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CONTENTS

- 1 Challenges of Teaching, Learning and Application of *Al-Farā'id* in Lagos and Oyo States, Nigeria: An Exposition—Busari, Jamiu Muhammad, PhD / Abdulsalam, Mikail Kolawole, PhD & Adeoye, Tawaliu Oriowo, PhD 1
- 2 Rethinking Shari'ah Legal Concept of *Sadd Adh-Dharā'* as a Right-Based Approach to Curb the Menace of Banditry in Nigeria—Adegoke, Kazeem Adekunle, PhD / Oloke, Muritala A, PhD 28
- 3 Sustaining Peace and Development: An Exposition of Reasons and Purposes for Qur'anic Admonitions—Paramole, Kabir Olawale, PhD / Shehu, Tijani Olawale 41
- 4 The Role of Agriculture in the Economic Development of Nigeria and the Sunnah Practice—Abdul-Raheem, Bashir PhD / Boladale, Sodiq Babafemi, PhD 55
- 5 Perception Engineering in Nigerian Politics: An Islamic Viewpoint—Adedeji Luqman Lekan, PhD / Abass, Aremu Rahman, PhD 70
- 6 Mixed Perceptions on Shari'ah in Nigeria, A Multireligious Nation—Adeleke, R.S., PhD 79
- 7 An Islamic Perspective on the Cost-Benefit Analysis of Gambling in Nigeria—Sanni, Mubarak O. 93
- 8 Nigeria's Potentiality in International *Halāl* Food Industry: An Analysis—Situ, Waheed Adeyemi, PhD / Odeniyi, Ismael Kolawole, PhD / Teliat, Yunus Olusina PhD 116
- 9 Towards Understanding the Islamic Concept of Rights: A Comprehensive Exposition—Lawal, Manzoor A. / Akanni, Akeem A, PhD 139
- 10 An Expository Study of Angels in Islam and the Perception of Muslims on the Syncretic and Heretical Beliefs in *Rūh al-Quds* (Holy Spirit)—Adeoye, Tawaliu Oriowo, PhD & Busari, Jamiu Muhammad, PhD 155
- 11 Towards a Perfect Qur'anic Recitation in Islamic Worship: An Assessment of *Tajwid* Competence of Muslims in Ijebu-Ode—Ibrahim, Toyib, Biodun, PhD & Adetunji, Jelilat Ronke 179
- 12 Of Love Theory and Love Poetry in Arabic Sufi Literature: An Exploration of al-Shushturi Sufi's Ecstasy as a Paradigm—Ade tunji, Izzudeen, PhD . . 193
- 13 التحديات إلى أبناء مدينة إبيبي بتنظيم المدارس القرآنية لإعادة مجد المدينة "صاحب القرآن" (إبيبي أبا القرآن)
—Shittu, Morufudeen Adeniyi, PhD 219

12

Of Love Theory and Love Poetry in Arabic Sufi Literature: An Exploration of al-Shushturi Sufi's Ecstasy as a Paradigm

Adetunji, Izzudeen, PhD

ABSTRACT

Love, in Arabic term denotes hubb, ishiq, gariimah, wudd and hawaa. It semantically has more than thirty Arabic words denoting the same meaning.¹ It has been a symbolic interactive expression of feeling that has possessed quantum significance and values over the passage of time in both animate and inanimate beings. Extant research works on love poetry have been carried out by researchers on its quantum purposes and effects in the socio-cultural, anthropological physiological, psychological, religious and socio-linguistic and literary arena, in both Arabic and western literary works. However, there has been sparse attention on the exploration of the love theory and love poetry in Arabic Sufi literature, which has created the gaps to be filled by this research. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the love theory in the love poetry of Arabic Sufi literature, using Al-Shushturi Sufi's Ecstasy as a paradigm. Before delving into the main discussion, the contrastive discourse between the concept of love theory and love poetry would be examined. Likewise, the concept of Sufism and ecstasy shall be discussed. Al-Shushturi's biographical account and scholarship including the review and literary analysis of his Sufi's poetries would be treated.

1. Hubb- Mahabba-Miqa-Ra'fa- Wudd-Sababa-Khulla-Kalaf-Sabwa-Hanin-Shawq- Ishtiyag-Baabal-Jami'i- Hawa-'Ishiq-Shaqaf-Wala'- Tatayyum-Walah-Hiyam-Wajd-Jawa-Karb-Ka'aba- Shajw- Ghamra-Jaza'- Khilaba-Suhd-Gamra and etc. See Stefan Leader: The Semantics of Love: Conflict, Sublimation and Experience in Arabic Discourse. Pg42.

Keywords: love theory, love poetry, Arabic sufi literature, shushturi, ecstasy

INTRODUCTION

LOVE IS REGARDED AS INDISSOLUBLY RELATED TO CODES, WHICH SERVE to structure both the communication and experience of the emotion. It involves the attachment of different values by different societies, cultures, eras and natures.² The creation of Adam and Hawau on the surface, does not only feature them as the first created being, but as husband and wife roped with the communication of profane love. Since then, the level at which the term “love” echoes and perturbs the globe cannot be underestimated as it has become a chant, slang, term that has great effects not only in the socio-cultural and religious life but in the anthropological and physiological arena especially from the ninth to fourteenth century when it expanded from being a “profane” idea to a significant “theory.”

The evolution of Islamic Sufism in Islamic mediaeval period has led to the witness of different mystical term, enchantment, slogans, slangs and ecstasy by the mystics (*sufis*) in their oral communication, interactions, and expressions of divine love to Allah and prophet Muhammad. This is featured in many Sufi literature books and compendiums. Arabic discourse, through the nexus link binding Sufism with Islam which the unconscious state of Sufis in expressing their divine love to Almighty God whom they always referred to as (beloved one), had depicted love as a statement of conflict between passion and rules of reasonable and socially approved behaviour. The conflict occurred as a result of contradictory stance; emotional attachment becoming more intense as the beloved is absented by adverse circumstances; inspiring intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual experience. Also, it depicts love as an emotional, intellectual and social phenomenon. According to Antaki's syntax, love is a sentence which starts with the pronoun of the first person and ends with its annihilation. As a chain of states of minds, love entails fixation i.e. the inability to perceive perfection outside of the objects of adoration. When the lover becomes totally absorbed by his desire, none of the usual treatments offer remedy. All sensations seem to be related illusively to the beloved. Permanent unrest unreliably takes

2. Stefan Leader: *The Semantics of Love: Conflict, Sublimation and Experience in Arabic Discourse*. 41

possession of the 'Ashiq as the beloved seems dearer than one's own life and death is better than the reality as life and love become incompatible.³

However, some different types of love which have great purposes to this paper would be enumerated and briefly discussed for research purposes. Among them are: ordinary love, ardent love, profane love, sublime love, passionate love, etc.

