

# *Sa'di's Rose Garden: a Paean to Reconciliation*

*'An Exploration of Socio-Political Relations, Human Interactions, Integration,  
Peace and Harmony'*

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## **Abstract**

The core purpose of this PhD has been to investigate the reconciliatory thought of a 13th century Persian poet named Sa'di Shirazi. Although Sa'di's prose poetry is not set out in the systematic form of a comprehensive political theory, profound insights were extracted from it that convey a powerful message regarding the necessities of harmonious behaviour as a precondition for a healthy society, and the dangers of not adhering to it. The *Rose Garden* of Sa'di, his most prized work and a pillar of Persian literature which is one of the oldest in the world, was the focus of this thesis. I revealed that deep within the *Rose Garden*, there exists a concept of human integration or reconciliation leading towards an ideal state that Sa'di envisions and the name of the book denotes. This concept lies at the heart of his concern for human well-being and prosperity. The thesis is developed in five stages: first, I describe Sa'di's personality and life experiences; second, I show how recently there has been an aesthetic turn and a local turn in our understanding of present-day politics and peace, demonstrating how poetry, especially indigenous poetry, can have a significant impact on political behaviour and understanding; third, I deal with the historiographical issue of transposing ideas from the past into political situations of the present, arguing that such transposition is not only legitimate but ineluctable; fourth, I provide a rigorous analysis of the reconciliatory notions in Sa'di's masterpiece, the *Rose Garden*; and fifth, I propose that Sa'di's concept of reconciliation can potentially help mitigate the profound clash in 21st century Iran between its national and religious identities, since poetry is an important and integral part of the cultural conscience of Iranians and a vehicle to mobilise, invigorate and convey socio-political ideas. Particularly, the eminent role which Sa'di has played in the past and present Iranian consciousness and expressions of Iranian character makes him a suitable candidate for this potential role.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

*“Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (Shelley, 1926, p. 90)*

## 1.1 Rationale of the Study

This thesis is a study of the work of a renowned 13th century Persian poet – Sa’di Shirazi – for his profound insights into the meaning and salience of the cognate notions of amity, reconciliation, integration, or harmony. Despite economic development, advances in technology, and a growing literature on peace studies, conflict remains endemic in both global and domestic scale. This dissertation focuses on ways to investigate possible solutions to this persistent problem by drawing on poetic inspirations from the past. The application of aesthetics in general and poetry in particular to politics is an attempt to counter the realist view of assuming events and proceedings in the world can be perceived and represented independently from people’s beliefs and norms, in pursuit of offering an alternative means of dealing with the problem of conflict in modern day politics. In an academia where a large proportion of political scientists have this realist outlook (and its affiliated notions such as realist school of thought in international relations), rarely have intangible and immaterial forces been regarded as paramount (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 5-6, 14, 18-9, 20-35, 43, 47, 61). This project is also significant in that it brings lessons from a non-western source: most diplomatic guidelines and peace making doctrines used today are from western sources, but since these guidelines have manifestly failed, new sources have to be examined, especially when dealing with non-western cultures. Western frameworks can have inappropriate colonial notions framed within them when implemented for non-western civilizations. They may also be unsuited to the dynamic, flexible, and emotional nature of indigenous populations (Mac Ginty, 2008, pp. 139-59; 2013, pp. 423-9; 2014, pp. 548-9, 550, 553, 557-61; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, pp. 763-81; Richmond, 2013, pp. 271-83; Öjendal and Ou, 2015, pp. 932-4; Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-23; Paffenholz, 2015, pp. 858-61; Chetail and Jütersonke, 2015, pp. 6-9; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Randazzo, 2016, pp. 1351-3; Holanda Maschietto, 2016, pp. 34-7; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). An examination of indigenous themes ingrained in the psyche of a national culture is what this project is concerned with. If one wishes to implement a reconciliatory framework in a part of the world where colonialism is so resented, an engagement with the deepest elements that inform that culture’s own identity are required; in this case, through poetry. Persians have a

rich literature which is among the oldest in the world (De Bruijn, 2017). In particular, Persian poetry, which is world famous and translated into many foreign languages, is an invaluable national treasure and a constituent of the country's identity (Haji Yusofi et al., 2014). One of the most widely respected of Persian poets especially in the area of peace, union, and coexistence, is the influential 13th century figure, Sa'di Shirazi, and he is the main focus of this study. Sa'di is a poet renowned for the profundity of his work on human relations, with 600 terms linked to friendship and its variants included in his compendium (کلیات سعدی) (Soleimani, 2009; Davam, 2010; Gharagoozloo, 2010; Zahedi, 2013; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Kazzazi, 2017; Khazir, 2017; Shirazi, 2017, p. 237; Tahoor Islamic Encyclopaedia, 2017a). He has occupied a revered status in Iran throughout the centuries from the time he enriched the Persian language (Haji Yusofi et al., 2014) in the 13th century until the present day. He, his expressions, and his lessons have been constantly quoted and invoked in political and social discourse, with his *Rose Garden* being used for teaching Persian language (Foroughi, 1937, p. 7; Haddad Adel, 2005; Zolfaghari, 2010; Harandi, 2010; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Afshani, 2017; Salehi Amiri, 2017). In the central part of this thesis (Chapter 5: Analysis), an examination of Sa'di's ideas on human interactions, interconnections, and reconciliation is presented and analysed, showing how deep the concept lies in Sa'di's imagination of a civilised society. It must be noted that the concept of reconciliation used in this thesis has a very broad meaning which includes all human behaviours, forces, or causes that could bring people together. The term 'reconciliation' does not necessarily imply that there existed a conflict beforehand to be resolved, but it does presuppose a lack of integration between people that restricts their well-being. The thesis believes that Sa'di, implicitly and explicitly, has identified many sources of integration and segregation between individuals and groups within his *Rose Garden* and I wish to draw these insights out of the poetic landscape into the political world in an easy to understand fluent manner. One eye catching aspect of the *Rose Garden* is the morality expressed in Sa'di's work. However, when looking from a socio-political position such as this thesis, one does not face a monolithic moral building in particular, as we will see in chapter 5.

The project's shift away from euro-centric notions in peace studies to appeal to the indigenous people of Iran using their own visions is unusual; utilizing aesthetic sources (poetry) in order to inform politics is rarer; the fact that a 13<sup>th</sup> century poet is used to inform modern peace literature is even more innovative; and the use of translations by the author himself compounds its originality.

It is important to have a solid theoretical foundation for the project. For this reason, the book written by Roland Bleiker (2009) entitled '*Aesthetics and World Politics*' was chosen (Bleiker, 2009). Aesthetics can touch a deep place in human identity in a way that other approaches in politics rarely do (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 1-13). Aesthetics, and especially poetic imaginations, convey truths in a manner that appeals to the subconscious and human emotions, while other schools of thought depend on logic, rationality, and mental processing (Ibid., pp. 84-96). The theoretical basis for the claim that poetry has a special place in political analysis will be presented in Chapter 2 with the help of Bleiker's (2009) valuable text.

## **1.2 Challenges of the Study**

This is a challenging project for four reasons. First, the originality of the work means there is little guidance to be obtained from the existing literature. Second, there is a linguistic challenge of translating the poetic verses and prose of Sa'di. There are several translations of the *Rose Garden* from its original Persian into English, but many of them use obscure or arcane language, often specific to the world view of a mystic, and my task as translator has been to convey the essence of Sa'di's words in as clear a form as possible to make them intelligible, simple, and accessible to the English reader. Third, there is a historiographical challenge of whether a writing, concept, or doctrine can be used outside its historical context. The thesis is transposing/transporting a 13th century poet to the 21st century, and the difficulties of doing so are rehearsed and resolved through consideration of the work of scholars such as Skinner (who insists on strict contextualism) (Skinner, 2002, p. 88), Lovejoy (who offers a perennialist outlook) (Lovejoy, 1940, pp. 3-23), Trompf (who believes in recurrence of historical events) (Trompf, 1979, pp. ix, x, 1-3), and Romano (who argues for 'eventual hermeneutics') (Romano, 2009, pp. 15, 21, 30, 38, 49, 54-8, 62-70, 82-5, 134-7, 148-52, 205, 211, 220). Discussing, in a systematic manner, whether concepts, ideas, or texts are contextual or perennial, paves the way for me to bring Sa'di's lessons from his day to ours. Fourth, in addition to the challenge of temporal transposition, there is also a challenge of disciplinary transposition – that of bringing Sa'di out of the field of poetry into the field of socio-political reconciliation. Bleiker's book (Bleiker, 2009) was particularly helpful in enabling me to justify this disciplinary transposition.

## **1.3 Approach**

This is the first major intensive attempt to systematically and methodically investigate the *Rose Garden*'s moral, ethical, and socio-political position, as a whole, in regards to what Sa'di intended it for. The prose and poetry contained in the *Rose Garden*, is analysed in

Chapter 5 for its reconciliatory lessons. Five major reconciliatory principles emerging from the *Rose Garden* have been identified (justice, bond, rationality, decency, disposition) along with an additional (sixth principle) anti-reconciliatory section, with the prose and poetry pertaining to each translated by the author from Persian into English. There are more principles existent within the *Rose Garden* but only partially useful for the purpose of this thesis or only vaguely referring to the main issue of reconciliation or harmony. These six principles are the ideas that most vividly express Sa'di's notion of reconciliation.

Interpretations based on what the author believed Sa'di intended by the passages are presented in Chapter 5. These interpretations are based on translations (each translation is in itself an interpretation) by the author of the thesis, also in comparison with the English translation of the *Rose Garden* by Edward Rehatsek (when unavailable, another authority was used or the author himself was the mere source). These textual interpretations have been contemplated with special consideration to Sa'di's life, times he lived in, his teachers and companions, the specific story the passage is embedded in, the chapter it is embedded in, the overall understanding of the *Rose Garden*, works on Sa'di from Iranian Studies scholars, general themes in Persian poetry, and Iranian culture as a whole. In addition, an attempt is made to point out links between the five principles and how they individually and collectively contribute to the overall message of the book. The first five principles are seen to be instruments in creating a higher more developed state of harmony between people (the term rose garden or garden, in Persian culture, symbolises a paradise of prosperity, wellbeing, and harmony (Mahmoudi Farahani, Motamed and Jamei, 2016, pp. 1-18)), while the sixth principle (anti-reconciliatory section or more confrontational combative sentiments) is designed to protect and ensure the sustainability of this peaceful condition which Sa'di envisions, by recognizing some limits on reconciliatory behaviour, merging his idealism (desiring a better world) with realism (acknowledging the dangers to making that ideal world). Metaphorically speaking, a single rose (or person) alone cannot make a garden, but when roses (persons) are brought together, they may form a rose garden (a state of integration or peaceful coexistence between people). In this regard, the thorns of roses can be pictured as the 6<sup>th</sup> anti-reconciliatory principle which protects this garden while the soil which all roses are embedded in and through which they contribute to each other's growth, can be regarded as the five reconciliatory principles.

For Sa'di, reconciliation is a means to the end of human well-being. His humanistic outlook (in terms of reducing human suffering and increasing well-being) is why he wants to create this rose garden or higher state of harmony between people. The five reconciliatory principles

are the pillars of this civilised society, while the anti-reconciliatory 6<sup>th</sup> principle demonstrates that even reconciliation is not an ultimate end but merely a means for human wellbeing. Consequently Sa'di views the five reconciliatory principles, as means to a rose garden (state of harmony between people), and the rose garden itself as a means to human wellbeing and prosperity. This thesis believes that Sa'di views the deepest common identity of man as his main one which is his human identity, and all his prose poetry, whether in forms of stories, advice, instructions, narrations, and accounts, is guided towards man cleansing himself from various ills (such as ego, greed, hate,...) which take him away from his true self (his humanity). The ego is a crucial factor which will be seen in chapter 5 as a barrier between man and his origin, the divine. If this barrier is crossed by destroying the ego, man will reach union with the divine which is the source of all goodness and his humanity fully realised. It would seem that Sa'di believes if man is attached to his main identity, then attaching with other people would be easier and roses can come together to create a rose garden.

In Chapter five, the reconciliatory principles are examined in detail, focusing on relevant passages from the *Rose Garden*. However, not all the relevant passages could be included because of limitations of space, and so the closest passages were used, with other passages noted in footnotes for readers to check. Also repetitions of the same theme have been left out in the footnotes in order to smooth the reading of the text. Furthermore, due to the allusive nature of the poetry and Sa'di's sometimes ambiguous writing, some of the passages quoted in Chapter 5 may not at first glance appear to reflect the given principle or this thesis' concept of reconciliation, but closer inspection reveals the linkage. That is the nature of Sa'di's prose poetry which at times, uses subtle tongue and alludes, not always states. From the six principles which contribute to the world order of harmony that Sa'di envisages (Rose Garden), the two which are closest together are Decency (more a deed, conscious, witnessed in behaviour, and can be acquired) and Disposition (more innate, subconscious, witnessed in character, and cannot be acquired). There is an added point which is regarding the critical importance of Bond as the closest principle to Sa'di's ideal Rose Garden or state of harmony between humans.

Moreover, it is natural that readers, due to their own grasp, might and will have varied understandings of the meanings of each passage, which principle it should be under, whether or not it reflects the concept of reconciliation within the thesis, or how much the identified principles within the *Rose Garden* actually lead to a more developed state of harmony which Sa'di intends to build. The dynamic versatility of passages together with their diverse, multi-dimensional, and at times contradictory implications, mean that they can simultaneously be

placed under more than one principle and convey dissimilar meanings. That is the aesthetic enigma of Sa'di's discourse where like a mirror, everyone can see a different entity when looking at it. Even the same reader can find different and new insights when looking at the same passage at various intervals.

#### **1.4 Aims**

The main goal of the project is to offer an original interpretation of what the author believes to be Sa'di's intention of his most esteemed writing, the *Rose Garden*.

#### **1.5 Sa'di's Works**

Sa'di's works are a mirror of Iranian culture and customs (Milani, 2008, pp. 76-7). They comprise two famous books - the *Orchard* (*Bustan*) (poetry), and the *Rose Garden* (*Golestan*) (prose poetry) - and Arabic Qasidehs, Persian Qasidehs, Odes (Qasideh), *Molama'at*, *Tarji'at*, *Mosalasat*, four volumes of *Ghazal*, *Quintuple Meetings* (prose), *Counselling Rulers* (prose), *Sahibiyeh* (Arabic and Persian *Ghet'e*), and *Khabisat* (*Ghazal* and *Rubayi*) (Tahoor Islamic Encyclopaedia, 2017b).

The *Rose Garden*, finished in 1258, is known to be the most eminent work in Persian literature for its prose. Throughout the book, Sa'di has been trying to link different emotions, beliefs, types of people, and roles attempting a balance between them. The link between morals and power in associations within the political domain, the link between self-interest and humane altruism in associations within the social domain, the link between idealism and pragmatism in world view and human life are visible during the course of the book. Sa'di devised the main chapters of the book as gateways to a paradise he envisioned (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86). Adam Olearius (1654, p. xviii) believes Sa'di's manner of conveying powerful truths was designed to influence people of power. Sa'di shows a high regard for dervishes or mystics within the book, although at times he ascribes the term to poor or humble men (Hakhamaneshi, 1976, pp. 170-5). He advises tolerant, sympathetic, magnanimous, and altruistic humanism within the book (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86). Scholars have touched on what have been alleged shortcomings in the organization, logical relationship, plot development, obvious progression, or consistency of the book with some even considering its composition as careless or hasty (Arberry, 1945, cited in Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86), while others believe that the semi-disorder could be due to Sa'di's determined endeavour to escape a dogmatic or methodical form (Masse, 1919, cited in Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86).

There are places within the *Rose Garden* where very combative and anti-reconciliatory sentiments are held which critics view as Machiavellian ethics (Dashti, 2002, p. 239). These could be due to Sa'di incorporating bits of the Mirror of Princes genre in Persian literature or due to practical or utilitarian ethics (Bahmanyar, 1937, pp. 33-40).

It is often thought that Sa'di's *Rose Garden* shows the world as it is (realism) whereas his *Orchard* reflects the world as it should be (idealism) (Nayeri, 2010; Yusofi, 2010; Safi Pour et al., 2010; Khazir and Dadbeh, 2010; Kamali Sarvestani, 2010a; Dadbeh, 2010abc; 2012; Movahed et al., 2011; Rastegar, et al., 2013; Mo'azen, 2014; Amiri et al., 2017; Mashadi, 2017). However, this is too simplistic a view, since there are notions of both realism and idealism in the *Rose Garden*. Moreover, the *Rose Garden* is not a systematic treatise, and contains anecdotes and stories which have no apparent link to each other (Milani, 2008, pp. 76-7). Perhaps the reason why it is not a systematic treatise is because Sa'di believes that no work can encompass all truths since reality is too complex and many-sided to be compressed into a monograph. Alternatively it could be because Sa'di is pluralistic rather than absolutist in his value system. The fact that he infrequently expresses notions in an absolute way and much of his advice is relative and conditional, could be due to his belief that nothing is absolute except God. There is an aphoristic sense to his writings (Ibid., p. 88).

The thesis assumes Sa'di intended to mirror the human condition through his prose poetry and since the human condition is complex, multifaceted, dynamic, fluid, and versatile, his writings are themselves complicated. However, in my view, when delving deep into the *Rose Garden*, there is one continuous theme that runs throughout the book like a red thread– the theme of human interconnections, interactions, reconciliation, and integration. Most of the stories, observations, homilies, and prescriptions relate in some way or another, implicitly or explicitly, to Sa'di's organising idea of the importance of harmony between people in the world, and the various dimensions of integrating people. Yet, it is difficult to ascertain whether the *Rose Garden* is a normative work, providing moral guidance on how we should behave in life, or an observational work, recording observations of how people behave in their lives. Perhaps it is both.

The *Rose Garden* (Golestan) is written mostly in prose but decorated with poetry (mosajja), and is fluent, elegant, and comprehensible, dealing with major issues humans face every day. The verses are not just mere decoration but in many cases the extracted meaning of the story in a precise form or a varied conclusion of the stated passage sometimes not directly connected with it. It is amusing, engaging, delicate, and instructive on how to live a better life.



It has insight and wisdom as well as pathos, drama and satire. In the book, Sa'di is often sad, yet hopeful, despite all his ordeals in life, believing the world can be made into a better place through healthier relationships between people. The reason Sa'di decided to write the *Rose Garden* is fascinating. He had written the *Orchard* the year before (1257) but was feeling depressed for passing the age of fifty and thought having wasted much of it. A friend came to his aid taking him to the country side to improve his mood. There, when the friend was picking flowers, Sa'di said the flowers would ultimately go dry, as he warned against too much fondness for transient entities, but he was capable of writing about a rose garden whose roses would never go dry and be everlasting (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86) (this has implications for his ideas not being context specific especially surpassing time). The friend took him at his word and in six months the *Rose Garden* was composed (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 29-33). In the *Rose Garden*, Sa'di employs a unique mix of elements from pre-Islamic Iran (legends and kings) and Quranic related themes (Milani, 2008, pp. 91-2). The book includes more than forty quotations from Hadis and Qur'an (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86).

The *Rose Garden* has been composed in eight chapters with a prologue by Sa'di himself. The main chapters are: I. The Manners of Kings II. The Morals of Dervishes III. The Excellence of Contentment IV. The Advantages of Silence V. Love and Youth VI. Weakness and Old Age VII. The Effects of Education VIII. Rules for Conduct in Life (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 21).

What is striking regarding the chapters with their respective stories, and the stories and their respective passages, is not only their diversity and variety, but also the difficulty to sometimes understand the relation of a certain story to the title of that respective chapter or at times, this has been seen regarding different sentences and verses in a story that do not necessarily follow the narrative of the entire story as well. Whether Sa'di wrote more from the heart than mind is not clear, but if the passages came to him through a river of feelings, this would explain the lack of coherence found in many parts of the book. Nevertheless, this project has done its best to discern a dominant narrative emerging out of the conflicting and oscillating elements which constitute the book— the central importance of reconciliation or integration in a society. Although it is very difficult and seems nearly impossible to extract a comprehensive political treatise from Sa'di's work because of the ambiguities and contradictions in the *Rose Garden*, there are sufficient intimations of a preoccupation with harmony, implicitly and explicitly. Therefore, this thesis has made every effort to go beyond these limitations in the form of contradictions and ambiguities, in presenting an overall narrative and orientation of the book. There has been no choice but to sometimes leave each principle as a set of vaguely related points and observations. This is due to Sa'di's writing being extremely diverse,

contradictory, and versatile which cannot be contained in a rigid political theory or systematic framework. But the idea behind what can be understood as Sa'di's moral, ethical, political, and social philosophy is presented in the notion of creating the rose garden as a civilisation based on human integration which would reduce human suffering and increase human prosperity. Since his prose poetry is like a mirror where any reader can see a different image, interpretations will be different and almost impossible to extract a consistent thought process from. This is the difference between prose poetry, especially Sa'di's versatile diverse mind, to a political ideologist (Marx) or political theorist (Machiavelli), or a political philosopher (Hobbes). In addition, Sa'di's attempt to mirror society in his writings, with all its varieties and dynamic realities, makes it an account of life rather than a theory.

The name 'Rose Garden' could have come from it resembling the city of Shiraz famous for its gardens and roses (Khurasani, 2005; Persian Voyages, 2018; Inn Iran, 2018), could be related to the notion of gardens in Persian culture as a place of harmony and tranquillity as mentioned before (Mahmoudi Farahani, Motamed and Jamei, 2016, pp. 1-18), or due to the fact that Sa'di decided to write it while he was contemplating in a garden with a friend (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 14-5). Whatever the explanation of its origin, my understanding of the meaning of the term is that Sa'di believed learning from his book could take man towards a condition of more peace and harmony which he depicted as a rose garden.

## **1.6 Commentaries on Sa'di's Work**

Many commentaries have been published on Sa'di's poetry and prose, but the current thesis is the only work in the English language that investigates the *Rose Garden* comprehensively. It is also the only commentary on the *Rose Garden* in any language that interprets the book as a work on human integration and reconciliation. In the English language, the main book on Sa'di is that by Homa Katouzian (2006) of the University of Oxford titled '*Sa'di the Poet of Life, Love, and Compassion*' (the name of the book suggests Sa'di's famed humane, peaceful, and conciliatory outlook to life). However this book does not focus on the *Rose Garden* but on Sa'di in general. The most notable commentaries on the *Rose Garden* have been written by the following scholars: Oways B. 'Alā'-al-Din Ādam (1494), Abd-al-'Azim Qarib (1931), Sa'id Nafisi (1962), Moḥammad-Jawād Maškur (1965), Bahā'-al-Din Korramšāhi (1977), Mohamad Khaza'eli (1988), Khalil Khatib Rahbar (1997), Kavooos Hasanli (2003), Mohammad Ali Foroughi (2006) {reprint version used for this thesis}, Gholam Hussein Yusofi (2015), in Persian; Oghli Aliof (1959) in Russian; Lāme'i Čelebi (1532), Šam'i (1592), and Soodi (1995), in Turkish; Ya'qub Efendi Sayyed 'Alizāda (1525) and Moṣṭafā b.

Ša‘bān Soruri (1550) in Arabic– but they mostly concentrate on linguistic matters, adding supplementary notes, providing the meanings of specific words, and explaining particular passages. Unlike the current thesis, none of them puts forward an interpretation of Sa’di’s overall message of the *Rose Garden*. However, for the purposes of having a reliable and credible text for the *Rose Garden* in Persian, *Sa’di’s Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) by Mohammad Ali Foroughi (2006) will be used. This edition is adequate for this project and thorough enough although there are more recent editions which might have in places a different text or corrections which could be necessary for linguistic or literary studies but not for the current work.

The only book which bears some resemblance to my thesis is ‘*The Political Thought of Sa’di*’ by Alireza Azghandi (2012), which, although does not focus exclusively on the *Rose Garden*, discusses Sa’di’s views on politics in general. However, Azghandi’s work is very short, in the form of a booklet rather than a rigorously researched monograph; has a descriptive and informative style; does not critically examine and interpret passages from the *Rose Garden* as much and as deeply as this thesis; and does not provide an overall interpretation of the book. Omid Ali Ahmadi (2011) provides a sociological interpretation of the *Rose Garden*, but says little about reconciliation. Asghar Kiyani-pour (2010) published a pedagogical interpretation of Sa’di, but does not focus on the *Rose Garden*. Ahmad Hussein Kazerouni (1994) produced an anthropological study of the *Rose Garden*, but in the form of paper rather than a monograph. Nazari, Elahi Zadeh, and Ramazani (2012) wrote a psychological interpretation of the *Rose Garden*, but have little to offer on the topic of reconciliation.

As mentioned earlier, most commentators of Sa’di consider the *Rose Garden* as a work in which Sa’di views life as it is (realism) and the *Orchard* as a work in which Sa’di views life as it should be (idealism) (Safi Pour et al., 2010; Khazir and Dadbeh, 2010; Kamali Sarvestani, 2010a; Nayeri, 2010; Yusofi, 2010; Dadbeh, 2010abc; 2012; Movahed et al., 2011; Rastegar et al., 2013; Mo’azen, 2014; Mashadi, 2017; Amiri et al., 2017). The current thesis, however, interprets Sa’di’s *Rose Garden* as a work in which both realism and idealism play important parts where the major emphasis is on idealism, since Sa’di’s main mission in life is to transform people’s understanding of how they should live their lives, but within a framework of realism in that Sa’di is keenly aware of the practicalities of achieving that ideal. Also it seems that Sa’di, at times, masks his idealism with realism in order to persuade readers, who may be less attracted to moral and ethical arguments than self-interested ones.

Although Sa'di is a poet who focuses on harmony and bringing people together, he takes the issue of segregation almost as seriously as the issue of integration. Perhaps, this is because by showing that the effects of segregation are more destructive than constructive, he intended to demonstrate the necessity of integration. Or, perhaps he is merging his idealism with realism, knowing too well that although a world based on human integration (five reconciliatory principles) is ideal, at times segregation (sixth anti-reconciliatory principle) is the only appropriate path of action, due to the brutal ways of the world. Although Sa'di's focus on integration is mainly presented through the five reconciliatory principles (justice, bond, rationality, decency, disposition) and his views on segregation are mainly presented in his sixth anti-reconciliatory principle, elements of integration and segregation are present in all six principles, which has made the allocation of passages difficult. But as noted, this is the nature of Sa'di's discourse as a passage can have multiple and sometimes contradictory implications simultaneously. This project has had the difficult task of trying to systematize Sa'di in order to present a monograph.

My thesis holds that the *Rose Garden* is meant to point the way towards a higher more developed human state based on integration. Unlike the many commentators who see the *Rose Garden* as a practical manual for getting by in an imperfect world (Mo'taghed, 1947, pp. 34-9), I see it as a blueprint for transforming human outlook by showing people how their lives could be radically improved through paying more attention to the most important things that matter to their wellbeing and survival, each other. I believe the *Rose Garden* is a poetic work on diplomacy, human relations, peace, and reconciliation, not merely a guide to practical wisdom.

The thesis is organized in seven chapters in the following order: chapter 1 offers a glimpse of what is to come, chapter 2 describes Sa'di's personality and life experiences in as much detail as possible due to a lack of resources, chapter 3 explains the link between aesthetics (poetry) and politics and the place of indigenous or local influences on peace, chapter 4 examines the historiographical issues raised by the transposition of Sa'di's ideas from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the modern day, chapter 5 provides an interpretive analysis of Sa'di's prose poetry, chapter 6 assesses the conflict of identities in modern day Iran and Persian poetry's potential relation towards it, especially Sa'di's possible contribution and position, chapter 7 offers a conclusion in the form of a summary and general recommendations.

The next chapter will examine Sa'di's profile, the socio-political events in his lifetime, how he is regarded inside and outside Iran, and what are the constituents of his identity based on

what little information is available on him. This chapter tries to understand what influenced his writings

## Chapter 2. Sa'di's Profile

"He (Sa'di) is the quintessential Muslim humanist, the first such wise man to be recognized in the West"  
(Bashiri, 2003, p. 8).

### 2.1 Sa'di's Life

It is thought that Sa'di was born around 1208 and died approximately 1291-1294. There is little information about his life, and the information that is available is much debated. However, what is agreed upon is that he lived during the 13<sup>th</sup> century, was educated at the famous Nizamiyeh School of Baghdad, and experienced journeys and adventures beyond the borders of modern day Iran. Sa'di was born into a family of theologians in Shiraz, the capital of the province of Pars (Fars in modern day Iran). His father was known to the court of the time in Shiraz and was responsible for his early education. However, during Sa'di's later childhood, his father died, and because of financial hardship, he and his mother were taken care of by family elders from his mother's side (Safa, 2010). When Sa'di was in his late teens, he had to leave his home town of Shiraz for Baghdad when the Mongols attacked Iran around 1225 and ruined the cultural centres in the country. Sa'di spent around 30 years abroad observing and learning, coming back to Shiraz in 1257. He left Shiraz when Sa'd ibn Zangi was ruler and during the horrors of the Mongol invasion, coming back when his son Abubakr ibn Sa'd was sovereign and there was relative peace. These two rulers were from the Salghorid Dynasty. Sa'di took his alias from the young son of Abubakr ibn Sa'd, who welcomed Sa'di back to Shiraz and was his patron. So Sa'di left during the time of the grandfather of his patron, and returned when his patron was the heir to the throne. Unfortunately, his patron died when travelling in 1260, which distressed Sa'di. He dedicated the *Rose Garden* to his benefactor (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 11-3).

Evidently, Sa'di always felt a close affinity with Shiraz: his book *Orchard*, indicates that of all the peoples he came into contact with during his life, for him none came close to the people of Shiraz in terms of the warmth of their hearts. It was known that when travelling abroad, the people of Shiraz brought back souvenirs for their friends. For example, travellers who went to Egypt brought back sugar. Sa'di himself brought back sweet words (*The Orchard*) rather than sweet foodstuffs:

"به دل گفتیم از مصر قند آورند"

بر دوستان ارمغانی برند  
مرا گر تهی بود از آن قند دست  
سخنهای شیرین‌تر از قند هست  
نه قندی که مردم بصورت خورند  
که ارباب معنی به کاغذ برند"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 309)

*"I told myself that people bring sweets from Egypt as a souvenir and present for their friends.  
If my hand is not capable of providing those sweets,  
I bring with me words much sweeter.  
Not the kind of sweet in material form where people eat,  
The kind where the knowledgeable take away with them in notes"*<sup>1</sup>

From the *Rose Garden*, we learn that Sa'di visited many foreign lands when he was absent from Shiraz, including Isfahan, Alexandria, Damascus, Kashgahr (currently in China), Baghdad, Diar Bekr, Hamadan, Balkh, Mecca, and Bamian. A great deal of what we know about Sa'di comes from his writings where he plays the part of the narrator. Persianist scholars such as John Boyle, Mohammad Khaza'eli, and Henri Masse (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 9-10) believe that these are indeed Sa'di's life stories, and they tell us about the context in which he lived. One of Sa'di's teachers was Abolfaraj ibn Jawzi who was a famous scholar and a mohtaseb (government auditor, ethical overseer, and religious enforcer) in Baghdad during the 13<sup>th</sup> century at the Nizamiyeh School. It seems that Sa'di was much influenced by Jawzi in religious sciences (though not in Sufism - Islamic mysticism) (Safa, 1974, pp. 594-5), and he was very distressed when Jawzi was killed as the Mongols reached Baghdad (Safa, 2010). Another influence was from a companion during his travels who was a famous Sufi, Shahab al-Din Sohrawardi, who seems to have enriched Sa'di's understandings of mysticism (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 10, 11, 73). Sohrawardi was different from many mystics in not believing in mere seclusion and asceticism for inner development but advocating an effective life style in society, retaining close interaction with civil establishments and assuming social and diplomatic assignments (Huda, 2006, pp. 775-6; Kafadar, 2007, p. 10). Although Sa'di

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<sup>1</sup> For alternative translations please see Edwards in Appendix item no. 1.

was never known to be a conventional Sufi (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86), he did get inspiration from Sufi ideas and was influenced by them (Amini, Elahimanesh and Ibrahim Alvi, 2016, pp. 103-26; Katouzian, 2006, p. 9). Due to his socially active life, Sa'di also met people in high places such as traveling to Azerbaijan where he had meetings with the Joveini brothers (also his patron along with the Salghorids) who were ministers of the Mongol emperor Abaqa (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 16-7, 117).

Unfortunately, Sa'di had several negative experiences while abroad. For example, a grisly incident affected him in Somnath, India, the sacred city of Hindus, where he stayed at a temple. The guardian of the temple was playing a trick with an ivory idol whom the people worshipped, by manipulating strings to move the hand of the idol. When the guardian of the temple found out that his secret had been discovered by Sa'di, he attacked Sa'di but was accidentally killed during the ensuing struggle. This incident profoundly affected Sa'di, because he abhorred violence (Ibid., p. 16).

Another negative experience made Sa'di disillusioned with conventional education. When he was a lecturer in Damascus, he was deeply disappointed in his students as someone passing by outside the classroom took more influence from him than the students despite being in close proximity with him every day. That was a reason why Sa'di gave up scholarly practices at that time (Rehatek, 2010, pp. 73-4). Following that unfortunate experience was a much more prolonged calamity – his enslavement and ill-fated marriage. While living in Syria, Sa'di became tired of his companions in Damascus and left the city to wander in the deserts of Jerusalem. During this time he lived in close proximity to animals until the Franks or crusaders imprisoned him and used him as a slave in Tripoli. A nobleman from Aleppo saw him and paid his ransom of 10 dinars, freeing him and giving his daughter in marriage to Sa'di. This was a disastrous marriage in which Sa'di was constantly berated by his irascible wife (Ibid., pp. 87-8).

Although it may be facile to try and explain a writer's views as determined by his or her life experiences, in Sa'di's case it is not hard to see how there may be a link between his experiences of separation, isolation, disaffection, and alienation and his desire to reconcile people who are estranged from one another. At any rate, we may believe that the following setbacks must have had some effect on his philosophy of life: he had to leave his city due to the Mongol invasion; he was a child when his father died; he had a short-lived but turbulent marriage; he was separated from conventional scholastic environments due to disappointment with his students; he lost his mentor (Jawzi) in Baghdad who was killed by Mongols; he was



enslaved by crusaders; he was alienated from himself when he accidentally killed someone; and he had to leave Baghdad where he was a student due to the approach of Mongol hordes. .

## **2.2 Political Context of Sa'di's Life**

The political context of Sa'di's life was marked by two major sets of circumstances: on the one hand, the negative experiences of the Mongol invasion of Iran with the Crusades in the Levant; and on the other hand, the positive experiences of the Salghorid Dynasty's attention to culture and wise statecraft in Shiraz (Spuler, 1987, pp. 894-6) and the Abbasid Caliphate's high regard for science and efficient governance in Baghdad (Shuriye, 2016, pp. 228-35). The wars had a traumatic effect on Sa'di, whereas the settled regimes in Shiraz and Baghdad were sources of great comfort to him.

### **2.2.1 *Mongol Invasion of Iran***

During a time when Iran had no strong ruler due to the death of Malik Shah, a sultan of the Seljuq Empire, the country became weak and vulnerable to outside intervention. It was around this time that Genghis Khan gathered Mongol tribes and directed them in a campaign to overwhelm China. After that, in around 1219, he commanded his 700,000 man army west and swiftly destroyed the cities of Bukhara, Samarqand, Balkh, Merv, and Neyshabur. The Mongol invasion of Khwarezmia was the initial stage of the Iranian campaign which was provoked by officials of the Khwarazmian dynasty themselves when they massacred two missionaries. The subsequent Mongol attack was instigated by revenge not conquest (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017a), and Genghis Khan invaded western Azarbaijan, sacking and burning towns as he proceeded. The Mongol invasion was calamitous for the Iranians as it led to the demolition of the qanat irrigation structures thereby ruining the pattern of moderately continuous settlement, creating many inaccessible oasis cities. A vast number of civilians, especially males, were murdered, and the population declined sharply during 1220-1258, while the rich Persian culture was all but destroyed. Genghis Khan's grandson, Hulagu Khan, attacked Baghdad in 1258 and ended the Abbasid Caliphate there, which was the reason Sa'di left Baghdad before the attack took full effect (Curtis and Hooglund, 2008, pp. 17-8)

### **2.2.2 *Crusades in the Levant***

It is unclear which crusade Sa'di witnessed and was captured in but the chronology of his life and the timeline of the crusades suggest it was during the 7<sup>th</sup> crusade when Sa'di left Damascus and wandered off in the deserts of Jerusalem (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. xv, 87-8). The

reason for this estimation is that Sa'di's 30 year travel outside Shiraz (1225-1257) coincides with the 5-7<sup>th</sup> crusades. Sa'di left Shiraz around 1225 for Baghdad when the Mongols initiated attacks on Iran and returned to Shiraz around 1257 from Baghdad, again when the Mongols were about to attack Baghdad. All his travels were in these 30 years. Since he was in his late teens when he left Shiraz, and it takes time to become a master at any subject, a reasonable estimation would be that he was captured by crusaders in the 7<sup>th</sup> crusade. The 5<sup>th</sup> crusade occurred during 1217-1221, the 6<sup>th</sup> crusade (The Crusade of Frederick II) during 1229-44, and the 7<sup>th</sup> crusade (The Crusades of St. Louis) during 1245-1254, all occurred in the 30 years of Sa'di's travels. By the time of the 7<sup>th</sup> crusade, Sa'di would have matured enough and been educated enough to go to Damascus to be a lecturer while during the 5<sup>th</sup> crusade he was a child and in the 6<sup>th</sup> crusade he would have been in his early 20s (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017b).

The 7<sup>th</sup> crusade was initiated, at least symbolically, by Pope Innocent IV requiring a full-fledged campaign approximately one year after Jerusalem had fallen (1244). The summon pope sent was welcomed with open arms only by Louis IX of France who was suffering due to medical conditions when the information regarding the fall of Jerusalem had got hold of Europe. Louis was strong willed and committed, declaring an oath to lead the crusade personally if he recovered from his infirmity. He professed to embark on the 7<sup>th</sup> crusade in 1245, however it did not start until around 1248. Similar to the 5<sup>th</sup> crusade, Louis wanted his campaign to go through Egypt and then capture the Holy Land thereafter. He started well, assaulting and seizing Damietta (1249), planning to go to Cairo but his operation became disastrous when he was taken prisoner. It was only when a ransom for him and his warriors were paid that he was freed and left Damietta. The bulk of the forces returned to France but Louis remained in the Holy Land stirring up support for another endeavour to seize Jerusalem. There were hurdles on this road as was the passing away of his mother which compelled his homecoming to France (1254) and so was the disappointment of his campaign (Ibid.).

### ***2.2.3 Rulers of Fars***

The Salghorid Dynasty reigned between 1148–1286 (Spuler, 1987, pp. 894-6) ruling the province of Fars and its capital Shiraz for most of Sa'di's life. The Salghorids were preceded by the Seljuks (1040–1194) (Basan, 2010, p. 21) and succeeded by the Ilkhanate Mongols (1260–1335) (Amitai, 2004, pp. 645-54). They were first vassals of the Seljuks and then the Il-Khanates which is why the dates of their dynasty overlap with both. The Salghorids realised the might of the Mongol forces and the devastation they would bring, so they decided

submission and to pay tribute (Spuler, 1987, pp. 894-6) rather than to resist them, thus saving much of the province of Fars from destruction. Although Sa'di had to leave Shiraz during the initial wave of Mongol attacks, much of Shiraz and the province of Fars were spared. The Salghorids were patrons of the arts and surrounded themselves with the cultured intelligentsia and wise councillors. They built schools, mosques, and cultural associations, and they attempted to increase socio-economic equality by a redistribution of wealth measure, which included tax laws to collect capital from the wealthy (a portion of this was also used to pay tribute to Mongols). The relative prosperity provided by the Salghorids was a blessing to Sa'di when he returned to Shiraz in 1257 after years of travelling and witnessing the Mongol slaughterings and the chaos of the Crusades. The Mongols however had a strategy to conquer all of Iran in the long term and the tribute given to them by the Salghorids only delayed the inevitable. They even placed an overseer in Shiraz where the Salghorids were ruling. That is why Shiraz was mostly spared but after the Salghorids became weak, Il-Khanates completely took control (Ibid.).

