



THE PARADOX OF GRIEF AND JOY IN MYSTICAL POEMS

Marzieh ESTAJI¹, Reza ASHRAF ZADEH²

¹ Ph.D. Student of Persian Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad Branch.

² Professor of Persian Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad Branch.

***Corresponding Author:**

Email: Ma_ta80@ymail.com

ABSTRACT

The paradox is among the linguistic art devices which, due to breaking the norms of language and the contention of customs, led to defamiliarization and manifestation of the speech, and induces artistic amazement and pleasure. Grief and joy are a kind of inner feeling and among the most important human phenomena which greatly affect the formation of man's behavior. The current study aimed to, besides evaluating the mystical role of grief and joy in poetic works of the mystics, investigate the paradoxes present in mystical works, and elaborate and explain the reasons behind using this technique.

Keywords: Paradox, Mysticism, Grief, Joy, Contradiction.

INTRODUCTION

The nature of mysticism is the unity of opposites and gathering of them beside each other. Contemplation in the world of mysticism would make the reader face many paradoxes and oppositions. These paradoxes are either derived from the universe and its different manifestations, or from the various spiritual states and experiences the mystics have gone through, in different spiritual conditions, and due to the contradiction between these experiences and states, the language of mysticism also have been directed towards paradox.

Some believe that paradox in mystical works is the result of inability of language in expression of mystical experiences; however, it can be said that the mystics' language is paradox only because their experiences are paradox, and language cannot reflect the experience correctly. The language and expression of mysticism, especially, *Shathiyat* (the words in opposition to the religion), are all descriptions contradictory and opposite to the world of feelings, expressed by the mystics while being tipsiness and drunk, and since these words are beyond the scope of wisdom, it also makes contradictions for the readers.

The current study aimed at discovering the innovations of some poets titled the mystic, and exploration of their approach to the subject of grief and joy, as well as recognition of the main axes of mystical contradictions and determination of the extent to which they are affected by these contradictions and exploit them in the mystical works. Also, through recognition of the root and source of the mystics' exploitation of mystical paradoxes, the expressive methods and techniques used by the mystics in expressing these paradoxes have been investigated.

The Position of Grief and Joy in Mysticism and the Mystic Works

Grief and joy are a kind of inner feelings, and actually, a reaction to the internal and external factors that are afflicted on human in different situations, and he inevitably have to experience

them during his lifetime. The type of the approach and attitude of man towards himself and the universe and its events, is the underlying cause of the emergence of these two states in the human being.

The joy or sorrow of the mystic's spirit is interpreted as consolation and disdain. The consolation and disdain are among the paired concepts and a pivotal issue for the mystics and mysticism, which have been introduced from the initiation of formation of mysticism. The concept and manifestation of consolation and disdain in the Iranian and Islamic mysticism are so broad. The consolation and disdain are two interconnected terms of the mystics for expression of joy and grief, and their inner states in connection to the Almighty God. The disdain is the gloom, and the so-called heartily sorrow. On the contrary, the consolation is the gaiety of the mystic's spirit, and as the mysticism implies, it is the cheerfulness and joy of the heart.

The Iranian mystics, in accordance with the mystical situations that had in different periods of their lives, expressed these states in a way. Sanai's division of grief and joy is summarized as the praised and deprecated joy and grief. The praised joy in his point of view is largesse and abandoning the world, and being satisfied with God's prudence, which leads to the joy and cheerfulness of man. The praised grief in his point of view is the grief that directs the man towards the real joy. He believes that grief is mixed with love, and the fascination and mania accompany the lover. Sanai, in his poems, believes that the sweetness of the religion is ultimately achieved through the annihilation of the lover, and this annihilation extricates the mystic from the transient grief and joy, and there would be no veils remained to get away from God and cause grief.

Rumi also has a specific view to the phenomenon of grief and joy. He considers all the creatures and the universe with all its components and events, to be controlled by the Almighty God. Thus, in his view, a person can be sad in the peak of prosperity and success, and be content and happy in the peak of poverty and misery. He has described the consolation and disdain without complexities and with the highest simplicity, and use the language in a specific way that is indicator of his mind's creativity. He considers no originality for the worldly grief and joy, since he believes that this world is an event. Therefore, the phenomena of this world are also accidental and mortal.

