

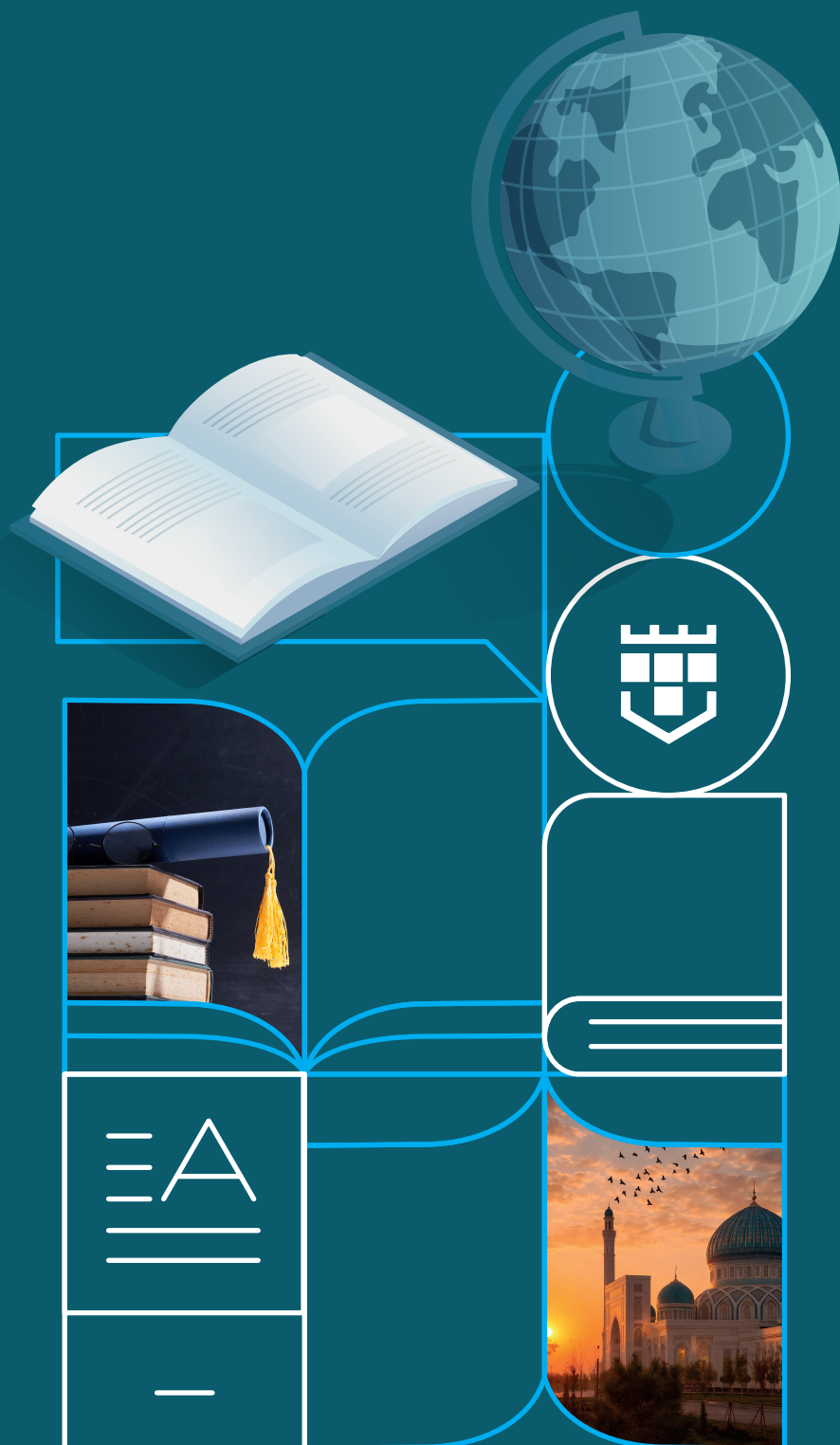


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ТРИБУНА ГЛАВНОГО РЕДАКТОРА

POETRY: THE SUSTENANCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

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Abstract. This article is devoted to an analysis of the works of Sirajiddin Rauf¹, a prominent representative of contemporary Uzbek poetry. It discusses the human being and the emotions inherent in him; civic duty; the image of the homeland in the poet's works and the feeling of love for it; and the distinctive features of his imagery. S. Rauf is a poet writing in every direction of poetry. Alongside poems in syllabic metre, he has achieved notable success as a writer who has tested himself in creating narrative poems, sonnets, rubaiyat, and tuyuks. What follows considers an artistic analysis of the poet's works and their effect upon the reader's spirit and the cultivation of spiritual health.

Keywords: the humble heart; Lawh ul-Mahfuz; samum; Salsabil; sonnet; syllabic metre; rubai; tuyuk; quatrain; abandoned; heart; spiritual health; spiritual wholeness; critic; literary scholar; scholarly-philological analysis.

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Annotatsiya. O'zbek zamonaviy she'riyatining taniqli vakili Sirojiddin Rauf² bitiklari tahliliga bag'ishlangan ushbu maqolada ijodkorning inson va unga xos bo'lgan tuyg'ular, fuqarolik burchi, asarlaridagi vatan timsoli hamda unga bo'lgan muhabbat hissi, tasvirdagi o'ziga xosliklar borasida so'z yuritiladi.

¹ Sirojiddin Rauf (Sirojiddin Raupov) was born in Qarshi on 26 June 1967. In 1992 he graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at the National University of Uzbekistan and in 2002 from the Tashkent State University of Law. In 2002 he was awarded the "Shuhrat" Medal. He is the editor-in-chief of the journals "Sharq yulduzi" and "Zvezda vostoka".