When the Il-Khanate Mongols took complete power in Shiraz, Sa'di's situation changed. Although he had relationships with people in power, Sa'di was never a court poet content merely to sing praises to rulers. Even his praise for Sa'd was appreciation for his patronage not a form of sycophantic admiration. Farrokhi, Onsoni, and Manuchehri, on the other hand, while under the Ghaznavids, served as sycophants in flattering them and describing their greatness (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 22-3). By contrast, Sa'di criticized people in power such as the Mongol ruler of Fars, Amir Angiyani, during 1268-1272, who ruled Shiraz with an iron fist. Sa'di condemned his ways:

"ای کہ وقتی نطفه بودی بی‌خبر

وقت دیگر طفل بودی شیرخوار

مدتی بالا گرفتی تا بلوغ

سرو بالای شدی سیمین عذار

همچنین تا مرد نام‌آور شدی

فارس میدان و صید و کارزار

آنچه دیدی بر قرار خود نماند

وینچه بینی هم نماند بر قرار

دیر و زود این شکل و شخص نازنین  
خاک خواهد بودن و خاکش غبار.....  
نام نیکو گر بماند ز آدمی  
به کزو ماند سرای زرنگار.....  
پادشاهان را ثنا گویند و مدح  
من دعایی می‌کنم درویش‌وار"  
(Sa'di, 2006, pp. 964-5)

*"Oh you who were a foetus unaware, then later an infant drinking mother's milk, after a while you grew and matured such as a beautiful tall cypress tree, and you became a famed man, the warrior of the field of battle and escape and hunts. What you have witnessed so far won't be eternal and what you will witness will not. Sooner or later your beautiful countenance and character will become soil and that soil dust.....A good name remaining from you is better than a house of golden decorations...Kings are praised and applauded, but I pray for you in the manner a mystic should"*<sup>2</sup>

In another instance, Sa'di says that not everyone can speak so directly to the Mongol ruler, even praising himself for doing so:

"نه هر کس حق تواند گفت گستاخ  
سخن ملکبست سعدی را مسلم"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 972)

*"Not everyone can speak the truth impudently, Sa'di has made discourse his personal realm where he resides as master"*<sup>3</sup>

He continued his warnings against the Mongol ruler attempting to advise him:

"دنیا نیرزد آنکه پریشان کنی دلی  
زنهار بد مکن که نکر دست عاقلی....."

<sup>2</sup> For alternative translations please see Katouzian in Appendix item no. 2

<sup>3</sup> For alternative translations please see Katouzian in Appendix item no. 3

زان گنجهای نعمت و خروارهای مال

با خویشتن به گور نبردند خردلی....

مرگ از تو دور نیست وگر هست فی‌المثل

هر روز باز می‌رویش پیش، منزلی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 993)

*"This life is not worth hurting a soul.*

*Be cautious of doing ill as is every wise man's way...*

*From those treasures and wealth, they did not even take to their graves a trifle...*

*Death is not far from you and if it is, it is such that you are taking steps towards that eternal house every day"*<sup>4</sup>

#### **2.2.4 Rulers of Baghdad**

The Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258) was ruling in Baghdad when Sa'di went there to study. They took power from the Umayyad Dynasty in 750 and were destroyed by the Mongol invasion in 1258 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017c). Around this time, Sa'di had to leave Baghdad and came back to his home town. The Abbasids were very open to other types of thinking and they learned ways of statecraft from the Persians (Bennison, 2009, p. 28). This caliphate encouraged progress in the sciences, industry, arts, power, trade and its international standing was crucial to the Golden Age of Islam (Ibid., pp. 158-61) with major Iranian contributions at its core (Ridgeon, 2012, p. 50). The Abbasid Caliphate also legislated against forms of discrimination and nurtured a spirit of tolerance (Bennison, 2009, p. 9). Sa'di thrived during his time in Baghdad but left when it was becoming unsafe.

#### **2.3 Sa'di's Position in Persian Literature**

Sa'di's works are among the pillars of Persian literature, Iranian culture, and customs: indeed, he has been praised for making the name of Iran eternal with his profound poetry and prose (Foroughi, 1937, pp. 3-4). A devout Muslim, he transcended religious denominationalism by his sensitivity to the ills that men of all faiths have inflicted on one another, and he appealed to the common values of all humanity. His concerns are a mix of pragmatic situational ethics together with personal integrity rather than religious edicts or systematic doctrines (Lewis,

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<sup>4</sup> For alternative translations please see Katouzian in Appendix item no. 4

2012, pp. 79-86). His passages have the rare quality of not going out of date, and we can read and re-read them to find new nuances every time. Although many writers have imitated him, he never imitated anyone in his writing style. He resuscitated the Persian language from its demise under Mongol rule and it is held by Foroughi that Iranianhood became complete with Sa'di since his works provide a comprehensive compendium of Iranian values and virtues which through them, influenced Iranian behaviour, mannerisms, dispositions, and culture (Foroughi, 1937, pp. 4-8). He is not only an icon in Iran but also outside Iran, and his works have been translated into many languages (French, Latin, Russian, English, Polish, German, Hindi, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish, Spanish, Malaysian) (Eshtehardi, 1994, p. 22; Nomani, 2010; Kamali Sarvestani, 2010b; Amin, 2014; Centre for Sa'di Studies, 2017ab). Like many icons throughout history, Sa'di was discovered and re-discovered after his death, exemplifying his belief that his *Rose Garden* would live on:

"به چه کار آیدت ز گل طبقی

از گلستان من ببر ورقی

گل همین پنج روز و شش باشد

وین گلستان همیشه خوش باشد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 10)

*"What use do you have for a bowl of flowers,  
If you desire, take a lesson from my Rose Garden  
A flower lives five or six days,  
but this garden will be eternally prosperous and worthwhile"*<sup>5</sup>

Sa'di claims in his ghazaliyat that his words had already become a familiar text in many countries below:

"هفت کشور نمی‌کنند امروز

بی مقالات سعدی انجمنی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 904)

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<sup>5</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 5

“Seven countries do not have an assembly without a treatise of Sa’di being used”

Sa’di here metaphorically uses the phrase ‘seven countries’ by which he means many countries (Eghbal, 1937, pp. 11-5). For some commentators, the greatest work of prose poetry in Persian is the *Rose Garden*, and understanding the works of Ferdowsi and Hafiz without it would be difficult (Shadman, 1937, pp. 54-64). The *Rose Garden* has been a major school text in Iran for generations (Shafagh, 1937, p. 65; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014), and many Westerners engaged with Iran have learned the Persian language through it (Jones, 1804, pp. xv-xx; Shafagh, 1937, p. 65). Part of the enduring appeal of Sa’di’s *Rose Garden* is that its messages resonate with people in many different parts of society from high to low and from rich to poor (Bahmanyar, 1937, p. 38). Another part of its enduring appeal is its focus on bringing people together. A major feature of the *Rose Garden* is Sa’di’s emphasis on the spirit of harmony and unity among humans and his abhorrence of conflict, duplicity and tyranny. Before Sa’di, Iranian scholars had touched on the issue of social unity and harmony, but at a time when inside Iran Mongols were ravaging the country and outside Iran, the Crusades were ravaging other countries, nothing was seen but conflict and chaos, prompting Sa’di to value accord, benevolence, amity. Sa’di saw the divisions between people as evidence of a failure of understanding of the human condition (Shafagh, 1937, pp. 65-70).

However, although Sa’di agreed with the Sufis (mystics) on the necessity for peace, conciliation, not harming others, kindness, and courtesy, he did not follow their isolated life style (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86) as he believed he had a duty to persuade both rulers and ruled to adopt strategies for coexistence and reconciliation (Homayee, 1938, pp. 198-203; Yasmi, 1938, pp. 208-11). So although he was influenced by Sufis, he did not become pacifist, passive or a mere theoretician in prayer separate from society. On the contrary, he was a practical and public philosopher and engaged with people (Forouzanfar, 1938, pp. 89-90). Sa’di believed that it was the duty of everyone to empathise with the pain of others suffering from conflict. The following verse from the *Rose Garden* (which today adorns a doorway in the United Nations Assembly building, exemplifies that holistic and inclusive belief (Sputnik News, 2017):

"بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند

که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند

چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار

دگر عضوها را نماند قرار

*"The humans are different organs of the same body  
Created from one substance  
If the ordeals of this life brings harm to one organ  
The rest of the organs will inevitably become restless  
You who have no worry for the pain of others  
Perhaps the name human does not befit you"*<sup>6</sup>

## **2.4 Sa'di and Modern Day Iran**

Sa'di has not enjoyed unbroken popularity in Iran. He was mostly revered until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (though he suffered a minor dip in popularity between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), but his reputation suffered two bouts of criticism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (with a small come backs during this period in 1937 and 1951), before recovering ground in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **2.4.1 Revered until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

In Iran, until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Sa'di was universally considered as among the pinnacles of the ancient classical tradition of Persian poetry which started in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and terminated in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Katouzian, 2006, p. 1). Foroughi admired Sa'di (calling him a perfect example of the truly civilized man) and other classical poets including Rumi, Hafiz, and Ferdowsi, referring to the *Rose Garden* and *Orchard* as perfect works for showing practical knowledge, urging people to use Sa'di as a role model and even making the exaggerated assertion that if people had adopted his instructions, the world would have turned from hell to heaven (Katouzian, 2002, pp. 514-5). However, between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, novel poetic styles and genres arose culminating in the style of poetry commonly referred to as 'Indian'. The Indian style used sophisticated imageries and intricate metaphors, exemplified in the poetry of Saeb Tabrizi. However, Tabrizi lacked the support of the establishment (the Safavid dynasty) of his time, and the Indian style slowly diminished in popularity during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A return to the neoclassical tradition took place during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and

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<sup>6</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 6



many of Sa'di's writings recovered their eminent status (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 1-2; Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86). Studying the *Rose Garden* next to the holy Qur'an was an integral part of the Iranian education system including religious seminaries (Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Kamali Sarvestani, 2014) and the fact that in a Muslim country, the *Rose Garden* was used in the curriculum alongside the holy book of the faith shows its significance.

In 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, Sa'di's *Rose Garden* was translated into Latin, German, English and French, and during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these translations presented him to the literary community and paved way to his growing status among intellectuals. Sa'di was praised in the age of reason and enlightenment by prominent writing figures such as Voltaire (Katouzian, 2006, p. 6-7), while Carnot, the French revolutionary leader, named his son after Sa'di (the son became a world renowned mathematician) (Mendoza, 2017). Herder, a romantic and contributor to the German counter-enlightenment, considered Sa'di a sublime instructor of ethics (Katouzian, 2006, p. 7). He had a wellknown status during this time as a didactic and amusing poet of social etiquettes (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86). He was heralded as a Persian humanist and an archetype of Iranian culture and values by Yohannan in his book '*The Poet Sa'di, A Persian Humanist*' focusing on the poet, written in 1987. Folk wisdom, tolerance, understanding of human nature, communications with a varied range of people due to travels, are the attributes Yohannan gives to Sa'di. As a notable point regarding the poet's influence, Yohannan refers to the writers who have been influenced by Sa'di in the East and West. Yohannan reflects on the values and world view of Sa'di and how it has continued to be of importance in modern day Iran referring to the continuity of his thoughts (Sandler, 1989, pp. pp. 590-1). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, fresh translations of the *Rose Garden* appeared and Sa'di became popular amongst the orientalist (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 7-8), although soon he was to be known beyond just the orientalist and in many western literary circles.

#### **2.4.2 Criticised during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

However, Sa'di's reputation faded during two main periods of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first period was in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the events of the Qajar dynasty, the Constitutional Revolution, and World War I. The turmoil of this time had the effect of inspiring modernist intellectuals to criticise Sa'di. Taleghani first started criticizing Sa'di (Mashadi, 2012) with Raf'at supporting his criticism (Abedi, 2012, p. 211). Other intellectuals such as Akhundzadeh, Kermani, Kasravi, Dashti, Raf'at, Yushij, Shamlou, and Shariati, rejected Sa'di's work as a guide for solving the country's problems, and even considered him its cause. Akhundzadeh argued that the time for books like the *Rose Garden*

had passed and new doctrines were required. Some mistakenly thought that Iran's transition to modernity required a farewell with its traditional past and since Sa'di was seen as the pinnacle of the country's traditions, he was attacked (Akhundzadeh and Mo'meni, 1972, p. 8).

Kermani, who himself had written a book imitating the *Rose Garden*, later condemned it and rebuked writers who used the *Rose Garden* as a model. He even blamed moral corruption among youth on Sa'di's romantic poetry (Kamali Sarvestani, 2014). Yushij, who was the father of modern Iranian poetry and attacked the classical poets, did not see any benefit from reading Sa'di (Tahbaz, 1989, p. 216). Shamlou, a student of Yushij, claimed that Sa'di was a master in prose not poetry (Kamali Sarvestani, 2014), and Rahmani, who was a disciple of Yushij and Shamlou, agreed (Abedi, 2012, p. 204). Khoui saw Sa'di as merely an average poet, though proficient in prose, and criticised him for not being more patriotic (Khoui and Zarrabi, 1977, p. 107). By attacking Sa'di, these modernist thinkers were inaugurating a new era of Iranian poetry: indeed, rejecting Sa'di's ideas had become part of the modern poetic circles of Iran (Hamidian, 2010).

These attacks launched against Sa'di were inspired by the dislike of Iran's Islamic civilisation and insisted on a return to the glories of ancient Persia. In the confusion that emerged in Iran after the Constitutional Revolution and particularly after World War I, numerous diagnoses were being made about the root causes of the country's disorders. A number of classical poets were blamed not least for their Sufi affiliations. An article in the newspaper '*Zaban Azad*' (*Free Speech*) (Katouzian, 2002, p. 516) in 1920 entitled 'Maktabe Sa'di' (*The School of Sa'di*) accused faulty education and negligent public ethics as the main reasons for Iran's difficulties, and Sa'di's legacy was blamed for both, not least because the *Rose Garden* was used so much in the educational system. Subsequently, a full-blown debate began between Bahar, the classicist Poet Laureate in Tehran, writing in the '*Daneshkadeh*', and Taqi Raf'at, a modernist in Tabriz, writing in the '*Tajaddod*'. Raf'at claimed that Sa'di's thoughts may have been appropriate for his own period but they did not provide solutions to current socio-political difficulties (Katouzian, 2006, p. 3-4). It would seem that Sa'di's critics were witnessing the political modernisation of Iran with the establishment of a parliament, and they saw Sa'di as an impediment to Iran's transformation to modernity (Katouzian, 2002, p. 517). Furthermore, Sa'di who spoke in fundamental terms and basic timeless human matters, not specific issues of the day, made him an easy target.

By demonizing and discrediting Sa'di, many other classical poets were disgraced at the same time due to Sa'di being seen as the most prominent. Kasravi had issues with all classical poets: he referred to Sa'di as morally deranged, Hafiz as a beggar, and Rumi as idle and

useless. Kasravi considered classical poets anti-social (Ibid., 509-10.). Akhundzadeh said that classical poets only offered praise and eulogies, with no practical benefits to society. Many of the modernist intellectuals during the latter part of the 19th century, like Akhundzadeh and Kasravi, had issues with the customs and practices of Islamic Iran (Sa'di being part of that cultural setting). Akhundzadeh saw Islam and Arabs as impediments to Iran's growth believing that without these two elements in Iranian life, Iran in the 19th century would have advanced like countries in Europe. Both intellectuals, although criticising Iran's classical poetry, spared Ferdowsi from their onslaughts because of his nationalist leanings: they both admired Ferdowsi as they saw his writings to be serving society (Ibid., p. 517.). Indeed, the period of 1920s and 1930s saw Ferdowsi's popularity soar. Its high point was the international Ferdowsi conference in 1934 which incorporated the inauguration of his recently renovated mausoleum in Tus.

However, shortly afterwards, Sa'di's had a small come back. Despite the Ferdowsi wave, a symposium of foremost Iranian intellectuals celebrated Sa'di and his accomplishments in 1937 commending the *Rose Garden*. Kasravi who intensely condemned the forum held in Sa'di's tribute believed that his anti-Sa'di campaigns would have weakened Sa'di's cult, but this gathering disproved his belief: the symposium demonstrated that the traditional cult of Sa'di was resilient and robust. The symposium referred to Sa'di as the greatest of all poets in East and West, and that his writings were priceless treasures. Mohammad Ali Foroughi, the eminent intellectual and politician, praised Sa'di in his writings in a most elegant manner in this congregation (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 4-5).

The second period of Sa'di's unpopularity was during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Nima Yushij who was the founder of modernist poetry in Iran, cast another shadow on Sa'di's reputation during the 1950s. Yushij's followers declared that before Nima, real poetry did not exist in Iran (Katouzian, 2002, p. 517).

Sa'di had a small come back during this period as well when the modern version of his mausoleum was designed and re-built by Iran's modernist architect Mohsen Foroughi (son of Mohammad Ali Foroughi whose book compendium (کلیات سعدی) is used as a source for Sa'di's passages) in 1951 as a sign of the renaissance of the Sa'di's important position in Persian literature (Tavaana, 2017).

However, throughout the 1960s, Hafiz came to be known as the greatest poet of Iran, eclipsing Sa'di. Moreover, The Iranian Communist Party (Tudeh), despite some sympathy for Sa'di's writings on social justice, criticised him during the 1950s, 1960s, and chiefly the

1970s, as they perceived him being the poet of the establishment (Katouzian, 2006, pp. 5-6). It must be noted that an added reason for Sa'di going out of favour in this century was also foreign literary influences coming to Iran facilitating the development of prose orientated towards European models and influenced by them (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86).

### **2.4.3 Recovered Reputation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Despite his oscillating reputation during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sa'di enjoys a distinguished place in modern day Iran. There is a national Sa'di day in Iran annually, which last year was 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2017, when statesmen and scholars visited his tomb recognizing him as a symbol of the cultural identity of Shiraz (Iran Daily, 2017). President Rouhani paid his respects to Sa'di in his mausoleum for this day (Official Website of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2017), while the Foreign Minister Zarif placed congratulations for the Sa'di day online (Khabaronline, 2017). The image of the mausoleum of Sa'di is also on Iranian bank notes (Tabnak, 2010). Moreover, there is a massive Centre for Sa'di Studies in Shiraz (Centre for Sa'di Studies, 1999; Magiran, 2008); no other poet in Iran has had such facilities dedicated to him. The Sa'di Foundation in Tehran is also a centre built for the purpose of spreading and teaching the Persian language (Sa'di Foundation, 2012). In addition, there are opera theatrical plays based on his writings (News Agency for Fars Media, 2013).

Hooshang Golshiri believes that every day Iranians utter some expression from Sa'di (Golshiri, Foroughi and Sa'di, 2005, p. 11). Movahed (2014) claims that 400 of Sa'di's idioms have entered the Persian language (see also Kamali Sarvestani, 2010b), while Zolfaghari (2010) argues the figure is closer to 2000. Homayee (1938, pp. 198-203) states that these expressions have infiltrated all classes of society from literate to illiterate, from powerful to commoner. Milani (2008, pp. 75-6) asserts that Sa'di is the architect of modern Persian, as the Persian language spoken today is in his style. Other scholars attribute to Sa'di the duty of protecting the cultural existence of the Iranian nation (Safi Pour et al., 2010). Kamali Sarvestani has said that the *Rose Garden* is the ambassador of the Persian language abroad (Kamali Sarvestani, 2013; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014) with Iranians owing part of their culture and civilisation to its author (Kamali Sarvestani, 2016). Perhaps the most striking tribute to Sa'di is found in New York, where his verses have been displayed in the United Nations building (Sputnik News, 2017).

On issues of Iran's transition to modernity, Abbas Milani did not agree that Sa'di was an impediment of Iranian progress. He saw Sa'di as a forerunner of modernity parallel to Europeans, even in some instances earlier than them (Milani, 2008, p. 80). In fact, if one

considers the social contract as the most important principle of political thought within modernity, government and law being both social contracts between people and statesmen/law makers, the legitimacy of this social contract being the public will of people, then Sa'di, within his *Rose Garden* has referred to this issue, Milani stresses. Contrary to the first generation of Iranian modernists who saw classic texts like the *Rose Garden* worthless and without benefit, Milani believes it must be accepted that the path towards Iranian modernity goes through works such as the *Rose Garden* where if deeply investigated, certain seeds of modernity can be seen (Milani, 2008, pp. 94-6; Kamali Sarvestani, 2010b).

The next chapter provides two theoretical foundations for interpreting Sa'di's *Rose Garden* as a work on human integration, interaction, interconnection, reconciliation, and harmony - the aesthetic turn of linking poetry with politics; and the local turn of using indigenous norms instead of foreign ones as the foundation of peace.

## **Chapter 3. The Aesthetic Turn in Politics and Local Turn in Peace Studies**

*“Poetry is one of the most active agents in awakening nations from their lethargy and in inspiring them with the spirit of vitality” (Browne, 1914, p. xxii)*

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, two main themes are developed to provide foundational bases for interpreting Sa’di’s *Rose Garden* as a work with implications for reconciliation: the aesthetic turn and the local turn. The aesthetic turn expresses the way that aesthetics is being used to interpret political undertakings. In this thesis, it entails three sections. The first section explains how aesthetics entered politics. The second section explains more specifically how poetry as a branch of aesthetics stepped into the political arena. The third section introduces poetry intermingling with politics within Iran: an illustration of the relationship between poetry and politics in the country is provided in the form of the ‘Constitutional Revolution’ (1905-11) and to a lesser extent the ‘Islamic Revolution’ (1978-9). Afterwards, the local turn will be discussed explaining the way that indigenous norms rather than foreign diktats can be used to mitigate conflicts and facilitate peace. This will entail the local turn’s bottom-up approach to the concept of peace building, considering indigenous traditions, customs, rituals, culture, mannerisms, etiquette, norms, belief systems, and value systems in order to give a different approach to peace building from the imposed top-down position where western institutions are in control with little acknowledgment of indigenous populations. These local norms or traditions can be extracted from cultural artefacts within the context that peace building is to work such as the history, poetry, art, theatre, and religion of the local populations.

### **3.2 The Aesthetic Turn**

#### **3.2.1 *Aesthetics and Politics***

The best explanation of how aesthetics has entered politics is provided by Roland Bleiker who argues that in recent times, an aesthetic turn has transpired (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 1-13).

Encountering politics with an aesthetic insight inspires intellectuals to pay more attention to emotion than logic, to subjective perception and judgment than to tangible fact, and to feeling rather than reason. According to Bleiker, aesthetic methods have broadened the horizons of

looking at political and international affairs, potentially offering more solutions than problems. On this view, the limitations of the insights provided by the study of politics and international relations (IR) have been because of its opposition to theories prefixed with ‘post’ (i.e. postmodernism, post structuralism) and its inflexible definitional borders. That is why the discipline has advanced very little in recent years, failing to keep pace with the radical shifts in modern politics. The solution to this failure, Bleiker argues, lies in approaching it from an aesthetic perspective. Doing so would enable us to identify the role of feelings and emotional sentiments in politics, and this would reveal how, for example, legends rooted in the foundation of a political system act as sources of identity for people, states, and political movements. It is unfortunate that today realism, in terms of seeing the world independent from people’s value systems and sentiments, has become so dominant in political considerations (Ibid., pp. 18-25, 27-47).

This is not to assume that aesthetic ideas have been entirely absent from politics in the past. On the contrary, many eminent thinkers, including Theodor Adorno, Anthony Burke, Stephan Chan, Costas Constantinou, James Der Derian and Cindy Weber (Ibid., p. 3, 38, 184) have considered artistic expressions (Sylvester, 2001, pp. 535-54) in a way that enriches interpretive accounts of domestic and global politics (Smith, 2004, pp. 499-515). Gerald Holden (2003, p. 229), actually points out that links between politics and aesthetic forms such as literature are not necessarily new. Moreover, history has demonstrated that some of the most drastic political changes originate in cultural, psychological, or emotional renaissances in which shared expression and self-perception precipitate major transformations.

Unfortunately, there is a misconception that aesthetics is only the study of what constitutes beauty (Shelley, 2013), whereas it is also the study of sensory-emotional values, subjective perceptions, sentiments, tastes, and feelings (Zangwill, 2014). Few people would deny the power of ideas in precipitating political change. For example, the French Revolution was a socio-political event in which the catalyst was radical, republican, and liberal ideas (Livesey, 2001, pp. 1-19). Other cases include the Russian Revolution which was stimulated by radical socialism (Roberts, 2017) and the Islamic Revolution of Iran which was stimulated by political Islam and clerical rule (Amuzegar, 2017). This is not to claim that all ideas or ideologies are products of aesthetics, but in many cases including the ones mentioned, a provoking form of literature with emotional/aesthetic features was instrumental in offering new dimensions of social thought, engaging people on their feelings, causing them to think outside the box and perhaps question the ruling norms (Mazzotta, 1993, pp. 213-5; Bleiker, 2004, p. 45; Burnside, 2012; Idowu, 2013, pp. 1-17; Gilmartin, 2014; Longenecker, 2014).

Moreover, Bleiker contends that a new revolution in aesthetics is occurring that is “finding new ways to understand the dilemmas of world politics” (Bleiker, 2001, p. 524).

The aesthetic turn in politics encompasses a large number of scholars who consider text and literature as an instrument for the analysis of various political representations but also believe these texts and literatures can be created in popular culture by those representations. For these scholars, aesthetics, like popular culture, is a main location in which political life is shaped and challenged. Directors who make films that challenge a state’s claims about how a political event happened, such as security forces oppressing demonstrations, exemplify such assertions (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 4, 19, 29-30, 37, 41-4, 172). This strand of thinking was encouraged by theoretical works on interpretative politics of dissent (George and Campbell, 1990, pp. 269-89), by the likes of Jutta Weldes (Weldes, 1999, pp. 117-34; 2001, pp. 647-67), James Der Derian (Derian, 2005, pp. 23-37), Stephen Chan (Chan, 2003) and Christine Sylvester (Sylvester, 2003). In this strand, popular culture and aesthetics provide places of skirmishes over the meaning of political practice (Rowley, 2010, p. 311), with many media outlets being formally and informally used as transporters of political messages throughout history. For example, writers have focused on the close relationship between the American security apparatus and Hollywood, which has had a powerful effect on popular understandings of state security imperatives (Grayson, Davies and Philpott, 2009, pp. 155-61).

The aesthetic turn in political sciences has undermined the traditional disciplinary bounds of the subject (Holden, 2003, pp. 229-36), touching instinctive and visionary explanations of how the world can be seen. The reason aesthetic interpretations give unconventional understandings is because they are connected to innovative and inventive ways of construing politics. This is how aesthetic foundations inspire deep appreciation of political sciences and international affairs which nurture a more unrestricted and liberated level of awareness, comprehension, and receptiveness (Bleiker, 2009, p. 2). The aestheticist Jim George, for instance, has described traditional IR in the following manner “Its critical status, consequently, is related to a discursive regime of exclusion, silence, and intolerance that, as "International Relations," reduces a complex and turbulent world to a patterned and rigidly ordered framework of understanding, derived from a particular representation of post-Renaissance European historical experience, articulated in orthodox Anglo-American philosophical terms. In the 1990s, however, as ethnic hatreds, religious passions, and the ongoing struggles of race, culture, and gender illustrate the inadequacies of universalist schemas and grand theories of order and control, the traditional doctrines and protocols of International Relations are coming under widespread critical challenge” (George, 1994, p. ix).



The aesthetic turn in politics may well offer a transformative technique in which the thin rigid disciplinary boundaries of politics and IR are challenged, and a transfer to dynamism, fluidity, subjective interpretation, diversity, flexibility, and innovation can be achieved (Moore and Farrands, 2010, pp. 1, 3, 4, 35-6, 40-5, 55-9, 127, 133).

### ***3.2.2 Poetry and Politics***

Poetry as a division of aesthetics is intertwined with politics and involved in the aesthetic turn. Poetry has the propensity to disclose new ways of imagining politics. A poetic representation of an event or era might deal more effectively than reason, with the crack that opens up between an event and its representation through language. Poetry exploits this gap as the sphere where politics and the fight for power ensue. It is about discovering a language that delivers a different lens, a different perception, and a different consciousness about what is salient. It is about disturbing the conventional order, dissenting from the norm, broadening thinking space, and generating options to act in more inclusive ways in politics. Social change and political transformation can be ingrained in poetic words, since poetry can generate new and unique images that defy the conventional code of ethics in a prevailing world order. Political revision is not only sparked in the visions of poets themselves, but more decisively in the heightened awareness and invigorated sentiments of the audience who listen, recite, and read it, therefore challenging their own status in relation to the existing power structures. The inspiration of poets is quite fundamental to visualise, deduce, and uphold new revelations, and when it comes to implementation, it is the consent of the ordinary people who with their endless interpretations, reinterpretations, comprehension, and contemplation, make their impact felt on the political stage, should they so want it. In this manner, poetry can be the stimulus for socio-political movements, as one of the branches of aesthetics (Rich, 1993, pp. 5-7, 21-7, 33-9, 46-9, 67, 83-8, 97-101, 143-150, 160-9, 172-5, 189, 194-8, 232-9; Bleiker, 2000, pp. 269-83; 2009, pp. 84-96; Gu, 2017, pp. 1-10). There are examples of this role of poetry in politics throughout history.

One example is Akhmatova's words during the Russian Revolution. Anna Akhmatova offered an image of the Russian Revolution which was in stark contrast to the world that the revolution had promised to create (Reeder, 1997, pp. 105-25) as is recited below in her poem *Requiem*:

*“For seventeen months I have been screaming,  
Calling you home.*

*I've thrown myself at the feet of butchers*  
*For you, my son and my horror.*  
*Everything has become muddled forever -*  
*I can no longer distinguish*  
*Who is an animal, who a person, and how long*  
*The wait can be for an execution.*  
*There are now only dusty flowers,*  
*The chinking of the thurible,*  
*Tracks from somewhere into nowhere*  
*And, staring me in the face*  
*And threatening me with swift annihilation,*  
*An enormous star”*  
 (Akhmatova, 2012, p. 59)

Above, Akhmatova explains the new world where chaos has taken over and the concept of mercy has lost all meaning. She is criticizing Stalin’s despotism and the pains of people living under it (Barringer, 1989). Another case is Percy Bysshe Shelley’s support for the Chartist movement in England for political reform. In his poetry, Shelley portrays the king as a creature who enjoys seeing the suffering of lower classes, which was due to an uneven distribution of wealth, and was a frequent focus for the Chartists of the time (Heijningen, 2015, pp. 29-32, 41-50, 65, 75):

*“A sullen joy*  
*Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan*  
*But for those morsels which his wantonness*  
*Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save*  
*All that they love from famine”*  
 (Shelley, 1844, p. 69)

Poetry has the potential to take the collective consciousness to a higher degree by contributing to the transformation of the political and social awareness of a society. It can spark and enlighten social critics with fresh designs. By contrast to realist, capitalist, and materialist thinking, the poetic turn maintains that human endeavours are constructed on words and stories rather than raw tangible material objects or crude, rigid, universal rules (Gu, 2017, pp. 1-10). Words, especially in the aesthetic form of poetry, can provide an imaginative platform to allow anyone to define his/her present position in society and the place he/she desires, as

well as the journey that must be undertaken to reach the ideal destination. It could provide a meaning to man and his community by granting an identity for a tribe, clan, village, town, city, province, or even country through reminiscing myths and legends regarding collective heroic icons and historic aesthetic artefacts (Cusack, 2009, p. 65; Bleiker, 2009, pp. 152-70; Weber et al., 2011, p. 168). Poetry can be political because it can categorize humans by ethical guidelines as it differentiates the right from the wrong, therefore challenging the predominant system or ideology. Like other divisions of aesthetics but possibly more so, poetry can elevate the human mind to a higher and more sophisticated level until its verses release man's consciousness from classifications such as ethnic background, geographic location, and religious belief. Poetry, as an example of such an aesthetic form of literature, therefore, can serve as an instrument to inflame and stimulate a revolt, though it might require a charismatic leader to ensure the implementation of its ideas. For centuries, humanity has been driven, organized, and judged by the written word. Words, especially aesthetically arranged words which appeal to human emotions, feelings, sentiments, tastes, subjective perceptions, and the deep instinct of beauty (such as poetry), have had the power to fill the souls of masses with a personal vision that they could have imagined was their own (Barthes, 1970, pp. xi-xxv, 1-9, 19-28, 58-9, 83, 67-74).

If poetry is to be defined as “the expression of the imagination” (Shelley, 1926, p. 12), “literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or a specific emotional response through language chosen and arranged for its meaning, sound, and rhythm” (Nemerov, 2017), “Literary work in which the expression of feelings and ideas is given intensity by the use of distinctive style and rhythm” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017a), we observe many successful political leaders and major political thinkers have used poetic imagination and elements in their writings and speeches. For example, Mao Tse Tung built a poetic link between a new unknown ideal and an indigenous vocabulary as a political vehicle to convey his thoughts. These poetic links are observable where Mao employed Chinese mythology to move crowds and gain loyalties. He told audiences that if someone died in the service of the people, his death has the weight equivalent to Tai-san Mountain which was sacred and mythical in China. Mao also used a Chinese fable in which he deifies the Chinese people who were so oppressed by the feudalistic class structure that their sense of self was hardened for a long fight (Heisey, 2000, p. 203). Mao arranged his words to synchronize with the hearts of the masses in order to raise followers. If his words, facial expressions, body language, tone, and volume had not a poetic rhythm, he would have had trouble in sending the signal that would appeal to the hearts and minds. From his speeches, articles and books, he

knew how to exploit aesthetical elements that would entrap the imaginations of followers towards a desired destination (Ingalls, 2013, pp. ix-xi, 3-23, 77, 136, 178, 185, 330).

This does not mean that poetry is confined to left wing politics. The unique use of language with its influential authority on people's thinking and actions is the substance of political activism on both the left and the right. Lawrence Ferlinghetti was a liberal poet (Farrell, 1997, p. 58) while Ezra Pound was a fascist poet (Menand, 2008). Moreover, poets may be both positive and negative about a political regime at the same time. For instance, Sa'di Shirazi criticized the Mongols at times (Katouzian, 2006, 24-5), yet had congenial consultations with them at other times (Ibid., pp. 17, 117-9). Poetry is thus linked in complex ways to political order (Scully, 1988, p. 5).

In explaining the link between poetry and politics, there are two stages. The first stage is to understand the link between language and politics; the second stage is to understand the link between poetic language and politics. In the first stage, the intertwining of politics with language is obvious: almost every political act employs language. For example, dramatic political events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall are represented through many kinds of linguistic discourse, each symbolising a distinctive way of looking at the world. The stormy proceedings of 1989 can, as an illustration, be comprehended through the terminology of high politics which rotate around power relations and diplomatic discussions; with the jargon of strategic studies which focus on military measures, state suppression, and coercive power; by expressions of international political economy which considers effects of market forces on political stability; via the language of peace studies which emphasizes popular dissent and its capacity to unseat structures of authority; by the words of feminist theory which exposes the gendered aspects of collapsing walls; or, by the words of the ordinary men and women which exemplify the everyday suffering of breathing in a choking atmosphere. In every instance, the language employed portrays a specific perspective; one that is necessarily political, even though it may offer its standpoint as an impartial representation of what happens in the real world (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 87-8).

In the second stage, poetry is a form of language that is particularly apt for reviewing politics because it can portray aesthetic manifestations of political understandings in especially rich language personal to the poet. The spirit of poetry is not to be found chiefly in its recognized features, such as rhyme. The crucial point lies in the self-consciousness with which a poem deals with the relations between language and socio-political reality (Ibid., pp. 84-96). The domain of poetry is an embodiment of the synergy between language and aesthetics,

potentially leading to developments in self-consciousness and consequential changes in the social and political arena (Valery, 2007, pp. 61-6).

The most obvious political aspect of poetry can be found in activist poetry; in those cases when poets intervene openly in social and political battles. These poets and their transcripts characterise a type of activist: one who is located, as Roland Barthes (1970, p. 26) records, "halfway between the party member and the writer, deriving from the former an ideal image of committed man, and from the latter the notion that a written work is an act". If a poem is to be of both literary and political significance, it has to transcend, as James Scully (1988, p. 5) says, the "boundaries between private and public, self and other." Pablo Neruda, for example, who at one stage of his life moved as a Chilean diplomat in the circles of high politics, called for an involved poetry, one that voices not only aesthetics, but that is also infused with a deep concern for social and political justice. His belief in an engaged poetry arose in the mid-1930s, when a diplomatic relocation brought him to Spain, where he experienced the beginning of the civil war. Although Neruda committed his poetry to the republican movement, he was well aware that this was a controversial choice (Bleiker, 1999, pp. 1129-41; Guardiola-Rivera, 2013) and needed to be defended vigorously: "*Would you know why his poems never mention the soil or the leaves, the gigantic volcanoes of the country that bore him? Come see the blood in the streets, come see the blood in the streets, come see the blood in the streets!*" (Neruda, 1994, pp. 56-7)

Neruda's justification of an engaged poetry raises the question of the political scope of poetry. There are those, like Neruda, who take sides in wars and use poetry as a weapon to follow a political aim. At the other end of the scale are those, like the German poet Hans Magnus Enzensberger, who see the political aspects of poetry in detachment from campaigning. Either way however, poetry typically delves beneath the surface of politics. Its particular insight and power comes from the skill to disclose what is hidden in the leading language of politics (Bleiker, 1999, pp. 1129-41; Guardiola-Rivera, 2013). "There is always the chance," says Ernest Hemingway, "that a book of fiction may throw some light on what has been written as fact" (Hemingway, 2010, p. 232). Russian poet Anna Akhmatova is a testament to this, since she lived through, and wanted to construct a poetic image of, her country's hard twentieth century. One of her famous poems, '*Requiem*', describes the Great Terror, the worst time under Stalin's rule. Akhmatova poetically recollects a question asked by a blue-lipped woman standing behind her in the prison lines of Leningrad: "*Can you describe this? And I answered: Yes, I can. Then something that looked like a smile passed over what had once*

*been her face*” (Akhmatova, 2000, p. 383). Another example of poetic insight into politics comes from Ross Coggins's deeply ironic poem *The Development Set*:

*“The Development Set is bright and noble,  
Our thoughts are deep and our vision global;  
Although we move with the better classes,  
Our thoughts are always with the masses.  
We discuss malnutrition over steaks  
And plan hunger talks during coffee breaks.  
Whether Asian floods or African drought,  
We face each issue with an open mouth”*

(Coggins, 1976, cited in Leene and Schuyt, 2016, p. 61)

This poem conveys a painful paradox in the modern world, exposing the discrepancy between what should be and what is, between image and reality, and between representation and what is represented, to make a political point. Through literary techniques and genres, poetry can challenge the immobilizing convictions of the political elite and disclose the grey shades of politics with its complications and enigmas. "In order to be clear to contemporaries, a poet flings everything wide," Akhmatova claims (Akhmatova, 2000, p. 415). And by flinging things wide, the poetic image brings into a conflicting territory many of the suppressed voices, viewpoints, and sensations that otherwise may never reach the formulaic, rigid, proceduralist, and framework-oriented academics and experts of modern politics.

