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## **The theme of Mysticism and its impact to Arabic Poetry**

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### **Abstract**

*Love is considered as a mean to understanding and gaining knowledge of God since ancient period, consequently mysticism continue as a way to being set free from worldly things and attaining approbation from the God. Literature had much done in circulating importance and role of mysticism in society. Mystical Arabic poetry goes through several stages including 'Islamic' by which knowledge can be achieved through wisdom and sense. Deep love and affection have more importance in these steps of mysticism, while we can see plenty of Arabic poetry dealing with mystical ideas through whole hearted love. Mystical Arabic poetry depict broad concept of love. Jalaluddin Rumi, Ibnul farid, Imam Busuri, Hallaj and others portrayed the concept of love through their collection of poems (Diwaan). Specially Mathnawi, the Diwan -i- Kabir, the Majalis-i- Sab'ah, the Maktubat or the collection of his discourses Fihi ma Fihi written by Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi is filled with Mystical ideas, love and wisdom of God.*

*There are some differences in the idea of love in mystical Arabic poetry and other love poetry, such as the feeling of love between the ode of Pre Islamic poet Imrul Qais and the Qasida of Ibnul farid is completely different. So, in this paper I would like to describe about the concept of love in Arabic literature, Mysticism in Arabic poetry, and Difference between Mystical Arabic poetry and Other Arabic poetry.*

***Key Words: Mysticism, Love, Knowledge, Devotion, Metaphysical priority.***

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**Introduction:** The meaning of "Mysticism" is – "The belief that knowledge of God and of real truth can be found through prayer and meditation rather than through reason and the senses".

Love is considered as a mean to understanding and gaining knowledge of God since ancient period, consequently mysticism continue as a way to being set free from worldly things and attaining approbation from the God. Literature had much done in circulating importance and role of mysticism in society. Mystical Arabic poetry goes through several stages including 'Islamic' by which knowledge can be achieved through wisdom and sense. Deep love and affection have more importance in these steps of mysticism, while we can see plenty of Arabic poetry dealing with mystical ideas through whole hearted love.

Sufis consider themselves devout Muslims for whom devotional love for God, for the prophet and his family, for the saints, for each other and for everyone is primary, for it is only through love that worship of God can be completed. Poetry is mysticism's most important expressive medium, languages closest approach to the subtle fragrance, the ineffable flashes characterizing the Sufis mystical life. Concept of love was depicted more through literal work in Arabic. Deep love and affection have more importance in mysticism, so we can see the mystical Arabic poetry as flourished with the depiction of genuine love, deep affection, as they differ from the others' illustration of love. These

poetry served Sufism to be spread and extended. The spread of Sufism has been considered a definitive factor on the spread of Islam and in the creation integrally Islamic cultures especially in Africa and Asia.

**Concept of love in Arabic literature:** Love is considered as a mean to understanding and gaining knowledge since ancient period. Plato saw the love is as liveliness of nonsensical mind without any thought. Love in the view of Aristotle is blindness of sense to percept the imperfection of beloved. The great Arabic poet of Abbasid period Mutanabbi convey us the same meaning through his words,

The love is nothing except blaze and greed  
Expose the heart itself, then to be afflicted.<sup>1</sup>

Dark Age Arab women saw the love as synonym to servility and madness. It is hidden like the latency of fire on stone<sup>2</sup>.

There are some causes to be loved and to begin the love like look and glimpse. This is why Qur'an (24:31) and Sunnah dishearten the repeated look to opposite sex. Farazdaq says:

She geared the look, you never leave  
The heart for it, he didn't feel whatever provided by her.<sup>3</sup>

Abdulla ibn Al Muatazz says

My eyes set a fire on love by my blood  
So cry as fallen, some of it is murders.<sup>4</sup>

**Mysticism in Arabic poetry:** The mystical poetry is inundation from God on his regents with the knowledge of vicinity and inspiration. If the adjectives and designations of God came into view of their heart, the reality of His mercy will appear over them. The relation between poetry and mysticism is interesting because the religious poetry is fluid, freer to express and arouse personal mystical feeling unlike Qur'an and Hadith which constitute the textual core of the Sufi's spiritual life, as they do for other Muslims. Thus Abu Hamid Al Gazali advised: "then know that singing is more powerful than Qur'an in arousing the ecstasy". His justification for this statement rests in part on the Qur'an's fixity<sup>5</sup>. When people understand the new sense of Qur'anic verse (26:224) and the sayings of prophet about poets, they began to defect the poetry in praise of sensual love and turned to begin every work with hymns to praise The Creator and the beloved prophet. The mystical tendency leads the poets to asceticism, to abstaining from worldly life to stand against king, to order the virtues and to prohibit the forbidden. There was one poet on Abbasid period called as 'poet of asceticism'. Dhu noon Al Misri, Ibn Al Keezani, Umar Ibn Al farid, Al Busuri, Al Sha'raani, Ibnul Fariz and others also known as mystical poets in the history of Arabic literature. When the mysticism or Sufism developed as full independent discipline with specific theories and terminologies, the mystics occupied the poetry as important stone to circulate the ideas of mysticism to the people. Ibn Al Arabi, Jalaluddin Rumi, Mansur Al Hallaj and others contributed more to this kind of Arabic Poetry. They depicted several mystical concepts of Fana (Extermination) Jama wal Farq (assembling and diversity) and Ishq (love), and mystical ideas like existentialist Sufism, Certainty of Muhammed, Unity of Religion, Esteem of regents, unreasonableness and others. The social role of Sufi poetry is not to communicate, but to reawaken mystical knowledge and feeling to cause the reader or listener to remember.