² Sirojiddin Rauf (Sirojiddin Raupov) 1967 yil 26 iyunda Qarshi shahrida tug'ilgan. 1992 yilda O'zMU jurnalistika fakultetini, 2002 yilda ToshDYUUni tamomlagan. Sirojiddin Rauf 2002 yilda "Shuhrat" medali bilan taqdirlangan. Shoir "Sharq yulduzi" va "Zvezda Vostoka" jurnallarining bosh muharriri.

S. Rauf she'riyatning barcha yo'nalishlarida qalam tebratayotgan shoir. U barmoq vaznida she'rlar bilan bir qatorda dostonlar, sonetlar, ruboiy va tuyuqlar yaratish misolida ham o'zini sinab ko'rgan ijodkor sifatida ma'lum muvaffaqiyatlarga erishgan. Quyida shoir asarlarining badiiy tahlili, ularning kitobxon ruhiyatiga, ma'naviyatining sog'lomlashuviga ko'rsatgan ta'siri borasida so'z yuritiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: miskin ko'ngil, Lavhul-mahfuz, samum, salsabil, sonet, barmoq vazni, ruboiy, tuyuq, to'rtlik, sabil, ko'ngil, sog'lom ma'naviyat, ruhiy to'kislik, tanqidchi, adabiyotshunos, ilmiy-filologik tahlil.

СТИХОТВОРЕНИЕ — ПИЩА ДЛЯ ДУШИ ЧЕЛОВЕКА

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Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена анализу творчества Сироджиддина Рауфа³, известного представителя современной узбекской поэзии. В ней рассматриваются чувства творца, его гражданский долг, образ родины в его произведениях и чувство любви к ней, а также особенности этого образа.

С. Рауф – поэт, работавший во всех областях поэзии. Он достиг определённых успехов как творческая личность, которая на собственном примере создавала эпосы, сонеты, рубаи и туюки. Ниже представлен художественный анализ произведений поэта, их влияние на душевное состояние поэта и восстановление его духовности.

Ключевые слова: бедное сердце, Лавхуль-махфуз, самум, сальсабиль, сонет, рубаи, туюк, четверостишие, сабиль, сердце, здоровая духовность, духовное самосовершенствование, критик, литературный критик, научно-филологический анализ.