On the matter of grief and joy, Attar Neishabouri believes the mystic to be a person who, with a cheerful heart, welcomes happily the sorrow, pain, and grief. Also, Hafez, with regards to the good thought and deed, recommends happiness, beauty, and enjoying the life. Hafez, in spite of all sorrow in his soul due to the time adversaries, has never sought to praise the grief. On the contrary, he tried to free himself from sorrow and find a reason for happiness, in any possible ways.

Investigation of Grief and Joy in the Mystic Works

The world of mysticism is the world of contradictions. A world in which the lover gets happy with the beloved's sorrow, grief, and misery, and welcomes it with joy and euphoria. The people who in the midst of the adversaries of life and even in the face of death, have a happy mood and a heart full of happiness.

In one of the philosophies of existence of grief and joy is the life getting more beautiful. The grief and joy are two paradox realities of life, which undoubtedly, come to every living



creature and make him captive for moments. The perception of these two states is interconnected and one can percept the joy of this universe who has experienced the grief. Through investigation of the mystical texts of poems from the sixth to ninth centuries, we would face plenty of such interpretations and paradoxes for manifestation of the inner grief and joy states of the mystic, which can be presented as follows:

1. Being Happy with the Sorrow of the Beloved's Separation in the Hope of Joining

The mystics' sorrow is significantly different from that of the ordinary people. Their sorrow is stemmed from the separation and fear of not joining. They, when it is possible to join God and his proximity, become happy and when the separation happens, become sad and sorrowful. The grief of separation and worries of joining is the most important sorrow that has captured the soul of mystics. Their sorrow is reduced after the edification and going through the stages of mysticism and approaching the beloved, and it turns into joy by joining the beloved. Such grief is the prologue to the eternal joy, followed by the most beautiful and indescribable joy, which is the joining of the beloved:

Since your sorrow is the elixir of joy I drink the poison of your grief as if it's sugar
(Attar, 1983, 384)

Sanai believes that the mystic should not mourn from the separation and be satisfied with it, since the sorrow of separation would turn into joy for him. In his view, the sorrow of separation from beloved is a prologue for the joy.

The injustice is all justice when you step in the religion it is all cheerfulness if you know
how to live with separation

Be like a nightingale in love, so that you will always find love do not wait like a nightingale
to join the beloved (Sanai, 2002, 431)

2. Being Happy with Enjoying the Sorrow of Love

Love creates a state in man in which, precludes him from determining and discerning ability. The interpretation and elaboration of this state lead the man to complication and difficulty, whether it is the real love derived from love of the divine beloved, or the mundane or figurative love. The mystic considers beloved to be the main reason of joy, and the lover, due to his proximity with this strong and eternal power, considers himself to be happy, and this happiness is beyond any kinds of transient and superficial joy.

O You, whose face is like a flower and your hair like a box, I am happy the moment I am
sorrowful of your separation (Rumi, 1998, 244)

Beautiful interpretations such as "laughing from cry" and "crying from the laughter" are among the most common interpretations found everywhere in the romantic and mystical texts.

The lovers cry laughter from you the mystics laugh cry from you (Sanai, 1981, 152).

I cry with laughter for myself like a candle what would do with you o cruel, my mourning
(Hafez, 1991, 792).

Sometimes, the divine sorrow and tolerating it would lead to the mystic's joy, and it is even more valuable to him than happiness, since this sorrow is not depression, this is the sorrow of love, and removes other grief.

