

17. *Ibid.*, No. 102, b. 1.
 18. *Ibid.*, No. 1, b. 37
 19. *Ibid.*, No. 4, b. 19; No. 100, b. 64; No. 106, b. 23, etc.
 20. *Ibid.*, No. 1, b. 44; No. 78, b. 56; No. 99, b. 34, etc.
 21. *Ibid.*, No. 1, b. 6; No. 105, b. 8, etc.
 22. *Ibid.*, No. 105, b. 39.
 23. *Ibid.*, No. 1, b. 36.
 24. *Ibid.*, No. 1, b. 34.
 25. *Ibid.*, No. 4, b. 22.
 26. *Ibid.*, No. 101, b. 30.
 27. *Ibid.*, No. 106, b. 20.
 28. *Ibid.*, No. 105, b. 16.
 29. *Ibid.*, No. 78, b. 33—40; No. 99, b. 9—22.
 30. *Ibid.*, No. 100, b. 44, 54—5; No. 102, b. 2—3, 18, 21.
 31. *Ibid.*, No. 106, b. 22—3.
 32. D. S. Likhachëv, *Poëtika drevnerusskoï literatury* (Old Russian Literature Poetics) (Moscow, 1979), pp. 194, 196.
 33. *Dīwān*, No. 31.
 34. Lévi-Provançal, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
 35. *Dīwān*, No. 1, b. 7.
 36. *Ibid.*, No. 1.
 37. *Ibid.*, No. 107, b. 10—1.
 38. Lévi-Provançal, *op. cit.*, pp. 242—3, etc.
 39. *Dīwān*, No. 118, b. 16—7.
 40. *Ibid.*, No. 118, b. 26—7.
 41. For more details see: A. B. Kudelin, *Srednevekovaia arabskaia poëtika (vtoraia polovina VIII—XI vek)* (Medieval Arabic Poetics (Second Half of 8th—11th c.)) (Moscow, 1983), p. 73 and dict.
 42. *Dīwān*, Nos. 100, 120.
 43. Lévi-Provançal, *op. cit.*, pp. 249—50.
 44. V. N. Lazarev, "Novyi pamiatnik stankovoï zhivopisi XII veka i obraz Georgiia-voina v vizantiiskom i drevnerusskom iskusstve ("New monument of the 12th c. easel painting and the image of George the Warrior in Byzantine and Old Russian art"), *Russkaia srednevekovaia zhivopis'* (Moscow, 1970), p. 100.

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THE LIFE OF THE TEXT AND THE FATE OF TRADITION. V:
 METHOD OF ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'ĀN
 (TA'WĪL) AND THE SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE OF PERSIAN POETRY
 OF THE 11TH—12TH CENTURIES

The use of the symbolic-allegorical method of the Qur'ān interpreting called *ta'wīl* [1] as the basis for formation of the norms of esoteric expression in the sphere of mystical practice of Islam is well-known. However, the stages of formation of this specific language and its fixation in the canon of classical Persian poetry, as well as the real contribution of certain authors into this process, which began in the 11th c., has not been studied enough, if we mean the literary, or, to put it more precisely, the poetological aspect of the matter rather than the ideological-religious or predicant aspect.

The opposition of the allegorical comments on the Qur'ān and the *sunna* suggested by the Bāṭinites (*ahl al-bāṭin*, *al-bāṭiniyya*) [2] and the literal, historical-philological and jurisprudential interpretation called *tafsīr* ("comment", "interpretation") based on the tradition, did not appear suddenly and was not absolute. The method of allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān arose in the 8th c. in the circle of the extreme Shī'ites in Iraq, and was later developed by the followers of Ismā'ilism of all trends, who were the first to be referred to as the Bāṭinites. As a result of the dispute between the supporters of the literal interpretation of the Holy Book, the Zāhirites (*al-zāhiriyya*, *ahl al-zāhir*) and those who strived to comprehend its "hidden" meaning, the Muslim community split up. With time the medieval Muslim theologians began to rank among the Bāṭinites, along with the followers of Ismā'ilism, the supporters of Šūfism, as well as the Mu'tazilites [3] and other adherents of rationalistic ideas in Islam. The Mu'tazilites, following other commentators of the Qur'ān, divided *āyāt* into the "clear" (*muḥkamāt*) and "vague" (*mutashābihāt*) ones. The latter, which, according to them, disagreed with common sense, had to be viewed as circumlocutions (*majāz*).