Poets do not only try to change the future through direct activism but through poetry they provide a unique historical record of the politics of their time. Akhmatova, the Russian poet exclaims, beautifully *“I am your voice, the warmth of your breath, I am the reflection of your face”* (Akhmatova, 2000, p. 299). She wrote with great anxiety in July 1914, when naive ecstasy penetrated a war-thirsty Europe, and she predicted the disaster that was soon to overwhelm the continent: *“Fearful times are drawing near. Soon fresh graves will be everywhere. There will be famine, earthquakes, widespread death, and the eclipse of the sun and the moon”* (Akhmatova, 2000, p. 199). This verse is a prediction by Akhmatova for her time, but for readers today it describes a memory of an incident decades earlier. Memory is the most ancient role of poetry: it is no coincidence that poetry began as a form of speaking that entailed rhyme and other symmetries, because the rhythmic and rhyming components of a poem made it easy to recall. Poetry thus came to perform the function of a societal memory: it was used to hand down from generation to generation the insight that had been accrued over

time. Rhyme was vital because it maximized both the possibility of recollection and the competence of memory. This stylistic constituent of poetry was to be indispensable until the extensive use of paper and printing created new ways of preserving records of events. The chief style of poetry practised today, free verse, was able to appear only because the role of remembering could be entrusted to other devices, as Scully (1988, pp. 126-7) points out, such as physical books and their latest electronic versions: "With increasing dependence on such repositories, and with less individual need to remember, free verse becomes possible and even, perhaps, inevitable." Poetry can protect from historical obliteration the multiplicities that make up political and social reality. This is how poetry can become a critical historical memory because it preserves for future generations a range of voices, truths, and dimensions which otherwise would be hidden under the rubble of time (Bleiker, 1999, pp. 1129-41). Not all poetry has this power, but it is one of the qualities that poetry can possess.

The examples above highlight the distinctive way that poetry interacts with politics – by allusion rather than by clarification. It demonstrates rather than argues. As Rene Char suggests, "It must leave traces of its passage, not proofs. Only traces bring about dreams," (Char, 1983, cited in Savigneau, 1993, p. 8). Roberta Reeder says "Poetic prose mirrors the way memory works. A story is based on analogy and association rather than on temporal or cause and effect relationships. There is a simultaneity and bringing into juxtaposition of key related moments of the past in order to give them new meaning within new contexts, and these fragments become equivalent in relevance" (Reeder, 1994, p. 386). When this new meaning of what was ingrained in the mind previously is finalized, a new self-consciousness is born in the reader who sees the world differently and could demand a convincing response from the structures of power based on that difference.

This is the political aspect of poetry. A poem plays with the imagination in that it requires and involves an engaged reader who produces meaning himself. This is political in that when a reader has the autonomy to give meaning rather than take meaning, to lead rather than follow, he/she breaks from the chains that political structures have placed upon him/her. The reader brings to life a poem's political significance by illuminating the struggle that takes place between the tension of what is, and how this is represented in and through poetry. Poetic re-representations open eyes and minds to different ways of seeing what has already been accepted as normal. Once the poet shows a phenomenon in a different way than that which the power structures want the reader to see, poetry becomes political. Poets redraw reality in different colours and from different angles, repeatedly, thus illuminating the accustomed in new manners (Shelley, 1926, pp. 29-67; Fulford, 2006, 1-17; Orr, 2011, pp. 37-58).

### ***3.2.3 Two Examples of the Role of Poetry in the Politics of Iran***

For centuries, Persian poetry has been at the core of Iranian politics vividly expressing and voicing concerns regarding Iranian socio-political movements due to its distinguished place among its people (Jahromi, 2015). “The history of the Persian poets is the history of the Persian nation; it is the biography of their greatest men, whose lives, whose actions, whose feelings, and whose tastes, are all, in a greater or less degree, associated with poetry and influenced by poetic impulse. This influence was exercised over the highest potentates by the most subordinate of their subjects. Their graver historians supply countless anecdotes of men exalted to rank and power, and enjoying the unlimited favour of their Sovereign by this sole merit. Lives have been sacrificed, or spared-cities have been annihilated, or ransomed-empires subverted, or restored-by the influence of poetry alone. Armies, levied to avenge the insult of an epigram, have been disbanded at its palinodia; the prison has opened its gates to the ingenious author of an impromptu; stanzas have saved a suppliant's life, and a well-turned compliment in verse more than once soothed a breast in which dwelt all the undisciplined passions of Eastern despotism” (Bland, 1843, p. 345).

The historic role of poetry in the politics of Iran can be illustrated with two 20<sup>th</sup> century examples, the Constitutional Revolution (strong role of poetry) and Islamic Revolution (light role of poetry). The following sections will recount the Constitutional Revolution aimed to establish a parliament during the reign of the Qajar Dynasty (Chehabi and Linz, 1998, p. 185) and the Islamic Revolution aimed to establish a religious state instead of the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran (Sharma and Aravind, 2014, pp. 1-7)

#### **3.2.3.1 Iran's Constitutional Revolution in 1905-1911 as an Example of the Interaction between Poetry and Politics in the Country**

The Constitutional Revolution took place in Iran during 1905-1911. The creation of a constitutional regime within the Iranian state was its goal, and resulted in the ending of the Qajar Dynasty and the emergence of a parliament (Amanat, 1992, pp. 163-76). The Constitutional Revolution is commonly seen as a nationalist and to a lesser extent religious undertaking directed by patriots who were provoked by European interference in the internal matters of the country. These constitutionalist patriots blamed the governing Iranian regime for betraying the country's interests by deference to foreigners and royalists. They fought against arbitrary rule and for the representative organization of the popular will which was mainly urban. The constitutionalists fought for development, liberty, and tolerance, but



patriotism was the main impetus behind their fight (Bayat, 1991, p. 3). They were inspired by three recent events abroad at that time.

First, the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the assembling of the first Duma demonstrated the success of widespread revolutionary struggle against a tyrannical power in a country known as the fortress of absolutist rule. Second, the triumph of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) was welcomed in the Iranian press because an Asian country defeated a European one and because they attributed Japan's success to converting itself from a traditional feudal society to a modern industrial society. Third, in South Africa, the constitution conceded to Transvaal in 1906 as a result of the Boer War (1899-1902) had an important effect on Iranian psyche (Amanat, 1992, pp. 163-76).

However, literature also played an important role in the Constitutional Revolution. The term '*Constitutional Literature*' denotes the literature that was created from the late 19th century until the early 1920s associated with socio-political reform in Iran. During this period, poetry was both affected by and affected political considerations and calculations. Writings of the constitutional period, similar to the constitutional struggle itself, echoed and influenced cultural, social, religious, and economic changes within the country during the passage of the 19th century (Kamshad, 2006, pp. 9-12). These changes led to the national and political arousal that climaxed in the constitutional campaign and brought about alterations in literary articulation. During this time, newspapers were the carrier of new ideas in forms of new poetry.

Mirza Rahim Yaghma Jandaqi voiced the troubling times (Soroudi, 1979, p. 6):

*"The age, age of danger and the day, day of battle, Time to war, time to shed blood. The reign, reign of injustice and the era, era of oppression, Abused is property and wasted innocent blood"* (Yaghma Jandaqi, 1960, p. 283)

Amiri Farahani issued an invitation for all to support their country (Soroudi, 1979, pp. 16-7):

*"O Iranians, O honorable and grand! Wherefore did you thus forsake the land?  
Did you not call her 'motherland'? All that rhetoric, O patriots, where is it gone?"*  
(Farahani, 2001, pp. 562-3)

Muhammad Taqi Bahar, a notable constitutional poet, cried out the uselessness of having faith in the state (Soroudi, 1979, pp. 25):

*“To discuss freedom with the Shah of Iran is a folly, To God we trust Iran's destiny.  
Religion of the Shah is not shared by any, To God we trust Iran's destiny.  
If the Shah of Iran cares not for justice, no wonder, For he is of no pure nature.  
To the eyes of a bat sunshine is agony, To God we trust Iran's destiny”*  
(Bahar, 1965, pp. 146-7)

Ashraf Hosseini was well known at the time for identifying with the daily struggles of ordinary folk and showing common sympathy (Soroudi, 1979, p. 33):

*“Be patient my darling, be patient! Be patient my dear, be patient! Tehran'll become like a rose garden soon. In the shops bread will abound for sure. Meat for shish-kebab will be very cheap. By patience problems are solved with much ease. Be patient my darling, be patient. Don't worry, next year you'll eat bread and sweet fruits to suit your taste. You'll lunch dear with roasted chicken Fesenjan will be your share for dinner. Be patient my darling, be patient”.* (Hosseini, 1959, pp. 87-8)

Soroudi (2011, pp. 212-6) distinguishes three stages in the development of constitutional literature:

The pre-constitutional stage (late 19th century to 1905 and the initial proceedings moving towards the constitutional decree); the constitutional stage (1905 to 1911 and the end of the 2nd parliament); and the post-constitutional stage (1911 to 1921 and the commencement of the Pahlavi dynasty).

Poetry in 19<sup>th</sup> century Iran rarely functioned as an organ of new ideas and did not reflect the movements for reform or radical change: poets demanding social or political changes had to live abroad. However, near the end of the 19th century, a fresh awareness and realisation slowly formed in the minds of many poets, and they began to express disapproval of the ruling class, condemning it with poems of discontent. Isfahani (Aryanpour, 2008a, p. 36), Shaybani (Ibid., pp. 141-4), and Farahani (Soroudi, 1979, p. 7) were among these critical poets. For example, Farahani sought to switch the focus of poetry from serenading the imagined deity/beloved/darling which was the topic of much classical poetry to paying tribute and homage to the country.

The issuing of the Constitutional Charter in August 1906 and the resulting era of free expression caused a massive increase in the publication of newspapers (Browne, 1914, pp. ix-xi). One of the reasons was that many of the writers and poets who participated in the

constitutional undertaking were journalists, and fewer constraints on the press had an intensely liberating effect on their work. Poets were also no longer reliant on the benefaction of the powerful, and their audience was no longer the king and his associates, but ordinary folk. For this reason, they attuned their themes to this new popular audience.

It is important to note that although prose was influential, poetry, due to its exceptional eminence in traditional Persian culture, functioned as the foremost revolutionary medium. Both educated and cultured people and illiterate and unschooled people were familiar with the recital of verse, which very concisely and in a few words, was able to stimulate, awaken, and capture emotions and feelings, directing them in sought after constitutional directions envisioned by the poets. It is also important to note that the alterations that occurred in the core of poetry did not constitute a hard break with classical norms of Persian poetry. The core of constitutional poetry continued the classical tradition of being exhortatory, didactic, and homiletic in language, form, tone, and content (Soroudi, 2011, pp. 212-6). The main difference was that the poems were channelled towards the constitutional project of the poets.

The chief novelty in constitutional poetry was that non-poetic themes were no longer off-limits (contrary to the past where by convention only certain approved themes were allowed), granting the poet huge autonomy to address any matter applicable to the expansion of constitutionalism. Soroudi identifies many prominent themes in constitutional poetry, including the denunciation of the Persian reigning elites; xenophobic viewpoints, expressly against Arabs and Turks, who were held responsible for the underdevelopment of Iran; deification of pre-Islamic Persia; anti-imperialism towards powers such as Great Britain and Russia but esteem for Germany; and the necessity for modernization, with a stress on modern schooling. The poetry of the time reflected and partly constituted the turbulence in Iranian society (Ibid.).

However, the end of the parliamentary term in 1911 and the failure to conduct speedy elections was a fatal blow to the constitutional undertaking. This failure unleashed a severe response from disappointed poets, who switched their focus from content (attacking the Iranian political system) to form (attacking the style of Iranian poetry). This led to the constitutional poets focusing on radical forms of poetry rather than the radical political content of the pre-constitutional and constitutional periods. This new group lacked firm classical training in Iranian poetry, but they were well acquainted with and affected by European literature. Contrary to their predecessors, they desired comprehensive and deep literary reforms to devise a novel poetry which would echo their time, not only in content and

topic, but also in style, tempo, and form. Their assaults on classical literature produced a dispute between the old and the new which became especially fierce in certain newspapers after World War I (Soroudi, 1974, pp. 24-38; Aryanpour, 2008b, pp. 436-66). Eshqi who had a reputation of being a literary and political radical, demonstrated the first signs of this fierce change. Eshqi's innovations, although slight and cautious, foreshadowed the first intentional break with classical norms. French literature had an impact upon him, and his poetry was grounded in his internal emotional responses and experiences, with his imagery facilitated by his own revelations, rather than those of the classical masters of Persian poetry (Aryanpour, 2008b, pp. 361-80).

However, it was Eshqi's friend, Nima Yushij, who under the influence of the constitutional revolution, showed substantial innovations in literary form. Nima Yushij unbound himself from supposed compulsory classical patterns and lines of the same length, and generated a free verse where the poem was fashioned organically based on its own cognitive necessities (Aryanpour, 2008b, pp. 466-80; Soroudi, 2011, pp. 212-6). His work, '*Afsana*', was seen as the defining moment in the conversion from classical to modern poetry in Iran.

As we can see from this analysis, the intermingling of poetry and the political domain before, during, and after the Constitutional Revolution in Iran in the early 20th century had many dimensions. Not only did poets become political militants through their poetry raising the political consciousness of the people, but the turbulent years of the revolution also shaped their poetry. The poetic and political spheres mirrored each other. A lasting effect of the constitutional revolution on poetry was that it influenced Iranian poets to break chains with the past and start innovations in poetic forms. Conversely, a significant influence of poetry on the revolution was the arrival and application of a medium which aroused national sentiments, provoked social change, fuelled the revolution, and raised political sentience (Soroudi, 2011, pp. 212-6).

The Constitutional Revolution in Iran and the role poetry played in it is an illustration of the aesthetic turn in politics. This period explicitly exemplified fierce activist poetry that adopted new poetic themes in content and form, raising political mindfulness, thereby, contributing to and taking advantage of new opportunities presented by socio-political challenges and changes. However, it must be emphasised that some of the dominant themes in poetry in the constitutional period such as nationalism, xenophobia, and scapegoating other countries, indicate a poetry that does not seek reconciliation but rather mixes a vision of social justice (freeing people from oppressive and exploitative rule) with a sense that others (foreigners) are

responsible for that injustice. In this sense, there is much difference between the more conciliatory and placatory prose poetry of the classic poet Sa'di Shirazi (focus of this thesis) and this period's poets. It seems that the poets of this period responded to instability and injustice at their times in a more aggressive manner compared to Sa'di who also lived in unstable times (much more), but responded with a more melodious harmonious tone.

### 3.2.3.2 Poetry before the Islamic Revolution of Iran (1978-1979): Another Example of the Interaction between Poetry and Politics in Iran

After the Constitutional Revolution in Iran which owed much of its momentum to poetry, a new poetic atmosphere started to develop. Printing equipment became more commonplace, education was spreading fast across the country, and people had more access to literature and news. In this new atmosphere, Iranian poets saw themselves accessing a much larger audience to communicate their social and political ideas. As with the Constitutional Revolution at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the role of poetry helped shape the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1978-9, but to a lesser extent. The role of poetry was one of rallying people and instilling in them the revolutionary thoughts of the time (Jahanpour, 2014). Ahmad Shamlou wrote his well-known 1976 poem '*She'ri ke Zendegist*' (*Poetry which is Life*) in opposition to the authoritarian regime of the monarchy, which had been installed by a western coup d'état against the democratically elected government of Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq, who had nationalized Iranian oil (Dehghan and Norton-Taylor, 2013):

*“The subject of poetry today is another matter altogether....*

*Today, poetry is the people's weapon because poets are themselves branches in the human forest, not greenhouse jasmine or hyacinths.*

*Today's poet is no stranger to the pains of the masses:*

*Today's poet smiles with the people's lips and grafts onto his or her own bones their pains and hopes”*

(Shamlou, 1976, cited in Hillmann, 1982, p. 257)

In the above passage, Shamlou explicates that poets are no longer sitting behind desks and distant from people's pains but ingrained within society and embedded within the masses. Nima Yushij in his poem '*Naqus*' (*The Bell*) describes the situation under the monarchy, but also offers hope for a dramatic change for the better (Khoshchereh, 2011, p. 245):

*“A bright rain will shower from a cloud's breath, full of tumult (gathered of our sighs).  
And the mournful tales of sorrow will turn into tales of rage.*

*And a time will come when in the realm of horror a conflagration will upsurge,  
And, with the tremors of kindness, an iron hand will take the hand of the wounded,  
And the burned crops of that day will transform into budding gardens;  
And the destination that this discontented generation strives for will be held worthy by others;  
And the fire that a cold body seeks will tread in the world's warm womb"*

(Yushij, 1967, pp. 22-3)

The repression instituted by the Shah of Iran after the coup overturning Mosaddeq was relentless, and the educated elite saw they had no say in the country's future. Hamid Mossadeq (1965), a poet, urged his countrymen not to stand idle at a time when the country was in strife:

*"If you rise! if I rise, we will all rise.  
If you sit! if I sit, who will then rise?  
Who will challenge our enemy?  
Who will wrestle down each of our foes?  
The meadows will call your name; the mountains will call my poem"*

(Mossadeq, 1965, cited in Vahabzadeh, 2015, pp. 109-10)

Mehdi Akhavan Sales viewed the coup as a barrier against the political development of the country. In a situation of despair for people, he wrote a poetry of anguish:

*"The Winter  
No one wants to answer your greetings, the heads are tucked away in collars. None raises his head to meet and greet comrades, and one's view goes no further than his next step. For the path is dark and precarious. And should you stretch a caring arm to another, he'll only reluctantly show his hand, for the cold is brutally piercing. Coming out of a warm chest, your respire becomes an opaque cloud. Which obscures your view like a wall. As your respire so appear, what would you expect from your close or distant friends?"*

(Akhavan Sales, 1956, cited in Vahabzadeh, 2015, pp. 108)

The arrival of a savior who will aid the Iranian nation through difficult times was what Forough Farrokhzad brought to the scene:

*"I've dreamed that someone is coming.  
I've dreamed of a red star . . .*

*Someone who is like no one.*  
*Not like father, not like Ensi, not like*  
*Yahya, not like mother,*  
*And is like the person who he ought to be . . .*  
*And his name is just as mother says*  
*at the beginning and the end of her prayer,*  
*the judge of all judges,*  
*the need of all needs,*  
*Someone is coming.*  
*Someone is coming.*  
*Someone who's in heart with us.*  
*In his breathing is with us.*  
*Someone whose coming can't be stopped, and handcuffed and thrown in jail"*  
 (Farrokhzad, 1982, cited in Axworthy, 2013, pp. 83-4)

Before the dawn of the Islamic Revolution (1978-9), Iranian poets witnessed the growing desire among the population for the institution of a free democratic Iran. This desire was precipitated by the increased censorship, authoritarianism, inequality, repression, and surveillance imposed by the Shah's ruling elite which was increasingly detached from the daily worries of people and instead preoccupied with imitating western values. Intellectuals, writers, and poets were imperilled by the security forces which demanded compliance with the state and intensified restrictions on creative intellectual and imaginative artistic expression. Nevertheless, some poets voiced their opposition to the ruling regime, as their predecessors had during the Constitutional Revolution (Karimi-Hakkak, 1986, pp. 251-6). For example, Hamid Sabzevari sang praises for the exiled leader of the revolution (Khomeini) who had fought the monarchy so long whilst in exile in Paris, and would soon return to Iran to celebrate the victory of the Islamic Revolution over the Shah (king). This is one of the most famous poems of the revolution:

"خمینی ای امام، خمینی ای امام  
 خمینی ای امام، خمینی ای امام  
 ای مجاهد ای مظهر شرف  
 ای گذشته ز جان در ره هدف  
 هر زمان می رسد از تو این ندا  
 ای اسیران و مستضعفان به پا

زیر بار ستم زندگی بس است  
نزد طاغوتیان، بندگی بس است  
بود شعار تو به راه حق قیام  
ز ماتو را درود ز ماتو را سلام  
خمینی ای امام، خمینی ای امام  
خمینی ای امام، خمینی ای امام"

(Sabzevari, 1964, cited in Asrarnameh, 2017)

*"Khomeini oh leader, Khomeini oh leader, oh fighter, oh symbol of honour,  
You who have sacrificed your life for your aims,  
Every moment this recital comes to our ears from you,  
Oh prisoners and the oppressed rise,  
Life under tyranny is enough, being slaves to monarchists is enough,  
Your slogan was rising for justice, we greet you, we hail you,  
Khomeini oh leader, Khomeini of leader"*

Reza Barehani was another poet who fought against the injustices of the time. In 1973, Barehani was kidnapped for 102 days by the Savak, the secret police of the monarchy and tortured. In his book, *'The Crowned Cannibals'* he tells the readers of his ordeal:

*"I used to be innocent.  
What happened on a September day in 1973  
Is already an old story  
But imagine a sieve, or rather, a screen  
Placed in front of your memories  
And everything passing through it  
The faces of all men and women you loved  
The children you saw and spoke with  
The grass on which you slept  
The stars you watched, the camels you rode  
The rabbits you followed  
Imagine all of them and other memories  
Passing through the screen"*



*And changing and changing, constantly changing*  
*And becoming things which are unrecognizable*  
*Imagine all love and beauty kept behind that screen*  
*Or memories distorted, standing upside down*  
*Or swollen like decomposing flesh*  
*Imagine a hell you recognize to have been your personal paradise*  
*Imagine I used to be innocent”*  
(Baraheni, 1977, p. 277)

In this section, the political character of poetry and the role of poetry in society have been illustrated with poets serving as activists at two critical junctures in 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian politics. At both times, poets opposed oppression and arbitrary rule and sought to promote social justice. They also opposed foreign intervention in Iran and sometimes developed nationalist themes. The poetry leading to the Islamic Revolution has similarities with the poetry leading to the Constitutional Revolution in rallying people, raising awareness, critiquing state and society, advocating ethical norms and justice. At both junctures, the prominence of poetry as a vehicle to convey messages that ordinarily would not have had the desired effect or would not be conveyed in the same zealous manner, was evident. Poetry opened the eyes of the audience to the agenda the poet had in mind, in a way, similar to modern propaganda techniques. However, as far as literary genres are concerned, whereas the poetry of the Constitutional Revolution ushered in a new era of poetry, the poetry of the Islamic Revolution did not create any new poetic style.

### **3.2.4 Closing Remarks**

The above section explained the intermingling of aesthetics with politics as offering a new perspective on viewing events focusing on human emotion rather than rigid rationality. A prominent branch of aesthetics (poetry) was seen to be able to expose political realities in different fashion than the conventional norms. Within Iran, the aesthetic turn and its branch, the poetic turn in politics was revealed in the Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution. Therefore it can be deduced that poetry and aesthetics have played significant roles in the country’s contemporary socio-political developments during the 20th century. This adds potential weight to the argument of this thesis that Sa’di’s poetry could have cultural importance beyond the period in which it was produced. Therefore, I believe it is important to examine the political ideas in Sa’di’s poetry – both because they may already be

exerting an ongoing political influence on readers and listeners (i.e., Sa'di might - through the cultural influence of his work - still, in a sense, be a poet activist) and also because by bringing to attention the political ideas in Sa'di's poetry we might help to identify a "new" source of inspiration for political activists, leaders and artists/poets in current times. The importance of the historic culture of a society for its politics in the present and the future has become much more widely recognized in recent years. In particular, this 'local turn', with its clear cultural emphasis, has become prominent in the theory and practice of the politics of peace. In the next section, I outline the 'local turn' in peace studies, connect it to the aesthetic turn in politics, and argue that together they provide a rationale for studying Sa'di's poetry, which I argue has reconciliation or harmony as its central idea being conceivably relevant for the clash of identities within modern day Iran.

### **3.3 The Local Turn in the Politics of Peace**

The local turn in the politics of peace refers to increased attention towards local, indigenous, and traditional norms in order to facilitate reconciliation in non-western societies. It recognizes local standards as a powerful force if coexistence is going to be achieved or sustained and realises the failures of western reconciliatory processes imposed on non-western civilizations which produced fragile results due to being incompatible with local culture (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 763; Öjendal and Ou, 2015, pp. 932-4; Randazzo, 2016, pp. 1351-3; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). The local turn represents a new wave of understanding whereby notions of universality, rationality, and modernism of western reconciliatory methods are challenged (Chabal, 2012, p. 316). This new wave is in effect a decolonization of western reconciliatory science (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 765; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-23; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32).

#### ***3.3.1 The Emergence of the Local Turn and the Importance of Culture***

Research on reconciliation has become more prominent since the end of the Cold War as practitioners and academics have sought to understand the sources of conflict, civil wars, and sectarian/ethnic/religious/racial clashes as well as seeking to develop new ways of resolving disputes to promote political stability (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 767; Paffenholz, 2015, pp. 858-61; Öjendal and Ou, 2015, pp. 932-4; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). Michael Pugh thinks that the western solution towards all these conflicts has been a problem-solving approach which:

“fits into the overarching neoliberal ideology that merges security and development; ‘romanticizes the local’ as victims or illiberal; builds hollow institutions; designs economic life to reproduce assertive capitalism; equates peace with state building; and assumes that interveners have privileged knowledge about peace issues. The paradigm is mobilized with a package of transformation policies—an assemblage construed by academics as the ‘liberal peace’” (Pugh, 2013, p. 14)

Timor Leste is one instance where an alien Western type of state was installed by means of liberal norms instead of local ones, resulting in armed resistance and a humanitarian crisis (Trindade, 2008, p. 166). The failures of the West in Afghanistan and Iraq are also examples of what happens when outside ideals are forced on people of another culture (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 766; Chetail and Jütersonke, 2015, pp. 6-9; Holanda Maschietto, 2016, pp. 34-7; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). The basis of the local turn in reconciliation is the recognition of the role that indigenous cultures, customs, beliefs, and values must play if tension is to be reduced. It is an acknowledgment that state building, reconciliation, peace building, diplomacy, and development should embrace local norms instead of outside people’s belief systems. It is a move against colonial attitudes towards diplomacy, intervention, and reconciliation (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 769; Holanda Maschietto, 2016, pp. 34-7; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32) since it challenges the universalism of the colonial mentality and ushers in particularism encouraging a bottom-up perspective, not a top-down approach (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 772; Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-823; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32).

Scholars of the local turn believe that since conflict is situated in a particular culture, then efforts to mitigate conflict should be respectful of that culture and seek solutions from within, discovering sources necessary to describe it (Avruch, 1998, p. 63). These sources or cultural artefacts can offer massive contributions based on local principles to strengthen reconciliation efforts (Lederach, 2008, pp. 55-63). Long-established customs and social behaviours can be extracted from anthropological literature which offers information regarding rituals, beliefs, ceremonies, rites, praxis, formalities, and conventions which in turn can be exploited to devise reconciliatory guidelines or codes. Kemp and Fry (2004, pp. ix-xv) describe how this approach might be applied in their book, *‘Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies around the World’*. They believe that the cultural elements required to ensure any society remains peaceful are pre-existing but only need to be investigated and exposed. They focus on finding cultural artefacts which allow people to deal with potential clashes in a nonviolent manner. Their book emphasises on traditional methods for

reconciliation (Mac Ginty, 2008, pp. 145-6; Holanda Maschietto, 2016, pp. 34-7; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32).

It is cultural artefacts ingrained in the psyche of a society that in any divided country provide invisible *modus vivendi* processes that allow people and groups to progress with their daily lives. This may be due to a set of often tacit and informal accommodations that individuals and communities afford each other which hold social legitimacy. These accommodations subconsciously facilitate and enable tolerance and coexistence between various groups, social divisions, or conflicting parties (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 769-70; Hughes, Öjendal and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-823; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). Elements of the local turn include the culture specific routines that persons in conflict-prone societies use to get along. These culture specific habits (Lustick, 1979, pp. 325-44) include daily civilities, social practices, and traditional etiquettes that people afford each other in divided societies in order to cohabit or challenge the divisions themselves effectively (Mac Ginty, 2014, pp. 548-9; Randazzo, 2016, pp. 1351-3; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). These unwritten and informal collective rules within intergroup networks (Hejnova, 2010, pp. 741-63) can bring people together, hold people together, and have conflict-defying, conflict-delaying and conflict-minimizing influence (Mac Ginty, 2014, p. 550). They have the form of a hidden transcript of social rules of behaviour not easily sensed by outsiders (Mac Ginty, 2013, pp. 423-9; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). These mannerisms have a calming effect and are especially needed where societies are on edge and any spark can take the country to violence and civil war (Mac Ginty, 2014, pp. 553; Randazzo, 2016, pp. 1351-3; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32).

These proprieties, which are ingrained within a culture, are not formally taught (Heyd, 1995, pp. 217-31) but are implicit and embedded within communities (Cecil, 1989, pp. 107–121). They constitute a protocol of demeanours that communities use to show civility, while accepting that there is a conflict (Caldwell, 2017, pp. 239–41). Aimed at easing daily interactions and minimizing risk to further violence, they are skills of toleration and behaviours which provide a social glue or cohesion easing coexistence, reducing the destructive effects of divisions, or preventing conflict spiralling out of control, and offering an environment where integration is facilitated (Mac Ginty, 2014, pp. 557-61; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). Such etiquettes and civil norms inform relations between communities, based on unspoken understandings shared by different peoples (Papacharissi, 2004, pp. 261-7).

Traditional Western peace-making efforts' neglect of these subtle cultural delicacies have caused them failure in a long list of countries, including Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, South Sudan and Tajikistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Cambodia, Burundi and Sudan (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, pp. 773-4; Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-23; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32). Given these failures, it should not come as a surprise that even state-centric, neoliberal conservative institutions like the World Bank have started to appreciate the value of peace-building approaches which focus much more in accord with local rather than western norms; the local turn, which emphasises indigenous, local, customary, and traditional values to understand conflict resolution and reconciliation (Chopra, 2009, pp. 1-17; Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, p. 775; Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck, 2015, pp. 817-823; Leonardsson and Rudd, 2015, pp. 825-34; Bräuchler and Naucke, 2017, pp. 422-32), is already being given priority over international and western frameworks in some peace making initiatives (Briggs and Sharp, 2004, pp. 661-76).

### ***3.3.2. The Local Turn and the Aesthetic Turn***

The local turn and the aesthetic turn both share the move away from reliance on ideas of (universal) reasoning/rationality. The local turn does this by acknowledging that diverse societies have their own culture specific norms and if one is to achieve some level of harmony between conflicting parties or intends to encourage integration between various groups, these local traditions must be used, otherwise the model imposed from outside which is fit for another value-system will not sustain itself and if it does, it will be in a problematic manner causing resistance from locals. The aesthetic turn does this by acknowledging that human beings have lenses with different colours seeing the world differently and their emotions have a say in how they perceive world events, causing political phenomenon not to be rigidly interpreted but be dynamic, flexible, fluid, constructed on feelings, sentiments, and sensibilities.

The local turn and the aesthetic turn both share yet another outlook and that is, towards culture as a powerful force in politics. They both stress on the intangible and immaterial forces in world affairs. The aesthetic turn sees cultural elements as involved in politics as material elements with the local turn believing cultural artefacts can actually make up for failed peacebuilding initiatives that ignored local customs.

Cultural factors such as customs, rituals, and invisible daily mannerisms have been the centre of attention in the local turn with poetry being the centre of attention in the aesthetic turn. Both of them however, have been mostly absent from peacebuilding endeavours and considerations in domestic and global politics. They may come together, as I argue is the case with Sa'di's poetry, which has the potential to be an exemplar of both the aesthetic turn and the local turn in Iran, insofar as its inspiring verses motivate Iranian readers to embrace the public good of reconciliation rather than the private interest of self-aggrandizement, not least because its message is deeply reflective of traditional indigenous Iranian values. The reason for this confluence between the aesthetic and the local in Sa'di's poetry is that it is not only an aesthetic source with political implications, but also has been embedded in the country's culture, expressions, education system and identity for centuries (Milani, 2008, pp. 75-6; Safi pour et al., 2010; Zolfaghari, 2010; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Kamali Sarvestani, 2014). Sa'di's poetry has also the potential to be at the border between the local turn and aesthetic turn in Iran, for gaining inspirations towards Iran's behaviour with itself in terms of the conflict of identities (religious and national) within the country.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Chapter 3 has discussed two issues that are highly relevant to my interpretation of the *Rose Garden*: the aesthetic turn and the local turn. On the aesthetic turn, the chapter has analysed the relationship between poetry and politics, and explained how this relationship was exemplified by the Persian Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution of Iran. On the local turn, the chapter has explained the increasing shift in peace studies away from western concepts towards indigenous values. The chapter also explained the connection between the aesthetic turn and local turn. It investigated poetry as one important form of aesthetic expression – and one that can be entangled with (local) politics – including conflict and the politics of peace - in a variety of ways. The political character and role of poetry has been illustrated at two critical junctures in 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian politics. These two junctures were perfect examples of how important the role of poetry has been to the country's politics and although the illustrations were from contemporary poetry, the historic culture – including classic poetry (embedded in Iranian culture today) – may have continuing formative role centuries later rendering it a cultural artefact that can be newly (re)discovered for political purposes. This would indicate that an effort for examining the reconciliatory ideas in Sa'di's poetry (which never permanently went out of style) is worthwhile.

It is part of the argument of the present thesis that Sa'di's *Rose Garden* exemplifies both the aesthetic turn and local turn in politics. It exemplifies the aesthetic turn in terms of using a world renowned poetic source that appeals to human emotions, tastes, sentiments, and imaginations to gain political insights. It exemplifies the local turn in terms of valuing cultural sensitivity so that local customs are respected in order for reconciliation to work (Pigou and Seils, 2003, pp. 28, 31, 39). Sa'di's ideas are themselves expressions of local (Iranian) norms (Foroughi, 1937, pp. 4-8). His *Rose Garden* offers precisely the same kind of local social norms in the advice it offers and in its moral anecdotes. 'Local', for this thesis, of course, refers to Iranian culture, and the cultural artefact used to shed light on Iran's cultural values, beliefs, ways, customs, and traditions is the *Rose Garden* of Sa'di, not least because it has been taught in Iranian schools, including religious seminaries, for centuries at many levels. The *Rose Garden* portrays the country's identity (Haji Yusofi et al., 2014) which sheds light on many Iranian customs in the form of anthropological poetic prose literature. Sa'di himself has also been a cultural icon in the country for centuries (Islamiye Nodoushan, 2011). The importance of poetry for Iranians lies in its capacity to convey messages related to the human condition like Sa'di's *Rose Garden*. It is also a carrier of political views mostly implicit in the case of Sa'di but for modernist poets of Iran, it was explicit. It is strange that the modernist intellectuals did not understand Sa'di's role in that respect as they were only interested in expressing explicitly political views directly related to events of their time, with a limited general humanistic outlook. Persian poetry, due to its position in Persian culture and its influence on the general public, has been used in contemporary Iran to spread socio-political views and positions but in the case of Sa'di has been expressed in a more general and fundamental manner relating to human nature with a strong inclination to moralistic overtones. The next chapter will discuss the issue of transmitting messages from doctrines or writings from one time and place to another, and whether this is a valid practice. This is necessary in order to justify the transposition of Sa'di's ideas from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to modern day.

## Chapter 4. Historiography

*“Sa’di has conversed in the common tongue of all nations.....and it is as if his discourse had been written for today’s world” (Eshtehardi, 1994, p. 22)*

### 4.1 Introduction

Sa’di’s poetry was written in the thirteenth century during a time of great turmoil, especially two great wars, the Crusades and the Mongol invasion of Iran (Spuler, 1987, pp. 894-6). Sa’di lived in a time of conflict which no doubt motivated him to write on human interactions, interconnections, harmony, ways to bring people together, and the consequences if they do not.

Today, Iran is a divided nation with the country split between its religious and national identity (Hunter, 2014a, p. 8). The differences between the social, political and economic circumstances of Sa’di’s life and the circumstances of twenty-first century Iran might lead us to question the relevance of Sa’di’s thought today, especially when in political theory, contextualists emphasise the importance of reading texts in their historical context and warn against treating them as if they have universal relevance across different times (and places). However, although there are great differences between conflicts during Sa’di’s time and the ones in contemporary Iran, the fact remains that harmony and integration were most needed at both times.

In this chapter, I will argue that we can read Sa’di’s work in a way that is sensitive to the context in which he wrote, while at the same time, interpreting his ideas for a modern reader. I begin by introducing the Cambridge School of Contextualism. I distinguish two claims made by the Cambridge School, first that the meaning of a text must be obtained from its context and second, that a writer’s text cannot have relevance for ages and places other than when and where it was written (Skinner, 2002, p. 88). I have respect for the first claim, although do not embrace it entirely, but reject the second claim completely.

This chapter will assess the arguments over the use of past texts in political thought for present day debates. It will examine the schools of thought for and against the practice of perennialism, and will argue that past texts can be legitimately used in contexts other than their own times. In doing so, the chapter will examine the Cambridge School of



contextualism, and attempt to refute its idea that texts or concepts are properly confined to the times in which they emerged. The chapter will make use of three perspectives - 'Eventual Hermeneutics', 'Historic Recurrence', and 'The Great Text Tradition' to show how concepts and texts can be perennial, rendering their use outside their immediate proximity valid. In this way, the path will be paved for the interpretation of Sa'di's *Rose Garden* as containing concepts for human relations and reconciliation which are relevant today in Iran.

There is an important distinction to be made between the issue of whether the historical context of a text is necessary in order for us to understand it; and the issue of whether a text can be legitimately used to interpret political reality in a different historical context. On the first issue, I argue (respecting the Cambridge School) that understanding the context can be helpful in elucidating the meaning of a text by situating that text within the forces that gave rise to it and considering the intentions of the author when uttering the communication but it is not always essential to understanding a text. On the second issue, I believe (in line with the Great Text Tradition) that writings that have been conceived at an abstract, conceptual, philosophical level, can be relevant for later periods. On the second issue, by making use of three perspectives - 'Eventual Hermeneutics', 'Historic Recurrence', and 'The Great Text Tradition' - the chapter will conclude that there is enough reason to give validity to using texts outside their immediate context due to certain texts themselves causing future contexts (Eventual Hermeneutics); similar contexts being echoed through history (Historic Recurrence); and certain classic texts which have fundamental notions in them that resonate with later thinkers (The Great Text Tradition).

## **4.2 Contextualism**

Quentin Skinner, J. G. A. Pocock, and their associates in the Cambridge School of intellectual history defend two central claims. First, they argue that context is vital to understand the meaning of past texts. Skinner cautioned against the practice of treating notions that have arisen from specific circumstances as universal and considered particular circumstances as integral to understanding the ideas. As Skinner says:

“Any statement is inescapably the embodiment of a particular intention on a particular occasion, addressed to the solution of a particular problem, and is thus specific to its context in a way that it can only be naive to try to transcend” (Ibid.)

For Skinner, it was critical to retain the original atmosphere of norms and suppositions from which a text was developed and into which it was placed. William Sewell Jr. supports Skinner

in arguing that intellectual historians have to acknowledge the variances that distinguish one age from another:

“Temporal heterogeneity also implies that understanding or explaining social practices requires historical contextualization. We cannot know what an act or utterance means and what its consequences might be without knowing the semantics, the technologies, the conventions-in brief, the logics-that characterize the world in which the action takes place. Historians tend to explain things not by subsuming them under a general or ‘covering’ law but by relating them to their context.” (Sewell Jr, 2005, p. 10)

Without acknowledging what scholars, such as Confucius, Sa’di, Hobbes, and Locke, intended to achieve by their efforts in their specific context, we risk misconstruing the genuine historical meaning of their work, and the Cambridge School believes it is impossible to understand the intention of the author solely from the words in the text. This intention is what speech act theorists refer to as illocutionary meaning, which can only be grasped in the context of which the act, concept, or text was originally produced. From this point of view, analysis of texts is limited to answering the queries of the time when they were written (Asard, 1987, pp. 101-11).

Second, the Cambridge School claim that ideas expressed in the past are relevant only for their own times and should not be used by later generations to address the different questions that are particular to their time. As Skinner argues:

“The implication is not merely that the classic texts are concerned with their own questions and not with ours; it is also that – to revive R. G. Collingwood’s way of putting the point – there are no perennial problems in philosophy. There are only individual answers to individual questions, and potentially as many different questions as there are questioners” (Skinner, 2002, p. 88).

The Cambridge scholars believe that the questions of our time are different from the questions that great thinkers of the past were addressing. There are no “perennial problems”. Therefore, the answers that they have provided are not directly relevant for us. Their answers should not be treated as timeless and we should not use their ideas as if they were answers to our questions.

It should be noted that the Cambridge School’s two claims are logically distinct. The second claim does not necessarily follow from the first claim. We might believe that the meaning of a text can only be understood in context but believe that historical texts are still relevant today.

