

The Key Meanings in *Abharol-Ashegin*

Dr. Mohammadreza Nasr Isfahani¹, Zahra Eftekhar², Mahdi
MohammadGhasemi³

DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v5-i4/1585>

Published Date: 07 April 2015

Abstract

Abharol-Ashegin written by Roozbahan Bagali is one of the most outstanding books about humane and Godly love. Roozbahan sees love as a heavenly ladder. He believes that the beauty and the goodness of loved one (God) is one the most essential and eternal characteristics of God. According to his view, God manifests himself in the heart of his lovers by the light of goodness and beauty. In this way, the lovers of God achieve happiness and enjoyment of a spiritual love. Roozbahan Bagali was one of the Gnostics who enjoyed a special power of contemplation and spiritual observation. He repeatedly narrated the story of the hair of loved one and its limitlessness in his writings. He was the adorer of God's goodness and the seeker of God's manifestation. He wrote *Abharol-Ashegin* on the basis of three key meanings: love, goodness, and observation. *Abharol-Ashegin* is a story about love and goodness and the enjoyment of meeting the loved one and its beauty.

Keywords: Roozbahan; Goodness; Love; Observation; Loved one; Beauty

Introduction

Abu-Mohammad Roozbahan Ibn Abi Nasr Ibn Roozbahan Bagali Fasaie Shirazi was born in 522 in Fasa.

Sheikh Roozbahan was the heir of Gnostic school of thought of Sheikh Ahmad Gazali. This school of thought is based on the originality and purity of love.

Another Gnostic who had a major influence on Roozbahan was Ainolgozat Hamadani. He wrote a book titled "*Lavayeh*" about love.

Abharol-Ashgin

Humane love and Godly love, which are interwoven, are the main subjects of *Abharol-Ashegin*. Because the theme of the book is love, it has an influence on the soul of lovers like the odor of daffodil. It makes them the travelers of the world of fellowship and friendship. Each chapter of the total thirty two chapters discusses one aspect of love. The book describes

¹Associate Professor, The Department of Persian Literature, the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

²PhD Student in the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

³Graduate student of Persian Literature, the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

the progress and elevation of lovers who walk along the way of Godly love. In the beginning chapters of the book, Roozbahan discusses several spiritual aspects of humane love. In these chapters, he talks about the virtues of lovers and fellows. In order to prove his points, he presents several Quran's verses and words of the prophet. He talks about the originality of humane love and the tools by which the love can be maintained. It is the story of spiritual wayfarers, including those who begin by humane love. Those who do not need humane love are the subject of his following discussions. Then he warns about the traps that might divert humane love from its right course. In each chapter, he describes the feelings of lovers and their status. In this article, we discuss the key meanings and concepts in *Abharol-Ashegin*. All other peripheral meanings and concepts are based on these key meanings.

The key meanings in *Abharol-Ashegin*

Based on his ideology and the principles of wisdom and observation, each Gnostic emphasizes some key elements, and other concepts and linguistic metaphors are formed on the basis of these key meanings and concepts. Roozbahan is a Gnostic who believes in the originality of the love. His life is full of revelatory experiences and heavenly ascensions. He said that every day he had an experience of the hidden and invisible world. Three key meanings and aspects can be recognized in *Abharol-Ashegin*: love, goodness, and observation (revelation). Other meanings and concepts are based on these three key concepts.

1. Love:

“Yes! Love is eternal and lasting. For an hour of a night, it came to the home of the sad people, and made me a lover. It took me beyond this materialistic world into the heaven”. (89)

In the eyes of Roozbahan, love is a reason for life. It is the goal of life and the reason behind its existence. That is why the word of “love” is the best word. Love is eternal and everlasting. Like a strange creature, one night it came into the heart of human. It combined the existence of human with a Godly color.

Love is eternal and everlasting. “It is the traveler bird of eternity. It continues its travel for ever. Not every nest deserves to be the host of love. Only those nests which are enlightened by the light of eternity deserve to be the host of lovers. Sometimes it flies back into eternity and conceals itself behind the curtain of eternity” (Gazali, 1359: 12).

Love is eternal; it is a characteristic of the God. At the beginning of the time, when there was nothing except the God, love existed. “Love is one of the eternal characteristics of almighty glorious God. He was the lover, the loved one, and the love itself”. (138)

Love will exist for ever. By the passage of time and the changes that occur in the world, its existence continues, because it is a characteristic of the God. “Love is a holy characteristic. It is free from change, because it is a characteristic of the God”. (44) In *“Galtatol-salekin”*, Roozbahan calls love as an indescribable phenomenon. He says that love can be described by the love itself: “Love can be recognized and understood only by the love itself” (Roozbahan Bagali, 1352:7). Sheikh Ahmad Gazali (1360) says, “Love is hidden and no one can see it; these lovers cannot continue to talk about love for ever; everybody in his imagination talks about love; it is an empty imagination”.