It was the Ismā'īli and Šūfī preachers who introduced the corresponding principles of words' treatment into the literature in the Persian language, including the poetry. Especially intensively Persian poetry developed in the 11th c. in the direction of formation of the "innermost" language. If we speak about the explicitly expressed justifications of the "bāṭinist" principle of words' treatment, the most valuable material is contained in the *qaṣīdas* by a zealous preacher of Ismā'ilism and didactic poet Nāṣir-i Khusraw (1004—1088). He was a figure typical of the early stage in the de-

velopment of the mystical-allegorical trend in the Persian poetry: being at the same time a religious philosopher and poet, he acted not only as an outstanding reformer of the Persian *qaṣīda*, but also as a theorist of poetry, eagerly talking about its nature and purpose in his works themselves.

In Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *qaṣīdas* we can find quite a few statements about the religious aspects of the notion of *ta'wīl*, which in this or that way are projected on the sphere of poetic constructions:

The body of faith — is the outer [knowledge], while its soul — *ta'wīl* [is inner knowledge — M. R.], // can a body live without a soul in this world?

If you are alive, why have you died for faith, // unless you heart has been caught in the snare of passions! [4].

In another text the author talks about the nature of faith even more directly, associating its body with the word of the Prophet (i. e. the Qur'ān), and its soul — with the word of his only rightful, according to the Shī'ites and the Ismā'ilites, successor, the fourth pious caliph 'Alī:

The faith is a palace (*sarā*) erected by the Prophet, // so that each mortal enters it calmly...

'Alī and his family are gates to that [palace], // blessed are those who enter this house [5].

Apart from the Prophet Muḥammad (*al-nāṭiq*, lit. "the speaking") [6] and his successor (*al-asās*, *al-waṣī*) [7] caliph 'Alī, other prophets worshiped by the Ismā'ilites are also united into such constant pairs. Shīṣ (Sif), Sām, Ismā'il, Hārūn, Šam'ūn (Simon — obviously, Simon Peter, one of the apostles) were considered the successors of the prophets Ādam, Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and 'Īsā correspondingly. Characterizing *ta'wīl* as the innermost knowledge (*'ilm*), Nāṣir-i Khusraw mentions the successors, who perform the same function of the "gates of faith" as 'Alī in the pair with the Prophet Muḥammad:

Search for [science] of *ta'wīl*, as for the Jews // it is the word of instruction of Yūshā' ben Nūn [8].

Ta'wīl in the dark night is for Christians // the candle and icon-lamp of 'Īsā and Šam'ūn [9].

In the same passage there is also the motive of faith as an erected building (palace, fortress), which we are already familiar with. Along with it we can distinguish a group of motives connected with the idea about the finding of the true knowledge: ablution with knowledge, Qur'an — sea, and *ta'wil* — a river flowing into it. The poet claims that without the innermost knowledge, the Qur'an will turn into sea water unsuitable for drinking, and that only by using the allegorical method of interpretation ("dip your face into the waters of Jayhūn!") one can come closer to the understanding of its meaning. There are poems in which the author says directly that only going the way of "spiritual successors" (*awṣiyā*) leads to finding the knowledge:

Undoubtedly will find its share of knowledge // each who goes the way of spiritual successors (*awṣiyā*) to the prophets [10].

Nāṣir-i Khusraw erects the building of his poetry on the basis analogous to the allegorical interpretation of the Qur'an accepted among the Ismā'īlīs, and uses Qur'anic images to justify his concept of creation, as well as materials of the *aḥādīth* and the holy Muslim history. Having become deeply disappointed in the contemporary secular poetry, its purposes and themes, Nāṣir criticizes harshly hired professionals who write poetry for gain. His criticism of the craft of a court panegyrist is based according to the scheme which represents a concealed resemblance of the argumentation of the Prophet Muḥammad in his dispute with tribal poets, among whom he was ranked by his opponents. Like the Prophet, Nāṣir-i Khusraw blames his opponents for their mendacious words. The Qur'an says:

Shall I tell you on whom the Satans come down? They come down on every guilty impostor. They give ear, but most of them are liars. And the poets — the perverse follow them; hast thou not seen how they wander in every valley and how they say that which they do not? Save those that believe, and do righteous deeds, and remember God oft, and help themselves after being wronged; and those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned [11].

Considering court poets the destroyers of the true nature of the word, Nāṣir-i Khusraw says in one of his *qaṣīdas*:

If you obtained the profession of a poet // and somebody became singer at that time.

Stay where the singer sits, // you should hold your daring tongue.

How much longer can you describe box-tree and tulip, // the face like the moon and the amber locks.

You praise knowledge and the perfection of the nature of the one // who represents the foundation of ignorance and ill-nature.

You introduce lies and greed into your poems, // lies is the source of unbelief [12].