We are sorrowful in the path of love and we are happy with this sorrow (Sanai, 2002, 140)

In the God's district, the one would be the elder who builds his house of joy in the city of sorrows (ibid, 140)



It is now a while that the longing of the idols is my religion the sorrow of this is the joy of my sorrowful heart (Hafez, 1991, 117)

There is sweetness in poison and a joy in suffering it is a painful medicine that have no pain (Sanai, 2002, 60)

The sorrow of love in the mystic's soul leads him to a path that solves all the contradictions and paradoxes, so the grief and joy clang his spirit no more, and since the strap is in the beloved's hand, the poison turns into sugar, and the sorrow's thorn becomes the most pleasant and delicate thing. "In Rumi's point of view, the grief and joy created in the nature of man, is both the effect of God's power and his action, and he is able to turn whatever that causes joy to a creator of sorrow, and vice versa, raise joy from the sorrow, and create sorrow from the joy" (Forouzanfar, 1982, 320).

They drink the poison as if it's sugar they graze the thorn of sorrows as if they are camels

For the sorrow and not for the sake of joy this humiliation is like a plaything for them

They are so happy in the depth of the well that they fear the throne

Whenever the beloved is in the company It's the highest position and not the well (Rumi, 2000, 4508-4511)

This enjoyable and cheerful sorrow would lead the mystic to the inner salvation and euphoria in relation to God.

3. Laughing to the Worthless Sorrows which are based on the Human Selfishness

All the manifestations of the universe and the creatures are to be demolished and declined. When the events of time are consistent with the human expectations, he would be happy, and whenever they are against his expectations, he is seized by the sorrow and grief. The asleep and ignorant man thinks that that what is considered as grief or joy in this world is real and has originality.

This is the same theme Rumi has addressed in the following verses:

Whatever makes you happy in this world so, be afraid of losing it

Everything by which you are rejoiced in the world—think at that time of the parting from it

Many a one has been gladdened by what made you glad: at last it escaped from him and became even as wind

It will escape from you also: set not your heart upon it. Do you yourself escape from it before it escapes (from you) (ibid, 3, 3697-3699).

The ignorant and asleep man who has considered every sorrow and joy to be original and real, so far, when he leaves this eternal world, and sees that on what foundation his transient and unpleasant sorrows and joy have been based, an how they have degraded his high spirit, would laugh at his ridiculous thoughts:

Then) laughter at those sorrows of his will take possession of him when he sees his permanent abode and dwelling-place (ibid, 4, 494).

4. Laughter at Sorrows as a Way of Conduct

The sorrow and pain of the mystics contradicts what is known by the human. In their point of view, this sorrow is transcendental and it has an evolutionary course from the lowest rank to the highest rank. Whenever the lover is far from his beloved and he is departed from his God, the sorrow will overwhelm him and this grief is a divine gift. Whenever he joins his creator, he would be cheerful.

When you feel pain, ask God's pardon :(Only) by command of the Creator is pain operative



When He pleases, pain itself becomes joy; bondage itself becomes freedom (ibid, 1, 836-7).

In the mystic's view, the sorrow is actually the joy, since it leads to his awakening, and this sorrow becomes happiness when the man is liberated from himself and he can distinguish between the good and the evil.

Know that in the hour of thy awakening thy tears and grief and sorrow and lamentation will turn to joy (Rumi, 2000, 4, 3661).

Pleasure is (concealed) in pains: the track has been lost, the Water of Life has been taken away into the (Land of) Darkness (ibid, 6, 1591).

In the poems of Rumi, we are faced with a type of sorrow that opens the way for happiness. This sorrow, through annihilation of the fake joys, removes the rotten root of the unreal pleasures from human's spirit, and prepares him for growth of new joys.

Sorrow pulls up the crooked rotten (root), in order that it may disclose the root that is veiled from sight

Whatsoever (things) sorrow may cause to be shed from the heart or may take away (from it), assuredly it will bring better in exchange

Especially for him who knows with certainty (intuitively) that sorrow is the servant of the possessors of (intuitive) certainty (Rumi, 2000, 234-236)

Rumi, in his fruitful life, have gone through two stages. Before finding Shams, he passes the stages of mysticism by austerity and piety, and he dances like an enamored, and confronts the frowning of the people with laughter when he met Shams.

The sorrowful drink wine, and we are happier than the wine, give your opium to the captives of sorrow, o cupbearer

It is forbidden for the sorrow to kill us, and it is allowed for us to kill the sorrow, any sorrows approaching us would bleed to death

The wine is red on the face of those inflicted by sorrow, our face is red with our own color (Rumi, 1998, 1247).