The value of love is in its power to free the spiritual wayfarer from humanistic and materialistic characteristics as well as the traps of materialistic world. “The lover is free from the materialistic needs and the martial world”. (144) Because love is one of the characteristics of the God, it frees human from limitations. It gives human the color and eternal characteristics of the God. “Love is one of the perfections of the God. When love enters into

the heart of the lover, it frees the lover from limitations and enlightens the heart of the lover by the spiritual light. Love is not influenced by the events of life and the passage of time and the change of place". (141) One who becomes the lover of the God achieves the real meaning of life, because he possesses a characteristics of the God who never dies. He is alive for ever. "One who takes life by the love of the God will never die". (141) Inspired by Roobahan and his words about love as a source of life, Hafez says, "The lover, whose heart is affected by love, will never die; he will live for ever". (Hafez, 1388)

Human love and spiritual love are essentially made of light. Sohrevardi believes that humane goodness and humane love are essentially made of light. Love begins by the beauty of appearance (materialistic world) and the goodness of soul. The soul is enlightened by the light of love. At this time, soul is ready to be the host of a spiritual feeling which is accompanied by a Godly goodness. Once the lover becomes intimate with the loved one, the light of the lover's eyes combines with light of the soul of the loved one. In this way, the loved one gives his characteristics to the lover. At this time, lover and loved one join together and form a union. The reality of love is in powerlessness and depravity. The souls of lover and loved one join together. They are "engulfed by the love" (Gazali, 1359:7) in a manner that union and separation are felt and seen in the same way.

Love is limitless, "because loved one is limitless". (140) Love is essentially perfection, because it is a characteristic of the God.

Roobahan enumerates several types of love: materialistic (animal) love, natural love, spiritual love, logical love, and Godly love. Materialistic (animal) love is a sensual desire. However, calling such a low desire love would soil the sanctity of love. It is a momentary sensual desire which is felt by lower people. After responding to such a desire, nothing will remain from such a sensual passing desire.

Natural love is a type of love that is created by the spiritual derives and at the same time affected by sensual desires. In most cases, sensual desires become the dominant element, and the flames of such low desires ruin people's lives. However, if logic and spirituality become the dominant elements, such a love would be placed in the right direction which leads to a holy love. Sheikh believes that such a love can be considered valuable, although it is one of the lowest points of the high ladder of love. "Love is a Godly light that enters into the heart of human. It is a jewel that has given life to the human from the beginning of the time". (43)

Spiritual love is the love of human for human. This love is free from sensual desires. Roobahan insists on the originality of humane love. He believes that humane love is the commencement of Godly love. Humane love is tool by which the Godly love can be achieved, because Godly love is too much for a beginner Gnostic. Through humane love, the Gnostic becomes familiar with the great sea of love. By humane love, the Gnostic can be prepared to enter into the deep sea of Godly love. "Spiritual love is the gate of Godly love. Godly love cannot be achieved without passing through this gate". (42)

Spiritual love is specific to a small group of special people. These are the people whose hearts and appearances are free from animosity and obscenity. Their hearts and their bodies are spiritual and free from any impurity. As far as this love is free from sensual desires, it is ladder to achieve Godly love. Roobahan believes that humane love is the introduction of Godly love. (75) He sees spiritual love as the "*Serat bridge*" through which the man can reach the paradise.

Fellowship and companionship is the beginning of love. Fellowship is the intimacy of two hearts. It is a connection between two souls. The union of lover and loved one does not mean

that all characteristics of loved one are transferred to the lover, because one of the characteristics of loved one is needlessness, while the lover is full of need, depravity, and suffering. "The true meaning of love is the intimacy of two hearts. Lover surrenders himself to the loved one. The position of loved one is the status of greatness and grandeur. (Gazali, 1359:21)

The increase in the light of love is called affection by Roozbahan. Gazali believes that light and affection are two names for one phenomenon. Different stages of love occur one after another one. As the lover's sadness increases, a sense of happiness is formed in his heart. It is the intensity of desire. When the heart of lover is burning in the flames of love, a sense of friendship and love is formed in his heart. After that is the "*Valeh*" (interlude) stage, in which the lover is affected by the madness of love. He talks about the secrets of the loved one. At this time, he forgets every thing. It is the result of the intensity of sadness. The next stage is "*Heyman*" (desperateness by love), in which "the soul is desperate by excitement and the internal storm". (Roozbahan Bagali, 1389:457)

Another stage of humane love is craving and eagerness. At this stage, love is present in all aspects of the existence of the lover, and no moment passes without the enjoyment of love. Humane love is accompanied by "inebriety", "brightness", "presence", and "absence". It is the endpoint of humane love. Humane love is the beginning of Godly love ...