Nāṣir-i Khusraw opposes to the mendacious and mercenary court poetry, which contains praises of the unworthy, his own poetic speech, which is true and carries the innermost knowledge, "bright with different colours of meanings and full of advice". In his *qaṣīdas* the conceptual role is played by his discussions about the origin and nature of the

"Good Word" (*sukhan-i nīk*) which the poet traces to the Divine source. According to him the pronounced word, including a poet's word, must point to the hidden essence of things, which must be comprehended by a truly wise one. One of the poet's *qaṣīdas* begins with the following words:

With your inner sight look at the world mysteries, // as the superficial glance does not catch the hidden.

What is concealed in the world, oh, the noble ones? // If you don't see the innermost, you will only see the external [13].

To comprehend the secrets of the universe and deliver them to the listener, leading him the way of salvation of soul, the poet must have a special talent, which Nāṣir-i Khusraw describes as one relative to the prophetic one:

Refresh the poems the meanings of which have worn out, // as a spring cloud spilling pearls [refreshes] the old land.

A plain note-book became beautiful due to your Good Word (*sukhan-i nīk*), // the note-book due to the good word, and clothes — due to starch.

The mind filled with knowledge does not give rise to any word expect the beautiful one, // only pure water flows from a clean jug.

What is the syrup [14] of speech? — The meaning (*ma'nā*) and the verbal expression (*lafz*). // Refresh your speech, as the syrup flows to you from above.

In your poems do not be afraid to repeat a word, // as it is no sin to repeat a pleasant word.

God's syrup is delicious and fragrant, and its colour // was born together with the apple and wild orange, the nutmeg, quince and pomegranate.

Good for you is the new harvest from vine, // though last year and before that it also yielded fruit.

For men of reason the seeds of the Word are wisdom and knowledge, // into the soil of your heart plant, oh, the wise one, the seeds of the Word.

You'll become the Chosen one if the Good Word is left after you, // as this is what the Chosen Prophet [i. e. Muḥammad] left you.

Due to the Word his faith spread in the world, // due to the Word the coelosphere started its movement [15].

The sending down of the poetic talent described by Nāṣir is closely connected to the idea of prophecy as the mission of communicating the Divine will. In the author's interpretation his talent to refresh obsolete words received by him from above is associated with certain gustatory senses [16]. This idea of perfect poetry as "sweet", typical of the literary epoch of the 10th—15th c., thus receives specific author's development.

Later the description of poetic inspiration in the terms of prophecy finds its continuation in the works of Ṣūfī poets. The picture of the sending down the gift is tinged with the colours of mystical irradiation, however the "gustatory" associations remain stable. Thus, for example, in the *ghazals* by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Mawlawī) the taste of poetic inspiration and mystical irradiation is embodied in the image of *ḥalwā*. In the end of one of his *ghazals*, which contains a metaphorical description of the perfect poetic speech sent down from the above, Mawlawī says:

Be silent, as tonight the *shāh* according to the beauty of his face, // this rare substance cooks for us — *ḥalwā*, for us *ḥalwā* [17].

If we proceed from other contexts in which the word *ḥalwā* is mentioned in Mawlawī's poems, it becomes clear that he speaks about the aim of the mystical way — the comprehension of the Truth, as in *maṭla'* (the opening *bayt*) of the *ghazal* with the *radīf* "*ḥalwā*" he says:

God prepared *ḥalwā* for the Ṣūfī, // so they sat in a circle, and in the middle there was *ḥalwā* [18].

In the same *ghazal* there is another *bayt* which clarifies the mystical meaning of the image:

Step by step the Prophet comes down from the kitchen, in which the angels in heaven prepared *ḥalwā*.

Thus, the "divine *ḥalwā*", like the "divine syrup" in the poems by Nāṣir-i Khusraw leads to comprehension of the Truth and creation of true poetry, in which Mawlawī says in the last verse of his other *ghazal*:

Do not turn to slyness when you find that *ḥalwā* in your mouth, — // boil, like that pan on fire in which *ḥalwā* [is boiled] [19].

According to Nāṣir-i Khusraw, the creative activity of a prophet poet is directly associated with its divine prototype, the creative activity of God in the moment of the creation of the world ("due to the Word the coelosphere started its movement"). Like the phenomenal world is presented as a metaphor and reflection of the world of divine essences, the creative act of a medieval artist is a metaphor of the creation of the world, and constantly tends to its prototype, and, despite the paleness of likeness is raised to it. For the sake of being fair we must say that the work of a poet-master, equated with any other craft, was, in the end, also interpreted as the aspiration for the comprehension of the "eternal ideal" [20].

