

The Recreation of the Descent of Man in the Iconic Analysis of the Black Dome Attributed to Sheikhzadeh

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ABSTRACT

Creating imagery is of the main fortes of the poets who draw on the power of imagination to express their own mystical, philosophical, and ethical points and worldviews in their poetry. One of the arts that are closely related to literature is 'imagery'. It is the illustration of poetry and literary and mystic texts whose scenes have allowed the poetical and literary texts to be understood. The story of the Black Dome whose narrator is a Hindu princess benefits from a bold, sensual, and profound mystical symbolism which depicts the practical experience in the descent of Man and indicates the lover's deprivation of the union with the beloved as he is driven from heaven for greed. Thus, he is clad in black in lamenting this separation. Nizami has managed to narrate this story exquisitely through the imagery of words. In this article, while a review and analysis of the poet's mystical thoughts are provided, an attempt is also made to compare the symbols and elements together with the icons that the painter has used to convey his purpose. Then, we articulate the main research question which is centered around the relationship between the mystical account of the story of Black Dome composed by Nizami and the pictorial symbolism which has been employed by Sheikhzadeh. To address this question, an analysis and explanation of seven mystic processes in the story and the paintings have been provided. Particularly, it seems that the painter has been aware of the meanings conveyed by the symbolic elements of the story which are hidden in the use of delicate and mystical words. Thus, he has illustrated them with loyalty to such themes in the form of designs and colors on a white paper.

Keywords: Descent, the Black Dome, Sheikhzadeh, story, imagery, mysticism, Nizami

INTRODUCTION

The illustration of literary and mystic books and texts is one of the applications of imagery which points to the link between literature, art, and especially imagery. The illustrators have always tried to rely on the depiction and decoration of texts to show their significant and effective events in such a way that is consistent with the original text and shows the varied aspects of the work properly. Many symbols of Iranian culture and literature have found their way into the Iranian imagery and this indicates that, despite the notion limiting the symbol or code to the text, they encompass a variety of items including pictures, signs and speech. The illustrator considers the icon that is based on the existential facts and the supernatural world and expresses its significant events and impact through the door leading to the upper world and the boundless world of ideas. He considers the symbol in his work as a transcendent reality that includes profound meanings. Through this knowledge, the essence of mystical contemplation

can be achieved. Sheikhzadeh was an active Iranian painter in the first half of the sixteenth / tenth century in Khorasan. He has illustrated the story of Red Dome in 1525 AD / 931. He followed the style adopted by the school of Tabriz (Pakbaz, 336, p. 2000) with multi-dimensional sceneries under the influence of a mystical and aesthetic insight in Persian imagery (Pakbaz, 2001, p. 93). His mastery can be seen clearly in books and manuscripts from Hafiz and Amir Alishir Navaee. (Sarmadi, 2001, p. 326).

In most studies conducted on Nizami's works and especially on the Seven Beauties, the researchers have mostly discussed the meanings of the lyrics and their analysis and less attention has been paid to the symbolism and the mysterious meaning in this book. Furthermore, as artists (and especially illustrators) have approached this work in the areas of arts, this research is significant in that it familiarizes the artists with the iconic aspects of the Seven Beauties. It is also important inasmuch as it

creates a link between literature and art. Thus, in this study, the iconic and symbolic aspects of this artistic work must be noted in relation to the story in the recreation of the mystic processes and especially the descent of Man on the one hand and the elements that any of these two artists have considered in forming their notions on the other hand.

Research Background

Despite Sheikhzadeh's mastery in painting, no research has been performed on his works. Furthermore, as regards the analysis of images from the Seven Beauties, the element of 'color' has been discussed only in an article entitled as "the scales of color in Seven Beauties and its revelation in a sample of imagery" by Khashayar Ghazizadeh and Mohammad Khazae. The works presented on Seven Beauties have not been discussed from the lens of the mystical interpretation and investigation of the mystical processes in the story. However, some works which have made references to the subject are listed below:

- "An analysis and critique of the narrative in Nizami's stories of Seven Beauties: With a structuralist and poststructuralist approach to literature.
- Literary criticism written by Zahra Sadat Qureishi. In this work, an investigation of the overall narrative and structure of the stories has been considered while the mystical interpretation of stories and images was intended in this research.
- "Michael Berry's interpretation of Nizami's Seven Beauties", translation by Jalal Alavinia. In this work, mystical references have been made to Seven Beauties in some details, but no analysis has been offered on the mystical exegesis of the story.
- "The seven images in the Seven Halls (an account of Nizami's Seven Beauties)" written by Aligholi Mahmoudi Bakhtiari. In this work, the moral consequences of Seven Beauties have been regarded whereas the mystical aspect has been disregarded.
- In "the analysis of Nizami's works" written by Kamel Ahmadnezhad and "an analysis of Seven Beauties" written by Moein, a small part is dedicated to Seven Beauties and a short account of the stories is given. In this regard, this study provides a recreation of the descent of Man in the illustration of Black Dome which is attributed to Sheikhzadeh based on Nizami's story of Seven Beauties.

Research Method

With regard to the issue examined in this paper, a comparative and analytical method has been used along with library resources to collect materials through notes from primary sources such as books, essays, and websites. To obtain the symbols, we referred to the Iranian Association of Imagery, Sheikhzadeh's works, and the main resources of available illustrations. Drawing on this comparative and analytic method, an effort was made to examine the relation and link between human, natural and spatial symbols in the story and the illustrations of the Black Dome. The article also tries to analyze and offer an interpretation of the conditions in the seven mystical processes in the story and the Black Dome imagery.

