

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



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Introduction

- We will be talking about a great poet in the history of Islam as well as humanity.
- When we learn about something, we learn the definition. The essential foundation of language is definition.
- One of the hardest things to define is a human being.
- We get to know Allah through ourselves and we get to know ourselves through the light of Allah
 - Iqbal said, “abandon everyone if you want to know yourself and go to the only One that knows you.
 - Nobody knows what we don’t allow them to know, but Allah knows all of the mysteries inside of us.
- Rumi tried to define it by saying “the shaykh was going through the streets of the city with a torch light, and he was tired of all the animals. He wanted to find a human being. He was told, “just stay at home, you can’t find a human being”. He replied, “I want the one that you can’t find.”
 - There are many human beings, but being a human is very rare.
- Allah says to the angels, “I will put a khalifa on the earth”. A khalifa is a caretaker, a maintainer - to make sure everything on the earth is preserved just the way Allah created it. The angels had a different definition for the human being than Allah when they said, “will you create a creation that will cause corruption in the earth and shed blood?”

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ اِنِّیْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ

‘Remember’ when your Lord said to the angels, “I am going to place a successive ‘human’ authority on earth.” They asked ‘Allah’, “Will You place in it someone who will spread corruption there and shed blood while we glorify Your praises and proclaim Your holiness?” Allah responded, “I know what you do not know.”

(Surah Baqara, 30)

- Allah knew all the definitions, and He knew better than the angels.
- Allah knows what’s in the hearts of people, we can’t judge people outwardly.

Sa’di’s Poem on the Human Being

- Sa’di has a poem on what a human being is.
 - In the UN there is a carpet gifted by the Persians that is hanging, and this poem is written there.
 - This is one of the masterpieces of Sa’di
 - “Humanity is like one body, when one part of this whole body is in pain, all of the limbs of the body should feel the pain. Oh you who are free from the pain and suffering of other people, you don’t deserve the title of a human being.”
 - We are all the same - all of the souls came from the same source.
 - Roses come in different colors, but they are all roses
 - Imagine each body part being a different place of the world
 - The greatest title we have is the title of a human being - this title doesn’t come for free.
 - A son had bad manners towards his father and his father told him that he would never be a human - when the son became a ruler, he told his father, “You said I wouldn’t even be a human, now I am a ruler”. His father replied, I didn’t say you would never be a ruler, I said you would never be a human.

Gulistan

- The Gulistan is one of Sa'di's most famous poems
- "Gul" means rose, and "istan" means land, so Gulistan means land of roses/garden.
 - "Istan" is in the names of places - Pakistan, Afghanistan, etc.
- He wrote this book in the year 655.
- Gulistan is very short, as it is the queen of poetry. We are going over a commentary.
- Nasrmasaja is the type of prose that doesn't have a rhythm, but it is very poetic.
 - This is the greatest poem of this type written in Persian history
- This has 8 chapters
 - First chapter: Advice to Kings and Rulers
 - Second chapter: Akhlaq (Ethics) of the Citizens
 - Third Chapter: Virtue of Contentment
 - Fourth Chapter: The Benefit of Silence
 - Fifth Chapter: Love and Youth
 - Sixth Chapter: Old Age and Weakness
 - Seventh Chapter: The Effect of Tarbiyya
 - We have taleem and tarbiyya in our tradition. Tarbiyya is the teaching of adab (manners and etiquettes).
- One of the first languages this was translated into was French in the 1600s.
 - The first chapter was given to a government official in France named Lazare Carnot, and he loved it because it was good advice on how to run a government.
 - Sa'di's way of running the government was very ethical and balanced.
 - He named his son Sa'di after this - his son was an engineer who died at an early age. He invented the thermodynamic engine, and he mentions how his inspiration was Sa'di, the great sufi muslim saint of Persia

- Lazare named his next son Sa'di as well who died at an early age.
- His brother named his son Sa'di, and this person became the president of France for a period of time.
- It was first translated in 1634 to different languages
- In 1654 it was translated into German
- In 1848 there was another translation into German
- The first Gulistan that was translated into English was in 1888 by Richard Burton.
 - Before this, in 1774, a few chapters of the Gulistan was translated by Stephen Sullivan into English, but not the full book.
- When Sa'di passed away, for the next 400 years, everyone copied his style of poetry.
 - He started a new genre of poetry.

Poems from the Panj Kitab (5 books in one)

Poem #1 - Speaking to Allah

- He starts the book with بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
- He then calls upon Allah - "Oh Kareem (the most Generous), forgive us in the state that we are in."
 - Even in our peak state of obedience, there is always room for getting closer to Allah and seeking his forgiveness
 - Why did he use Kareem? Kareem is the One who gives what we are asking.
 - If Allah gives us so much without us asking and He is Kareem, what will He give when we ask? This is the mentality of Sa'di here.
 - The best thing he can ask for is forgiveness.
- He then says, "I am a prisoner of my nafs."
 - He wants Allah's forgiveness in every state of his life because the nafs is like a rope that drags us to evil. The poet said, "the great lovers take that rope off their neck and put the rope of Allah on their neck, and let Allah take them anywhere they want".

