم بر حافظ قبول خاطر و لطف سخن خداداد است

He is really a gifted poet who has inspired great poets of many languages across the centuries. The two great names are those of Kabir (1440-1518) in India and Goethe (19th century) of Germany. During Kabir's days the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz was sung in the circle of Sufies. Common *goshties* (meetings) were held in which both the Bhakti and Sufi saints participated. That is how Kabir came to know Hafiz and Rumi. There is inner evidence in his poetry of the influence of the great Persian poets, Rumi and Attar. It can safely be presumed that Kabir was aware of the poetry of Hafiz.

Hafiz exercised greater influence on Goethe. *Diwan-i-Hafiz* was translated in German language in 1812. Goethe was 65 at that time. Europe was in turmoil and the German nation in decadence. The restless soul of Goethe and his high soaring imagination found a nest in the garden of Hafiz's poetry. And he wrote his *West Ostlicher Diwan* in the style of Hafiz and Sa'adi. Some lines of this book of poems in Iranian style seem to be free translations in the Sufi interpretation of his poetry. He is inspired by the pure *ghazal* of Hafiz. His revolutionary contemporary Hiene, the favourite poet of Karl Marx, was also inspired by Persian poetry. At one place he feels in his imagination that he is a Persian poet who has been exiled to Germany. "O Firdausi, O Sa'adi., O Jaami, your brother in the prison of pain and sorrow is pining for the roses of Shiraz." (Quoted by Iqbal in his *Payam-i-Mashiq*, Message of the East written in answer to Goethe's *West Ostlicher Diwan*, 1924.)

A biographer of Goethe quoted by Iqbal in the above book says, "Goethe saw his own image in the songs of the Nightingale of Shiraz (Hafiz). At times he felt as if his own soul had lived on the land of the East in the body of Hafiz. He shared with Hafiz the same earthly pleasure, the same spiritual ecstasy, the same simplicity and depth, the same warmth and joy, the same Catholicism, broad mindedness, and freedom from the shackles of traditions. A world of meaning is enclosed in the simple words of Hafiz. In the same manner Goethe reveals the secrets and truths of life through his spontaneous expression. Both of them have received homage from the rich and the poor alike. Both of them maintained their personal dignity in front of the great conquerors of their ages. (Hafiz in front of Timur and Goethe in front of Napoleon). Both of them succeeded in maintaining their inner tranquility under the stress and strain of the periods of general destruction and plunder, and went on singing their songs."

Occasionally Goethe copied the style of *ghazal* with the same scheme of rhyming. He even borrowed expressions and metaphors

like the "Pearls of verses" and the "Arrows of the eyelashes". But he always remained a poet of the West with Western sensibilities.

How the charm and magic of Hafiz works is revealed in the case of Iqbal. He is the direct inheritor of Persian traditions and the last great poet of the Persian language. In his book *Asrare-i-Khudi* (The secrets of the Self) he denounced Hafiz as a poet of wine and the poet of death. "His cup of wine is full of the poison of death." The poetry of Hafiz is like a wine mature, smooth and mellow. Iqbal's wine is heady and strong. Hafiz's philosophy of life could not fit into Iqbal's philosophy of the self where action is a dominant factor. When you read Hafiz in the original Persian you hear the soft jingling of bells, the rustling of breeze through the rose bushes, and the sweet whispering of the opening bud of flower, the lament of the nightingale and the murmuring of the streams of water, and you fall in love with the beauty and joy of life. While in Iqbal's poetry you hear the beating of drums, the thunder of storms and the march of the nations with their footfalls echoing across the corridors of history. The revolutionary temper of the modern age. He thought that Hafiz was a poet of the negation of life who said in his poetry:

*Princes (alone) know the secrets of their kingdom;
Hafiz, thou art a beggarly recluse; hold your peace.*

گدای گوشه نشینی تو حافظا مغرور
رموز مصلحت خویش خسرو را ن دانند

Iqbal was wrong in his appreciation of Hafiz. There was a storm of protest against his denunciation of Hafiz and he withdrew his piece of poem. It is not only the communists who become sectarians, any poet with a strong ideology can find himself in this pitfall.