- **Ordinary love (*hubb*):** is a love not binding on chain or contract but mere feelings and affections.
- **Ardent love ('*ishiq*):** is a voluntary affection and exercise nourished by exposing oneself repeatedly to the initial stimulus and cultivated by an inspired imagination which refuses to acknowledge the complexities of reality. It prevails over reason and is often shown, in its most simplistic form, as an affliction and misfortune. It develops to voluntary exercise, relying solely on the lover's deliberate acceptance of a paradoxical situation where he cannot renounce his affective attachment knowing that a union with his friend is unattainable. When the lover no longer relies on a positive response, this kind of love becomes a selfless and morally refined stance based upon the emotional experience of ardour (*wajd*).⁴

In sublime love, love is recognized as a driving force, encouraging and inspiring, as the lover aims to win the object of his desire and please him. Love demands active engagement and results from some sort of sensitivity and cannot afflict the dull person. Thus, it remains a futile effort.⁵

Passionate love is depicted as an unconditional devotion to the beloved in spite of all hindrances. This experience entails suffering and often causes the lovers' deaths.⁶ Profane love corresponds with ascetic exercise of the mystic's love of God.⁷

3. Tazyin al-Aswaq bi tafsir ashwaq al 'Ushsaq. ed. Aiman 'Abd al-Jabbar al-Buhairi. Vol 1, Cairo, pg 52. Also , see :Stefan Leader: The Semantics of Love: Conflict, Sublimation and Experience in Arabic Discourse. Pg46

4. *Ibid.*: pg 52-59

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. English dictionary

LOVE THEORY IN ARABIC AND WESTERN LITERARY DISCOURSE

Love and theory are two separate entities, which connote different ideas and meanings. The word “theory” means a description of an event or system that is considered to be accurate.⁸ It is a coherent statement or set of ideas that explains observed facts or phenomena and correctly predicts new facts or phenomena not previously observed, or which sets out the laws and principles of something known or observed; a hypothesis confirmed by observation, experiment, etc.⁹ The term “theory” is used in western scholarship and was employed by Goldzihar, Ritter and Gruebaum in modern literary discourse¹⁰. In Arabic literary discourse, the term denotes “نظريّة” i.e. *nazariyyah*, which means theory, notion, be judged etc. Hellmut Ritter stated different words which denote *nazariyyah* as speculation, discussion, or theoretical discussions.¹¹

In this paper, the term “theory” entails two ideas. First, it encompasses a discussion of love’s nature, essence, names, causes, varieties and differences. Second, it involves the Ahwal of the lovers, their cases, circumstance, situation, and moods as well as states of the poet to express love to his beloved one.

In western analytical views, love theories can refer to several psychological and sociological theories. There are four types of love described in philosophy as agape, phileo, storge, and eros. Agape is a type of unconditional love that is less common in society but more apparent between individuals and their god. Phileo is a love used to describe friendship between individuals. This love is commonly seen between friends in public, especially as displays of warm gestures. Storge is another type of love that is expressed through parenting. While *eros* is romantic love which was forbidden in early society and is still forbidden in some societies today.¹² These different types of love are expressed differently based on culture. However, in individual experience, love is generally perceived as an intrinsic national state triggered by certain stimuli and accompanied by pleasant or unpleasant desirable and undesirable effects.¹³

In literary Arabic discourse, three stages led to the development of Arabic

8. Lois Anta Giffen : love poetry and love theory in mediaeval Arabic literature, pg 110-111

9. *Ibid.* 123

10. *Ibid.* 141

11. *Ibid.*, pg 108-112.

12. https://wikipedia.org/wiki/arabic_love_poetry.

13. K.S. Viktor, Sufi Brotherhoods in Africa, in *The History of Islam in Africa*, Levezion and Pouwells (eds.), Athens, Ohio University Press, p.1

love theory. These stages fell between the ninth to nineteenth centuries with the emergence of some exponent scholars, literati, and critics, who devoted their precious engagements and times in studying and researching critically and stylistically on this theory from the Arabs' publication outlets.

The first stage started in the ninth to eleventh centuries, and shows the greatest variety in form of Arabic literary renditions and emphasis as shown in the works of Jahiz ("Risalat al-'Ishiq wa 'n-Nisā'" (essay on love and woman), and the risālat al-Qiyān (essay on singing slave girls), Muhammad bn Dāud (Kitab al-Zahra (the book of the flower), Marzubani (Kitabar-Riyyad: the book of garden) and Kitabal-Mutayamim (the book of those enslaved by love), etc.

The second stage falls between the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries, with emphasis on the clarity in form and contents in Arabic literary discourse. In this stage, there are more tendencies in the form and content than the previous works. The forms of all the books were well treated and there was clarity in the content of the text. Raudatal-Ashiq wa Nuzhat al-Wamiq: "the garden of the passionate lover and the promenade of the tender lover" and Mawazil a`a`aal-Ahbab wa Nuzhatul-Albab (the camping places of the dearest ones and the garden of hearth) of Shihab ad-Din Sulaiman al-Kisai are examples.

The third stage called super anthology focuses on reworking the contents of the writings of the preceding period. It falls between the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. They are in the straight Adab tradition of love theory and are more in the character of compilations than anything written previously. It avoids the controversial issues of Jahiz, mghutal and ibn Qayyim among others¹⁴. Therefore, Arabic tradition in the wake of modernity has focused on the expression of sublime love both in the context of profane relationships and spiritual love of God.

LOVE POETRY IN ARABIC LITERARY DISCOURSE

Since the pre-Islamic era, the love theme has been a predominantly topical theme in poetic concepts of Arabic literary texts. It is a channel of expression and communication both verbally and symbolically between lovers. It is an attempt at expressing minds, feelings and affections to the woman an individual is in love with. Quantum factors led to the influx of love themes in the Arabian Peninsula, amongst them are; the desert environment, the nomadic lifestyle

14. James .T.M. (1974) : Hispano Arabic poetry: A student Anthology, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1974, pg xvii

and the need for constant travel. These contributed to a poetic vision that focuses on absence, departure, lack, and nostalgia. In the majority of the love poems, the beloved is absent. Memories of her belong to the past, and future encounters are dependent on the dictates of fate.¹⁵ These contextual illustrations later led to what we refer to in Arabic literature as *ghazal*.

