

HAFIZ AND THE  
RELIGION OF LOVE IN  
CLASSICAL PERSIAN  
POETRY

*edited by Leonard Lewisohn*

*Iran and the Persianate World*

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 همه همه همه همه  
 بیت العرن  
 معرفت است  
 آفتابین  
 نفس  
 دلکش  
 لطفش

Each verse that Ḥāfīz pens is a masterpiece  
 of gnostic lore and sapience.  
 Let's praise his fetching turn of phrase  
 and his stunning power of speech.

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# Foreword: Ḥāfīz of Shīrāz

*Peter Avery*

Ḥāfīz of Shīrāz was born about 1315 and died in 1389 AD. Thinking of my experience of him, four incidents come to mind. The first is what happened one morning when, on the advice of my mentor, *Pīr*, I listened for several hours to a commentary on the poetry of Ḥāfīz delivered to me by a mullah. I was taken to a small mosque in Shīrāz with the injunction that, since I was a student of Ḥāfīz, it was necessary for me to listen to what a mullah had to say about him. Thus I spent the morning being told how every reference to wine, the rose, the nightingale and so forth could be, and should be, seen in a spiritual light: Ḥāfīz was reduced to a dealer in metaphors, all of which had a meaning justified by sanctity. I refrained, of course, from referring my interlocutor to the *Gulshan-i rāz* of Shabistarī, who died after 1340. In addition to its being a comprehensive key to Sufi imagery, it seems not to be doubted that it influenced Ḥāfīz; but this is not the place in which to go into the question of whether or not Ḥāfīz's, or for that matter Shabistarī's, thought was coloured by Ismailism. What should, however, be added in any discussion of the mystical significance of wine and intoxication is the fact that Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī, one of the greatest Islamic and for that matter world thinkers, saw intoxication as the 'intoxication of love'. As Margaret Smith puts it: 'For His lovers, God pours out a draught from the cup of His love, and by that draught they are intoxicated, rapt away from themselves.'<sup>1</sup> Since Shīrāz has always been famous for its wines, in spite of these caveats it might be supposed that Ḥāfīz had, among other considerations, real wine in mind; there is evidence for this in one or two of his allusions to wine.

Of course, Ḥāfīz dealt in metaphor. The poet, especially, has to express the otherwise inexpressible. A possible criticism of the mullah's comments is that it might not be correct to attribute one particular set of meanings, based on one particular strand of belief or prejudice, to the metaphors the poet used. There is, however, no doubt that wine was a common metaphor for the spirit; to be remembered is Surah XII of the Koran, verse 36, where one of the prisoners in a dream saw himself pressing wine, and wine here stands for service to God, spiritual devotion. Take, for example, the fragment of Ḥāfīz, which may be translated as follows:

Again the time has a head for discord:  
I and drunkenness and the incitement of the friend's eye!

I am continually astonished at the wheeling of fortune;  
I don't know whom it'll take down next into the dust.

And if the Magian Elder were to spread a fire,  
I don't know whose lamp would be kindled.

The deceit of the world is a well-known tale.  
What will the dawn bring? The night is pregnant!

In this bloodletting on Doomsday's plain,  
Pour you the blood of the beaker into the goblet.<sup>2</sup>

In the last couplet, 'blood' (*khūn*), might be said clearly to mean 'Spirit'. Garcin de Tassy, in his *Rhetorique et prosodie des langues de l'Orient musulman*,<sup>3</sup> lists nine examples of metaphor (*majāz*) in Persian poetry.

The second incident was a chance exchange with the elderly maidservant in an Iranian household, whom I met as she was leaving the room in which a group of us – including Dr Khānlarī – were talking about Ḥāfīz, with quotations from his *ghazals*. As she came out I met her in the hall and while she was putting her feet back into her slippers, after delivering tea to the assembled company, I asked her what she thought of what was going on in the sitting room. She replied, 'I don't understand it but the words have been banging on my ears all my life and I love their sound.' Her life, incidentally, had been a very long one: she was old enough to remember the days in her native Khurāsān when the Turkamen raiders came down from the north and 'took away our sheep, and sometimes people, while we stayed in the refuge of the *burj* [the tower]'. Of course, these raids persisted well into the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh, who died in 1896.

The third episode – and, for me, the most moving – was when I was travelling across country and my chauffeur and I chanced upon, as one often did on the highways of Iran, a large Mac-lorry parked with all its machinery taken out and strewn on the road around it, as the driver, with the wonderful mechanical *savoir-faire* of the Iranian, sorted out the fault prior to putting the pieces back and driving off. Next to this scene I spotted the driver's apprentice, sitting on the verge with a small book in his hand in which, as semiliterate people do, he was painstakingly reading with his finger, guiding his eyes along the lines of the text. I looked over his shoulder and saw that the book was the *Dīvān-i Ḥāfīz*. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was trying to learn how to read. I saw him several times subsequently and helped him in his studies, which he had begun with the poems of Iran's greatest and one of the world's greatest poets.

On a fourth occasion, I asked a slightly, if at all, literate youth whence he came. When he replied, 'Shīrāz', I immediately recited the famous verse 'If that Shīrāzī Turk were to get hold of my heart...', whereupon he proceeded to recite the rest of the poem. Literate or not, he knew his Ḥāfīz. Imagine giving a London cab driver the

first line of a Shakespeare sonnet. It is unlikely that he would reply with the rest of the poem. The last three of these episodes speak of the universal feeling for and acquaintance with the works of Ḥāfīz throughout Iran and all levels of its people.

Thus it is that Ḥāfīz is a living entity in Iran today. A fact which brings us to the use of his text for bibliomancy: taking a *fāl*, omen, from the verses where the *Dīvān* falls open; *sortes Hafizianae*. But so all embracing are his verses, and on so many levels can they be read, that of course the augury to be derived from them is generally what the seeker expects or wants. Such is apt to be the case with scriptural writings in general; it is to be recalled that the works of Ḥāfīz, or he himself, have been known since his own time as the *Lisān al-ghayb*, 'The Tongue of the Unseen'.<sup>4</sup> And here touched upon is one of the most discussed aspects of Ḥāfīz's compositions and a major problem in attempts to translate them into another language: the subtle ambiguities, the marvellous wordplay, the several levels on which he can be interpreted.

Samuel Johnson said that while science books might be translated exactly, in translating history books precision is possible except where oratorical passages are concerned, because they are 'poetical'. He goes on to say that poetry cannot be translated, a consequence of which is that poets 'preserve languages; for we would not be at the trouble to learn a language, if we could have all that is written in it just as well in a translation. But as the beauties of poetry cannot be preserved in any language except that in which it was originally written, we learn the language.'<sup>5</sup> But in Johnson's time another genre was cultivated, by poets such as Dryden and Pope and himself: poets did not translate but composed what were known as 'imitations'. Edward Fitzgerald, who, incidentally, was a lover of Dryden's poetry, did not set out to translate the quatrains of Omar Khayyam. In a letter he remarks 'God Forbid' that he should be thought to be translating. He was, in fact, working in the now almost forgotten tradition of the Imitation.<sup>6</sup> Since he was possessed of the genius of a poet, his imitation is one of the most successful poems in the English language, but it is not intended to be a translation. Of it Fitzgerald used the coinage 'transmogrification'.

If the translator is not a poet but is anxious to convey in his own language what the poet said in his, then prose is the best choice. Sometimes, as in the instance of the Authorized Version of the Psalms, the prose translation takes on a specially exalted quality from the power of the original. Gertrude Bell's verse renderings of Ḥāfīz are a pleasure to read, and Sir William Jones' *A Persian Song* amused Byron. It goes:

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight  
And bid these arms thy neck infold;  
That rosy cheek, that lily hand  
Would give thy poet more delight  
Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,  
Than all the gems of Samarcand.<sup>7</sup>

Byron's coarse parody of it was not published in his complete poetical works until 1980. Dr Loloï describes it as 'a witty exercise in burlesque which merits detailed

comparison with “A Persian Song”.<sup>8</sup> It is known, however, that Byron admired Jones’ display of skill in poetic technique in this particular translation. Jones’ version is all very well (Byron’s of course has really nothing to do with examination of the Persian original), but Jones is a long way from:

If that Shīrāzī Turk captures our heart,  
For his Hindu dark mole I would forgive Samarqand and Bukhārā.<sup>9</sup>

with its connotation of the allure of cruelty in the Turk.

There is no need to go further in listing translations of Ḥāfiz. In his *Classical Persian Literature*, Chapter XIII,<sup>10</sup> Professor Arberry gives a most useful summary of various Ḥāfiz translations; and, more particularly, translations into several tongues are covered in detail in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* article on Ḥāfiz. To this article our colleagues Franklin Lewis and Parvin Loloī, whose essays grace this volume, made valuable contributions. But above all the debt is great that we owe to the latter’s *Ḥāfiz, Master of Persian Poetry: A Critical Bibliography*, with the subtitle *English Translations Since the Eighteenth Century*.<sup>11</sup> In conclusion here, it should be noted that when the aim is to convey what the poet really said, not what the translator thinks he might or ought to have been saying, versions in a kind of jingle, and even the better verse translations, do erect an extra curtain between a reader who does not know Persian and the original.

It is not only the charm of Ḥāfiz’s verses that makes him such an important world poet, and the universality of his appeal to many different kinds of people and the whole gamut of their emotions. It is the way in which his poetry, although it grew out of a great tradition already established by his time, rides above all that preceded it, while it addresses itself to the hearts of everyone. It is as if, in our state of imprisonment beneath the Ptolemaic dome – as the cosmos was seen in Ḥāfiz’s time – his purpose was to pierce that dome and reach the clear light of the Empyrean beyond it in a process propelled by love.