Transferring his poetry from the sphere of skill into the sphere of prophecy and divine inspiration, Nāṣir-i Khusraw not only aspires to the "improvement" of tradition" (A. Kudelin) [21] in his dispute with his predecessors, but also tries, by distinguishing false poetry from true poetry, to raise the status of the latter in the hierarchy of approaching the divine world. The fact that Nāṣir includes spring seasonal figurativeness in his description of an ideal's poets work, also serves as evidence to this. It is known that in the traditional Persian literature spring renovation of nature is a stable metaphor of the creation of the world, which is rooted in the system of concepts of the epoch of the predominance of Zoroaster beliefs. What concerns the autumn seasonal figurativeness, which is also present in the analyzed quotation, being united with the spring one, it, obviously, represents the metaphor of the paradisiacal garden, where, despite the season everything blossoms and gives fruit at the same time. The rudiments of these early beliefs are found in classical poetry of all genres and forms [22], and Nāṣir-i Khusraw's *qaṣīdas* are no exception. In them the corresponding motives are repeated in a number of contexts connected with the characteristic of poetic work. In the most complete way these motives are represented in

the poem describing an ideal *qaṣīda*. It begins with the description of *dīwān* as a blossoming garden:

May be I will manage to change my life // and make all the best its purpose.

The world blossoms in the month of *nīsān*, // and I will turn my mind into *nīsān* through reflection.

In the gardens and meadows of my note-book (*daftar*) and my *dīwān* // I will grow hyacinth and basil from poems and prose.

Into fruits and flowers I will turn all [poetic] meanings (*ma'nī*), // and from beautiful verbal robes (*lafzihā*) I will grow trees.

Like a cloud turns steppes into gardens, // I will also turn my note-book into a garden [23].

The description of writing poems in the terms of spring blossoming has also been found in the *qaṣīdas* by Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān (1046—1121). Here is a characteristic example:

My art has blossomed, and before it was in decay, // in the garden of praise in your honour I constantly sing songs.

Each my melody is such, that this arcuated vault // equates day and night for the sake of [spring] equinox.

In the gardens of poetry the necklaces of rose bushes // have become suitable for patterns on the garbs of *nīsān* [24].

Let us, however, look back at the text of Nāṣir-i Khusraw. Further, in the same poem, the author talks about *qaṣīda* as an architectural structure:

I will make my *qaṣīda* a palace and in it // from *bayts* I will make flower-beds and *aywāms* [covered galleries].

In some [halls] I will place majestic panoramas, // and make the other spacious and wide as stadiums (*maydān*).

And at its doors made of '*arūḍ*' of the rarest size // I will put a porter, faithful and smart.

Maf'ūlun fā'ilātu ma'faihu fa [25] // I will put at the foundation of this building.

And then I will invite to my palace // wise men from around the world,

So that ignorant ones do not get inside, // as I did not build it for the ignorant.

I will hold such a feast that a sensible man // having tried the food will be puzzled and astounded.

In the body of speech at the example of sense // from beautiful and rare meanings I will make soul.

If you have not seen in words [the feature] of humanness, // I will display to you in speech the human face.

From beautiful descriptions and well [constructed] narratives // I will make her wavy locks and laughing lips.

I will make meaning her beautiful face and then // I will hide her under the cover of words [26].

The quoted fragment contains a number of motives which are also found in the purely religious discussions of Nāṣir-i Khusraw about the essence of belief. Despite the fact that on the whole the author follows the terminology and the concepts fixed in theoretical poetics [27], in his discussions we can trace the poets' aspiration to liken his work to the work of the Prophet who erects the "palace of faith" — "I will make my *qaṣīda* a palace". What is placed inside the *qaṣīda* — poetic meanings (*ma'nī*) — is food

meant for wise men, who possess true knowledge, as the entrance to the palace is closed for the ignorant. Speech is body, in which its sense is placed like soul (compare belief — body, *ta'wīl* — soul). Besides, unlike the theoretical poetics, in which the concept of the necessity of the fullest possible conformity of meaning and its verbal expression was predominant, Nāṣir-i Khusraw insists on the idea that verbal robes (*lafz*) of poetic meanings are veils hiding them, and the comprehension of meaning is replacing the veils. The end of another *qaṣīda* by Nāṣir serves as evidence to it:

On this way [i. e. the way of true faith] search for *Hujjat's* [28] poems, // if you crave for sherbet and rose water.

They are the young bride from whose face // his thought took off the veil [29].

Nāṣir-i Khusraw gives quite a close, from the point of view of the set of motives, correspondence to the description of the “ideal *qaṣīda*” when talking about the caliph ‘Alī as the bearer of *ta'wīl*:

The Qur'ān has a keeper who was entrusted by God // with responsibilities for love and soul.

The Prophet made him shepherd for his associates, // at His order he pastures this boundless herd.

And you have preferred the chosen one by the God and the Prophet // to some other one.

The meaning of the Qur'ān is obscure to you // because you have no obedience to the shepherd.

