

The Harmony of Sufi Concepts With Natural, Beloved, and Light Imagery in Classical Poetry: a Poetic Manifestation of Spirituality

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Article information:

Manuscript received: 16 Apr 2025; **Accepted:** 17 May 2025; **Published:** 18 Jun 2025

Abstract: This article explores how classical Eastern poetry employs natural imagery, beloved figures, and metaphors of light to express core Sufi spiritual concepts such as divine love (ishq), annihilation (fano), truth (haqiqat), and divine presence (haqq). The study examines symbolic and metaphysical harmonization through poetic language, revealing how these symbols bridge the divine and the worldly.

Keys words: Sufism, classical poetry, ishq, fano, haqiqat, symbolism, metaphysical imagery, beloved, light, nature

1. Introduction

Classical Eastern poetry, particularly Persian and Turkic literary traditions, has long been a fertile ground for the transmission of Sufi philosophical and spiritual ideals. The use of poetic imagery to encode transcendental meanings is a salient feature of this tradition. Among the most recurrent symbolic elements are nature (garden, rose, nightingale), the beloved (yor), and light (nūr), which are intricately linked with core Sufi concepts such as ishq (divine love), fano (annihilation of the self), haqiqat (truth), and haqq (divine presence). This study aims to demonstrate how these poetic elements act as vehicles for expressing deep spiritual experiences and metaphysical truths within the Sufi framework.

2. Materials and Methods

This research adopts a comparative poetic-semantic analysis of selected works from classical poets such as Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, Hāfiz, Alisher Navoi, and Jāmī. The texts are examined through the lens of symbolic hermeneutics and cultural poetics. Key methods include:

- Semantic field analysis of core terms: ishq, fano, haqiqat, haqq
- Identification of recurring symbolic motifs (flower, nightingale, candle, mirror)
- Interpretation of the interrelation between image and metaphysical concept
- Contextual reading in original and English translations

3. Results The analysis reveals the following key poetic patterns:

Sufi Concept	Poetic Symbol	Function/Meaning
Ishq	Beloved (Yor), Wine	Representation of divine attraction and loss of rational self
Fano	Candle, Moth	Symbol of annihilation in divine presence
Haqiqat	Mirror, Ocean	Reveals the infinite truth reflected in finite world
Haqq	Light (Nūr), Sun	Representation of divine being and spiritual awakening
Zuhd	Desert, Lonely Path	Renunciation from worldly attachments

These symbols provide multi-layered interpretations where the earthly is a veil for the divine. The garden becomes Paradise, the nightingale a longing soul, and the beloved a metaphor for God.

4. Discussion

The relationship between poetic image and Sufi concept is not merely allegorical but ontological. The symbolic nature of classical poetry allows poets to present an inner, mystical reality through aesthetic means. Nature is not described for its own sake, but as a signpost pointing toward divine unity. The beloved in this context is not a human figure but a hypostasis of divine beauty. Light imagery, in particular, acts as an ontological metaphor that expresses the journey from darkness (ignorance) to enlightenment (ma'rifah).

This poetic method contributes to the “soul’s education” as seen in Rūmī’s *Masnavi* or Navoi’s *Lison ut-Tayr*, where symbolic interpretation becomes spiritual practice. The convergence of natural and metaphysical layers marks classical Sufi poetry as both art and theology.

5. Conclusion

The findings affirm that classical poetry uses nature, the beloved, and light as integrative tools for transmitting complex Sufi ideas. These symbols do not merely ornament the text but serve as epistemological and spiritual bridges between the human and the divine. This approach provides rich ground for further cross-cultural and comparative theological studies in literary discourse.

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