

## THEMATIC SEQUENCE AND ARTISTIC MASTERY IN THE GHAZALS OF THE LOVE SINGER HAFIZ SHIRAZI

Tokhtiev Shukhrat Rustamovich,

PhD., Senior Lecturer “IRCICA Chair for Islamic History and Source Studies” International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

E-mail: shuhrat55567@mail.ru

### Abstract

This study examines the thematic diversity and artistic mastery of one of the major figures of Persian-Tajik literature, Hafez Shirazi. His ghazals encompass themes such as love, divine passion, Sufi ideas, and the transience of life. The analysis focuses on the poet's skill in crafting imagery, his use of wordplay, metaphor, allegory, and simile. Additionally, it highlights his unique stylistic approach within the ghazal genre and his significant contribution to classical poetry.

**Keywords:** Characteristics of the ghazal genre, Poetry of Hafez Shirazi, Unity of love and spirituality, Artistic mastery and stylistic expression, Sufi imagery and symbolism, Thematic sequence of ghazals, Musicality and lyrical flow, Use of metaphor and allegory, Semantic richness of Hafez's ghazals, Hafez's role in Eastern literature.

### Introduction

In the development of romantic features in Eastern literature, lyric genres have played a major role. First and foremost among these is the ghazal. Although the ghazal originated in Arabic literature, Persian poets made a significant contribution to its development. It was in Persian-Tajik literature that the ghazal became fully formed and truly matured[3:28].

The earliest lexical definition of the ghazal is given by Qays ar-Razi: “Literally, a ghazal is speaking about women – expressing the erotic feelings and love that arise in us... it depicts love for women and the burning longing of the heart.” Similar ideas are presented by Abdul-Rahman Jami in his work *Bahrstan*[9:306].

AliShir Nava'i places greater emphasis on the ideological-thematic aspects of the ghazal. According to him, the leading theme of the ghazal is “complaints and words of pain” (love and its fiery passion). He notes that after reading thousands of his ghazals, it becomes clear that their dominant mood is one of love: each poem expresses a yearning, a sense of delay. Love was the only source of inspiration for the poet[4:3].

Although Nava'i defines the theme of the ghazal as “complaints and words of pain,” he acknowledges that within this form beautiful ghazals were created on all topics of life. He believes every poet must be an innovator, extracting “the highest pearls” from the boundless ocean of verse.

In India, scholar Qabul Muhammad writes in *Haft Qulzum*: “...the ghazal, literally meaning love for women, in literary refinement is a poem of a few couplets united by a single meter and rhyme. The first line is called matla', the last maqta'; often ghazals range from 11 to 19 couplets, though sometimes poets extend them to 21 or even 27. However, beyond 19 couplets some say it



becomes a qasida.” He notes the ghazal often depicts the beloved’s beauty, experiencing love’s joys and sorrows, with moral advice appearing in other poetic genres[8:44-45].

Taking into account these early views, we see that ghazals in Persian-Tajik and Uzbek literary traditions are not confined solely to erotic themes.

### Main Body

The ghazal arose as a lyric genre celebrating romantic love – primarily earthly love for a beloved, the beauty of the real world. Persian-Tajik poets such as Khusraw Dehlavi and Salman Savaji made love the central theme of their ghazals, a tradition that continued for centuries. Gradually, social events and human responses to them entered the ghazal.

Consequently, in the ghazals of Sa’di and Hafez new themes, new ideas, and new images emerged. Alisher Nava’i in *Muhokamat al-lug’atayn* considers Sa’di the true originator of the ghazal form, praising in particular Hafez, Khusraw Dehlavi, and Jami among Persian-Tajik poets, and Lutfiy among Uzbek poets[1:200].

Hafez’s literary legacy is composed primarily of ghazals. While the ghazal form was already known during the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries, it reached full maturity and independence in Persian poetry through Sa’di.

“Hafez developed the ghazal form even further, reaching such heights that no poet before or after him has equaled,” writes Shomuhamedov[5:11]. Hafez introduced into his ghazals a wide range of themes: life itself, love, wine and joy, beautiful depictions of nature, moral advice, complaints against injustice, concepts of happiness, and images of philosophers, rakes, cruel kings, hypocritical sheikhs, and preachers. As a master craftsman, he skillfully used all the features of the ghazal form and its devices.

In medieval Eastern literature, the theme of love – especially romantic love – was central, and Hafez used it to reflect on the entire universe and philosophy of life. He created a lyrical world distinct from objective reality: filled with lovers and beloveds consumed by inner emotions, jealousy, suffering, and longing. Many lines of his ghazals reflect social discontent, because the lover’s suffering is an expression of social injustice. In depicting the lover’s inner agony, Hafez elevated verbal artistry to an extraordinary level, creating emotional lyric imagery that revealed the vast boundaries of artistic imagination and gave his lyricism a romantic character.