This might be the case for, at least, two reasons. First, a particular historic text might be relevant because we think that some problems or questions of the author's time are still important problems or questions today. So, we might reject the radical contextualism implied by Skinner's suggestion that there are "as many different questions as there are questioners" (Ibid.). Second, a particular historic text might be relevant because we think that the problems or questions it addresses are, at least, related to the problems or questions of today in interesting ways. So, even if the questions are not the same, we might still learn something of interest as long as we carefully take into account the contextual differences.

We can believe that context is important for understanding the meaning of an historical text without believing that it is essential or that we need to fully understand the context to understand the meaning of a text. Similarly, we can believe that we should be very careful how we use historic texts to inform our thinking about today's problems without believing that they cannot be of any use for thinking about today's problems or questions.

In this section, I have outlined two claims made by the Cambridge School of Contextualism and have suggested that even if we accept the first claim (in its strong form) we need not be committed to the second claim. In the next section, I outline a number of important reasons for scepticism about the strong form of contextualism proposed by the Cambridge School.

### **4.3 Against the First Contextualist Claim**

A number of powerful arguments have been put forward in opposition to the dependency on context as a method for understanding past texts. First, it has been pointed out that our understanding of a context may in turn be dependent on past texts, so there is an element of circularity in the position of the Cambridge School. If comprehending a document requires its contextualization, a problem arises if the context requires textualization (Lacapra, 1980, pp. 245-76). The context may not be an independent variable, but, at least in part, dependent on the text. So it will be the text which elucidates the context, not the context elaborating the intentions of the text.

Second, even if the contemporary context can be known independently of the text (so there is no circularity) it cannot be known independently of the mental functioning of the modern historian, since all knowledge is filtered through the thought processes of the investigator. How then can we know that the context is being accurately portrayed by whatever sources are used to comprehend it? How can we be sure that the contemporary context helps us to ascertain the intentions of a writer if we cannot be sure of the veracity of our picture of that

context? In other words, if our interpretation of a writer's context is distorted by the modern lens through which we view it, is not our interpretation of a writer's intention equally distorted by the modern lens through which we view that context? Contexts do not just relay themselves or their features without being questioned or examined by their present readers. Benedetto Croce's statement that "all history is contemporary history" (Roberts, 1995, p. 94) infers that no historical context is known without its present reconstruction (which is an active effort not a passive one) (Conati, 2015, pp. 54-60). The use of paradigms and techniques to bring to life the context has been noted by Hayden White thus:

"Every contextualization requires, as a condition of its enablement as a representational or an explanatory strategy, a formalist component, which is to say, a theoretical model on the basis of which, first, to distinguish contexts from the entities inhabiting them; second, to generate hypotheses about the nature of the relations between the entities and the contexts thus distinguished...." (White, 1999, p. 51)

Skinner's application of the speech act theory of J. L. Austin and John Searle is a case of the formalist component that White describes. As Vincent Crapanzano points out, "Whatever their objective claims, contextualizations are never neutral. They always have an imperative function; they tell us how the exchange they 'enclose' is to be read. They confirm, thereby, the theoretical underpinning of the rationalizations for such instructions" (Crapanzano, 1992, p. 210). Even Skinner concedes that "we inevitably approach the past in the light of contemporary paradigms and presuppositions, the influence of which may easily serve to mislead us at every turn" (Skinner, 1998a, p. 281). Therefore, the historian is always imposing present frameworks on past contexts as well as past texts and because s/he is actively engaged in this process, issues of bias about both contexts and texts are a possibility.

Third, another problem with contextualism is how to decide what the relevant context is when studying texts, especially if they are far back in time or the contexts are complex and multifaceted. This issue was raised by Dominick LaCapra (1989, p. 203): "over contextualization often occludes the problem of the very grounds on which to motivate a selection of pertinent contexts... The farther back one goes in time, the less obvious the contexts informing discourse tend to become, and the more difficult it may be, at least in a technical, philological sense, to reconstruct them."

Fourth, there is the issue of which context takes priority. When investigating, there are layers of different contexts the historical actor is embedded in, including dynasty, education system of the country, spoken language of the time, religious issues, political system, social norms,

generational life styles, family values, and economic background. Skinner responded to this concern by stating that however complicated a context might be, “we can readily single out the most crucial element in it. This is the fact that all serious utterances are characteristically intended as acts of communication” (Skinner, 1998a, p. 274). Therefore, since communications are created to convey something, there is an intention behind them and that can be used to see which force in the context is the most enabling one.

However, this explanation creates a fifth problem about intentions, namely, what if the historical actor has subconscious intentions, or what if the actor has intentions that he does not realize until later on, or what if the actor has hidden intentions that are not easily identified? Skinner’s answer is that we must assume a human rationality: “Unless we begin by assuming the agent’s rationality, we leave ourselves with no means of explaining his behaviour, or even of seeing exactly what there is to explain about it, if it should happen that he is not acting rationally” (Skinner, 1998b, p. 113). But this answer seems to contradict the contextualist assumption that there is no indisputable notion of rationality that can be used ahistorically which transcends cultures in any condition or circumstance. An assumption of rationality runs the risk of imposing current standards on the past, which contextualists deplore.

Sixth, what is the evidence for the contextualists’ assumption that contexts shape historical actors and explain their ideas? How do we know whether contexts are a cause for a text being written? How sure are we that a text was intended to address an issue just because that issue was in trend at that time? Perhaps the text caused a context rather than the other way round. Claude Romano has touched on this possibility, referring to it as “evential hermeneutics”, arguing that writing can cause as well as be caused by a certain situation. A text can be the cause of many phenomena after it was written or spoken. There are texts, speeches and concepts that initiate a movement or phenomenon:

“But is all understanding of events limited to explaining them by grasping their meaning in light of a prior context? This would undoubtedly be the case were it not for events that radically upend their context and, far from being submitted to a horizon of prior meaning, are themselves the origin of meaning for any interpretation, in that they can be understood less from the world that precedes them than from the posterity to which they give rise” (Romano, 2009, p. 38).

By ‘events’, Romano refers to any and all undertakings which a context has given rise to, or that specific undertaking (providing a concept or text) which itself has given rise to a new context. There are texts that can be better understood in terms of what they bring about later

rather than what influenced them or gave rise to them. In this way, the text, speech, or concept is a cause not an effect. For example, Romano claims about a work of art that it “cannot be understood in its singularity except from the posterity to which it gives rise, the refashioning it brings about in the forms, themes, and techniques of a period. A work of art cannot be understood within the artistic context in which it is born, which it necessarily transcends if it is an original work” (Ibid., p. 62). Romano is advising the contemporary researcher, when looking at historic events, to beware of its context as it might not be sufficient to explain or interpret it: “understanding events is always apprehending them on a horizon of meaning that they have opened themselves, in that they are strictly non-understandable in the light of their explanatory context” (Ibid., p. 152).

Randall Collins takes a similar view:

“Intellectuals are people who produce decontextualized ideas. These ideas are meant to be true or significant apart from any locality, and apart from anyone concretely putting them into practice. A mathematical formula claims to be true in and of itself, whether or not it is useful, and apart from whoever believes it. A work of literature, or of history, claims the same sort of status, insofar as it is conceived as art or scholarship: part of a realm that is higher, more valid, less constrained by particular occasions of human action than ordinary kinds of thoughts and things... Intellectual products are felt, at least by their creators and consumers, to belong to a realm which is peculiarly elevated. They are part of Durkheim’s “*la vie sérieuse*”. One can recognize intellectual ideas as sacred objects in the strongest sense; they inhabit the same realm, make the same claims to ultimate reality, as religion”. (Collins, 1998, p. 19)

Nietzsche adds this very relevant statement about intellectual history,

“The greatest events and thoughts-but the greatest thoughts are the greatest events-are the last to be comprehended: generations that are their contemporaries do not experience these sorts of events, – they live right past them. The same thing happens here as happens in the realm of stars. The light from the furthest stars is the last to come to people; and until it has arrived, people will deny that there are stars out there. “How many centuries does it take for a spirit to be comprehended?”” (Nietzsche, 2002, p. 171)

The meaning of a Ferdowsi, a Sa’di, a Hobbes, or a Locke may be intimately attached to the future they created, the followers they encouraged, the new ways of thinking they started, the very different world they opened, the lives they influenced, the passions they sparked, and doubts they may arouse.

So far, I have argued that there are good reasons for doubting the Cambridge School claim that understanding the context in which an historical text was produced is essential for understanding the meaning of the text. In the next section, I outline two arguments for rejecting the Cambridge School's second claim that we cannot use historic texts to inform our thinking about today's problems.

#### **4.4 Against the Second Contextualist Claim**

There are two important lines of argument against the claim that we should not make use of historical texts to inform our thinking about current problems. The first argument suggests that historical circumstances may not be as unique as contextualism implies. Instead, we can learn from history because history repeats itself in a variety of ways. So, we can expect that some historic texts will be relevant for thinking about contemporary problems. The second argument makes the stronger claim that some problems are perennial problems. On this argument, the great historical texts will always be relevant for contemporary problems.

The first line of argument points out that strong contextualism implies we can never learn from history because its lessons must be solely for their immediate proximity, not any other situation. Critics, such as Trompf (1979) argue against this understanding of history. In contrast, Trompf proposes the concept of 'Historic Recurrence' (Trompf, 1979, pp. ix, x, 1-2), which is the repetition of like events in the duration of history, history mirroring itself, history having a way of echoing itself, or incidents throughout history transpiring in resonance. The concept of historic recurrence, Trompf (1979, pp. 2-3) claims, is exemplified in the following alternative or complementary modalities: a cyclical or oscillatory sequence (historic events going through a sequence of phases and coming back to their original point of departure, beginning the cycle or oscillation all over again); a pattern (events unfolding in such a manner demonstrating an overall pattern in history); re-enactment (a particular action, especially a profound one, recurring later in deeds of others); renaissance (the establishment of an approved state of affairs revitalizing past states of affairs which were seen as obsolete or invalid); predictable change (certain social changes being classic, frequent, and predictable); uniformity of human nature (human nature being generally the same throughout history, it is natural to have recurrences); historical similarities (very isolated and distinct historic phenomenon having startling similarities); and history affording lessons (the human past having lessons for the human future, since events that happened in the past can happen again).

All of these modalities have one message: humans will lose a very valuable source of guidance if they discard the past and avoid its use in the present. There is so much resource

available in history and with these modalities, so much evidence that history does repeat itself, and that losing this valuable resource looking at the past only in the light of its original context unrelated to the present, will be a fatal mistake. As Edmund Burke (1814, p. 35) puts it: “People will not look forward to posterity, who never look backward to their ancestors”.

George Santayana wrote in his classic work ‘*The Life of Reason*’ in 1905 that,

“Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When change is absolute there remains no being to improve and no direction is set for possible improvement: and when experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. In the first stage of life the mind is frivolous and easily distracted: it misses progress by failing in consecutiveness and persistence. This is the condition of children and barbarians, in which instinct has learned nothing from experience.” (Santayana, 1905, p. 284)

Mark Twain (1903, p. 64) also enunciates the notion of historic recurrence when he states that "a favorite theory of mine-to wit, that no occurrence is sole and solitary, but is merely a repetition of a thing which has happened before, and perhaps often" (Twain, 2009, p. 287).

Chuck Palahniuk (2003, p. 118) also claims that history reiterates itself, “There are only patterns, patterns on top of patterns, patterns that affect other patterns. Patterns hidden by patterns. Patterns within patterns. If you watch close, history does nothing but repeat itself. What we call chaos is just patterns we haven't recognized. What we call random is just patterns we can't decipher”.

On these accounts, the past may be related to the present in many different ways and we can learn about the present from thinkers of the past. We might reasonably expect that there would have been times in the past when people faced some problems sufficiently similar to the problems we face today or could face in the future, so we might fruitfully make use of their ideas to address them.

The second line of criticism of contextualism is that not only is there a recurrence of *events* in history, but there is a recurrence of *ideas* in history. This criticism comes from subscribers to the ‘Great Text Tradition’, whose main proponent was Arthur Lovejoy. This tradition believes that scholars of the past have deliberated on political dilemmas which continually echo throughout history. The assumption made by these writers is that many political concerns are trans-historical in nature, and each generation can learn from discovering what past thinkers had to say about them (Lamb, 2009, pp. 51-73). Skinner (2002, p. 57) rehearses the arguments used by advocates of the Great Text Tradition thus:



“The task of the historian of ideas is to study and interpret a canon of classic texts. The value of writing this kind of history stems from the fact that the classic texts in moral, political, religious and other such modes of thought contain a ‘dateless wisdom’ in the form of ‘universal ideas’. As a result, we can hope to learn and benefit directly from investigating these ‘timeless elements’, since they possess a perennial relevance. This in turn suggests that the best way to approach these texts must be to concentrate on what each of them says about each of the ‘fundamental concepts’ and ‘abiding questions’ of morality, politics, religion, social life. We must be ready, in other words, to read each of the classic texts ‘as though it were written by a contemporary’. It is indeed essential to approach them in this way, focusing simply on their arguments and examining what they have to tell us about the perennial issues. If instead we become sidetracked into examining the social conditions or the intellectual contexts out of which they arose, we shall lose sight of their dateless wisdom and thereby lose contact with the value and purpose of studying them.”

Skinner does not deny that political concepts have endured throughout history, but he rejects the unhistorical assumption that we can understand texts by merely picking out their contributions to these perennial issues:

“To say this is not to deny that there have been long continuities in Western moral, social and political philosophy, and that these have been reflected in the stable employment of a number of key concepts and modes of argument. It is only to say that there are good reasons for not continuing to organise our histories around the study of such continuities, so that we end up with yet more studies of the kind in which, say, the views of Plato, Augustine, Hobbes and Marx on ‘the nature of the just state’ are laid out and compared.” (Ibid., pp. 85-6)

Lovejoy defends the perennial problems thesis, and according to Wickberg, urges the historian to put his “mind at work in an embrace of transhistorical reason, independent of language, power, and contradiction” (Wickberg, 2014, p. 443). For Lovejoy, it was naive to think that history does not return: “There is nothing more naive, or more indicative of a failure to learn one of the real lessons of the history of thought, than the tendency of some, even among philosophers, to take the bare fact that a way of thinking is now ‘de mode’ as indicative either that it is false or that it will not come back” (Lovejoy, 1940, p. 21). Mark Poster (1982, p. 137) characterised Lovejoy’s views on studying history as a “search for shifting configurations of eternal ideas as expressed by the most refined philosophical minds”. Daniel Wickberg (2014, p. 450) describes Lovejoy as: “Unlike those historians of political language who followed Skinner, Lovejoy was willing to see meanings from different

intellectual sources making their way from one era to the next or skipping in and around discursive formations”.

There are many commentators on political philosophers of the past who have adopted a textual approach to their subjects (Lamb, 2009, p. 58). For example, the analysis of Hobbes’ political philosophy by Gregory S. Kavka (1986) does not engage with contextual concerns, nor does the interpretation of Marx by G.A. Cohen (1978). The work on Locke by Jeremy Waldron (2002) espouses a strictly non-contextualist foundation, which Waldron (2002, p. 8) finds untroubling:

“So, someone may ask, with all this potential for anachronism and misunderstanding, what could possibly be the point of lining up John Locke alongside an array of twentieth- and twenty-first-century thinkers—say, Bernard Williams, John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and Amartya Sen—as a leading theorist of equality? What could possibly be the point of my saying—as I said at the beginning of these introductory remarks that a body of work first published three hundred years ago is as well worked-out a theory of basic equality as we have in the canon of political philosophy?..... I am not an historian of ideas, and most of my work on Locke and other thinkers in the canon of political philosophy has proceeded in a way that is largely untroubled by worries like these.”

Another book on Locke is by Michael Otsuka (2003) entitled ‘*Libertarianism without Inequality*’ which explicitly exploits Locke’s ideas to inform current debates: “I will develop—and modify and revise as necessary—those ideas in the Second Treatise that I find true, interesting, and illuminating of topics of contemporary concern among analytic political philosophers” (Otsuka, 2003, p. 1). All these interpretations of historical texts make use of the work of past intellectuals in addressing difficulties of the present or issues of trans-historical concern (Lamb, 2009, p. 58).

It is common for analytical political theorists to adopt a textualist approach to the work of historic political thinkers. However, we do not need to assume that there are perennial problems or that major political concepts, such as justice or reconciliation, do not change over time to believe that the ideas of historic thinkers can usefully inform our thinking about today’s problems. We only need to believe that the present is connected to the past in ways that would allow us to learn from those who have tried to address the problems and questions of the past whilst keeping differences of time and place in mind.

## 4.5 Conclusion

I have argued against both claims of the Cambridge School, rejecting strong contextualism about how we should understand the meaning of texts and about the use of historical texts to inform thinking about current problems. However, I do not mean to dismiss the relevance of context for understanding the meaning of a text. Nor do I mean to suggest that we should not be concerned with differences between contexts when we use historical texts to inform thinking about current problems. Understanding context can help us to understand meaning; but understanding context may not be essential to understanding meaning nor does context determine meaning. Understanding the differences between contexts is important to the fruitful use of ideas from historical thinkers; but differences in context do not mean that we should not try to learn from the ideas of historical thinkers.

In this thesis, I aim to understand the meaning of Sa'di's socio-political ideas – in particular, the central idea of reconciliation or harmony and the ideas that Sa'di associated with it or underpin it (justice, bond, disposition, decency, and rationality). My aim is to bring these ideas into sharper focus for two reasons. First, as noted before, Sa'di's poetry has exerted a continuing influence on the culture of Iran for centuries; he is an example of a historic thinker whose ideas have repeatedly informed thinking about problems in other times. Therefore, developing a more thorough understanding of his ideas might contribute to developing a better understanding of his potential or actual influence. Second, developing a more thorough understanding of his ideas might help to make them available for use in addressing contemporary problems – always taking into account contextual differences where that is appropriate. This is significant as scholars have claimed that the secret to Sa'di perennial influence is his focus on the basic daily needs of people (Haji Yusofi et al, 2014) and issues fundamental to human nature (Motlagh, 2010).

The next chapter will analyse the *Rose Garden* of Sa'di Shirazi based on five overarching principles of reconciliation and an added supplementary 6<sup>th</sup> principle on anti-reconciliation. The passages within each principle will be interpreted and scrutinized for assessing whether they have the potential to inform subsequent thought and discourse on reconciliation and associated topics.

## **Chapter 5. Analysis of the Principles of Reconciliation in the *Rose Garden* of Sa'di Shirazi**

*“The monotheistic perspective of Islamic intercultural humanism, therefore, concentrates on togetherness, connectedness, and belonging to humanity. The Persian poet Sa'di illustrates this sense of belonging when he depicts the universality of pain that is human in nature” (Spariosu and Rösen, 2012, p. 95)*

*“If anyone had truly understood the Rose Garden, he would have become a competent diplomat” (Sha'bani, 2010, cited in Safi pour et al., 2010).*

*“In Sa'di's mind, peace is always preferable to war; that is why one must avoid initiating conflicts, and only in the case of an enemy's assault and his continued belligerence, must he be fiercely confronted” (Zahedi, 2013)*

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, a close textual examination is made of Sa'di's masterpiece, the *Rose Garden*, to elicit the meaning and implications of his profound but complex reflections on fundamental principles of human conduct. I focus especially on his views about human relations, interactions, interconnections, reconciliation, and integration, to analyse how central these views are in his conception of life; what messages he intends them to convey to us; how consistent he is in expressing them, and whether there is an underlying narrative binding them together. It was declared in the introduction that reconciliation, for this project, does not imply that two parties were necessarily at conflict and the notion of reconciling is ushering peace between them. In this thesis, the *Rose Garden* is analysed for its lessons in bringing any peoples closer together, no matter whether there existed a conflict between them. The term reconciliation is merely inferring the bringing of roses closer together in order to create the garden which Sa'di envisions. Rose Garden is the higher state of civilization where there is relative harmony or coexistence between roses. Individual roses (human entities) cannot make a garden, but when they come together, a rose garden or higher state of harmony is born where they are integrated.

From my research, there are five main principles or pillars that underpin Sa'di's vision of the Rose Garden, providing the disparate passages with an element of continuity or consanguinity. These pillars or principles are justice, bond, decency, rationality, and disposition, and each of them exemplifies not only a pillar of the world Sa'di intends to build but also an instrument in creating that world. This is not to say these are the only fundamental

principles in the book, nor is it to imply that the five principles are self-contained or consistent, either in themselves, or with each other. On the contrary, they are ambiguous and even self-contradictory, and sometimes overlap and clash with each other. They are not so much well-defined concepts as constellations or clusters of related notions. As noted before, from the principles, bond is the most vital and closest to the world of harmony Sa'di envisages, and there is considerable overlapping between decency and disposition; although decency is a deed, it is done more consciously, and can even be acquired, where disposition is more innate, is more subconscious and within one's personality, nature, temperament, and character. Sa'di is not a rigorous political or social philosopher who systematically sets out his philosophy in a methodical fashion. In the *Rose Garden*, he offers his deep reflections on the human condition in a loosely organised order, often in anecdotal form, in both verse and prose. Sometimes his writing is clear and straightforward, but at other times it is complex and ambiguous. At times he makes use of elaborate literary devices such as metaphors, analogies, and myths; at other times his style is descriptive and narrative, though it is often elliptical and allusive and sometimes obscure. Most of the time, he seems to be conveying a message to his readers, though often not directly but through the words of others, which raises the issue of whether he is simply observing an action rather than endorsing it.

This means there is considerable scope for different interpretations of the contents of the *Rose Garden*. As pointed out earlier, within the literature, most commentators (especially in Iran) who have worked intensely on Sa'di, have been content to study the linguistic and literary features of the *Rose Garden* rather than examine his political or social principles. However, the book by Alireza Azghandi (2012) which is titled '*The Political Thought of Sa'di*', although not focusing on the *Rose Garden* itself, is the most similar work to this thesis. Several concepts discussed in the book are also discussed in my thesis, including realism, pragmatism, moderation, intellect, prudence, justice, fairness, judgment, ethics, morality, and human behaviour in state and society, but they are presented in his book in a descriptive and informative way, not interrogating them deeply. Moreover, this commentary has little or nothing to say about Sa'di's ideas on reconciliation, which in my view is the central social and political idea in the *Rose Garden*. Although other scholars have drawn attention to Sa'di's reconciliatory views (Soleimani, 2009; Gharagoozloo, 2010; Davam, 2010; Zahedi, 2013; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Kazzazi, 2017; Khazir, 2017; Shirazi, 2017, p. 237; Tahoor Islamic Encyclopaedia, 2017a), no work (to the author's knowledge) has interrogated the passages of the *Rose Garden* in this much detail to determine the basis and coherence of that reconciliatory urge.

Before beginning to examine the five principles, it is worth pausing to reflect, in more detail, on the term 'rose garden' itself. Why would Sa'di have chosen this title for this collection of verses and prose? The term 'rose garden' conveys a picture of natural peace and tranquillity, but a space which is cultivated carefully to maintain order and stability, especially by regularly pruning to prevent some roses overwhelming others. Unlike a single rose, a garden of roses can be created to form a harmonious whole in which each individual plant is valued both in itself and because of its relationship with other plants. It is likely that Sa'di meant the notion of the rose garden to serve as a metaphor for a society in which people are blended into a condition of mutual cooperation and peaceful coexistence, all embedded in the same soil, contributing to each other's growth and well-being.

I believe it was Sa'di's humanism which led him to envision a higher more developed state of harmony between people (Rose Garden), because this state would safeguard man's survival and prosperity. The five reconciliatory principles are the pillars of this new civilisation and the anti-reconciliatory 6<sup>th</sup> principle is the place where Sa'di protects this new order and admits that where reconciliation does not reduce human pain or increase human happiness, it should not be pursued. Accordingly, the five reconciliatory principles are means to a state of harmony between people (rose garden) and the rose garden itself means to human wellbeing and prosperity (Sa'di's humanism).

Passages of verse and prose illustrating the five principles will be stated in the Persian (Farsi/Parsi) language, followed by my translation into English tailored as simple as possible for the common English reader, and an official translation by a respected authority given in the appendix and referred to in footnotes, to ensure that my translations are unbiased. I will then provide an explanation of the meaning and significance of these passages and on their implications for Sa'di's views on reconciliation. The words I have chosen to exemplify the five principles, whether in Persian or English, are the closest terms that I can find to denote the relevant clusters of ideas provided by Sa'di. A Persian and English word has been used to denote each cluster,

**عدل [Justice], وصل [Bond], تعقل [Rationality], اخلاق مدارى [Decency], سيرت [Disposition]**

but in reality they cannot be fully described by a single word. Besides the five reconciliatory principles (or pillars of the world Sa'di wishes to build based on human integration) which will be discussed, an added section will examine Sa'di's anti-reconciliatory or combative and confrontational views (sixth principle) in order to make sense of his clashing or even contradictory ideas. It must be noted that occasionally, the verses and prose do not exactly

reflect the principle they are under or even the concept of reconciliation of the thesis. At times, the passages within the five reconciliatory principles have anti-reconciliatory elements within them and even the passages in the 6<sup>th</sup> anti-reconciliatory principle can be seen to have reconciliatory elements. This is a notable aspect of Sa'di's fluid multi-faceted prose poetry which infers rather than communicating everything in a direct manner. Sa'di's fluid writing creates the dilemma of multiple simultaneous and at times contradictory messages emerging, which on occasion makes it difficult to pin them down unambiguously to particular principles, but genuine effort has been made in this regard.

Because of the massive amount of prose poetry in the *Rose Garden*, not all of the passages illustrating the five (or six) principles could be included in this chapter. However, all the omitted passages have been scrutinized and referred to in footnotes so if the reader wishes to see more illustrations of a principle, he/she can look up the pages noted from the *Rose Garden*. Although every reader can have his/her own opinion on whether and how much each passage reflects the principle it is under or how much it is related to the broad definition of reconciliation within this thesis, I have attempted my own interpretation of Sa'di's masterpiece which is organised below. This issue is due to the elegant elusiveness of the *Rose Garden* where its flexibility is like a master key allowing any reader to open a door within his/her own mind finding answers particular to him/her. At times, different angles of the same point Sa'di refers to have been placed in the text so the reader can view how Sa'di looks at an issue differently. The fact that some passages can be placed under various principles simultaneously, although adds difficulty to the project, is a blessing not a curse in that it reveals the subtlety of Sa'di's sensibility. His writing is often deep and profound, and it sometimes keeps the reader guessing what Sa'di meant. Even a certain passage might be understood differently not by just different people, but at different times by the same individual, depending on the reader's state of mind. Basically, every time one looks at it, he/she might discover something new. That is ofcourse the mark of a genius and the reason why Sa'di is the master of discourse who cannot be placed in a rigid framework.

## 5.2 Justice

### عدالت

*“By distributing more to what is greater and smaller amounts to what is lesser, it gives due measure to each according to their nature: this includes greater honors always to those who are greater as regards virtue, and what is fitting—in due proportion—to those who are just the opposite as regards virtue and education. Presumably this is just what constitutes for us political justice” (Plato, 1988, p.143).*

Justice or عدالت is a principle within state and society but more importantly a pursuit throughout human history in that it is the basis of movements and struggles and gives legitimacy to causes and wars. Justice in English can be defined as “behaviour or treatment based on or according to what is morally right and fair, deserved or reasonable or appropriate in the circumstances” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017bc).

Sa’di’s account of justice is multi-faceted. At its centre is a commitment to the fundamental equality or equal dignity of all persons. For Sa’di, the equal dignity of persons means that everyone should be treated fairly. However, his account of justice also bears the hallmarks of his time insofar as he assumes that people occupy different and clearly-defined roles. For example, some people are kings while others are their subjects. Yet, Sa’di makes clear that the roles that people occupy in this world do not define their true character. Moreover, he rejects the idea that kings can do as they please. Tyranny is unjust. The role of the king is to promote the well-being of his subjects and justice demands that he fulfils that role. More generally, Sa’di’s account of justice in distribution requires that everyone has enough to live a decent life. He demands beneficence from the wealthy and views greed as a serious vice. In this regard, Sa’di’s concept of justice entails that people of wealth and power treat persons in lower positions with righteousness.

Sa’di also believes in a generalized reciprocity: those who act justly to others will benefit from being treated justly by others; those who act unjustly to others will suffer retribution in the form of bad consequences or bad treatment (sometimes from those they have treated badly, sometimes from other people, sometimes as divine punishment, or sometimes from damage to their reputation). In relation to retribution, Sa’di’s concept of justice is expressed in the notion of reprisals where persons who suffer at the hands of the great will eventually take revenge. Sa’di’s commitment to retributive justice is a recurring theme in his stories. He even proposes a principle of proportionality to guide punishment of those who act unjustly. Punishment, for Sa’di, is a central issue which is quite odd since he is influenced by mystics or dervishes who were more pacifist and passive. The centrality of punishment in his thought can easily be attributed to his life situations especially the Mongol invasion where he lost his mentor, and the Crusades which enslaved him.

Overall, Justice for Sa’di can be seen in various guises including distribution, equality, retribution, revenge, the action-reaction dynamic in getting what one has given, small crimes especially committed by rulers leading to big crimes by others, financial corruption, cruel rule



leading to instability of the state, proportionate punishment, and the contrast between moral justice versus legal justice.

For Sa'di, peace and justice are intimately connected. Justice, for Sa'di, is a means of creating harmony between groups in state and society, and between individuals, and non-adherence to it, a cause of tension and discord. In the *Rose Garden*, justice is one of the pillars which prevents conflict and sows harmony between various groups. Justice is both a necessary means to and partly constitutive of a peaceful society. Peace cannot be maintained without justice. However, there are also times when we must forego the direct or short-term promotion of peace to ensure that we respond appropriately to injustice (having clear links with Sa'di's anti-reconciliatory attitudes-6<sup>th</sup> principle). If we can tackle injustice – and ensure that just retribution is exacted – we should do so because that is the only way that we can effectively promote peace and justice (or a just peace) in the long-term. A peaceful/harmonious society is a just society (and one where justice is restored when unjust actions are punished).

Sa'di's conceptions of justice can be related to his religious nature due to God's unhappiness with the unjust. They can also be traced back through a long Iranian tradition of justice in Iran from the time of Cyrus the Great and his cylinder of human rights (Simpson, 2013), Zoroastrianism (the religion of Iran before the Arab invasion) (Stausberg, 2004, pp. 359, 363, 365), to Islam (Bacchus, 2014, p. 5-9) and Shi'ism (Mutahhari, Ibn Abu Talib and Al-Jibouri, 2009, pp. 63-81). In the *Rose Garden*, justice is one of the pillars underlying Sa'di's desired harmonious state. In the remainder of this section, the prose poetry of Sa'di provides vivid illustrations of his lessons related to justice.

A striking feature of Sa'di's concept of justice is that it is based not only on sympathy or empathy, but also upon rational calculation of self-interest. Justice is also treasured because it creates a win-win situation: justice is not only beneficial for the person receiving it but also for the person dispensing it, because justice is a way of reducing threats to persons who act justly, reducing tension at the time or future paving the way for added harmony. If we show mercy or beneficence towards the weak, we will be treated well by the strong. It is not clear that by punishment from the strong Sa'di means people or God or both. Understanding his Islamic inclinations and life experiences, both look plausible:

"هر که بر زیر دستان نبخشاید      به جور زیر دستان گرفتار آید  
نه هر بازو که در وی قوتی هست      به مردی عاجزان را بشکند دست

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 298)

*"He who does not show benevolence to his inferiors will be entrapped by the persecution of his superiors*

*Not every arm which possesses strength can break the arms of the helpless in a show of manliness. Do not hurt the hearts of the weak or you will be redeemed (rectified/remedied) by the punishment from the strong"*<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned, for Sa'di, an important manifestation of justice lies in retribution. This is exemplified in a story below where Sa'di assumes that justice is done if the guilty are punished for their offences, and punishment carried out by the victim on the perpetrator appears to be a particularly satisfactory form of justice:

" مردم آزاری را حکایت کنند که سنگی بر سر صالحی زد درویش را مجال انتقام نبود سنگ را نگاه همی‌داشت تا زمانی که ملک را بر آن لشکری خشم آمد و در چاه کرد درویش اندر آمد و سنگ در سرش کوفت. گفتا تو کیستی و مرا این سنگ چرا زدی گفت من فلانم و این همان سنگست که در فلان تاریخ بر سر من زدی. گفت چندین روزگار کجا بودی گفت از جاهت اندیشه همی‌کردم، اکنون که در چاهت دیدم فرصت غنیمت دانستم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 49)

*"It is narrated that a cruel person hit the head of a decent man with a rock but since that poor man had not the means to retaliate, he held the rock with himself until the persecutor fell out of favour with the king of the land and was thrown into a dungeon as his confinement. At that time, the poor man came and threw the same rock at his head. The persecutor shouted: 'who are you and why did you hit me with this stone?' The mystic said: 'I am the same person you hit me with a rock on the head at a certain point in time and this rock is that very same rock'. The persecutor said: 'where have you been all this time?' He replied: 'I was afraid of your position but now that I see you in a dungeon, I seized an opportunity'"*<sup>8</sup>

There are four dimensions of Sa'di's concept of justice revealed in this tale. The first dimension is his observation that people are so blinded by power that they think they can act

<sup>7</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 7. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of justice where there is an action and reaction involved within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi published in 2006, pp.31,167, 287.

<sup>8</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 8. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of justice where there is an action and reaction involved within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi published in 2006, pp.31,167, 287.

unjustly with impunity. The second dimension is that for Sa'di, opportunism is quite compatible with justice: he is telling the reader to be pragmatic and sensible in deciding how and when to strike in retaliation. The third dimension is the sweetness of symmetry in retribution. The rock held by the pious man for so long has a reason: the pious man could have used another rock but Sa'di is trying to convey to his audience how the pain of afflicted hearts can linger and how long humans are willing to wait for sweet vengeance. The fourth dimension is that the story illustrates the Newtonian principle that every action precipitates a reaction: maybe not that day or that specific moment, but reaction from people who were hurt can come anytime. In this way, justice can bring peace in a person's life and society by minimizing vengeful actions and leading people closer together (this passage has implications for the principle of rationality as it asks people to think prudently before acting against one).

There is a sentiment within the *Rose Garden* of the inescapability of retributive justice. It can come in many forms but it always comes. Taking retribution – or acting aggressively to those who have acted immorally or unjustly – does not appear to directly and immediately promote peace or reconciliation. However, it is a step towards a long-term just peace because retributive justice restores the conditions for a just peace. In addition, the threat of just retribution might motivate just action that avoids harm to others and promotes peace and reconciliation among people. This action and reaction dynamic deters people (not all) from acting unjustly creating discord.

Although Sa'di believes in the ethical and idealistic value of justice, he uses pragmatic and self-interested themes to convince his audience to adhere to justice, since not all people will be convinced by ethical and normative arguments. Below, Sa'di uses the sensitive matter of the survival of the state as a persuasion tactic:

"نکند جور پیشه سلطانی  
که نیاید ز گرگ چوپانی  
پادشاهی که طرح ظلم افکند  
پای دیوار ملک خویش بکند"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 26-7)

*"A man of cruelty cannot become ruler as a wolf will not become a shepherd"*

*"A King who is cruel only destroys his own realm"*<sup>9</sup>

In the above lines, Sa'di gives a warning to those in power that their weapons and wealth will protect them only so far. If they desire the survival of their regimes, they need to engage sensitively with their subjects, treating them fairly in order to win them over. In this way again, Sa'di is explaining the pragmatic benefits of being just for a ruler. The analogy of a tyrannical man to a wolf signifies Sa'di's insistence that it is a categorical error to associate tyranny with kingship, just as it is a categorical error to associate a wolf with a shepherd. Sheep do not follow wolves, but are afraid of them, and instead they follow their shepherd who takes them to places where they can safely graze. Sa'di attempts to bring ruler and ruled closer together. The above passage attempts to shed light on how peace in a country can be established by bringing state and society closer through the principle of justice. (It has implications for the rationality principle requiring rulers calculate the consequences of their decisions).

In many verses, Sa'di characterises justice as an essential obligation. So much that for example, in the following story, Sa'di argues that it would be better for a ruler to die rather than to oppress his subjects.

"درویشی مستجاب الدعوة در بغداد پدید آمد حجاج یوسف را خبر کردند بخواندش و گفت دعای خیری بر من کن. گفت  
خدایا جانم بستان گفت از بهر خدای این چه دعاست گفت این دعای خیرست ترا و جمله مسلمانان را

ای زبردست زیر دست آزار

گرم تا کی بماند این بازار

به چه کار آیدت جهانداری

مردنت به که مردم آزاری"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 32)

*"A mystic with a blessed gift of having his wishes and prayers come true, appeared in Baghdad. Hajaj Yusef was informed and the mystic was summoned. Hajaj Yusef told the mystic: 'perform a favourable prayer for me'. The mystic replied: 'Oh God, take his life'.*

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<sup>9</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 9. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of justice between a person of power in the state and a weak individual within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 26, 31, 47-8, 50, 51, 55, 61.

*Hajaj Yusef said: 'For God's sake what kind of wish is that?' The mystic replied: 'This prayer is beneficial to you and all Muslims'.*

*Oh you man of power who hurt the ones inferior to you*

*I wonder, how long this situation can go on?*

*Why should you be a sovereign?*

*Your death is preferable to hurting people''<sup>10</sup>*

In this story, it seems the mystic is praying to God to end the life of the merciless ruler not only to benefit innocent subjects by saving them from being oppressed, but also to benefit the ruler by saving him from committing further acts of oppression. In this way, the dervish would save both the victims and the ruler. On saving the victims, the rhetorical question asked by the dervish - '*Why should you be a sovereign?*' – signifies Sa'di's strong belief that the only proper use of authority is to promote the prosperity of the people who are subject to it (nature of kingship/sovereignty). For Sa'di, authority should be used in a positive manner, not in a manner which increases the number of a person's bad deeds. However, what does Sa'di mean by saying that death is favourable to the ruler? Does he mean that dying faster on earth would save the ruler from further punishment in the after-life? It would seem that Sa'di is ironically being very decent with the ruler in wishing him death as to reduce his sins and suffering in the next world and reduce suffering he brings upon people in this world. (The principle of decency comes to mind here).

The story is a powerfully vivid, explicit criticism of cruelty. However, does unwillingness to reconcile and connect with a cruel ruler suggest that Sa'di values freedom from oppression more highly than peace and reconciliation? It seems for Sa'di that where the only effective justice is anti-reconciliation, the best form of harmony is distance from oppressors; when an action leads to less suffering for humans, Sa'di chooses it. Sa'di has not recommended that the mystic guide the cruel ruler or befriend him, but actually he demands his demise. It could be that only in this manner, there would be more peace on earth. The analogy could be where gardeners kill bad weed so the roses in a garden can grow better (this passage could be placed in the anti-reconciliatory section of this chapter).

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<sup>10</sup> For alternative translations please see *Rehatsek* in Appendix item no. 10. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of justice between a person of power in the state and a weak individual within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (كليات سعدى) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 26, 31, 47-8, 50, 51, 55, 61.

Another interesting feature of the story is the fact that the cruel ruler, a very powerful person (powerful in tangible/material terms but powerless in intangible/spiritual assets), is asking the dervish, a very powerless person (in material terms powerless but powerful in spiritual way), to pray for him to protect him from his enemies. It seems Sa'di is suggesting that the apparently powerful persons can be actually weak, and the apparently weak persons can be, in fact, strong depending on how strength and power are interpreted. In this way he changes the definition of power and offers new insights to what constitutes it, or simply stresses the vulnerability of all.