Ghazal, has historically been one of the most popular themes of Arabic poetic form, originating in Arabian Peninsula around the 7th century, as a form of amatory poem or ode.¹⁶ It deals often with topics of spiritual and romantic love and may be understood as a poetic expression of both the pain of loss or separation from the beloved and the beauty of love in spite of that pain. It is a short poem consisting of rhyming couplets, called bayt. Most ghazals have between seven and twelve bayts. For a poem to be considered a true ghazal, it must have no fewer than five couplets.¹⁷ Topically, the ghazal's focuses also changed, from nostalgic reminiscences of the homeland and loved ones, to romantic or erotic themes. These included sub-genres with themes of courtly love (*udharî*), eroticism (*hissî*), homoeroticism (*mudhakkar*), and a highly stylized introduction to a larger poem (*tamhîdî*).¹⁸

Ghazal is always written from the point of view of the unrequited love whose beloved is portrayed as unattainable. Most often, either the beloved has not returned the poet's love or returns it without sincerity or the societal circumstances do not allow it. The lover is aware and resigned to this fate but continues loving nonetheless. The lyrical impetus of the poem derives from this tension. Representations of the lover's powerlessness to resist his feelings often include lyrically exaggerated violence. The beloved's power to captivate the speaker may be represented in extended metaphors about the "arrows of his eyes," or by referring to the beloved as an assassin or a killer.¹⁹

Based on this, Al-Khalil summarized the steps taken by Love poetry in Arabic literary renditions thus:

The theme of love has been present in the Arabic poetic tradition since the earliest poems committed to written form. The bulk of the love poetry that has been preserved were composed by male poets and express love and admira-

15. https://wikipedia.org/wiki/arabic_love_poetry.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

tion for women. The earliest Arabic poems reveal distinctly different attitudes to the theme of love.

During the Islamic period, this desert-inspired approach to love was adapted and transformed into a strand of love poetry called 'Udhri, named for the tribe to which the poet Jamil, one of its best-known poets belongs. 'Udhri poetry belongs to a courtly love tradition, and indeed many scholars have suggested it as a precedent to the development of a similar strand in Western literatures during the middle Ages. The early centuries of recorded Arabic poetry are replete with collections of poetry written by 'Udhri poets, all of whom are known by a name that incorporates their beloveds: Jamil Buthaynah, Majnūn Laylā, Kuthayyir' Azzah. The story of Majnūn in particular became the subject of folkloric narratives and other artistic media, such as miniature painting, drama, and song.

Alongside this attitude to love in early poetry, however, there is in the Mu'allaqah of Imru' al-Qays a much different one, in which the poet's persona is engaged in encounters with the fair sex that are considerably different:

One day I entered 'Unayzah's camel-litter: "Damn you!" she protested, "You'll force me to dismount." The litter kept swaying all the while. "You have hobbled my camel, Imru' al-Qays," she said, "so dismount now!"

With the passage of time, elements from these two strands were blended into a unified tradition of the Arabic love poem (Ghazal). Images from the 'Udhri repertoire were particularly favoured by the Sufi poets in their mystical verses. Al-Bashshari bn Burd's diwan contains love poems of both types, but it is once again Abū Nuwās who makes major innovative contributions. His love poetry affords insight into the tolerant approach of Abbasid society to varying sexualities, as his verses refer to relationships with both women and men.

Genres of Zajal and Muwashshah that originated in Muslim Spain had love as their primary theme. Often blending both 'Umarī and 'Udhri themes with songs and popular poems in Romance dialects, they present a blend of images and motifs that are representative of the cultural environment in which they were created.

Unlike some of the other genres already mentioned, ghazal has remained popular into the modern period. While the romantic movement in the early

20th century provided an impetus for many poets, the quest for new identities in post-independence societies and, in particular, the increasing prominence of works by women produced significant change in Arabic love poetry.²⁰

SUFISM AS A PRISTINE ASPECT OF ISLAM

Sufism known as *tasawwuf* and Islamic mysticism in both Arabic and English terms respectively, is etymologically caused by diverse opinions among the Arabo-Islamic Scholars. It is viewed from *Safā* (صفا), which means "purity,"²¹ *Ṣūf* (صوف) means wool,²² *Ahl al-Ṣuffa* (أهل الصفا) "the people of the Suffah or the bench,"²³ and etc, while its Practitioners are referred to as "Sufiyyu" (صوفيّ) , i.e. Sufist).²⁴ Its definition as "Islamic mysticism," is due to its mystical expression of the interiorization and intensification of Islamic faith and practice. It is also identified as practices, texts, materials sites and lifestyles that are uniquely specific to religious traditions, as well as historical and geographical moments of their origin.²⁵

The basis of Islamic mysticism is rooted in the yearning of human spirit for communion with God which prepares the needs of individuals who want to experience God personally and makes them ready for the tasks.²⁶ This could be deduced from the well-known hadith *al-Qudsi* in which Allah addresses prophet Muhammad thus:

My servant draws might with nothing more dear to me with supererogatory works, so that I may love him. For if I love him I am the ear by which he hears, the eye by which he sees, the hand by which he takes and the leg by which he walks.²⁷

Historically, Islamic Sufism emerged in the early period of Islam in Hijaz, which

20. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sufism>.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*

24. *Ibid.*

25. R. Farrin, 2011, *Ecstasy*, In "Abundance from the Desert, Classical Arabic Poetry, Syracuse University Press, p. 228.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Hadith Qudsi retrieved from <http://honeyfortheheart.wordpress.com/hadith-38-inam-al-nawawis-4ohadith/hadith-38-myservant-draws-near-to-me/t4>

predates some sectarian order that emerged in Islam. One of the ulterior motives and rationale for Sufism is to create a direct contact between the servant and Almighty Allah through spirituality, evolved total submissiveness, supplications, meditations, purity, dedication and by striving to take the regular practice of the religion to the “supererogatory level” through simultaneously “fulfilling the obligatory.”²⁸

Sufism is regarded as a science of the soul that has always been an integral part of Orthodox Islam.²⁹ In his *Al-Risala al-Safadiyya*, ibn Taymiyyah describes the Sufis as those who belong to the path of the Sunnah and represent it in their teachings and writings. As a mystic and ascetic aspect of Islam, it is considered as the part of Islamic teaching that deals with the purification of the inner self. By focusing on the more spiritual aspects of religion, Sufis strive to obtain direct experience of God by making use of “intuitive and emotional faculties” that one must be trained to use.³⁰