Here it is appropriate to mention the problem of fatalism in Persian literature. The fatalism which haunts the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī (died *circa* 1020 or 1025 AD) is not the kind reflected in the poetry of Ḥāfiz. As Dr Annabel Keeler, in her recently published *Sufi Hermeneutics: the Qur’an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī*, makes clear,<sup>12</sup> Sufi ‘fatalism’ or concept of predestination should not be related to the idea of predestination as derived from a Zurvanite or pre-Islamic Iranian ethos.<sup>13</sup>

Sufism is totally hinged on Islam: for the Sufi, Man’s life was pre-legislated for when God asked Adam, *Alastu birabbikum?* (Am I not your Lord?), and Adam replied ‘Yes’,<sup>14</sup> this was the Covenant between God and Man. It is to this Covenant that Ḥāfiz refers when he speaks of, for example, the inevitability of his being a drunkard. It is interesting to see him using the same formula of Firdawsī, on the immutability of the Written Decree, but in a different context. For Ḥāfiz says, ‘The Written Decree cannot be erased’, but he begins his couplet with, ‘For me, from the beginning of Eternity, love was written’. Firdawsī has no reference to love. He begins his couplet

with the formula, 'The Written Decree cannot be erased', but concludes with, 'For divine business is no light matter'.

The Sufi concept of predestination in no way militates against the idea of achievement of the ultimate bliss of being with God in the Empyrean beyond the malignant influence of the planets. But the whole question of predestination in Islam has been the subject of much debate and discourse, as – when we remember Jansen, Calvin or, for that matter, James Hogg, the 'Ettrick Shepherd', he of the *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, to say nothing of St Augustine – has Christianity. My contention is that, so far as Sufi poetry is concerned, there is no need for us further to flounder in ambiguity or argument.

As for the universality of Ḥāfīz's appeal for over six centuries, it should be noted that his diction is, in fact, ordinary colloquial Persian, with words and phrases that can be translated into such colloquialisms as the English 'sure' and 'OK';<sup>15</sup> but in Ḥāfīz it is colloquial Persian raised to the level of high literary diction. Yet, how far his usage consists of ordinary conversational Persian, as common today as it ever was, must not be forgotten. The Persian language has changed less since the death of the poet Rūdākī in 940–1 AD than has English since that of Chaucer in 1400; Chaucer, of course, was Ḥāfīz's contemporary.

As for sectarianism, the divisions which can ruin civilizations, Ḥāfīz lifts his verses above any such conflicting positions. Whether or not he was a Sufi has been much discussed. His refusal to be identified with any particular sect, one might even say religion, is not at all alien to genuine Sufism. It is probable that he was a Sufi, but of a special kind; of his contempt for false Sufis his verses bear ample testimony. Some years ago it was interestingly suggested by the late 'Alī 'Aṣghār Ḥikmat that Ḥāfīz was in fact an Uwaysī Sufi. An Uwaysī Sufi acknowledges no living *Pīr* or easily recognizable ancestral guide, those guides to whose guidance exponents of Sufism attach such very great importance. He follows a spiritual guide of a more ethereal kind. In the case of the Uwaysī, this guide was Uways al-Qaranī, he who in legend is said to have inspired the Prophet Muḥammad. Hence Ḥāfīz's references to the sacred breath that emanates from the Yemen; that is to say, from the region where Uways al-Qaranī is supposed to have lived. In this context, and in that of Ḥāfīz's being above sectarian divisions – or for that matter any divisions at all,<sup>16</sup> including social and sexual – it is to be noted that the *Pīr* (not necessarily a personal *Pīr*) of whom he frequently speaks is the *Pīr-i Mughān*, the *Magian Elder*; that is to say, a Guide outside the Muslim fold, and who figures dramatically in the five-*bait Masnavī* cited above:<sup>17</sup>

And if the Magian Elder were to spread a fire,  
I don't know whose lamp would be kindled.

with its obvious Magian or Zoroastrian associations. In Dr Khānlārī's version there is no reference to the 'Magian Elder', while in a manuscript dated 846/1442–3, a copy of which is in the author's possession, the verse does not occur at all. Khānlārī has for his verse 4:

And if the kindling stick spreads fiery sparks  
I do not know whose lamp it will light,

with no reference to the 'Magian Elder'. Given that the 846/1442-3 manuscript does not include this verse at all, the Magian Elder might be a later addition, but it is more likely that it was in the original and later, with a mind to religious prejudices, deleted.

That his, so to speak, love-based free-ranging outlook aroused suspicion may be considered attested by, among other sources, Khwāndamīr.<sup>18</sup> He mentions the objection of Jalāl al-Dīn Shāh Shujā', the ruler of Shīrāz from 1357 to 1384, to a line of Ḥāfiz's to the effect that:

If Muslimism be of that which Ḥāfiz has,  
Woe if today be followed by a tomorrow!

Shāh Shujā' saw this verse as a denial of the Day of Resurrection. Members of the religious classes who were jealous of Ḥāfiz seized the opportunity to propagate this indication of Ḥāfiz's heresy. Ḥāfiz was forced to apply to a great religious authority who happened to be passing through Shīrāz and who advised the poet to add another line, putting the offensive words into the mouths of Christian revellers outside a tavern door early in the morning, accompanied by 'drum and fife'.

The late Professor Minorsky, on meeting me in my first year at the School of Oriental and African Studies, asked me why I was studying Persian. When I answered, 'To read Ḥāfiz in the original', he replied, 'Don't forget, Mr Avery, that Ḥāfiz too was a political animal'. I have not forgotten and have appreciated Qāsim Ghanī's *Baṭh dar athār u afkār u ahvāl-i Ḥāfiz*, with its details of Ḥāfiz's possible or probable political relations with, chiefly, rulers of Shīrāz in his time, and how these relations are reflected in his poetry.<sup>19</sup> A salient factor, where his verses are politically coloured, is that they generally take the shape of warnings. Thus they speak to us of tyranny accompanied by that not uncommon feature of oppressive regimes, secret police. On one occasion he says that, 'the wise bird does not go to the assembly tonight'.<sup>20</sup> Guarded against were to be the *muḥtasib*'s men, the secret agents of the censor of morals and policeman of the city wards. The obverse of this situation is that Ḥāfiz belonged to a special coterie; the *dowra* ('circle'), has always been and still is a feature of Iranian social and intellectual life, a feature characteristic of societies in which freedom of expression is restrained. Thus like-minded people may meet in the security of privacy, and exchange views. Ḥāfiz's is very much what might be called coterie poetry, taking the form of a code addressed to intimates who would understand allusions – to many of which, alas, we must remain largely blind and deaf.

In so far as there is any element of non-violence in Ḥāfiz's verses,<sup>21</sup> his message might be considered especially appealing in the times in which we are now living. Comparison of his works with those of the troubadours is not only justified by the

fact that he too, though in a very different manner, deals with courtly love, but also, and more importantly, because with the flame of his poetry he succeeded in keeping alive a delicate cultural entity and true spirituality in times of cruelty and brutality, as did the troubadours during the European Dark Ages. As for courtly love, in the case of the troubadours it comes across to us as distinctly related to specific human situations: the peasant lass is perfectly real, and the cold and aloof great lady perfectly conceivable. Ḥāfīz, on the other hand, is free from the Occidental preoccupation with the *human* self. His lover and beloved are not represented by identifiable human beings. They appear in symbolic figures: the nightingale and the rose, for example. For him the problem of love is lifted above the mundane, tangible level: the *beloved* can be spelt with a small or a capital 'b'.

Achieved is a sense of exquisite beauty quite outside the everyday human sphere. It is the still loveliness of the miniature, translated into the movement and rhythms of poetry. It is the recollection of a beauty that presents the challenge of what is not to be obtained without the cultivation of a virtue excluding all that is carnal. We are transported from earth to heaven, and, as one or two nineteenth-century European travellers observed, in Iran earth and heaven often seem very close to each other. Iran is a plateau some 4,000 feet above sea level; it is a country where it is possible at four o'clock in the morning to read, during the darkness of night, by the light of the stars alone. The function of poetry as the preserver of cultural refinement in times of cultural degradation is never more evident than it is in the troubadours' and Ḥāfīz's poetry. They both established – or, in the case of Ḥāfīz, continued – a poetical tradition.

It should be emphasized that Ḥāfīz was heir to a great poetic tradition. Many tropes, such as for instance the Shīrāzī Turk, were inherited from predecessors. Sa'dī, it will be remembered, has a *ghazal* in which he says:

At the hands of the Cathayan Turk nobody's endured  
Such cruelty as I have at the hands of the Shīrāzī Turk.

This is one of the more obvious quarryings in the mines of poetic conventions.

Nizāmī-i 'Arūḍī Samarqandī's statement in the *Chahār Maqāla* ('Four Discourses'), where he is speaking about a poet's training, may be recalled. He says that a poet cannot attain any rank 'unless in the prime of his life and the season of his youth he commits to memory 20,000 couplets of the poetry of the Ancients, keeps in view (as models) 10,000 verses of the works of the Moderns, and continually reads and remembers the *diwans* [sic] of the masters of his art, observing how they have acquitted themselves of the straight passes and delicate places of song, in order that thus the different styles and varieties of verse may become engrained in his nature ...'.<sup>22</sup>

It can be said that poets are therefore constantly producing variations on themes suggested by their forerunners. Sa'dī gives us to infer that the Shīrāzī Turk's cruelty was far in excess of that experienced from the Cathayan Turk. As if to echo this

theme, Ḥāfiẓ gives us to infer that his Shīrāzī Turk might also be crueller than those of Central Asia, the region of the Shīrāzī Turk's forebears, in the cities of Bukhārā and Samarqand, the metropolises of Tīmūr where his Turkish soldiers would be concentrated. Tīmūr threatened Shīrāz with those Turks in 1382 and invaded it in 1387, while he completely liquidated the ruling dynasty of Shīrāz in 1393, some three years after Ḥāfiẓ's demise. There seems to be no doubt that the spectre of Timur (and his Turks) hung over Shīrāz throughout much of Ḥāfiẓ's later life, but ironically among enlightened people his rigorous regime might have seemed at times to be preferred to the ever-warring Muzaffarid princes whom he eventually eliminated. In comparison with the torment of the Shīrāzī Turk's attractiveness, those fresh from Bukhārā and Samarqand are to be pardoned.