The lover's getting liberated from himself and as Rumi puts it, "death of the self", is the cause of happiness.

Hurray men, hurray men, happy with their death, one should make a ball from his own head and step in the field (ibid, 695).

5. Combination of Grief and Joy to Create Gaiety in Man

The mystic believes that the Almighty God has created the grief and joy, so that through the paradox between these concepts, the gaiety is found. Everything is valuable and manifested in the presence of its opposite. The Almighty God created sorrow in order for the joy to be distinguished.

God created pain and sorrow for the purpose that happiness might be made manifest by means of this opposite

Hidden things, then, are manifested by means of their opposite; since God hath no opposite, He is hidden (Rumi, 1998, 3, 3752-3753).

The mundane joy is different from the real and divine joy. The worldly joy, since it is achieved by the transient mundane and carnal joy, is same as a wound that is only cured by the bam of sorrow. On the contrary to this joy are the lasting and great joys that never turn into sorrow, and are like a gift from the divine world.



All these griefs that are within our breasts arise from the vapor and dust of our existence and wind (vain desire)

These uprooting griefs are as a scythe to us: (to think that) this is such and such or that that is such and such is a temptation (of the Devil) to us (ibid, 1, 2296-2297).

6. Acceptance of Sorrow as a Divine Blessing and being Happy with its Presence

The mystics believe that there are no grief and joy without a wisdom, and any consolation and disdain in the universe indicate a particular wisdom. Therefore, any sorrow and fear that comes to man, is the prologue to new joy and blessings.

The sugar of joy (hereafter) is the fruit of the garden of sorrow (here): this (sensual) joy is the wound and that (spiritual) sorrow is the plaster (Rumi, 1998, 3, 3752).

Not only does the mystic accept sorrow, but also he is happy with it.

If the thought of sorrow is waylaying (spoiling) joy, (yet) it is making preparations for joy

It violently sweeps thy house clear of (all) else, in order that new joy from the source of good may enter in (Rumi, 2000, 5, 3678-3679).

The sorrow, in the viewpoint of the pious ones, leads to evolution. The sorrow is the means of joining God and the ladder of the man's improvement. There are hidden treasures in the world that are only achieved through sorrow and suffering, and this issue cannot be understood by the narrow-minded and superficial observer.

Rejoice in sorrow, for sorrow is the snare of (means of attaining to) union (with God): in this Way the ascent is downwards (ibid, 3, 509).

Some sorrows end in bigger joy.

When the pain (of love) has begun to increase your (spiritual) joy, roses and lilies have taken possession of the garden of your soul (ibid, 2, 321).

In the viewpoint of the mystic, the everlasting joy is a calamity whose medicine is sorrow.

7. Inseparability of grief and joy

The mystic is so melted in his creator that he cannot distinguish grief from joy. These attributes are so mixed in his soul that he interprets grief as joy, and joy as grief.

The sorrow is the shadow of joy, and it runs after joy

Leave the joy, they are not separable

The darkness comes after the day, and sorrow comes after the joy

If you see the day, know that the night cannot be avoided

As soon as you run to sorrow, the joy runs towards you

And if you opt for the joy, the sorrow is waiting for you (Rumi, 1998).

CONCLUSION

The most fundamental factor of happiness and joy in the field of religion and mysticism is seeking and discovering the truth and going after God's satisfaction, which implies the idealist attribute of the man and his servant being for his creator. The man achieves real joy and calmness when he achieves inner liberation and salvation. The mystics have depicted achievement of these pleasing states through specific interpretations and words, which is the very paradox.

The current study firstly aimed at investigation of the position of grief and joy in mystic works, and then, through extracting the verses that contained grief and joy paradox from the works of



the significant Persian poets, and categorizing the concepts in seven categories, analyzed the reasons behind using the paradox in the related verses. The most important reason behind using this paradox is manifestation of the mystic cheerfulness for having divine sorrow, and being departed from the beloved in the hope for joining, that makes him happy and euphoric.

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