



CLOSE READING OF SOHRAB SEPEHRI'S POEM "و چه تنها" (AND HOW LONELY)

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This article offers a close reading of Sohrab Sepehri's poem: "و چه تنها" – which translated to "And How Lonely", focusing on the interconnected themes of nature, solitude and the symbolism of the water lily. Drawing from Persian literary tradition, mysticism and philosophical influences, the close reading will analyse how Sepehri has portrayed nature as a sacred and active guide in one's spiritual journey. Solitude is depicted as a path to transcendence and the water lily as a symbol for enlightenment. Through minimalist language, yet evocative, Sepehr invites readers to reflect on the divine presence in nature and in the self.

SOHRAB SEPEHRINING "و چه تنها" (QANCHALIK YOLG'IZ) SHE'RINING YAQIN O'QILISHI

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MAQOLA HAQIDA

Kalit soʻzlar: Tabiat, yolgʻizlik, suv nilufari, ruhiy, oʻtish, oʻzgartiruvchi, mistitsizm, ilohiy, maʼrifat.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola Sohrab Sepehrining وچه تنها ("Qanchalik yolgʻiz") nomli sheʼrining yaqin oʻqilishini taqdim etadi, unda tabiat, yolgʻizlik va suv nilufari ramzining oʻzaro bogʻliqligi asosiy eʼtibor markazida turadi. Fors adabiy anʼanalari, mistitsizm va falsafiy taʼsirlar asosida ushbu tahlilda Sepehri tabiatni ruhiy sayohatdagi muqaddas va faol yoʻlboshchi sifatida koʻrsatgani oʻrganiladi. Yolgʻizlik – bu oʻtish, poklanish yoʻli, suv nilufari esa maʼrifat ramzi sifatida tasvirlanadi. Minimalistik, ammo taʼsirchan tili orqali Sepehri oʻquvchilarni tabiat va oʻzlikdagi ilohiy mavjudlik haqida mulohaza yuritishga chorlaydi.

**БЛИЗКОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ СТИХОТВОРЕНИЯ СОХРАБА СЕПЕХРИ "وچه تنها"
(«И КАК ОДИНОКО»)**

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: Природа, одиночество, кувшинка, духовный, трансценденция, преобразующий, мистицизм, божественное, просветление.

Аннотация: В данной статье предлагается близкое чтение стихотворения Сохраба Сепехри وچه تنها («И как одиноко»), сосредоточенного на взаимосвязанных темах природы, одиночества и символизма кувшинки. Основываясь на персидской литературной традиции, мистицизме и философских влияниях, анализ показывает, как Сепехри изображает природу как священного и активного проводника на духовном пути. Одиночество представлено как путь к трансценденции, а кувшинка — как символ просветления. Через минималистичный, но выразительный язык Сепехри призывает читателей задуматься о божественном присутствии в природе и в себе.

Sohrab Sepehri is one of Iran's most celebrated modern poets. He is known for using nature, spirituality and mysticism in his poetry. With his poetry he creates a visual experience for the reader by bridging traditional Persian themes with modernist simplicity. For the close reading of Sohrab

Sepehri's poem "و چه تنها" three interconnected themes will be discussed: nature, the water lily (nilufar), and solitude. The imagery of these subjects in the poem reveal Sohrab Sepehri his belief in the spiritual essence of nature and the transformative power of solitude.

Nature as a spiritual guide

The first sentence of the poem reads:

ای درخوراوج! آواز تو در کوه سحر، و گیاهی به نماز

"O exalted one!

Your song resounds in the dawn-lit mountains, and a plant bows in prayer."

In these words nature is not just a lifeless object but an active participant in Sohrab Sepehri his spiritual ritual. Sohrab actually personified the mountain and the plant. The mountain is described as having a divine sound that is heard in dawn and the plant is described being in the action of prayer. The personification portrays Sohrab Sepehri his view that nature has a spiritual soul and essence. The word نماز (prayer) also reveals the connection between nature and worship because Sepehri considers the whole universe as a shrine. And we all must be in harmony with it and must say prayers together. This might be a reference to the Quranic verse 24:41. In this verse it is stated that all those who are in the heavens and earth praise God, including for example birds. And that each has their own way of prayer. Hence, the plant in a state of prayer in this poem.

The connection between nature and worship is enhanced further with the line:

غمها را گل کردم، پل زدم از خود تا صخره دوست

"I made sorrows into blooms, I built a bridge from myself to the cliff of the Friend."

The sorrows of the person are, metaphorically, turned into flowers. Nature now has become a tool for transformation. The building of a bridge symbolizes overcoming inner struggles and connecting with دوست ("the Friend"), probably referring to God or a divine presence. It is a process of spiritual and emotional growth. Sepehri actually regards nature as the container of signs and truths of the divine and therefore even flowers can be seen as an eternal and a secret object. By nature mankind is able to meet with God or enter other spiritual worlds.

Sepehri further highlights the idea of nature being a container for divine mysteries with the following sentence:

من هستم، و سفالینه تاریکی، و تراویدن راز ازلی

"It is me, the clay vessel of darkness, and the exuding of the eternal secret."

The word سفالینه (terracotta) symbolizes the earth but it could also be identified with the human body, connected with the idea that humans were created from clay. Here the clay vessel refers to the body and the soul is separate from it (من هستم). The clay vessel of the darkness may refer to a story about Adam that is common in Sufi traditions and is probably derived from Christian and Jewish tradition with a similar story. The story is that Adam (his soul) was hesitant to enter his body (the

clay vessel) because it was in the 'dark'. This can be taken literal or as a metaphor that the soul struggles with the earthly form. It holds راز ازل (the eternal secret/truth). And again nature becomes a container for divine mysteries. However, now the nature is also exuding (و تراویدن) the eternal secret functioning as a guide towards spiritual realization.