As for the various levels of meaning which confront the translator, it should be pointed out that the second hemistich of the Shīrāzī Turk poem is translatable in terms of readiness to barter Bukhārā and Samarqand for the mole on the Shīrāzī Turk's cheek. This interpretation has given rise to the legend that Tīmūr was vexed by Ḥāfiẓ's apparent contempt for that ruler's Central Asian capital cities. Another possibility is that, in the Shīrāzī Turk, Ḥāfiẓ might be alluding to his patron Shāh Shujā', of whose maternal Turkish ancestry he frequently speaks.

The variation might be wide, a long way from the theme that is being played upon, but the fixed point is that of retention of a balance. If Sa'dī has his Cathayan Turk to some extent exonerated, so Ḥāfiẓ must have the Turks of Bukhārā and Samarqand made less blameworthy than the Turk of Shīrāz. In Persian art, balance is a cardinal principal, between positive and negative, between the ins and outs of arabesque patterns. One of my old teachers of Arabic used to say, 'It's all algebra'. He was, in fact, thinking of the Arabic broken plurals, but in poetry it can be said that it is all geometry as well.

As if to prove the truth of Dryden's comment that 'it takes a poet to read a poet's mind', my collaborator, John Heath-Stubbs, in some translations of Ḥāfiẓ we produced when I was still a student, pointed out that there was observable in Ḥāfiẓ's poems a pattern of continuing referral to a dominant theme or themes. As so many have done since Ḥāfiẓ's time, with comments such as 'orient pearls at random strung',<sup>23</sup> Shāh Shujā' criticized Ḥāfiẓ, saying that 'each of your *ghazals* fails from beginning to end to stay on one topic. Rather in each lyric three or four verses are in praise of wine and two or three concerning Sufism and one or two describing a beloved. Such a variability in a single lyric is contrary to the rules of rhetoric.'<sup>24</sup> Shāh Shujā' was wrong: 'orient pearls' were never strung less 'at random'. There was a pattern. It was an arabesque, going in and coming out, dependent on repetitions, both obvious but also suppressed, in alternate verses. We did an analysis on these lines in the introduction to the little book which we published. This book has been reissued both in the USA and the UK.<sup>25</sup>

This arabesque patterning brings to mind the discovery now being worked on by Mr Jason Elliot, and discussed in his book *Mirrors of the Unseen*.<sup>26</sup> The theory is that behind the intricate plaster-work and mosaics in Iran's ancient mosques, there is a

series of persistent geometric designs. The arabesque pattern behind the imagery of the poetry seems to emanate from the same obsession with geometric symbols. This is an obsession that can be related to the constant longing on the part of Iranians – and indeed other Middle Easterners, if not all human beings – for order in place of chaos; in the case of the Iranians, for the trim pathways, canals and flowerbeds of gardens in place of the harshness, emptiness and tumbled rocks of the deserts beyond the garden walls.

Recognition of arabesque thematic patterns in poetry is of course germane to the problems facing those who would endeavour to reconstruct the texts of Persian poetry of former times, correcting the inadvertences of omission or inclusion of false verses, and other errors attributable to the scribes who have copied the poems through the centuries. The order and genuineness of verses might be more easily established if attention is paid to the thematic recurrence of associated images such as John Heath-Stubbs noticed and other colleagues have subsequently studied in detail.

But I must venture no further into the intricacies of textual criticism. Instead, I would just like to conclude with a plea that it should be remembered that Sir William Jones was at least right in calling his version of a famous Ḥāfīz poem *A Persian Song*. We must not, in dissecting and analysing the poetry of Ḥāfīz, forget that, whatever else he was, he was a singer. In his role as a poet he belonged to the class of minstrels: to use that word which is so difficult to translate, *rind*, in his guise as a poet, Ḥāfīz was of the type of rogues or scallywags. We are grateful to him, and to the troubadours, for it is through the power of song, of music, that great liberator of the soul from the body, that they preserved grace in an ever darkening world; grace, and a sense of humour, with fifes and drums.

Cambridge, July 2007

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Smith, *Al-Ghazālī: The Mystic*, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> See A.J. Arberry's admirable *Fifty Poems of Ḥāfīz*, Poem XLVIII, but also *Divān-i Ḥāfīz*, ed. Khānlarī, II, p. 1057, Poem IV, where he gives a different reading in a quintuplet, *mukhammas*.

<sup>3</sup> Paris 1873, pp. 66–70.

<sup>4</sup> It has been argued that the title *Lisān al-ghayb* alludes not to Ḥāfīz in person, but to his words. However this may be, it is interesting that the historian Khwāndamīr also accords Ḥāfīz the title *Tarjumān al-asrār* ('The Interpreter of the Secrets') in his *Habīb al-siyar*, IV, pp. 314–15.

<sup>5</sup> Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, pp. 36–7.

<sup>6</sup> Dryden has the comment, 'Mr. Cowley's Praise of a Country Life is excellent, but is rather an imitation of Vergil than a version.' In W.P. Ker (ed.), *Essays of John Dryden*, II, p. 244. It will be noted that here Dryden draws a distinction between 'imitation' and 'version' or 'translation'.

<sup>7</sup> *A Grammar of the Persian Language*, p. 168.

<sup>8</sup> *Ḥāfīz, Master of Persian Poetry: A Critical Bibliography – English Translations Since the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 60–4.

- <sup>9</sup> Peter Avery (trans.), *The Collected Lyrics of Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz*, Poem III, p. 21.
- <sup>10</sup> London: Allen & Unwin 1958; reprinted Surrey: Curzon Press 1994.
- <sup>11</sup> See note 8 above.
- <sup>12</sup> Oxford: Oxford University Press 2006. See particularly pp. 61ff. and the Index under 'Preordination' and 'Covenant'.
- <sup>13</sup> See Zaehner, *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* for an exposition of the connection in Firdausī's concept of predestination with what was in fact a Zoroastrian heresy, the belief that the cosmos is ruled by Time.
- <sup>14</sup> Qur'ān, VII, p. 172.
- <sup>15</sup> For example, in the dialogue poem (*Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Khānlarī, *ghazal* 194: 1) where the person addressed replies *Gufta bih chashm harchih tū gū'ī chunān kunand*, where the phrase beginning with *bih chashm* can be translated as: 'Sure, whatever you say, so they will act.'
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. R. Shafaq, *Tārīkh-i adabīyāt-i Īrān*, p. 333, and Arberry, *Fifty Poems*, p. 16.
- <sup>17</sup> Arberry, *Fifty Poems*; *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Khānlarī, cf. pp. ix-x above.
- <sup>18</sup> *Habīb as-Sīyar*, III, p. 315.
- <sup>19</sup> *Baḥth dar āthār u afkār u aḥwāl-i Ḥāfiẓ*, vol. 1: *Tārīkh-i 'aṣr-i Ḥāfiẓ yā tārīkh-i fārs va maqāfāt va iyālāt-i mujāvarih dar qarn-i hashtum*.
- <sup>20</sup> *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ*, ed. Khānlarī, *ghazal* 458: 4.
- <sup>21</sup> See J. Christoph Bürgel's article 'Ambiguity: A Study in the Use of Religious Terminology in the Poems of Hafiz', in Glünz and Bürgel (eds), *Intoxication, Earthly and Heavenly: Seven Studies on the Poet Hafiz of Shīrāz*.
- <sup>22</sup> Translation by E.G. Browne, *Chahār Maqāla*, pp. 49–50.
- <sup>23</sup> See A.J. Arberry, 'Orient Pearls At Random Strung', pp. 699–712.
- <sup>24</sup> Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-siyar*.
- <sup>25</sup> Peter Avery and John Heath-Stubbs (trans.), *Hafiz of Shīrāz: Thirty Poems*.
- <sup>26</sup> *Mirrors of the Unseen: Journeys in Iran*.

# Editor's Introduction and Acknowledgements

*Tempus omnia revelat*, Ḥāfiẓ's verse preserves its immortality through contemporaneity. Ḥāfiẓ has street-touch. Comparing Ḥāfiẓ with the Bard, Peter Avery recalls in his Foreword above how much easier it is for the native – even an illiterate – Iranian to interpret the complicated theological, mystical and social references in Ḥāfiẓ's poetry, to revel in the nuances of his allusions, understanding and reciting his verses by heart with refinement and depth of feeling than it is for the modern educated English person to appreciate even the most basic literary allusions of Shakespeare's sonnets. Two external factors – literary and socio-linguistic – partially account for this. On the one hand, Persianate societies today remain bardic civilizations in which bricklayers sing the *ghazals* of Sa'dī and Rūmī as they work, and discussion of the verse of Ḥāfiẓ and 'Irāqī regularly enriches the common man's hours of leisure. On the other, Iranians and Afghans and the natives of the other Persianate lands of Central Asia, such as Tajikistan, by and large speak exactly the same Persian tongue spoken in fourteenth-century Shīrāz by Ḥāfiẓ.