The Link between Persian Painting and Persian Poetry

The imagery of Persian poetry and Iranian painting are consistently related. Similar items seen in the descriptions of poets and authors concerning human, nature and objects, also exist in the works of painters (Moghadam Ashrafi, 1988, p. 11). The illustrator does not draw pictures of a story; rather, he changes its theme, notion and essence and depicts them in a spiritual way, so that everyone can benefit from his art. In this way, the Iranian mystic painter never sacrifices the spiritual understanding of the story for the description of ordinary events (Bolkhari Qohi, 2005, p. 488) because poetry encourages images, but when the image acquires objectivity and turns into a picture, it is indeed transformed into illustrated poetry. (Rabii, 2009, p. 30). No doubt, if we view miniature just as a simple decorative element that is used to make manuscripts, we have formed a wrong opinion as their ambience clearly depends on the hermetic sense of light and imagination that is associated with the world of ideas in the domain of thought. (Shayegan, 2002, pp. 82-83). The sphere of imagination and ideas is the world viewed by both painters and poets. The artist and speaker have turned to this heavenly world based on a unique insight and a similar mentality. An artist shows the space in miniature in the two-dimensional surface. This means that Persian miniatures correspondingly to the concept of detached space and quality to change a two-dimensional miniatures into an image of existence. This takes the beholder from the horizon of material and non-spiritual life to a higher status of being and awareness to make him aware of the world beyond the physical

world. This world has its peculiar time, space, colors, and forms wherein events virtually take place but not in a material fashion. Islamic scholars have called it the world of imagination (Nasr, 2010, p. 189).

The world of imagination is divided into an attached and a detached world. The attached imagination is the human power of imagination and the detached imagination is the interface between the world of spirits and bodies. Nevertheless, the meaning of both is actually a limbo that is the interface between the two worlds. An imaginative subject must degenerate into sensible forms and must then bridge the world of sense and the world of interpretation and change in the intrinsic and actual sense of the word (Poorjavadi, 2009, p. 114). In this world which is the world of mysteries and symbols and an esoteric world of heavenly landscapes and innermost pleasures in the hierarchy considered by the mystics, the events turn into spiritual mysteries and the spirits are given flesh and the flesh is thus given a spirit. The creative power of this fanciful existence is the sense of spiritual understanding which is illustrated by change and evolution (Sajjadi, 2010, p. 186). This world is called the world of ideas and representations as it manifests any matter and substance. This is the eighth realm labeled by Suhrawardi as the world of rational images (Kamalzadeh, 2010, pp. 71-73). This abstract world is the place for the emergence of meanings in tangible forms shown properly in book illustrations. In this system, the unchangeable substances or their eternal shapes which are unfathomable and above formal frames would be described through images. In this sense, the dreamlike quality that rings the majority of images – and is certainly not a false and untrue fantasy – is like a clear dream that has apparently gone through an illumination from within (Burckhardt, 2007, p. 175).

The illustrator presents his painting in a divine sphere whose colors and shapes reflect the shapes and colors of the world of ideas. In fact, he reflects the heaven, purgatory, and the world of representations. Using different colors like blue, turquoise, and golden colors has not originated solely from the taste of the artist. Rather, they are the observational outcomes of an objective fact belonging to the world of ideas. He draws the space in such a way that the eye moves vertically and horizontally between two-dimensional and three-dimensional spaces. However, this move never leads to a mere three-dimensional space. If this was indeed the case,

the miniature would have descended from the kingdom of heaven and changed into the image of the world of properties (Nasr, 2010, p. 194). With regard to this figurative function of painting, it can be said that Persian painting has a mysterious substance and essence and points to a single truth and one has to go through clear elements and components or rather layers to achieve it (Akhgar, 2012, p. 187). Thus, an artist or illustrator uses any color, line and picture in his own image in a sense other than what it shows physically to view its internal meaning and create a mysterious ambience resulting from his intuitions. In this regard, we referred to the images that are brought here from the selected illustrations created by Sheikhzadeh. We intend to compare these images with mystical codes. Perhaps, these secrets correspond to the illustrator's purpose in drawing them.

In the image of the Black Dome, in addition to the colors and human figures, geometric forms such as circles, squares, triangles, hexagons and six-pointed stars in geometric motifs and arabesques have been used by the painter in the walls and the decoration of dresses and other means. In addition to its literal meaning, each shape indicates other meanings as well. The geometric approach has been based on the idea that natural forms and tangible shapes are perceived as the constructive symbols of metaphysical principles. The features of geometric shapes from dots and dashes to regular polygons and spatial forms can be naturally given symbolic and secret signs. In the spiritual world of Islamic Iran, there is a domain in which the way numbers and shapes are viewed turns them into the key to understanding the structure and codes of the universe in the world of ideas. (Krichlu, 2011, p. 13). The illustrator uses geometric designs consisting of circles, squares, and triangles to show the message of unity that these images express through diversity in unity and vice versa. The geometrical images that reveal the intrinsic laws of the known universe are effective in the entire creation and guide the beholder's mind independently from the physical and this-worldly descriptions to the spiritual and supernatural truth and, in one word, from the image to the meaning. (Ibid., 9).

The Synopsis of the Story of Black Dome

On Saturday, Bahram Goor wears black clothes and goes to the Black Dome that is home to the Indian princess. At night, he asks the princess to tell him a story. She explains that, as a child, she

had heard from her relatives that a pious woman came to their home and always wore a black dress. When asked why she always wore a black dress, she replied: I served a just and fair king. Suddenly, the king disappeared and he clad in black from head to toe when he returned. When I asked why he was wearing black clothes, he replied that one day a stranger appeared before me and he was wearing black garments. I asked about the reason why he was clad in black and he replied: "This is something that must be seen rather than heard".