Humane love is a tool for spiritual wayfarer. Ignoring sensual desires is the way through which the Gnostic can achieve Godly love. Keeping obscenities away from humane love creates a light that enlightens the way of the lovers of the God. "Those who are attracted by sensual desires of the nature will achieve the paradise of Godly love". (77) Those who are attracted by the mean desires will be burnt in the flames of these low desires and will not achieve the position of Godly love. When the lover reaches the highest point of humane love, the God removes the curtains and the obstacles of humane love. In this way, his love is connected to the Godly love. Humane love prepares the Gnostic for a greater love and gives him the capacity to be the lover of the God. "The wayfarers of Godly love are prepared by the humane love. By this initial preparation, they enter into the way of Godly love. It is the gate of a high status". (69)

After reaching the status of Godly love, the Gnostic cannot return to humane love. "At the beginning of Godly love, humane love puts the man in the hands of natural desires. These are obstacles that prevent the man and delay his travel toward the God, because they are blasphemy". (91)

Roozbahan considers the stages of Godly love as the following: obedience, friendship, attention (control), fear of God, hope (aspiration), joy, confidence, intimacy, revelation, observation, affection, and eagerness. After passing through the test of humane love, the first stage is obedience. The Gnostic should be diligent, prayer, and ascetic. The next stage is friendship. The beginning of this stage is penitence and avoidance of everything except the loved one. Roozbahan believes that all stages of love are based on the wishes of the loved one. Abstinence and depravity are parts of the love. "Chastity is to obey the orders of the loved one". (105)

Goodness

When I was attracted by your beauty at the beginning of the time, I became your true lover I was in a heavy sleep, your beauty awakened me (Aragi, 1387)

“Those whose eyes are not enlightened by the light of God have no place among the lovers. Tulip does not see love in the face of those who have not entered into the road of love. Those who cannot talk about love have no place among the wise lovers”. (37)

At the beginning of the time, goodness and love were two fellows. Both were the characteristics of the God. The main goodness was that of the God. Every goodness took its light from the God. The face of the man was the most valuable jewel in the heaven. Initially, goodness appeared in the holly wisdom and holly soul. The sun of God’s goodness shined its light directly on the soul. The soul shattered by its heat (45).

The face of human became a mirror that reflected the beauty of the God. The human beauty became one of the manifestations of God’s beauty. Jacob’s love for Yusuf was nothing other than his love for the God, “because the beauty of Yusuf was a manifestation of God’s beauty”. (29) Prophet Mohammad believed that the beauty of human was a reflection of God’s beauty. When he saw a rose, he kissed it and said that this rose has taken its beauty from the God (29).

Every beauty is a reflection of God’s beauty. The closer something or someone to God, the more beauty it takes from him. “Therefore, the goodness of human is a reflection of God’s beauty”. (35)

In “*Mashrabol-Arvah*”, it has been said, “Goodness is one of the eternal characteristics of almighty God. If God seeks to capture the heart of his servant and to make him one of his lovers, he puts the light of his goodness and beauty in the heart of the servant. He pours the drink of affection and love into the heart of his servants. The more the goodness and beauty of God is observed by the servant, the stronger the love is. Love and affection are close to each other. God is the best creator (23/14). The goodness and beauty of God’s creatures is a description of the beauty of the God”. (Noorbakhsh, 1371:202)

Roobahan presents a spiritual interpretation of the story of Adam and Eve and the prohibited tree. He believes that the beauty of God appeared in the tree. Adam and Eve were attracted by this beauty. So, they became the lovers of the tree. “When they came closer to the tree, the light of holiness covered the tree and the beauty of God appeared in the tree. Adam and Eve became the lovers of the tree and they stayed beside it (Roobahan Bagali, 1388:63).

The prophet believed that the signs of God’s beauty are apparent in the face of the man. The sentences of “*I put my soul in the human*” and “*I created the human by my hand*” show the sublimity of human’s characteristics.

Roobahan believes that internal and external goodness gives greatness to the human. “He gave his characteristics to the human and made him superior to the holly angels that are close to the God”. In “*Arayesol-Bayan*”, it has been said, “I myself created you, the human, and put soul into your existence. Your beauty has originated from me”. (Roobahan Bagali, 1383,215, Volume 2).