The world of religious wars, theological controversies and embattled fanaticisms that choked and filled Ḥāfiẓ's soul with the smoke and fumes of anti-clerical parodies and biting religious satire still prevails today – which is why his verse can accurately articulate and redress the same political passions that hold sway throughout the contemporary Persianate world. Whereas the fanaticisms and tribal sectarian quarrels over religion heard during Ḥāfiẓ's day are still audible on an hourly basis in Iran today from pulpit, radio and television, only a tiny minority of trained historians can imaginatively relocate themselves within a Protestant police state of England during Queen Elizabeth I's reign. Linguistically as well, the language of Shakespeare's plays appears to us as a quaint, archaic dialect at best, a dead language at the worst. Hence Ḥāfiẓ's *Sententiae* – unlike many of Shakespeare's – never grow out of date, today remaining as *à propos* to the modern context of political argument and social debate as they did in 1387 when, outside the ramparts of the city of Iṣfahān, Tamerlane erected minarets out of the severed sconces of its inhabitants.

Albeit immanent in popular consciousness, most of Ḥāfiẓ's mythopoesis – his language of analogy and capacity for thinking in symbols – is no longer part of the mental furniture of modern man. The aesthetic premises of his poetry are incomprehensible within the conceptual framework of modern anti-art movements such as surrealism, minimalism, abstract expressionism or 'pop' art, for the principles of his spiritual vision, being heart-based and focused on presential knowledge

(‘ilm-i ḥudhūrī), are completely alien to the presuppositions of the modern materialist society of the West. If we are to gain access to Ḥāfiz’s ‘visionary topography’, as Daryoush Shayegan called it, recourse must be made to the first principles of the Islamic neo-Platonic tradition and to the traditional doctrines underlying the verse of all the Sufi poets who were intoxicated on the same bacchanalian metaphors and inspired by the same erotic images that fill his *Dīvān*.

The central aim of the chapters in this volume is to enable contemporary Western students of classical Persian poetry to reconnect with that lost symbolic universe and hopefully re-initiate themselves into the *mundus imaginalis* of Ḥāfiz and the entire galaxy of Persian poets who spoke his ‘language of the invisible’. Even many modern educated Persians, afflicted by the anti-imaginative climate of the West, today find much of his symbolism incomprehensible. They delight in the great beauty of his poems but often view them as utterly meaningless. University-educated rationalists in Iran and Pakistan have deplored the metaphysical system behind Ḥāfiz’s poems and the religious and sacred aspect of his symbolism as a kind of superstitious absurdity that is no longer within the range of intellectually respectable ideas. The Pakistani philosopher Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938) and the radical Iranian modernist Aḥmad Kasravī (d. 1946) thus both castigated Ḥāfiz’s poetry as socially ‘decadent’ and intellectually ‘backward’. Sensible men who wish to raise the material and technological level of society, or who equate progress in education exclusively with the study of the social or physical sciences today, can no longer relate to the Sufi ideals of spiritual ‘holy poverty’ (*faqr*) which were sustained by the all-enveloping culture of *malāmatī* spirituality and ethics that underpin radically unconventional statements by Ḥāfiz like these:

Why speak of ‘shame’ when my good name  
Is itself made of shame and blame?  
Why do you ask of ‘name’ – you know I am  
Ashamed of all you’d call good name?<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, just as Ḥāfiz’s Religion of Love celebrated by this volume is anathema to the turbaned puritans regnant in Iran’s ‘Islamic’ Republic, mention of his spiritual and metaphysical teachings remain largely taboo in the Academe, particularly in modern Persian Language and Literature departments in universities both East and West. Again, a strange similarity of bias between contemporary Ḥāfizology and academic Shakespeare studies exists. Since Frances Yates,<sup>2</sup> it is an open secret among Shakespeare scholars that the Hermetic Rosicrucianism and neo-Platonic Occultism of Elizabethan thinkers such as John Dee (d. 1609) and Giordano Bruno (d. 1600)<sup>3</sup> – along with the Christian Platonism of Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499)<sup>4</sup> – comprise the central philosophical sources of Shakespeare’s teachings on love, yet the writings of these thinkers generally remain a body of ‘excluded knowledge’ which students are instructed not to investigate; mention Dee, Ficino or Bruno to the learned doctor of Shakespeare studies whose serene voice held his lecture hall spellbound – thereafter

you talk to a box turtle. Ḥafīz studies today suffer from a similar conspiracy of silence. In modern literary studies and critical theory, especially in the contemporary West, the vertical purport and spiritual import of his symbolic imagery by and large are deliberately neglected, and the esoteric doctrines and metaphysical teachings inspiring his verse are treated as irrelevancies. Most interpretations of his poetry treat him simply as a brilliant court poet of an entirely secular and worldly bent. It is hoped that the chapters in the present volume, penned by the world's leading experts in classical Persian poetry, will serve in some minor degree to redress the calumny of decades of collective critical neglect of the spiritual sources and metaphysical bases underlying Ḥafīz's teachings on love.

Part I of the volume, which places 'Ḥafīz in the Socio-historical, Literary and Mystical Milieu of Medieval Persia', comprises two sections. In the first prolegomenon, Ḥafīz's oeuvre is contextualized within the medieval society of Shīrāz and in classical and modern Persian *belles lettres*. An overview of the little we know of Ḥafīz's life and times is then presented, followed by a lengthy review and re-evaluation of the courtly milieu of his poems and an examination of his relationship – and lack thereof – to various princes and patrons mentioned in his poetry. Here, I underline the fact that Ḥafīz was not a court poet, or at least not a professional panegyrist in the traditional sense of the word. An assessment of some of the causes of his supreme position in classical Persian lyrical poetry is also offered.

The second prolegomenon aims to summarize the key teachings of Ḥafīz's erotic spirituality. In particular, I explore the social, literary and metaphysical dimensions of the poet's most important symbol: the Inspired Libertine (*rind*). A survey of the erotic ethic of his romantic philosophy of *rindī* is offered, along with an outline of the two related contemplative disciplines practised by its *fedeli d'amore*: the Art of Erotic Contemplation (*shāhid-bāzi*) and the Art of the Erotic Gaze: Contemplation of Human Beauty (*naẓar-bāzi*). This section concludes with a study of Ḥafīz's *malā-matī* ethic and his praise of the rite of the spiritual vagabonds (*qalandarī*).

Part II comprises three chapters devoted to the subject of 'Ḥafīz and the School of Love in Classical Persian Poetry'.

In the volume's keynote chapter on 'The Principles of the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry', one of Iran's most popular contemporary thinkers, Husayn Ilahi-Ghomshei, surveys the main themes and principles of the transcendental Religion of Love, *madhhab-i 'ishq*, in Persian and Arabic Sufi literature, as well as in classical Persian poetry. He shows how the sources of this mystical erotic doctrine appear both in the writings of the two great Sufi martyrs – Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (executed 304/922) and 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadhānī (executed 526/1132) – as well as in the earliest Persian court poets such as Rūdākī Samarqandī (d. 329/940) and Sanā'ī of Ghazna (d. 525/1131). Likewise, he points out how manifestations of the doctrines of that same School of Love can be found in the writings of Arab mystical poet-philosophers such as Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) and 'Umar ibn Fāriḍ (d. 633/1235), and in the Persian poetry of Nizāmī of Ganja (d. 598/1202),

‘Aṭṭār of Nishapur (d. 618/1221 or 627/1229), Sa’dī (d. circa 691/1292) and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273). The spiritual traditions that sustained this *madhhab-i ‘ishq* and the terms in classical Persian literature which referred to antinomian mystics – *qalandars* (vagabonds, wild men), *rind* (inspired libertine), *qallāsh* (knave), *mubāhī* (libertine), *dīvāna* (lunatic) and *lā-ubālī* (daredevil, desperado) – are analysed by the author, with appropriate verses by Sa’dī and Ḥāfiz praising both the daredevil *lā-ubālī* and the wildman *qalandar* attitude, cited to contextualize their doctrines. In Ḥāfiz’s erotic spirituality, with his penchant for terms such as ‘Love’s creed’ (*madhhab-i ‘ishq*), the ‘Magian master’s faith’ (*madhhab-i pīr-i muḡhān*) and the ‘creed of inspired libertines’ (*madhhab-i rindān*), those same doctrines again appear.

In the following chapter on ‘The Erotic Spirit: Love, Man and Satan in Ḥāfiz’s Poetry’, Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab demonstrates how a mystical theory of love can be reconstructed from Ḥāfiz’s *Dīvān*. Ḥāfiz’s reliance on the Islamic creation myth as developed by the Persian Sufi mystics such as Najm ad-Dīn Rāzī over the preceding centuries, and his combination of bacchanalian imagery of wine and erotic love poetry with familiar Qur’ānic traditions and Persian Sufi doctrines, enabled him to succeed ‘in interweaving the mystical version of the creation myth with a philosophy of earthly love’. Ḥāfiz’s use of the term love corresponds entirely with his predecessors such as Sanā’ī, ‘Aṭṭār and Nizāmī, who were all influenced by Aḥmad Ghazālī’s (d. 520/1126) seminal treatise *Savāniḥ*, the founding text of the School of Love in Sufism and the tradition of love poetry in Persian. Knowledge of the background of Sufi thought, argues Seyed-Gohrab – and, in particular, the ascetic (*zuhdiyyāt*), bacchic (*khamriyyāt*) and antinomian (*qalandariyyāt*) themes in his poetry – enriches our experience of reading Ḥāfiz’s poetry.