گفت: شهري است در	شهري آراسته چو
ولایت چین	خلد برین
نام آن شهر، شهر	تعزیت خانه سیه
مدهوشان است	پوشان است
مردماني همه به	همه چون ماه در
صورت ماه	پرند سیاه

*He said, there is a land in China,
A land as charming as paradise,
It is called the land of the amazed
It is home to the black dressers
People whose faces resemble the Moon
As Moon they appear in black,
(Nizami, 2005, p. 136)*

There is a land in China which is called the land of the amazed. Its people are clad in black, though they are charming. The storyteller went away and I was excited by the love for the land of amazement until I left everything behind to search for that land as I departed. As I arrived in that land, I saw everyone wearing black clothes. I enquired about the reason and got no answer. Then, I befriended a butcher and treated him most kindly. As he wanted to return my favor, I asked why they all wore black clothes. To answer my question, he took me with himself and put me in a basket which was tied to a long pole. The basket was raised and I was left hanging in the air.

سبدي بود در رسن	رفت آورد پیشم
بسته	آهسته
گفت: یکدم در این	جلوه اي کن بر
سبد بنشین	آسمان و زمین
تا بدانی که هر	از چه معنی چنین
که خاموش است	سیه پوش است

*There was a basket tied with a rope,
He brought it to me slowly,
He said, sit in this basket a while
Behold the earth and heaven
So that you would know anyone who is silent
Why they would be clad in black*

All of a sudden, I saw a bird that sat nearby.

چون بر آمد بر این	بر سر آن کشیده میل
زمانی چند	بلند
مرغی آمد نشست چون	کآمدم زو
کوهی	به دل در اندوهی

*As a little time went by
On the tip of that long pole
A mountainous bird came to sit
And made me feel sorrow at heart
(Nizami, 2005, p. 141).*

I grabbed the bird's claws. When the bird flew away, I went up with him to heaven. The bird took me to a charming plain. I let go of the bird and fell on the ground. I was amazed with all the beauties. I went around the gardens until night and enjoyed their delicious fruits. At night, beautiful fairies appeared holding candles in their hands.

دیدم از دور صد	کز من آرام و
هزاران نور	صابری شد دور

*I fancied hundreds of thousands of light from far,
So I lost my patience and calm
(Nizami, 2005, p. 144)*

They carried a throne and spread carpets. Their lady sat on the throne and as she became aware of my presence, she summoned me and allowed me to sit on the throne.

As time passed, she raised her head.

چون زمانی گذشت،	گفت با محرمی که در
سر برداشت	بر داشت
که ز نا محرمان	می‌نماید که شخصی
خاک پرست	اینجا هست
خیز و بر گرد گرد	هر که پیش آیدت، به
این پرگار	پیش من آر

*She said to the confidante that she had in arms
Of the strange worshippers of earth
It seems there is one here,*

Rise and go around this sphere,

*Bring forth anyone who would come by
(Nizami, 2005, p. 145)*

Each night, she left me with one of her beautiful concubines and I spent the whole night making love to her. Twenty nine nights went by like that until I became ungrateful and greedy. I had a strong desire for that angel and asked her to quench my desire. In response to my persistence, she said: Close your eyes to have your desire satisfied.

گفت يك لحظه تا گشایم در خزینه
دیده را در بند قند
چون گشادم بر آن در برم گیر و دیده
چه داری رای را بگشای

She said, close your eyes for a moment,

So I shall open up the sweet treasures

As I opened what you would desire

Hold me tight and open your eyes,

(Nizami, 162: 138)

I closed my eyes and as I opened them again, I found myself hanging inside the basket.

من به شیرینی دیده بستم از خزانه
بهانه او او
چون یکی لحظه گفت بگشای دیده،
مهلش دادم بگشادم
چون که سوي خویشتن را در آن سید
عروس خود دیم دیدم

For the excuse of her sweetness,

I turned a blind eye on her treasure,

As I gave her a moment

She said open your eyes and so I did

As I turned to my bride,

I found myself in that basket

(Nizami, 2005, p. 162)

I wore a black dress and then returned to my homeland. The Woman in Black also said: "After I heard this story, I dressed in black as well. (R. K: Nizami, 132: 2005)

The Analysis of the Story of Black Dome

The story of the Black Dome from the Seven Beauties is one of the most mysterious stories of this versified work suggesting the practical descent from heaven as experienced by Man and wearing a black dress for this loss.

The story takes place in mainland China that is a symbol of the material world. The king who is a fair and hospitable person meets a stranger clad in black and sets off to find out why he is clad in black. But why is the king intrigued by the man's habit of wearing black clothes? Perhaps because the king has been chosen as a seeker and traveler in a mystical journey. The king's knowledge of the land of the amazed and the people who wore black can be considered as the notion of delightⁱ in mysticism. He becomes aware of another world by observing the man in black. The king has been chosen as the seeker for his virtue, fairness, hospitality and his other benevolent qualities. As he is still within the

powers of his concupiscence, he receives a ray of the divine light and understands a secret through the man clad in black. This is a stepping-stone for his evolutionary path. The awareness of the land of the amazed is the divine ray of delight that stirs the king to set off in search of this land. Here, the king enters the first stage of the spiritual journey. The king's searching spirit takes him to the stage of desireⁱⁱ. He wants to know where the land of the amazed is and why they are in black. The sense of curiosity to discover the secret of the land of the captivated people has so deeply penetrated the king's mind that he abandons his throne and kingdom and sets out a journey to find the land of the amazed and its people.