Sa'di views justice as an active, not passive principle. He also sees it as not only a private and personal matter but having a wide range of social consequences. The oppressors and their victims live in the same society, country, and world, and the decisions made by the wealthy and powerful lead directly to victim and the victim's misery comes back to the wealthy. For example, begging stems from the poverty that the rich and powerful have created by not regarding the rules of justice:

"خواهنده مغربی در صف بزّازان حلب میگفت: ای خداوندان نعمت، اگر شما را انصاف بودی و ما را قناعت، رسم  
سؤال از جهان برخاستی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 135)

*"A beggar from Morocco was in the queue of textile merchants in Aleppo saying: 'Oh you who have been blessed by fortune, if you were only fair and we were content with what we had, the practice of begging would no longer exist in the world'"<sup>11</sup>*

This is an illustration of Sa'di's holistic understanding of the human condition – that we are all bound up in a common humanity, and what each person does affects everyone else, no matter how slightly. Justice, in the *Rose Garden*, has deep meanings. These deep meanings are both intrinsic and instrumental: the intrinsic meanings see justice as an intrinsic quality or an end in itself; the instrumental meanings see justice as a means to other ends (more harmony). Above, Sa'di shows how not adhering to justice has driven a wedge between the rich and poor (reflecting his principle of bond later described, in terms of how justice can facilitate bonds between people of different classes) creating distributive injustice and inequality.

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<sup>11</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 11

Another manifestation of justice is Sa'di's advice to rulers to avoid committing small acts of injustice because they could escalate into social ruin:

"آورده‌اند که نوشین روان عادل را در شکار گاهی صید کباب کردند و نمک نبود غلامی به روستا رفت تا نمک آرد  
نوشیروان گفت نمک به قیمت بستان تا رسمی نشود و ده خراب نگردد گفتند از این قدر چه خلل آید گفت بنیاد ظلم در  
جهان اول اندکی بوده است هر که آمد برو مزیدی کرده تا بدین غایت رسیده

اگر ز باغ رعیت ملک خورد سیبی

بر آورند غلامان او درخت از بیخ

به پنج بیضه که سلطان ستم روا دارد

زنند لشکریانش هزار مرغ بر سیخ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 46)

*"It has been said that kebab of prey was cooked in a hunting area for Nowshervan the Just but there was no salt. A servant was about to go to a village to get salt. Nowshervan said: 'ensure that you pay for the salt exactly its price so this does not become a habit and the village does not get ruined'. His companions asked: 'a small bit of salt does not need so much attention and no damage will come by it if payment is not exact'. Nowshervan said: 'the foundation of injustice and oppression in this world was small but whoever appeared, added to it until it became uncontrollable and vast'. If a king eats an apple from the garden of a peasant, his subordinates will pull the tree out from its roots. If a ruler steals as much as five eggs, his soldiers will place one thousand of the peasants' chickens on skewers"*<sup>12</sup>

In this story, the ruler could have obtained the salt by force, or the shop keeper might give it free to gain favour with the ruler, but Nowshervan the Just insists on paying for even a small quantity of a product so it becomes a habit for others in his regime to do the same, rather than to seize products from the village which could eventually lead the village to ruin. In other words, if you do not stop small crimes, it will become impossible to stop big ones. From small injustices, great conflagrations can develop. Sa'di attempts to bring state and society closer in the above passage by preventing financial corruption by the ruler (the considerate disposition of the ruler with his calculating mind connects the principle of justice to Sa'di's disposition and rationality principles).

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<sup>12</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 12

An interesting manifestation of justice in the *Rose Garden* is the notion of proportionality. For Sa'di, any punishment for an act of injustice should itself be just. A punishment which was too severe would compound the original injustice by adding a further injustice. The story below describes a conversation about how an insult delivered to the king's son by the son of a minister should be punished:

"یکی از پسران هارون الرشید پیش پدر آمد خشم آلود که فلان سرهنگ زاده مرا دشنام مادر داد. هارون ارکان دولت را گفت جزای چنین کس چه باشد یکی اشاره به کشتن کرد و دیگری به زبان بریدن و دیگری به مصادره و نفی، هارون گفت ای پسر کرم آن است که عفو کنی و گر نتوانی تو نیزش دشنام مادر ده نه چندان که انتقام از حد درگذرد آن گاه ظلم از طرف ما باشد و دعوی از قِبل خصم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 65)

*"One of the sons of Harun Al-Rashid came to his father very angry because a son of a high ranking officer had insulted his mother. Harun asked his court: 'what is the punishment for such a person?' One referred to execution, another to cutting his tongue, another confiscating his property and expelling him. Harun said: 'my son it is noble that you forgive but if you cannot, you can also insult his mother so your revenge doesn't surpass that level that you be the wrong doer and he becomes the claimant'"*<sup>13</sup>

This anecdote reveals Sa'di's deeply-held view that it is important not to descend to the level of the evil people we fight. This has been a recurring theme in wars and conflicts when people who are innocent victims become as bad as the people they are fighting, or even worse. The king tells his son not to pass over to the wrong side. The story also shows how Sa'di applauds rulers who face down their belligerent courtiers: rulers have the responsibility to ensure that what is done in their name is just, whether or not it is popular with their advisors. Self-control is evident in not taking rash decisions when insulted, in the above passage (this passage resonates with the disposition principle).

However, the passage also raises two questions. First, it demonstrates Sa'di's belief that it is possible to calibrate unjust acts and punishments of unjust acts on a scale of pain, rather like the utilitarian calculus of happiness, in order to select the amount of punishment that exactly matches the amount of injustice. The difficulties of such matching are, however, considerable as such a calculation can become arbitrary, and Sa'di seems to recognise this in his rejection of whimsical suggestions of punishments for the insult, like death and amputation. Second,

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<sup>13</sup> For alternative translations please see *Rehatsek* in Appendix item no. 13



the eventual choice by the king of a punishment of retaliatory insult is to match the original insult with the exact same injustice in return. This avoids the calibration problem, but raises the question of how fair such ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ outlook is and how far it can lead to stability in society.

In the story below, Sa’di raises the issue of a distinction between justice and legality or moral justice and legal justice.

" درویشی را ضرورتی پیش آمد گلیمی از خانه یاری بدزدید حاکم فرمود که دستش بدر کنند صاحب گلیم شفاعت کرد که من او را بجل کردم گفتا به شفاعت تو حدّ شرع فرو نگذارم

گفت آنچه فرمودی راست گفتمی ولیکن هر که از مال وقف چیزی بدزدد قطعش لازم نیاید

و الفقيرُ لا يَمْلِكُ

هر چه درویشان راست وقف محتاجان است حاکم دست از و بداشت"

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 91)

*“A poor man became so destitute as to steal a rug from the house of a friend. The ruler ordered his hand be cut off. The owner of the rug mediated on the thief’s behalf that he would forgive him. The ruler replied that: ‘your forgiveness cannot impede me from doing my moral duty and laws’. The friend replied: “what you say is of course true but cutting off his hand is not necessary for the theft of what had already been allocated for charity and the poor do not own anything and are in need. Whatever mystics have belongs to the needy’. In this instant, the ruler relented from giving out the punishment”<sup>14</sup>*

One interpretation of this story is to say that Sa’di makes a distinction between justice and legality: justice lies in treating people in accordance with the moral principle of fairness; legality lies in treating people in accordance with the law. Sa’di’s point in making this distinction is to point out that although justice will and should normally be in harmony with the law, sometimes there may be a gap between them and enforcement of the law would lead to injustice. On this interpretation of Sa’di’s story, the blanket thief does not deserve any punishment (let alone the severe punishment of hand amputation) because the blanket owner forgave him. The moral here is clear – that even people who have been wronged must understand the situation of the criminal who has wronged them. However, another interpretation of the story is to say that Sa’di is disputing the validity of the judge’s original

<sup>14</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 14

ruling on the law: a poor man who appropriates a blanket from a friend is not really stealing, because the blanket will be used for welfare purposes – to enable a poor man to survive the cold, and nothing has been stolen when all the property belonging to the thief is dedicated for virtuous uses. It seems that the judge was more impressed by the latter argument than the former, because the former argument required by-passing the law, whereas the latter argument required administering the law more subtly. On the question of which argument Sa'di himself favours, my view is that he would be happy with either, because both lead to the acquittal of the accused, which would reduce suffering.

Most of these instantiations of justice in Sa'di's *Rose Garden* are linked to bringing people closer from different segments of society and reconciliation. For example, in his repeated advice to rulers to treat their subjects fairly, Sa'di argues that failure to do so imperils the stability of their societies: "*A King who is cruel only destroys his own realm*". Sa'di says to rich merchants "*if you were just...the practice of begging would no longer exist*". Clearly for Sa'di justice brings healing. However, some instantiations of justice in Sa'di's *Rose Garden* do not at first sight appear to be linked to reconciliation. For example, Sa'di has a very strong sense of the legitimacy of retribution. He seems to approve of the decent man who hurls a rock at the head of the cruel man who hurled the same rock at him many years earlier, and he says to tyrants, '*Why should you be a sovereign? Your death is preferable to hurting people*'. How is this approval of retribution consistent with Sa'di's message of reconciliation, since retribution pushes people away from each other rather than unites them? Sa'di may be cautioning readers of what may befall them if they act unjustly (resonating with his rationality principle). Knowing Sa'di, forgiveness rather than punishment would seem a more reconciliatory response to injustice. However, it could be argued that for Sa'di, some offenders are beyond the pale of reconciliation, either because the enormity of their offences makes them unreceptive to overtures of reconciliation, or because the unity of the rest of society demands their punishment. Society is brought back in harmony by their punishment rather than by their appeasement. Sa'di may be applying here a conception of retribution later developed by Hegel that punishment cancels or annuls the wrong and thereby restores right (Hegel, 2003, p. 252). On this view, punishment treats the wrongdoer with dignity and respect as a rational being and person, who has done wrong and authorities have a right to punish him. The outcome is that the division between people which is caused by the wrongdoing is erased and harmony is restored. Also Sa'di urges punishment to be strictly proportionate to the offence, in order not to create a new division caused by injustice.

### 5.3 Bond

#### وصل

*“It is characteristic of liberal and decent peoples that they seek a world in which all peoples have a well-ordered regime. At first we may suppose this aim is moved by each people's self-interest, for such regimes are not dangerous but peaceful and cooperative. Yet as cooperation between peoples proceeds apace they may come to care about each other, and affinity between them becomes stronger. Hence, they are no longer moved simply by self-interest but by mutual concern for each other's way of life and culture, and they become willing to make sacrifices for each other. This mutual caring is the outcome of their fruitful cooperative efforts and common experiences over a considerable period of time” (Rawls, 1999, p.113)*

Bond or وصل is the principle closest from the five, to the world of harmony Sa'di intends to build. It is a necessity for Sa'di's more advanced state of integration (Rose Garden). Of course the principles of justice, disposition, decency, rationality are instrumental in creating that world but bond is decisive. It is a necessity for the survival and functioning of the state, because it prevents internal strife and civil wars. Bond, in English can be defined as “an entity used to tie or fasten others together, a force or feeling that unites people, a shared emotion or interest, a strong force of attraction, a relationship or link based on common feelings or interests and/or experiences” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017d). My understanding of Sa'di's Sufi inclinations suggests that Sa'di wishes to bring humans back to their origin, which is the divine. However, in order to establish a bond with the divine, a bond with the self must first be accomplished, after which bonding with others comes naturally, and a bond with God will follow. In this way, there is an ascending level of peace between people and themselves, between people with other people, and between people with their creator (University Portal of Iran, 2011; Niazkar, 2013, pp. 269-91; Amini, Elahimanesh and Ibrahimi Alvijeh, 2016, pp. 103-26; Tahoor Islamic Encyclopaedia, 2017cd). These three kinds of bonding are observed in the *Rose Garden*. In the passages below, Sa'di's prose poetry illustrates his notion of bond as a means towards better harmony. There are six kinds of bonds that Sa'di discusses: bonds with God and bonds with self which are closely related, bonds with friends, political bonds, social bonds, and bonds with enemies.

Sa'di explains bond with oneself in relation to bond with the almighty. Below, he describes his belief that 'friend', which implies the creator, is indeed more attached to Sa'di than Sa'di is to himself. This comes from Sa'di's sufi/mystic inspirations where the distance one has from his true self (the divine) is merely the ego. The ego is the false self, God the true self, and man made from dust. If the ego is killed, the distance between man and his true self,

which is the divine, will be eliminated (Amini, Elahimanesh and Ibrahimi Alvijeh, 2016, pp. 103-26):

" دوست نزدیکتر از من به من است وینت مشکل که من از وی دورم

چه کنم با که توان گفت که او

در کنار من و من مهجورم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 88)

*"My friend is closer to me than I am to myself, the problem is the wonder that I am far from him. What can I do? To whom can I explain this predicament that he is beside me and I am distant from him?"<sup>15</sup>*

In the passage below, Sa'di follows up from what was said earlier stating that all people were made from dust (they are nothing and whatever exists in them, is merely a creation of the divine) and will eventually return to it in the grave. So it's better to have humility, be dust in front of the lord, and kill the ego which makes man think of himself as higher than mere dust distancing himself from his true divine origin:

"ای برادر چو خاک خواهی شد خاک شو پیش از آنکه خاک شوی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 123)

*"Oh brother, since you will inevitably become dust, please be dust (humble) beforehand"<sup>16</sup>*

In the passage above, Sa'di asks humans to embrace their identity, which is indeed nothing but what the divine creator granted them, otherwise they are just made for simple dust. Only in that case, they shall attain union with the divine (their true self). It could also be argued that when humans reach that level of humility and nothingness where the ego is killed, they become extremely humane as well since evil temptations of the ego are gone and man's disposition becomes a decent one (mirroring Sa'di's decency and disposition principles). In that case, man's main and basic identity which is his human one is achieved since he is cleansed. In the two above passages, Sa'di implicitly conveys three messages to the audience: (1) God is omnipotent and omniscient and knows us better than we know ourselves; (2) Humans are merely dust – we come from and we return to dust and whatever else we are

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<sup>15</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 15. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in connection to God within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 288.

<sup>16</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 16

along the way is the creator's divine blessing – and this should make us humble in our relations with ourselves, with others, and with God; (3) Lack of humility and absence of self-knowledge leads to estrangement from ourselves (we imagine ourselves to be something higher than we are), from God, and most likely from other people.

Friendship is one of the most important bonds. For example, Sa'di says that being with friends in prison is better than being with strangers in a garden: friendship is even more important than freedom (although is it more rhetorical, it shows Sa'di's views on friendship):

"پای در زنجیر پیش دوستان" به که با بیگانگان در بوستان"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 110)

*"Being restrained by chains in the company of friends is much more preferable to residing in pleasant garden with those whom I do not identify with"*<sup>17</sup>

Sa'di shows why in the above passage he goes to extremes in valuing friendship. A reason is that you are not alone in this world when facing foes, offering a sense of safety and peace of mind (this is the instrumental value of friendship), as the following indicates:

"دشمن چه زند چو مهربان باشد دوست"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 25)

*"What can a malicious enemy possibly do, when there is a caring friend?"*<sup>18</sup>

In the next passage, Sa'di explains the pain of the loss of friendship:

"فقدت زمان الوصل و المرء جاهل بقدر لذیذ العیش قبل المصائب"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 203)

*"The time of companionship is lost and how unaware man is of appreciating the pleasures of it before misery of separation takes over"*<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 17. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273.

<sup>18</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 18. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273

<sup>19</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 19. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273

This passage is a reminder that people take the blessing of bonds for granted and only appreciate them when they have lost it. Sa'di is telling us to appreciate what we possess in terms of closeness with another person because when it is lost, we will surely miss it. The moral is that having some kind of (good) bond with another person is truly invaluable.

Sa'di also describes disingenuous bonds. A form of false friend is the back-biter – the person who says nice things to your face but foul things behind your back. Sa'di demands his readers to be vigilant towards this kind of companion and stay away (The passage has a link with Sa'di's anti-reconciliatory section or 6<sup>th</sup> principle):

"مودت اهل صفا، چه در روی و چه در قفا، نه چنان کز پست عیب گیرند و پیشت بیش میرند.

در برابر چو گوسپند سلیم

در قفا همچو گرگ مردم خوار

هر که عیب دگران پیش تو آورد و شمرد

بی‌گمان عیب تو پیش دگران خواهد برد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 80)

*"The amity of brethren of purity, whether in front of you or behind your back is the same, not in a manner that they speak ill when you are not present and sacrifice themselves at your feet when you are present.*

*They are like harmless sheep in front of you and like a human devouring wolf behind your back. Remember that someone who speaks ill of another in front of you, will no doubt speak ill of you in front of another"*<sup>20</sup>

Sa'di even implies that because a bad apple in a group contaminates the group, one should boycott the whole group or at least beware of this bad apple entering the group (again there is a link with his anti-reconciliatory principle):

"چو از قومی یکی بی دانشی کرد

نه که رامنزلت ماند نه مه را

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<sup>20</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 20. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'di's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273

شنیدستی که گاوی در علفخوار  
بیالاید همه گاوان ده را.....

به یک ناتراشیده در مجلسی  
برنجد دل هوشمندان بسی

اگر برکه‌ای پر کند از گلاب  
سگی در وی افتد کند منجلاب"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 82)

*"If one among a community acts dishonourably, there will be no dignity left amongst their people or their leader. Have you heard one cow in the grazing ground disgracing the rest of the cows in the village?...For the actions of one fool in a gathering, all the clever have to get distressed. If a well is filled with rose water but a dog falls in it, the whole well becomes foul"*<sup>21</sup>

Sa'di warns also of flatterers and sycophants who surround a person and offer him nothing but an egotistic narcissistic cloud of empty praise which would blind him to his faults:

"از صحبت دوستی به رنجم

کاخلاق بدم حسن نماید

عیبم هنر و کمال ببیند خارم گل و یاسمن نماید

کو دشمن شوخ چشم ناپاک

تا عیب مرا به من نماید"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 188)

*"I am resentful of the words of a friend who my bad behaviour appear to be virtues*

*He sees my vices as they are perfection and art, my thorns to him looks like flowers and  
Jasmines*

<sup>21</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 21. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273

*Where is that dirty audacious enemy who would reveal my flaws openly?*"<sup>22</sup>

Sa'di perceptively explains that these sycophants and flatterers are more damaging to us than our enemies who at least make us aware of our flaws. His suspicion of the stability of human bonds are shown when he advises us to hold our cards close to our chests in our relationships with both friends and enemies, in order not to be caught out if circumstances change:

"هر آن سری که داری با دوست در میان منه  
گرده  
و هر گزندی که توانی به دشمن مرسان  
شود"

چه دانی که وقتی دشمن  
باشد که وقتی دوست

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 273)

*"Whatever secrets you hold, do not share all of them with your friend for the fear of a day he might become your enemy. Do not cause any kind of pain on your enemy for the hope of one day he becoming your friend"*<sup>23</sup>

Sa'di warns us not to make the mistake of thinking that every bond or every animus is everlasting. Today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy; and today's enemy may be tomorrow's friend. Indeed, we should not reveal our confidences to anyone.

These baleful sentiments about the conditions under which friendships are to be pursued, monitored, or maintained are surprising given Sa'di's reputation in a more soft and conciliatory stance. If the key to a happy society is for everyone to live in harmony, we would expect Sa'di to tell people to heal divisions between everyone, rather than to pick and choose whom we are willing to befriend. Indeed, it could be argued that the most important people we should cultivate are strangers and enemies rather than friends. The question arises, therefore, as to whether all these warnings by Sa'di of bad friendships contradict his message of harmony. Why does he advise us to avoid risky friendships to prevent contamination and reputational damage, rather than advise us to interact with bad friends to make them into good friends? It seems that Sa'di does not believe that bonds can be forged with everyone in society: some divisions are unbridgeable, and therefore there are limits to reconciliation. This is how Sa'di integrates his idealism to realism. Also, Sa'di might believe that by choosing

<sup>22</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 22. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273

<sup>23</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 23. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond as in different aspects of friendship, companionship, its challenges and delicacies within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 64,126,198, 209,213,230, 273



whom to bond with is wise because one does not waste his/her energies and allocates them where it may yield fruit (it seems Sa'di's rationality principle shadows his bond principle in this way).

In the passage below, Sa'di pays a fulsome tribute to his own patron, attributing all that he is, and has, to his relationship with him and the political bond they had:

"ذکر جمیل سعدی که در افواه عوام افتاده است وصیت سخنش که در بسیط زمین رفته و قصب الجیب حدیثش که همچون شکر می خوردند و رقعہ منشآتش که چون کاغذ زر می برند بر کمال فضل و بلاغت او حمل نتوان کرد بلکه خداوند جهان و قطب دایره زمان و قائم مقام سلیمان و ناصر اهل ایمان اتابک اعظم مظفر الدنیا و الدین ابوبکر بن سعد بن زنگی ظلّ الله تعالی فی ارضه رَبِّ اَرْضَ عَنْهُ و اَرْضِهِ بعین عنایت نظر کرده است و تحسین بلیغ فرموده و ارادت صادق نموده لاجرم کافه انام از خواص و عوام به محبت او گراینده اندکه الناسُ علی دینِ ملوکِهم

زانگه که ترا بر من مسکین نظر است

آثارم از آفتاب مشهور ترست

گر خود همه عیب ها بدین بنده درست

هر عیب که سلطان بیسندد هنرست

گلی خوشبوی در حمام روزی

رسید از دست محبوبی به دستم

بدو گفتم که مشکى یا عبیری

که از بوی دلاویز تو مستم

بگفتا من گلی ناچیز بودم

و لیکن مدتی با گل نشستم

کمال همنشین در من اثر کرد

وگر نه من همان خاکم که هستم"

(Sa'di, 2006, pp. 5-6)

*"The very good name of Sa'di which has been spread among various people of the world and the fame of his words which has penetrated the span of the earth and his delicate writing which is consumed like sugar and the papers of his works which is bought like gold plates, cannot be credited to him(Sa'di) but to the lord of the world, eminence of the era, the second*

*in command of Solomon, aider of the faithful, Atabak A'zam Mozaffaro'd--donya va din Abubakr ibn Sa'd ibn Zangi, shadow of God on Earth, Oh lord, please be content with him and his kingdom as he has looked upon me favourably, respected me sincerely, and encouraged me enthusiastically so much that people from all walks of life have become fascinated with me, as people follow the path of their king.*

*Because you look upon your humble subject favourably,  
my works become renowned higher than the sun,*

*Although I have so many flaws*

*The flaw that my king (you) adore becomes a virtue*

*One day in the bath a piece of fragrant clay came to my hand from a beloved*

*I asked him are you perfume or musk?*

*Because I am undoubtedly bewitched from your captivating scent*

*It replied "I was a bit of mud with no value*

*But I sat next to a flower for a while*

*The flower's close proximity and companionship influenced me*

*Otherwise I am that very same worthless mud"'"<sup>24</sup>*

In this passage, Sa'di shows his own humility (reminding of the principle of disposition) and gratitude describing the greatness of his patron. The moral of the passage is that having a bond with the great can make you great. Also appreciation can go a long way in linking people whether it is a ruler appreciating Sa'di's gifts or Sa'di choosing his alias after that dynasty. The lump of clay in the companionship of the rose gains its qualities such as smell and becomes sweet-smelling clay. This is the extent that Sa'di believes companionship can influence people. The question arises, however, whether Sa'di really believed he owed everything to his patron, or whether he was expressing the sort of flattery that patrons expected from their dependants. We know Sa'di was not a sycophantic flatterer but he did employ highly diplomatic language to praise his patron and be grateful to him, thereby taking his own advice (as we shall see in passage 38 within the rationality principle) of choosing

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<sup>24</sup>For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 24

words carefully in order to establish and maintain unity with others. The passage is almost opposite to passage 21 regarding one bad apple destroying the whole group. Here, a good apple influences positively.

Turning to social bonds, there are many different manifestations of this kind of bonding in the *Rose Garden*. A condition of successful socialisation is to be sensitive to circumstances (resonating with the principle of rationality), not lose temper (close to principle of disposition) and to use kind words (echoing decency principle) to reduce tension:

“چو پرخاش بینی تحمل بیار

که سهلی ببندد در کار زار

به شیرین زبانی و لطف و خوشی

توانی که پیلی به مویی کشی”

(Sa'di, 2006 p. 168)

*“When you see commotion and aggression, try patience and tolerance because not inflaming the situation can settle it down. With a sweet tongue, kindness, and good behaviour, you can lead an elephant by a hair”<sup>25</sup>*

Sa'di here explains to the reader how to manage a tense situation by patience, tolerance, kind words and persuasiveness. Sa'di advises gentle behaviour in the face of impending conflict in order to diffuse confrontational situations. The moral of the story is that ‘You catch more flies with honey than you do with vinegar’. Kind words are especially important in dealing with men of peace:

“بامردم سهل گوی دشوارمگو با آنکه در صلح زندجنگ مجوی”

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 275)

*“With congenial folk, don't be rude, with the person who knocks the door of peace, don't look for a fight”<sup>26</sup>*

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<sup>25</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 25. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond in terms of social skills and social awareness within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 88, 108, 181, 207-8.

<sup>26</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 26. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond in terms of social skills and social awareness within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 88, 108, 181, 207-8.

This passage instructs us how to behave when someone is civilised or comes in harmony. Sa'di asks that humans be civil especially if the other side has already shown signs of conciliation. The moral is to seek harmony wherever possible.

In a story below, Sa'di emphasises the importance of patience and tolerance in forging relations with others:

"جالینوس ابلهی را دید دست در گریبان دانشمندی زده و بی حرمتی همی کرد گفت اگر این نادان نبودى کار وى با نادانان بدین جا نرسیدی.

دو عاقل را نباشد کین و پیکار  
نه دانایی ستیزد با سبکسار  
اگر نادان به وحشت سخت گوید  
خردمندش به نرمی دل بجوید  
دو صاحبدل نگهدارند مویی  
همیدون سرکشی و آزر م جویی  
و گر بر هر دو جانب جاهلانند  
اگر زنجیر باشد بگسلانند  
یکی را زشت خوئی داد دشنام  
تحمل کرد و گفت ای خوب فرجام  
بتر زانم که خواهی گفتن آئی  
که دانم عیب من چون من ندانی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 181)

*"Galen saw a fool holding the collar of a scholar and insulting him. He (Galen) said: 'If he weren't ignorant, he wouldn't be in this predicament with this fool'.*

*Two wise men do not have war and hatred between them, neither does a wise man fight with a petty person*

*If the fool speaks aggressively ill to the wise, his intellect will make him tolerate it and empathise*

*Two virtuous men preserve a thread of hair between them undamaged when in each other's proximity, the same goes for a rebellious person with a polite man*

*But if both sides are ignorant, they will even tear a chain with their turmoil*

*A person was insulted by an ill-mannered one, he bore it and said oh fortunate man*

*I am worse than you want to say, because I know my faults the way you do not*<sup>27</sup>

Sa'di is telling his readers to avoid situations where they might be caught in a dispute with a low fellow (echoing the rationality principle), but if this situation arises, the wise man should be patient enough not to inflame the situation. In the striking concluding sentence, Sa'di urges self-knowledge leading to humility (evoking the disposition principle) as a tool to help with restraint in contentious circumstances, because focusing on one's internal flaws will make it easier to forgive or ignore the flaws of the other party. It seems also Sa'di believes that by confessing his sinfulness, the wise man will take the wind out of the sails of his 'ill-mannered' assailant, and improve the prospects of reconciliation with him.

This leads us to Sa'di's claim that human vanity prevents bonding:

"گر از بسیط زمین عقل منعدم گردد

بخود گمان نبرد هیچکس که نادانم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 279)

*"If intellect disappears from the face of the earth, not one person would admit his ignorance"*<sup>28</sup>

Sa'di points out that few people care to admit their own flaws, mistakes, or defects. If they did, bonding would be made easier since the other side would unclench their fists due to our act of humility. In fact, self-awareness is helpful for bonding.

On bonds with enemies and ill-wishers, Sa'di is quite appeasing it seems. In the passage below, Sa'di claims that in order to sustain bonds with others, people must be prepared to sacrifice their most precious of belongings. This does seem contradictory with what was instructed elsewhere on limits and cautions in dealing with people, but this is the nature of the *Rose Garden* that it has no rigid form and has various instructions based on the context and circumstance (different from most strategic doctrines, political ideologies, political philosophies, social creeds, or political theories which have some kind of framework or model):

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<sup>27</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 27. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond in terms of social skills and social awareness within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 88, 108, 181, 207-8.

<sup>28</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 28. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bond in terms of social skills and social awareness within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 88, 108, 181, 207-8.

"یکی از وزرا به زیر دستان رحم کردی و صلاح ایشان را به خیر توسط نمودی اتفاقاً به خطاب ملک گرفتار آمد همگان در موجب استخلاص او سعی کردند و موکلان در معاقبتش ملاطفت نمودند و بزرگان شکر سیرت خویش بافواه بگفتند تا ملک از سر عتاب او در گذشت صاحب دلی برین اطلاع یافت و گفت

تا دل دوستان بدست آری

بوستان پدر فروخته به

پختن دیگ نیکخواهان را

هر چه رخت سراسر سوخته به

با بدانیش هم نکوئی کن

دهن سگ بلقمه دوخته به"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 64)

*"One of the ministers who was merciful to his subjects and did everything in his power for their well-being, one day became victim of the king's scorn. All who knew him did everything on his behalf to free him and the people who had apprehended him were soft on him and the courtiers told the king of his high virtues until the king relented and let him go. A pious man became informed of the event and said:*

*'In order to fill the hearts of your friends, even sell the inheritance of your father*

*Burn your possessions for fire to cook for the well intentioned friends*

*Even with the malicious folk, be kind as it is better for a dog to have his mouth closed with meat'"<sup>29</sup>*

This passage is significant for two reasons. First, burning one's possessions is metaphoric but shows Sa'di's emphasis on enormous prices he is willing to give to make friends. Second, the injunction '*Even with the malicious folk, be kind*' seems to contradict Sa'di's advice expressed earlier in this section to beware of bonding with those who are bad or inappropriate. Of course, Sa'di's position might be a pragmatic one (as in the principle of rationality) that doing good to the bad might bring them on your side, and the fewer enemies, the better. It could be argued that this is what a diplomat or ambassador is routinely required to do. To

<sup>29</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 29. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bonding with enemies and ill wishers within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 52

evoke a famous apothegm by Sir Henry Wotton, a diplomat is “an honest man sent abroad to lie for the good of his country” (Wotton, 1611, cited in Low, 1918, p. 217).

On bonding in between different sides of a conflict (between others who are enemies), Sa'di advises readers to dampen down such tension where possible:

:

"سخن میان دو دشمن چنان گوی که گر دوست گردند شرم زده نشوی.

میان دوکس جنگ چون آتش است

سخن چین بدبخت هیزم کش است

کنند این و آن خوش دگر باره دل

وی اندر میان کوربخت و خجل

میان دو تن آتش افروختن

نه عقل است و خود در میان سوختن"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 274)

*“Speak in such a way to each of the two enemies (both sides of conflict) so if they become friends, you hold no shame. War is between two people like fire and the gossiper who chatters mischievously in between them is the bearer of timber inflaming the fire. The two fight and finish becoming friends with the one who inflamed the fire, ashamed and disgraced. Inciting fire between two people is against reason and causes the person to burn in the fire he sparked”<sup>30</sup>*

Sa'di urges readers to abstain from sowing divisions, not only for ethical reasons, but for pragmatic reasons (also reflecting the rationality principle). Sowing divisions is compared to starting fires between two people which burn the agitator himself. Basically we reap what we sow. The moral is either to attempt to reconcile opposing forces, or at least not make matters worse by inflaming the situation.

This section has examined passages in Sa'di's *Rose Garden* which exemplify six kinds of bonding. In all of them, we have found Sa'di's view on the value of bonding and their

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<sup>30</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item 30. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of bonding with enemies and ill wishers within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'di's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 52

different aspects. Sa'di's lessons which came in this principle, whether directly or indirectly from the passages, are instrumental in building the higher state of harmony he envisages between people (Rose Garden). However, we have also found Sa'di warning us of bonds with sycophants, back-biters, and those who will damage our reputation or contaminate us by their association. It seems that some kinds of bonds are not helpful for the state of harmony he intends to build, and are to be avoided (resonating Sa'di's 6<sup>th</sup> anti-reconciliatory principle showing limits to reconciliation and intended to protect his higher state-Rose Garden). Not all bonds contribute to healthy human integration, and in this regard, bond is not an end in itself, but a means to the attainment of a new world (Rose Garden). The criterion for judging what kinds of bond are good or bad is whether they bring us closer to, or further away from that desired higher and more developed state which itself is means to reduce human suffering and increase man's wellbeing.

#### **5.4 Rationality**

##### تعقل

*"If something is capable of rational foresight, it is a natural ruler and master, whereas whatever can use its body to labor is ruled and is a natural slave" (Aristotle, 1998, p. 2).*

Rationality is a complex principle which is capable of a wide variety of interpretations. One interpretation is the popular assumption that it is equivalent to common sense – i.e. necessary for the performance of daily tasks by everyone from those in power to ordinary people. On this view, rationality ensures a certain level of calculation and prudence when engaging in actions or decision making processes. It is a counter-weight to emotional, rash, or thoughtless speeches or actions. Another interpretation of rationality is narrower, focusing on a dictionary definition of it as "The quality of being based on or in accordance with reason or logic" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017e). Historically, rationality has been associated with the 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightenment, in which it has been aligned with positivist science and opposed to reliance on tradition and on faith (Bristow, 2017). More recently, in political science, rationality has been interpreted in terms of rational choice - the theory that humans aim to maximise the satisfaction of their individual self-interest (Amadae, 2017). On this view, reason has no moral purchase but is merely an instrument or tool. However, the root of Sa'di's concept of rationality lies in his view that reason is not just common sense, calculated decision making, or an intellectual tool, but can be a moral faculty in terms of causing less suffering by making reasonable choices: indeed, it can enable men to make ethical choices, not just self-interested decisions.



Rationality can drive humans towards reconciliation because rational actions, as will be seen below, are more prone to peace than are irrational, erratic, foolish ones. All of Sa'di's advice on rationality, therefore, is focused on recommendations to prevent or reduce tension and possibly bring humans closer. One can observe rationality throughout Sa'di's writings: the *Rose Garden* exemplifies it in terms of proper allocation of tasks, reminder of the value of intellectual consultation, being open to criticism, calculation before action, patience, pragmatism, prudence, precision, integrating implementation and knowledge, and careful use of the tongue.

Sa'di asserts that rulers need the advice of scholars:

"ملک از خردمندان جمال گیرد و دین از پرهیزگاران کمال یابد پادشاهان به صحبت خردمندان از آن محتاج ترند که  
خردمندان به قربت پادشاهان  
پندی اگر بشنوی ای پادشاه  
در همه عالم به از این پند نیست  
جز به خردمند مفرما عمل  
گرچه عمل کار خردمند نیست"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 272-3)

*"A realm attains its elegance from intellectuals and religion its virtuousness from the noble. Kings are in need of advice from intellectuals much more than intellectuals in need of their companionship.*

*Oh king, if you would listen to a piece of advice, allow me to speak*

*As nowhere in the world will you witness a better counsel*

*Do not delegate tasks to anyone except scholars*

*Even though their first duty is not execution or implementation"<sup>31</sup>*

In recommending that rulers should appoint ministers for their intellect rather than their practical working faculty, Sa'di appears to prioritise intellectual knowledge over practical knowledge, or he is exaggerating their worth to emphasize the need for knowledge in state

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<sup>31</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 31. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality in terms of intellectuality and its role within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 256

decision making to prevent chaos and collapse of the state which in turn would lead to tension between state and society.

However, Sa'di does not suggest that intellectuals are above scrutiny: on other hand, the wise man is not arrogant and listens to criticism, because that is how to improve. If one arrogantly thinks he is beyond criticism, tension can be increased and harmony put at risk:

"متکلم را تا کسی عیب نگیرد سخنش صلاح نپذیرد

مشو غره بر حسن گفتار خویش

به تحسین نادان و پندار خویش"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 279)

*"If no one criticizes a speaker, his speech will not improve. Do not be conceited due to the perceived beauty of your speech, the praise of ignorant folk, and your own delusions of skill"*<sup>32</sup>

On the issue of calculated decision making, in another passage, Sa'di applauds a patient king who resists taking action against an accused intellectual until and unless convincing evidence of his guilt is provided (resonating with the justice principle). Such caution is crucial to avoid creating unnecessary discord:

"ملک را هم در آن شب آگهی دادند که در ملک تو چنین منکری حادث شده است، چه فرمایی؟ ملک گفتا من او را از

فضای عصر میدانم و یگانه روزگار باشد که معاندان در حق وی خوضی کرده‌اند. این سخن در سمع قبول من نیاید

مگر آنکه که معاینه گردد که حکما گفته‌اند

بتندی سبک دست بردن بتیغ

بدندان گزد پشت دست دریغ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 220)

*"They informed the king that in your realm such a crime has transpired. 'What do you command?' The king said: 'I know the alleged perpetrator as one of the scholars of our time and an exception of our days. It could be that his enemies had schemed against him. I do not accept this malign report unless it is properly investigated because the philosophers have*

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<sup>32</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix. Item no. 32

said: 'One who impetuously reaches for the sword will regretfully bite the palm of his hand'<sup>33</sup>

Rationality also urges men towards prudence and pragmatism reducing unnecessary conflicts, and especially those that one cannot handle:

"لقمان را گفتند حکمت از که آموختی گفت از نابینایان که تا جای نبینند پای نهند

قَدَمَ الخُرُوجِ قَبْلَ الوَلُوجِ.....

گرچه شاطر بود خروس به جنگ

چه زند پیش باز رویین چنگ

گربه شیر است در گرفتن موش

لیک موش است در مصاف پلنگ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 13)

*"They asked Loqman: 'who did you learn wisdom from?' He replied: 'from the blind because they do not step anywhere before ensuring its safety'. If you want to move about, first probe the area, as prevention is better than cure and getting out of a situation before going too deep is wise.....Although a cock may be agile in fight, what can he do with a brazen clawed hawk? A cat is lion when hunting a mouse but becomes a mouse when confronted by a tiger."*<sup>34</sup>

Much of Sa'di's analysis of rationality focuses on it as a repository of practical wisdom and common sense. A very basic but practical side of rationality warns us to avoid gratuitously antagonising people as it is a very likely source of conflict:

"تا توانی درون کس مخراش      کاندر این راه خاراها باشد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 66)

<sup>33</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix. Item no. 33. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality in terms of patience within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 135.

<sup>34</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 34. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality as in calculations and prudence within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 284.

*“As much as you can, do not provoke or aggravate anyone, as there are spines on this path”<sup>35</sup>*

The next passage shows that arrogance, egotism (links to the principle of disposition), and being troublesome, are a recipe for discord while humility and quietness are recipes for concord:

"هر که گردن به دعوی افرازد

خوشتن را بگردن اندازد

سعدی افتاده ایست آزاده

کس نیاید به جنگ افتاده"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 13)

*“Whoever is arrogantly asking for trouble, will only sacrifice his own neck. Sa'di is a free humble soul, No one comes to war against such an unassuming person”<sup>36</sup>*

Another characteristic of rationality is for rulers to be selective and discriminating in choosing where they concentrate their attention. For example, they should focus more on assuaging the wicked than the good, because the good can be relied on to be more accommodating or complaisant. Although Sa'di is not taking good people for granted, he is warning rulers to appease bad people since they are more likely to destabilise their rule:

"اول کسی که علم بر جامه کرد و انگشتری در دست جمشید بود. گفتندش چرا بچپ دادی و فضیلت راست راست. گفت:  
راست را زینت راستی تمامست

.....

بدان را نیک دار ای مرد هشیار

که نیکان خود بزرگ و نیکروزند"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 299)

<sup>35</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 35. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality in terms of decisions and behaviours which can prevent or cause confrontation and suffering within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 9, 42, 168

<sup>36</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 36. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality in terms of decisions and behaviours which can prevent or cause confrontation and suffering within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 9, 42, 168

*“The first person who placed an insignia on his clothes and a ring on his finger was Jamshid. He was asked: ‘why did you place the ring on your left hand while the right is honourable and is blessed’. He replied: ‘The right hand already is a treasure in itself due to being righteous’. ....., hold the bad ones in a good way oh vigilant man, because the good are already grand and prosperous”<sup>37</sup>*

This passage implies that Sa’di regards it as wise for rulers to appease bad people rather than combat their wickedness which is contradictory to many parts of the *Rose Garden*.

Reconciliation here appears to entail compromise with the bad by the ruler.

