

# Comparative Study of the Moral Virtues in Sanai's Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah and Saadi's Bustan

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## ABSTRACT

Moral advice and teachings have always been amongst the foregrounded concepts in poetry and poets have made a lot of efforts for promulgating the moral virtues and each of them has dealt with it through a specific method and style. The quality and type of the poets' moral virtues depend on the type of their teachings, thoughts and ideologies. Sanai and Saadi are amongst the ethics-oriented and ethics-centered poets. The essence of ethics in Sanai's mindset is laid on the foundation of the religion. He considers going through sharia as the way to the perfection rank. The ethics intended by Saadi is the very general and mental ideals he has posited for the prudence of the individual and society and reaching felicity and ideal life. As a teacher of ethics, he has introduced the moral virtues and depravities based on the canonical teachings and invited his ideal human being to follow them so as to reach felicity and correct the human relations. The present article seeks comparatively investigating the ethical approaches in Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah and Bustan.

**Keywords:** ethics, Saadi, Sanai, Bustan, Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah.

## Introduction

Following monotheism and theology, the most honorable science encountered by the mankind is ethics because every science is dignified by its subject and the subject of the ethics is "the human beings' movement towards the absolute perfection" and edification and purification of the soul of the depravities and filths and preparing it for the acceptance of the divine light is its outcome.

Persian language poets and writers have paid a lot of attention in their poems and works to the ethics and the ethical concepts can be vividly seen in the ancient Persian texts. The Persian literature poems that are manifestation of the theosophical and philosophical discussions as well as the ethical and social topics

accompanied concomitantly by wisdom, advice and guidance became prevalent during the early sixth hejira century by Sanai with his presentation of the poetical book "Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah" which is a theosophical book containing advice, guidance, wise sayings and preaching and the poets after him began imitating him.

But, Saadi who is the greatest ethical-educational poet exclusively deals with educational and ethical significations accompanied concomitantly with wise sayings, advice and guidance for the correction and instruction of the various social classes as well as for achieving an ideal society.

Undoubtedly, achievement of the teachings of such works that have been illuminating the mankind's path since long ago demands a special talent and cognizance. Accordingly, it is necessary to elaborate the ethical and educational goals of this work in such a way that the today's human being can be made acquainted with such ethical teachings. In the present article, the human beings' ethical indices have been investigated from the perspective of Sanai and Saadi in Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah and Bustan. How have Sanai and Saadi approached moral virtues in these two poetical books?

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How have the moral virtues been reflected in Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah and Bustan?

Ethics is a plural noun meaning the internal characteristics and habits by way of which a person readily performs an action (whether moral or immoral); however, in case that the term "ethics" is used in absolute terms, the good and moral virtues and temperaments are understood <sup>[1]</sup>.

Ethics is a science wherein edification of the soul and the individual's quality of relations with family and society and the entire individuals' interrelationships in the community are discussed <sup>[2]</sup>.

In our cultural and literary resources, Sanai and Saadi are two influential and prominent poets who have created outstanding and impressive works by relying on the ethics.

Sanai has stepped into the arena of Persian literature as a pioneer poet and a social reformer. He is well aware of his prophetic mission as a poet and tries offering a canon-based solution to show the felicity path to the human beings. In Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah, he enlightens issues and engages in a fight against the society's corrupt classes and provides them with preaching. The method he uses in his praises and extolments and subsequent offering of ethical advice to his time's governor has been found attractive to Saadi who happens to later on follow it <sup>[3]</sup>.

Saadi is called the "teacher of ethics" or a "social corrector" for the fact that he has paid a great deal of attention to the gracing the self with pleasant and moral attributes. "Like the today's modernist theoreticians who do not anymore find sole intellectuality as a sign of the society's renovation and find national unity and attentions to the ethics as more important conditions, Saadi gives an extraordinary importance to ethical sublimation" <sup>[4]</sup>.