Hafiz was however fully vindicated, when Iqbal wrote his next book in Persian, *Payam-i-Mashriq* (The Message of the East) in answer to Goethe's *West Ostlicher Diwan* in 1924. The Eagle of Lahore was overpowered by the Nightingale of Shiraz. The charm of Hafiz's poetry and the magic of his expression was reflected in Iqbal's *ghazlas*. But the stamp of Iqbal's personal poetic genius was there. Iqbal in his approach to life and poetry is closer to Dante than Hafiz. It would be appropriate here to quote Gertrude Lowthian Bell's estimate of Hafiz in comparison to Dante:

To Hafiz, on the contrary, modern instances have no value;
contemporary history is too small an episode to occupy his thoughts...
But some of us will feel that the apparent indifference of Hafiz lends to

his philosophy a quality which that of Dante does not possess. The Italian is bound down within the limits of his philosophy, his theory of the universe is essentially of his own age, and what to him was so actually real is to many of us merely a beautiful or a terrible image. The picture that Hafiz draws represents a wider landscape, though the immediate foreground may not be so distinct. It is as if his mental eye, endowed with wonderful acuteness of vision, had penetrated into those provinces of thought which we of a later age were destined to inhabit. We can forgive him for leaving to us so indistinct a representation of his own time, and of the life of the individual in it, when we find him formulating ideas as profound as the warning that there is no musician to whose music both the drunk and the sober can dance.

(*A Literary History of Persia*, Vol.111, by Edward G. Brown. pp. 292-3)

Hafiz lived in one of the most difficult periods of the history of Iran. The great period of epic poetry (Firdausi) had ended four hundred years earlier. Sufism reflecting the ideological challenge of the peasant and the artisan uprisings against the feudal lords had declined. The Tartar hordes of Chingez Khan, Halaku, and Timur had devastated and plundered the fair lands of Iran and Iraq. "During his life-time the city which he loved was besieged and taken five or six times; it changed hands even more often. It was drenched with blood by one conqueror, filled with revelry by a second, and subjected to the hard rule of asceticism by a third. One after another Hafiz saw kings and princes rise into power and vanish like snow upon desert's dusty face. Pitiful tragedies, great rejoicing, the fall of kingdoms and the clash of battle - all these he must have seen and heard." (Ibid)

In such cruel circumstances Hafiz could take refuge only in his poetry, the inner aesthetic universe of his soul where he was the master without any tyrant near him. Yet to survive physically he had to visit the courts of kings, princes and amirs of the period, show the magic of his words to the fools sitting on the throne and then retire to his inner creative world.

*Lord Joseph (Yusuf) will return to Canaan: grieve not!
The house of sorrow will one day become a rose garden:grieve not!
If the spring of life survives a day will come
When the sweet singing bird will be on the throne
of the garden with the canopy of roses on the head:grieve not.
If the revolution of the sky is not according to my wishes
The temper of time will not be the same for ever:grieve not.
Though the goal is difficult and purpose far of*

*There is no path that does not end anywhere; grieve not.
Sitting in the house of content in the aloneness of the dark night,
Hafiz*

Repeat the words of prayer and recite the Quran: grieve not.

یوسف گم گشته باز آید بکنعان غم مخور کلبه احزان شود روزی گلستان غم مخور
گر بهار عمر باشد باز بر تخت چمن چتر گل در سرکشی ای مرغ خوشخوان غم مخور
دور گردون گرد و روزی بر مراد ما نرفت دائماً یکسان نباشد حال دوران غم مخور
گرچه منزل بس خطرناکست و مقصد بس بعید هیچ راهی نیست کائرا نیست پایان غم مخور
حافظا در کنج فقر و خلوت شبهای تار
تا بود وردت و دعا و درس قرآن غم مخور

*I find it expedient at the moment
That I remove myself to the tavern and sit in happiness.
No friend no companion except the book and the flask of wine.
So that I do not see the treacherous impostors in the world.
On my heart is settled the dust of oppression, my God,
Don't let the mirror be dimmed that shines with love.*

حالی مصلحت وقت در آن می بینم که کشم رخت بمیخانه و خورش بنشینم
جام می گیرم و از اهل ریا دور شوم یعنی از اهل جهان پاک دلی بگزینم
جز صراحی و کتابم نبود یار و ندیم تا حریفان دغا را بجهان کم بینم
بر دلم گرد ستمهاست خدا یا مهسند
که مکدر شود آئینه مهر آئینم

There are moments of such inspiration in his poetry that he wants to change the world, change it in such a way that there is nothing left except happiness and joy:

*Come my Love, let us scatter the roses around us and pour the wine
in the cup*

*Break open the dome of the sky and lay a new foundation.
If the pain and sorrow raise an army to shed the blood of the lovers,
I combine with the Saqi and annihilate its forces.
Let the musician start a new tune on his sweet sounding instrument
so that I clap my hands and sing my ghazal and dance on it.*

بیا تا گل بر افشانیم و می در ساغر اندازیم فلک را ستف بشگا فیم و طرحی نودر اندازیم
اگر غم لشکر انگیزد که خون عاشقان ریزد من و ساقی بهم سازیم و بنیادش بر اندازیم
چو در دستت رودی خوش بزن مطرب سرودی خوش
که دست افشان غزلخوانیم و پاکوبان سر اندازیم

But by the time he writes his last lines the poet realises that his beautiful dream is nothing more than a wishful thinking:

*There is no place in Shiraz for poetry and music,
Come Hafiz, let us migrate to a new country.*

سخن خوانی و خوش خوانی نمی ورزند در شیراز بیا حافظ که تا خود را بملکی دیگر اندازیم

But it was not possible for him to go anywhere, not even to the nearest city of Baghdad where a generous tyrant, Sheikh Ahmad Ovaise Hasan Ilkani ruled. He was himself a poet, musician, painter and artist who repeatedly strove to induce Hafiz to visit his court. But the poet was too much in love with his Shiraz as he said in one of his ghazal:

*The zephyr-breeze of Musalla and the stream of Ruknabad
Do not permit me to travel or wander afied.*

نمی دهند اجازت مرا بسیر سفر نسیم باد مصلاً و آب رکتا باد

In another ghazal he sings in praise of the stream of Ruknabad and the rose gardens of Musalla:

*Bring, cup-bearer, all that is left of thy wine!
In the Garden of Paradise vainly thou'it seek
The lip of the fountain of Ruknabad
And the bowers of Musalla where roses twine.*

بده ساقی می باقی که در جنت نخواهی یافت کنار آب رکتا باد و گل گشت مصلاً را

There are two aspects of the Sufi doctrine, one spiritual and the other temporal, because Islam does not preach renunciation of the world. Hafiz combines both. The earthly beauty is a mirror of the Beauty of God and it must be loved. And no one has loved it better than Hafiz. The tavern is a symbol. In contrast to the mosque or other places of worship it admits all communities, all religions. It is not reserved only for the chosen few of God. And in contrast to the royal court it is a place without distinctions. The king and the beggar are equal here. Only the Saqi rules here who distributes wine to all

without distinction. It is here that the equality and brotherhood of man, preached in Islam, are practised.

The spiritual aspect of the tavern, called Maikhana and Kharabat in Persian, has been depicted in a poem by Nizami Ganjawi, who lived two hundred years before Hafiz:

*Last night I sought the Tavern and had no guide to lead,
I cried and shouted but none would care or heed.
Perhaps the Vintners there had fallen deep in sleep,
Perhaps my name and fame none happened there to read.
So thus I moaned for hours as hours past at night,
A Reveller peeped from window I got a chance to plead.
Said I: "Now open door" Said he: "Silence avaunt!"
"To admit you at night has anyone agreed?
"This place is not a mosque which opens at your call,
"So that you enter late and yet in ranks precede,
"this is a Magi's Tavern and there are Revellers here,
"With Beauty, Wine, and Lights with Sweets, Song and Reed,
"The Muslim, Brahmin, Christian, the Zartusht and the Jew
"In Tavern you will find the man of every creed
"And if you wish to profit with their discourses here,
"Be dust of feet of all, so then you may succeed.
"How long would thou Nizami be knocking at this door?
"O fool! This love is fire which gives thee smoke.*

می زدم ناله و فریاد کس از من نشنود	دوش رفتم بخرابات و مرا راه نبود
یا که من هیچ کسم، هیچ کسم در نکشود	یا نه بُد هیچ کس از باده فروشان بیدار
رندے از غرفه برون کرد سرورخ بنمود	پاسے از شب بگذشت، بیشترک یا کمتر
یے محل آمدنت بر در ما بہر چه بود	گفت خیر است درین وقت کرامی خواہی
کاندرین وقت کسے بہر کسے در نکشود	گفتمش در بکشا، گفت برو ہرزہ مگوی
کہ تو دیر آئی و اندر صف پیش استی زود	این نہ مسجد کہ بہر لحظ دوش بکشایند
شاہد و شمع و شراب و شکر و نای و سرود	این خرابات مغانست و درورندانند
مومن و برہمن و گبر و انصارا و یہود	ہرچہ در جملہ آفاق درین جا حاضر
خاک پایے ہمہ شوتا کہ بیابی مقصود	گر تو خواہی کہ دم از صحبت ایشان بزنی
کہ ازین آتش گردان تو نہ بینی جزود	اے نظامیٰ چہ زنی حلقہ این در شب و روز

Swami Govinda Tirtha in his book *The Nectar of Grace* has commented that "From the above description it would appear that in Nizami Ganjawi's time the term 'KHARABAT' was applied to sufi gatherings where seekers after the Truth, without distinction of creeds discourses, Poems were read and sung". (p. CXLIII)

To emphasise this spiritual aspect of the Tavern only eight out of hundreds of exquisite lines of poetry by Hafiz are quoted here:

*I am seeing the Light of God in the Tavern of the Magi,
Strange it is, what a Light is seen from what a place.
Don't try to deceive me you leader of the Hajjis,
You only see the House (KAABA), and I am seeing the Master of the
House.*

در خرابات مغان نور خدا می بینم این عجب بین که چه نوری ز کجا می بینم
جلوه بر من مفروش ای ملک الحاج که تو خانه می بینی و من خانه خدا می بینم

