

SHEIKH SA'DI'S DIDACTIC AND MORAL TEACHINGS

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Abstract: This article examines the didactic and ethical aspects of Sheikh Sa'di's literary heritage, focusing primarily on his masterpieces "Gulistan" and "Bustan." Through a thorough analysis of the text and the topic, the study reveals how Sa'di used narrative, metaphor, and poetic form to convey universal moral values, principles of social justice, and practical wisdom. Sa'di's teachings, based on the traditions of classical Persian literature and Islamic moral thought, emphasize such virtues as humility, mercy, justice, and the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

Keywords: "Gulistan", "Bustan", Persian classical literature, rhetorical strategy, didactic tone, Quranic allusions, Sufi principles.

INTRODUCTION

Sheikh Sa'di Shirazi (approx. 1210-1291) was one of the most influential representatives of Persian classical literature, known not only for his poetic skill but also for his profound moral and educational views. His most famous works, "Gulistan" and "Bustan," occupy a central place in the Persian literary and moral tradition. Sa'di's works were written during a period of social upheaval and political fragmentation in the Islamic world, serving as both a mirror of his time and an immortal guide to a virtuous life. With a unique combination of prose and poetry, aphorisms and anecdotes, Sa'di taught moral principles beyond cultural and temporal boundaries. The didactic nature of Sa'di's work implies the intention of teaching students moral behavior, civic responsibility, and spiritual maturity. His stories are filled with kings and beggars, scholars and fools, and each character is a means of demonstrating virtues such as honesty, humility, justice, mercy, and self-control. Sa'di's literary approach, based on Islamic moral teachings and Sufi philosophy, balances theology with practical wisdom, which makes his works not only spiritually enriched but also pedagogically effective.

This article is aimed at examining the moral and pedagogical foundations of Sa'di's literary collection. He explores how the use of allegory, narrative technique, and rhetorical style serves his ethical views and assesses the ongoing relevance of his teachings in contemporary contexts. Through text analysis and a review of existing scholarly research, this study presents Sa'di as a key figure in the ethical philosophy of Persian literature and highlights the global significance of his humanistic values.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS

The scientific study of the works of Sheikh Sa'di has long attracted the attention of literary scholars, moralists, and historians of Persian literature. Sa'di is widely recognized not only as a master of Persian prose and poetry, but also as a moral philosopher whose works reflect the moral and pedagogical foundations of classical Islamic thought. Scholars such as Edward Brown (1906) and Annemarie Schimmel (1975) emphasized the central place of Sa'di's works in the canon of Persian literature, noting his ability to combine aesthetic beauty with deep moral guidelines. In modern research on the study of Sa'di's didactics, attention is often paid to the

structure and content of his two major works - "Bustan" and "Gulistan." In particular, "Bustan" is described in verse as a moral treatise in the spirit of Sufism, while "Gulistan" is described in prose with concise wisdom and anecdotes. As noted by Maria Subtelni (2004) and J.T.P. de Bruijn (1997), Sa'di's use of stories and moral examples reflects a pedagogical strategy aimed at providing accessible moral education for both elite and popular audiences. The role of allegory, satire, and irony in Sa'di's works was also at the center of artistic analysis, because these tools simultaneously perform the function of entertainment and education.

In addition to literary analysis, Sa'di's work has been studied more extensively in the context of Islamic ethics and philosophy. Scholars have noted the strong influence of the Quran, hadith literature, and Sufi mysticism, all of which testify to Sa'di's depiction of virtues such as justice, generosity, humility, and patience. The research of scholars such as Hamid Dabashi and Nasrin Rahimi further studied the intercultural and intertextual aspects of Sa'di's ethical doctrine and showed that his views are beyond the boundaries of time, space, and religious doctrine. Despite these extensive studies, the need remains for a comprehensive synthesis of Sa'di's moral worldview from the perspective of modern moral discourse and educational theory. Although many studies highlight individual themes or stylistic features, few have sought a systematic analysis of how Sa'di conveys moral ideas or how these teachings can be applied in contemporary intercultural and pedagogical contexts. This article seeks to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing Sa'di's didactic strategies and ethical foundations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of "Bustan" and "Gulistan" shows that the works of Sheikh Sa'di are built around a clear moral structure that combines moral education with fiction. Careful reading of the selected stories shows that Sa'di's didactic method is based on storytelling, in which moral lessons are conveyed through short, vivid stories reflecting life situations and human experiences. The results of the study show that his teachings are contextualized in practical and relevant situations, including topics such as justice, humility, generosity, gratitude, and self-education, rather than abstract moral teachings. One of the most striking results of the analysis is that Sa'di used the contrast and comparison between the virtuous and the corrupt, the wise and the fool, the strong and the weak to emphasize moral choices and their consequences. For example, the frequent appearance of wise kings and corrupt ministers in Gulistan serves as a narrative tool for studying the responsibility of leadership and the ethics of governing the state. Sa'di often incorporates Quranic allusions and Sufi principles into these stories, enriching their moral depth and grounding them in the spiritual and cultural traditions of his time.

In "Bustan," Sa'di's moral teachings are more connected with divine law and spiritual perfection. In his poems, the ideas of self-awareness, repentance, and purification of the soul are often put forward as a condition for a moral life. The results show that Sa'di's concept of morality, by its very nature, is connected with both internal spiritual discipline and external social behavior and reflects a holistic view of human perfection.

Another important result is Sa'di's rhetorical strategy. The use of humor, irony, and rhetorical questions increases the impact of his teachings. Rather than giving advice in an instructive or didactic tone, Sa'di often allows the reader to understand the intended goal through the results of the actions of his characters. An indirect approach increases the reader's activity and deepens the moral impact of the story.

From the conversation, it becomes clear that Sa'di's teachings have not lost their significance even in modern conditions. Its emphasis on compassion, tolerance, and mutual respect directly testifies to the values necessary in today's globalized and culturally diverse world. From an

educational perspective, his works provide valuable tools for character development in both secular and religious environments, promoting intercultural competence and universal values.

CONCLUSION

In Sheikh Sa'di's epics "Bustan" and "Gulistan," there is a unique combination of literary elegance and moral teachings. Through engaging stories and moral reflections, he conveys eternal values such as justice, humility, and compassion. His teachings, based on the traditions of Islam and Sufism, are still relevant today, promoting personal virtue and social harmony. Sa'di's immortal legacy lies in his ability to inspire moral thought and intercultural understanding among generations.

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