Introduction. Over the last thirty to thirty-five years, literary criticism has said a great deal about the distinctive features of Uzbek literature of the independence period and about its study. Specialists have expressed their views, and the process continues. Every time and place has its own social requirements and way of life. These features are clearly manifested in the poetry of a given period. That is, every writer works with the pen within the conditions of the environment and age in which he or she lives. Literary scholar U. Hamdam characterizes the attempt, in the poetry of the independence period, to observe and portray the human psyche from diverse perspectives as follows: "Over the past ten to fifteen years, the poet has withdrawn his gaze from without – from the world-changing events occurring around him – and turned it toward his humble heart, setting about 'translating' it" [1].

³ Сиражиддин Рауф (Сиражиддин Раупов) родился 26 июня 1967 года в городе Карши. В 1992 году окончил факультет журналистики Национального университета Узбекистана, а в 2002 году – Ташкентский государственный университет журналистики. В 2002 году Сироджиддин Рауф был награжден медалью "Шухрат". Поэт является главным редактором журналов "Шарк юлдузи" и "Звезда Востока".

Poets of the independence years differ from writers of other times through the distinctiveness of their portrayal of feeling. The work of Sirajiddin Rauf, a renowned poet and representative of this period's literature, is likewise poetry that calls for a distinctive kind of inquiry, analysis, and response. As the reader enters the substance of poems included in such collections as "The Weeping Moon", "The blue dom", "You are needed by me", "Suspended infinity", and "I am a citizen", he or she sees, beneath the works, an individual personality characteristic of their author, as well as scenes bound up with the depiction of inner life.

Analysis. Professor Q. Yuldoshev writes: "*To know a person, to discern the experiences of the heart, to comprehend the disturbances occurring in the psyche is an exceedingly difficult process. A genuine artist assumes the responsibility of drawing scenes of such extremely intricate and incomprehensible inner states in a manner capable of affecting the feelings of another person as well*" [Yuldoshev, 2024, p. 29]. Sirajiddin Rauf's poetry is precisely such a phenomenon: it can lead the reader after it, affect the reader's feelings and worldview, make every reader more alert, and serve the health of the spirit. To substantiate this idea, to discern the poet's inner experiences, and to understand the qualities characteristic of his personality, it is appropriate to analyze his poem "*Autobiography*" [S. Rauf, 2017, pp. 104–105]. This approach is a key to discovering the artist as a person and entering the essence of his poetry. At the same time, it encourages the reader to look at his or her own personality from outside, compare the self with the poem's protagonist, and nurture his or her own inner life.

The more fully and deeply a reader knows the poet as an individual, the better the reader begins to understand the poet's works. The reader feels his experiences, grasps his "I," and makes discoveries accordingly. Sometimes a poem is simply read through; often, reading brings a person a certain pleasure. Yet when the poem, its lines, and its words are subjected to analysis and their essence is entered, the pleasure to be felt increases twofold. From this analysis and these discoveries, a sense of wonder rises in the spirit. The pleasure and wonder thus felt have a positive effect on the reader's spiritual maturation. Indeed, perhaps one reads poetry precisely in pursuit of this pleasure. The comparatively long "Autobiography", with its portrayal of inward feelings, thoughts, and anguish; its expression of philosophical reflection; and its petitions to the Creator, is a distinctive writing that reveals the person who possesses it:

*In this abode, I too stand as a tree,
Where countless roads and footsteps intertwine.
Some bend my branches, smiling in delight,
While others hurry, palms brimmed full with water; toward mine!*

This poem, which begins with these lines, reflects the fact that human life consists of diverse passages and experiences. In likening himself to a tree, the protagonist sees, in the life of a tree amid nature, the course of a human life. Not only poets but all people differ from one another according to the sharpness of their gaze, the breadth and richness of their worldview, and the degree of health and purity of their spirituality. For this reason, every poet may see a single situation, event, or person from different perspectives and portray it differently; this is natural. It may be said that Sirajiddin's vision of human destiny in the symbol of a tree and his depiction of life by analogy with it are the product of the author's distinctive gaze. One of the poem's later stanzas reads:

*The tempests barred the breath of gentle breeze,
As season ceaseless hunted after season.
Within spring's warm embrace I grew with ease,
Yet winter's wrath kept breaking me, unceasing.*

These lines emphasize that the life of every person or creator always passes through struggles. Those who work with words, poets especially, possess exceptionally delicate and sensitive hearts. They place the feelings that pass through their hearts in the depths of their lines.

In this poem, as the poet reflects like any person who submits to destiny, he portrays a truth that a person of thought must acknowledge: "*The tempests barred the breath of gentle breeze*". In society as in nature, life always consists of struggle. From birth until death, a human being lives struggling with problems. Death alone can bring this struggle to its end. The state depicted in the example of a tree – the course of life – is a reflection of human destiny.

The breeze and the tempest in the first line are natural phenomena: one possesses delicacy, the other power, and both have been commanded to exist. They have been ordained to struggle with one another in their lives. In nature each has its place and task. So too do the seasons follow what has been ordained for them: they live in ceaseless pursuit of one another. The connection between these two lines is that, just as the succession of seasons in nature is true, so is the struggle of breeze and tempest. Each has its particular effect on the life of a tree. However strong one may be, it cannot destroy the other; nature contains no such command or law. At the same time, the tree may benefit from one and suffer from the other. Relations among people in society are similar to this to some degree.

The next two lines of the stanza are directly connected with human destiny – the fate of the poem's protagonist: "*As season ceaseless hunted after season. Within spring's warm embrace I grew with ease*". Human destiny, too, proceeds according to what has been written in one's fate. In human life there are things that must occur, things written in one's destiny. No one and nothing can alter them. This is an autobiography: a plain-language expression of a state and event, of human fate. The tree's growing slowly in the embrace of spring is related to human life in that among all created beings, the human child grows to maturity most slowly and is an extraordinarily delicate creature. The trials of life pursue it continually: someone rejoices in bending its branches; someone else hastens toward it with hands cupped with water. The human child, including the poem's protagonist, continually grows strong through the trials of life. This is at once a natural and a social condition. The next lines translating the inner state, the personal "I," are:

*No wonder if a puddle roars like a river,
If I turn pale in spring, yet bloom in autumn's glow.
Be it for good or ill – I must endure whatever
As written in al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz long ago⁴.*

That a puddle does not roar like a river, and that a tree does not yellow in spring, are golden rules of nature. Likewise, a tree cannot bloom in autumn. Yet the words spoken directly in the tree's voice – "If I yellow in spring and bloom in autumn" – give the stanza a special meaning as a sentence reflecting the personal "I". The difference between the destiny of a tree and that of a human being appears in this line. Contrary to the laws of nature, the beginning – the spring. – of a human life may be yellow, that is, marked by loss and hardship. In autumn – the second half of life – life may, however, grant that person joy, abundance, and prosperity. It is also a fact of life that a servant may be rewarded "in autumn" for the good deeds performed over a lifetime. There are a number of truths every person, poets included, must acknowledge: "...we must behold / Whatever is inscribed upon the Preserved Tablet." The contrasting truths in this stanza portray what the author has discovered and understood in his own life. Only people of sharp vision and independent thought reflect upon their lives, experiences, and the causes of outcomes. They weigh their views and conclusions. As the poet renders his own condition, he invites the reader, too, to think about the truths of life.

⁴ Lawḥ al-Mahfūz (the Preserved Tablet) is the safeguarded record in which God has written the destinies of the universe and His servants and all events that will take place. In religious sources, it is one of the fundamentals of belief concerning the unseen world.

⁵ Salsabil (Arabic: Salsabil) is a spring in Paradise mentioned in the Qur'an (76:18).