عاقبت مملکت رها خویشی از خانه،
کردم پادشا کردم...
نام آن شهر باز آنچه خواستم دیدم
پرسیدم رفتم

Finally, I abandoned the kingdom,

I left the kingly realm

I enquired about the name of the land

And I beheld what I desired

(Nizami, 2005, p. 137)

The word from the land of the amazed is the same great word which frees the seeker's heart of the angst felt in the world of plurality and drives him towards the world of unity. The sages have described this word as the spring or Nowruz breeze that refers to the divine breath of the holy men. Stepping into the realm of 'desire' is a sign for the appearance of the desired to the desirer, as they are the dual presentations of one truth that comes to join and becomes one at the end of the evolutionary path. This great secret is 'wearing a black dress' that attracts the king to the realm of desire and what he desires is the secret for which he has forsaken his kingdom and throne. For him, this realm is the center of love that turns the invaluable copper of his self into the gold of true love.

Nizami's reference to bitumen and tar in the description of the tantalizing land of the amazed is a mystical hint as there is a correspondence between the black color of tar and the people who are clad in black. What is meant by the land of tar is actually all the places around the globe. In the works of Suhrawardi, this land is synonymous with the land of "dark western matter" where life has been captured. No matter where "Girvan" is, it shall be considered the mystic's dungeon (Barry, 2006, p. 245).

گفتمش: باز گو، خبرم ده ز
بهبانه مگیر قیروان و ز قیر
زین سیاهی خبر ندارد مگر آن کاین
کس سیاه دارد و بس

I said, speak! No excuses!

Speak of the Girvan and Tar

Of this darkness no one is aware

Save the one who shares this darkness

(Nizami, 2005, p. 136)

This land, which is the equivalent of the land of amazement, represents the world of dirt and matter that is at the lowest hierarchy of creation in the arc of ascent. The seeker (or the King) who is in search of the object of his desire comes across the land of the amazed. However, the question that made him enter this stage is no ordinary question as everyone evades it and this fact rekindles his passion to know the truth and, at last, the butcher reveals to him the secret behind wearing a black dress in return for his kindness.

گفت: پرسیدی آنچه نیست رحمت آن چنان که
صواب هست جواب...
گفت: وقت این است بینی و یابی از
کآنچه می خواهی وی آگاهی
خیز تا بر تو راز صورت نانموده
بگشایم بنمایم.

He said, you asked what is not right

Show mercy as the reply demands

He said, the time is right for what you desire

To be seen through enlightenment

(Nizami, 2005, p. 139).

The butcher takes the king to a ruin that symbolizes the world. There is a basket in the ruin and the butcher asks him to sit inside it.

چون در آن منزل خراب چون پری هردو در
شدیم نقاب شدیم
سیدی بود در رسن بسته رفت و آورد پیشم
آهسته آهسته
بسته کرده رسن در آن ازدهایی به گرد
پرگار سلنه مار
گفت: یکدم در این سبد جلوه ای کن بر
بنشین آسمان و زمین

As we enter that ruins

We wore a mask as a fairy

There was a basket tied by ropes

He moved to bring it to me slowly

He tied the rope on the pole

As a dragon swirling round a serpent

He said, sit in this basket for a while

Have a look at the heaven and earth,

Here, the basket in which the kind has sat has been likened to a sack full of serpents and the rope has been compared to a dragon. As the story unfolds in China where, contrary to Iran, dragon represents immortality and the flying dragon is the ride of the immortal beings which raises them to heaven (Chevalier, 2000: 126). It can be held that this basket is the same vehicle in which the king begins his ascent. The king is detached from the material world and ascends to heaven and this upward movement is intended to join the sense and truth. Inside the basket, the king views the heavens and globes as this vehicle can be both a help in this ascent or a curse for descending to a lower world. The rope that has been likened to a dragon is the same as the flying dragon which is known to the Chinese. It became the vehicle of immortality for the king and lifted him to the heaven.

The basket stops on top of a pole and the king remains hanging between the heaven and earth as if he is in a purgatory that mediates the heaven and earth. The second world among the worlds of creation in the ascending arc of the divine world is the world of gentle form which is a desired world attributed to one's thought. This globe mediates the world of matter and the celestial kingdom. Perhaps, it can be said that the king's suspension in this state between the heaven and earth indicates the position of a seeker in the divine world. The king is inside that basket on top of the pole and if the rope is torn, he would fall to the world of matter and, on the other hand, he can step into a superior world if he manages to go higher. Then, the following happens.

مرغی آمد نشست چون کامدم زو به دل در
کوهی اندوهی
از بزرگی که بود میل گفتمی در
سرتاپای اوفتاد ز جای

A mountainous bird appeared and sat nearby

I found sorrow in my heart

It was so large from head to toe

As if the pole would fall from its place

(Nizami, 2005, p. 141)

This gigantic bird that drops pearls whenever it scratches itself is called "Rokh" which has a Hindi rootⁱⁱⁱ. Rokh is the secret to freedom and relief when it is a rescuer. Then, it is similar to a divine vehicle and anyone who rides on its swift wings may travel the realm of the universe and the heaven with the speed of lightning to transcend to another stage of existence (Satari, 1989, p. 260). To save himself from that limbo

in which he is hanging between the earth and heaven, the king clings to the claws of the gigantic bird and travels to another land and stage of existence with the bird. No one else has set foot on this heavenly paradise.

روژه ای دیدم نا رسیده غبار
آسمان زمیش آدمیش
صد هزار گل شکفته سبزه بیدار و آب
در او خفته از او...

I beheld a paradise from the heaven,

No human dust had ever touched it,

Within it, one hundred thousand blossoms,

The grass awake and the water asleep,

(Nizami, 2005, p. 142)

It is a paradise filled with juicy fruits, beautiful flowers, and splendid gardens smeared with the scent of rosewater, incense and sandalwood. It was a paradise whose mountains were all made of rubies and emeralds. This place has so much gentleness and goodness that it stands above heaven.