On a totally different issue, we should adjust our speeches to suit our audience if we demand any positive response from them. The western expression ‘Know your audience’ comes to mind:

"حکایت بر مزاج مستمع گوی

اگر خواهی که دارد با تو میلی"

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 293)

*“Tune your story to the temperament of the audience if you want them to be inclined towards you”<sup>38</sup>*

In the passage below, it seems that for Sa’di, rationality entails both intellectual and practical qualities: neither of them without the other is sufficient:

"رای بی قوت مکر و فسون است و قوت بی رای جهل و جنون

تمیز باید و تدبیر و عقل وانگه ملک. که ملک و دولت نادان سلاح جنگ خداست"

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 287)

*“A decision without implementation is mere deception and delusion and an act without judgment is ignorance and madness. Discernment is necessary and prudence and intellect, then a realm is born because a realm with an ignorant government is a weapon against God”<sup>39</sup>*

<sup>37</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix. Item no. 37

<sup>38</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix.item no. 38

<sup>39</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 39. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of rationality regarding the relationship between application and knowledge within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa’d’s *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 291

State policies might be well conceived but poorly executed, and vice versa. The lesson here for rulers is to strike a balance between plan and execution, by using wise intellect, good judgement, and perfect execution. The lack of these three vital elements is the recipe for war against all that is good which is what Sa'di describes as God in the passage. Sa'di means that without these three together, the realm will be erratic and unstable causing people who reside inside and outside it to suffer; in that way, this realm will be at war with all that is good (God).

This section has explained Sa'di's principle of rationality, its potential in bringing people closer or at least being effective in not causing them to move away from each other, in which situations Sa'di uses it as a social and political tool, and finally, how it can pave the way for Sa'di's more harmonious world or better society. Sa'di's notion of rationality shows that the world is not a perfect place, but that it can be improved if people can be persuaded to follow some level of reason and calculation in their own lives. Sa'di has shown that rationality is a practical guide to conduct which can bring people in a common endeavour to live well together because it is simply in their own interest. That is how Sa'di uses rationality as a moral and practical tool.

## 5.5 Decency

### اخلاق مدارى

*"Therefore so long as a man is in the condition of mere nature, which is a condition of war, private appetite is the measure of good and evil: and consequently all men agree on this, that peace is good, and therefore also the way or means of peace, which (as I have shown before) are justice, gratitude, modesty, equity, mercy, and the rest of the laws of nature, are good; that is to say, moral virtues; and their contrary vices, evil" (Hobbes, 1651, p. 98).*

'Decency' is an umbrella word denoting "behaviour that conforms to accepted standards of morality or respectability and avoids impropriety or immodesty" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017f). Decency entails acting in a dignified way and affording others respect and consideration whatever their position. It is similar to Kant's injunction to treat people as ends in themselves (Hill, 1980, pp. 84-99); the Christian injunction to do as you would be done by (Worden, 2010, p. 174); and the Islamic injunction to be compassionate and merciful (Nasr, 2004, p. 206). Sa'di's decency in the *Rose Garden* is exemplified in terms of honesty as opposed to lies and hypocrisy, charity, philanthropy, altruism, genuine internal virtues,

happiness in not having power to harm, humanity, sympathy, empathy, harmlessness, caring, forgiveness, selflessness, a saviour in rainy days, asset in the next world, deterrent of mishaps.

For Sa'di, decency of behaviour will improve social relationships, mitigate tense situations, and thereby bring people together. He is particularly critical of hypocrisy or fake decency. For example, he denounces those who flaunt their piety, as the following story illustrates. Sa'di is especially scathing of hypocritical clerics and scholars. Hypocrisy only takes people away from each other causing resentment:

"فقیهی پدر را گفت هیچ ازین سخنان رنگین دلایز متکلمان در من اثر نمی‌کند به حکم آن که نمی‌بینم مر ایشان را فعلی موافق گفتار

ترک دنیا به مردم آموزند

خویشتن سیم و غله اندوزند

عالمی را که گفت باشد و بس

هر چه گوید نگیرد اندر کس

عالم آن کس بود که بد نکند

نه بگوید به خلق و خود نکند"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 120)

*"A theologian told his father that the coloured pleasant speeches of preachers do not have any impact upon me as I do not see their actions in alignment with their words. They teach people to leave this material world behind but themselves collect riches and wealth. The scientist who lectures only without acting upon it himself, whatever he teaches will not impact anyone. A real sage is one that does not do evil, not the one who preaches to others but doesn't listen to what he preaches himself"<sup>40</sup>*

Linked to this is Sa'di's injunction that wealth should be put to use, not hoarded:

"جوانمرد که بخورد و بدهد به از عابد که روزه دارد و بنهد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 287)

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<sup>40</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 40. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of the indecency of hypocrisy and the need for true decent actions, especially in religious contexts within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 83, 130

*“An honourable man who eats and donates with generosity is superior to a pious man who fasts and saves”<sup>41</sup>*

The decent man is devoted to a life of altruistic service to others, not to a life of selfish piety. Although Sa'di approves of self-denial from his Sufi inclinations, he rejects the scrooge mentality of some outwardly pious men who perversely combine abstention with accumulation. For Sa'di, material goods are not in themselves sinful; sin lies in the way we use them, especially in withholding them from others.

In another verse, Sa'di reiterates his condemnation of fake decency but from another angle, asserting that it is better that a good man is held in low esteem than that a bad man is held in high esteem. Why does Sa'di truly regard empty decency as worse than being falsely accused of vice? Perhaps it is because he believes that false decency (hypocrisy) does more damage to social cohesion than does false vice (wrong accusation or malicious allegation or spiteful denunciation):

"نیک باشی و بدت گوید خلق"

به که بد باشی و نیکت بینند"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 101)

*“Being honourable and others talking unpleasant of you is better than being wicked and others seeing you in decent light”<sup>42</sup>*

For example, he may think that good men will simply brush aside false charges against them, whereas bad men will take advantage of their false esteem to commit more evil acts.

According to Sa'di, there are two types of motives to be decent. First, decent behaviour will benefit other people. Second, decent behaviour will benefit the self. The implication of the passage below is that everyone in the world is connected to everyone else, so that bad behaviour experienced in one part of the world will be felt by people in every other part of the world:

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<sup>41</sup> For alternative translations please see *Rehatsek* in Appendix item no. 41. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of the indecency of hypocrisy and the need for true decent actions, especially in religious contexts within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 83, 130

<sup>42</sup> For alternative translations please see *Rehatsek* in Appendix item no. 42. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of the importance of having internal virtues and how it is perceived by self and others, within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 101



"بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند  
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند  
چو عضوی به درد آورد روزگار  
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار  
تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی  
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 31)

*"Human beings are organs of one body*

*Equal in creation from the same source*

*If the troubles of life cause pain for any organ*

*The rest of the organs cannot bear it, becoming restless*

*You who are indifferent to the suffering of others*

*Perhaps the name human you should not carry"<sup>43</sup>*

Moreover, we have a moral duty to God to repay the blessings that he has conferred upon us by conferring similar blessings on others since we are created from the same source and are positioned in an interconnected web of influence.

Another observation about decency made by Sa'di is the intense rejoicing and gratitude for not being able to be indecent due to lack of power or resources. Sa'di is implying that not being strong enough to hurt others is a blessing and must be cherished, even if it implies the only reason one doesn't engage in indecent deeds is the very simple reason he doesn't have the capacity to:

"کجا خود شکر این نعمت گزارم  
که زور مردم آزاری ندارم"

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<sup>43</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 43. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency in terms of not harming others or feeling for their pain within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 37, 125, 252, 289

*"To whom can I express my gratitude*

*That I possess no strength to harm others?"<sup>44</sup>*

Combining the two previous passages for decency above, is the passage below where Sa'di took from the holy Qur'an (41<sup>st</sup> Surah Fussilat, 46<sup>th</sup> Ayah) affirming that the deeds one does, comes back (the instrumental benefits of decency are linked to Sa'di's justice principle and the action reaction phenomenon within it):

"صدق الله من عمل صالحاً فأَنْفِسِهِ و مَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 66)

*"God has spoken the truth when he said those who do good are beneficiaries of good and those who do bad are the recipients of harm"<sup>45</sup>*

This is partly because God will bless you with benefits if you observe his commandment to be well-behaved towards others: decency can be used as a means to gain God's favour: doing good enables men to receive God's good graces in the afterlife:

"هر که را جاه و دولت است و بدان

خاطری خسته در نخواهد یافت

خبرش ده که هیچ دولت و جاه

به سرای دگر نخواهد یافت"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 290)

*"Whoever has high position and prosperity and due to it does not sympathise with the ones in pain, inform him that there will be no prosperity and high status waiting for him in the next world"<sup>46</sup>*

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<sup>44</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 44. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency in terms of not harming others or feeling for their pain within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 37, 125, 252, 289

<sup>45</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 45. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency as a self-interested endeavour within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 8, 12, 47, 257, 271, 280, 289

<sup>46</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 46. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency as a self-interested endeavour within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 8, 12, 47, 257, 271, 280, 289.

Decency is also evident when people display sympathy for others, for example, by comforting the destitute. This has an intrinsic value but also, according to Sa'di, prevents tragedies from happening to you:

"به روزگار سلامت شکستگان دریاب

که جبر خاطر مسکین بلا بگرداند"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 96)

*"During the times when you are well, make sure you have sympathy for the ones who are in pain*

*Because the well wishes of the destitute prevent catastrophes which would otherwise make them your way"*<sup>47</sup>

Note that in the three previous passages, there is a self-interested motive for behaving decently. Sa'di is well aware that pure ethical arguments will not convince all to act harmoniously with others.

The lesson learned from above is that, Sa'di is urging rulers or those with any authority over others to treat their subjects decently. This means rulers should be moderate, not oppressive, in exercising authority over the ruled. Often, Sa'di justifies this injunction in terms of self-interested reasons against using power oppressively – oppressors will find themselves bereft of support (echoing both the rationality and justice principles) when they are in need of help from others:

"بد اختر تر از مردم آزار نیست

که روز مصیبت کشش یار نیست"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 280)

*"There is no one more unfortunate than a tormentor of people because on that day he is in trouble and misery, no one will lend a hand"*<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 47. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency as a self-interested endeavour within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 8, 12, 47, 257, 271, 280, 289

<sup>48</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 48. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of decency as a self-interested endeavour within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 8, 12, 47, 257, 271, 280, 289

It is not made clear by Sa'di how distress befalls people who fail to do good, but he may be drawing on prudential nostrums such as fixing the roof in the summer before the bad weather of the winter arrives. Or he may have the Greek notion of Hubris-Nemesis in mind (Ronfeldt, 1994, pp. vii-ix, 1-4) – that evil deeds inevitably attract evil consequences – that you cannot escape the nasty consequences of your nasty actions.

There are many other illustrations of decency in Sa'di's *Rose Garden*. For example, decency is evident when people show empathy with others. In the passage below, this seems to require that we must have personally experienced the pain which others have experienced before we can empathise with them:

"تندرستان را نباشد درد ریش  
جز به همدردی نگویم درد خویش  
گفتن از زنبور بی حاصل بود  
با یکی در عمر خود ناخورده نیش  
تا تورا حالی نباشد مثل ما  
حال ما باشد تورا افسانه پیش  
سوز من با دیگری نسبت مکن  
او نمک بر دست و من بر عضو ریش"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 217)

*"Those void of troubles do not understand pain*

*I will not tell my misery but to a compassionate person who has felt what I felt*

*It is a vain attempt to try to explain the sting of a bee*

*To someone who in his life has not been stung*

*Unless your situation is not similar to ours*

*Our condition will be a fantasy for you*

*Do not compare my pain to another's*

*He has salt on his skin but me on my wounds*<sup>49</sup>

Sa'di evidently believes that people who have not themselves felt hardship are incapable of understanding how it afflicts others. But this sets a very high barrier for decent conduct towards the poor: not all the great social reformers who have brought huge relief to the destitute have themselves experienced abject misery. However, Sa'di's belief is a salutary warning to armchair theorists that if they truly want to unite with the deprived, a good start is to experience what they feel, otherwise it can be difficult to merge with them or understand them.

In another passage, however, Sa'di seems to recognize that empathy does not have to depend on identical experiences, as he describes how a householder displayed considerable empathy towards a burglar who found nothing of value in his house to steal, by giving the thief his blanket. So the owner of a house, instead of fighting off the burglar, actually gives him the little he possesses. The moral of the story is that the homeowner, as a man of God, does empathise with the plight of the burglar, though he is not a thief himself and is not in need to steal. Sa'di sees being a man of God as a commitment to helping other humans even if they are enemies, because even enemies are creations of the same God that created him (this is a connection to bond principle). This reminds one of the Christian notions of 'loving one's enemies' (Mathew 5:44) which is extremely reconciliatory:

"دزدی به خانه پارسایی در آمد چندانکه جست چیزی نیافت دل تنگ شد پارسا خبر شد گلیمی که بر آن خفته بود در راه  
دزد انداخت تا محروم نشود

شنیدم که مردمان

راه خدای

دل دشمنان را نکردند تنگ

ترا کی میسر شود این مقام

که با دوستانت خلافت و جنگ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 80)

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<sup>49</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 49. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of the necessity to understand other's troubles thorough experiencing them firsthand, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 189

*“A burglar went to the house of a moral man trying to find something of value but failing in the attempt, causing him sadness. The ethical man became aware of the issue and threw to the burglar the blanket he was sleeping on so he does not leave his house unsatisfied. I had heard that Godly people do not wound the heart of even their enemies, so how can you reach a level where you become untrue to your friend or fight with him?”<sup>50</sup>*

Forgiveness is another trait of decent behaviour expressed in the above passage. Sa’di deepens the concept of decency in giving comfort to transgressors by invoking the notion of forgiveness for their sins. Sa’di is particularly anxious that people should forgive isolated transgressions committed by normally righteous persons as to preserve the accord between them (this evokes the justice principle as it is unjust to judge a person by only one mistake and all his contributions should be considered):

آن را که به جای توست هر دم کرمی      عذرش بنه ار کند به عمری ستمی

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 53)

*“The one who has shown you so much good, look the other way if he harms you once in a life time”<sup>51</sup>*

This section has analysed the principle of decency, Sa’di’s outlook towards it, how it relates to other principles, its value in bringing people closer, its potential as a self-interested endeavour, and how decent behaviour can pave the way for more harmony leading towards an improved society. For Sa’di, decency is one of the most basic and least sophisticated principles of reconciliation, but one of the most powerful, in terms of everyday effects in building harmony (There is considerable overlap between the principles of decency and disposition as will be seen below).

## 5.6 Disposition

### سیرت

*“It appears also, that, in our general approbation of characters and manners, the useful tendency of the social virtues moves us not by any regards to self-interest, but has an influence much more universal and extensive. It appears that a tendency to public good, and to the promoting of peace, harmony, and order in society, does always, by affecting the benevolent principles of our frame, engage us on the side of the social virtues. And it*

<sup>50</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 50

<sup>51</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 51. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of forgiveness and decency with ones who have made mistakes, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa’d’s Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 122

*appears, as an additional confirmation, that these principles of humanity and sympathy enter so deeply into all our sentiments, and have so powerful an influence, as may enable them to excite the strongest censure and applause” (Hume, 1927, p. 137).*

Disposition is a characteristic that influences all that a person is and does. It may be defined as “a person's inherent quality of mind, character, inclination or tendency” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017g). Sa'di's *Rose Garden* exemplifies this principle in terms of nobility, magnanimity, manners, self-control, contentment, guardianship, moderation, tolerance, loyalty, modesty, humility, generosity, and beneficence and it is typically seen in social, personal, and political circumstances, where it is shown to elevate chances of reconciliation and pour water on the fire of discord. Within the *Rose Garden*, a person's disposition is characterised mostly as an intrinsic or innate quality like temperament, personality, nature, essence, or character which can make this world move towards Sa'di's desired higher state of harmony. It is mostly innate contrary to the closest principle to it, decency, which can be acquired more. It was innate in the case of Hatam Tai who was known to be inherently generous (explained later). On the other hand, it was learned in the case of Loqman's qualities, an ancient Persian philosopher. Both thinkers had characters which brought them closer to others but in different ways:

"لغمان را گفتند ادب از که آموختی گفت از بی ادبان هر چه از ایشان در نظرم ناپسند آمد از فعل آن پرهیز کردم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 99)

*“Loghman was asked: ‘from whom did you learn good manners?’, he replied: ‘from the ill-mannered as whatever I witnessed in them which was impolite, I abstained from practicing’”<sup>52</sup>*

A disposition may be either good or bad. The man of good disposition displays traits of nobility and magnanimity, which are especially striking in people of high authority. For example, the following is a particularly poignant story about a magnanimous king and his minister who was very noble:

"پادشاهی را شنیدم به کشتن اسیری اشارت کرد بیچاره در آن حالت نومیدی ملک را دشنام دادن گرفت و سقط گفتن که گفته‌اند هر که دست از جان بشوید هر چه در دل دارد بگوید.

وقت ضرورت چو نماند گریز

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<sup>52</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 52

دست بگیرد سر شمشیر تیز

اذا ینس الانسان طال لسانه

گسّور مغلوب یصول علی الکلّب

ملک پرسید چه می‌گوید یکی از وزرای نیک محضر گفت ای خداوند همی‌گوید و الکاظمین الغیظ و العافین عن الناس ملک را رحمت آمد و از سر خون او در گذشت وزیر دیگر که ضدّ او بود گفت ابنای جنس ما را نشاید در حضرت پادشاهان جز به راستی سخن گفتن این ملک را دشنام داد و ناسزا گفت ملک را روی ازین سخن در هم آمد و گفت آن دروغ وی پسندیده تر آمد مرا زین راست که تو گفتی که روی آن در مصلحتی بود و بنای این بر خبثی و خردمندان گفته‌اند دروغی مصلحت آمیز به که راستی فتنه‌انگیز "

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 17)

*"I heard a king give orders for the execution of the prisoner. The desperate man started insulting the king in his state of despair. As they have said whoever has lost all hope for his life, will say what is in his heart. In urgency when there is no chance of escape, man takes on the sharp sword. When all hope is lost, man's tongue becomes long such as a defeated cat assaulting a dog. The king asked: 'what is he saying?' One of the kind hearted ministers replied: 'Oh Lord: He says God loves the ones who do good, restraining their rage forgiving others'. The king showed mercy and changed his prior command of execution. Another minister who was against the kind hearted one, said: 'men of our stature should not lie in the presence of kings for this prisoner offended the king and used foul language'. The king became angry and said: 'that lie was superior to this truth which you just uttered because there was good intentions behind that lie but malice behind your truth as scholars have said: 'a lie from a conciliatory intention is better than a truth which sows divisions''<sup>53</sup>*

The noble action of the minister who lied to the king, thereby endangering his own position, in order to save the life of the prisoner (reminding one of decency principle), is striking, as is the magnanimity of the king who vindicates the prisoner when he hears the compassionate lie of the 'good natured' minister. Evidently, at least in this case, Sa'di values conciliation more than truth because it reduces human suffering, since all of Sa'di's endeavours are to that ultimate end.

<sup>53</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 53. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of noble dispositions within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 52



Opposite to nobility and magnanimity, excessive pride is seen by Sa'di as having the potential to stoke up fire between people:

"نشاید بنی آدم خاک زاد

که در سر کند کبر و تندى و باد

تو را با چنین گرمی و سرکشی

نپندارم از خاکی از آتشی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 277)

*"It is not appropriate for humans born out of dust to exhibit vanity, aggression, and pompousness. You with this heat and defiance, I do not think are made of soil but fire!"<sup>54</sup>*

In the above passage, Sa'di is referring to the religious story of the Devil, created of fire, who did not bow down to Adam, created from dust, when asked by God. The Devil's excessive pride caused him to disobey God and see Adam as inferior (Petkov, 2008, p. 213). Sa'di is contrasting the good disposition of humble people who are descendants of Adam who is himself a servant to God, to the ill disposition of those who are arrogant, like the Devil, who rebelled against God (the passage has a link with the bond principle especially bonding with self as man should humbly acknowledge he is nothing more than dust, attributing all that he is as being granted from the creator).

For Sa'di, the test of a ruler's character is being true to his people, taking care of them and serving them. This brings the regime and its people closer together:

"پادشه پاسبان درویش است

گرچه رامش به فر دولت اوست

گوسپند از برای چوپان نیست

بلکه چوپان برای خدمت اوست"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 58)

*"A king is to guard and look after his poor subjects although their welfare is in the prosperity of his reign. The sheep is not for the shepherd but the shepherd at the service of the sheep"<sup>55</sup>*

<sup>54</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 54. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of humility within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 85

<sup>55</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 55

Here, Sa'di overturns the conventional norm for ruling, describing the ruler as the servant and the citizens as the primary beneficiaries of rule. Dervish is the poor mystic who has relinquished earthly possessions and Sa'di is using him as an example to demonstrate that even the padshah who is king and supposedly the highest in the realm is there to support the supposed lowest in the realm which is the dervish. The analogy of the sheep and shepherd demonstrates this: just as the shepherd is there to guide the sheep to good places for grazing, so it is the duty of the king to lead his people to a proper destination.

According to Sa'di, the good disposition of beneficence also outweighs social etiquette in reconciliatory value. For example, he applauds royal beneficence when it ignores class boundaries that seek to maintain a distance between rulers and ruled. The following story shows how a beneficent ruler conveyed honour on a small landowner by accepting his hospitality, thereby lowering the barriers between the classes:

"یکی از ملوک با تنی چند خاصان در شکارگاهی به زمستان از عمارت دور افتادند تا شب در آمد خانه دهقانی دیدند ملک گفت شب آنجا رویم تا زحمت سرما نباشد یکی از وزرا گفت لایق قدر پادشاه نیست به خانه دهقانی التجا کردن هم اینجا خیمه زنیم و آتش کنیم. دهقان را خبر شد ما حضری ترتیب کرد و پیش آورد و زمین بیوسید و گفت قدر بلند سلطان نازل نشدی ولیکن نخواستند که قدر دهقان بلند گردد. سلطان را سخن گفتن او مطبوع آمد شبانگاه به منزل او نقل کردند بامدادانش خلعت و نعمت فرمود شنیدندش که قدمی چند در رکاب سلطان همی رفت و میگفت

ز قدر و شوکت سلطان نگشت چیزی کم

از التفات به مهمانسرای دهقانی

کلاه گوشه دهقان به آفتاب رسید

که سایه بر سرش انداخت چون تو سلطانی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 154)

*"One of the kings with a few of his courtiers, during winter, went far from their accommodation in some hunting grounds when night befell them. They saw the house of a small land owner where the king said: 'let's stay the night there to keep away from the cold'. One of the ministers said: 'it is below the dignity of the king to stay at the house of a small land owner and we can hold tents here and have fire'. The simple land owner heard what happened, prepared some food and brought it forward kissing the ground of the king. He said: 'the stature of the king wouldn't have decreased so much if he had accepted my hospitality but the value of the humble landowner would have been raised'. The king was pleased with the statement of the simple landowner so they stayed the night in his house and*

*in the morning the king granted him robes and gifts. He was heard walking along with the king a few steps saying: 'From the value and worth of the king nothing was reduced when he accepted to be guest in the house of a humble landowner but the hat of the small landowner hit the sun when such a king had his shadow over him'”<sup>56</sup>*

Not looking down upon simple people and being one with them on the same level is the lesson of a good disposition here (mirroring the decency principle). The insignificant landowner exclaims at the end that although the king lost nothing, the humble man gained much. The expression- throwing one’s hat up in sky – which is somewhat mentioned in the passage- *‘the hat of the small landowner hit the sun’* -is a Persian expression of extreme joy and is still used today. Sa’di says the social status of the minor landowner was raised by the generosity of the king, while the social status of the king was not diminished, so a form of social reconciliation between classes took effect. At a deeper level, however, Sa’di implies that the moral status of both minor landowner and king was raised, and thereby a more fundamental form of reconciliation between hearts and minds occurred.

In another passage, Sa’di explains how a bad disposition brings countless disadvantages to both the ill-disposed themselves and to those around them. For example, Sa’di warns that the negative consequences of an ill-disposition to the ill-disposed include feelings of wretchedness:

"بدخوی در دست دشمنی گرفتارست که هر کجا رود از چنگ عقوبت او خلاص نیابد.

اگر زدست بلا بر فلک رود بدخوی ز دست خوی بد خویش در بلا باشد"

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 277)

*“The ill-tempered is prisoner at the hand of such an enemy that wherever he may travel, he cannot find refuge from its cruel claws. Even if the ill-tempered travels to the sky escaping the misery of his nature, he will still be in wretchedness due to his temperament”<sup>57</sup>*

Comparing and contrasting good and bad dispositions, Sa’di says a man of good disposition is in control of himself, whereas a greedy man is out of control, as the following passage graphically indicates. Greedy people are insatiable, whereas the content can be satisfied with

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<sup>56</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 56

<sup>57</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 57. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of ill dispositions and bad characters within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa’d’s Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 21, 291

very little so they will not harm others for their greed (greed makes sharing impossible – and conflict more likely):

"ده آدمی بر سفره ای بخورند و دو سگ بر مرداری با هم بسر نبرند. حریص با جهانی گرسنه است و قانع به نانی سیر.  
حکما گفته اند توانگری به قناعت به از توانگری به بضاعت.

روده تنگ به یک نان تهی پرگردد

نعمت روی زمین پر نکند دیده تنگ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 280)

*"Ten people can eat at a table but two dogs cannot share a carcass. The greedy are hungry even if they have a world but the content are satisfied with just a loaf of bread. Scholars have said that being rich through contentment is better than being rich with wealth. A small intestine will be filled with a light loaf of bread but all the riches on this earth will not fill miserly eyes"*<sup>58</sup>

In a passage reminiscent of Aristotle's doctrine of the Golden Mean (Kraut, 2014), Sa'di urges his readers to choose the mean between the extremes of excess and deficiency (links to rationality principle):

"خشم بیش از حد گرفتن وحشت آرد و لطف بی وقت هیبت ببرد

نه چندان درشتی کن که از تو سیر گردند و نه چندان نرمی که بر تو دلیر شوند..

. درشتی و نرمی به هم در به است

چو فاصد که جراح و مرهم نه است

درشتی نگیرد خردمند پیش

نه سستی که ناقص کند قدر خویش

نه مر خویشتن را فزونی نهد

نه یکباره تن در مذلت دهد

شبانای با پدر گفت ای خردمند

مرا تعلیم ده پیرانه یک پند

بگفتا نیک مردی کن نه چندان

که گردد خیره گرگ تیز دندان"

<sup>58</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 58. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of ill dispositions and bad characters within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 21, 291

*“Having no control over one’s anger causes fear and out of place kindness reduces charisma. Do not show so much might that they have enough of you and do not be so soft that would embolden them towards you. Might and kindness are appropriate together like the phlebotomist who punctures you and heals you. A wise man will not show too much might or be a pushover. He doesn’t take his status to the sky or suddenly bring himself down degradingly. A shepherd asked his father oh wise man, grant me an adage. He said be kind but not to such a degree that it will encourage the sharp toothed wolf”<sup>59</sup>*

Evidently, the man of good disposition must avoid being too kind, because that would risk being taken advantage of by unscrupulous people. It seems that for Sa'di, reconciliation with unscrupulous people has its limits (implications for the anti-reconciliatory principle).

Self-control and restraint leading to propriety is the mark of a good character and disposition:

“نه مرد است آن به نزدیک خردمند که با پیل دمان پیکار جوید

بلی مرد آن کس است از روی تحقیق که چون خشم آیدش، باطل نگوید”

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 65)

*“He is not considered a man by philosophers, who picks a fight with a mighty elephant. Yes, a man is definitely the one who when in fury and rage, does not speak nonsense, but speaks based on knowledge and inquiry<sup>60</sup>*

I argue that for Sa'di, disposition is a means to the end of reconciliation rather than an end in itself. We can see this when we consider how Sa'di deals with the question of tie-breaking between two good dispositions – by invoking the criterion of reconciliation. For example, in the following passage, Sa'di says that judging between two elements of a person's good disposition - bravery and beneficence – we must choose beneficence, because it contributes more to reconciliation:

“حکیمی را پرسیدند از سخاوت و شجاعت کدام بهتر است؟ گفت: آن که را سخاوت است به شجاعت حاجت نیست.

نماند حاتم طائی ولیک تا به ابد

<sup>59</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 59. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of moderation within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 141

<sup>60</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 60

بماند نام بلندش به نیکوی مشهور

ز کوه مال بدر کن که فضله رز را

چو باغبان بزند بیشتر دهد انگور

نیشته است بر گور بهرام گور که دست کرم به ز بازوی زور"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 132)

*"A scholar was asked: 'from generosity and bravery which one is better?' He said: 'one who is generous doesn't need bravery'. Hatam Tai will not himself be eternal, but his name will remain famed due to his kindness. Give charity from your wealth as the gardener who spreads more seeds, will have more grapes. It is written on the grave of Bahram Gur that a giving hand is better than a powerful arm"<sup>61</sup>*

Indeed, Sa'di argues that beneficence (which has connections to the decency principle) is so superior to bravery that it renders the latter redundant, since if one is generous, one would not require a strong hand. To substantiate his argument Sa'di refers to Behram Gur (Boroumand, 2012), a king of the Sassanid Dynasty who preferred beneficence to violent action, and to Hatam Tai (Omidasalar, 2012, pp. 57-8) who was a famously generous poet whose name is alive still due to his legendary beneficence. It is very interesting how Sa'di has exploited three very different roles, a warrior king (Bahram Gur), a poet (Hatam Tai), and a gardener to express one notion (generosity). Sa'di has fused three levels of aristocracy, intellectuality, and peasantry, respectively, in one direction in harmony. Sa'di conveys that generosity is not limited to one part of society.

The section has described the principle of disposition and how it has the potential to bring people closer together, what constitutes a good disposition in a person for Sa'di, what entails a bad disposition, and how the principle of disposition is closely related to the principle of decency, in that the disposition Sa'di is searching for in people is a decent one.

### **5.7 Sa'di's Apparently Anti-Reconciliatory Sentiments**

*"I say that every prince must desire to be considered merciful and not cruel. He must, however, take care not to misuse this mercifulness. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, but his cruelty had settled the Romagna, united it, and brought it peace and confidence. If this is considered a benefit, it will be seen that he was really much more merciful than the Florentine people, who, to avoid the name of cruelty, allowed Pistoia to be destroyed. A prince,*

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<sup>61</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 61. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations of self-control within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 125

*therefore, must not mind incurring the charge of cruelty for the purpose of keeping his subjects united and confident; for, with a very few examples, he will be more merciful than those who, from excess of tenderness, allow disorders to arise, from whence spring murders and rapine; for these as a rule injure the whole community, while the executions carried out by the prince injure only one individual” (Machiavelli, 1921, p. 65).*

There are times when Sa’di appears to contradict his famed peaceful and conciliatory stance. The five reconciliatory principles of the *Rose Garden* which we have discussed above are the instruments which Sa’di uses to build his vision of human integration or higher more developed state of harmony between people which the title *Rose Garden* conveys. But as we have already seen, on occasion, Sa’di seems to shift away from his commitment to reconciliation and recommends that people distance themselves from others. This section examines these sentiments in more detail where confrontational, combative, and anti-reconciliatory passages seem to be expressed, and discusses their significance for our interpretation of Sa’di as a scholar of human relations, interactions, integration, and reconciliation. Some elements of Sa’di’s anti-reconciliatory stance have already been mentioned in the earlier analysis of the five principles, but in this section, a closer look at these instantiations is conducted. It seems that Sa’di intends to protect his *Rose Garden* (built on the five principles) with a sixth principle mentioned here, due to his familiarity with the vicious ways of the world. In this way Sa’di reconciles his idealism with his realism. This sixth principle serves as a check on the other five, since it is where they fail to reduce human suffering or increase human wellbeing, that this sixth principle takes charge. Sa’di’s vision of a higher state based on harmony and integration depends on the application of the five reconciliatory principles, but where they fail to deliver that harmony, they must be ignored. However, this does not undermine Sa’di’s general reconciliatory stance, but only refines it, as we shall see (this whole section reminds one of Sa’di’s rationality principle).

Sa’di’s lessons in this section include the limits of friendship and companionship, dealing with enemies and ill-wishers, issues relating to low and petty individuals, people with ill substance, the disloyal and ungrateful, the envious, the obstinate, dealing with the cruel, and when to use violence.

On the limits of friendship Sa’di emphasizes stability as a limiting criterion (echoing the rationality principle):

"یار ناپایدار دوست مدار"

دوستی را نشاید این غدار"

(Sa’di, 2006, p. 8)

*“Do not embrace a friend who is erratic or unstable as this traitor will not understand or deserve friendship”<sup>62</sup>*

Sa'di's characterisation of unstable friends as traitors is unusually harsh since he values friends so much and is normally very compassionate and empathetic. Nevertheless, he has insisted on treating stability as a necessary personal trait of a friend.

In the next passage, Sa'di advises us to rebuff the overtures of fair-weather friends – i.e. people who pretend to be our friends when we are prosperous, hoping to gain some benefit from our good fortune. The true friend is one who helps us out when we are in need (resonating with the decency principle):

"دوست مشمار آن که در نعمت زند  
لاف یاری و برادر خواندگی  
دوست آن دانم که گیرد دست دوست  
در پریشان حالی و درماندگی"  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 41)

*“Do not consider a man to be your friend, who knocks your door when you are well off bragging about being your brother and comrade, I consider that man to be my true friend who takes my hand when I am distressed and miserable”<sup>63</sup>*

Sa'di's warning against ill-advised friendships extends to enemies of friends: a wise man cannot be friendly towards his friends' enemies, because having relations with those who have hurt your friend is another way of injuring your friend. Moreover, Sa'di advises the reader to probe the alliances that his friends have (evoking the rationality principle), because if they fraternise with his enemies they can no longer be trusted:

"هر که با دشمنان صلح می‌کند سر آزار دوستان دارد  
بشوی ای خردمند از آن دوست دست

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<sup>62</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 62. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations kinds of relationships one should not pursue within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 294

<sup>63</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 63. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations kinds of relationships one should not pursue within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 294



که با دشمنانت بود هم نشست "

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 275)

*"Whoever makes peace with the enemy of his friends, has an intention to harm them, Oh scholar, wash your hands clean from that kind of friend who has chosen your enemies as his companion"*<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, evil companions will make you evil. Even an angel, who is a symbol of purity, beauty, and innocence, sitting with demons, which are symbols of wretchedness, will eventually take on some of their evil attributes:

"هر که با بدان نشیند نیکی نبیند"

گر نشیند فرشته ای با دیو

وحشت آموزد و خیانت و ریو

از بدان نیکوی نیاموزی"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 282)

*"Whoever socialises with the bad will see no good. If an angel accompanies a demon, he will learn fear, betrayal, and hypocrisy. From the bad you will not learn any goodness"*<sup>65</sup>

In the next passage Sa'di denies appeasing enemies, which runs contrary to other parts of the *Rose Garden*, claiming that soft treatment of enemies merely augments their enmity:

"گویند دشمن به ملاطفت دوست نگردد بلکه طمع زیادت کند"

کسی که لطف کند با تو، خاک پایش باش

وگر ستیزه برد در دو چشمش آکن خاک

سخن بلطف و کرم با درشتخوی مگویی

<sup>64</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 64. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations kinds of relationships one should not pursue within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 294

<sup>65</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 65. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations kinds of relationships one should not pursue within the *Rose Garden*, please observe Sa'd's *Compendium* (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 294

که زنگ خورده نگردد بنرم سوهان پاک"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 294)

*"They say that the enemy will not be placated by conciliation but only he will become more audacious*

*If anyone is kind to you, be the soil under their feet*

*And if he demands war, throw dust in his eyes*

*Do not speak in a kind and conciliatory way with a intimidator*

*As the rust on metal will not be wiped off with a non-abrasive file"<sup>66</sup>*

Likewise, Sa'di urges wise people to challenge foolish people and take a tough stance:

"عالم را نشاید که سفاهت از عامی به حلم در گذراند که هر دو طرف را زیان دارد هیبت این کم شود و جهل آن مستحکم.

چو با سفله گویی به لطف و خوشی  
فزون گرددش کبر و گردنکشی"

(Sa'di, 2006, pp. 287-8)

*"A wise man should not restrain himself with patience when witnessing the impudence of a vulgar fellow because both sides will be losers.*

*The stature of one becomes lower and the ignorance of the other higher.*

*When you treat a scoundrel with dignity and relate with in a lovely manner, his arrogance and defiance will grow"<sup>67</sup>*

Sa'di emphatically disdains disloyalty and ungratefulness as qualities of a petty character lowering it below animal level (evoking the disposition principle in terms of reminding readers of certain elements which can degrade the human's nature and personality). He also urges the reader to be on their guard against mean people they have treated well:

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<sup>66</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 66. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations places where courtesy does not work or should not be used, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات) (کلیات) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 203

<sup>67</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 67. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations places where courtesy does not work or should not be used, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات) (کلیات) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 203

"أَجَلَّ كَائِنَاتٍ مِنْ رُؤْيِ ظَاهِرِ آدَمِيٍّ اسْتِ،  
وَ أَذَلَّ مَوْجُودَاتِ سِجِّ،

و به اتفاقِ خردمندانِ سگِ حقِ شناس به از آدمیِ نا سپاس.

سگی را لقمه ای هرگز فراموش  
نگردد و زنی صد نوبتش سنگ  
وگر عمری نوازی سفله ای را  
به کمتر تندی آید با تو در جنگ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 295)

*"The highest of creatures seems to be man and the lowest dog but scholars have a consensus that a loyal dog is superior to an unappreciative man. A dog never forgets a bit of food given to him even if you hit him hundred times with stone but if you look after a petty fellow your whole life, he will assail you for any small irritation you might cause him"*<sup>68</sup>

This lesson – that we must always be on our guard when we interact with people – is reinforced by Sa'di in the following passage where he is suspicious of friends or students who might turn on us:

"دوست را چندان قوت مده که اگر دشمنی کند تواند، نشنیده‌ای که چه گفت آن که از پرورده خویش جفا دید؟"

یا وفا خود نبود در عالم

یا مگر کس در این زمانه نکرد

کس نیاموخت علم تیر از من

که مرا عاقبت نشانه نکرد"

(Sa'di, 2006, pp. 56-7)

*"Do not give your friend so much clout that if he desires to become your enemy, he would be capable of it. Have you not heard what was said by the one who suffered at the hands of his*

<sup>68</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 68. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on where gratefulness and loyalty might not exist, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 194, 273, 279.

*protégé? 'Either loyalty does not exist in this world or no one exercises it in this age. No one learned archery from me and did not target my back at the end'’’<sup>69</sup>*

Sa'di's suspicion is based on the fact that we cannot get into anyone's mind. He states that it is difficult to know another's internal qualities (linking to the disposition principle) even after a long acquaintance. He believes the difficulty of discerning character is more than discerning intellect:

"نه هر که به صورت

نکوست سیرت زیبا در اوست کار اندرون دارد نه پوست.

توان شناخت به یک روز در شمایل مرد

که تا کجاش رسیده است پایگاه علوم

ولی ز باطنش ایمن مباش و غره مشو

که خبث نفس نگردهد به سالها معلوم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 283)

*"Not everyone who has a pleasant appearance has a noble disposition inside. The essence is within not on the surface. Someone's level of intellect can be assessed by his appearance in a day. But beware of his interior and do not get overconfident as the malignity of one's character will only come out through years"’’<sup>70</sup>*

Sa'di is arguing below that if the substance of a person is bad, there is no use trying to convince him or educate him to reform. It is difficult to see how such determinism is compatible with Sa'di's principle of reconciliation, since healing strategies presuppose that people's behaviour can be improved so some kind of integration or coexistence can occur. However, while his determinism rules out change in the behaviour of ill-substanced people, it does not rule out change in the behaviour of well-substanced ones (echoing the disposition principle in terms of Sa'di views on human nature):

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<sup>69</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 69. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on where gratefulness and loyalty might not exist, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 194, 273, 279.