The Qur'ān is the food from the table of spirituality. Oh, the reader of the Qur'ān, // look, who is the host at this honourable table!

From this table those shall eat bread and other food, // who will make acquaintance with the welcoming host.

Due to people become your bread and water people's [food], // can't you see that a dog turns bread and water into dog's [food].

That is why the patriarch [of the Prophet's] house // has made food from this table inaccessible for the enemy of his House [30].

If we compare the discussion about the comprehension of the meaning of the Qur'ān contained in the quoted fragment with the description of the “ideal *qaṣīda*”, we will notice their obvious similarity when it comes to the interpretation of the properties of the true word, no matter if it comes from the Prophet (as well as his spiritual successor) or from the poet. This word, undoubtedly, belongs to the category of the “Good Word” and bears the utmost truth, the light of the divine truth. An uninitiated or ignorant person or an enemy of faith and the Prophet's House can not be allowed to the comprehension of the “Good Word” described as tasting the food at a feast or the “honourable table”. Understanding of the Prophets words, as well as those of the poet, is only possible through using the *ta'wīl* method.

Nāṣir-i Khusraw's undertakings in the sphere of reforming of the poetic language were continued by the others oriented at the Šūfī doctrine and religious practice. Their perception of the word, including the poetic word, despite all possible differences from that of the perception of the Ismā'īlī poet Nāṣir-i Khusraw, however reveals a number of convergences. This, first of all, concerns the view of the correspondence of the meaning and its verbal expression. In

the poetic canon the attitude towards the word as a sign which not only possesses its immediate lexical meaning, which points at a concrete material object or phenomenon, but also refers to the higher reality, which it can only reflect partly, was gradually established. In this respect the concept of the pronounced word fully corresponds to the concept of the phenomenal world as a shadow or reflection of the world of divine essences, which is primary to the material one.

From the point of view of the literary tradition succession, the outstanding poet-mystic Sanā'ī (ca. 1048—after 1126) is the closest to Nāṣir-i Khusraw. The character of treatment with the traditional poetic vocabulary in his *qaṣīdas* suggests the idea that the author was well familiar with the experiences of his Ismā'īlī predecessor [31]. For the sake of being fair we must say that Sanā'ī's belonging to any Šūfī brotherhood raises doubts among many researchers of his works, however, the fact that the Šūfī interpreted his works as part of their own tradition, is doubtless. In one Sanā'ī's *qaṣīdas* which begins with the description of a personality dissolved in the divine substance (“If there can be a person whose strength comes from existence, then I am the one whose personality takes life and soul from non-existence”) contains quite a characteristic description of the properties of the poetic word:

He [God — *M. R.*] creates mind, so how can He find room in mind, // fingers do not find room in letters, although letters are traces left by fingers.

No matter how long mind seeks Him, it fell into desperation. // What objects finds room in these hearts, if He throws hearts into shiver...

From holy seas has the [rain] cloud came down on the hearts, // He rejoices all wishful hearts...

Meanings and words never get mixed up // like water and butter are different in their weight.

There are no meanings in names, and no names in meanings, // and if so, you have said what is covered by a veil.

My pain is caused by the fact that I can not tell about what is happening to me, // the penury of speech makes me weak and powerless in words.

I have lots of intentions in my heart, and still // as the word does not find room in the heart, it has a tongue as an interpreter.

However, when I think, everything becomes good // because the one, who knows this meaning finds soul in mediators.

I have made my name divine, and I will connect myself with Him, // while each poet connects himself with this or that person.

Among us one goes the right way, and another has lost his way, and among birds // one eats sugar, and another eats bones.

My glorification can not stand anyone from those praised in the world, // and [the fact that] if somebody's steed is his kennel keeper, [we must say] that it is shod with the full moon.

[And the fact that] if all existing material and spiritual // he will give for one such *bayt*, indeed he possesses it all gratuitously.

Such world can [only] create Common Mind, and if He wishes, // He says something like He is engaged in eternal work.

I have said thousands of times, that I will reveal my secret, // but human weakness keeps me silent.

Each time I write poems, they turn out to be elevated, // but my mind becomes my guard, as it sees defects in words.

Alas, I can not write the poems I know, // and if I do what will worldly people get from them?

Even now you can see how for that man, petty and mean, // the bearer of these meanings has pledged [to serve].

I am never afraid that I have honey on my table, // when somebody has honey on his table, flies go around it...

From the ocean of mind along the Jayhūn of meanings // my tongue flies in the direction of the spiritual ark.

Not everyone who has ears will hear these poems, // and not everyone who has tongue will write [such] [32].