Saadi's Bustan is a valuable social and ethical poetical book that depicts the world the way it has to be. In this instructive book, it is ethics that helps the mankind reach the rank of utmost perfection <sup>[5]</sup>; it also proposes many various human-constructive themes and instructions the fulfillment of which help an individual reach felicity and prepares the mankind for achieving an ideal society. As an able thinker who possesses a creative mind and mindset and at the same time knows the human beings' and the society's spirits, Saadi recognizes the society's vulnerabilities and the mankind's pains and hurts and offers solutions to them like a psychologist who is versatile in sociology and anthropology <sup>[6]</sup>.

The present article seeks finding an answer to the question as to "how have Sanai and Saadi delineated moral virtues in Hadiqah Al-Haqiqah and Bustan, respectively?" The reason for choosing Hadiqah amongst Sanai's works is that this book is one of the first books pointing to the necessity of applying ethics in life. Moreover, the reason for selecting Bustan amongst Saadi's book of Kolliat is that he has portrayed his ideal society in Bustan.

## Common Themes:

The repetition of some of Hadiqah's ethical themes in Bustan has caused these concepts and teachings to appear once again in the guise of poems. The common ethical themes in Hadiqah and Bustan can be expressed in the following cases:

### 1. Humbleness:

Amongst the other moral virtues strongly recommended against haughtiness and boastfulness, humbleness and modesty can be pointed out. In fact, humbleness is the observance of moderation as the middle point between haughtiness and inferiority <sup>[7]</sup>.

As held by mystics, humbleness includes "viewing one's own self as a servant worshipping the God and a just person treating the whole creatures fairly" <sup>[8]</sup>.

Imam Ali (PBUH) finds humbleness as the fruit of knowledgeableness: "*Al-Tawāzo' Thamarah Al-Elm*" <sup>[9]</sup>. Sanai sees humbleness as a means of getting to the close vicinity of the God:

"If you put chains on your own self, you will be selected; if you put your feet on your head, you will be ripened" <sup>[10]</sup>.

Humbleness is graded: "humbleness before the God is the submission of the self to the God; in the position of a worshipper, it is the complete obedience of the orders and prohibitions or acceptance of the manifestations of the characteristics or the evanescence of the existence in the manifestation of the essence. The self's obedience of the orders and prohibitions is the humbleness by the new-comers and acceptance of the characteristics' manifestation in the heart along with the evanescence of one's own volition in the God's will is the humbleness by the mid-level persons and acceptance of the manifestations of the essence in the soul along with the evanescence of one's own self in the absolute being is the humbleness by the high-ranking seniors" <sup>[8]</sup>.

In Hadiqah, Sanai points to these ranks:

#### 1.1. Juniors' humbleness by accepting servitude and accepting the orders and prohibitions of the religion:

"Keep the neck of your soul downward so that you can become the dear of every alley".

"If you stop perpetrating sins, the religiosity would appear; if you pick up your hat, your head will appear" <sup>[10]</sup>.

#### 1.2. The second degree of humbleness is the quitting of the characteristics:

"Take off this seven-color cassock and put on a set of one-color attire like Messiah" (Ibid.).

#### 1.3. The third stage is the desertion of the ego and evanescence in the God's essence:

"Deduce all of your own self from yourself then you can claim that you are Adam" (Ibid.).

From Saadi's perspective, humbleness and modesty are the lofty perfection of the mankind and the factors

giving rise to social consistence and peaceful life. He dedicates the fourth chapter of Bustan to humbleness and expresses stories and sweet sayings regarding the importance of humbleness and the adverse outcomes of haughtiness and boastfulness. Saadi reminds of the mankind's first creation and concludes that the human beings cannot be haughty and immodest with such a creation:

"The pure God has created you from the soil; so, O servant, be modest like the soil" <sup>[11]</sup>.

Saadi realizes humbleness before the others as the cause of the human beings' pride and knows haughtiness and boastfulness as the cause of deprivation and perishing of them:

"Humbleness would make your head of loftiness be elevated; haughtiness would make you fall on the soil" <sup>[11]</sup>.

## 2. Generosity and Munificence:

"The best of you is the most generous of you and the worst of you is the most parsimonious of you" <sup>[12]</sup>.

The adjectives generosity and munificence are the antonyms of parsimoniousness and product of unwillingness towards the world; they are also the most well-known attributes of the God's prophets and the most famous of the moralities of the God's guardians and appointees <sup>[13]</sup>. As it has been ordered by Imam Ali (PBUH), "those who are generous would be given a lofty position in this and the other world" <sup>[9]</sup>.