<sup>70</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 70. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on Sa'di's views regarding the significance of a man's essence and worth, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 23-4, 99.

"چون بود اصل گوهری قابل

تربیت را در او اثر باشد

هیچ صیقل نکو نخواهد کرد

آهنی را که بد گهر باشد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 241)

*"If the essence of man is worthy, training will penetrate. No amount of polishing will make a low quality iron shiny."*<sup>71</sup>

Some of Sa'di's anti-reconciliatory passages suggest that not only does Sa'di believe that there are significant limits to the application of his reconciliatory principles, but at times, Sa'di is an advocate of belligerent attitudes towards enemies rather than the advocate of conciliatory attitudes that we normally find in his passages.

For instance, he says we should relax when our enemies are disunited, and worry when they are united:

"چو بینی که در سپاه دشمن تفرقه افتاده است تو جمع باش و گر جمع شوند از پریشانی اندیشه کن

برو با دوستان آسوده بنشین چو بینی در میان دشمنان جنگ

وگر بینی که با هم یک زبان اند

کمان را زه کن و بر باره بر سنگ"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 277-8)

*"Once you witness division among the troops of an enemy, have peace of mind, and if they unite, think of a strategy from the anguish of the situation. Go and sit safe with your friends when you see discord among your enemies but when you see them to have harmony, make your bow ready for battle and place rocks on the walls of your defences"*<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 71. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on Sa'di's views regarding the significance of a man's essence and worth, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 23-4, 99.

<sup>72</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 72. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on strategies and outlooks towards enemies, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 210, 276, 278

In other words, reconciliation amongst one's enemies is not the kind of reconciliation that Sa'di approves of. Sa'di behaves like a strategist rather than a diplomat in the passage above.

Or from another perspective, committing an anti-reconciliatory action today might reduce the overall total of anti-reconciliatory actions committed in the future – as the following passage suggests. This is a clear indication that Sa'di only wishes the five reconciliatory pillars to be means to attaining a world based on harmony but that world is means to reduce human suffering. When conciliatory attitudes towards an enemy increase human pain, Sa'di becomes combative:

"هر که دشمن کوچک را حقیر می‌دارد بدان ماند که آتش اندک را مهمل می‌گذارد  
امروز بکش چو می‌توان کشت  
کاتش چو بلند شد جهان سوخت"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 274)

*"Whoever holds a small enemy in contempt is like the one who doesn't consider a small fire important. Kill the enemy today as long as there is a chance because when the fire rises, the whole world will burn"*<sup>73</sup>

The next passage expresses Sa'di's scepticism about the sincerity of submissive overtures by a defeated enemy:

"دشمنی ضعیف که در طاعت آید و دوستی نماید، مقصود وی جز آن نیست که دشمنی قوی گردد؛  
و گفته‌اند که بر دوستی دوستان اعتماد نیست، تا به تملق دشمنان چه رسد"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 274)

*"A weak enemy who comes in obedient and claiming friendship has no aim except to become a strong enemy and it is said that there is no reliability on the friendship of friends, much less the fawning of enemies!"*<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 73. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on strategies and outlooks towards enemies, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 210, 276, 278

<sup>74</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 74. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations on strategies and outlooks towards enemies, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, pp. 210, 276, 278

Sa'di is saying here that we should not trust a defeated enemy who offers friendship, since he is bound to be unreliable. At first sight, this seems contrary to Sa'di's reconciliatory views, since we would expect Sa'di to advise us to be accommodating towards a former enemy who has come knocking on the door of friendship, and show mercy, not be suspicious of his intentions (as he has advised in other parts of the *Rose Garden*). Nevertheless, with the life he had and the turbulent times he lived in, it is natural that his natural softness turned into hardness or put more professionally, his idealism was balanced with realistic attitudes towards the world.

In the passage below, Sa'di states that if a conflict can be resolved by wealth rather than by endangering life, it is necessary to use wealth because loss of life is a far greater calamity than loss of money. But if all non-violent tactics fail, using violence is legitimate. Sa'di thus condones the use of force as a means of resolving a dispute. This is an example of the limits of reconciliation and harmony which is related to the military and economic sphere, where Sa'di has strong views on avoiding war at almost all costs because of its terrible toll on human life. He held that political leaders had a moral duty to use whatever means they had (including money) at their disposal to prevent war. The passage below does not explain how money can be used to save lives, but if it implies that bribery and corruption might be legitimate, it suggests that Sa'di is saying the imperative of not endangering life is more important than being honest:

"تا کار به زر بر می آید جان در خطر افکندن نشاید چو دست از همه حیلتی در گسست حلال است بردن به شمشیر  
دست"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 275)

*"It is not allowed to endanger human life as long as wealth can offer solutions, when and only when all schemes have failed, then it is permissible to use force"*<sup>75</sup>

So Sa'di admits that reconciliation (even by using money) is not always possible, and that where it fails, force may be justified. This is an important admission by Sa'di, indicating that he is not a pacifist: there are some circumstances in which the sword is necessary. In other words, if it is evident in a particular case that reconciliation is unable to protect humanity, then force must be used to do so. This may lead to more human suffering in the short term, but in the long term it will lead to less human suffering. In general, force does not protect humanity as effectively as reconciliation does, because force begets retaliatory force and can

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<sup>75</sup> For alternative translations please see *Rehatsek in Appendix.item no. 75*

lead to a spiral of violence and even war. But there are some particular circumstances when limited force may protect humanity better than futile attempts at reconciliation like below where Sa'di even conveys that it is justifiable to kill an evil person who oppresses folk. It seems that Sa'di sets a limit on mercy (limits of forgiveness and generosity in consequentialism):

"هر که بدی را بکشد خلق را از بلائی او برهاند و او را از عذاب خدای عزوجل

پسنندیده است بخشایش ولیکن

منه بر ریش خلق آزار مرهم

ندانست آنکه رحمت کرد بر مار

که آن ظلمست بر فرزند آدم"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 275-6)

*"Whoever kills a bad person saves the human race from misery and saves himself from the fury of God. Forgiveness and generosity is praiseworthy but don't soothe the wounds of tormentor of people. The person who showed mercy on the snake did not know that it was cruelty to man-kind"*<sup>76</sup>

In another respect, Sa'di refers to the limits of reconciliation focusing on specific personal characteristics. He claims headstrong people should be left alone:

"هر که نصیحت خود رای میکند او خود به نصیحت گری محتاج است"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 279)

*"Whoever advises a headstrong man, needs advice from an advisor himself"*<sup>77</sup>

Sa'di views advising an obstinate fellow, ignorant and a waste of time. Indeed, Sa'di sometimes implies that because it is not possible to reconcile with certain types of people (envious, jealous, vengeful, and resentful dispositions), they would be better off dead! Whether Sa'di means this literally or rhetorically is unclear and relevant to Sa'di's mood at

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<sup>76</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 76. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations regarding why the bad should not be granted mercy, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 273

<sup>77</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix item no. 77. For more comparatively similar variations and slightly dissimilar illustrations regarding why the bad should not be granted mercy, within the Rose Garden, please observe Sa'd's Compendium (کلیات سعدی) edited by Mohammad Ali Foroughi in 2006, p. 273



the time but judging from Sa'di's overall character, it seems it is an exaggeration to intensify his words:

"توانم آنکه نیازم اندرون کسی

حسود را چه کنم کوز خود به رنج درست

بمیر تا برهی ای حسود کین رنجیست

که از مشقت آن جز به مرگ نتوان رست

شور بختان به آرزو خواهند

مقبلان را زوال نعمت و جاه

گر نبیند به روز شپره چشم

چشمه آفتاب را چه گناه

راست خواهی هزار چشم چنان

کور بهتر که آفتاب سیاه"

(Sa'di, 2006, p. 25)

*"I can avoid hurting people's soul but what can I do about the jealous as he is hurting within himself due to his disposition. Die oh jealous one so you can escape this pain as it is the kind of illness which only death is its cure. The unfortunate wish for the misery of the ones who are well off with blessings and stature. If the bat eyed man does not see in day light, is it the fault of the source of light, the sun? It is a legitimate request that a thousand eyes like this be blind rather than the sun be dark"*<sup>78</sup>

In conclusion, while some of Sa'di's anti-reconciliatory passages may, on close examination, show that there is a subtle reconciliatory meaning deep within the apparently anti-reconciliatory message, other places appear to be saying unequivocally that reconciliation with certain kinds of men is fruitless and potentially dangerous, and that in such circumstances we should meet evil with force, not conciliation. Sa'di also urges caution in reconciling when hardness can work better than softness, when there is discord among our foes, when time is ripe to kill an enemy, when all schemes of reconciliation have failed, when

<sup>78</sup> For alternative translations please see Rehatsek in Appendix.item no. 78

not reconciling with someone is to the benefit of society, or when reconciling might lower our dignity. What are we to make of these anti-reconciliatory verses? Do they undermine the validity of his commitment to reconciliation? My answer to this question is no, for five reasons.

First, in some of the anti-reconciliatory passages, it may be that Sa'di is not condoning anti-reconciliatory behaviour, but only describing it, as it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether the *Rose Garden* is intended as a normative work, providing moral guidance on how we should behave in life with a stern didactic tone, or an observational work, recording observations of how people actually behave in their lives or both. My understanding is that Sa'di's intention in the book is to provide ethical guidance, but sometimes his passages seem observational, and the message he means to convey may not be to copy the behaviour he describes. At times he even conveys that the opposite of what he describes should be done as he shows the harsh consequences of actions in various accounts.

Second, Sa'di does not see harmony and integration as an absolute good or unconditional end in itself. It is a means to the end of human well-being, and if there comes a point at which conciliatory behaviour threatens to undermine rather than underpin human happiness, then we are no longer obliged to act upon it. Sa'di is consequentialist in this way when he sees human well-being as the focus of all endeavours. This is Sa'di's humanism. One such point is when he says acting decently towards bad people puts good people at risk.

Nevertheless, these are startling sentiments from a writer whose work we are interpreting as designed to bring about reconciliation and unity between people. In these kinds of sentiments, Sa'di directly encourages extreme harm to be inflicted on evil people. He does reiterate that forgiveness is praiseworthy, but he also says that humanity to the brutal is brutality to the humane.

Third, some of Sa'di's passages are rhetorical, rather than literal, and suggest irony, hyperbole, or exaggeration rather than prescription.

Fourth, Sa'di's writings are piecemeal not systematic, so one should not look for consistency and coherence throughout his work but expect to discover some contradictions. But by reading and re-reading, a tacit narrative emerges towards building a better world (*Rose Garden*) based on the spirit of harmony. As mentioned, he is not a political philosopher like Hobbes, who sets out a rigorous system of analysis in which there is little ambiguity, but a profound commentator on the human condition and human interactions who appeals to

sentiment more than logic, though he also employs logic to give his sentimental views legitimacy in the eyes of readers not easily convinced by mere sentiments.

Fifth, even if it is true that Sa'di means at least some of the apparently anti-reconciliatory passages to be interpreted as endorsing anti-reconciliation, it could be argued that this does not undermine his reconciliatory principle but only shows that it is not an unlimited principle and there are other values he places alongside reconciliation. Other values which are as important as, or even more important, at times than reconciliation for Sa'di, are those which increase human wellbeing and reduce human suffering. In other words, the apparent inconsistencies in Sa'di's *Rose Garden* may not be contradictions so much as reflections of his pluralistic value system, mirrors of complex societies which he observed and wrote about which have inconsistencies, or reflections of his experiences which required diverse responses and reactions. This is a perfectly acceptable moral or philosophical position to hold that a fundamental principle-reconciliation-is valid even if it has limits. For example, the principle of liberty is for many people a fundamental principle, but it is not unlimited.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has offered an interpretation of the prose poetry of Sa'di. In my view, Sa'di used his prose poetry in the *Rose Garden* as a vehicle to express his message of reconciliation and harmony. Although the book does not present a disciplined analysis of the concept of reconciliation, it does provide a wealth of insights into the human condition and human interactions which form a powerful case for urging humanity to adopt conciliatory behaviour in order to create a more harmonious or civilised social and political order. My interpretation of the way Sa'di conveys his message of reconciliation is by focusing on five cardinal principles – justice, bond, rationality, decency, and disposition – which contain the central aspects of his reconciliatory guidelines. These five principles are the pillars that underlie his ideal world (*Rose Garden*), instruments in building that world, or bridges to it.

The five principles are complementary, yet independent of one another. They are complementary in the sense that a person can be simultaneously just, bonded, rational, decent, and well-disposed, and the more of these principles that people enunciate, the more likely that they will reconcile and make peaceful gestures towards one another. They are independent in that they do not need each other in order to exist, while contributing to the creation of Sa'di's

rose garden. All five can work together or separately. They form a pentagon of harmony where each point is a fundamental part of the structure, and although each principle offers guidelines that if adhered to separately could help lead to a better world, collectively they would have a much greater impact. There is overlap between them in that they may demand the same conduct (acting justly may also be acting decently). Although there is no formal hierarchy between them, bond is closest to creating that world based on harmony. In short, the five principles are loosely defined; wide-ranging; overlapping; mutually supportive if sometimes conflicting; and speak to all of us in one way or another.

As for the sixth 'principle', Sa'di's anti-reconciliation nostrums serve as a check on taking any of the five principles to an extreme. He draws back from prescribing an unqualified commitment to any principle of reconciliation: as his anti-reconciliatory remarks demonstrate, there are limits to his reconciliatory imperative. But within these limits, there is ample scope for efforts at reconciliation: we must not conclude that Sa'di's acknowledgement that reconciliation has its limits in any way dilutes his commitment to the right kinds of reconciliation, but balances that commitment and puts it in perspective and places it in moderation. Actually, Sa'di's more anti-reconciliatory inclined passages and reconciliatory inclined ones are not necessarily in clash. The reason being that Sa'di's ultimate aim was human wellbeing and integration was a mere instrument towards it. Therefore if integration does not yield the result needed, Sa'di advises other strategies (segregation) necessary in the real world. Places where Sa'di becomes confrontational instead of conciliatory show that being conciliatory may sometimes undermine his deeper goal of human well-being. If reconciliation threatens to undermine that humanist goal, Sa'di draws back from urging reconciliation in order to protect that humanist goal.

The next chapter discusses the bipolar nature of Iranian identity and how Persian poetry such as Sa'di's may be seen as helpful in potentially mitigating the tensions within it.

## **Chapter 6. The Bipolar Identity of Iran and Sa'di's Relevance to it**

*"I'm not saying as long as the Farsi language survives, Sa'di will remain, I say as long as Sa'di's poetry exists, the Farsi language will endure" (Shadman, 1937, p. 59)*

*"I do believe Sa'di has the duty of safeguarding the cultural identity of this nation (Iran)" (Sha'bani, 2010, cited in Safi pour et al., 2010).*

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter consummates the arguments put forward in previous chapters by showing the relevance of Sa'di's thought to modern Iran and modern international politics. In Chapter 3, it was argued that the aesthetic approach, of which Sa'di is an exemplar, is a valuable addition to our understanding of political science and international relations. In Chapter 4, it was argued against the contextualism of the Cambridge School that an author's work can speak meaningfully beyond his own historical context to subsequent generations' experiences. In Chapter 5, it was argued that there are fundamental principles of reconciliation in Sa'di's thought that inform his approach to politics and society. In Chapter 6, these strands of argument are brought together and followed through by showing how Sa'di's work can be interpreted as addressing issues of conflict in modern Iranian politics, and indeed, in the wider arena of international politics. Section 6.2 explains how conflicts in modern Iranian politics arise from the country's two main sources of identity – Persian and Islamic. Section 6.3 discusses how Iran possesses a distinctive sense of unity despite its conflictual politics. The following four

sections focus, respectively, on the roles played by mass mobilisation, poetry, religion, and the state in fostering this sense of unity. Section 6.8 demonstrates how Sa'di's ideas on reconciliation can be used to underpin and reinforce this Iranian sense of unity in helping to bridge the gap between the country's Persian and Islamic roots. Section 6.9 argues that Sa'di's reconciliatory principles can be applied beyond modern Iran to modern international politics in general.

## **6.2 Two Sources of Iranian Identity**

Within Islamic nations, Iran is distinctive in that its pre-Islamic language, culture, and customs have pretty much survived the Arab/Islamic invasion of the country in 642 A.D., and are still thriving and important to its peoples' daily existence. However, from the time of the initial days of the country's Islamization, the resilience of Iran's pre-Islamic cultural customs and language has triggered a degree of clash between the country's Persian (national) and Islamic (religious) dimensions of identity resulting in a split sense of national character. Throughout the centuries, the Iranians have struggled to reconcile these two contending, or at times complementary, dimensions of their identity. Some Iranians have been able to do this and associate themselves with Persia and Islam equally, but other Iranians have associated themselves more with either Iran's Persian civilisation or Iran's Islamic civilization. Those who have inclined towards the Persian dimension of their identity have preferred the preservation of Iran's pre-Islamic civilisation and its periodic revival, whereas those who have inclined to the Islamic dimension of their identity have preferred Iran's thorough Islamization and the dismissal of its pre-Islamic background (Hunter, 2014, p. 8).

Throughout much of the country's history, this competition between Persia and Islam as the primary identity of people was mostly irrelevant to the dynamics of political power because rulers exercised absolute sovereignty and were rarely required to validate their rule by resorting to discourses founded on ties of identity. In addition, from the Arab conquest onwards, notwithstanding the rise of some local dynasties of Iranian origin in the following centuries, Iran was administrated by Arab and Turko-Mongol sovereigns. These circumstances changed however, and by the beginning of the 19th century, Iran was facing threats from European imperial powers and the imposition of western ideas, and Iran initiated its own attempt at transformation and modernization. By the end of the 19th century, due to Iran's modernization efforts, matters of national identity came under the spotlight, and thereafter the Persia versus Islam dispute emerged.

Significant for Iran's long-term direction was that the matter of identity and its cultural foundations were now becoming connected to issues of politics. With Iran's modernization moving with increasing speed and intensity during the 20th century, the connection between identity, culture, power, and politics became closer. Iran's modernizers stressed Iran's pre-Islamic legacy, utilizing nationalism as the state ideology, and this modernization route widened the Persia-against-Islam rift. The modernizers' pre-Islamic discourse infuriated religious groups, specifically the clerical institutions, and they responded by advancing their own discourse which was Islam-centric. The Islamic Revolution (1979) was the eventual consequence of the mounting opposition to modernisation, and the newly founded religious establishment initiated a cultural revolution to re-Islamize Iran. They ushered in a conservative type of Islam, and they battled against Persian-based nationalist leanings and signs, discouraging the practice of naming children with Persian names instead of Arabic ones, scorning the practice of Persian traditions, and even damaging some pre-Islamic ancient Persian sites. In addition, they redesigned the country's cultural, legal, academic, political, and economic structures in alignment with what they perceived to be Islamic values of the specific Twelver sect of Shia Islam (Ibid., p. 9).

This Islamization of Iran's political and legal systems was largely effective, but the attempted Islamization of the cultural and identity dimensions of life in Iran was more complicated, for the following reasons. Persian customs were rooted deep within people's consciousness; there was a strong sense of nationalist attitudes in terms of love of the land; and external events such as Iraq's assault on Iran in 1980 stimulated people's sentiments of dying for the homeland. These nationalist feelings differed from themes of Islamic solidarity with other Islamic nations endorsed by the new regime, and compelled the Islamic regime to dilute its anti-Persian rhetoric. As a result, by the end of the 1980s, the cultural Islamization scheme was in jeopardy; the regime's anti-nationalist drive had waned; and there was a revitalization of Iranian patriotism, even among some of the Islamic leaders of the country. During the early 1990s, the old discussion regarding the particular roles Persia and Islam play in the country's identity, culture, character, value system, lifestyle, and belief systems had re-emerged (Ibid., p. 9).

### **6.3 The Concept of Unity in Iranian Society**

Although Iranian society has encompassed different religious, sectarian, linguistic, racial, tribal, and ethnic sects, it has not only managed to preserve its cultural identity (characterised by its Persianness) through the ages, but also retain its Iranianhood as a political entity, from the Safavid Dynasty onwards (Jackson and Lockheart, 2006, p. xxi). This means that its cultural identity goes back to Ancient Persia (Gnoli, 2012, pp. 504-7) while its political identity goes back to the Safavids. So along with our analysis of the forces dividing the country, it behoves us to analyse the forces that have kept Iran together. Many forces have brought diverse Persian and non-Persian speaking groups together, ushering in a feeling of belonging to the same Iranian cultural and political entity. In fact, the political structuring of nationhood in Iran started vigorously with the Safavids (Jackson and Lockheart, 2006, pp. 189-90), strengthened during the Qajars (Zonis, 1971, pp. 121-2; Tabari, 2014), and consolidated during the Pahlavis (Ahin, 2010, pp. 93-114; Bakhash, 2011, pp. 462-6; Sheikholeslami, 2011, pp. 466-70).

This feeling of belonging has allowed Iran to endure numerous foreign invasions and overcome countless internal calamities. The reason why Iranians have exhibited a strong sense of Iranianhood or unity in spite of having numerous sub-identities grounded in countless religious sects, local languages, faiths, tribal formations, ethnicities, cultures, and lifestyles, is because of the appeal the country's deep emotion of Iranianhood has on these various groups (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 1-10). In order to understand this emotion, we must distinguish between two senses of national identity – an institutional sense and a psychological sense. Anthony Smith defines national identity in an institutional, legal, and physical sense:

“National identity involves some sense of political community...A political community in turn implies at least some common institutions and a single code of rights and duties for all the members of the community. It also suggests a definite social space, a fairly well demarcated and bounded territory, with which the members identify and to which they feel they belong” (Smith, 1991, p. 9)

By contrast, William Bloom defines national identity in a psychological, symbolic, and mental sense:

"National identity describes that condition in which the mass of people have made the same identification with national symbols-have internalized the symbols of the nation-so that they may act as one psychological group when there is a threat to, or the possibility of enhancement of, these symbols of national identity" (Bloom, 1990, p. 52).

While Iranianhood contains both institutional and psychological elements, the emphasis is on the latter as the former has been strongly present only since the Safavid Dynasty. Another helpful distinction is between cultural and social identity. Cultural identity is fairly fixed for most people, signifying the fundamental basis of their self-perception, whereas social identity is comparatively diverse, signifying their various loyalties and commitments. An individual can possess as many social identities as s/he desires, but only one firm cultural identity (Lian, 1982, pp. 42-52). Applying this schema to Iran, while people have numerous social identities grounded in ethnic, religious, tribal loyalties, there has been one cultural identity to which the majority of Iranians subscribe. As Richard Cottam said, "loyalty to the nation can exist along with a multitude of other loyalties and that to a tribe can be one of them" (Cottam, 1979, p. 64). Applying this to modern Iran, the Bakhtiyari consider themselves as a tribe, yet part of the Iranian nation: they even tried to save the Iranian state in 1910 from Russian influence (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 3). The important point to make is that the presence of diverse social identities has not been so much in conflict with the country's cultural identity as to threaten its social cohesion or partition the country. Although much tension has been evident in Iranian history between different segments of society, its cultural identity has remained more or less intact.

#### **6.4 The Role of Mass Mobilization in Iranian Cultural Identity**

In the modern period, the strength of cultural identity in Iran has periodically revealed itself during sensitive historical points in the shape of mass mobilization of diverse religious and linguistic groups for a national cause such as defending the country against outside threats or encouraging nationhood during episodes of internal mayhem. William Bloom describes such mass mobilization as "the potential for action which resides in a mass which share the same national identification" (Bloom, 1990, pp. 53). Kazemi portrays it in Iran as "the regular pattern of multi-ethnic participation in major Iranian national events and causes" where several groups supported each other in a campaign of joint aims and ends (Kazemi, 1988, p. 214). Examples of this cross-social ethnic mobilization occurred during the occupation of Iran by the Ottomans and Russians after the collapse of the Safavid dynasty in 1722 (Foran, 1958, pp. 75-80). Nadir Quli Beyg Afshar, who became the Nadir Shah of Iran, was the chieftain of a small group of tribal warriors who managed to mobilize other Iranian tribal and non-tribal groups, including Afghans, Kurds, Qajars, Bakhtiaris, Azeris, Baluchis, and many Persian-speaking people to remove the Russians and Ottomans from Iranian territory.

Similarly, in 1856, when the British navy launched an assault on Bushihr in the south of Iran during the Qajar Dynasty, many non-Persian Iranian clans, particularly the Qashqai Turks, contributed to the battle against the British forces (During the Qajar period, it is possible to see the establishment of a nation state within a territory mainly occupied by a Persian-speaking population in its majority, and a Persianised upper and middle class reaching into the lower strata of society) (Fasai and Busse, 1972, pp. 319-35). Furthermore, during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905 and its reverberations, non-Persian speaking Iranians such as Azeris and Armenians had prominent parts to play. In 1951-53, most tribal groups showed their backing for Mossadeq's nationalization of Iranian oil which was under the control of the British (Ahmadi, 2012, pp. 3-4).

Not only have minorities in Iran undertaken to protect the country every time it was endangered by outside adversaries, they have also been passionate Iranian nationalists admiring the heritage of ancient Persia during the pre-Islamic empires of the Achaemenids (640-330 B.C.) and Sassanians (224-637 A.D.). Many of the well-known Iranian nationalists such as Talib Zadeh (Adamyat, 1984, pp. 79-93), Fath Ali Akhundzadeh (Farman Farmayan, 1968, p. 141), and Ahmad Kasravi (Abrahamian, 1980, p. 101), were from Azerbaijan, while many other non-Persian speaking Iranians such as Kurdish politicians like Karim Sanjabi embraced Iranian nationalism (Cottam, 1979, p. 74). Indeed, Cottam has reported that many Iranian Kurdish



scholars such as Muhammad Ghazi chose Iranian instead of Kurdish nationalism because of the lure that Iranian history and culture has had for the Kurds (Ibid., p. 68) believing that Kurdistan should be part of Iran as it was during time of the Persian Empire (Nikitine and Ghazi, 1987, p. 15).

### **6.5 The Role of Persian Poetry in Iran's Cultural Identity**

There are many sources of division between the Iranian people, but their awareness of, veneration for, and pride in, Iran's civilization or concept of Iranianhood, serves as a cohesive force to help neutralize the conflict-prone polity. Not only do the many Persian-speaking areas of the country identify themselves with this distinct concept of Iranianhood, but so did Turkish-speaking and Kurdish parts (Cottam, 1979, pp. 26-7). The reason for this could be that they too identify themselves with the national language of the country and take pride in it, despite having a local language as well. Iranian cultural heritage, offering a sense of Iranianhood, has expressed itself in classical and modern Parsi (Farsi) works in the forms of poetry and prose. Persian language and literature empowered Iran to preserve its independent identity and prevented its incorporation into the Arabic fold, unlike Islamic regions of North Africa and the Middle East. The Arab invasion was not the only external assault from which Iran retained its independent identity and cultural legacy. Mehrdad Mashayekhi has pointed out that Iran has been subject to many other conquests and invasions, but due to its rich cultural heritage, especially Persian literature, Iranians have survived such turbulences, each time adjusted to the new situations, even shaping (Persianising) the culture of the invaders and occupiers, while keeping some features of their ancient civilization unbroken.

The most important building blocks which were used to underpin identity included the Persian language, the state's administrative structure (Ansari, 2014, pp. 16-8, 26, 51-7, 60-3, 71-7, 82), historians (keeping the pre-Islamic Iran alive), rituals, customs and traditions (Mashayekhi, 1992, p. 84). Indeed, although foreign conquerors have governed Iran for lengthy periods, Iranian culture influenced them more rather than the opposite (Meskoob and Hillmann, 1992, p. 49). The administration had a particularly profound effect as the gatekeeper of the Persian language because the occupiers had to learn Persian in order to operate in the country. Through them, the language preserved the traditions, customs, and rituals: the court and cultural centres were continuous transmitters of Iranian consciousness (Ansari, 2014, pp. 16-8, 26, 51-7, 60-3, 71-7, 82). The chief component of the cultural resilience of Iran, predominantly in its Islamic age, was the Persian language and its extraordinary power in poetry and literature. Sandra Mackey claims that, "If Persian culture were to survive in an Arab empire it would do so through the Persian tongue" (Mackey, 1996, p. 59). Richard Frye states that Iranian poetry holds a celebrated and paramount place in the hearts and minds of Iranians, since understanding of great Persian poets such as Hafiz Shirazi, Ferdowsi, Nezami, Rumi, Omar Khayyam, and Sa'di Shirazi, is not restricted to the educated elite. Even many illiterate people from deprived backgrounds are able to quote lengthy verses from these icons (Frye, 1953, p. 22). Laleh Shahideh agrees: "For centuries, poetry has captured the essence of Iranians' sense of identity and acted as a safe place for the preservation of their cultural and traditional heritage" (Shahideh, 2004, p. 28).

A central theme in the passages of many iconic Persian poets is their disdain for factional, racial, religious, and linguistic divisions and their enunciation of universal human values, morals, and beliefs. Among the poems of Sa'di, this theme is particularly striking. In addition to transmitting universal human values that made them known and loved by religious and linguistic groups, Persian poems contributed to the restoration of Iran as a political unit. In effect, it was the Persian poem with its literary richness and allure that stimulated the first local Iranian anti-Caliphate dynasties, such as the Saffarids in Sistan, the Bueeds in Tabaristan, and the Samanids

in Greater Khorasan, to embrace Persian poetry and support the writing of history in Persian instead of Arabic (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 7). With the constant progress of Persian literature, it was unavoidable that it became entwined with Iranian culture and played a central role in linking different religious and linguistic groups to each other, giving them a sense of national identity and consciousness. Alongside the Persian language, other features of Iranian culture, like national Iranian festivals and traditions, specifically the historical Iranian festivities, are foundations of national unity among groups. Rituals such as the Iranian New Year, wedding ceremonies, Winter Feast, Nature Day, Water Festival, Fire Festival, Autumn Festival, Spring Cleaning and Shopping Festival, and Last Wednesday of the Year Festival, are among these national celebrations (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 8).

## **6.6 The Role of Religion in Iran's Cultural Identity**

The role of Islam in Iran's identity has become a debateable issue in the 20th century. This dispute over the place of religion and nationality (Islam and Persia), in Iranian identity has deepened since the formation of the Islamic Republic. As we have noted, two views exist on the dispute: the first highlights the standing of Iranian national identity, chiefly in its pre-Islamic form, eliminating any place for Islam (Bigdeloo, 2001, pp. 43-50), while the second focuses on Islamic identity and its civilization, discarding the contributions of ancient Iran (Persia), its culture, and customs (Naqavi, 1985, pp. 30-40). To reconcile these two views, some scholars such as Shariati (1984) have adopted a position that acknowledges the role of both influences in the modelling of the country's identity (Naraghi, 1976, pp. 171-86). This third view sees a mutual relationship between Persian and Islamic cultures, arguing that a careful analysis of life in Islamic Iran shows that the Islamic and pre-Islamic Iranian cultures have not always or necessarily been in conflict with each other. Indeed, during the Islamic era, these two dimensions, Iranian culture and Islamic faith, have been complementary, each side making significant contributions to the other.

Examples of the contributions made by the Islamic side include the fact that Islam helped Iranians resuscitate and preserve their pre-Islamic cultural legacy: for instance, the festivity of Now Ruz (Persian New Year) was recognised as an Islamic (Shia) festival by Muslim theologians such as Majlesi during the Safavid dynasty when he celebrated that Ali (head of the Shia branch of Islam whom Iranians have embraced) was selected as Prophet Muhammad's heir on this day (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 9). Also Prophet Mohammad believed in the Persians' scientific abilities saying: "Were knowledge in the Pleiades, some of the Persians would reach it" (Browne, 1910, p. xv), which showed immeasurable respect to Persians, elevating their status in the region. Examples of the contributions made by the Persian side include the fact that when during the reign of Shah Abbas (1587-1628), the Iranian New Year (Now Ruz) which was a solar jubilee, and the mourning of Ashura (a Shia iconic figure who was martyred) which was on a lunar calendar, overlapped, Shah Abbas organised the mourning for Ashura on one day and merriments for Now Ruz the next day, out of respect to both identities (Shariati, 1988, p. 72). Another example was the Safavi dynasty employing Shia Islam to craft the first prominent central state in Islamic Iran fuelling Iranian nationalism. Moreover, many notable Iranian nationalists have been Muslims (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 9). Furthermore, Iran played a major role in the Islamic Golden Age, producing noteworthy Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna and Ghazzali, historians like Tabari, statesman such as Nizam al-Molk, mathematicians like Khawrazmi, and encyclopaedic prodigies like Biruni (Ronconi, 1978, p. 69). Indeed, Abbas Iqbal Ashtiani proclaimed that Iranians have played the greatest part in shaping Islamic civilisation:

"All Muslims (meaning non-Arabs as well as Arabs) have had a part in (the shaping of) Islamic civilization, but Iranians have played a more prominent role than everyone else.

This is not only because this people took charge of the main institutions of Islamic governance, but they were also direct promoters of science and literature or experts and teachers of learning (ma'lumat). As a result, the majority of the learned figures among the clerics, philosophers, and poets who wrote in Arabic during this period of Islamic civilization were Iranians" (Iqbal, 1924, cited in Aghaie and Marashi, 2014, p. 212).

Conversely, one of the core elements of Iranian pride and identity, its literature, was rejuvenated during the Golden Age of Islam:

"The impact of Islam, on the other hand cannot be minimized for the change in poetry...Sasanian poetry in the Pahlavi language was poor in comparison to the tremendous flowering of new Persian poetry later...It was Arabic, the international language or the Latin of the Near East which gave Persian the richness and flexibility to become a world literature. Think of the poverty of the Anglo-Saxon without the Norman French or Latin influence! The new Persian Literature reflected the Golden Age of Islamic thought, religious and philosophical, but, of course primarily in poetry where the new techniques were derived in great part from the Arabs" (Frye, 2011, p. 46)

Therefore, according to this third view, in contemporary Iran, Islam has become inextricably embroiled in Iranian cultural heritage, and an "Irano-Islamic identity" has emerged as a means of unification and preservation of the country overcoming the bipolarity of Islam and Persia. This spirit of unification is exemplified in the work of two Iranian poets, Ferdowsi and Sa'di. Ferdowsi was a devout Muslim yet interpreted the ancient, pre-Islamic heritage of Iran in such a way that it was harmonious with the soul of Islam (Pourjavadi, 2014). *'Shahnameh'* (*Book of Kings*), Ferdowsi's poetic work, became so adored by Muslim Iranians that some Arabs saw it as the Qur'an of Ajam (referring to Iranians). Ferdowsi merged Iranian mythology with an Islamic view of history reconciling the national and Islamic identities of Iran (Shirani, 1990, p. 306). Sa'di Shirazi, who experienced an Iranian-Islamic upbringing, also endeavoured to strengthen the Persian language during the Mongol invasion, through enabling the *Rose Garden* to become a school book in the curriculum (Mohamad Khani et al., 2013; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Ibrahim Dinani, 2015). So, as Meskoob and Hillmann (1992, p. 44) put it, "the tree of Iranianness grew on the earth of Persian language and in the climate of Islam". Sa'di, in his *Rose Garden*, evoked notions and figures from pre-Islamic Iran which were pure Persian (including Ardeshir babkan, Bozorgmehr, Anushiravan, Bahram Gur, Jamshid, Rustam, Zal, Fereidoun, Kasra, Keykhosrow, Homa) as well as from Islamic Iran which were purely religious (including the Holy Quran, Ayah, Hadis, Nahjolbalaghe, and Revayat) (Sabzianpour, 2009, pp. 96-8).

## **6.7 The Role of the State in Iran's Cultural Identity**

In post-1979 Iran, faced with international hostility to its declaration of an Islamic Republic, the state has played a role of uniting Iranians against a common enemy – western imperialism -- coming through modernity and globalization. In order to resist western infiltration, the state has, in a new turn, attempted to reconcile Iranian and Islamic identities uniting them in resistance to western influence. The anti-western discourse transmitted by the Iranian state defines the country as 'Islamic Iran' to protect itself from western cultural hegemony (Saboori et al., 2015, pp. 57-8). This move was particularly evident during the 1990s, when the state tried to merge Iran's pre-Islamic Persian civilisation with its Islamic identity. The cultural policies termed Principles of Cultural Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (CPIRI), which were approved in 1991 by the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution, were the formal views of the establishment which other governmental bodies must follow. Many clauses in the CPIRI

statement reveal how the state has officially endorsed the effort at uniting the two identities (Fazeli, 2006, pp. 167-8):

“Article One: Recognizing and evaluating historical and national heritage and traditions in various scientific, literary, artistic, and public cultural spheres; safeguarding Islamic and national works of art, and preserving and revitalizing the constructive and valuable achievements of civilization in Iran

Article Four: Being comprehensively cognizant of Islamic and Iranian national culture and civilization; promoting Islamic morality and knowledge; and introducing great figures and events of both Islamic and Iranian history to the public

Article Five: Consolidating national and religious solidarity; taking into account ethnic and religious characteristics; and endeavouring to eliminate impediments to national unity.

Article Seven: Taking every effort to promote and enrich the Persian language and literature

Article Twenty-two: Endeavouring to identify and publicize the fundamentals of authentic religious and national identity to consolidate and perpetuate cultural independence”

Sa’di’s prose poetry can contribute to, or be relevant for, every clause in the CPIRI statement, but specifically Article Five stands out in relation to this project and to what Sa’di’s *Rose Garden* has to offer in terms of a fusion of Islamic and Persian cultural elements. Characters and symbols from Iran’s pre-Islamic Persian civilisation plus themes from Iran’s Islamic identity are both present in the *Rose Garden*. The fact that Sa’di placed them together in a compatible manner, mixing Persian and Islamic values, is significant from a person who is himself an example of the merging of both identities: Sa’di sees no clash in these two dimensions of his persona.

### **6.8 Sa’di’s Potential Role as a Poet Diplomat for the Modern Day Iranian Identity Clash**

Much has been said in this thesis regarding Sa’di and his prose poetry in relation to Iran, including its culture, language, and history. This section explains why Sa’di’s prose poetry can be used to fuse the two competing identities of Iran – Persian and Islamic. It does so by making five interrelated points. First is the fact that Sa’di’s notion of Iranianhood offers a holistic understanding that embraces both Persian and Islamic identities. If a part of contemporary Iran associates itself more with its Islamic Civilisation while another part associates itself with its Persian Civilisation, this does not necessarily mean there is a fundamental chasm, since both pre-Islamic Iran and Islamic Iran are located within the same continuum. Whether people have an inclination towards the religious customs of a country or the national traditions of a country, does not necessarily mean that they have deviated from the idea of Iranianhood. It merely expresses which part of this Iranianhood they espouse more. Sa’di, who has fused Islamic and Persian notions in his prose poetry, is himself an example that different parts of the evolution of a country do not have to be incompatible with each other. It is normal that a person will like or dislike different parts of his/her heritage, so people in Iran can and will have the right to choose which part of the country’s evolution and history they are more inclined towards. This does not imply a fundamental divide as long as the idea of Iranianhood is preserved, which Sa’di has done much to maintain through his contributions to the country’s language and culture (Foroughi, 1937, p. 3-4; Milani, 2008, p. 75-7; Safi pour et al., 2010; Zolfaghari, 2010; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Kamali Sarvestani, 2014).