Leili Anvar, in her lovely chapter on ‘The Radiance of Epiphany: The Vision of Beauty and Love in Ḥāfiz’s Poem of Pre-Eternity’, also emphasizes Ḥāfiz’s debt to the allusive poetic eroticism of Aḥmad Ghazālī’s *Savāniḥ*. The trans-rational nature of the experience of love and the impossibility of expressing erotic experiences prosaically, emphasized by Ghazālī, made Ḥāfiz’s choice of poetry as the language of love the perfect vehicle of expression, but one which necessarily – paradoxically – remains elusive to rational analysis. Exploring Ḥāfiz’s conception of the Qur’ānic theme (VII: 172) of the ‘Day of Pre-Eternity’ or ‘Day of the Covenant’ (*rūz-i alast*) in pre-eternity, in what she calls his *ghazal* of pre-eternity, her chapter explores a number of Ḥāfiz’s key themes – Love, Beauty, Grief (the paradox of joy in pain) and Longing – demonstrating how his erotic poeticization of these ideas have their literary sources in the topos of the religion of love in classical Persian poetry.

Sufism is the dominant tradition of Islamic spirituality that influenced Ḥāfiz and the most significant source of the imagery and symbolism in his *Dīvān*. For this reason a separate section of this volume (the three chapters in Part III) is devoted to ‘Ḥāfiz and the Persian Sufi Tradition’.

After a lifetime of study of Ḥāfiz and the translation of his entire poetic oeuvre into French, Charles Henri de Fouchécour in his opening chapter on ‘Ḥāfiz and the Sufi’ underlines the importance of the fourteenth century as an epoch in Islamic

civilization which saw the establishment of the great Sufi Orders throughout the Middle East, Central Asia and India. The author examines Ḥāfiẓ's wine symbolism and bacchanalian expressions, viewing them as comprising 'a language of mystery' alluding 'to something experienced', and yet indefinable and 'unthinkable rationally'. In this respect, he states that Ḥāfiẓ's *Dīvān* follows precisely the same bacchanalian Sufi hermeneutic proposed by Maḥmūd Shabistarī in his *Garden of Mystery*, who had demonstrated how profane poetic imagery could be used to vividly convey ideas of a spiritual order. Professor Fouchécour also gives a rough sketch of the Sufi world in which Ḥāfiẓ was situated, revealing the role played in it by key Sufi poets such as 'Imād al-Dīn Faqīh Kirmānī (d. 773/1372), one of Ḥāfiẓ's famous contemporaries. Surveying the mystical-intellectual terrain of the age, he analyses Ḥāfiẓ's very strong criticisms of the Sufis and examines the poet's Sufi terminology. He concludes that 'despite these strictures, Ḥāfiẓ declares the path of Sufism to be a good one, on one condition, however – that it lead beyond itself. As a way composed of rules, the Sufi Path should lead to where no rule exists save the Rule of Love ... [where] the entire hierarchy of perfection is abolished.'

My chapter on 'The Religion of Love and the Puritans of Islam: Sufi Sources of Ḥāfiẓ's Anti-clericalism' illustrates Ḥāfiẓ's role as Islam's supreme anti-clerical and anti-puritan poet. The desiccated Muslim piety of the ascetic (*zāhid*) is contrasted to the higher religion of *Eros* held by the poet's inspired libertine (*rind*); the dichotomy and difference in spiritual attitudes between the two – the latter's focus on outer rituals versus the former's inner contemplative 'intention' – is shown to be derived from the teachings of early Persian Sufis such as Kalābadhī and Junayd. The Sufi ethical and metaphysical doctrines sustaining his opposition to religious hypocrisy and sanctimony are analysed in detail. Ḥāfiẓ's predominant social attitude is shown to be *anti-hypocritical*, and his condemnation of hypocrisy as the 'supreme sin' traced back to its antecedents in Sufi thought: Anṣārī and Ghazālī in particular. Lastly, the Sufi sources of Ḥāfiẓ's counter-ethic of *malāmātī* bacchanalian piety, which redresses counterfeit religiosity and remedies the vice of hypocrisy, are explored. His theology of sin (counterbalancing the vice of pride, sin functions as an adjunct of humility), with its roots in the Sufi doctrine of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī and Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, is subjected to detailed analysis. The chapter concludes that the emphasis on God's mercy and forgiveness (*ʿafw*) of sin is the fundamental keynote theme of Ḥāfiẓ's moral theology.

Carl Ernst concludes this part of the volume with a study of 'Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī's Interpretation of Ḥāfiẓ'. Davānī (d. 908/1502) was a famous late classical Iranian mystical philosopher who lived a little less than a century after Ḥāfiẓ's death in Shīrāz. He wrote one of the earliest, if not the very first, separate commentary on his poetry, approaching the poet's verses from three perspectives: those of the philosophical mystics, the Sufis, and the Peripatetic and Illuminist sages (*ḥukamā*). Davānī's hermeneutic involved a reading of individual words and coded symbols as metaphorically representative of unstated realities, an approach that was similar to 'the way of reading symbols in Persian literature from a Sufi

perspective [found in] the *Gulshan-i rāz* of Maḥmūd Shabistārī (d. after 740/1340), a work doubtless known to Ḥāfīz as well as Davānī'. Sufi authorities such as 'Ayn al-Quḍāt, Ḥallāj, Ibn Khafīf and Rūzbihān are invoked in the Sufi section of Davānī's commentary. Throughout his commentary on Ḥāfīz, Ernst demonstrates that 'Davānī maintains ... a consistent hermeneutic that assumes a deep structure of concealing and revealing the divine mysteries as the operative principle behind all serious literature. ... It was just as natural and inevitable to employ a Sufi hermeneutic for the poetry of Ḥāfīz as it was for Sa'īd al-Dīn Farghānī (d. 701/1301), Ṣadr al-Dīn Qunawī (d. 752/1351), or 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1751) to write detailed mystical commentaries on the Arabic poems of Ibn al-Farid.'

Part IV features four chapters on the topic of 'Ḥāfīz's Romantic Imagery and Language of Love'.

In the first chapter on 'The Allegory of Drunkenness and the Theophany of the Beloved in Sixteenth-Century Illustrations of Ḥāfīz', eminent art-historian Michael Barry decodes the mystical symbolism underlying Ḥāfīz's romantic imagery, as depicted in two famous Timurid-period illustrations of the *Dīvān* – featured respectively on the front and back cover of this volume. 'Such paintings', Barry reveals, 'underscore how much traditional readers in the Iranian and Indo-Muslim worlds perceived Ḥāfīz's *Dīvān* to be a pre-eminent allegory of Sufi love and mystical frenzy'. The artist's visual exegesis of Ḥāfīz's bacchanalian imagery – his depiction of the symbol of the tavern (*kharābāt*) – portrays the metaphysical drunkenness pervading all levels of Being, wine being a symbol for radiation of the Divine light and beauty – theophany – radiant within every atom of Existence. The Persian painter's depiction of wine becomes 'a metaphor for the all-connecting and all-pervading emanation of the divine creative clarity, from its most rarefied and immaterial heavenly configurations, to its densest and most visible embodiments on earth', namely 'the Divine Light's descent (*nuzūl*) from the higher planes of Being to the lower: in the careful hierarchy of Islamicized neo-Platonic thought and imagery upon which Ḥāfīz so much plays in verse'. Lastly, the theme of the Sophianic Feminine in Persian miniature painting, with its many correspondences in Ḥāfīzian love mysticism, is analysed, with Barry adducing convincing arguments that, just as with the Persian visual art of painting, 'the mystical imagery of classical Persian Sufi epic – and lyrical – poetry thus can most definitely configure the Divine Belovéd as a female'.

In the second of these chapters, entitled 'Transfiguring Love: Perspective Shifts and the Contextualization of Experience in the *Ghazals* of Ḥāfīz', James Morris attempts to recreate, and thus remind us, of the poet's spiritual world view based on a perspective at once metaphysical, religious, aesthetic and ethical, where the entire creation is viewed as a theophany of the One divine Source. He focuses on the scriptural-symbolic correlates that are necessary to grasp the most essential spiritual realities in Ḥāfīz's poetry, which in turn reveal some of the basic rhetorical structures and presuppositions in his poetry. In order to illustrate these subjective shifts in perspective, Professor Morris analyses two *ghazals*, showing how the poet shifts line by line from the abstract to the particular, and from the general narrative

to intimately personal voices in each verse, divine allusions (to Heart, Spirit and God) complementing the humanly individual work of understanding, a mental leap which the aesthetic of the *ghazal* demands of the reader.

The last two chapters in the volume discuss Ḥāfiẓ's poetry in relation to comparative literature: medieval European and Romantic English poetics respectively.

Franklin Lewis' study of 'The Semiotic Horizons of Dawn in the Poetry of Ḥāfiẓ' addresses the particular literary topos of dawn, the 'Alba', in Persian poetry in general, and in Ḥāfiẓ's poems in particular. The chapter opens with a survey of this topos in the medieval Provençal lyric in southern France and northern Italy, showing how the theme of the parting of two lovers at dawn was ingrained into European literary traditions and suffused medieval European and renaissance literature. Lewis then reveals how a certain kind of *Alba* topos in early Arabic Andalusian poetry existed, which was similar but not identical to its Provençal prototype. In Persian, a kind of *Alba* theme is shown to appear in Sanā'ī's *ghazals*. In the second half of his chapter, he examines Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazals*, to see if any of the criteria for the *Alba* genre can be found in them, but concludes to the negative: that the poet found the topos uninteresting or too clichéd to use. Nevertheless, making an inventory of Ḥāfiẓ's lexicon of dawn, he underlines that nearly one-fifth of the *ghazals* of Ḥāfiẓ explicitly refer to dawn or early morning, so that the topos of dawn is integral to his mythopoetic vocabulary.