From the perspective of Sanai, the forgiving and sacrificing of the properties is not equal to losing them, rather it is storing them in the treasury of the God:

"A generous man donated several thousands of gold coins in the presence of his son".

"Bearing witness to the father's donation, the son started speaking about the father's bad performance and deposition".

"He said: O father! Where is my share? He Said: O son, in the treasury of the God".

"I gave your quotient without any executor and partaker to the God and he will return it to you ...".

"He will give you seventy coins for every one of them; he will open ten gates to you if he closes one door" <sup>[10]</sup>.

Saadi, as well, has worthy words in this regard including the one that the opportunities should be seized and measures should be taken in line with treating others benevolently and generously.

"Give gold and blessings now that they are in your possession for they are not under your command after you pass away" <sup>[11]</sup>.

Saadi knows the benevolent treatment of the poor as the gratitude to the needlessness of the others.

"Now that you are not indigently begging at the gates of the others, show your gratitude by not repelling the needy from your gate" <sup>[11]</sup>.

Some of the reasons for Saadi's recommendation to generousness can be recounted in the following cases:

### 2.1. If you donate, the others will donate to you:

"Should you do good and throw it in Tigris, the God will return it to you in the desert".

### 2.2. Generosity comes out of greatness and it has to be existent in the essence of everyone:

"A person did not dare to spend; he had gold but was unable to spend".

"He did not either eat it to become comfortable in the mind or donate it so that it might come out useful in the future" <sup>[11]</sup>.

### 2.3. Since Saadi's addressees all have religious beliefs, he presents other reasons for recommending to generousness, including:

#### 2.3.1. Generousness is superior than worshipping because it is a sort of serving the people:

"Relieve a heart by performing a benefaction for it is better than saying a thousand rounds of prayers in every location" <sup>[11]</sup>.

#### 2.3.2. Donation repels disasters and it is not left unanswered:

"A stream of water can prevent a coarse calamity; have you heard that a cane can compensate for crookedness" <sup>[11]</sup>.

#### 2.3.3. Belongings are not eternal and unoriginal:

"One should learn a skill and acquire virtue, religion and perfection for properties and positions come and go occasionally" <sup>[11]</sup>.

Therefore, collecting properties is not a rational thing to do:

"Eat and wear and donate and keep yourself and others comfortable; why are you collecting for others?" <sup>[11]</sup>.

## 3. Courteousness:

This characteristic has been reminded as the reign of the divine mercy. "Good temper is the reign of the divine mercy" <sup>[14]</sup>. The importance of Courteousness/ is to the extent that Imam Sadeq (PBUH) orders that "courtesy extinguish sins the way that the sun melts ice" <sup>[15]</sup>.

Sanai realizes courtesy as being like eight paradises and bad-temperedness as being like the seven hells:

"As for the good virtues and bad way of conduct, you are the seven hells and eight heavens" <sup>[10]</sup>.

From Sanai's perspective, the human beings' real beauty depends on goodness of dispositions, not the smoothness of the skin:

"You should not become prideful of the goodness of skin for the good disposition is the covering of the individuals before the people" <sup>[10]</sup>

Courtesy and good virtues and temperaments constitute another important principle of social ethics the emergence of which in the individuals has a large deal of effect on the social consistency and friendship attractions and continuation of the relationships. In Bustan, Saadi has dealt with this important ethical and social property and believes that the foes can be even gentled and their evilness and badness can be repelled by lenity and wisdom:

"It is by lenity that the enemy can be turned into friend; your friend will become your enemy if you treat him harshly".

"Treat everyone you see morally even if he is your subordinate or your superior" <sup>[11]</sup>.

"The roaring elephant does not attack the keeper for the grace it has seen".

Saadi realizes bad temper as the cause of a person's entry into the hell and finds good tempers as heavenly and ethereal.

"The bad temper takes a person to the hell the way that the good temper takes a person to the heaven" <sup>[11]</sup>.

