

kis kā junūn-e dīd tamannā-shikār thā
āīnah khānah wādī-e jawhar-ghubār thā
(Ġhālib, nuskhah-e Bhopāl)

Whose frenzied obsession
for a gaze
was desire's prey
The mirror-chamber
was a burnish-dust-filled desert

The syntactical grammar of the second hemistich permits an "A is B" as well as "B is A" reading in the mode of sentential bisemy (ṣannat-e idmāj). Ergo: The burnish-dust-filled desert was a mirror-chamber. I'll prefer the first possibility reading. Again, the grammar of "tamannā-shikār" allows it be read both as "desire's prey" as well as "desire's hunter." I've chosen "desire's prey." The "hunter," then, is desire (tamannā) and its "prey" (shikār) is the "frenzied obsession for a gaze" (junūn-e dīd). I've translated "wādī" as "desert," rather than "valley" or "forest" or "plain" or "ravine," from the ri'āyat between junūn and wādī, since the desert traversed by Qais in Love's frenzy is the wādī-e majnūn. I've translated "jauhar-ghubār" as "burnish-dust."

The first hemistich by itself doesn't convey a complete sense: "Whose frenzied obsession for a gaze was desire's prey?" Unfortunately, the second distich too fails to do so: "The mirror-chamber was a burnish-dust-filled desert." The problematic of this distich's the apparent disconnect, the lack of "rabṭ" (connection) between the first and second hemistichs. I'll posit a rabṭ between the two hemistiches, between "frenzied obsession" (junūn) in the first hemistich and "desert" (wādī) in the second, and between "gaze" (dīd) in the first hemistich and "mirror-chamber" (āīnah khānah) in the second. The second hemistich too has a problem being the unestablished nature of the tertium comparationis, the wajh-e shabbah between "āīnah khānah" and "wādī-e jawhar-ghubār." One of the meanings of "jawhar" is/are the scratch-marks made upon a rusted metal surface in order to burnish it to brightness. Positing "jauhar-ghubār" as burnish-dust also supplies the tertium comparationis with "actual" dust, ghubār (burnishing a rusty metal mirror will result in the dark metal parings), which supplies a further point of comparison between "ghubār" and "āīnah."

Now for this distich's topos, its maẓmūn. A poetic text is about something (its maẓmūn) and says some/many thing/s (its m'anī). Conventional, traditional maẓmūn's are indited with associated stock imagery, their talāzimāt, i.e., "objective correlatives" (T.S. Eliot defines an objective correlative as "a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked"). Over time and consistent usage, a maẓmūn's image becomes its semiotic-metonymic "shorthand," and specific images bring about and evoke the recognition and recall of specific maẓmūns. Images thus function as the "objective correlatives" for a maẓmūn. There can be theoretically the following permutations:

- 1) Old maẓmūn, old image;
- 2) Old maẓmūn, new image;
- 3) New maẓmūn, old image;
- 4) New maẓmūn, new image.

Rhetorically, poets can also "mix and match" and feint in the ihām mode by conflating and mixing the traditional "objective correlative" image "A" of a particular maẓmūn "X" with another maẓmūn "Y," which has its own particular traditional "objective correlative" image "B." The connection between maẓmūn and m'anī is more fluid than that between a maẓmūn and its correlative image. One maẓmūn may have a single m'anī or multiple m'anīs (though in Urdu, m'anī is always grammatically plural) and one m'anī might be expressed through multiple maẓmūns. Determining a text's maẓmūn is framing it in a particular context. Prima facie, the Mirzā ṣāhib's text seems to indite a major maẓmūn of the Persian-Urdu poetic universe, the jalwah-e mehbūb, the Manifestation of the Divine Beloved (jalwah, the ur-