*I saw last night that the Angels knocked at the door of the Tavern
They kneaded the earth out of which Man is made and fashioned the
cup of wine
Then came the inhabitants of the Heavenly Court,
And shared the intoxicating wine with my humble self.*

دروش دیدم که ملایک در میخوانه زدند گل آدم بسرشتند و به پیمانہ زدند
ساکنان حرم ستر و عفاف ملکوت با من راه نشین بادہ مستانه زدند

It is here in the *Kharabat* or *Maikhana* that the poet finds enlightenment for which he uses the image of *Jam-i-Jam*, the legendary Cup of King Jamshid of Iran who could see in this all the happenings and the secrets of the universe:

*For years the heart demanded the Jaam of Jamshid from me
What he possessed himself wanted a stranger to supply.
The pearl that is outside the shell of the earth and the sky,
Was demanded from those who lost their way on the shore of the sea
itself*

*I placed my difficulty before the old Magi last evening,
Who with the help of his glance could solve the problem.
I found him happy and smiling with a cup of wine in his hand,
And in that mirror he was seeing and enjoying many a happening.
Who gave you this cup which reflects all the world in it, I asked,
He said, the day this blue dome was erected.
The coward who always had God with him,
Did not see Him and went on crying: O God O God.
And he said that the friend (i.e. Mansoor Hallaj) who gave dignity to
the gallows,
His crime was that he revealed the Secret.*

(Mansoor Hallaj born in 858 was executed in Baghdad in March 922 for saying AN AL HAQ. "I am God". He was one of the earliest Muslim mystics and was a carder by profession.)

سالها دل طلب جام از ما می کرد	وانچه خود داشت ز بیگانه تمنای می کرد
گویی کز صدف کون و مکان بپروست	طلب از گم شدگان لب دریا می کرد
مشکل خویش بر پیر مغان بردم دوش	کو بتائید نظر جن معنا می کرد
دیدمش خرم و خندان قدح باده بدست	واندر آن آینه صد گونه تماشا می کرد
گفتم این جام جهان بین بتو کی داد حکیم	گفت آنروز که این گنبد مینا می کرد
بیدلی در همه احوال خدا با او بود	او نمیدیدش و از دور خدا یا می کرد
گفت آن یار کز و گشت سردار بلند	جرمش این بود که اسرار هویدا می کرد

I need not quote the exquisite and elegant poetry of Hafiz reflecting the temporal aspect of the Tavern. His Diwan is full of it. But an important point should be underlined. The spiritual aspect of the Tavern eliminates the religious bureaucracy standing between God and man, and exploiting man in the name of God: the temporal aspect of the Tavern eliminates the state bureaucracy who stand between the king and his subjects, and they are objects of ridicule in the poetry of Hafiz and other Persian and Urdu poets. At times in those ages the religious and the state bureaucracy is the same, Qazi, Mulla, Mohtasib and Waiz, the religious preacher.

*The religious preachers who show their glory on the pulpit under the arch of mosque,
Indulge in different things when they retire to their seclusion.*

واعظان لاین جلوه در محراب و منبر میکنند چون بخلوت میروند آن کاردیگر می کند

Hafiz calls them Waiz-e-Shehna Shinas, واعظ شهنه شناس, i.e. police friendly Waiz.

واعظ شهنه شناس این عظمت گو مفروش ز آنکه منزل گه سلطان دل مسکین من است
براعظ شهنه شناس بگو این بهمه بزرگی مفروش زیرا دل مسکین من منزل بادشاه است

(شرح بر حافظ)

جلد اول ۳۰۱

The Tavern in its temporal aspect is distinct from the courts of the kings and the princes where only the elite could find access. But the Tavern is a public place, a democratic assembly where the lowest of the low could go and sit in the circle of the highest. This is the humanism of the medieval ages. It is here that the under-privileged, deprived of their humanity, find their dignity:

*I am a beggar on the door of the Tavern, but see me intoxicated,
I rule over the sky and order the stars to revolve according to my
wishes*

گدای می‌کده ام لیک وقت مستی بین
که ناز بر فلک و حکم بر ستاره کنم

*Come with me, the lowest of the low, sitting on bare earth,
To the Tavern and see what dignity I command there.*

بامن راه نشین خیز و سوری می‌کده آئ
تا در آن حلقه ببینی که چه صاحب جام

The Tavern is also the seat of wisdom. From here the *rind*, the reveller, can talk to the king on equal terms and say a few things to tame his pride:

*Who will carry the message of a beggar like me to the kings,
In the lane of wine sellers thousands of Jamshids have turned into the
cup of wine.*