#### 4. Confidentiality:

The great prophet of Islam (may Allah bestow him and his sacred progeny the best of His regards) orders that "ask for assistance for getting your tasks done by keeping your secrets" <sup>[14]</sup>. Confidentiality/ secrecy is amongst the good deeds and the result of the power of soul and internal courage. "The persons who can keep secrets are the lamps of the guidance road and source of knowledge and wisdom; they do not set on the fire of tyrannical mutiny. They neither divulge secrets nor do they reveal the others' scandals; they do not either seek sinfully oppressing and annoying others or acting hypocritically and boastfully" <sup>[13]</sup>.

Sanai believes that the secret should not be told to everyone but there is sometimes a need for guidance and assistance of the others' light of wisdom for making correct choice and staying away from slip; so, it is necessary to ask help from and tell the secrets to an emphatic friend who hides the secret like life in his heart.

"The secret should be kept hidden from the strangers and even the close friends should be carefully told of one's secret".

"A confident friend is to be told of the secrets and needs and the secrets can be naked before the close friends".

"Do not open your secrets but only to the intellectuals and do not give your heart but to the fellows of the heart" <sup>[13]</sup>.

From his perspective, the divulging of the secret is a sign of irrationality:

"The person who spreads the secrets on the lightness of the day surely has literacy cleaned of the plate of his intellect" <sup>[13]</sup>.

Saadi warns everyone to avoid retelling of the personal secrets to the others and he underlines this issue for the inability in keeping the people's mouth shut. He states in Bustan that:

"You can store your gems in the treasury of the illiterate persons but you have to guard your secret"

"O wise persons, the heart is the prison of the secret; it cannot be chained again when told" <sup>[11]</sup>.

"Do not divulge your secrets to anyone for I have seen many accomplice spies" <sup>[11]</sup>

#### 5. Forbearance:

In Arabic, forbearance means "prevention" and "avoidance" <sup>[16]</sup>. In ethical books, forbearance is an antonym for impatience and it includes stability of the soul and its sureness and that an individual would not undergo anxiety and distress in calamities and difficulties and can preserve openness and confidence s/he has had before an accident. Patience has been said to be of some kinds as patience in the battlefield as the attribute of the courageous persons, patience during the anger which is called forbearance, patience over the hardship and difficulties of the worshipping and obedience that stems from faith, patience against the carnal wishes and lusts that is called chastity, patience against the life's severities that is called the broadness of the chest, patience over the desertion of the world and its desires which is called asceticism and so forth <sup>[13, 17, 18]</sup>. In demonstrating the excellence of patience, it only suffices to say that the God orders the following words in describing the goodness of the forbearers: "*Enna Allah Ma'a Al-Saberin*" meaning "the God is with the forbearers" (Baqarah, 153) and "... *Enna Mā Yowaffi Al-Sāberūn Ajrahom Bi Qaire Hesāb*" meaning "verily, [the God] rewards the forbearers perfectly and countlessly" (ZOMAR, 10). Forbearance has also been stated to be half the faith <sup>[14]</sup>.

Sanai knows patience as the forbearance in hardship and calamities and a prelude to the acquisition of knowledge:

"You should be firstly patient to acquire knowledge; then, you can take your share of the knowledge by means of your patience"

"Without patience, knowledge is the dust of the alley; the knowledge accompanied by the patience is an honor" <sup>[10]</sup>

Sanai believes that patience and forbearance is the feed for intellect and the knowledge accompanied concomitantly with patience is the precondition for being a human being:

"Patience is the feed of the knowledgeable persons' intellect; patience is the outfit of the scholars' life"

"He who is not assisted by knowledge and patience should not be considered as a human being in this world" <sup>[10]</sup>

In Bustan, the good products of patience and forbearance have been repeatedly highlighted. These emphases are more frequent in the fourth chapter. In the course of one of the stories in the fourth chapter of Bustan, Saadi speaks of the virtuousness of the pious individuals who have separated themselves from the people and attached their hearts to the God in the corner of their seclusion. One day, a bold and ignorant person starts sarcastically taking to a pious person in public and rudely attacks him by various insults, slanders and libels and accuses him inter alia of hypocrisy:

"An unwise man started verbally and humorously saying bad things about the good man"