One of the poem's later quatrains reads: "The samums of envy blew with malice; / My flourishing buds were left abandoned. / No, I do not envy the waves of the river; / One sip of your water is enough for me, O Salsabil!" In these lines, when hardship befalls any grown man – when he yellows in spring, as such things often occur in the merciless world of life – and his "flourishing buds" are left forsaken, unattended, the poet reflects, through the image of a tree, how important the feeling called patience is to human life⁶.

For a tree, not envying "the waves of the river" in the third line of the stanza is an ordinary and natural condition. At first sight this may appear to be the admission of one who has fallen into spiritual despondency. In truth, the line carries submission. Not envying "the waves of the river" and not asking the Creator for them is also a sign of a human being's obedience to destiny: to force oneself beyond one's strength and capacity is not the conduct of a person who knows himself. The tree's endurance is a lesson for humankind. In the next line, "One sip of your water is enough for me, O Salsabil!", one can perceive both a great wish and an expression of submission and patience, as well as the form of reward. Patience and steadfastness are among the highest virtues God grants to His servants, and a reward has been ordained for them. The reward is in Paradise: in partaking of the waters of the river of Salsabil. These wishes of the poet as a Muslim are a symbol of his spiritual elevation. For a puddle that does not envy the river's waves, the water of Salsabil is not all that important. Yet for the protagonist likened to a tree, a drop of the river of Paradise – a mere handful of water giving strength to overcome life's hardships—means that Someone who hurries toward him with love, attention, and faithfulness is profoundly important.

The sense of confidence contained in the meaning of the final lines of "Autobiography" reveals a lofty virtue characteristic of the poet's person and nature:

*I have tasted the hardship of blessed tidings;
Praise be, tremor and quivering are within my being:
With my roots and leaves, unceasingly,
Rustling,
I utter
Tasbih
Every moment!*

It is evident that "Autobiography," from the pen of S. Rauf, is a writing in which a person of strong will has "translated" his own heart and personality for the admirer. Let us attend to the first line of the quatrain: "I have tasted the hardship of blessed tidings." Entering into the substance of the words, one finds the meaning of having endured the difficulty, the pain, of pleasant and happy news. What hardship or difficulty can good tidings contain? On reflection, one sees that in life, even some good deeds performed for nature or for a human being may be followed by a world of problems. Beneath this line and its statement are certain truths known only to the author himself. Were this not so, these lines would not have been placed in the author's heart and he would not have written them.

The distinctiveness of the poem's form also draws attention. In it, the four words set on separate lines – "Rustling / I utter / Tasbih / Every moment" – continue the line spoken in the tree's voice: "With my roots and leaves, unceasingly." They have their own wisdom. Their placement on separate lines shows the significance each has not only for the tree but also for the servant of God. Roots and leaves are, after all, evidence of any tree's life. For these two sacred aspects, the tree's offering of tasbih – praise and glorification – to God at every moment is the basis of its existence. If the tasbih is carried into human life and received in the voice of the protagonist symbolized by

⁶ Samum (Arabic: a hot wind) is a powerful, dry, sandstorm-bearing hot wind of the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa.

the tree, his intention becomes clear: to roam the gardens of Paradise and partake of the waters of the river of Salsabil. Living with such intentions is a truth that becomes the basis for enduring all the games of life. It is the portrayal of the essence and being of the poet's personality – the rendering of his inner state, a description of the qualities of his person.

In the work of S. Rauf, too, there are many poems reflecting the experiences of the heart, the greatness of the feeling called love that has taken up residence there, and the anguish of a lover's heart caught in the force of that feeling. D. Turaev and I. Ganiev advance the following view regarding Rauf's work: "Though the language, form, style, artistic-imagistic means, and expressive devices in his poems are complex, the harmony and philosophy of life in them are exceedingly deep, varied, and unique. They are easy to read, but only an intelligent reader can discern the essence in their layers of meaning. These poems demand from the reader extensive enlightenment and creative reflection" [6]. Every artist leads the reader upward to the artist's own level.