کے بردہ پیش شاہان زمن گدا پیامی کہ بکوی می‌فروشان دو ہزار جم جامی

*Do not be surprised by the revolution of time,
The revolving sky remembers a thousand tales of this kind.
Pick up the cups of wine with reverence,
They have been fashioned out of the skulls of (mighty kings)
Jamshid, Behman and Kaiqubad.*

ز انقلاب زمانه عجب مدار که چرخ
ازین فسانه هزاران ہزار دارد یاد
قدح بشرط ادب گیر زانکہ ترکیبش
ز کاسہ سر جمشید و بہمن است و قباد

It would be wrong to call Hafiz a pleasure loving poet. He is a poet of love and a poet of joy of life. He celebrates life and love as no other poet has done:

*I have seen the reflection of my beloved's face in my cup,
You do not know the joy of my continuous drinking.*

ما در پیالہ عکس رخ یار دیدہ ایم
ای بیخبر ز لذت شرب مدام ما

*Drink the ruby red wine and glance at the faces bright like the moon
Contrary to the religion of others behold the beauty of these beauties*

شراب لعل کش و روی مہ جبینان بین
خلاف مذہب آنان جمال اینان بین

*I say, drink the cup of wine and kiss the lips of the Saqi,
Listen, my dear, no one can say a word better than this
My conscience keeper asks: what is there in love except pain,
Go your way, O wise fool, love has something better than this.
The nectar of the pen of Hafiz is sweet like the sugarcane,
You will not find in any garden a fruit better than this.*

می فگن بر صف رندان نظری بهتر ازین بر در میکده می کن گذری بهتر ازین
ناصرم گفت که جز غم چه پسر دارد عشق بروای خواجه عاقل پتری بهتر ازین
من چو گویم که قدح نوش و لب ساقی بوس بشنواز من که نگویید دگری بهتر ازین

*Who can enjoy the fruits of paradise,
If he has not tasted the apple of the beloved's face.*

ز میوه پائے بهشتی چه فیض دریابد هر آن که سیب زنگدان شاهی نگزید

His message or total attitude to life is summed up in two lines:

*Every foundation that you see is breached
Except the foundation of love which is without breach.*

خلل پذیر بود هر بنا که می بینی بجز بنائے محبت که خالی از خلل است

There is a kind of glorification of sin in Hafiz and other Persian poets. In reality it is the glorification of mercy of God. The explanation was simple, but not to the liking of the fundamentalist mullah who promised better life in the other world for the wretched of the earth as a reward for practising piety in life. Adam was the first sinner who was thrown out of paradise and thus the life of man began on earth. So sin is the heritage of man. God is merciful and how could He exercise mercy if man did not commit sin. Hafiz gives a retort to the mullah in a taunting way:

*Go your way O man of God, paradise is my destiny,
Only the sinners deserve the mercy of God.*

نصیب ما ست بهشت ای خدا شناس بر که مستحق کرامت گنا پگارانند

*They did not suffer me to pass through the lane of good repute,
If thou does not like my ways, then change the Destiny.*

در کوثرے نیک نامی مارا گذر نه دادند گر تو نمی پسندی تغیر کن قضا را

Hafiz is not the chronicler of his age like Mir and Iqbal. Yet his life and times are reflected in his poetry. He was born in 1312 in Shiraz and died there in 1387 or 1389. His father was named Bahaduddin who had migrated from Isfahan to Shiraz and enriched himself by commerce. But when he died he left his affairs in confusion, and his wife and little son in penury. The little Shamsuddin Mohammad had to struggle to earn his livelihood. He attended a school where he got good education and learned the Quran by heart. That is how he became "Hafiz" (one who remembers Quran and recites it without error) and this is the pen name he used in his poetry afterwards.

During the 75 or 77 years of his life he saw the rise and fall of many kings whose favour and patronage he enjoyed. His first patron Shah Sheikh Abu-Is-haq was more of a friend than a king. In a painting, now in the British Museum, Hafiz is shown sitting under a tree in an informal way with a book in his hand while Abu Is-haq is sitting a normal style with his hands folded in his lap. More than a king and a courtier they look like friends. And one gets the same impression from the *ghazal* of Hafiz in which Abu Is-haq has been mentioned as a friend. He was himself a poet and friend of poets. He loved pleasure and wine and neglected the affairs of the state. It was the season of spring when Shiraz was surrounded by the armies of Mubarizzuddin. Abu-Is-haq did not take any notice of it. At last he was induced by a courtier to see and enjoy the beauty of spring flowers from the top of his palace so that he should see that his throne was in danger. Seeing the army of the enemy surrounding Shiraz he merely remarked that Mubarizzuddin must be a fool to waste the delicious season of spring in such a manner. He concluded by reciting a verse:

*Come let us make merry just for this one night,
And let us deal tomorrow with tomorrow's business.*