- "I don't have anything except You to come to rescue me"
 - In Persian, there is "tu" and "shumal". Shumal is a sign of respect, but here Allah is referred to as "tu". Why?
 - Shumal is always plural (like the 'royal we') out of respect for someone. Because it has that plurality, the word "tu" is used for Allah to indicate Allah's oneness.
 - He is saying that he is shouting for help, but only Allah can help.
 - We must call Allah like an orphan that has lost their mother. We should call in desperation.
- "You are the One Who forgives the sinners alone (bas). Protect me from the path that is khataa."
 - Khataa is when you miss the bullseye in archery, a mistake or a sin.
 - We must get rid of the idea that we can do things, Allah is the One Who allows us to do things. We should avoid "I" and encourage using "we".
- "Put my sins to the side and replace them with reward"
 - Abu Hanifa was asked about the dua for the first sight of the Kaaba, and he said, "ask Allah to accept all of your duas after that dua". Be smart in your duas.
 - Allah changes khataa into blessings.
 - If you have remorse for a sin, Allah will elevate you to a level so high that you couldn't have gotten it through worship.
- Sa'di has completed his poem with Allah and moves on to his second poem.

Poem #2 - Praise of the Prophet SAW

- "For as long as you have your tongue in your mouth, what is beloved to your heart is the praise of Muhammad SAW"
 - He understood the connection between the tongue and the heart.
 - A munafiq is the one who says with their tongue what is not in their heart.
 - The heart's joy is the name of Muhammad SAW.

- We all have our tongue in our mouths at all times, so we should constantly be sending salawat on Prophet SAW.
- “He is the habib (beloved) of Allah”
 - The sahaba were once sitting talking about the virtuous titles of all the previous prophets (Musa is kaleemullah, Ibrahim is khalelullah, etc). Prophet SAW passed by and heard them, he said, I am Habibullah. The one you love is the highest, so habib is higher than khalil and kaleem.
- “He is the most noble of the prophets”
 - Notice he doesn’t say Ashraful Makhlooqat - the most noble of creation. He says the most noble of the prophets.
 - He doesn’t want to even compare Prophet SAW with all of us, he compares him with the elite - the prophets, saying that he SAW is the most noble of that elite group.
 - The Prophet SAW was the imam of all of the prophets, and the imam should be the best of the group.
- “The ‘arsh of Allah is his pillow”
 - Muttaqar is something you lean on, like a pillow.
 - The Prophet SAW leaned on the ‘arsh of Allah in Israa wal Miraaj with his sandals.
 - An Ansari said - “let me tell you who the Prophet SAW is. The mark of his shoes became a crown on the heads of the kings.”
- “He rode the buraq when it put its hands forward and in one hop it went to Jerusalem. It went through a palace with a plethora of shades of blue lights.
 - The wings were just decoration to make it beautiful for the Prophet SAW
 - Sa’di was born around the year 1201 and died 1299. He was around the same time as Rumi.
 - If we look at the pictures of the skies and cosmos, it’s like a hub of blue lights, like a palace lit up. He couldn’t have known this at the time he lived.

Poem #3 - A Khutbah to the Nafs

- We cannot be nice to our nafs.
- “40 years of this precious life that Allah gave you has passed but your infant state has not changed”
 - 40 years is a symbolism of a great portion of one’s life
 - He is not speaking of the fitra when he talks about the infant state, he is talking about the childish nature of even adults - we want everything
- “Your companionship has been your hawa and your hawas”
 - Our desires overtook us, we just fed the nafs
- “Not even for a moment did you do something beneficial”
 - There’s a taste in virtues and ethics. If one gets this taste in their mouth, they cannot go back to sin.
 - Iqbal says, when a sajdah is done with love, you can taste your ibadah. Anyone can do tasteless sajdahs.
 - When one prays the night prayer (tahajjud) until they break down, one night for Allah can change their life for eternity.
 - Allah is in the heart of every human being. If we are lost ourselves, we can’t find the light of Allah.
- “Don’t lean on this life because life has no pillar to lean on”
 - Be always upright and vigilant, don’t relax and fall asleep
- “Never feel safe from the great game of life”
 - It will find something to drop into this abyss - when one falls into it, it’s difficult to come out

Summary

- There are two ways of looking at these poems. The first way:
 - First, Allah is saying to ask help from Him
 - Cry in desperation