It is of no doubt that Islamic Sufism has played a major role in the widespread of Islam globally as the rise of Islamic civilization coincides strongly with the spread of Sufi philosophy in Islam. The spread of Sufism has been considered a definitive factor in the spread of Islam, and in the creation of integrally Islamic cultures, especially in Africa and Asia.³¹

Many Sufi orders emerged in Islam as a result of expansion of Islam and Islamic propagation and evangelism, which made many Sufi Shaykhs establish these orders and name them after themselves. Among them are; Yisāwīyyah (Ahmad al-Yisāwī, d. 1166), Qādrīyyah (Abdul Qādir al-Jaylāni, d. 1168), Suhrawardīyyah (al-Shurawardi, d. 1168), Rifā’īyyah (Ahmad al-Rifā’i d. 1182) 15th Century, Chistiyyah (Mu’inud-Din Chisti, d. 1236) India, awlāwīyyah – Merlevīs (Jalahud-Din ar-Rumi, d. 1258), Shādhiliyyah (Abdul Hassan ash-Shādhili, d. 1258 from Rya’yyati), Badawīyyah (Ahmad al-Badawi, d. 1276o Egypt – Africa), Naqshabandīyyah (Muhammad Bahā’d – Din al Naqshabandi d. 1389), Tijāniyyah (Ahmad al-Tijani, d. 1815), etc.

28. K.D. Loevy (2012), *The Poetics of Embodiment in Islamic Mystical Philosophy*, a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Arts, Vanderbilt University, p.1

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

AN OVERVIEW OF ARABIC SUFI LITERATURE

Arabic Sufi literature is a presentation of literary works of Arabic Sufi Scholars, comprising both prose and poetry, with expression from the hearts, filled with love, affection, feelings and emotions, and vast experience of the Sufi Saints and their urge to meet their beloved. Sufi poets take different modes in expressing their love to their beloved. At times, they take Almighty Allah (the creator) as their beloved after severe spiritual experiments and ecstasy or Prophet Muhammad as their beloved through eulogising in what is known as (*Al-Madah al-Nabawiyah*) or the poems of eulogies to the prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him), which was an addition to the Art of eulogy (*fann-il-madhe*) in Arabic literature. Also, they at times take their Shaykh or master as their beloved.

Arabic Sufi literature consists of literary genres developed and engaged in by mystics through various trends and periods.³² They employed literary genres to achieve highest level of knowledge.³³ Also, they employ the use of symbolic language to express their feelings and interpret their discourse. Their communication in such discourse is characterized by their knowledge of Sufi symbolism and terminology which are known as *tasawwuf* professional register.³⁴

Badmus opined that Arabic Sufi literature developed and evolved into an independent branch of Arabic literature, which according to al-Khatibi include different phases. Some of which are:

- **1st phase:** This phase spanned between 100 and 200 A.H. Sufi poetry appeared in forms of imitation which usually contain few lines. Famous poet of this period is Rabiah al-'Adawiyah.³⁵
- **2nd Phase:** This took place between the third and fourth centuries after Hijrah. It was the stage of renaissance and growth. Notable poets of this period include Abu Turab 'Askari bn at Husayn at-Takhshabiyy (245AH), Abu Hamzah at Kurasaniyy, Al Mutanabbi and Sharif ar Ridaa among others.³⁶

32. S. Kemal, 1989. Philosophy and Theory in Arabic Poetics, In Journal of Arabic Literature, 2,2:128, retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/4183198, accessed 19/02/19:08:43

33. R. Farrin, 2011, Ecstasy, In "Abundance from the Desert, Classical Arabic Poetry, Syracuse University Press, p. 233

34. *Ibid.* 233

35. Badmus, Murtada Adegboyega (2023): Sufi Ecstasy In Shaykh Ibrahim Salih Al-Husayni's Poetry, Seminar paper at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, in March, 2023. pg 13

36. Z. Holladay (2008), Poetry and Ritual: The Physical Expression of Homoerotic Imagery

- **3rd Phase:** Between 5th and 6th century after Hijrah. The period heralded themes such as ecstasy, panegyric of the prophet, and longing to visit Islamic holy sites. Persian Sufi literature began simultaneously at this period with the emergence of poets like Ma'ruf al-Balkhi and Al-Bastī. Notable Sufi poets of this period are As-Sahr Ward (857A.D) Abdul Qadir Al-Jaylanin, al-Bari, and others.³⁷
- **4th Phase:** The fourth phase of Sufi literature in Arabic coincided with the 7th century Hijrah. It was the time of its full development and notable poets of this era include Ibn al-Farid (632 A.D), Jallaludin Ar-Rumi, Ibu Arabi (638 A.D), al-Bussayriyy (695 A.D) and Ibn'Ata'llah Iskandariyy and others.³⁸
- **5th Phase:** This period extends from the 8th century Hijrah till date. The poets of this period are Ash-Sha'rani, An Nablusi and others.³⁹

ECSTASY (WAJD) IN SUFISM

The word "ecstasy" denotes "Wajd" in Arabic. It has other lexicon meanings like 'to find' 'obtain, experience', suffer, etc.⁴⁰ In Sufism, it is a concept relating to the sciences of mystical states (*ilm al-Ahwāl*), which leverages on traditional repertoire of *samā'* by the Sufis that constitutes an aesthetics of spiritual savour (*dhawq*) that is apprehended by the spiritual heart as the seat of gnosis.⁴¹ It is a state of an intense emotion perceived or experienced by Sufis which goes beyond rational thought and self-control.⁴² It is just one of the components of the

in sama, a thesis submitted to the Department of Religious Studies, College of Arts and Sciences, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts, University of South Florida, p.1 retrieved from <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd> on 20/06/2018, 4:26 pm

37. *Ibid.*, p.3

38. K. Atif (2009), p.13

39. Atif (2014), Contentment, Satisfaction and Good-Pleasure: Rida in early Sufi Moral Psychology, In *Studies in Religion*, Vol.1:9, p.13. retrieved from sr.sagepub.com on....