"Beware of this trick and ruse and deceit; of sitting in the position of Solomon while being a beast"

"They are constantly washing their faces like a cat while seeking greedily in search of the mice to hunt"

"They are exercising mortification to acquire fame and pride for the hollow drum's sound can reach far away"

"He was speaking this way and a crowd had gathered around him and every man and woman was enjoying it" <sup>[11]</sup>

Surprisingly, the aforementioned pious person not only avoids arousal by such a rude attack and keeps oneself abstinent but he also exhibits an extremely human behavior against this rude abuser and offers an amazing and incredible pattern of forbearance, forgiveness and justness: he asks the God to grant this abuser the gift of repentance and grant him the gift of repentance so that he might be saved of perishing if he is right" <sup>[19]</sup>.

## 6. Justice-Orientation and Fighting against Injustice:

Justice is antonymous to oppression and tyranny and synonymous to fairness (Mo'ain, under the term justness". Justice has various meanings and examples. Commonly, it means observing the others' rights against tyranny and suppression. So, justness means "*E'taa Kollo Zi Haqqen Haqqah*" and the meaning of justness has been developed by some so that it has been taken as meaning placing everything in its right place or performing every task the way it deserves <sup>[20]</sup>.

From Sanai's viewpoint, justice and fairness mean avoiding tyrannically and abusively treating the

subordinates. Sanai considers justice alongside religion and religiosity as two symmetrical parts that bring about happiness and comfort in the heart of the people: "The ruler was like the twin of religiosity and justice and the people's heart was happy with justness"

"And, if his verdicts were inclined towards injustice he would have his realm entirely gone with the wind" <sup>[20]</sup>

Sanai finds justice as a divine characteristic and a prophet-like condition:

"Exercise justness for the just person would knock the door of prophetic mission in the territory of the heart"

"Moses practiced justness when he was a shepherd and the benevolent God assigned him to the position of a prophet" <sup>[20]</sup>

## 6.1. Effects of Justness and Justice-Orientation:

### 6.1.1. Persistence and Permanence of the Governorship and Country:

"If you seek assistance from justice, you will be saved otherwise you will have your promise and vow broken"

"Practice justness and do not get close to suppression for it will make dusts rise up from this territory"

"The king should be just inside the country; he should be the God's deputy and messenger" <sup>[10]</sup>

### 6.1.2. Sanai finds justice as the cause of spiritual perfection and sublimation:

"In case that you prepare your supplies from justness, your horse will take you two more abodes ahead"

### 6.1.3. From Sanai's perspective, one should seminally acquire knowledge and patience to become habitually accustomed to such a good virtue as justness; moderation in speaking leads to wisdom that can create justice if concomitantly accompanied by forbearance:

"A man should have both knowledge and patience at the same time otherwise justice cannot be established amongst the people" <sup>[10]</sup>

### 6.1.4. Sanai finds justice as the moderation in the country's affairs:

"The just kind has to exercise moderation; he is neither lion-hearted nor camel-hearted" <sup>[10]</sup>.

The most distinct feature of Saadi's thoughts and ideology is his justice-seeking properties. Before being



a versatile poet, Saadi is a social thinker. He pays attention to whatever the thing required for a social life and he has run words on his tongue about them. Justice and spreading of justice, as well, are amongst the most original bases of Saadi Shirazi's utopia. Due to the importance of this subject, Saadi dedicates a chapter of his valuable book, *Bustan*, to this issue:

"Beware not to turn your head away from justice and fairness otherwise the people would evade your way out of your wrongdoings" <sup>[11]</sup>.

"The body of the justice-serving individual would be cool on the judgment day for it is based in the shade of the divine throne" <sup>[11]</sup>.

Saadi is of the belief that an unjust person can find whatever the thing he is seeking in tyranny and oppression in treating the people justly:

"He was in the wrong place and his strategies were weak; all the things that can be sought in tyranny exist in justice" <sup>[11]</sup>.

"Have you ever treated a person justly that you are asking for a just person now?"

"If you are doing wrong, do not expect to be treated well for tamrix does not ever produce grapes" <sup>[11]</sup>.