In chapter on 'Ḥāfiẓ and the Language of Love in Nineteenth-Century English and American Poetry', Parvin Loloī surveys the reception history of Ḥāfiẓ's poetry in English from the first translations into English verse by Sir William Jones in 1771 down to today. She summarizes the highlights, while underlining the drawbacks, in the versions done by nineteenth-century English and American translators, and some of the later renditions into English free-verse by the twentieth-century translators. As Loloī reveals, Von Hammer-Purgstall's German translation (1812) of Ḥāfiẓ's *Divān* had a huge impact on Goethe, Emerson and Tennyson in Europe and the USA, and played an important role, along with Orientalism, in revitalizing and renewing the literature and poetry of the Romantics. Likewise, through their readings of Sir William Jones, most of the English Romantics (Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Tennyson in particular) had a fairly advanced understanding of the love theory of classical Sufism; examples are adduced from their own works showing how the erotic content of their poetry is redolent of 'the Ḥāfiẓian garden of love'. Other examples adduced by Loloī show how Shelley's philosophy of Love, though steeped in neo-Platonism, also reflects his immersion in Jones' translations of Ḥāfiẓ and writings on Persian mysticism, and his cognizance and versification of the doctrines of Sufism in his own work. It was in Tennyson's poetry, however, that Ḥāfiẓ's influence can be seen most forcefully among all the Romantics; the Sufi imagery frequent in Ḥāfiẓ appears prominently in Tennyson's own poetry as well. In sum, we discover how widespread 'the Ḥāfiẓian language of love' has been in the work of both British and American poets throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the West.

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### A Note on Transliteration

Transliteration of Persian and Arabic words in this book follows the transliteration table of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, except for the letter ‘z’ (*zad*) which is rendered as ‘ḏ’ (as in Arabic). Persian words of Arabic origin, such as *Dīwān*, generally, but not exclusively, use ‘w’ instead of ‘v’ for the Arabic letter *wa*. The diphthongs are consistently rendered as ‘aw’ and ‘ay’.

Leonard Lewisohn, 13 August 2009

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Dīvān-i Ḥāfīz*, ed. Khānlarī, *ghazal* 47: 8.

<sup>2</sup> See, in particular, her *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*. Also, cf. J. Vyvyan, *Shakespeare and the Rose of Love: A Study of the Early Plays in Relation to the Medieval Philosophy of Love*.

<sup>3</sup> See Ted Hughes, *Shakespeare and the Goddess of Complete Being*, pp. 18–61.

<sup>4</sup> The best study of Ficino and Shakespeare remains Jill Line, *Shakespeare and the Fire of Love*.

PART I

ḤĀFIẒ IN THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL,  
LITERARY AND MYSTICAL MILIEU OF  
MEDIEVAL PERSIA



# Prolegomenon to the Study of Ḥāfiẓ

## 1 – Socio-historical and Literary Contexts: Ḥāfiẓ in Shīrāz

*Leonard Lewisohn*

*Cité de l'amour*

When Ḥāfiẓ was born in the city of Shīrāz some time between 710/1310 and 720/1320,<sup>1</sup> the cultural epoch into which our poet stepped was one of the richest in all human history. As the second leading cultural capital (after Tabriz) of medieval Persia, the artistic, intellectual and literary brilliance of fourteenth-century Shīrāz under Muẓaffarid rule is perhaps best comparable to fifteenth-century Florence under Cosimo and Lorenzo de Medici. The poets and philosophers who thrived in this intellectual centre of south-western Fars easily rival the likes of Marsilio Ficino, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Pico de Mirandelo, who were to fill the capital city of Italian Tuscany a century later. For several centuries, throughout all the domains of the Islamic world, Shīrāz had been renowned as House of Knowledge (*dār al-‘ilm*),<sup>2</sup> the city vaunting its learned theologians, eloquent preachers, pious ascetics, ecstatic Sufis, erudite scholars, specialist theologians, great calligraphers, famous scientists and adept *hommes de lettres*. Many of the natives of the city still figure as the central pillars of classical Islamic civilization. Shaykh Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 606/1210), one of the greatest exponents of paradoxical expression and certainly the most original author of works on Sufi erotic theology, had flourished there a century before Ḥāfiẓ. Sa’dī of Shīrāz, the greatest romantic and humanist poet in the Persian language, had died in 691/1292, less than a generation before Ḥāfiẓ’s birth, while the Illuminationist (*Ishrāqī*) philosopher Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311), author of the encyclopaediac work *Durrat al-tāj li-ghurraṭ al-Dubāj*, had walked its streets a few years before he was born.

This city of ‘Saints and Poets’, as Arthur Arberry called it,<sup>3</sup> was especially famous for its colleges and seminaries, its Sufi centres (*khānaqāhs*) and mosques, many of which had large accompanying gardens and possessed properties attached by charitable bequest to their grounds. The presence of these institutions, even if their administrators were often than not corrupt,<sup>4</sup> lent the town a peculiar sacred ambience in the popular imagination. In Shīrāz – claimed the fourteenth-century Moroccan world traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, who visited the city during Ḥāfiẓ’s life – the

Qur'ān is chanted more beautifully than anywhere else in the Muslim world. The city was also like Florence in being both hotly decadent and a hotbed of religious fervour,<sup>5</sup> with prayer assemblies, Qur'ān study classes, Sufi séances for *samā'*, lecture halls full of preachers calling the populace to repent their sins, recluses and ascetics (*zuhhād*) down every corner and alley,<sup>6</sup> vignettes of which appear everywhere in Ḥāfiẓ's verse.

The city also prided itself on vast cemeteries with mausoleums of its saints. 'In Shīrāz one thousand Sufi masters and saints or more are found', boasted Sa'dī in a poem describing the city in the thirteenth century, 'around whose head the Ka'ba continuously circumambulates'.<sup>7</sup> The most interesting work on Shīrāz's necropolis was a work penned by Junayd-i Shīrāzī in Ḥāfiẓ's lifetime called *The Thousand Mausoleums*, a guidebook landmarking all the important tombs as sites of visitation for travellers, adding in as an extra feature a backdrop account of the city's famous quarters.<sup>8</sup> This work provided a veritable tourist guide to the sacred sites and shrines of Shīrāz,<sup>9</sup> and for visitors who flocked there from all over Islamdom gave 'the impression that the whole of Shīrāz consisted of pious Sunnis'.<sup>10</sup> Among these holy sites, the tomb of the Sufi master Ibn Khaffif of Shīrāz (d. 371/982), renowned for his ascetic prowess, was the most popular spot of weekend visitation for the populace of the city, second only to Shāh Chirāgh, the tomb of Aḥmad ibn Mūsā, brother of the Shi'ite Imām 'Alī al-Riḍā, slain in 220/835.<sup>11</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa describes how Tāsh Khātun, the mother of Sulṭān Abū Ishāq Īnjū (reg. 743/1343–753/1353: the ruler of Shīrāz when Ḥāfiẓ was a youth), paid homage to 'the Imām, the Pole, the Saint, Abū 'Abdu'llāh Ibn Khaffif, known to them as the Shaikh, ensampler of the whole land of Fars and much revered by them, so that they come to his tomb morning and evening to seek a blessing. The Khātun visits the mosque every Thursday night; there is an oratory and a *madrasa*, where the judges and scholars gather as they do at the shrine of Aḥmad ibn Mūsā'.<sup>12</sup> The abundance of Sufi shrines and centres (*khānaqāhs*) in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Shīrāz made the city renowned as the 'Citadel of Saints' (*burj al-awliyā*).<sup>13</sup>

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa also recounted 'the strange custom' of seeing thousands of women fanning themselves cool in the sultry summer heat, who crowded on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons onto the balconies of the Ancient Mosque listening to famous preachers discourse.<sup>14</sup> 'I have never seen in any land so great an assembly of women',<sup>15</sup> he exclaimed, stunned by their sight. Aside from the beauties of the fair sex in Shīrāz (with vignettes of whom Ḥāfiẓ's verse abounds), the city was fabled for its vast bazaar (Ibn Baṭṭūṭa thought it more sumptuous than that in Damascus),<sup>16</sup> divided into sections by guild (an alleyway for fruit sellers, another corridor for goldsmiths, for cloth merchants, etc.). Shīrāz's gardens were full of fountains, their rills lined by fragrant orange trees and elegant cypresses: gardens so beautiful that they retained their reputation as a byword for lovely pleasantries down to the nineteenth-century when the Romantic poets – Goethe and Schiller in Germany; Shelley, Keats and Tennyson in England; and later in the early twentieth century the modernist poet Rilke – indued their verse with the scent of the roses

and sound of the songs of nightingales echoing through Shīrāz's meadows and gardens. Its large parks, fountains and gardens, imposing palaces, pleasancess and promenades, gracious brothels (*bayt al-luṭf*) and many taverns (*kharābāt*) were all celebrated by all its great Persian poets. Hāfiẓ sang:

What delight Shīrāz is! How peerless  
Her site and circumstance. Do not let her,  
O God, decline and fall from grace.