40. A. Atiqah (2014), *Malamih as-Sufiyyah fi Shi'r Sallah 'Abdis Sabur*, B.A. long essay, Dept. of Arabic Language and Literature, Abubakr Balqayid University, Telmecen, Algeria, p.12

41. Badmus, Murtada Adegboyega (2023): Sufi Ecstasy In Shaykh Ibrahim Salih Al-Husayni's Poetry, Seminar paper at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, in March, 2023, pg 6

42. K.D. Loevy (2012), *The Poetics of Embodiment in Islamic Mystical Philosophy*, a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, in partial fulfilment of the

metaphors that are used to understand bacchanalian poetries, using a kind of drunkards' lexicon and key terms such as wine, wine cups, cub bearers, intoxication, rapture and ecstasy.⁴³

In Arabic theoretical Sufi discourse, *Wajd* is a symbolic representation of a heart sparkling by intoxicated wine of the goblet of the heart. The mystic imbibes the rapture of meditation on the divine attributes such as beauty, knowledge, omniscience, which leads to ecstatic experiences.⁴⁴

Abu Said al-Kharrāz (d.277/890 or 286/899) opined on ecstasy in his *Kitābas-Sifāt* where he analysed the experience of *qurb* (proximity and nearness to Allah) in which he describes the various *maqāmāt* (stages) to be traversed by the mystics before they can attain the degree of ecstasy. Kharrāz, therefore, opines that *wajd* or ecstasy is the first stage experienced by those who have realised nearness to Allah by describing the signs of ecstatic as:

a kind of concentration of attention with intense self-observation (*murāqabah*) accompanied by quietude of one's bodily limbs in immobility. Therein one searches for God without experiencing much fluctuation of mental imagery during contemplation (*khatarāt al-mushāhadah*) either allowing oneself to be moved by the initial flashes of intuitional consciousness. It is a flight into solitude and isolation as one is filled with the hands of his pleasurable delights, resting in him after undergoing the disturbances of multiplicity of ways and means in seeking to practise emulation (of the prophets and in the end it is finding intimacy in Him through compliance with His words when he will relieve them of their burden Q7:157 and the loads they bear.⁴⁵

Badmus made a critique on the above quotation that what Karrāz cited as *wajd* is not really focused on 'ecstasy' but rather an 'in-stasy'. This is because, *wajd* is essentially a communication with oneself and not exit from oneself, and it should be a meditation to find (*wajada*) the word of God within and become

requirements for the degree of Master in Arts, Vanderbilt University, p.4

43. Badmus, Murtada Adegboyega (2023): Sufi Ecstasy In Shaykh Ibrahim Salih Al-Husayni's Poetry, Seminar paper at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, in March, 2023. pg 6
44. Lewisohn, 2014, Principles and Philosophy of Ecstasy In L. Lewisohn (ed.), The Philosophy of Ecstasy, Rumi and the Sufi Tradition, World Wisdom, Inc. p. 36
45. K.D. Loevy (2012), The Poetics of Embodiment in Islamic Mystical Philosophy, a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Arts, Vanderbilt University, p.8

delighted.⁴⁶ The in-stasy notion of *wajd* rather than been an ecstasy is equally alluded to by other leading Sufi scholars of the Baghdad school like Abu Bakr Shibli (d.334/945) and Abu'l Husayn an-Nūrī (d.295/907). Lewisohn, Lonis Masignon in his comment on Hallaj's teaching on Sufism observed that "behind every ecstasy, as well as every action, he means to see only one to whom he is bound, who enrapt *Manfil Wajdi Mawjud*. God, who from ecstasy, continues to draw close to him."⁴⁷

AL SHUSHTURI'S HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

He is Abu-l- Hassan 'Ali bin Abdullah an-Numairi al-Fasi, popularly known as Al-Shushturi, a mystic, poet, philosopher, jurist and trader, born at Shushtar, a village in the Ash Valley in the west of Andalusy, near Guadix, northwest of Granada, Spain. 608/1212.⁴⁸

He started his youthful age in his hometown where he received education from the renowned scholars of note, and was well versed and grounded in different genres of Arabo-Islamic scholarship, such as, science of Quran, Sharia, Hadith, Jurisprudence and its principles, Arabic literature, grammar, exegesis, etc. He is very eloquent in Quranic recitation and knowledgeable in interpreting and analyzing the Quranic exegesis.

Shushturi's Sojourn in Arabo-Islamic scholarship did not hinder his interest in business transactions, as he later became a renowned trader, who travelled far in networking his business activities. This gave him quantum opportunities to visit many countries, such as; Tunisia, Algeria, Damascus, Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia where he performed hajj and created a link between him and many scholars whom he gained immensely from their wealth of scholarship and wisdom as well as Sufi order, such as: Shazilliyyah order in Cairo, and Suhrawardi order in Morocco.⁴⁹

His exposure to Sufism has earned him great fame and worldly recognitions, not only as a disciple of a particular order but as a master, leader, mystic,

46. Badmus, Murtada Adegboyega (2023): Sufi Ecstasy In Shaykh Ibrahim Salih Al-Husayni's Poetry, Seminar paper at the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, in March , 2023. Pg 7.

47. K.D. Loevy (2012), The Poetics of Embodiment in Islamic Mystical Philosophy, a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Arts, Vanderbilt University, p.8

48. <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/shushuturi>

49. *Ibid.*

ascetic, ecstatic, and beloved to his creator, who was ordained with enchantment of different *zikr* (glorification of Allah), and composed many Arabic poetries on Sufism and treaties in expressing his divine and sublime love to Almighty Allah, whom he always referred to as “beloved,”⁵⁰

He finally settled at Cairo where he became a devotee of the Sufi master, Ibn Sabi'in, who was four years younger than him and was widely respected at that time. They first met in Algeria when in their thirties. He was influenced by the great Sufi Master, ibn 'Arabi, although he sometimes expressed criticism of the complicated nature of his teachings, preferring simpler explanations.

Al-Shushturi's intellectual exponent and scholarship were well acknowledged by all and sundry, till he was known as 'Arus-l-Fuqahah, and a poet per excellent, who was very versed in the composition of Arabic poetries, swinging between conventional and new meters and odes such as Muwashah and Zajal.⁵¹

Shushturi was the first Sufi poet to use the Zajal metre in Sufi ecstatic expression, as was Ibn Araby who was the first Sufi poet to use Muwashaha to express Sufism. He is best known by posterity for his poetry, which was designed to be sung in songs employing simple mono-rhymes to praise God with everyday musical idiom, which won wide recognition beyond the hundreds of disciples in his own Shushtariyya group.⁵² Many verses of al-Shushtari's poetry (62 short poems called “Tawshih”) were identified in the classical Andalusian music that is today sung in North Africa as well as other parts of the Greater Middle East.