On reflection, one may understand that poets, with their refined sensibility and delicate hearts, are very close to lovers. Perhaps they themselves are lovers of God and all His creations. Thus they understand the condition of lovers from within and feel their emotions. Perhaps this is why writings connected with the figures of love, the lover, and the beloved, and with their emotions, are abundant in poetry. Perhaps they express their love in this way because they have been favored with God's special gaze... In any case, as in the poetry of all poets, this theme takes on particular significance in Sirajiddin's work. It draws every reader inclined toward the artistic word, for people always thirst for positive feeling and nourishment for the heart. The celebration of divine love and the expression of human feeling bring glad tidings to the mood, life, and activity of both poet and reader. In this ugly world, hearts thirsty for a flash of beauty and grace become helpers to one another: one writes, the other reads.

In this sense, it may be said that S. Rauf's poem beginning "*My heart, the jewel of my being, my heart*" has its own effect upon the reader's inner world [S. Rauf, 2024, p. 69]. Although the images of Heart and Spirit in the poem's first quatrain are synonymous as words, the poet assigns each a separate burden:

*My heart – the precious essence of my soul,
Were you there when I was shaped from clay?
Through you I came to know life's sacred whole;
Were you the song that drew my soul away?*

It is known that the human being consists of the unity of body, consciousness, and spirit (heart, soul). Body and consciousness are created; spirit is breathed into the person. Spirit – the heart – is God's breath within the human being. Therefore it is the jewel, the priceless possession, of the body. Even consciousness, the intellect, is obliged to reckon with it. When a person's clay was kneaded – that is, when the body of Adam was created – there was no spirit within it. The truth portrayed in the poem is that after the spirit entered the body, the human being began to see the beauties of the world, distinguish them, and taste the pleasures of life. If we understand the word "carried along" in the last line in its direct sense, the spirit was "made to follow." According to tradition, when the spirit obstinately refused to enter the human body, it was gently led in by melody. Following the melody, it entered the body of Adam. Perhaps this is also why the human spirit is drawn to another beauty – melody – and is a companion to art. The Heart (spirit) is therefore an inner world inclined to all the beauties of the world, to words, melody, and a whole universe of other graces and virtues. Only people of the heart discern the beauties of life and the miracles and mercies of the Creator; they partake of them. They are moved by words and take pleasure in them. Let us read the second stanza of this poem, itself a product of the power called the word:

My heart, a heart that Heaven might acclaim,

*Yet Eve sought Paradise on earthly ground.
My road has led where Love and destiny became;
In my own soul, I am Adam – exiled and bound.*

These lines portray the condition and situation of the lover's heart through the image of Adam, who was expelled from Paradise because of his love for Eve. Had our great forefather Adam not loved Mother Eve, he would not have followed her word, and neither of them would have been expelled from Paradise. The lover whose path "joins the abode of love" is also among the exiled. He is Adam's descendant. This analogy contains the truth that every loving heart entrusts its faith and will to the hand of the beloved. This is the culmination of the blessing called love, the rank of being a lover. If it is not so, it is not love, and the lover is not a lover.

*My heart, though wounded, yearns for love once more;
Heaven-born, yet destined for the earth below.
My tongue is torn your glory to explore;
Ten thousand voices sing the tales they know.*

In these lines, the epithets "wounded" (hurt, plunged into grief) and "yearning for love" are joined to the heart. Because of love and the beloved's indifference, the lover's heart has become acquainted with pain and anguish. Yet it still yearns for love. For every lover, love is beautiful in its pains, precious in its anguish, and separation sweeter than union. Once the heart was celestial, that is, it belonged to God. Its dwelling-place was Paradise together with Adam. As it lives in Adam's body and is overcome by love, it has "become a dweller of the earth" through love—it has descended to earth. From Adam until today, every lover sings in his or her own way of the heart and the feelings connected with it: love, union, and the pains of separation. Divine love is a feeling of such immeasurable depth that a servant cannot learn it to the end. The tongue is powerless and words are poor when it comes to describing it fittingly.