Second, Sa’di’s reconciliatory principles do not threaten either nationalism or Islamism: on the contrary, they appeal strongly to both. If Iran’s two movements changed their rhetoric to ending

suffering for humans instead of focusing on a nationalist zeal or a religious fervour, a commonality will occur with which both movements can identify. Islam has a rich tradition of mercy and compassion while Persians prides itself with honour and chivalry. These two can indeed integrate. The duty of the national media and parliament in supporting the initiative of integration is critical, but greater is the duty of ordinary men and women who do not want Iran to become a failed or collapsed state such as, to different extents, Syria, Libya, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, and Lebanon. What Sa'di urges is not for either side to abandon its ideals, but to return to their roots which lie in their humanness, and follow his five principles of justice, bond, rationality, disposition, and decency which are at the heart of both Iranian and Islamic values. These five principles will offer a bridge between the two movements without them having to cede any of their Persian or Islamic doctrines. Sa'di's *Rose Garden* offers a glimpse of harmony where one can be himself while contributing to the wellbeing of the other. So far in Iran, each side has been attempting to change the other side but no one has actually said in order to have reconciliation, both sides need to be comfortable in their own skins of their respective religious and national identities. It is quite novel that Sa'di demands the religious movement to stay religious and the national movement to remain national, because it is only in this way that they can start to respect one another. Once they have been able to fully be and express themselves with no threat or hindrance, then they can start to appreciate the other side as once self-integration occurs, integration with the other comes naturally. In fact, once the members of each movement understands and acts within the codes of their movement, then they can see that actually, what the holy Qur'an (holy book of Islam and a symbol of Islamism) and Avesta (holy book of Zoroastrianism which is the religion of Iran prior to the Arab invasion and a symbol of Persianness) have said are really the same; just different images of the divine. This comes from Sa'di's Sufi sentiments. What is unique about Sa'di's diplomacy is that he does not demand change but a closer understanding of one's origins.

Third, in his writings, Sa'di has evoked notions from both pre-Islamic Iran (Persia) and Islamic Iran in an aesthetic blend. For example, in the *Rose Garden*, Sa'di brings together elements from pre-Islamic Iran which are purely Persian and related to the national identity of the country (legends and kings - e.g. Ardeshir Babkan, Bozorgmehr, Anushiravan, Bahram Gur, Jamshid, Rostam, Zal, Fereidoun, Kasra, Keykhosrow, Homa), and Islamic themes (Holy Quran, Ayah, Hadis, Nahjolbalaghe, and Revayat) (Sabzianpour, 2009, pp. 96-8) related to the religious identity of the country (Milani, 2008, pp. 91-2) including more than forty quotations from Hadis and Qur'an (Lewis, 2012, pp. 79-86). He does this so deftly that the reader may not distinguish between the two separate identities but see only a continuous flow of constituents of the country's imagery.

Fourth, Sa'di's own life personifies both Persian Civilisation and the Islamic Golden Age. For one thing, he had an Iranian-Islamic upbringing, and he saw no tension between his religious and national identity. For another thing, during the Mongol invasion, Sa'di endeavoured to strengthen the Persian language, which is itself a blend of the pre-Islamic Iranian language and Arabic which came to Iran after the Islamization of Persia, by ensuring that the *Rose Garden* became a textbook in the school curriculum (Shafagh, 1937, p. 65; Mohamad Khani et al., 2013; Haji Yusofi et al., 2014; Ibrahimi Dinani, 2015).

Fifth, current and modern statesmen evoke Sa'di's ideas and refer to him in their discourses, thereby giving him visible weight in political circles (Foroughi, 1937, pp. 3-8; Haddad Adel, 2005; Harandi, 2010; Salehi Amiri, 2017; Afshani, 2017; Official Website of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2017). Such familiarity in political discourse suggests that Sa'di may already be used in mediating between the two identities. With the state terming the country 'Islamic Iran', it appears that Sa'di would be the archetypical Islamic Iranian.

Sixth, the strife in modern day Iran between the two contesting identities, although unlike the strife in the country after the Mongol invasion, does place Sa'di at a unique position to understand conflict since instability was a part of his life. All his writings were written in response to conflict. His abhorrence of discord and disturbance in human relations especially in Iran can be seen in the beautiful and emotional verse below where he prays to God to save Persia from the fires of disharmony:

يارب ز باد فتنه نگهدار خاک پارس  
چندان که خاک را بود و باد را بقا  
(Sa'di, 2006, p. 7)

*“Oh Lord, preserve the land of Persia from the winds of strife  
In the same manner soil endures and winds survive”*

It can be observed in the above passage how Sa'di prays to God using the Arabic/Islamic name (رب) and at the same time he asks this Islamic title for God to preserve not Iran but the land of (پارس) which is the very ancient name of Iran and has a more patriotic and nationalist tone. When this passage is read today, the implications of Sa'di's message becomes clearer for modern day Iran. No matter the God of which religion one prays to, no matter which name one refers to his country, the concept Sa'di conveys is the same: Love of the land and love of faith are entwined as this land is the lord's blessing upon people which must be kept safe away from fires of discord.

Seventh, referring to the principles Sa'di has for reconciliation, it appears that with much talk in modern day Iran for national unity, national dialogue, national solidarity, and national reconciliation, the principle of Bond would be most fitting. The topic of a fractured country and fractured political system has long plagued modern day Iran and caused instability, even threatening the country with collapse (Tabesh, 2014; Maghsudi, 2017; Hunter, 2014b, p. 246; Mazeni, 2017; Fani, 2010). Sa'di's Bond is necessary for this entity to thrive, not just survive. With the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region in a state of turmoil after the Arab Spring and civil wars in Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria, it is natural that Iranians are fearful that their country would be next. Bond with people whom one disapproves of is a small price to pay to prevent losing the country to a Syria-like situation.

Eighth, after Bond, Sa'di's principle of Rationality is very relevant to the clash and instability in modern day Iran as much of the problem lies in people and movements making decisions based on ideology and sentiment, rather than reason and logic. With the belligerent rhetoric from President Trump and new challenges for Iran, the issue for national reconciliation becomes ever more prominent. In this new sensitive environment with the threat of war even looming, decisions must be based on logic and calculation between both sides of the Iranian divide as an internal war cannot be afforded (Nazargah, 2017).

## **6.9 The Application of Sa'di's Reconciliatory Principles to the World in General**

In this section, I suggest that Sa'di's principles of reconciliation may help us to see ways of reducing conflict not only in modern Iran, but also in international politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The failure of current peace-building initiatives across the world is no secret. Vicious conflict is evident in dozens of regions, including the Middle East, East Asia, and East and Central Africa. In what way could Sa'di's reconciliatory principles reduce such conflicts? In my view, Sa'di's appeal to our common human nature, regardless of faith, race, sect, ethnicity, occupation, or socio-economic background, is a promising foundation for bringing warring sides together. If humans identify themselves based on faith or occupation or gender or social

status, there will be differences and clashes between them. But when these differences are seen as secondary to the fundamental identity of man's humanness, reconciling will be easier as even man's worst enemy is a form of human, no matter how evil he is. Also, the simplicity of Sa'di's message of reconciliation is refreshing – that we should not allow complicated rules of status and etiquette, rigid prejudices, and long-held traditions to stand in the way of resolving conflicts. His insistence that every person should be treated with respect, and his tempering of idealism with realism and pragmatism, are further contributions to global peace-making. In addition, Sa'di's notion that all human beings are connected with one another is a powerful reminder to factious groups that our actions may affect other people in unexpected ways, and subsequently rebound upon us.

As far as the specific principles identified in the Rose Garden, I do believe that the principle of Decency would appeal more to the world at large. Firstly, it is a simple principle and understanding it does not require any form of training or sophisticated knowledge. Secondly, all cultures and religions have notions of it within them in various ways and guises. Thirdly, if one looks at conflicts such as those in Myanmar, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, and Yemen, one can easily discern that this very simple principle would answer and offer solutions even at times of deadly conflict. For example, even if the Serbs or Croats or Bosnians demanded independence from former Yugoslavia, even if the central government opposed it, it does not give people the right to persecute one another with ethnic cleansing, rape, genocide, and torture. One can oppose the secession of a part of his country but vigorously oppose murder of children of that specific part. Fourthly, decency, even in times of war, has a placating effect which throws water instead of oil on fires of discord. For example, imagine how the Yugoslav wars would not have spiralled out of control when soldiers of either side simply prevented secession with as much restraint as possible without using rape as a tool of war. In this way, decency does not cure the problem, but prevents it from going out of control, since it allows for some actions to be deemed crossing red lines. The worst scenario was that soldiers fight and kill each other, not hurting each other's families. In this manner, conflict can be contained with honour as compared to having a human catastrophe such as many massacres in the Yugoslav Wars. Fifthly, decency allows one to help another or at least refrain from mistreating him due to the pleasure one gains from it. The psychological impact of harming another lingers on man's soul, no matter how much one hates another, but decency allows man to help himself in the way of easing his conscience. Sixthly, although proponents of Realism in IR will never accept decency as a strategy for resolving conflicts because it might be seen as trivial or a weakness, nevertheless, observing the chaotic situation of the world which is very much due to Realist thinking, I believe Sa'di's decency is a cure, even if seen as too idealistic.

After Decency from the principles of Sa'di in the Rose Garden, I do believe that Disposition which has a close link with decency is very relevant to the modern day troubles of the world. A man's character and personality can be naturally either conciliatory or aggressive. In politics, they are called doves and hawks. This is a point much neglected in global politics which focuses on how one's temperament causes conflict and chaos. An erratic character such as President Trump compared to a much more stable character such as his predecessor President Obama, had very different views on how to deal with Iran. Trump's behaviour has invigorated hardliners in Tehran while Obama strengthened moderates. I do not wish to state that unclenching the fist always works. If it did, Sa'di would not have had a 6<sup>th</sup> anti-reconciliatory principle, but I do wish to affirm the reality that statesmen are humans and humans have temperaments. Sa'di has acknowledged this and we see the tension which had subsided much in US-Iranian relations during Obama's presidency, soar again due to Trump's presidency. Both sides of the Iranian divide are currently at each other's throats playing the blame game over whom is responsible for warming to the USA in the first place, which increases internal tensions in the country (Torfeh, 2018; Fisher, 2016).

## **6.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that Sa'di's principles of reconciliation can be applied to both modern Iran and the wider arena of international politics. The chapter identified the forces that threatened to divide Iran - its bipolar nature - and the forces that have consolidated it as a single socio-political entity - its heritage through cultural artefacts, national festivities, customs, language, ancient civilisation, and literature. The values within these forces were pointed out, and the efforts made to preserve the Persian language in a fashion that would incorporate both Islamic and Iranian themes have been explained. In my view, what unites bipolar Iran is stronger than what divides it, and Iranian poetry, including that of Sa'di, with its Persian linguistic style imbued with Arabic linguistic intonations and other elements borrowed from that language has played a major part in uniting Islamic religious ideas with Persian national notions. The chapter has argued that Sa'di's reconciliatory principles offer guidelines to the resolution of conflict in modern Iran, which are particularly welcome at present, given the fraught condition of the country, both at home and abroad. In addition, Sa'di's further contributions to modern global conflicts have been explained and discussed. The next chapter will conclude this project by offering a summary of its findings, and an outline of its wider implications.



## Chapter 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

There are two parts to this brief conclusion: a summary of the findings of the thesis; and an assessment of the contribution the thesis has made to scholarship.

### 7.2 Summary of the Findings of the Thesis

The main finding of the research is that interpreting passages from Sa'di's *Rose Garden* has confirmed the hypothesis of the thesis that his prose poetry has the intellectual weight and aesthetic quality to offer lessons of reconciliation in the field of human relations promoting harmony and integration. Sa'di has expressed several notions in his *Rose Garden* but for the purpose of this thesis, it was discovered that he has intimated five principles (justice, bond, rationality, decency, and disposition) which are particularly instrumental in creating a more advanced civilisation based on human integration. Sa'di also considered a sixth anti-reconciliatory principle which reflects his understanding of the realities of the world and that at times, segregation is the only way of coexistence between different individuals and groups of people. Furthermore, this 6<sup>th</sup> principle sets a restraint on forms of conciliation that could endanger the Rose Garden. Where reconciliation does not reduce suffering or increase happiness, Sa'di is willing to restrict it as well. Therefore, the five reconciliatory principles are means to a rose garden of harmony between people; this rose garden itself is meant to be means towards the final aim of human wellbeing (Sa'di's humanism plays a critical role here). Importantly, it must be remembered that these six principles still do not fully grasp Sa'di's mind as he cannot easily be placed in a strict and completely closed model. However, with the limitations of Sa'di's ambiguity, contradictions, possible different interpretations, the project

has been able to identify, as much as possible, an overall understanding and narrative of the *Rose Garden* based on reconciliation, running like a red thread throughout the book, as roses alone will not lead to a garden but when the roses come together they can (garden being a place of prosperity and harmony).

This is not to claim that Sa'di's principles of reconciliation are always straightforward or clear. On the contrary, they are often ambiguous and even at times contradictory, and they give rise to many different interpretations. Nevertheless, the project has been able to find a plausible understanding of the *Rose Garden* that seems to make sense of Sa'di's disparate verses as expressions of the need to heal the divisions between people and to usher in a harmonious society. Further studies may be undertaken to see whether Sa'di's manifold insights can be captured into a more rigorous framework of political philosophy, possibly with a different organising principle than reconciliation. I am fully aware that the profundity of Sa'di's thinking is capable of many different interpretations. However, I believe that my interpretation is sufficiently grounded in the text of the *Rose Garden* to constitute a possible reading of that masterpiece. It must be noted that passages within the principles have been sometimes intentionally left as mere points and observations with little relation to each other due to them not fitting into any distinct consistent political school of thought.

### **7.3 The Thesis' Contribution to Scholarship**

The study makes five contributions to scholarship. First, it helps to move western scholarship on politics away from western humanities and social sciences in order to bring about new insights from eastern sources. This is important since so much work in this field has been by western scholars who offer a western-centric view of the world, thereby ignoring valuable insights from the east. This project follows writers who seek to reverse this tendency, by using eastern ideas as an inspiration for human diplomacy. For example, the use of indigenous ideas chimes with the suggestion of Roger Macginty and Oliver Richmond (Mac Ginty and Richmond, 2013, pp. 763-81) to exploit local frameworks for local peace initiatives, rather than western frameworks being imposed upon people from outside, the west (local turn in peace building).

Second, this study sees poetry as a means to counter the realist outlooks in political sciences of attempting to view the world as separate from a person's norms, values, and sentiments. Using aesthetic/emotional tools instead of rational/realist ones, is a comparatively novel approach in dealing with the problem of conflict and issue of human interconnectedness in modern day politics. In an academia where a large proportion of political scientists view

realism as the overriding perspective, seldom have intangible and immaterial forces been viewed as important (Bleiker, 2009, pp. 5-6, 14, 18-9, 20-35, 43, 47, 61). In this approach, I have made use of Roland Bleiker's (2009) view of the merging of aesthetics and politics (the aesthetic turn in politics). My claim is that Sa'di's prose poetry may be interpreted as enunciating approaches to human behaviour, especially in the socio-political domain, that could improve the prospects of coexistence and integration by appealing more to our better nature than threatening us with coercion.

Third, the study dealt with the historiographical problem of investigating the ideas expressed in one century for their profundity by the author several centuries later. This issue was addressed through studying the work of scholars such as Skinner (who insists on strict contextualism) (Skinner, 2002, p. 88), Lovejoy (who offers a perennialist outlook) (Lovejoy, 1940, pp. 3-23), Trompf (who believes in recurrence of historical events) (Trompf, 1979, pp. ix, x, 1-3), and Romano (who subscribes to eventual hermeneutics) (Romano, 2009, pp. 15, 21, 30, 38, 49, 54-8, 62-70, 82-5, 134-7, 148-52, 205, 211, 220). In this analysis, I reached the conclusion that it is legitimate to interpret the ideas of past writers and scholars as relevant to issues facing present-day society. This conclusion paved the way to seeing Sa'di's ideas as offering plausible insights into ways of reconciling opposing identities modern-day Iran.

Fourth, the study makes important contributions to Sa'di scholarship itself. For example, while many books and papers on Sa'di's *Rose Garden* are readily available, many of them are of a descriptive nature and do not adopt such a rigorous analytical and critical approach as this thesis. The works that do have an analytical approach, belong overwhelmingly to the disciplines of literary criticism, linguistics or religious studies, but no serious effort has been made to investigate the *Rose Garden* for a reconciliatory understanding. This is the first major work (to the knowledge of the author) where Sa'di's *Rose Garden* has been interpreted essentially for its reconciliatory value. There have been previous studies of Sa'di's poetry carried out to investigate his political, ethical, psychological, and educational views, but not to examine his diplomatic and reconciliatory views in state or society, in this depth and to this extent, especially in English. The thesis also contributes to Sa'di scholarship by demonstrating why he was such an icon in Iran for helping to preserve the Persian language during the Mongol invasion; for being a historical accountant of events within the country; for his characterization of Iranian identity; and for his appeal to the Iranian mind.

Fifth, although the thesis does not suggest that Sa'di's writings on their own can be used to fix the bipolar conflict of identities in contemporary Iran between its religious and national

dimension, it does offer insights into why Sa'di continues to resonate in the Iranian psyche helping safeguard the idea of Iranianhood, and could therefore play a part in reducing that conflict. It must be expressed that Sa'di does not refer to Iran per se but more to Persia as pre-Islamic Iran where Sa'di brings many themes from was indeed Persia (although the term Iranian does not necessarily apply to Sa'di and his period, Persianness is the heart of Iranianhood and the Iranian mind today). However, although today Iran consists of many different people who a huge constituent are Persians, still the core of modern day Iranianhood is characterised by its Persianness. From my conversations in Iran with Sa'di scholars in two high ranking universities and officials at several private and public institutions, almost all acknowledged Sa'di's persistent influence in the country and pointed to his contributions in keeping the country together as a whole, through safeguarding its language and its customs during chaotic and devastating times. I discovered a deep resentment of the fact that Iran has been victim to many outside interventions and influences, and a keen desire to retain the country's unique cultural heritage, which includes the works of Sa'di as a pillar of Iranianhood.

## Appendix

<sup>1</sup> *“Travelers bring sugar-candy from Egypt as a present to their friends. Although I have no candy, yet have I words that are sweeter. The sugar that I bring is not that which is eaten, but what knowers of truth take away with respect” (Edwards, 2010, p. 5)*

<sup>2</sup> *“You who were once a foetus Next, a suckling babe Then grew and matured Like a tall tree, a cypress Till you became famous A knight in the arts of war and chase. The past remained not at the same phase Nor will the present remain the same Sooner or later this dear person Will turn into earth, then into dust... Better to leave a good name Than a palace of gold behind... They write eulogies for rulers I give you advice, dervish-like...” (Katouzian, 2006, 24-5)*

<sup>3</sup> *“Not all could speak the truth so bold Words are the realm, Sa ‘di is the lord” (Katouzian, 2006, p. 25)*

<sup>4</sup> *“Life is not worth your breaking a heart Do no wrong, as would no man who is smart... Of the masses of wealth and treasure They took to their grave not one measure... Death is close to you, be it as it may You take another step towards it every day” (Katouzian, 2006, p. 25)*

<sup>5</sup> *“Of what use will be a dish of roses to you? Take a leaf from my rose garden. A flower endures but five or six days But this rose garden is always delightful” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 15)*

<sup>6</sup> *“The sons of Adam are limbs of each other Having been created of one essence. When the calamity of time afflicts one limb The other limbs cannot remain at rest. If you have no*

*sympathy for the troubles of others You are unworthy to be called by the name of a man.”(Rehatsek, 2010, 35-6)*

<sup>7</sup> *“Who has no mercy upon inferiors will suffer from the tyranny of superiors. Not every arm which contains strength Breaks the hand of the weak for showing bravery. Injure not the heart of the helpless For you will succumb to the force of a strong man” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 223)*

<sup>8</sup> *“It is narrated that an oppressor of the people, a soldier, hit the head of a pious man with a stone and that the dervish, having no means of taking vengeance, preserved the stone until the time arrived when the king became angry with that soldier, and imprisoned him in a well. Then the dervish made his appearance and dropped the stone upon his head. He asked: “Who are you, and why have you hit my head with this stone?” The man replied: “I am the same person whom you have struck on the head with this stone on such and such a day.” The soldier continued: “Where have you been all this time?” The dervish replied: “I was afraid of your dignity but now when I beheld you in the well I made use of the opportunity.”” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 49)*

<sup>9</sup> *“A tyrannical man cannot be a sultan As a wolf cannot be a shepherd. A padshah who establishes oppression Destroys the basis of the wall of his own reign” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 32)*

<sup>10</sup> *“A dervish, whose prayers met with answers, made his appearance, and Hejaj Yusuf, calling him, said: “Utter a good prayer for me,” whereon the dervish exclaimed: “O God, take his life.” He replied: “For God’s sake, what prayer is this?” The dervish rejoined: “It is a good prayer for you and for all Believers.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 36)*

*“O tyrant, who oppresses your subjects, How long will you persevere in this? Of what use is authority to you? To die is better for you than to oppress men” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 36)*

<sup>11</sup> *“A Maghrabi supplicant said in Aleppo in the row of linen drapers: “Lords of wealth, if you were just and we contented, the trade of begging would vanish from the world.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 101)*

<sup>12</sup> *“It is related that, while some game was being roasted for Nushirvan the Just during a hunting party, no salt could be found. Accordingly a boy was sent to an adjoining village to bring some. Nushirvan said: “Pay for the salt lest it should become a custom and the village be ruined.” Having been asked what harm could arise from such a trifling demand,*

*Nushirvan replied: "The foundation of oppression was small in the world but whoever came augmented it so that it reached its present magnitude."*

*If the king eats one apple from the garden of a subject His slaves will pull him up the tree from the roots.*

*For five eggs which the sultan allows to be taken by force The people belonging to his army will put a thousand fowls on the spit. A tyrant does not remain in the world But the curse on him abides for ever" (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 47-8)*

<sup>13</sup> *"One of the sons of Harun-ur-Rashid went to his father and angrily informed him that the son of an official had used insulting expressions towards him whereon Harun asked his courtiers what requital he deserved. One of them proposed capital punishment, another the amputation of the tongue while a third recommended fine and imprisonment. Then Harun said: "Oh my son, it would be generous to pardon him but, if you are unable to do so, use likewise insulting expressions concerning his mother; not however to such a degree as to exceed the bounds of vengeance because in that case the wrong will be on your side." (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 60)*

<sup>14</sup> *"A dervish who had fallen into want stole a blanket from the house of a friend. The judge ordered his hand to be amputated but the owner of the blanket interceded, saying that he had condoned the fault. The judge rejoined: "Your intercession cannot persuade me to neglect the provision of the law." The man continued: "You have spoken the truth but amputation is not applicable to a person who steals some property dedicated to pious uses. Moreover a beggar possesses nothing and whatever belongs to a dervish is dedicated to the use of the needy." Thereon the judge released the culprit" (Rehatsek, 2010, p.75)*

<sup>15</sup> *"The Friend is nearer to me than my self, But it is more strange that I am far from Him. What am I to do? To whom can it be said that He Is in my arms, but I am exiled from Him." (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 74)*

<sup>16</sup> *"O brother, as the end is dust, be dust before you are turned into dust" (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 95)*

<sup>17</sup> *"The feet in chains with friends Is better than to be with strangers in a garden" (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 87)*

<sup>18</sup> *"What can a foe do when the Friend is kind?"(Rehatsek, 2010, p. 30)*

<sup>19</sup> *“I lost the time of union and man is ignorant Of the value of delightful life before adversity” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 144)*

<sup>20</sup> *“The friendship of pure men, whether in your presence or absence, is not such as will find fault behind your back and is ready to die for you before your face. In your presence gentle like a lamb, In your absence like a man-devouring wolf. Who brings the faults of another to you and enumerates them Will undoubtedly carry your faults to others” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 68-9)*

<sup>21</sup> *“When one of a tribe has done a foolish thing No honor is left either to the low or the high. Do you not see how one ox of the pasturage Defiles all oxen of the village?... For one rude fellow in the assembly The heart of intelligent men is much grieved. If a tank be filled with rose-water A dog falling into it pollutes the whole” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 70)*

<sup>22</sup> *“I am displeased with the company of friends To whom my bad qualities appear to be good. They fancy my faults are virtues and perfection. My thorns they believe to be rose and jessamine. Say: Where is the bold and quick enemy To make me aware of my defects? He whose faults are not told him Ignorantly thinks his defects are virtues.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 134)*

<sup>23</sup> *“Confide not to a friend every secret you possess. How do you know that he will not some time become your foe? Inflict not every injury you can upon an enemy because it is possible that one day he may become your friend” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 197)*

<sup>24</sup> *“The good reputation of Sa ‘di which is current among the people, the renown of his eloquence which has spread on the surface of the earth, the products of his friendly pen which are consumed like sugar, and the scraps of his literary compositions which are hawked about like bills of exchange, cannot be ascribed to his virtue and perfection, but the lord of the world, the axis of the revolving circle of time, the vicegerent of Solomon, protector of the followers of the religion, His Majesty the Shahanshah Atabek Aa ‘zm Muzaffaruddin Abu Bekr Ben Sa ‘d Ben Zanki—The shadow of God on earth! O Lord, be pleased with him and with his kingdom—has looked upon Sa ‘di with a favorable eye, has praised him greatly, and has shown him sincere affection so that all men, gentle and simple, love him because the people follow the religion of their king. Because you look upon my humble person, My merits are more celebrated than those of the sun. Although this slave may possess all faults, Every fault pleasing the Sultan becomes a virtue. A sweet-smelling piece of clay, one day in the bath, Came from the hand of a beloved one to my hand. I asked: “Are you musk or ambergris?*



*Because your delicious odor intoxicates me.” It replied: “I was a despicable lump of clay; But for a while in the society of a rose. The perfection of my companion took effect on me And, if not, I am the same earth which I am.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 7)*

<sup>25</sup>*“When you see a quarrel be forbearing Because gentlemen will shut the door of strife. Use kindness when you see contention. A sharp sword cannot cut soft silk. By a sweet tongue, grace, and kindliness, You will be able to lead an elephant by a hair.”(Rehatsek, 2010, p. 122)*

<sup>26</sup>*“Speak not harshly to a man of gentle speech. Seek not to fight with him who knocks at the door of peace.”(Rehatsek, 2010, p. 199)*

<sup>27</sup>*“Galenus saw a fool hanging on with his hands to the collar of a learned man and insulting him, whereon he said: “If he were learned he would not have come to this pass with an ignorant man.” Two wise men do not contend and quarrel Nor does a scholar fight with a contemptible fellow. If an ignorant man in his rudeness speaks harshly An intelligent man tenderly reconciles his heart. Two pious men keep a hair between them untorn And so does a mild with a headstrong man. If however both sides are fools If there be a chain they will snap it. An ill-humored man insulted someone. He bore it and replied: “O man of happy issue, I am worse than you can say that I am Because I know you are not aware of my faults as I am” (Rehatsek, 2010, 130-1)*

<sup>28</sup>*“Should from the surface of the earth wisdom disappear Still no one will acknowledge his own ignorance” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 203)*

<sup>29</sup>*“One of the veziers of a king treated his subordinates with kindness and sought the goodwill of his colleagues. Once he happened to be called to account by the king for something he had done whereon his colleagues endeavored to effect his liberation. Those who guarded him treated him leniently and the great men expatiated upon his good character to the padshah until he renounced all further inquiry. A pious man who took cognizance of this affair said: “In order to gain the hearts of friends Sell even the garden of your father. In order to boil the pot of well-wishers Burn even all the furniture of the house. Do good even to a malevolent fellow. Tie up the mouth of the dog with a sop.”” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 59-60)*

<sup>30</sup>*“Speak so between two enemies that you may not be put to shame if they become friends. Between two men contention is like fire, The ill-starred back-biter being the wood-carrier. When both of them become friends again He will among them be unhappy and ashamed. To*

*kindle fire between two men Is not wise but is to burn oneself therein.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 198)*

<sup>31</sup> *“The country is adorned by intelligent and the religion by virtuous men. Padshahs stand more in need of the advice of intelligent men than intelligent men of the proximity of padshahs. If you will listen to advice, padshah, there is none better in all books than this: ‘Entrust a business to an intelligent man although it may not be his occupation’” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 196-7)*

<sup>32</sup> *“Unless an orator’s defects are mentioned by someone, his speech will not be remedied. Be not proud of the beauty of your speech, of the approbation of an ignoramus and of your own opinion” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 203)*

<sup>33</sup> *“The same night information was also brought to the king that in his realm such a wickedness had been perpetrated and he was asked what he thought of it. He replied: “I know that he is one of the most learned men, and I account him to be the paragon of our age. As it is possible that enemies have devised a plot against him, I give no credit to this accusation unless I see it myself because philosophers have said: ‘He who grasps the sword in haste will repenting carry the back of his hand to his teeth and bite it” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 158-9)*

<sup>34</sup> *“Loqman the philosopher, being asked from whom he had learnt wisdom, replied: “from the blind, who do not take a step before trying the place.” First move about, then stir out... Though a cock may be brave in war he strikes his claws in vain on a brazen falcon. A cat is a lion in catching mice but a mouse in combat with a tiger.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 20)*

<sup>35</sup> *“As long as you can, scratch the interior of no one because there are thorns on this road” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 61)*

<sup>36</sup> *“Who lifts up his neck with pretensions, foes hasten to him from every side. Sa ‘di has fallen to be a hermit: no one came to attack a fallen man.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 19-20)*

<sup>37</sup> *“The first sovereign who laid stress on costume and wore rings on his left hand was Jamshid; and being asked why he had adorned his left whereas excellence resides in the right hand, he replied: ‘The right hand is fully ornamented by its own rectitude’. .... ‘Keep the wicked well, O intelligent man, because the good are in themselves great and fortunate. ‘” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 224)*

<sup>38</sup> *“Tell your tale according to your hearer’s temper if you know him to be biased to you.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 218)*

<sup>39</sup> *“A design without strength to execute it is fraud and deception and application of strength without a design is ignorance and lunacy. Discernment is necessary. Arrangement and intellect, then a realm; for realm and wealth with an ignorant man are weapons against himself”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 212) [Rehatsek might have had a different text of the Rose Garden as he has translated *خدا* (in Foroughi’s version of Rose Garden) as himself. *خود* would mean himself and God would be *خدا*]

<sup>40</sup> *“The son of a faqih said to his father: “These heart-ravishing words of moralists make no impression upon me because I do not see that their actions are in conformity with their speeches.”*

*They teach people to abandon the world But themselves accumulate silver and corn.*

*A scholar who only preaches and nothing more Will not impress anyone when he speaks. He is a scholar who commits no evil, Not he who speaks to men but acts not himself”* (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 93-4)

<sup>41</sup> *“A liberal man who eats and bestows is better than a devote who fasts and hoards”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 212)

<sup>42</sup> *“To be good and to be ill spoken of by the people Is better than to be bad and considered good by them.”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 82)

<sup>43</sup> *“The sons of Adam are limbs of each other Having been created of one essence. When the calamity of time afflicts one limb The other limbs cannot remain at rest. If you have no sympathy for the troubles of others You are unworthy to be called by the name of a man”* (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 35-6)

<sup>44</sup> *“How shall I give due thanks for the blessing That I do not possess the strength of injuring mankind?”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 101)

<sup>45</sup> *“He, who does right, does it to his own soul and he, who does evil, does it against the same”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 61)

<sup>46</sup> *“Who possesses wealth and dignity but therewith Succors not those whose minds are distressed, Inform him that no kind of wealth and dignity He will enjoy in the mansion of the next world”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 215)

<sup>47</sup> *“Help the distressed in the day of prosperity Because comforting the poor averts evil from yourself”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 78)

<sup>48</sup> *“No one is more unlucky than an oppressor of men Because in the day of calamity no one is his friend” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 204)*

<sup>49</sup> *“Who are healthy have no pain from wounds. I shall tell my grief to no one but a sympathizer. It is useless to speak of bees to one Who never in his life felt their sting. As long as your state is not like mine My state will be but an idle tale to you” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 155)*

<sup>50</sup> *“A thief paid a visit to the house of a pious man but, although he sought a great deal, found nothing and was much grieved. The pious man, who knew this, threw the blanket upon which he had been sleeping into the way of the thief that he might not go away disappointed.*

*I heard that men of the way of God Have not distressed the hearts of enemies. How can you attain that dignity Who quarrels and wages war against friends?” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 68)*

<sup>51</sup> *“He who bestows every moment favors upon you Is to be pardoned by you if once in his life he injures you” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 53)*

<sup>52</sup> *“Loqman, being asked from whom he had learnt civility, replied: ‘From those who had no civility because what appeared to me unbecoming in them I refrained from doing.’” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 20)*

<sup>53</sup> *“I heard a padshah giving orders to kill a prisoner. The helpless fellow began to insult the king on that occasion of despair, with the tongue he had, and to use foul expressions according to the saying: Who washes his hands of life says whatever he has in his heart. When a man is in despair his tongue becomes long and he is like a vanquished cat assailing a dog. In time of need, when flight is no more possible, the hand grasps the point of the sharp sword. When the king asked what he was saying, a good natured vezier replied: ‘My lord, he says those who bridle their anger and forgive men; for God loves the beneficent.’ The king, moved with pity, forbore taking his life but another vezier, the antagonist of the former, said: ‘Men of our rank ought to speak nothing but the truth in the presence of padshahs. This fellow has insulted the king and spoken unbecomingly.’ The king, being displeased with these words, said: ‘That lie was more acceptable to me than this truth you have uttered because the former proceeded from a conciliatory disposition and the latter from malignity; and wise men have said: ‘A falsehood resulting in conciliation is better than a truth producing trouble.’” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 23)*

<sup>54</sup> *“It is not proper for sons of Adam born of earth to inflate their heads with pride, violence and wind. You who display so much heat and obstinacy must be, I think, not of earth but of fire” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 201)*

<sup>55</sup> *“The padshah is the guardian of the dervish although wealth is in the glory of his reign. The sheep is not for the shepherd but the shepherd for the service of it” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 56)*

<sup>56</sup> *“A king with some of his courtiers had during a hunting party and in the winter season strayed far from inhabited places but when the night set in he perceived the house of a dehqan and said: ‘We shall spend the night there to avoid the injury of the cold’ One of the veziers, however, objected alleging that it was unworthy of the high dignity of a padshah to take refuge in the house of a dehqan and that it would be best to pitch tents and to light fires on the spot. The dehqan who had become aware of what was taking place prepared some food he had ready in his house, offered it, kissed the ground of service and said: ‘The high dignity of the sultan would not have been so much lowered, but the courtiers did not wish the dignity of the dehqan to become high.’ The king who was pleased with these words moved for the night into the man’s house and bestowed a dress of honor upon him the next morning. When he accompanied the king a few paces at the departure he was heard to say: ‘Nothing was lost of the sultan’s power and pomp by accepting the hospitality of a dehqan, but the corner of the dehqan’s cap reached the sun when a sultan such as you overshadowed his head”. (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 111-2)*

<sup>57</sup> *“An ill-humored man is captive in the hands of a foe, from the grasp of whose punishment he cannot be delivered wherever he may go. If from the hand of calamity an ill-natured man escapes into the sky, the evil disposition of his own nature retains him in calamity” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 201)*

<sup>58</sup> *“Ten men eat at a table but two dogs will contend for one piece of carrion. A greedy person will still be hungry with the whole world, while a contented man will be satisfied with one bread. Wise men have said that poverty with content is better than wealth and not abundance. Narrow intestines may be filled with dry bread But the wealth of the surface of the world will not fill a greedy eye” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 204)*

<sup>59</sup> *“Wrath beyond measure produces estrangement and untimely kindness destroys authority. Be neither so harsh as to disgust the people with you nor so mild as to embolden them.*

*Severity and mildness together are best Like a bleeder who is a surgeon and also applies a salve. A wise man uses neither severity to excess Nor mildness; for it lessens his authority. He neither exalts himself too much Nor exposes himself at once to contempt.*

*A youth said to his father: "O wise man, Give me for instruction one advice like an aged person." He said: "Be kind but not to such a degree That a sharp-toothed wolf may become audacious." (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 200)*

<sup>60</sup> *"He is not reputed a man by the wise who contends with a furious elephant. But he is a man in reality who when angry speaks not idle words". (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 60)*

<sup>61</sup> *"A sage having been asked whether liberality or bravery is better replied: "He who possesses liberality needs no bravery."It is written on the tomb of Behram Gur: "A liberal hand is better than a strong arm."*

*Hatim Tai has passed away but for ever His high name will remain celebrated for beneficence. Set aside the zekat from your property because the exuberant vines When pruned by the vintner will yield more grapes." (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 100)*

<sup>62</sup> *"Cherish not an inconstant friend. Such a traitor is not fit for amity" (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 11)*

<sup>63</sup> *"Account him not a friend who knocks at the door of prosperity, boasts of amity and calls himself your adopted brother. I consider him a friend who takes a friend's hand when he is in a distressed state and in poverty" (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 43)*

<sup>64</sup> *"Whoever makes peace with the enemies of his friends greatly injures his friends. Wash your hands, O wise man, from a friend Who is sitting together with your foes" (Rehatsek, 2010, p.199)*

<sup>65</sup> *"Whoever associates with bad people will see no good. If an angel associates with a demon, he will learn from him fear, fraud and hypocrisy. Of the wicked you can learn only wickedness" (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 206-7)*

<sup>66</sup> *"It is also said that by complaisance an enemy will not become a friend but that his greed will only be augmented. To him who is kind to you, be dust at his feet. But if he opposes you fill his two eyes with dust. Speak not kindly or gently to an ill-humored fellow Because a soft file cannot clean off inveterate rust" (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 219)*

<sup>67</sup> *“A scholar is not meekly to overlook the folly of a common person because thus both parties are injured; the dignity of the former being lessened, and the ignorance of the latter confirmed. Speak gracefully and kindly to a low fellow, and his pride and obstinacy will augment.”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 213)

<sup>68</sup> *“The noblest of beings is evidently man, and the meanest a dog, but intelligent persons agree that a grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man. A dog never forgets a morsel received though you throw a stone at him a hundred times. But if you cherish a base fellow a lifetime, he will for a trifle suddenly fight with you.”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 220)

<sup>69</sup> *“Do not give so much strength to your friend that, if he becomes your foe, he may injure you. Have you not heard what the man said who suffered molestation from one whom he had educated? Either fidelity itself does not exist in this world or nobody practices it in our time. No one had learnt archery from me without at last making me a target.”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 56-7)

<sup>70</sup> *“Not everyone who is handsome in form possesses a good character; the qualities are inside not upon the skin. It is possible in one day to know from a man’s qualities what degree of science he has reached. Be however not sure of his mind nor deceived. A wicked spirit is not detected sometimes for years”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 207-8)

<sup>71</sup> *“When a nature is originally receptive, instruction will take effect thereon. No kind of polishing will improve iron, whose essence is originally bad. Wash a dog in the seven oceans, he will be only dirtier when he gets wet. If the ass of Jesus be taken to Mekkah, he will on his return still be an ass”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 171)

<sup>72</sup> *“When you perceive that discord is in the army of the foe, be at ease; but if they are united, be apprehensive of your own distress. Go and sit in repose with your friends when you see war among the enemies; But if you perceive that they all agree, span your bow and carry stones upon the rampart”* (Rehatsek, 2010, pp. 201-2)

<sup>73</sup> *“Who despises an insignificant enemy resembles him who is careless about fire. Extinguish it today, while it may be quenched, Because when fire is high, it burns the world”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 198)

<sup>74</sup> *“A weak foe who professes submission and shows friendship has no other object than to become a strong enemy. It has been said that as the friendship of friends is unreliable, what trust can be put in the flattery of enemies?”* (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 198)

<sup>75</sup> *“As long as an affair can be arranged with gold, it is not proper to endanger life*

*When the hand is foiled in every stratagem It is licit to put the hand to the sword” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 199)*

<sup>76</sup> *“Whoever slays a bad fellow saves mankind from a calamity and him from the wrath of God. Condonation is laudable but nevertheless Apply no salve to the wound of an oppressor of the people. He who had mercy upon a serpent Knew not that it was an injury to the sons of Adam.” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 200)*

<sup>77</sup> *“Whoever gives advice to a self-willed man stands himself in need of advice” (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 202)*

<sup>78</sup> *“I may so act as not to hurt the feelings of anyone, but what can I do to an envious man dissatisfied with himself? Die, O envious man, for this is a malady, deliverance from which can be obtained only by death. Unfortunate men sometimes ardently desire the decline of prosperous men in wealth and dignity. If in daytime, bat-eyed persons do not see, is it the fault of the fountain of light, the sun? You justly wish that a thousand such eyes should be blind rather than the sun dark”. (Rehatsek, 2010, p. 31)*



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