#### 7. Contentment:

Self-sufficiency or contentment that has been praised by all the believers and the scholars of ethics and mystics and recommended frequently by the elders of the religion is synonymous to avarice and greed; literally, it means "satisfaction, happiness and cost-effectiveness". In the terminology of the theological sciences' scholars, it means residence and tranquility in the absence of usual things and presence of all the things against one's own wants" <sup>[7]</sup>.

Sanai invites his audience to contentment and emphasizes that the several-day life in this world does not deserve belongings and the best treasure is satisfaction and contentment and the best place is the corner of the adytum:

"Find a corner in this virtual world and try harvesting supplies for the hereafter"

"You are not bond to anyone so when you are crying in pain, the other would be laughing at you"

"When the government of religion shows its face, the person would turn his back onto the world"

"The wise individuals accept this two-day life on this earth if it is good or bad and if it is pleasant or unpleasant"

"I swear to the God that you cannot take anything with you from this two-day life and your belongings"

"Be living till the time death grasps you and asks the trachea of your throat to payoff for the bread"

"That is because nobody has trusted in two breaths in the world of deceit and capriciousness"

"So, you would be happy in this several-day borrowed life in the corner of adytum and treasure" <sup>[10]</sup>

Contentment is indeed needlessness:

"O wise person, your contentment suffices you; patience and efforts are the only things you can afford" <sup>[10]</sup>

Sanai recommends that one should exercise self-sufficiency otherwise s/he would be ambushed by the corporeal and otherworldly chastisement and astray from the path of felicity and perfection:

"Beware! Exercise contentment for inferior avarice is stigmatized by chastisement in both of the worlds" <sup>[10]</sup>

"Contentment is amongst the human-specific characteristics and properties the social and economic importance of which has persuaded Saadi to dedicate a chapter of his *Bustan* and a chapter of his *Golestan* to this attribute. In poet's mind, contentment, i.e. self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency, is a valuable and credible principle leading to the felicity of the human beings. In Saadi's opinion, the human being who is not satisfied with his or her luck and sustenance has not recognized the God and has fallen short of His obedience" <sup>[6]</sup>.

"He who is not satisfied with the luck and sustenance has not recognized and worshipped the God"

"Contentment makes a person rich; send this news to the world-seeking greedy person" <sup>[11]</sup>

## Conclusion:

Saadi's ethical teachings in *Bustan* begin with advice, guidance and recommendations for observing the human and social relations and the human beings are invited to fight their carnal wishes in a simple language. After elucidating the subject, Saadi deals with the moral virtues and invites the human beings to observe them for reaching corporeal comfort and welfare and otherworldly felicity. All of the ten chapters in his *Bustan* are the explications and detailed explanations of the issue that the human relations are formed in a unique and connected body and the weakness and inability of one component in the system causes the weakness and laziness of the other parts. Therefore, Saadi requires to the observation of the ethical principles for the achievement of a felicitous life.

Sanai proposes a moral system wherein the individual's purification is in a particular position. To do so, Sanai underlines the edification of the inside and the basis of his movement on this path in this ethical system is Islam. He emphasizes on the elimination of the internal depravities that, as he opines, prevent the human beings from finishing the felicity route. Highlighting the necessity for the individuals' equipping of their own selves with the moral virtues, honesty and truthfulness, contentment and humbleness and courtesy and well-temperadness, he tries getting the human beings arrived at a psychological-mental balance. To this end, Sanai realizes the individual and identifies

them for his audience like an insightful teacher who is aware of all the temptations and internal tendencies of the individuals. He distinguishes the lures from the clean spiritual mentalities and provides his readers unsparingly with such an insight. He illuminates the lamp of intellect so as to show the path of felicity and, in doing so, gives a lot of value to the knowledge and awareness and praises it extremely so as to encourage the listeners of his words towards acquisition of knowledge. He knows the world as a ground wherein everyone can take the ascension path depending on the type of his or her movements and activities or find oneself on the verge of fall. All the effort Sanai makes in such cases is aligned with showcasing the depravities and introducing the virtues to mark the path of preserving the human veneration. Creation of a calm space along with the preservation of the human reverence is the goal sought by Sanai.

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