Al-Shushturi's true legacy lives on in the hearts of men who still sing his poems and celebrate his memory. In the delta of Egypt, followers of the Shashilliyyah order still recite his Zajal, while in Tunisia his words are sung to the tones of a musical instrument bearing his name, “Al-Shushturiyyah.” In Morocco, his songs are a common denominator to several Sufi celebration and in Spain, he is regarded as a trendsetter in Andalusia literature and is better known as “The juggler of love.”⁵³ Most of his poems are in forms of Qasidahs, Gazals, Qit'as, Muwashaha, Zajal. He died in Dimyati in northern Europe and was buried in 668/1269.

50. من ويكيبيديا، الموسوعة الحرة: أبو الحسن الششتري

51. <https://wikipedia.org/wiki/shushuturi>.

52. *Ibid.*

53. من ويكيبيديا، الموسوعة الحرة: أبو الحسن الششتري

LOVE THEORY IN SHUSHURI'S SUFI POETICAL ECSTASY: AN ANALYTICAL DISCOURSE

In examining Sufi poetical ecstasy in Shushuri's poetry, one would definitely need to digest and understand the level of Sufi experimentation and affiliation, and the quantum spiritual exercise and repertoire engaged by Shushuri that created a connection of love between him and the Almighty Allah whom he always referred to as "beloved." In giving a critique on the Sufi poetic ecstasy of Al-Shushuri, one would discover the level of love theory exploited in expressing his love, mind, feelings and affections to his beloved, which is beyond ordinary love but is a profane, passionate and sublime one, hinged on the basis of exercising the mystic's love for God which is an unconditional devotion to the beloved. In spite of all hindrances, and seeing it as a driving force, it is encouraging and inspiring, as the lover aims to win the object of his desire and please him.

It is very pertinent to state that Shushuri's Sufi Ecstasy Poetry reflects a profound exploration of the divine and spiritual connection between him and his lover after going through a rigorous spiritual experience. Most of his Sufi poetry establish the unity and oneness with the beloved, representing the ultimate joy experienced through divine love. He emphasizes the inseparability of the lover and the beloved, illustrating that they are not two separate entities but a unified existence. However, the use of wine in most of his poetry as a metaphor for divine ecstasy and spiritual bliss enhances the theme of union and celebration. The imagery of the cup and permitted wine symbolizes the permissible delights and joys that come from the beloved. It conveys the idea of indulging in spiritual pleasures and elevating one's soul through this divine connection. It portrays the intimate connection between the lover and the beloved, with imagery that conveys a sense of union, joy, and surrender. The poetic language and vivid descriptions immerse the reader in the emotions of the speaker, making the poem a heartfelt and captivating exploration of love, ecstasy and spirituality. In conclusion, his poetry is a beautiful expression of divine love, devotion, and spiritual ecstasy.

Therefore, efforts would be placed in this paper to examine the love theory in three of Shushuri's Sufi poetical ecstasy. For the purpose of this research, his poetry titled: You are ultimate joy, my beloved has visited me and my beloved has manifested in my heart would be examined.

1. Arabic Poetic version with the topic "You are my Ultimate Joy"⁵⁴

ذا الذي نعشــق نعم هو قد عشقني باخــتـ يارو
 من قديم هـ عشقوا ذاتي وأنا ساكن بدلروا
 ليس شيء يخرجني عتو إذ ليس ثم دار لغيرو
 كل شيء ظهري مئو حتى شرو عاد وخيرو
 كل شيء صدر لي عتو حتى مسجود ويرو
 أنا واحد ليس اثنين وفي هذا الأمر جاروا
 من حجر ينبع لك الماء وفي حجر الماء نارو
 أنا واحد وهو واحد كيف نكون أحنا اثنين
 وهو معبود وأنا عابد فيجي من هذا ضتين
 وهو مشهود وأنا شاهد منه فينا صاحب اثنين
 إذ كفا الزوج واحد فالوصال يغيب نفارو
 ونغيب دنيا وأخرى في مقامو وقرارو
 احرز أن تطلب شيء بزا لا تجد شيء برا موجود
 ليس يخرج عن طرز كل شيء فيك موجود
 وأنت غاية المسرورا وأنت ناقد وأنا منقود
 والوجود واحد هو كله بيك وفيك تظهر آثارو
 وذهب ذاتك مشجر وفي أكبادك عبارو
 التفت روحك يا محظور أنت هلستم غيرك
 وننت هوت الحقيقة في قعودك وفي سيرك
 وأنت هسرك وجهرك ولا خير إلا خيرك
 بيك ظهرت هذي الأشياء التي لا تنح صارو

54. من ويكيبيديا، الموسوعة الحرة: أبو الحسن الششتري

54. Shushuturi, Diwan, ed. Ali Sami' an-Nashshar (Alexandria, 1960) pp. 245-248

Translation:

1. You are Ultimate Joy

This is the one we love – he loves me through choice.

From all eternity he loved my essence – in his house I dwell.

There is nothing that can make me leave him, there being no house for another.

Everything is manifest to me from him, be it so-called evil or good,

All things come to me from him, whether in the mosque or in the monastery.

I am one, never two – yet in this matter in perplexity:

From stone water springs out before you, while within a rock the water is fire.

I am one, he is one – how can we ever be two?

He is the adored, I the adorer – from that come two opposites.

He is the contemplated; I the contemplator – which of us is bringing twoness?

When we two are one, it's a union that makes non-compatibility disappear,

We are hidden in this world and the next, in a place of rank and repose.

Beware of seeking something outside – you won't find a thing elsewhere existing.

Not an atom can leave you – all things are within you existing.

You are ultimate joy: you the examiner separating good from bad, I the one being tested

Being is one: all of it is through you and in you manifesting its effects.

The gold of your essence is multi leaved – within your interior lies the standard of purity.

You confined one, pay attention to your spirit – you are, there is no-one other than you.

You are he, the reality, whether still or in movement.

You are your own secret and your own public – there is no good but your own goodness.

LITERARY APPRAISAL

This poem establishes the direct nexus and interrelation between the poet and his beloved one (Almighty Allah). It shows that the level of their love is beyond what anyone can quantify or measure. The love between them is beyond ordinary as it is a profane, passionate and sublime one, because the mind and soul of both of them have become one. The poet sees nothing more than his beloved one, who loves him by choice in the absence of any other external conditions that might be attached to it. He further explains that there is no one who could

be loved by him like his beloved one and nothing can make him leave him, because He is the best companion and friend.

The poem expresses the belief that everything comes from the divine source, be it perceived as good or evil, and that the essence of the self reflects that divine essence. The poet advises against seeking fulfilment elsewhere, as all that is sought is within oneself. This self-discovery is presented as the key to understanding and manifesting the limitless potential within.

