

**Mystical Manifestation of Medicine and Self-
Purification in *Divan-e Shams***

K. Tabatabaee (Corresponding Author)

M. A. in Persian Language and Literature, Semnan
University; Staff Member in Ministry of Education,
Semnan, IRAN.

S. Tabatabaee

Assistant Professor, Persian Language and Literature
Department, Semnan University, IRAN;

A. Hasanzadeh Mirali

Associate Professor, Persian Language and Literature
Department, Semnan University, IRAN

Introduction

One of the sciences widely reflected in Persian literary texts is medicine. Rumi is one of the poets who have knowledge in various sciences, and like many of the scholars of the ancient era, he possessed medical knowledge. However, he has never artificially and conspicuously reflected such knowledge in his works. Concerning the herbal terms, medical statements, and medicinal plants mentioned in *Divan-e Shams*, this research tries to show to what extent and for what purposes Rumi has used such medical contents and terms. In fact, Rumi does not merely intend to express the concepts of medicine or traditional medicine in *Divan-e-Shams*; rather, as is clear from his

mystical practices, he employs medical terms as a means of expressing his views and ideas.

Research method, research background and purpose

In Persian literature, there are scattered researches on reflection of medical themes in poets' divans. One example is Golshani's *Medicine and Medical Themes and its Reflection in Persian Literature* (2012), in which poetic themes in medicine are studied based on ancient medical texts. "The Manifestation of Medicine in Ancient Literature" in which medical themes in *Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi*, *Divan-e Shams*, Saadi's *Bustan*, *Khamsa of Nizami* and the poems of Attar and Khaqani are extracted (Zanjani and Asadi, 2002: 117), "Biography of Physicians in Persian Literature" that highlights the ethics of physicians in Persian literary texts (Kollahdoozan, 2004: 98), and "Medicinal Terms and Medical Themes in Attar's Works" that deals with Attar's medical terms, medicinal plants, medical position and medicine (Bahmani Motlagh and Toni, 2013:29) are all examples of such research.

This research mainly aims to make ancient texts more comprehensible. By adopting inductive approach, it studies relevant couplets where medical concepts are stated or implied; and also explains Rumi's intentions in employing such terms. First, treatment methods including preventive methods, medication therapy, and other therapies reflected in *Divan-e Shams* are categorized; then, all medicines are listed and classified based on their predominant features into recreational, analgesic, narcotic, tonic, and mood stabilizers.

Discussion

Preventive methods

Human beings have always been looking for ways to maintain their health. Abstinence, Cupping, and stability of mood are preventive methods reflected in *Divan-e Shams*. Rumi believes that physical abstinence along with spiritual abstinence will be the way forward. Therefore, the poet considers the divine calamities, which are a means of purifying the human soul and spirit from material belongings, to be as similar to cupping, which was practiced in order to remove blood and impurities from the human body (Ibn Sina, 1991: J 1: 491). In addition, human existence is made up of four elements. Any disruption of moderation among them causes illness in the individual (Golshani, 2012: 5). In *Divan-e Shams*, four temperaments have been repeatedly mentioned so as to explain Rumi's intentions. Referring to the inflammation caused by cholecystitis (Ibn Sina, 1991: 1/281), the poet states that materialists neglect their very existence out of arrogance due to the weakness in them.

Medication Therapy

In his poems, Rumi mentions various herbal medicines, compounds, herbal and minerals, which are classified as follows:

Recreational: Badeh, Sharbat, Mosalas.

Analgesic: Tootiya, Golshekar, Marham, Matbookh, Manbal.

Narcotics: Afsantin, Afyoon, Teryagh.

Tonic: Belador, Pest, Sormeh, Sabr, Lekhlekheh, Marjan, Moshk, Maajoon, Mofarreh, Nil.

Stabilizer drugs: Balileh, Pelpel, Anbar, Laal.

Other treatments

Surgery: Rumi refers to the concept of surgery in his sonnets (1268/3, 1337/3, 1428/3, 1474/3, 2263/5). The poet introduces the presence of the beloved as an ointment that relieves pain and pulls out old trachoma with a fork.

Fasd or Bloodletting: It is a kind of blood withdrawal to remove impurities (Ibn Sina, 2013, vol. 1: 471). One of the blood vessels mentioned in *Divan-e Shams* is Akhal or brachial vein (1337/3, 3082/6, 3102/6, 322/7), bloodletting of which is beneficial for most human diseases (Jorjani, 1978: 193).

Conclusion

Rumi has employed medical terms and concepts in a natural way and, unlike some other poets, his goal has been to explain moral and mystical points, not to boast.

On the one hand, Rumi transmits the symptoms and treatment methods of physical diseases to the realm of the human spirit, and this demonstrates the fact that his main focus is the soul not the body. And if ever the human body gets attention, it is because body is the carrier of human soul; on the other hand, Rumi's intense inner feelings and emotions are not the result of rational reason and thought, but the result of intuition and revelation inasmuch as he points to the mystical nuances by expressing the medical and scientific themes of his time with no poetic artificial fabrication.

One of the most important things about the use of medicine and medical terms in Rumi's poetry is that, for Rumi, referring to the properties of drugs has no intrinsic validity. He rather uses them in order to explain

the minute points of spiritual medicine and further to contrast it with physical medicine. From the various properties of a medicine, he selects the ones that are most suitable for explaining his spiritual medicine.

Keywords

Medicines, *Divan-e Shams*, treatment methods, medical topics and Rumi.

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