symbol of which is Moses at Tūr). I'll beg to posit that the mirror here is the metaphorical heart-mirror. Gazing upon the Divine Presence, experiencing kashf (Revelation) and tajallī (Epiphany) is possible only through the spiritual eye, the eye of the heart, the oculus cordis. Both *tajallī* and *jalwah* are from the same triconsonantal Arabic root *JA-LA-WA*. *jalwah* is a Qur'ānic word, occurring four times in the Qur'ān in three forms-59:3 *aljalā*; 91:3 *jallāhā*; 92:2 *tajallā* and 7:143 *tajallā*. From the same trilateral Arabic root is also *jalā*, "to become clear, evident, manifest"; "to reveal itself, be revealed; to appear, show, come out, manifest itself"; "to be manifested, be expressed, find expression." Al-Ġhazālī in the book of the Iḥyā 'Ulūm-al-Dīn entitled "the book of the revelations of the marvels of the heart" (*kitāb sharḥ 'ajā'ib-al qalb*) drawing on Qur'ān 83.14 (*kallā bal rāna 'alā qulūbihim mā kānū yaksibūna*: "By no means! On their hearts is the rust of their actions") indites the image of the rusty heart-mirror requiring burnish to be able to reflect the Light of the Divine. Burnishing the heart-mirror so as to prevent it from "rusting" in order to reflect the Refulgence of the Divine Presence is a major Ṣūfī poetic image. The first and second hemistichs indite imagery traditionally and conventionally associated with the *maẓmūn* of the *jalwah-e meḥbūb*, viz. the intense desire to see, reflection, mirror, burnish-marks etc. This is then the Ṣūfī topos of *waḥdat-al shahūd* ("unity of witnessing"), conceived by ḥaẓrat mujaddid-e alf-ṣanī, Shaykh Aḥmad Sirhindī against the concept of *waḥdat-al wujūd*, (unity of being") delineated by the Doctor Maximus, the Shaykh-al Akbar, Ibn 'Arabī. I'll however choose to identify this distich's topos as *waḥdat-al wujūd* instead of *waḥdat-al shahūd*.

I'll submit that the interrogative in the first hemistich "kis kā junūn-e dīd tamannā-shikār thā" by a change of pitch can be intoned to mean "kisī kā nahīn" in the mode of *istifhām-e inkārī*. The intentio in this reding would be that the the desire to see the Absent Beloved which has heightened into a frenzy is pointless. Why so? Because the notion of "gazing" (*dīd*) implies a triad: a seer, the thing seen and the process of seeing, but there's really no difference between the seer, the thing seen and the process of seeing. I'll quote as an intertext verses from Maḥmūd Shabistari's (1288-1340) Persian treatise *Gulshan-e Rāz*:

'adam ā'īnah 'ālam 'aks wa insān
chū chashm-e 'aks dar wey shakḥṣ-e pinhān

tū chashm-e 'aksay wa ū nūr-e dīdah'st
badīdah dīdah rā dīdah dīdah'st

chū nekū banigarey dar 'aṣl īn kār
hamū bīndah ham dīdah'st wa dīdār

jahān rā sar-ba sar ā'īnah dān
bahar-yak żarrah ṣad mehr pinhān

Non-being the mirror,
the world the reflection,
and man
is as the reflected eye
of that hidden One.

You're the reflected eye,
He's the light
of that eye
In that eye
His eye
sees
His own eye

When you look closely
at the root of this matter,
He's at once seer,
seeing eye

and the thing seen.

Know that the world's
entirely a mirror,
Every atom
hides a hundred blazing suns.