The imagery of water and fire within a rock symbolizes the enigmatic nature of the union between the lover and the beloved, where seemingly contradictory elements merge harmoniously. The mention of letters and the Alif (the first letter of the Arabic alphabet) signifies the essence from which all existence manifests, encouraging the reader to look beyond the superficial manifestations and recognize the underlying unity.

Overall, the poetry portrays a deep sense of spiritual awakening and the realization of one's identity with the divine. It explores the themes of unity, love, self-discovery, and the all-encompassing nature of existence, inviting readers to contemplate their innermost being and its connection to the universe. This is a typical picture of Sufi's ecstasy as displayed by Al-Shushturi. The love theory has vividly prevailed in this Sufi love poetry, which showcases the profane love of the poet to his beloved.

That is why the poet claimed that the two souls (i.e. his soul and beloved's soul) are in love in different forms and have become one.

2. Another example titled: My beloved has visited me⁵⁵

زَارَنِي جِيَّي وَطَابَت أَوْقَاتِي وَسَمِعَ لِي الْحَبِيبُ
وَعَفَا عَن جَمِيعِ زَلَّاتِي عَالِي غِيْظِ الرَّقِيبِ
زَارَنِي مُثْبِتِي وَزَالَ الْبَاسُ وَسَمِعَ بِالْوَصَالِ
وَحَضَرَ حَضْرَتِي وَدَارَ الْكَاسُ وَبَلَغَتْ الْأَمَالِ
وَشَرَبْنَا وَطَابَتِ الْأَنْفَاسُ مِنْ مُدَامِ حَلَالِ
إِمْلَأْ كَاسِي فَفِيهِ مَزَاتِي نَشْرَبُوا يَا أَلْبِيبِ
وَحَبِيبِي أَنْسِي وَمَشْكَاتِي مَعِي حَاضِرٌ قَرِيبِ
أَي مَدَامِهِ وَأَي خَمْرِهِ وَأَي خَمَّارِ وَأَي طَرَبِ

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91

وَاي غَنَا فِي رِيَاضٍ تَفْتَحَتْ أَزْهَارَ وَأَنْبَارَتْ لَنَا
 وَالطُّيُورُ فِي مَنَابِرِ الْأَشْجَارِ تَحْتُ طِبِّ بَيْتِنَا
 وَرُجَا جَاتِي مَلَأَ وَطَاسَاتِي دُونَ عِنَبِ دُونَ رَبِيبِ
 يَا نَدَامَى أَفْهَمُوا إِشَارَاتِي إِنَّ وَقْتِي عَجِيبُ
 رَقِّ ذَا الْخَمْرِ رَاقِ ذَا الْمَشْرُوبِ فِي مَحَلِّ سَعِيدِ
 دَعْنِي نَشْرَبْ وَنَعْتَقِ الْمَخْيُوبِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ جَدِيدِ
 السَّفِيهِ الَّذِي يُقُولُ لِي تُوْبَ إِنَّمَا أَنَا رَشِيدِ
 وَفِي عِشْقِي الْمَلِاحِ فَنَيْبُ عُمْرِي وَفَنَيْبُ الْفُتُونِ
 فِي دُجَى اللَّيْلِ زَارِنِي يَذْرِي لَا تَرَاهُ الْغِيْبُونَ
 وَأَضَا مَنْزِلِي وَسَاحِلَاتِي كَمَا عَقَلِي يَغِيبُ
 فِي سَكُونِي سَكَنَ وَحَرَكَاتِي حَاضِرَ لَا يَغِيبُ
 أَنَا فِي مَذْهَبِي نَهَبَ نَفْسِي لِمَا أَذِي هَمَّتْ فِيهِ
 وَحَضَرَ حَضْرَتِي حَضَرَ أَنْسِي وَأَضَا الْوَقْتُ بِبِهِ الْخ

Translation:

1. My beloved has visited me and my moments have become sweet. My beloved listened to me.
2. And forgave all my sins, despite the apy's wrath.
3. The goal of my hope visited me and (all) harm caused. He gave news of the union
4. And was present in my presence while the cup went around and I achieved my hopes.
5. We drank and our breaths were sweetened with a permitted wine.
6. Fill my cup, for in it are my lofty pleasures, so that, I may drink it up, O you who understand!
7. My beloved is my (sole) joy and the niche (holding a lamp) , ever present with me, close at hand.
8. O for his liquor! O for his wine! O for the wine seller! O for the joy! O for the song.
9. Among gardens in which flowers have opened and shone for us.

10. While the birds in the tree pulpits deliver sermons among us!
11. And he filled my glasses and cups, but not with (the juice) of grapes or of raisins!
12. O fellow drinkers, understand well my allusions, my hour is wondrous indeed!
13. How fine was that wine, how clear that drink was in a happy place!
14. Let me drink and love my beloved every new day!
15. It is the fool who tells me to repent when I am most certainly on the right path.
16. In loving beauties, I have wasted my life and exhausted all branches of knowledge.
17. My full moon visited me in the pitch-black darkness of night and no eye saw him.
18. He illuminated my lodging and my courtyards that I almost lost my mind.
19. He rested in my rest and in my moments, ever present, never absent.
20. In my act, I give my soul to him whom I love desperately.
21. And who was present in my presence, present in my joy while the joy was illuminated by him.

LITERARY APPRAISAL

This poetic composition reflects a profound expression of love and devotion to the beloved, with themes of spiritual union, joy, and the pursuit of pleasures. The verses create a vivid and emotionally charged portrayal of the speaker's intimate relationship with their beloved. Here's an appraisal of the poem:

The poem begins by celebrating the visitation of the beloved, which brings sweetness, joy, mercy to the speaker's moments and forgiveness for their sins, despite external challenges. The union with the beloved is portrayed as a goal fulfilled, and in their presence, the speaker's hopes are realized. The use of wine as a metaphor for divine ecstasy and spiritual bliss enhances the theme of union and celebration. The imagery of the cup and permitted wine symbolizes the permissible delights and joys that come from the beloved. It conveys the idea of indulging in spiritual pleasures and elevating one's soul through this divine connection. The repeated emphasis on the beloved being the source of joy and happiness in the speaker's life is a testament to the depth of their love and devotion. The imagery of the niche holding a lamp signifies the constant presence of the beloved as a guiding light in the speaker's life.