... Come to Shīrāz, entreat for grace  
Of the *Spiritus Dei* from her men  
Of letters there, versed in the sciences.<sup>17</sup>

And yet, while Hāfiẓ did mention the city of Shīrāz and its human and natural beauties frequently in his poetry, the poet's 'real' world lay elsewhere: this terrestrial topography was but a pretext to celebrate and an allegory to catechize his reader about the wonders of Love's metropolis. Hāfiẓ's real habitation was the *Cité de l'amour*, of which he claimed to be an eternal denizen, his beloved Shīrāz but its temporal place and local habitation on earth.<sup>18</sup> Hāfiẓ's eleven references to the city of Shīrāz in his *Dīvān*, far from being literal descriptions of its local place and habitation, as much depict the topography of the *mundus imaginalis* of this cosmopolis of *Eros* as figure as actual references to the city's bordellos, pleasancess, gardens and taverns. These references are not simply to a fun-loving 'city full of love and erotic pleasures', as certain historians' imaginations fancifully project,<sup>19</sup> for in nearly all these references words such as 'love' (*ishq*) or beauty (*husn*) hover amid the surrounding lines, encasing, in some cases replacing, the city's physical geography with Love's supra-terrestrial utopia and ambience.<sup>20</sup> This romanticization of urban centres was an integral aesthetic dimension of the Persian love-lyric – *ghazal* – itself, found in many major classical Persian poets.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Khāqānī vaunted 'Here and in Damascus is the scale of Love [*dimashq-i 'āshiqī*]. Of Damascus cease to boast for love's a scale without need of gold',<sup>22</sup> and Rūmī celebrated the 'Damascus of Love' (*dimashq-i 'ishq*),<sup>23</sup> and Kamāl Khujandī boasted that Tabrīz is 'but half a league' away from Paradise,<sup>24</sup> just as 'Ubayd Zākānī, praising Shīrāz during the 1340s, extolled how 'By the fortune of the justice of the king [Abu Ishāq Īnjū, reg. 743/1342–753/ 1353] who cares for the poor, the environs of Shīrāz are paradise on earth'.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in Hāfiẓ's lyrics his physical birthplace melded into a metaphysical paradise of love:

Shīrāz is a treasury of ruby lips, a quarry of beauty.  
Bankrupt jeweller that I am, it all makes me uneasy.  
So many drunken eyes I've seen, by God, in this town,  
I'm so filled with cheer that I've abandoned wine.  
The town abounds with coy coquettes in each of the six  
Directions – I'm broke, else I'd buy all six.<sup>26</sup>

Shīrāz inspires love in him; love inspires him to praise Shīrāz. ‘The woes of Love are all but one single tale, yet how strange it is that everyone who tells it makes it sound so novel!’, he says in one verse, before immediately in the next vaunting the beauty of Shīrāz, reminding the reader: ‘Do not fault Shīrāz nor its delicious Rukhni waters and sweet breeze – This city is the beauty-spot of all the seven climes.’<sup>27</sup> In this fashion, the earthly metaphor of the heavenly city of Shīrāz, the temporal cynosure on the earth’s surface of eternal Paradise, for Ḥāfiẓ came to illustrate the timeless story of his love:

Our towns are copied fragments from our breast;  
And all man’s Babylons strive but to impart  
The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.

### *Shīrāz and the Galaxy of Fourteenth-Century Persian Poetry*

To enter imaginatively into Ḥāfiẓ’s times, we must examine in brief some of the literary figures and historical factors that gave shape and reality to this grand vision of *Eros*. The literary and philosophical thought of Ḥāfiẓ cannot be understood without comprehending something of the high culture of Persia, its monumental intellectual achievements, literary, theological and philosophical, as well as the local society of Shīrāz and contemporary politics of the province of Fars.

The poetic cosmos of fourteenth-century Persia blazed with some of the brightest luminaries in Persian poetic history, whose ideas Ḥāfiẓ absorbed and emulated, and whose verse he followed and imitated. As a poet, Ḥāfiẓ was a genius of transformative appropriation, supreme connoisseur of verse-aphorisms and epigrams, who specialized in selecting the choicest verses from the past masters of Persian and Arabic poetry, transcreating their imagery, improvising and improving on their ideas in his own original manner. Hardly a verse of Ḥāfiẓ can be found whose sound, form, colour or sense does not hark back to similar lines in the works of ‘Umar Khayyām (d. 526/1131), Sanā’ī (d. c. 535/1140), Khāqānī (d. 595/1198), Nizāmī (d. 598/1202), Ḥāfiẓ Faryābī (d. 598/1202), ‘Aṭṭār of Nīshāpūr (d. 618/1221), Kamāl al-Dīn Ismā’īl Iṣfahānī (d. 635/1237), Sa’dī (d. c. 691/1292), Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Irāqī (d. 688/1289), Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 721/1321), Awḥādī Marāghī (d. 738/1338), or other of the grand master poets of classical Persia.<sup>28</sup> His verse is also steeped in the poetry of Ibn Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), the greatest Arab Sufi poet.<sup>29</sup>

Foremost among the poets of his own day whom Ḥāfiẓ respected, knew intimately and emulated was Khwājū Kirmānī (d. after 753/1352), a Sufi poet who lived in Shīrāz during much of his lifetime where he was a disciple of Amīn al-Dīn Kāzarūnī Balyānī, a Sufi master distinguished enough to be praised by Ḥāfiẓ in his poetry.<sup>30</sup> The spiritualized eroticism of Ḥāfiẓ, who ‘is perhaps the first poet in the Persian-speaking world who perfectly realized the unity of the mundane and the spiritual

sphere',<sup>31</sup> was largely indebted to Khwājū's ideas. In the erotic *mathnawī* verse of Khwājū, one finds explicit imagery of sexual union, intimate descriptions of carnal intercourse of the female beloved with her male lover. In Khwājū's *Mathnawī-yi Gul va Nawrūz*, for instance, the love-making of Nawrūz with Gul is described in meticulous detail. The lover and his mistress are likened to a single heart (*dil*), one of them composed of the first letter of the word (*Dal*) and the other its second letter (*Lam*), the two letters which make up the word for heart in Persian. One is described as wine, and the other as honey, so that 'before them lay the wine and honey. In their palms were dates and in their mouths sugar. Night and day they were transported beyond this realm of dust, unaware of the whirling spheres of heaven.'<sup>32</sup> In such verse, the erotic becomes the metaphysical, the sentient sexual made equivalent to the transcendental suprasensual. An identical sublimation of the Erotic into the Sacred and sacralization of sexual pleasure is also found in Ḥāfiẓ's verse. In Khwājū, as in Ḥāfiẓ, one finds the Dantesque, and later Petrarchean, notion that there is more religion in the throes of earthly passion, though misdirected, than in the platitudes of holy beautitudes hymned by rote for heaven's sake, as Shelley expressed it so perfectly in his poem *Amor Aeternus*:

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass  
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,  
When once from our possession they must pass;  
But love, though misdirected, is among  
The things which are immortal, and surpass  
All that frail stuff, which will be or – which was.

Ḥāfiẓ apparently followed Khwājū's poetic style and views closely.<sup>33</sup> During the years Khwājū spent in Shīrāz they were close friends<sup>34</sup> and we find numerous *ghazals* in which Ḥāfiẓ responded to the Kirmānī poet's verse, and there is even a famous verse attesting to his fondness for Khwājū:

All agree that Sa'dī is the master of ghazal  
But Ḥāfiẓ follows Khwājū's genre for style.<sup>35</sup>

As we see, there existed an all-pervasive tradition of eroticism, both metaphysical and physical, in the verse of at least one contemporary poet whom Ḥāfiẓ explicitly admired. Ḥāfiẓ not only voices his admiration of Khwājū's rhetorical prowess in the art of verse, but pays homage to the Kirmānī poet's iconoclastic spiritual vision: his lauding of infidelity as being superior to public displays of pharisaic ascetical piety, his declaration that lovers do not follow the conventional ways of orthodox religious piety and abstinence, his pursuit of notoriety and glorification of blame in the *malāmatī* tradition, and praise of selflessness as constituting the essence of the spiritual path – Sufi doctrines that are also of central significance in Ḥāfiẓ's anti-clerical erotic spirituality.<sup>36</sup>

The most important contemporary master lyrical poet was Salmān Sāvajī (d. 778/1376), who resided in Tabriz, the other major cultural capital city of Persia during this period. Salmān was ‘the most frequently imitated poet of his own age’.<sup>37</sup> The great Kubrāwī Sufi Shaykh ‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī (659/1261–736/1326) uttered no hyperbole at all when he asserted that ‘the like of Simnām’s pomegranates and Salmān’s poems cannot be found anywhere’.<sup>38</sup> Even today, scholars judge Salmān to be ‘one of the supreme Persian poets of his period: his *ghazals*, after those of Sa’dī, Rūmī, and Ḥāfīz, fall into the first-class category’.<sup>39</sup> Salmān’s *ghazals* sometimes parallel those of Ḥāfīz so closely that it is clear that they both imitated and copied each other’s poetry,<sup>40</sup> and in one line, where Ḥāfīz boasts that his own poetic abilities excel both Salmān and Khwājū, it is clear that Salmān was one of his touchstones of poetic excellence.<sup>41</sup>

Beside these superficial commonalities of rhetoric and image, rhyme and metre shared between them, and aside from – and even more important than – this respectful literary rivalry, Salmān and Ḥāfīz were both inspired by the same radical Religion of Love. *Eros* is the main concern of their verse, as Salmān boldly declares:

I have no job but love. To play the lover’s part to me  
Is creed and faith. Each man follows some sect and faith  
Which is his own. Of what concern to you is Salman’s faith?<sup>42</sup>

Eschewing the pedestrian conventions of ‘Muslim’ exoteric piety just like Ḥāfīz, Salmān vaunts being a heretic on the Path of Love, glorifying his pursuit of ‘blame’ and ‘ill-fame’ in *ghazal* after *ghazal*:

If being a Muslim lies in not adoring mortal beauty  
And renouncing wine, well I for one declare myself  
A lifetime heretic – if ever once I was a Muslim!  
The best path in love is blackening one’s name, Salmān  
Take it from me: my life is spent in pursuit of ill-fame.<sup>43</sup>

The Religion of Love only obtains probity and righteousness through ill-fame. Piety on the Path of Love is realized by being tainted with reproach and affliction with the stigma of public rebuke. In respect to this world’s wiles and ways the lover is always unwise – he is a fool. The lover’s pursuit of shame and notoriety is poles apart from the ascetic’s reasonable piety and calculated self-serving unctuous moral rectitude, for as Ḥilālī says in a verse:

Abandon all shame and good name in the lane  
Where love’s game is played, for the inspired  
Libertine’s art does not sit well with holy piety.<sup>44</sup>

Another first-class Persian *ghazal* poet, the Sufi Kamāl Khujandī (d. 803/1400), was like Salmān also based in Tabriz and shared his ethos of love. All three were well acquainted with one another's poetry and belonged 'to a common literary culture, despite never meeting face to face'.<sup>45</sup> Kamāl wrote about twice as many *ghazals* as Ḥāfiz, about a fifth of which, in my opinion, rank equal in accomplishment with the Shīrāzī master. Kamāl's many parallelisms in verse to Ḥāfiz's poems<sup>46</sup> are as important to Persian literary history as those of Salmān. He had lambasted Ḥāfiz in a *ghazal* written in reply (*javāb*) as a parallel poem (*naẓīra*) in the same metre and rhyme as one by Ḥāfiz, boasting: 'Although Ḥāfiz might be a rakish courtier serving Sulṭān Abū'l-Favāris,<sup>47</sup> in the stylistics of the *ghazal* he never matched the genius of Kamāl.'<sup>48</sup> Despite such literary rivalry, relations between the two poets was characterized overall by cordial and fraternal exchanges.<sup>49</sup>

As with Salmān, the unconventional Religion of Love in 'which repute and good name are not allowed', as Kamāl says (echoing Ḥāfiz's many similar statements to this effect<sup>50</sup>), is the most oft-repeated refrain throughout his poetry. The glorification of ill-fame and the vaunting of notoriety was in fact one of the central topoi of the anti-clerical repertoire and literary counter-culture that both poets shared in common:

Neither of shame am I worried, nor of name take heed:  
For in my creed, repute and good name are not allowed.<sup>51</sup>

Kamāl also extols the 'Canon-Law of Love' (*sharī'at-i 'ishq*), praising and preaching the contemplation of beautiful faces as an act of religious devotion:

Do not cover your face from those who'd gaze on it  
For in the Canon Law of *Amor*, judges say it is  
Allowed to contemplate the faces of the fair.<sup>52</sup>

Exactly the same erotic doctrine, which grants the lover permission to gaze upon his beloved's face,<sup>53</sup> runs through Sa'dī's poems<sup>54</sup> and fills all of Ḥāfiz's *ghazals* as well.

Another major Persian poet contemporary with Ḥāfiz was 'Imād al-Dīn Faqīh Kirmānī (d. 773/1371), one of the most eminent Sufis of his age, whose *ghazals* were mostly composed during Sufi séances in the *khānaqāh* that he directed in Kirmān.<sup>55</sup> Later Persian hagiographers have seasoned 'Imād's biography with various legends about Ḥāfiz's rivalry with him, which have recently been contested and shown to be spurious.<sup>56</sup> The parallelisms between the two poets' *ghazals* are in fact so numerous that it's clear that his younger contemporary Ḥāfiz admired his verse and imitated him frequently.<sup>57</sup>

All in all, Ḥāfiz, Khwājū, Salmān, Kamāl Khujandī and 'Imād al-Dīn Faqīh are stars sparkling within a single literary galaxy of geniuses in fourteenth-century Persia. Their penchant for Sufi symbolism, sharing of the same poetic rhymes, metres, images and ideas (especially their use of the same bacchanalian imagery), not to

mention theerotic sensibility, poetic vision, mystical persuasion and metaphysical thought, exhibit an overall concordance.<sup>58</sup>

Belonging to the next generation, but evidently well known to Ḥāfīz, was Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī (d. 835/1431), the greatest Sufi master of the Timurid period. Ḥāfīz apparently had scant personal regard for him, responding to one of his *ghazals* in such a manner as to expose his profound difference of opinion in respect to the former's spiritual claims. So while some 'correspondence' between the two poets did exist, it hardly transcended the superficial literary level.<sup>59</sup> While Shāh Ni'matullāh and Ḥāfīz were discordant in their spiritual sensibilities despite an occasional superficial concordance of poetic rhyme, Shāh Ni'matullāh's foremost disciple, the great Tabrīzī Sufi poet Shāh Qāsim Anvār (d. 838/1434), venerated the poetry of Ḥāfīz and professed in his verse the same universal Religion of Love found in the *Dīvāns* of Ḥāfīz, Khwājū, Salmān, 'Imād and Kamāl. These following oft-cited verse gives a taste of Shāh Qāsim's transcendental love mysticism:

In pagoda and mosque, in Ka'ba and tavern,  
The God of Love is the sole aim  
And all the rest are just moonshine.<sup>60</sup>

Qāsim's line was directly patterned on the following verse from a *ghazal* composed by Ḥāfīz in the same metre and rhyme:

All three are one: the boon-companion,  
The musician and the Saki, and what's betwixt  
Them – this earthen and watery veil – is just a pretext.<sup>61</sup>

The major – perhaps the most unusual – poet contemporary with Ḥāfīz in Shīrāz was the extraordinary social satirist and master parodist 'Ubayd-i Zākānī (d. 772/1371).<sup>62</sup> A serious court poet known for his mellifluous bachanaliantic *ghazals* in the style of Sa'dī, 'Ubayd was the author of *qaṣīdas* in praise of Abū Ishāq Īnjū and Shāh Shujā' and other local rulers.<sup>63</sup> Times and tastes change. Today he is regaled as classical Persia's chief pornographer both in prose and verse. Due to its distinctly Adult XXX content, his bold and fantastical sexually explicit verse (and prose), which many traditional scholars continue to denigrate as 'worthless',<sup>64</sup> of course remains unprintable in Iran's would-be Islamic Republic.<sup>65</sup> Throughout 'Ubayd' prose and verse the same rabidly anti-clerical sentiments present in Ḥāfīz frequently appear – as when he declares himself the foe of 'preachers with chilly breath', and the enemy of 'hypocritical Sufi shaykhs'.<sup>66</sup> 'Ubayd's caustic, sarcastic style, his courting of notoriety and ill-fame (*bad-nāmī*)<sup>67</sup> – his parodying of hypocritical Muslim clerics, lampooning of fake Sufis and spoofs on proud ascetics – are replicated exactly in Ḥāfīz's poems.<sup>68</sup> Although these refined caricatures of religious hypocrites did have an influence on Ḥāfīz, who was his junior,<sup>69</sup> his bawdy satires on the society of medieval Shīrāz were not by any means, as some scholars assert,<sup>70</sup> the chief inspiration underlying Ḥāfīz's

doctrine of inspired libertinism or *rindī* (see below: Prolegomenon II, p. 31–55). In ‘Ubayd’s lyrics, which largely follow Sa’dī’s style, the perplexing ethical and profound theological depths, amazing spiritual transports and the bewilderingly complex mystical allusiveness that fill Ḥāfiẓ’s verse are completely absent. Both poets were indeed ardent social reformists, but in his use of satire and parody the discourse and voice of Ḥāfiẓ never descends to the facetious and libellous level that ‘Ubayd almost always inhabits.<sup>71</sup> The intellectual fraternity between the two Shīrāzī poets was a product of shared social not of common spiritual attitudes, and lay, as Mu‘īn rightly states, ‘in their mutual opposition to hypocrisy, the irrepressibility of their poetic natures, and their fully developed penchant for pleasantries and jesting’.<sup>72</sup>

A host of lesser-known poets also flourished alongside Ḥāfiẓ in Shīrāz, whose poetic voices, moods and images all find resonances of their own in his verse. These include the likes of Princess Jahān-Malik Khātūn (d. after 795/1393), the greatest female poet of medieval Iran, who composed ‘the largest known *dīvān* to have survived from any woman poet of pre-modern Iran’,<sup>73</sup> and Bushāq Aṭ‘amah-i Shīrāzī (d. 827/1423 or 830/1427), the supreme comic (and only culinary) poet in Persian literature, whose entire oeuvre consisted of lyrical lampoons on other poets using exclusively the imagery of food and eating. Most of Bushāq’s *ghazals* were deliberate parodies (*taqīḍa*) of Ḥāfiẓ and other contemporary poets, such as Shāh Ni‘matu’llāh.<sup>74</sup>

The above overview of some of the major and minor poets contemporary with Ḥāfiẓ in fourteenth-century Persia only gives a very superficial indication of the immense richness of the Persian poetic tradition in which he was steeped. Scholars have long known the fact that many of Ḥāfiẓ’s lyrics were composed in imitation of the metrical and rhyming schemes of previous *ghazal* writers in a time-honoured tradition. The entire *Dīvān-i Ḥāfiẓ* constitutes an intratextual commentary on the lyrical tradition present in Persia since the eleventh century, which is why in many editions of Ḥāfiẓ’s *Dīvān* several pages of introduction are devoted to tracing the verses that he appropriated from previous poets, then recast and reused in his own poetry, a phenomenon which has been the subject of a number of long scholarly essays.<sup>75</sup>

### *Connoisseurship of Poetry in the Age of Ḥāfiẓ*

The audience who listened to the recitation of Ḥāfiẓ’s *ghazals* were some of the most formidably educated and exactingly cultured men that Persians have ever been. When he recited or sung his poems – and ‘Ḥāfiẓ’ today is still a term used for a singer and bard<sup>76</sup> – to this intellectual nobility, he knew quite well that they were all supreme connoisseurs of verse. Many of his listeners were poets themselves who would have known by heart many *ghazals* by his famous forebears (‘Aṭṭār, Rūmī, ‘Irāqī, Sa’dī...) and illustrious contemporaries (Salmān, Khwājū, Kamāl Khujandī...). In catering to that elite, supersophisticated circle of specialists, Ḥāfiẓ’s success lay