بیا تا یک ام شب تماشه کنیم چو فردا بود کار فردا کنیم

When "Tomorrow" came he was defeated and beheaded, and a ruthless tyrant who was a puritan by temperament came on the throne, King Mubarizzuddin Muzaffar. Hafiz wrote a moving elegy on the death of his friend which must have annoyed the new king of whom Hafiz never wrote a word of praise:

Remember when your lane was my abode,

and my eyes received light from the dust of your door.
 In your pure company like lily and rose,
 I had on the tip of my tongue what was there in your heart.
 It was the desire of my heart not to live without my friend,
 But what to do, all attempts by me and my heart were useless.
 Last night I went to the tavern remembering my friends,
 I saw the jar of wine with blood in its heart and feet in the mud.
 So I came back to ask some one the reason of the pain of separation,
 In truth the turquoise ring of Abu-Is-haq,
 Flashed finely, but it was a transitory prosperity.
 You have seen Hafiz, how the partridge laughed and walked,
 Completely obligious of the talons of the eagle of death.

یاد باد آنکه سر کوی تو ام منزل بود دیده راروشنی از خاک درت حاصل بود
 راست چون سوسن و گل از اثر صحبت پاک بر زبان بود مرا آنچه ترا در دل بود
 درد دلم بود که بی دوست نباشم هرگز چه تو آن کرد که سعی من و دل باطل بود
 دوش بریاد حریفان بخرابات شدم خم می دیدم و خون در دل و پا در گل بود
 پس بگشتم که بپرسم سبب درد فراق مفتی عقل درین مسئله لا یعقل بود
 راستی خاتم فیروزه بو اسحاقی خوش درخشید ولی دولت مستعجل بود
 دیدی آن قهقه کبک خرامان حافظ

که ز سر پنجه شاهین قضا غافل بود

Hafiz hated the new king Mubarizzuddin who drowned Shiraz and the province of Fars in blood. He never forgave him for the murder of his friend, and religious hypocrisy. He was so ruthless that while sitting on a prayer carpet reading Quran he would calmly pick up his dagger and plunge it in the heart of any unfortunate victim brought to his presence and return to the reading of Quran again. He imposed total prohibition and closed all the taverns. Although it is not recorded anywhere, but there is a clear evidence in the writings of the period that Hafiz did not visit the court of this harsh, stern and ascetic king. The great annoyance of Hafiz is expressed in one of his most beautiful ghazals:

*Though wine gives delight and the wind distils the perfume of the
 rose,*

*Drink not wine to the strains of the harp, for the constable
 (Muhtasib) is alert*

*Hide the goblet in the sleeve of the patch work cloak,
 For the time, like eye of the decanter, pours forth blood.
 Wash your dervish-cloak from the wine stain with tears,
 For it is the season of piety and the time of abstinence.*

اگر چه باده فرح بخش و باد گل بیزست بیابانک چنگ مخور می که محتسب تیزست
 در آستین مرقع پیاله پنهان کن که همچو چشم صراحی زمانه خورشیزست
 بآب دیده بشویم خرقة پا از می که موسم روع و روزگار پرہیزست
 سپهر برشده پرویز نیست خون افشان که ریزه اش سر کسری و تاج پرویزست

Hafiz also wrote a moving elegy on the death of wine;

*O will it be that they will reopen the doors of the taven,
And will loosen the knots from our tangled affairs?
Write the letter of condolence for the Daughter of the grape.
So that all the comrades may let loose blood from their eyelashes.
Cut the tresses (strings) of the harp in mourning for the death of pure
wine,
So that all the sons of Magians may loosen their curled locks!
They have closed the doors of the wine-tavern; O God suffer not
So that they should open the doors of the house of deceit and
hypocrisy!
If they have closed them for the sake of the heart of the self-righteous
zealot
Be of good heart, for they will reopen them for God's sake.*

گره از کار فرو بسته ما بکشایند	بود آیا که در میکده ها بکشایند
تا حریفان همه خون از مژه ها بکشایند	نامه تعزیت دختر رز بنویسید
تا همه مغیبتگان زلف دو تا بکشایند	گیسوی چنگ بپرید بمرگ می ناب
که در خانه تزویر و ریا بکشایند	در میخانه بیستند خدایا مپسند
دل قوی دار که از بهر خدا بکشایند	اگر از بهر دل زاهد خود بین بستند

Hafiz found another occasion to express his contempt for Shah Mubarizuddin when his Shan Shuja imprisoned him and got him blinded. The taverns reopened and the poet celebrated the occasion:

*At early dawn good tidings reached my ear from the Unseen Voice,
It is the era of Shah Shuja: drink wine boldly!
That time has gone when men with insight went apart,
With a thousand words in their mouth but their lips silent.
To the sound of the harp we will tell the stories
At the hearing of which the cauldron of our bosoms boiled.*