We have allowed ourselves such a long quotation as in the quoted fragment Sanā'ī's view on the properties of poetry is expressed explicitly: the poet is the spokesman of the divine will, who constantly aspires to express in his words the true meaning, but who inevitably fails to approach the Absolute; the poet's words are dictated by his love for God, and this fills him with joy, however, due to its earthly, material nature (“human weakness”) the pronounced word can not express the secret hidden in it and sent down to the poet as rain from the “cloud of light”, but his poems always point to the divine source of the Word, so they turn out to be “elevated” (*alī*); the word pronounced by a true poet is “honey on the table”, which many strive after, including the unworthy (“flies”), however only those who were initiated in the knowledge of the secret can comprehend it; a concrete earthly man, even of high status and rank, can not be the addressee of the true poetry which aspires after the “spiritual ark”. Sanā'ī's discussion about the essence of poetry is similar to the abovementioned statements of Nāṣir-i Khusraw on the analogous theme in their positive (sending down the poetic talent from above, a special mission of the poet, the secret meaning of the true word, etc.) as well as in the negative (disapproval of a poet's—panegyrist's service at the ruler's court) aspects. Later the poets' views on the nature and purpose of the word are summed up and fixed in the tradition in the form of theoretical works. As the experience of mystical poets was faintly reflected in the secular poetic tradition, inside Šūfī literature works appeared which filled this gap and touched upon the questions of the words' treatment. In the poetry in the Persian language the work by *shaykh* Maḥmūd Shabistārī (1309—1362), a small poem called “Garden of Secrets” (*Gulshan-i rāz*), dedicated to the main doctrinal questions of Šūfism and written in the form of novices' questions and mentor's answers, can be consid-

Let us make some conclusions:

(i) in the basis of formation of the symbolical-allegorical language in the Persian poetry of the 11th—12th c. lies the *ta'wīl* method, which is transferred from the Qur'ānic text on the text in general, including a poetic text (as it could be transferred on any other appearance of the phenomenal world);

(ii) poetic talent is the first creators of this language as a resemblance of the prophetic talent, which comes down into the phenomenal world from the Divine sphere, and its fruits have the same source as the speeches of the Prophet:

ered one of the kind. Forestalling the section about the symbolic understanding of a number of poetic terms (eyes and lips, a lock, face and birthmark, *kharābāt* [33], *zunnār* [34], Christianity, idol), the author gives an account of the principles, according to which he interprets them:

Each thing which can be seen in the world // is similar to the reflection of another world's sun.

The world is like a lock and the bloom [on cheeks], and the birthmark, and eyebrows [on face], // where they all are beautiful in their place.

Theophany [turns] now merciful beauty, now retributive beauty, // the face and the lock resemble it.

The attributes of God the Most High are mercy and punishment, // the faces and the locks of the idols have received their share from them.

As these words (*alfāz*) became accessible for ear, // the first is the subject for the sake of the perceived.

The world of meanings (*ma'nī*) is boundless, // can the word (*lafz*) see its limits?!

Can each meaning revealed by the feeling of beauty // find verbal interpretation?

When mystics (*ahl-i dil*) interpret (*tafsīr*) the meaning, // they use assimilation (*mānandī*) for interpretation of meaning.

As the sensual is like a shadow of another world, // it is like a child, and that [world] is like a wet-nurse.

For me the words are the retelling // of the meaning which came down from the original ascertainment...

When a glance was cast [on earth] from the world of Reason, // the words were transferred from there.

The Wisest anticipated the correspondence // when He condescended to the word and the meaning.

However, complete resemblance is impossible, // so refrain from the search of it [35].

In the poem by Maḥmūd Shabistārī we can distinguish the same methodological instructions about the treatment of the word as had been formulated in the preceding mystical poetry, as in the basis of these instructions lies the general concept of universal order and the unified system of ideas about the place of the word in this picture of the world. It is characteristic that the questions that Nāṣir-i Khusraw's interprets directly (divine inspiration of a poet, his mission as the bearer of the utmost Truth, resemblance of his mission of the Prophet's mission, etc.) are stated by his followers in a less direct way, which is evidence of the fact that these ideas were rooted in the poetic canon and his method of interpretation of the traditional poetic figurativeness was commonly acknowledged.

the Prophet, as well as the poet is inspired by the God's messenger Jabrā'īl (“Holy Spirit” — *rūḥ al-quds*, or “Faithful Spirit” — *rūḥ al-amīn*). Nāṣir-i Khusraw, when praising Rūdākī as an ideal poet wrote:

Many poems about the renunciation of the world and as admonition wrote // that poet, who was blind but clairvoyant [i. e. Rūdākī].

You have read them, so read *Hujjat's* words // bright with colourful meanings and full of advice.

If in prayer you read his poems, // the Faithful Spirit (*rūḥ al-amīn*) will send you “Amen!” [36].