This idea of nature as an instrument of revelation culminates in the water lily that is a symbol for ultimate enlightenment.

The water lily (nilufar) as a symbol of enlightenment

The word نیلوفر (water lily) is mentioned in the last sentence of the poem:

هنگام من است، ای در به فراز، آی جاده به نیلوفر

! خاموش پیام

"My time has come, O door to ascent, O road to the silent water lily of the message!"

The water lily is an ancient symbol in Persian culture and it is historically associated with the goddess of water, Anahita. It represents purity and perfection. However, the water lily is also a symbol for the enlightenment of the heart. This is then turned into the ideal example of pure intellect. The lily's ability to rise from murky waters, untouched by impurity, made it a powerful symbol of spiritual transcendence, a theme also found in Buddhist and Sufi thought. The poem states: هنگام من است (it is my time), meaning that it is time to embark on the road (جاده) towards enlightenment which means a transformation of the self. The enlightenment, hence the water lily, is referred to as a silent message, خاموش پیام. It refers to the ineffable nature of the spiritual truth, something that cannot be spoken but must be experienced.

Solitude as a path to enlightenment

The theme of solitude is a reoccurring subject in Sepehri's poetry. The title of this poem refers to solitude:

و چه تنها

"And How Lonely"

Solitude permeates the entire poem and reaches an emotional peak in the following sentence:

! و چه تنها من

"and how lonely I am!"

While this may awaken a feeling of sadness with the reader, this is not the emotion that Sepehri tries to evoke. He views solitude as a symbol of ecstasy and meditation. It refers to a pure and spiritual loneliness that will help a person break free from all sufferings, and sorrows. And therefore, they will reach the state of ecstasy and contemplation.

It is said that Sepehri was directly influenced by Buddhism and to argue this the importance of the theme of solitude in Buddhism is highlighted. However, similarly in Sufism the theme of

solitude also resonates. Creating a discussion between people about whether Sepehri was, or was not influenced by Buddhism or Sufism. But most importantly is that his portrayal of solitude aligns with these spiritual traditions.

As said before, solitude is reinforced throughout the poem and it is felt through images that create this sense of solitude. An example of this is the verse:

تنها من، و سر انگشتم در چشمه یاد، و کبوترها لب آب

“Only I, and my fingertip in the fountain of memory, and the pigeons gathered at the water’s edge.”

This phrase exhibits that the loneliness talked about in this poem is not absolute because the person is surrounded by elements of nature. In these images nature becomes a mirror and companion to the person’s inward reflection, evoking meditative solitude.

Up until the end of the poem loneliness is being mentioned continually. The final lines of the poem state the transformative power of solitude that will break a person free from sorrows and reach a state of spiritual ascension.

هنگام من است، ای در به فراز، ای جاده به نیلوفر

! خاموش پیام

“My time has come, O door to ascent, O road to the silent water lily of the message!”

The ascension is a metaphor for the spiritual awakening. The solitude, mentioned throughout the whole poem, is a spiritual journey that had prepared the person for this and is ready to receive the silent message of the water lily, which will complete their journey towards enlightenment.

Conclusion

The themes nature, the water lily and solitude are intertwined with each other in Sohrab Sepehri’s poem "و چه تنها". Together it conveys a spiritual message. Nature is displayed as a living, scared entity that will guide mankind towards the divine. The water lily symbolizes enlightenment and perfection which is seen as a message for the people who seek it. And lastly, solitude which is not portrayed as a sad theme in Sepehri’s poem but functions as a tool for a transformative experience that allows a person to transcend worldly suffering and achieve spiritual clarity.

This is the message that Sepehri is trying to convey and he does this with simple yet evocative language. With the poem Sepehri invites readers to reflect on our own relationship with nature, solitude, and the divine.

– و چه تنها

ای درخوراوج !آواز تو در کوه سحر، و گیاهی به نماز
غمها را گل کردم، پل زدم از خود تا صخره دوست

من هستم، و سفالینه تاریکی، و تراویدن راز ازلی
سر بر سنگ، و هوایی که خنک، و چناری که به فکر
و روانی که پر از ریزش دوست

،خوابم چه سبک، ابر نیایش چه بلند، و چه زیبا بوته زیست
! و چه تنها من

تنها من، و سر انگشتم در چشمه یاد، و کبوترها لب آب
هم خنده موج، هم تن زنبوری بر سبزه مرگ، و شکوهی
در پنجه ی باد

من از تو پر، ای روزنه باغ هم آهنگی کاج و من و
! ترس

هنگام من است، ای در به فراز، آی جاده به نیلوفر
! خاموش پیام

And How Lonely –

Oexalted one!

Your song resounds in the dawn-lit mountains, and a plant bows in prayer.

I moulded sorrows into blooms, forging a bridge to the cliff of the Friend.

It is me, the clay vessel of darkness, and the exuding of the eternal secret.

My head on stone,dense air, and a sycamore in thoughts,

and a soul full of the Friend's descent.

How light is my sleep, how lofty the cloud of prayer, and how beautiful the bush of life,
and how lonely I am!

Only I, and my fingertip in the fountain of memory, and the pigeons gathered at the water's
edge.

Both the laughter of the wave, the bee's body on the grass-blade of death, and magnificence
clenched in the grasp of the wind.

I am filled with you, O window of the garden, O the harmony of the pine trees, O me,
O fear!

My time has come, O door to ascent, O road to the silent water lily of the message!
yetamiz.

Foydalanilgan adabiyotlar ro'yxati:

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