Like the other forms of Dhikr, Sufi poetry points back to the archetypal moment of divine awareness. "Though Sufi poetry may be defined as poetry used in Sufi ritual contexts or carrying specifically Sufi meaning, there is no sharp division between Sufi poetry and Islamic poetry, generally just as there is no sharp division between Sufism and 'mainstream' Islam<sup>6</sup>. The critical study of mystical Arabic poetry divided into two ways,

- 1-Aim to project the motions and indications of Sufism
- 2-Aim to expand the concept of Sufism as included all poetical experience.

**Depiction of love in Arabic Poetry:** There are some differences in the Portrayal of love in the mystical Arabic poetry and in other Arabic poetry. Whenever love considered as the result of 'look' and other steps, mystics saw the love as a mean to sacred one, leading to love of God and prophet.

Prophet says, "Allah is most beautiful and like beauty." Thus the beauty of Allah reflect on the universe when Sufis see this beauty of universe, they will fall in ardent love and passion with Allah, then the extinction will be concealed from them because he reflects in the mirror of reality, this is why Ibn Al Arabi unleash the imagination through this poem.

“What happened to abundant fool on love?  
Without any complaints of distance and exile  
I am just opposite, my lover on my imagination  
So it continue as near to me  
My lover from me, on me, near to me  
Then how can I say what in me? What in me?

Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi depicts love as the transformative force that infuses every aspect of Rumi's world and herein lays his appeal and the timelessness of his message. There is inherent unity in our universe and love is the key to realizing it<sup>7</sup>. By this reason, we have the capacity to love and moreover the need to be loved. Rumi says,

I lamented in every gathering  
I associated with those in bad or happy circumstances  
(But) every one became my friend from his (own) opinion  
He did not seek my secrets from within me  
My secret is not far from my lament  
But eyes and ears do not have the light (to sense it)<sup>8</sup>

The great Sufi poetess Rabia Al Basri portrayed her love to God which is absolute and the thought of paradise or hell neither can diminish it nor to grow. She introduced the absoluteness of devotion in her poetry.

Two ways I love thee; selfishly  
And next, as worthy is of thee  
This selfish love that I do naught  
Save think on thee with every thought  
This purest love whom thou closest raise  
The veil to my adoring gaze  
Not mine the praise in that or this  
There is the praise in both I wish<sup>9</sup>

And even more typically, she takes refuge with God, the only goal of her life, who she love to the exclusion of everything else, even to the exclusion of prophet. She says,

Oh! My beloved, my comfort on my loneliness  
And the lover always present to me  
I can't see any remedy for that love  
That love is my adversity on my loyalty

We can generalize that the most of the depiction of love on Sufi poetry is the result of loneliness and isolation. They feel the depth of love only in isolation while they need not to be presented near to beloved. Their affection begins and continued through the invisible communication of minds. Ibn Al Arabi says,

Greeting to 'Salma' and to those who dwell in the preserve  
For it behaves one who loves tenderly like me to give greeting  
And what harm to her if she gave me a greeting in return?  
But fair women are subject to no authority  
They journeyed when the darkness of night had let down its curtains,

The poet described through these above verses about Prophet Mahammad (S). He indicates through last line, the ascension of the prophets always took place during the night because night is the time of mystery and concealment<sup>10</sup>.

The metaphysical priority of the divine voice is a source of confusion for the Sufi poet who does not seem to retain a clear perception of the respective identities of the speaker and hearer. A poem of Hallaj highlights this kind of indecision and the disorienting inversion,

Here I am, I am, my secret, my bliss  
Here I am, here I am, my soul my thought  
I call you, no you call me, now can  
I call you, if you don't whisper to me?  
O! Eye of my being's eye, O! End of my wish  
O! My speech and my terms and my stammering<sup>11</sup>

Umar Ibn Al Farid, another noted Sufi poet who transcends by transforming the love to wine as created new term 'love of wine' along with the love of God.

We drunk continuously in lover's memory  
We are intoxicated by her before by wine  
She have moon, a cup, she is sun  
The full moon surrounding it  
How it clear when she intermixed by star!<sup>12</sup>

Burdah of Busuri also has a beautiful depiction of love to God and to prophet. This poet stand on the position of Imam to all Poets who wish to praise the Prophet Muhammed and it makes the root clear to the Divine love which extends from the Creation of Adam and continued up to last prophet through several decades.

**Difference between Mystical Arabic poetry and Other Arabic poetry:** There are some differences in the idea of love in mystical Arabic poetry and other love poetry, such as the feeling of love in the ode of Pre Islamic poet Imrul Qais and in the poetry of Umayyad Poet Omer bin Rabia are completely different from mystical poetry.

Al Nuwairi mentioned that the worldly love is the main character of the Pre-Islamic poets, But the reflection of worldly love which largely based on the prosperity of body rather than the sanctity of mind and the depth of ardent love. Imrul Qais portrayed the love which emerged from the sexual feeling in the seeing of opposite sex and aiming to get that one to be closed and to intercourse. He will obey anything ordered to him from the lover to fulfill his desire.

And the poetry of Umar Ibn Abi Rabia also attached with bodily love, as he says,

Oh! What a day in which I accomplished my desire  
I kissed what lay between your eyes and mouth.<sup>13</sup>

But, according to mystical concepts, love promote only sacred love, even without the 'look' which is considered as the main cause of love among Arabs and in religious doctrines also.

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