



## SHAIKH SADI'S GULISTAN-A CRITICAL STUDY

**Javed Siddiqui**

*Research Scholar, Department of Persian, Vasant Rao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Nagpur*

**Dr. M. A. Siddiqui**

*Supervisor, Ex Professor and Head, Department of Persian, Vasant Rao Naik Government Institute of Arts and Social Sciences, Nagpur*

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### Abstract

*Gulistan meaning a rose garden, a flower garden is a well-known book of Shaikh Sadi, a Persian poet and writer who was born around 606 A.H./ 1209 A.D. in Shiraz, a well-known city and capital of Fars province of modern Iran. From the study of the preface of Gulistan it appears that this book was written during the reign of Atabek Abubakr bin Saad bin Zangi. One chapter has also been devoted in the name of Prince Saad bin Abibakr bin Saad and one in the name of Amir Kabir Fakhruddin Abibakr bin Abi Nasr. It also appears that Sadi is hopeful from the king, Prince and Amir Kabir that this book which is named Gulistan will be appreciated by them. Especially, the appreciation of Prince is sought because its forward has been written in the name of his father. From the study of one chapter which has been devoted in the reason of writing Gulistan it appears that Sadi had reached to the age of fifty years and his fame and popularity had reached all over the world but he was still sleeping so he was advised by his intellect to get up and grab the opportunity and utilize these five days and thus he opted to live in seclusion and wrote this book. From two couplets of a Masnavi it is evident that this book was completed in the year 656 A.H. This book is divided in eight chapters and almost all chapters in some way or other deal with humanity, universal brotherhood, morality, contentment, purity of life, honesty, etiquette of company and wisdom.*

**Keywords:** Critical, Gulistan, Sadi, Shiraz and Study.

### Introduction

Gulistan is a well-known prose work of Shaikh Sadi, a Persian poet and writer who was born around 606 A.H./ 1209 A.D. in Shiraz, a well-known city and capital of Fars province of modern Iran. From the study of Gulistan it appears that this book was written during the reign of Atabek Abubakr bin Saad bin Zangi. One chapter has also been devoted in the name of Prince Saad bin Abibakr bin Saad and one in the name of Amir Kabir Fakhruddin Abibakr

bin Abi Nasr and he is hopeful from them that his book will be appreciated by them because it is the rose garden which will give pleasure and not sorrow. From one chapter it appears that Sadi had reached to the age of fifty years and his fame and popularity had reached all over the world but he was still sleeping so he was advised to get up and grab the opportunity and utilize these five days and thus he opted to live in seclusion and wrote this book. From two couplets of a Masnavi it is evident that this book was completed in the year 656 A.H.

This book is divided in eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the habits of kings. Second chapter deals with ethics of saintly figures. Third chapter deals with importance of contentment. Fourth deals with the benefits of silence. Fifth deals with love and youth. Sixth chapter deals with the weakness of old age. Seventh chapter deals with the impact of upbringing and chapter eight deals with etiquette of company and wisdom. From the study of the Gulistan it appears that whatever Sadi had seen, faced and observed during 30 long years of his travel the gist of those events and experiences have been given in this book and narrated in the shape of story in small and simple sentences so that it can be beneficial not only for the students and lovers of Persian language and literature but also for the king.

### **Gulistan**

From the study of Gulistan it appears that this book was written during the reign of Atabek Abubakr bin Saad bin Zangi because Sadi has devoted one chapter in his name. <sup>(1)</sup> Sadi is hopeful from the ruler that his book which is named Gulistan will be appreciated by him. One chapter is also devoted in the name of Prince Saad bin Abibakr bin Saad and one chapter of this book deals with Amir-e Kabir Fakhruddin Abibakr bin Abi Nasr, <sup>(2)</sup> It seems he was the chief minister of the ruler of Shiraz. Sadi is seen praising Amir and is hopeful that the Prince and Amir both will appreciate this book.

The reason given for writing of Gulistan is that Sadi had reached to the age of fifty and his fame and popularity had reached all over the world probably as a poet but he was still sleeping therefore he should grab the opportunity and utilize these five days and thus he opted to live in seclusion and wrote this book. <sup>(3)</sup> From two couplets of a Masnavi it is evident that this book was completed in the year 656 A. H. <sup>(4)</sup> This book is divided in eight chapters. The first chapter deals with the habits of kings. <sup>(5)</sup> Second chapter deals with ethics of saintly figures. <sup>(6)</sup> Third chapter deals with importance of contentment. <sup>(7)</sup> Fourth deals with the benefits of silence. <sup>(8)</sup> Fifth deals with love and youth. <sup>(9)</sup> Sixth chapter deals with the weakness of old age. <sup>(10)</sup> Seventh chapter deals with the impact of upbringing <sup>(11)</sup> and chapter eight deals with etiquette of company and wisdom. <sup>(12)</sup>

From the minute study of all the chapters of Gulistan it appears that this book was written keeping in mind all the sections of the society. While Sadi was student he would have heard about the invasion of Changez Khan (1219-1227 A.D.) but Shiraz was facing continuous problem. Apart from Mongol Shiraz was plundered by miscreants in the absence of Atabak Sad bin Zangi who often invaded in the territory of Iraq. Especially, in the beginning of 7<sup>th</sup> century A.H. first Atabek Uzbek Pahlwan and then Sultan Ghiyasuddin invaded Shiraz and plundered the city and destroyed it. <sup>(13)</sup> In fact, these invasions had created anarchy in Shiraz and the life and property of the citizens were not safe. The condition of Shiraz has also got a reflection in the verses of Sadi. <sup>(14)</sup>