Ġhālib's indited this topos, i.e., that of waḥdat-al wujūd often:

usey kaun dekh saktā kih yaḡānah hai woh yaktā
jo dūī kī bū bhī hotī to kahīñ do chār hotā

Who can possible see
Him who is Unique, One?
Were there the slightest
trace of duality
He'd be seen somewhere

aṣl-e shuhūd-o-shāhid-o-mashhūd ek hai
ḡairāñ hūñ phir mushāhadah hai kis ḡisāb meñ

The root of
the seer,
seeing
and the thing seen
is one
I'm amazed, then
how doe one
account
for it?

az mehr tā bah zarrah dil-o dil hai āīnah
ṡuṡī ko shashjihāt sey muqābil hai āīnah

From a dust-mote
To the Sun
Every heart's a mirror.
The parrot
confronts from the six directions
a mirror

har zarrah meḡw-e jalwah-e ḡusn-e yaḡānah īst
goī ṡilism-e shashjihāt āīnah-ḡhānah īst

Every dust-mote's suffused
with the beauty
of that Unique one's Manifestation
As though
this mystery of six directions
is a veritable mirror-chamber

This distich is an excellent illustration of the "paradigmatic-metaphor-making process" of Arabic-Persian-Urdu poetics: A metaphor is treated as a literal fact, and another metaphor is created from it: The Beloved's Light (nūr) is reflected in the heart and hence, the heart is a mirror. A mirror (in this case metal) is prone to rust and hence normally requires regular burnishing to be lustrous enough to reflect images. In this particular instance, the "burnish-dust" accumulated by all created entities polishing/burnishing their hearts in their frenzied desire to reflect the Divine Visage has rendered all creation itself into a frenzied "mirror-factory" (āīnah-ḡhānah), a "desert" made not of sand grains, but "burnish-dust." The entire

earth is a (metal) mirror. Mirrors rust. Rust must be burnished. Burnished rust/metal particles are "burnish-dust." A carpenter's studio will be filled with sawdust, and a goldsmith's smithy will be suffused with gold dust and a metal mirror-maker's workshop will be filled with (unsurprisingly) burnish-dust..! Polishing a darkened, rusted metal mirror produces fine "burnish-dust," and since all of creation's burnishing its "heart-mirror" in a collective frenzy, storms of accumulated burnish-dust create a "desert," which is thus likened to a mirror-chamber. Medieval and other palaces had glass "mirror-chambers," unlike the metal mirror-chamber envisioned here. In this instance, however, I'll beg to submit that the "mirror-Chamber" is the metaphorical (metal) mirror-chamber of all creation and not an "actual" mirror-chamber. There's a burlesque *ṣannat-e Ġhulū*, the most intense form of *mubālaġhah*, "hyperbole. *mubālaġhah* is divided by the Perso-Urdu rhetors into three sub-varieties in increasing order, *tablīġh*, *istīġhrāq* and *ġhulū*. There's also the rhetorical device *mazhab-e kalāmī*.

Since the Beloved's "always-already" reflected in the heart, there's no need to burnish the heart-mirror. However, on account of ontological nescience, beings are wont to nevertheless "burnish" their heart-mirrors, "captured" by their frenzied "desire" to reflect the Eternal Light of the Absolute. All this collective heart-mirror burnishing, therefore's entirely useless, as is the notion of positing an external Beloved and *jalwah*. Since seer, the thing seen and sight are One, the heart-mirror is "always-already" illumined by the Light of the Absolute; there's no burnishing needed. It's useless to burnish the heart-mirror, since the Beloved's Locus is the seeker's heart itself. *Ġhālib*:

naqsham giriftah dost namūdan cheh iḥtiyāj
ā'īnah-e marā ba zidūdan cheh iḥtiyāj

The Beloved's
captured in me,
what's the need
to show it?
My mirror's already lustrous,
what's the need
to burnish it?

The *shuhūd* topos is an *ihām*-like feint (being the *m'anī-e qarīb*, the "immediate" meaning), the text-intention being better served by positing the *wujūd* topos (being the *m'anī-e ġharīb*, the delayed, proximate meaning). *Ġhālib* uses this "topos-bisemy" elsewhere as well, as in this famous distich:

yak nazar besh nahīñ saiqal-e ā'īnah hanoz
chāk kartā hūñ maiñ jab sey kih gareybāñ samjhā

Mirror-burnish
still no more than
a single Alif
I've been rending my collar
ever since
I understood it