(iii) one of the first poets who introduced the *ta'wīl* principles into the poetic canon of the traditional Persian poetry was Ismā'īlī Nāṣir-i Khusraw whose experience was later used by the Ṣūfī poets, first of all his direct successors in the genre of the didactic-philosophical and mystical-allegorical *qaṣīda* in the 12th c. — Sanā'ī and Khāqānī;

(iv) originally all religious-mystical connotations of the traditional poetic topics appeared on the level of individual author's initiative. These meanings were reached through interpretation of the traditional images and whole themes immediately in the text of a poetic work with attraction of motives transferred from non-poetic contexts (the Qur'ān, *aḥādīth*, commentators' tradition, tractates and messages, etc.). Partly these connotations were selected by the tradition and were fixed in the semantics of the images and served as a source for further author's transformations as commonly acknowledged ones;

(v) a special, "innermost" language of poetry on the early stage of its formation in the Persian literature was created simultaneously by poets representing different esoteric trends. The Ṣūfī and Ismā'īlīs, who dealt with different literary genres — *qaṣīda* was originally developed by

the Ismā'īlīs, while *ghazal* — by the Ṣūfī, participated in this process as equals. According to H. Corbin, the period which followed the epoch of Nāṣir-i Khusraw in Persian literature was the time of "accretion of Ismā'īlī ideas with Ṣūfism". Then the researcher wrote:

"And this true unit is proved, for example, by the fact that the Ismā'īlī *ta'wīl* can be found in the famous mystical poem *Gulshan-i raz* ('Garden of Secrets') of Maḥmūd Ṣhabistārī, and the acceptance of the great Ṣūfī tractate by 'Azīz Nasafī *Zubdat* [37] *al-ḥaqā'iq* ('Distillation of the Truths') as one of their books, as well as by the fact that the Ismā'īlīs consider the outstanding Ṣūfī poet Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār their coreligionist" [38];

(vi) apart from theoretical tractates on Muslim esotericism and Ṣūfī explanatory dictionaries, the works containing the motives of the author's self-consciousness can serve as a source for our ideas about the character of formation of the language of the Persian mystical poetry in the 11th—12th c.

Notes

1. *Ta'wīl* (lit. "return to the source, beginning") — is a method of rationalistic or symbolic-allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān. The term itself is taken from the Qur'ān, where in eight cases it, according to commentators, means "interpretation of dream", and in the remaining nine — "outcome", "consequence". For more detail see: A. D. Knysh, "Ta'wīl", *Islam. Èntsiklopedicheskiĭ slovar'* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 218—9.

2. The Bāṭinīs (*ahl al-bāṭin*, *al-bāṭiniyya* from *bāṭin* — "inner", "hidden") is the common name of the followers of free, allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ān and the *sunna*, who were looking for the "hidden", esoteric meaning in them. See: S. M. Prozorov, "Al-bāṭiniyya", *Islam*, pp. 38—9.

3. The Mu'tazilīs, (*al-mu'tazila* — "standing apart, separated") — representatives of the first large trend in the Muslim religious-philosophical concept, *kalām*. They supported the postulates of the divine "fairness" which implied the freedom of human will, and strict monotheism, which not only rejected polytheism and anthropomorphism, but also the reality and the old age of the divine attributes (including speech, which is the source of their idea about the "creation" of the Qur'ān). See: Taufik Kemal' Ibragim, A. V. Sagadeev, "Al-mu'tazila", *Islam*, pp. 175—6.

4. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Dīwān*, ed. by M. Darwīsh (Tehrān, 1339/1960), p. 53.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 110.

6. The teaching about the "speaking" (*nāṭiq*) and the "speechless" (*ṣāmī*) *imāms* of each epoch was introduced by the "extreme" Ṣhī'ites Khaṭṭābīs (about them see: Prozorov, "Al-khaṭṭābiyya", *Islam*, p. 277). In accordance with this teaching, in the epoch of Muḥammad the "speaking", 'Alī was the "speechless" *imām*, who, in his turn, became the "speaking" one after Muḥammad's death. The Ismā'īlīs, who adopted their terminology, became the ideological followers of the Khaṭṭābīs.

7. *Waṣī* — the executive of the spiritual will. According to the Muslim tradition, 'Abd Allāh b. Saba', 'Alī's consistent supporter, was the first to state that each prophet had his own *waṣī*: Mūsā — Hārūn, 'Īsā — Sham'ūn, etc. In the Ṣhī'ites' doctrine all prophets from Ādam to Muḥammad have respective pairs. See: Prozorov, "Wasi", *Islam*, p. 47.

8. It is considered that Yūsha' ben Nūn in the Muslim tradition corresponds to Joshua Navin, he is believed to be one of Mūsā's associates.

9. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, p. 65—6.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

11. Qur'ān 26: 221—8. Translation by A. J. Arberry.

12. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

14. In the original the author uses the word *āchār*, which is literally translated as "marinade", "pickles".

15. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

16. It seems that here we deal with the rudiments of the early concept of the poetic talent as a certain material substance — food or drink. In the Rigveda "cow's milk" is the synonym of sacral speech (see: N. P. Grintser, P. A. Grintser, *Stanovlenie literaturnoi teorii v Drevnei Gretsii i Indii* (Formation of the Literary Theory in Ancient Greece and India) (Moscow, 2000), pp. 164—7), in the early Iceland mythology the poetic talent is associated with the "honey of poetry", received by Odin (see: M. I. Steblin-Kamenskii, "Kul'tura Islandii" ("Culture of Iceland"), *Trudy po filologii* (St. Petersburg, 2003), pp. 48—9).

17. Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Balkhī, *Kullīyyāt dīwān-i Shams Tabrīzī*, ed. by A. Kaseb (Tehrān, 1374/1996), i, p. 16.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

19. *Ibid.*, ii, p. 1012.

20. About the perception of creative process and the author's singularity in Arabic-Muslim culture, see: A. B. Kudelin, "Avtor i traditsionalistskiĭ kanon" ("The Author and the Traditionalistic Canon"), *Istoricheskaia poëtika. Literaturnye èpokhi i tipy khudozhestvennogo soznaniia* (Moscow, 1996), pp. 245—8.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 248—9.

22. About the meaning of this motive in Persian literature see: M. L. Reisner, N. Iu. Chalisova, "Persidskaia klassicheskaia lirika: k probleme genezisa" ("Classical Persian Poetry: to the Problem of Genesis"), *Trudy po kul'turnoi antropologii. Pamiatī G. A. Tkachenko* (Moscow, 2002), pp. 294—5.

23. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

24. Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān, *Dīwān*, ed. by R. Yāsemī (Tehrān, 1374/1996), p. 331.

25. In this hemistich the author uses the scheme of *muḍāri'* meter.

26. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, pp. 303—4.

27. In the medieval Arabic and Persian poetics there is a fixed concept of *ma'nā* (meaning) and *lafz* (verbal expression) as of body and soul or beauties and their attires, For example, see: Kudelin, *Srednevekovaiia arabskaia poëtika (vtoraia polovina VIII—XI vek)* (Medieval Arabic Poetics (second half of the 8th—11th c.)) (Moscow, 1983), pp. 130—1, 139.

28. *Hujjat* (lit. evidence) is one of the highest titles in the Ismā'īlī religious hierarchy, which Nāṣir-i Khusraw could have had and which he used as a literary nickname — *takhalluṣ*.

29. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

31. About the interpretation of the traditional seasonal theme and figurativeness in Sanā'ī's works see: Reisner, "Ptitsy v mistiko-simvolicheskikh kasydakh Sana'i i Khakani (XII v.) (k probleme stanovleniia simvolicheskogo iazyka v klassicheskoi persidskoĭ kasyde)" ("Birds in the Mystical-Symbolic *Qasidas* of Sanā'ī and Khāqānī (12th c.) (to the Problem of Formation of the Symbolic Language in the Classical Persian *Qasida*")), *Issledovaniia po iranskoĭ filologii*, 1 (Moscow, 1997), pp. 124—32.

32. Sanā'ī Ghaznawī, *Dīwān*, ed. by M. Razawī (Tehrān, 1341/1963), pp. 114—6.

33. *Kharābāt* — lit. "ruins", "slums". In Ṣūfī *ghazal kharābāt* is the main place of the lyrical plot development. About this see, for example, Reisner, *Èvoliutsiia klassicheskoi gazeli na farsi (X—XIV veka)* (Evolution of the Classical Persian *Ghazal* (10th—14th c.)) (Moscow, 1989), p. 63, 120—2, 134, 145 and further.

34. *Zunnār* (from Greek *zonarion*) — type of belt which was originally considered an indispensable attribute of clothing of Christian monks, and then in the medieval Muslim states became a distinctive feature of non-Muslims. Not only the Christians, but also representatives of other confessions had to wear *zunnār*. In poetry it became the symbol of transformation on the way of comprehension of the Truth.

35. Maḥmūd Ṣhabistārī, *Gulshan-i raz* ("Garden of Secrets"), ed. and commented by A. Mojāhed and M. Keyānī (Tehrān, 1371/1993), pp. 75—6.

36. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

37. The word *zubdat* lit. means "cream".

38. H. Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw and Iranian Ismā'īlism", *The Cambridge History of Iran*, iv — *From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. R. N. Frye (Cambridge, 1975), p. 526.