حور سر در سرشتش سرگزیت از بهشتش
آورده آورده

An angel had turned her head in its nature

Had brought her head in paradise

(Ibid., 143).

This world is another universe; it holds within it the globes of heaven, earth, the universe and the world above forms that is the third globe in the stages of creation in the arc of one's ascent. The king goes to a higher level in traveling the world of beings. The king sees the nymphs in that world as they have candles in their hands and carry the lady of ladies on a throne. The king is besotted after setting eyes on her and thus enters the realm of love preceded by the realm of desire. Love is the second level of this heavenly journey. The king sees the unmatched beauty of this lady and he is infatuated to such an extent that he disappears in love and expresses his love for her. Love is one of the major and central elements of the mystical insight and motion. Here, the poet has manifested the God Almighty as a fairy queen. She is a heavenly and beautiful lady or the divine presenter surrounded by her courtiers who are the shining rays of her light. (Barry, 2006: 242).

The seeker becomes infatuated with the powerful charm of divinity after he beholds it. He is soaked in the love for this eternal beloved. The king is treated kindly by the beautiful lady. He is welcomed and offered wine and drinks.

مطرب آمد، شد طرب را
روانه شد ساقی بهانه در باقی...
شد به دادن برگرفت از
شتاب ساقی گرم میان وقایه شرم
من به نیروی کردم آن ها که
عشق و عذر شراب رطلیان خراب و...

The musician came and departed the Saki,

The cause was rejoice for good

The Saki started to share his wine

No shame was left in these events

Through the power of love and the excuse of wine

I caused the debauches fall into disrepute

(Nizami, 2005: 1479)

In the language of mysticism, each of these words has a code as 'minstrel' means the enlightener (Mohtasham, 1992, p. 566) and wine refers to the "captivation by love with acts worthy of blame and this characterizes the seekers of perfection who are unique in the final stages of their spiritual path (ibid., 562). Coquetry, caress, and kisses refer to the blessings and appeal of one's heart (Sajjad, 1992, p. 276). Here, the ceremony in which the king converses with the beautiful lady represents the same instants and times being in the presence of God (ibid. 562). His pleasure is the perpetuation of being and the cheerfulness in the intimacy with God. The chant of heart turns into the labor of love while this leads him to trade his life of piety and virtue for a bit of amorous love. The heat and flame of love melts his cold and innermost nature and he transcends the feeling, illusion, fantasy and reason to reach the status of love while his intellectual senses rise to a higher level. With an expression of love and romance in words, the poet prepares the disciple in the realm of love to discover the way to the next realm which is the world of knowledge. As love is the transcendent order of sagacity and the lover sees nothing but the beloved, this vision leads him to the globe of knowledge. "Knowledge of divinity is the recognition of the nature and attributes of God in the form of detailed states, events, and the light of eternity after being briefly revealed that the real being and the absolute agent is God. Unless the appearance of monotheism is translated into pure and detailed objectivity, mystical knowledge will not be realized and the owner of such knowledge shall not be deemed as a mystic (Sajjadi, 1999, vol 3, 1847).

Before falling in love, the king failed to see the world in a proper way and did not grasp its secrets as he saw nothing but his own self while self-centrism is the characteristic of any man. However, his infatuation led him to break away from the cover of selfishness and behold everything more beautifully and virtuously. He realized that the broad universe is all but a passage for becoming one with him. To enter the safe bounds of divinity, everything and everyone has a path. He thought that the courtiers of the charming lady offered a way to approach that beautiful goddess. Any time the king loses his control, the lady leaves him to one of her maidens. If we consider these maidens as the revelations of divine attributes, as they are her shining rays of whom the seeker becomes aware at each night, it can be said that the king has entered yet another globe from the levels of creation in the arc of his ascent through their companionship. This is the world of divine names and qualities which is called the spiritual world.

The king does not stay in the realm of knowledge and on the thirtieth night, a storm comes upon his mind and this storm drives him towards the feeling of disdain. He believes that he is independent of the maidens and enters the stage of disdain and independence. This means 'needlessness' and at such a stage the king observes his independence and the need he materializes for the enchanting lady. By going through the stages of desire, love, and knowledge, he finds himself only in need of the beloved and nothing else. All his knowledge is condensed into one truth that is the fact that those maidens and courtiers are literally waves and bulbs in need of water and the sea whereas 'water' has no need for them. Moreover, this disdain echoes the chant of 'there is no one but Allah' within his soul. Disdain and needlessness guide the seeker to the next place where he articulates his professed belief in the oneness of the creator and this is called the realm of monotheism. Monotheism means the single-mindedly achieved perception of one creator and making and turning everything into the 'One' (Sajjadi, 1999, vol. 1, p. 602). At this stage, the seeker admits that nothing and no one deserves to be worshipped but the one creator. In this position, the seeker submerges himself in the beauty of the creator to such an extent that he is blind to everything but his nature. The king also sees nothing but the beautiful goddess. In this resting place, all pluralities change into unity. There is a single beloved and he is the one

who has been reflected by all. The lady who has shown her qualities and names to the king, encourages him to be patient and avoid the forbidden act. However, the king is deceived by his temptations and is filled with greed and avarice, thus he commits the forbidden act.