The pious sees the signs of the God in the world and makes his belief (in God) stronger. The lovers focus on the goodness of human, which is the reflection of God’s goodness. (35)

Goodness cannot be accompanied by mean characteristics. So, those who have low and mean characteristics cannot enter into the paradise which is the center of goodness.

Human’s goodness has originated from God’s goodness. If human disobeys the order of the God, his goodness reduces. If human obeys orders of the God, his goodness increases from moment to moment, like Moses and Yusuf. The prophet of Islam says that the happiness of this world and the other world belong to those who are generous and have a good disposition. This can be achieved by obeying orders of the God and praying.

One of the most fundamental points in the ideology of Roozbahan is this belief that human is a mirror that reflects the beauty of the God. He believes that by observing the characteristics of the God in the face of each other, the souls become friends and fellows. When they come into this world, they know each other and become the lovers. "When the mirror of nature is free from obscenities and sins, the beauty and goodness of the God can be seen in it. Lovers of the God are birds that move around a candle. They took light and beauty from the candle". (48)

Observation (visiting)

"There is a city beyond the seas in which the windows are open to the manifestations". (Sepehri, 1390)

"Among the servants of the God, who have been made from the soil, there is no one who does not want to see the God. In their gathering, they talk about love and meeting the God". (132)

Roozbahan is sitting in front of the gate of a city whose windows are opened every morning and night to see the beauty of the God. Many times, he saw the God in his revelation and talked to the God and composed poems about him. Throughout the passage of the time, there has been no day and no night in which I have not experienced a great revelation in the hidden world. (Roozbahan Bagali, 1356:12) In "*Mashrabol-Arvah*", sheikh divides the revelation into three parts: "visiting the paradise, visiting prophet (*Hazrat*), and visiting the God. Visiting paradise is the result of attention; visiting prophet (*Hazrat*) is the result of conversation; and visiting the God is the result of action and observance" (Roozbahan Bagali, 1355:172).

Conclusion:

Abharol-Ashegin written by Roozbahan is based on three meanings and concepts: love, goodness, and observation (revelation). The other meanings and concepts are based on these three key concepts. Love is a ladder by which the beauty of God can be seen and understood. Goodness and love were accompanied at the beginning of the time. Goodness is one of the characteristics of the God. Human's beauty is the reflection of God's beauty, and the origin of human's goodness is God's goodness. Therefore, human deserves to be loved. In the ideology of Roozbahan, humane love has a special originality and importance, because it is the ladder of Godly love. It is a tool by which the Gnostic can achieve the Godly love. Through love, the Gnostic can see the beauty of the God and achieve the status of revelatory observations.

References

- Chittick, W. (2010). *The Spiritual Road of Love* (Sh. Abbasi, Trans.). Tehran: Paykan Publication.
- Chittick, W. (2004). *Imaginal Worlds* (M. Y. Sani, Trans.). Tehran: Imam Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution Research Center.
- Earnest, C. (1998). *Roozbahan Bagali* (M. Kaivany, Trans.). Tehran: Markaz publication.
- Earnest, C. (2004). *Roozbahan Bagali* (k. Divsalar, Trans.). Tehran: Amirkabir .
- Ghazali, A. (1978). *Savaneh-al-Oshaq*, Poorjavadi, N. (Ed.). Tehran: Iranian Culture Association Press.
- Hamadani, E. (1988). *Tamhidat*, Asiran, A. (Ed.). Tehran: Manoochehri Publishers.
- Pazoki, Sh. (1999). *Romantic Sufism of Roozbahan Bagali: Collection of Iranian Mysticism Articles*. Tehran: Azmayesh Publishers.
- Roozbahan Bagali, A. M. A. N. (1971). *Aleghaneh, Al-Kiali E. A.* (Ed.). Beirut: The Library of Scientific Books.

Roobahan Bagali, A. M. A. N. (1973). Resalat-al-Gods and Ghalatat-as-Salekin, Noorbakhsh M. J. (Ed.). Tehran: Noorbakhsh Abbey Publication.

Roobahan Bagali, A. M. A. N. (2010). Interpretation of Shathiat, Carbon, H. (Ed.). Tehran: Tahoori Publishers.

Roobahan Bagali, A. M. A. N. (2010). Abharol-Ashegin. Carbon, H., and Moein, M. (Eds.). Tehran: French Association of Iranian Studies.

Zarrinkoob, A. (1996). An Investigation of Iranian Sufism. Tehran: Amirkabir.