The poem also addresses societal norms and expectations, as the speaker

rejects calls for repentance, confident in their chosen path of love and spiritual connection. There is a sense of contentment and pride in following this unique path, and the speaker asserts their self-awareness and knowledge of their own journey. The verses express a profound sense of surrender, dedication, loyalty and submission to the beloved. The act of giving their soul to the beloved signifies the complete devotion and selflessness of the speaker's love. Throughout the poem, the use of metaphors and vivid imagery creates a captivating and emotionally charged atmosphere. The expressions of longing, illumination, and intimacy with the beloved evoke a deep sense of spiritual fulfilment and joy.

In conclusion, this poem has aptly shown the level of Sufi ecstasy of Al-Shushturi to his beloved one. It is of no doubt that he has passed a different level of spiritual experimentation, torment, suffering and total submission to the will of Almighty Allah, which makes him desist fully from seeking worldly materials or personal engagement with creatures than his beloved.

3. Another example titled: My Beloved has Manifested in my Heart, He Never Disappeared⁵⁶

مَحْبُوبِي قَدْ تَجَلَّى فِي قَلْبِي لَمْ يَغْـيِبْ
 وَأَنَا بِكَ سَائِسِي نَمْلًا خَمْرًا مُزْجَ بَطِيْبْ
 لَقَدْ سَكَنْ فِي دَارِي وَصَارَ لِي نَصِيْبْ
 وَأَنَا فِي مَنَارِي الْحَاضِرِ الْغَائِبِ
 قَدْ صَرْتُ فِي مَدَارِي اسْتَكْرَ وَاهِيْمَ وَطِيْبْ
 رَيْثَ الْمَعَانِي تَجَلَّى وَالشُّكْلُ قَدْ خُجِبْ
 وَكَاسِي قَدْ تَمَلَّأَ وَدَيْبِي قَدْ سَكِيْبْ
 تَجَلَّتِ الْمَعَانِي وَغَابَتِ الظُّلُومُ
 وَكُسِرَ الْأَوَانِي وَمُزِقَ الْمِثَالُ
 وَفِيًّا قَدْ تَرَانِي فِي عَقَبِ الْبِزَالِ
 يَا طَالِبِي تَخَلَّى عَن قَلْبِ الْقَلِيْبِ
 تَرَقَى الْمَقَامَ الْأَعْلَى وَالْمَنْزِلَ الرَّحِيْبِ
 تَدَخَّلَ لِذِيْرِ عَالِي فِي أَرْفَعِ الْعَمَلِ

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 134-136

مجموع من الغوالي من ظوم من الحلا
تسقى من الزلال كاس لك أقبل
تدخل لحي ليلى وروضها الخصيب
تبدو إليك تجلى بحسنها العجيب
يا خلي يا رفيقي قرب ترى عجب
لمحفل الحق يقي والسذن والطرب
واسالك على الطريق تصل بلا تعب
وادنو بغير مهلة لحضرة الحبيب
تخلع عليك خله تنكي بها الرقيب
ادنو مع الحب ايب للمنزى المنيف
واصعد على مراتب المجد واتصيف
ترى من العجائب ما لم تطق تصيف... الخ

Translation

1. My beloved has manifested in my heart, he never disappeared.
2. And as I fill my cup, I mix wine with perfume.
3. He has taken residence in my abode, becoming my portion.
4. And I am in my minaret, present yet absent.
5. I've become intoxicated in my sphere, infatuated and fragrant.
6. The meanings have revealed themselves, and the form has been unveiled.
7. My cup has been filled, and my world has been poured.
8. The meanings have manifested, and the shadows have disappeared.
9. The vessels have been shattered, and the symbols torn apart.
10. And now you see me, after vanishing.
11. O my seeker! leave behind the mould of shallow matters.
12. Ascend to the highest station, to the welcoming abode.
13. Enter the lofty dwelling, in the highest elevation.
14. A collection of precious things, a masterpiece of sweetness.
15. You'll be served from the purest spring, a cup offered to you.
16. Enter the abode of Layla, and her fertile garden.
17. She will appear to you, with her astonishing beauty.
18. O friend, come closer, you'll witness wonders.
19. In the true gathering, of joy and delight.

20. Embark on the path, reaching without fatigue.
21. Draw near swiftly, to the presence of the beloved.
22. You will be granted the attire of honour and distinction.
23. Approach the beloved company, to the benevolent dwelling.
24. Climb the levels of glory and be adorned.
25. You will see wonders, that words can't describe and etc

LITERARY APPRAISAL

The text seems to be a complex and metaphorical piece, touching on themes of love, longing, mysticism, and personal transformation. The imagery of the beloved manifesting within one's heart, the blending of wine and perfume, and the idea of presence yet absence all allude to a profound inner experience. The progression from unveiling meanings to shattering vessels could symbolise a journey of spiritual revelation and shedding of external attachments.

The use of Layla's imagery, a well-known figure in Arabian literature representing unattainable love, adds depth to the exploration of desire and striving for the ineffable. The call to ascend to higher stations and approach the beloved company suggests an aspiration towards a transcendent state.

The text also touches on patience, the inward journey, and the concealment of one's inner world. The emphasis on maintaining secrecy and wisdom highlights the delicacy of the inner path and the need for discretion.

Overall, this text appears to be a contemplative and spiritually-oriented composition that uses rich imagery and symbolism to convey the themes of self-discovery, longing, and transformation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has investigated terms that have been symbolically proven in Arabic Sufi literature on the theory between love and Arabic Sufi literature. Apparently, love signifies a quantum factor in the production of Arabic Sufi literature from the second century till date. The level at which the Sufis express their feelings, affections and love is beyond ordinary but is a profane, passionate and sublime one as they exercise rigorous experience in the Islamic mystical sojourn in order to win the heart of their beloved.

Shushuturi, a scholar of note, a poet par excellence, a renowned Sufi and seal of intelligentsias, has aptly contributed to the development of Islamic Sufism through his Scholarship and Sufi evangelization. His intellectual exponent and scholarship were well acknowledged by all and sundry, till he was titled: 'Arus-l-Fuqahah. He was very versed in the composition of Arabic poetries,

swinging between conventional and new metres and odes such as Muwashah and Zajal.

Shushturi's Sufi Ecstasy Poetry reflects a profound exploration of the divine and spiritual connection between him and his beloved after going through a rigorous spiritual experience. Most of his Sufi poetry establishes the unity and oneness with the beloved, representing the ultimate joy experienced through divine love. However, the use of wine in most of his poetry as a metaphor for divine ecstasy and spiritual bliss enhances the theme of union and celebration. The imagery of the cup and permitted wine symbolizes the permissible delights and joys that come from the beloved. It conveys the idea of indulging in spiritual pleasures and elevating one's soul through this divine connection.

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