تا بد آنجا رسید کز	دادم آن بند
مستی	بسته را سستی
چون که دید او ستیزه	نا شکیبی و بی
کاری من	قراری من
گفت: یک لحظه دیده	تا گشایم در
را در بند	حزینه ی قند...
چون یکی لحظه مهلتش	گفت: بگشای
دادم	دیده، بگشادم
کردم آهنگ بر امید	تا در آرم عروس
شکار	را به کنار
چون که سوی عروس خود	خویشتن را در آن
دویدم	سید دیدم

So far had it gone that in drunkenness,

I let loose the knots of the noose,

As she saw my unpleasant demeanor,

My impatience and self-struggle,

"Close your eyes a moment", she said

So I shall open the door to the sweet treasures,

As I gave her a moment,

She said open your eyes and so I did

I set myself in motion

To bring the bride in my arms

As I ran to my bride,

I found myself in that basket

(Nizami, 2005, p. 162)

This greed causes the king to enter the stage of amazement. Amazement refers to the drifts of confusion (Sajjadi, 1999, 2, vol. 773). Attar introduces the stage of amazement that appears after the level of monotheism as such:

بعد از این وادی	کار دائم در دو
حیرت آیدت	حسرت آیدت
هر نفس اینجا چو	هر دمی اینجا
تیغی با شدت	دریغی با شدت
از بن هر موی این	میچکد خون،
کس نه به تیغ	می نگارد ای دریغ
گر بدو گویند	نیستی گویی که
مستی یا نه ای	هستی؟ یا نه ای

After this, you would face the realm of amazement

You are in constant duality of sorrows

Anyone is a blade to you here

Any moment is but regret

Blood drops at bottom of the strings of hair

Not by a blade but by regrets

Asked if he is a drunkard or not

Nay! But as though you are!

(Attar Neyshabouri, 1993, p. 128)

His amazement and confusion are reflected by the question why he has been deprived of traversing in the beloved's garden of heaven and her presence and admiration. The punishment for such a misdeed is burns, tolerance and confinement in the stage of amazement and confusion. The king has to stay in the realm of amazement for being cheated by the tempting ego and for succumbing to one's temptation and greed. Thus, he fails to travel to the next level that is doom and survival after death. In the hierarchy of creation, he also fails to ascend to the world of divine nature and the realm of any determination and he cannot become one with the creator. He falls to the world of matter once more and wears a black dress for such a loss as he is overcome by grief.

من در این جوش گرم وز تظلم سیاه
جوشیدم پوشیدم

I boiled in this warm passion,

And I wore black with grief,

(Nizami, 2005, p. 162)

The Hindu prince was not granted the required holiness and, as the other people in the land of amazement, he was doomed to experience an agonizing ululation. He is unsuccessful in the trials of his spiritual journey and cannot experience a premier world. The king wears a black dress to lament the injustice he has done to himself. Black is the color of sorrow and mourning and the king laments as he has been deprived of courting the beautiful lady. Nevertheless, the black light which has been mentioned in the dome is verily the goddess or the jewel crown of the beauties who shines as she is hidden behind her black hair, beyond any sensual or rational perception in a broad domain of light extending to the source of her manifestation (Barry, 2006, p. 228). This blackness is the stage of doom and a stage where the distance between the lover and the beloved shall be removed and the King fails to reach this stage. The mourning causes him to turn to the material blackness in which the elegance of blackness has diminished and has become dense. Thus, black remains as the symbol for lamentation and mourning in the material world. Generally, this story emphasizes the pursuit of the passion. The grief and regret

that it implies for humanity might indicate the image of the man caught in the trap of lust and greed. Man has forgotten his genuine desire that is the union with the creator and fails to achieve this goal. In the end, the same old story of the Adam's fall from the paradise is repeated.

The Description of the Illustration of Black Dome

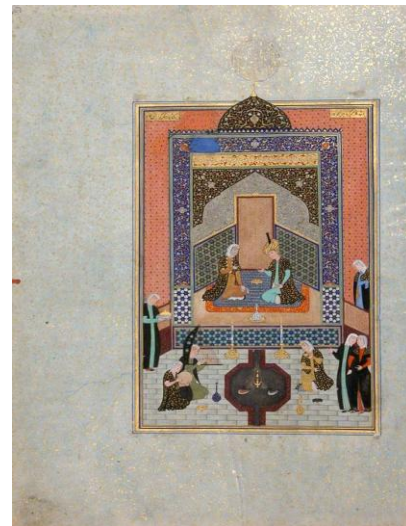


Figure1. *The illustration of the Black Dome (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)*

In this image (Image 1), by selecting the vertical and rectangular framework, the artist has created a perfect symmetry based on the vertical axis and all the elements of the image have been encapsulated in one frame. On the top, the frame is broken by only a part of the Black Dome and it bends upward while this creates some kind of ascent in the eye of the beholder. Inside this rectangle, there exists another rectangle and, if given a number from the center outwards (Picture 2), the central rectangle (number 1) is empty and Bahram's head has only partially appeared in it. In the second rectangle (number 2), there exists the image of Bahram and the Hindu lady and they have sat on a dark blue mat. The crooked walls behind them have a perspective which guides one's look towards the altar and then to the dome and the area outside the frame. The black space above the altar that is covered with arabesques and bright and golden lines may evoke the night sky. The weight of this darkness and blackness is moderated by the whiteness of the altar. In correspondence with this quality, below the altar and exactly in the right and left sides of the frame, the black color of the dresses worn by the king and the princess is observed. It has balanced and harmonized the painting with

regard to the geometrical composition used by the painter. The third rectangle (number 3) which appears to be mostly a margin for the second rectangle is devoid of any human figure. Its inner surface at the bottom is covered with geometric shapes painted blue and green. The upper part is painted azure and is covered with bright and golden arabesques. These colors have been used harmoniously with the black color and the atmosphere of the story which reflects the theme of the story. The colorful cover of this rectangle with the dark shades of color remind one of the night and darkness. With respect to the color contrast in this rectangle and the outer rectangle, we can consider this (number 3) as the separator of the atmosphere with Bahram and princess and the one with the maidens. The fourth rectangle (number 4) is the external one and, in its upper part, there exists the black dome covered with black and brilliant arabesques. The dome has broken the frame and points to the rise and ascent and its black color may indicate a heavenly realm of this color which is the black light. This rectangle (number 4) encompasses seven human figures that have been scattered almost symmetrically on the right and left sides of the painting. The pool in the middle of the lower part has been divided into two sections. The courtyard surface has been covered with olive green. There are four figures of courtiers on the right side and there are three figures on the left. The colors covering the figures are in harmony with the dominant color in the picture and they are all wearing black garments. The courtiers are playing music and singing to welcome the guests. In general terms, the colors used in this illustration such as azure, dark green, the silent grey, and the bright and tarnished red color lead to the dominance of black in this illustration and this evokes the theme of the story (Figure 2).