که دور شاه شجاعست می دلیر بنوش	سحر ز هاتق غییم رسید مرده بگوش
هزار گونه سخن درد بان و لب خاموش	شد آنکه اهل نظر بر کناره میرفتند
که از نهفتن آن دیگ سینه میرد جوش	بصورت چنگ بگویم آن حکایتها

The new era after the defeat of the old tyrant is depicted by Hafiz as the new dawn:

*In the morning from the secret corner of creation,
The candle of the east reflects its light all around;
The sky takes out a mirror from the pocket of the horizon,
and shows through it the face of the earth in all its loveliness;
The harp began to calmour: 'where is the objector?'
The cup began to laugh: 'where is the forbiddier?'
Keep an eye on the ways of time and hold fast the cheering cup,
This is the best way of living in these bad days.*

با مدا دان که ز خلوتگه کاخ ا بداع	شمع خاور فگند بر همه اطراف شمع
بر کشد آینه از جیب افق چرخ و در آن	بنماید رخ گیتی بهر زان انواع
در زوا یای طربخانه جمشید فلک	ارغنون ساز کند زهره بآهنگ سماح
چنگ در غلغله آید که کجا شد منکر	جام در قهقه آید که کجا شد مناع
وضع دورا ن بنگر ساغر عشرت بر گیر	که بهر حالتی اینست بهین ا وضاع

What else could a sensitive and self-respecting poet do in those days of feudal oppression where change meant only the change of kings. He took refuge in his poetry and sitting in a corner expressed his despair and hope and sang of the glory of life and beauty of man. The times were dangerous and one could lose one's head just for a heedless word, so the poet had to be subtle in his expression. If he has to denounce religious hypocrisy he would talk about himself:

*How pleasant to me seemed this saying which at early dawn
a Christian was reciting at the door of the tavern with tambourine
and flute:*

*If Mohammadanism be that which Hafiz holds,
Alas if there should be a tomorrow after today.*

این حدیثم چه خوش آمد که سحر گه میگفت	بر در میکده ای بادف رنی ترسائ
گر مسلمانی از این است که حافظ دا رد	آه اگر از پی امروز بود فردائ

If he has to remind a rich benefactor who has not sent his stipend to him he would sing:

*There are good tidings that Spring has arrived and the grass is green,
If I receive my stipend now it would be used for roses and date-wind*

*The Spring is passing, where are you, my benefactor?
The season is at its end and Hafiz has not tasted a drop of grape wine.*

بیا صبا در چمن لاله سحر می گفتم
که شهیدا ن که انداین همه خونین کن
از می لعل حکایت کن و شیرین ده
گفت حافظ من و تو محرم این راز نه ایم

ousness and understanding reflect the blood stained landscape

*One morning in the garden of tulips I asked the breeze.
Those martyrs are these (flowers) wearing bloody shrouds?
The answer was: Neither you know this secret, Hafiz nor I,
It's better to talk about the ruby red wine and the sweet lipped
beauties.*

با صبا در چمن لاله سحر می گفتم
که شهیدا ن که انداین همه خونین کن
از می لعل حکایت کن و شیرین ده
گفت حافظ من و تو محرم این راز نه ایم

another place the poet is talking to the haughty beloved calling
rose and himself the nightingale, and yet the verses contain a
for the haughty kings who come and go like blooming and
flowers:

*The nightingale of the garden said to the newly opened bud of rose in
the morning,
By this coquettish pride and conceit, many a flower like you have
blossomed in this garden and gone.
The rose smiled and said I do not grieve for the truth told by you,
I do not have no lover speak harsh words to the beloved.*

صبحدم مرغ چمن با گل نو خاسته گفت
گل بخندید که از راست نرنجیم ولی
ناز کم کن که درین باغ بسی چون تو شگ
بیچ عاشق سخن سخت بمشوق نگفت

native towns and the seats of my government; and you, miserable wretch that you are, would sell them both for the black mole of a Turk of Shirazi". "Shire" replied Hafiz, with deep obeisance, "it is through such prodigality that I have fallen on such evil days!" Timur is said to have been so much delighted by this quick rejoinder that he not only refrained from punishing the poet but gave him a handsome present." Edward Browne the author of the *Literary History of Persia* who has quoted this story thinks that it is entirely apocryphal.