Hafez’s art lies in turning conventional themes – true love, fidelity, friendship – Into rich images. For example:

*Marō chashmast xun afshon zi chashmi on kamon obro’*,

*Jahon pur fitna mebinam az on chashmū az on obro’* [10:456]

(“Your lovely arched eyebrow causes my sight to weep blood... your beauty entices the universe to treachery.”)

Another famous couplet:

*Agar on Turki Shīrozi ba dast ārad dil mā rā,*

*Ba khāl-e hindūyish bakhsham Samarqand-o Bukhārā rā* [10:33].

Here, the poet imagines gifting the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara just for a single mole on the beloved’s face – an expression of ideal, unattainable love.

Hafez’s ghazals also sometimes shift from romantic to realistic or satirical tones. One ghazal addresses a shaykh in the tavern:



*Biyo, ey Shaykh, dar khumkhān-i mo,  
Sharob-e khor, kiyā dar kavсар nabāshad*[10:173].

("Come, o Shaykh, to our tavern – drink wine that is not in Paradise.")

Another begins:

*Voizon ke-in jilvā mehrobu minbar mekunand...*

("Preachers display their devotion at the mosque's pulpit, but in private they do something else.") [10:261].

These realistic lines criticize hypocrisy, especially among religious figures. Scholar I. S. Braginsky notes Hafez's distinct realism: "Hafez's lyrics portray the living emotions of people, the life-like character of the lyrical hero... but they do not form Western-style realism" [7:7-10; 2:54].

Hafez's greatness lies in his ability not only to sing of love and ideal beauty but also to juxtapose it with the world's injustice. Though he retreats into the lyrical realm, he always remains connected to reality, subtly expressing advanced ideas through conventional metaphors and symbols. Thus, though love is central, his poetry reflects real-life experiences, noble emotions, and critiques of the times.

### Conclusion

Hafez's ghazals, while influenced by Sufi thought, also boldly expose the hypocrisy of clerics, sheikhs, and ascetics, and criticize ignorance, tyranny, and deceit. For instance, he writes:

*Haq bandalār ni yo 'ldan ozdirmoq uchun*

*Bu makru riyo hirqasini kiyīgāyān...*

("Do not stray from the straight path, for you wear the cloak of deceit.")

He condemns piety that ignores the people's suffering and calls for genuine compassion and justice.

Wine in Hafez's poetry serves a dual role: as a symbol of resistance and as a means of temporary escape from harsh realities. For example:

*Hirqam rā garov qoygum, bir kosa sharob āvlo...*

("I would pawn my cloak for a cup of fine wine, better than empty advice.")

This indicates that wine offers relief from sorrow, rather than marking frivolity. He even questions religious certainty:

*Gapir cholg'uchidan, maydan, jahān sirini kam izlā...*

("Stop asking minstrels and wine for the secret of the world; none can solve this mystery.")

Yet he does not ignore reality. In lines like:

*Qorong'udir kecha, qorqinchli mavj...*

*Kel endi gul sochib haryon, qadah qo'lda...*

("The night is dark and full of dread... come, let us scatter roses with cups in hand...")

He gives voice to the people's suffering. His lyricism thus becomes an expression of rebellion: he opposes injustice not through politics but through the power of his ghazals as his weapon.

In the end, the "Singer of Love" is also a rebel who refuses to bow to injustice. Though his authority cannot organize a collective movement, Hafez transcends his epoch: through themes of love, wine, and mysticism in his ghazals, he resists oppression. Armed with his verse, his artistry inspires admiration and wonder. His rich metaphors, rare similes, and fresh imagery



captivate, flow like a gem-rich river into the reader's consciousness, sometimes calming, sometimes thrilling, but always enchanting.

## REFERENCES

1. Alisher Navoiy. Tanlangan asarlar. – T.: O'zdamnashr. 1948.
2. Braginskiy I.S. O voznikovenii gazeli, Jurnal "Sovetskoye vostokovedeniye". 1958.
3. Mirzoyev A.M. Rudaki i razvitiye gazeli v X-XV. – Dushanbe. Tadjikgosizdat. 1958.
4. Oybek. Navoiy g'azaliyoti. "O'zbek tili va adabiyoti masalalari" jurnali, 1961, №2.
5. Shomuhamedov Sh. So'z boshi. Hofiz, G'azallar. – T.: O'zdamnashriyoti. 1958.
6. Rypka J. Iranische Literatyr geschic hinte. – Lepzig, 1959.
7. "Sovremenniy Vostok» jurnali, 1958, №9.
8. Qabul Muhammad. Haft qulzum. – Lakhnay, 1230 h., UP qism.
9. Qays ar-Roziy. Al-Mo'jam fi maoiri ash'or ul-Ajam. – Tehron, 1314 h.
10. Hofizi Sherozi. Muntaxabi devon. – Dushanbe. Nashriyoti Davlatii Tojikiston. 1957.