Figure2. (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)

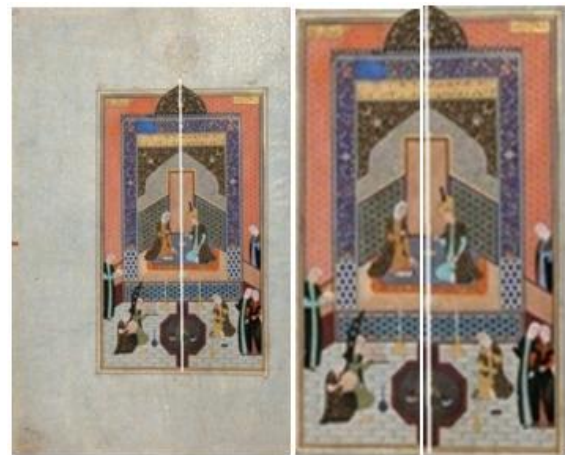


Figure3. (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)

To avoid the excessive use of black, the illustrator has resorted to darker color shades. He has depicted the splendor and grandeur of the royal palace and court by using golden colors in the form of twisted arabesques in the black background of the dome and above the altar. This is also reflected on the dress of the figures and the whiteness in the altar with the surrounding blue. The use of lively grey colors and maintaining a balance among them, the use of black, cold, and warm colors, and the appropriate and suitable reappearance of these colors have illustrated the ambience of the Black Dome efficiently all over the illustration. This painting has been drawn with a geometric and symmetrical composition. The painter has maintained the symmetry throughout his work. If the illustration is divided into two halves by an imaginary line, the symmetrical elements would be seen clearly. This line cuts through the center of the dome at the top and through the below pool in the courtyard garden and divides them into two halves. In the right half, there would be the king's figure while the figure of the Princess is set on the opposite side. Even the white pot below the carpet close to the king and princess is also divided into two halves. A little lower, there are two candlesticks one of which is drawn on the right and the other on the left. (Figure 3) The figures of the courtiers are also set at the two sides of the image. The illustrator has even adhered to this symmetry by resorting to a peer-to-peer symmetry as seen in the reappearance of golden ewer on the right with the pot close to it that correspond to the azure ewer and the pot in the left half. He has used the same objects in different colors and with slight differences in other places. (Figure 4) The position of figures on imaginary circles (Figure 5), the narrow vertical divisions on the sides of the building, the location of all figures in the

architectural ambience, and the use of vertical lines in the illustration have depicted the awe, the splendor, and the weight of the atmosphere very well.



Figure 4. (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)



Figure 5. (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)

The Analysis of the Black Dome

This image is not the visualization of material reality. Rather, it portrays the mediating globe whose space and shapes have their own rules being above and beyond the laws and rules of the material world. The manner adopted in handling the codes of space and color clarifies the esoteric nature of this illustration and its relationship with the world of representations.

The illustrator has chosen the rectangular frame to emphasize the earthly and material facet and the repetition of these shapes from the outside to the inside increases the material aspect of the work. The position of the princess and Bahram in the inner rectangle and the use of four angles are related to the subject of the story that is the fall of Man on earth. It is as if Bahram and the princess, who are placed in the inner rectangle within this perspective, are at the depth of the fence of nature. This sense of descent is intensified by the black clothes which are typical of lamentations. In this way, Bahram appears clad in black which is the sign of an earthly darkness, pain, and ignorance.

The presence of seven maidens in the picture can indicate the seven stages of spiritual

journey. All these courtiers appear in black dresses and make up the ambience of the land of the amazed in the illustration which is a land populated by charming people clad in black.

The maidens are welcoming the guests and these beauties are symbols of manifestations in the matter. They beat the tambourines which are the symbol of the quest for love and they create pleasure and joy for humankind (Mohtasham, 1992; 569-568). As such, Bahram sets foot in the House of moments. This image has shown earthly symbols, but has also relied on mysticism and elements of imagery that express the celestial and supernatural aspects. The dome which represents heaven in a circular shape cuts through the rectangular frame being a symbol of the earth and this further evokes a rise and elevation. The elevation from the bottom of the frame has started by the diagonal lines and perspective that draws the beholder's attention towards the altar and ends in the same place. (Figure 6)

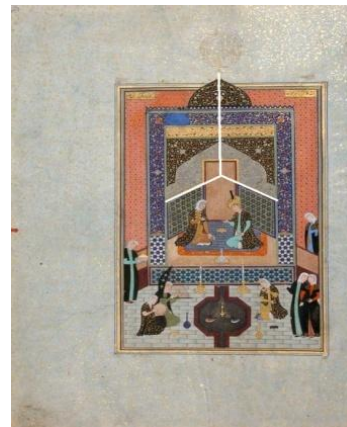


Figure 6. (Ghazizadeh et al., 2005, p. 18)

The form and appearance of the altar have strengthened this elevation which is conveyed by the dome. The iconic concept of this dome as the manifestation of the Divine Throne moves out of the rectangular frame (symbol of the Earth) and best represents the ascent in the image.