The more you discover and master this knowledge – God's knowledge, the content of the mysteries of the heart, His possession within a person – the less you are satisfied. The more you drink of this knowledge, the richer you become spiritually. The richer you become, the more you long for it. This is the truth discovered by the sages of eternity:

*My heart, eternal lamp through time untold,
Your radiance outshines the dawn's first light.
Love is the highest wisdom mortals hold;
I live in love – my life's supreme delight.*

With these lines the poet also invites his reader to think. A reader can merely read any poem and pass on. But if the reader enters the essence of the words and follows the poet's insight, he or she feels a universe of pleasure in the spirit and senses spiritual purification. A heart that has found pleasure in words and poetry wishes to feel that sensation again and again. In this way a person gradually becomes spiritually healthy and, accompanied by virtues, knowingly or unknowingly rises toward spiritual wholeness and perfection. For this, perhaps, is the task of the poet, poetry, and the word...

S. Rauf has a poem called "The Nightingale's Call" that fills anyone who reads it with wonder [S. Rauf, 2024, p. 6]. It resembles a tale of love. As in classical works, the Lover is the nightingale and the Beloved is the flower. The lover's anguish in hope of union and the beloved's coyness bring softness to the reader's heart and a sincere, warm smile to the lips. With such delicate words poets become the cause of readers' seeing beauty, taking delight in it, and rising spiritually:

*A lover, I dwell in the prayer of your soul;
Restless and yearning, by your side I remain.
Yet you are a bud that refuses to unfold,
Nor scatter your fragrance across the plain.*

A flower will surely open one day; this is natural. But the lover is impatient. To him it seems as if the flower will never open, and he continues to feel as though he is "burning in vain." He wants to know sooner the truth – the Flower's answer to his own love. He is a lover, and he is impatient. In hope of union, he repeatedly asks: "Why do you prolong coyness and separation, why do you not hasten? / Why do you not part your ruby lips?" Consider the delicacy of these lines. The portrayal, spoken from impatience, of a natural phenomenon not yet ripe for opening as "coyness and separation," and the comparison of the still-unopened red petals that have emerged from the bud to ruby lips, are products of the poet's talent. From this silence and these coquetties, the lover's heart is full of anxiety: "Tell me, will this garden not turn to autumn?" The flower's opening, its granting favor to the lover, and its spreading fragrance around it are its positive answer to the Nightingale's love. The nightingale is intoxicated by this fragrance; its life fills with joy and its tears are wiped away.

There is also a certain variation in this poem's form: its final two stanzas have three lines. Such changes of form occur frequently in Sirajiddin's poetry:

*Do streams forever murmur as they glide?
Can beauty such as yours outlive all time,
And must my yearning haunt me all my life?*

Of course, beauty is eternal for the beloved and longing for the lover. This is the basis of every love. If it were not so, the feeling would not be so sacred and everlasting; it would not be sung from work to work and from century to century. The celebration of love appears in every poet's work in its own way. To be a lover is pain and suffering. Perhaps those pains made them poets... In the view of S. Rauf, poets are in fact ordinary people. Only, when they come into the world, "my Creator has made the poet's heart a gift." With this gift the distinctiveness of poets is noted: their hearts have been commanded to praise love, see beauty, and guide others toward it as well. When readers read them, they too are affected no less than the poet and, knowingly or unknowingly, rise step by step toward the poet's level.