Due to invasion of Mongol, Atabek Uzbek Pahlwan and Sultan Ghiyasuddin over Shiraz Sadi left Shiraz. According to Daulat Shah Samarqandi for 30 long years he remained out of Shiraz and during this long period he travelled from place to place and country to country. During travel he went on pilgrimage of Mekka for five times and became disciple of Shahabuddin Sahrwardi and also met Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. <sup>(15)</sup>

His book Bustan suggests that, he also had a visit of the celebrated temple of Somnath in Gujarat which has been disputed by some scholars. <sup>(16)</sup> Khwaja Shamsuddin Juwaini and Alauddin Juwaini had high regard for Sadi and through them Sadi came into contact with Abaqa Khan. <sup>(17)</sup> In 1256 A.D. during the reign of Atabek Abubakr bin Sad Zangi when political situation of Shiraz returned to normalcy Sadi came back to Shiraz. This is also supported by the verses of Bustan. <sup>(18)</sup> After coming back to Shiraz Sadi realized that he has passed fifty years therefore he should write whatever he had witnessed in Shiraz and learnt and faced during his journey of the thirty years. In fact, during his travel, he had realized that in this universe nothing is permanent and therefore one should live a simple life and believe in humanity and brother hood because all are creation of the same God and therefore one should respect and love each other. While writing Gulistan Sadi had firm belief that one day both king and beggar have to depart from this universe hence king should think that he has been given the duty to work for the betterment of the people and society and not for invasion and plunder of the cities.

As it has been already said Gulistan is divided into eight chapters which deals with different topics. All the topics have been explained through different stories. Through these stories Sadi has tried to illustrate some conditional principles which lead a man towards happy, peaceful and prosperous life. However, the basic theme of this book is contentment, morale

and universal brother hood. The way he has narrated the stories, is highly appreciable. Moreover, the use of small and simple sentences has infused a refreshing life in the whole book and therefore, this book of Sadi is still loved and admired by the students of Persian language and literature.

### **Critical Study of Gulistan**

Gulistan of Sadi was written while Sadi had reached to the age of fifty and it was completed in 656 A.H. As this book was written after Sadi had returned Shiraz after travelling thirty years therefore he had developed a kind of maturity which is seen in Gulistan. During his travel he went country to country, met several people, faced so many difficulties and seen the life from very close and came to the conclusion that in this universe there is nothing permanent. Either king or beggar everyone has to leave this world and therefore there is no alternative except to love and respect each other and be honest and practice good morale and ethics. In Gulistan Sadi laid much emphasis over the need of morality because he was of the view that, good morale plays an important role in the human life. Prior to Sadi, morale aspects were already introduced in Persian literature but, here also Sadi is credited for introducing new ideas and modes which proved much effective in spreading and understanding the norms of ethics and morale and therefore, he is also regarded as moralist.

Shaikh Sadi has been propagating the philosophy of universal love and brother hood and one such example is Bani Adam which is most famous and being part of his book Gulistan. Transliteration of Persian text is given as under.

### **Transliteration**

*Bani adam azae yak digar und  
Ke dar afrinish ze yak jauhar und  
Chun azve bedard awarad rozgar  
Digar azwaha ra na manad qarar  
Tu kaz mehnate digaran beghami  
Nashayad ke namat nehand adami<sup>(19)</sup>*

### **Translation**

Human beings are parts of each other, because they are made from the same essence. If a part of the body is in pain, the other parts of the body become restless too. If a man does not feel the pain of the others, he does not deserve to be called a human being.

The above couplets of Sadi have found a place on one of the most beautiful carpets which was gifted to the United Nations in 2005 by the Iranian people. The said carpet hangs in a meeting room, inside the United Nations building, in New York. The above couplets of Sadi are one of the best examples which exhibit and propagate the message of humanity and brotherhood. There are various books in prose written on different topics but no book in Persian can compete Gulistan and the only reason is that this book is written in simple language and small sentences which can be read and understood by everyone and this is the greatness of Gulistan and therefore this book has been mostly read through the ages and translated in various language of the world. It is therefore that Gulistan of Sadi has been appreciated by great Persian scholars and one being Allama Taftazi whose book **Motawwal** on rhetoric is quite famous has highly appreciated Gulistan. <sup>(20)</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In the light of the above facts, it may not be wrong to conclude that, Sadi's Gulistan is quite famous, most read and have been translated in various languages of the world which shows the popularity of both book and the poet. The reason behind this fame and popularity is simplicity of this book. The most important topics like morale, ethics, honesty, simplicity, humanity, love and universal brother hood have been narrated by Sadi in a simple language and through small sentences which enables readers to read and understand the book without feeling any difficulty and this characteristic makes the book different from others and here lies the importance of Gulistan of Shaikh Sadi.

### **Notes and References**

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- 3-Ibid.PP.12-18
- 4- Ibid.P.24
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