The black color of the dome and altar is the same as the black light referring to the spiritual realm. This particular color depends on the dome and its icons and thus indicates the light of the absolute nature and the stage of doom where the protagonist has failed to reach. The darkness above the altar that appears with bright arabesques and lines is like a starry night. It is also considered as the bright night in the middle of a dark day by pointing to the inner impediment, vision and mystery. In the mystical view, the altar is the battleground with the devil

within a person. It is placed between the dome and where Bahram and the princess appear. In this sense, it is connected to the black dome which is a symbol of the divine nature and, in another sense, it is connected to the material world where Bahram exists. This may indicate a conflict between the demands of the material and temporal world and Man's success in reaching the divine nature that has been shown by white which is appropriately used as it is a colorless color.

The appearance of the white color in the altar below the black dome can refer to the superiority of the transcendental principle which is shown in white to evoke the absolute color in this way (Bolkhari Ghohi, 2005, p. 514).

The golden arabesques used in the dome and altar put an emphasis on their relationship with the invisible world and the kingdom of heaven because the golden color is an icon of light and sanctity and a symbol of the divine nature for its brilliance. They have appeared in the form of arabesques that illustrate diversity in unity and unity in Godly diversity. This has created a strong compatibility with the dome and the altar. The use of these shapes on the clothes and other belongings shows some traces and aspects of the heavenly realm in the material world. The emergence of geometric and arabesque decorations may indicate the single and the sacred world appearing in the form of the material world.

Taken together, these figures have been able to show the meaningful aspects of colors and shapes and convey the main idea of the story through the dominance of black, dark blue and dark green. The illustrator has shown the descent of Man in the rectangle of matter against his ascent through the circular dome. He guides the beholder's observation from the world of matter to the worlds of spirit by involving a turn in one's look at the whole picture. Using color spectrums ranging from black to white, he has indicated the stages and moods to signal the seeker's ascent by the shift from one color to another and from one world to the one which is superior. The fact that all of figures in this work are clad in black may convey the sense of grief over failure in this ascension and spiritual journey as black is the color used for lamentation and grief. It is said that Gabriel wore a black dress to join Adam in lamentation after he was driven from the heaven (Hassan Lee & Siddiqi, 2007, p. 24). In psychology, the black color is also a symbol of sadness and, while creating a sense of pride, it

might lead to mental depression. In funerals and lamentations, black is often used as it always keeps a sign of sorrow in an individual (Forouzan, 1995, p. 45). This is the color of the dress worn by Adam having experienced his descent to remember and impregnate the sorrow over being kept away from his origin and nature. Nizami's story is in correspondence with this fall and verbalizes the feeling of love that has been deprived of the union with the beloved for the sake of greed as he is driven from the heaven and wears a black dress to mourn this detachment. "This is the story of the practical experience of Adam's descent and that one should be clad in black to mourn this failure" (Bina Motlagh, 2005, p. 121). "In the Zoroastrian version, Adam and Eve were deceived by Lucifer and were driven from the heaven and were dressed in black clothes at the time (Chevalier, 1999, p. 678). Being clad in black in poetry and imagery indicates that the material desires in opposition to the human excellence and brightness have caused a difficult descent to the material world which covers humans by a dark and earthly dust. "We said that you all must descend from heaven until you receive a messenger from me then anyone who shall obey my messenger shall have no fear (in the world and the Hereafter). (Baghareh, 38)^{iv}.

CONCLUSION

In most cases, a picture can be worth thousands of words and we may see a great many examples in paintings and architecture. In this illustration, the artist has given life to the story to convey it through images and turn the poet's abstract pictures into real images. In this process, the poetic icons are illustrated pictorially.

Taken together, this illustration has been able to show the meaningful aspects of colors and shapes and convey the main idea of the story through the dominance of black, dark blue and dark green. The illustrator has shown the descent of Man in the rectangle of matter as opposed to his ascent through the circular dome. He guides the beholder's observation from the world of matter to the worlds of spirit by involving a turn in one's look at the whole picture. Using color spectrums ranging from black to white, he has indicated the stages and moods to signal the seeker's ascent by the shift from one color to another and from one world to the one which is superior. The fact that all the human figures are clad in black indicates Man's failure in his spiritual journey in this story. For

his material desires in opposition to the human excellence and brightness, he has suffered a painstaking descent to the material world which has covered him with a dark and earthly dust. Harmony between the symbols presented by the poet and painter shows that the symbols used by Nizami could be translated into graphic icons and the poet's mystical view has been illustrated properly in the illustrator's work.

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ⁱ What is meant by delight is a domain which is revealed to one's heart by the divinity and changes the state of the soul. The delighted is the one who has not yet transcended the cover of carnal qualities and his being resists the existence of God. At times, an opportunity would present itself to allow him to receive a ray of the divine light. As he senses this light, the cover reappears and the being is lost again (Yasrebi, 2001, p. 263).

ⁱⁱ The term 'desire' means searching the beloved to find him and if the search is done on the outside, no result would be achieved; and the truth of desire is given to any heart, the man to fulfill this task is a great man, the pain of this pain is formidable (Sajadi, 2000, vol. 3, 1195)

ⁱⁱⁱ Rokh which is the same as Phoenix and the orientalist have translated it as 'eagle' or 'hawk', is a heavenly bird which nests on Alborz Mount or Ghaf mountain and Rumi considers it to be the bird of the heavenly sphere and the God's bird. For being invisible, it represents "spirituality" and the mirror of perfection.

^{iv} Koran indicates the principle of Man's descent from heaven in four cases (i.e. Verse 36 and 38 of Baghareh, verse 24 of Araf and verse 123 of Taha)

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