Hafiz is perhaps the greatest master of the highly stylised metaphor of the Persian poetry. The simple words like rose, garden, nightingale, wine, tavern, saqi etc., are motifs with which he weaves beautiful patterns of poetry creating simultaneously various levels of consciousness and understanding reflect the blood stained landscape of his times, and at the other level the metaphysical aspect of the universe:

*One morning in the garden of tulips I asked the breeze,
Whose martyrs are these (flowers) wearing bloody shrouds?
The answer was: Neither you know this secret, Hafiz nor I,
It is better to talk about the ruby red wine and the sweet lipped
beauties.*

که شهیدان که انداین همه خونین کفنان
از می لعل حکایت کن و شیرین دهنان

با صبا در چمن لاله سحر می گفتم
گفت حافظ من و تو محرم این راز نه ایم

At another place the poet is talking to the haughty beloved calling her a rose and himself the nightingale, and yet the verses contain a lesson for the haughty kings who come and go like blooming and fading flowers:

*The nightingale of the garden said to the newly opened bud of rose in
the morning,
Why this coquettish pride and conceit, many a flower like you have
blossomed in this garden and gone
The rose smiled and said I do not grieve for the truth told by you,
But no lover speak harsh words to the beloved.*

ناز کم کن که درین باغ بسی چون تو شگفت
هیچ عاشق سخن سخت بمعشوق نگفت

صبحدم مرغ چمن با گل نو خاسته گفت
گل بخندید که از را ست نرنجیم ولی

The technique of the stylised metaphor with the same classical motifs has been used by the progressive and revolutionary poets of Urdu along with modern techniques of poetry. We have inherited this tradition. It is not surprising that Hafiz who has been throughout the ages the favourite poet of kings and beggars alike is also the favourite poet of the revolutionaries. Sajjad Zaheer wrote two books in the prisons of Pakistan during five years of his imprisonment in the Rawalpindi conspiracy case. One is the history of the Progressive Writer's Movement called Roshnai and the second on Hafiz Shirazi. The name Roshnai itself is from the poetry of Hafiz Shirazi. During my hospitalisation under a heart attack *Diwan-i-Hafiz* was my constant companion. It gave me courage and determination to live when I opened the book on my sick bed and read the verse.

*Find your medicine in the sweet words of Hafiz,
So you do not need rose and sugar for the treatment.*

شفا ز گفته شکر فشان حافظ جوی کہ حاجتت به علاج گلاب ر قند میاد

My doctor who himself was a lover of Hafiz was amused and brought for me the next day the collected works of Sa'adi and told me that good poetry is also like medicine.

Now a revolutionary poet from Bengal has fallen in love with Hafiz and has translated his ghazals into Bengali. I would like to end my article by quoting the lovely metaphysical ode of Hafiz which is engraved on his tombstone. It also expresses a kind of discontent of Hafiz with his times. He has said again and again in his poetry that he does not belong to this world. He is the nightingale of paradise. Yet it is full of zest for life:

*Where are the tidings of union? that I may arise-
Forth from the dust I will rise up to welcome thee!
My soul like a homing bird, yearning for paradise.
Shall arise and soar, from the snares of the world set free.*

*When the voice of love shall call me to be thy slave,
I shall rise to a greater far than the mastery
Of life and living, time and the mortal span:*

*Pour down, oh Lord! from the clouds of Thy guiding grace
The rain of a mercy that quickeneth on my grave,*

*Before, like dust that the wind bears from place to place
I arise and flee beyond the knowledge of man.*

*When to my grave thou turnest thy blessed feet,
Wine and the lute shalt thou bring in thy hand to me,
Thy voice shall ring through the folds of my winding-sheet,
And I will arise and dance to thy minstrelsy.*

*Though I be old, clasp me one night to thy breast,
And I, when the dawn shall come to awaken me,
With the flash of youth on my cheek from thy bosom will rise.*

*Rise up! let mine eyes delight in thy stately grace!
Thou art the goal to which all men's endeavour has pressed
And thou the idol of Hafiz's worship; thy face
From the world and life shall bid him come forth and arise.*

طایر قدسم و از دام جهان بر خیزم	مژده' وصل تو کو کز سر جان بر خیزم
از سر خواجگی کون و مکان بر خیزم	بو لای تو که گر بنده خویشم خوانی
پیشتر زانکه چو گردی ز میان بر خیزم	یا رب از ابر هدایت برسان بارانی
تا بیوت ز لحد رقص کنان بر خیزم	بر سر تربت من با می و مطرب بنشین
تا سحر گه ز کنار تو جوان بر خیزم	گر چه پیرم تو شبی تنگ در آغوشم کش
کز سر جان و جهان دست فشان بر خیزم	خیز و بالا بنما ای بت شیرین حرکات
روز مرگم نفسی مهلت دیدار بده	
تا چو حافظ ز سر جان و جهان بر خیزم	

Hafiz's wish has been fulfilled, his prophecy about himself has come true:

*"When thou passest by our tomb, seek a blessing,
for it shall be a place of pilgrimage for the libertines of all the world:"*

بر سر تربت ما چون گذری همت خواه که زیارتگه رندان جهان خواهد بود

He is called by his admirers *Lisanul Ghaib* (The tongue of the Unseen) and *Tarjumanul Asrar* (the Interpreter of Mysteries).