The following poem, dedicated to the praise of love and loving and beginning with the line "I wait in longing for your resolve," likewise gives delight to the reader's inner world through the force of its effect:

*I wait, devoted to your will alone,
And drive vain doubts that cloud my restless mind.
Perhaps, before your eyes this very hour,
I'm but a flute whose mournful voice you cannot find.*

*Do not let time be squandered into air;
Let not a single moment fade in vain.
Show mercy now, and reach your gentle hand,
My precious one, whose ruby lips remain.*

*The frost of absence chills me without grace;
I long to feel the warmth of every breath.
If questions rise and torment fills your soul,
I'll place my heart into your palm beneath.*

[S. Rauf, 2024, p. 54]

The true Beloved must be able to read the lover's heart. For this, she too must be acquainted with love of the lover's own degree. Only when the thoughts and views of the lover and beloved are proportionate do they become a pair—true lovers. One does not wish to break these lines into smaller parts. In their wholeness they fill the reader with wonder. That wonder raises the reader to

spiritual heights, increases the feeling of love for life, frees one from the cares of the world, and urges one not to leave the world of words or lose the pleasures received from words.

The poem's final line – "I cast my heart into your palm!..." – portrays both the victory and defeat of the lover's heart. In truth, there is neither victor nor vanquished in love. Yet through this conduct the protagonist of the poem becomes worthy of the beloved's favor and mercy. This is his victory. When the lover entrusts his heart to the beloved's will, he gives all his faith and will into the beloved's hands; this is his defeat. Both conditions serve union. It would not be fitting to call this state the beloved's victory either. This union is equally dear and precious to lover and beloved, and no more.

The poem "Questioning" [S. Rauf, 2024, p. 55], given below, is another writing that draws the attention of hearts familiar with poetry. On reading it, every reader is compelled to think. As the author himself answers the poem's rhetorical question – "Are you happy?" – both the question and the answers encourage the reader to observe the self. The poet appears to ask the question first of himself, as though scrutinizing his own life and destiny. This is a natural process for human beings. The answer may be different for everyone, and happiness itself is a relative concept. Each person answers it from the standpoint of the breadth or narrowness of his or her worldview, level of attainment, and degree of spiritual richness:

*Are you happy? Tell me, are you so?
Your presence fades like ripples on the stream.
You've built the gallows where you hang alone;
You cannot flee yourself, however you dream.*

Anyone who reads these lines falls into thought. From one perspective, birth and existence in the world itself seem to be a happiness; therefore a servant ought to offer thanks and praise to God. For a person of thought, however, this is not enough. If you have come into the world, make your existence known; leave something of yourself behind. Again, this comes down to personality. What does each person leave of himself or herself in this bright world: "...your existence is like a trace upon water," "You are a gallows erected for yourself; / You cannot live without loathing yourself"? On reflection, not only the lyrical protagonist but every person fears merely living, fears being average. The phrase "trace upon water" expresses a person's place in this life. Its logic frightens the reader and compels reflection. It urges constant supervision of oneself – of one's thoughts, actions, and conduct. These lines of the stanza contain the wisdom of a world of trial.

"If servitude is alien to your nature, / Your life in the impermanent world is ruin." In this transient world, "You sorrow, lonely and wandering, / Your broken rib aches and aches!..." The author is a person of thought. Everyone who thinks interrogates life and the environment in which he or she lives, takes account of each day and of one's conduct. Such a person knows that deeds will be called to account and therefore cannot help thinking. With the questions he poses, the problems he raises, and the answers he gives them, the author also compels the admirer to think. What does the brokenness in the line "Your broken rib aches and aches!..." express? Why does it ache so? O human being, created from the missing place of your rib, why do you sorrow lonely and wandering? What relation can this condition have to Adam, whose nature finds servitude alien? When a reader expands these questions and asks them of the self, he or she remains surrounded by life's problems and searches for its truths. Everyone answers these questions in his or her own way. Thus the reader also gradually becomes a person of thought.

Quatrains in the work of the poet Sirajiddin Rauf gain particular significance through the embodiment of a Rumi-like spirit and a Khayyam-like sensibility. A person without such feelings in the inner world cannot write in such a spirit. To me, only those poems in which poets celebrate divine and human love continue to seem sincere. Whether that love is directed toward God, the beloved, a mother, the homeland, or something else is unimportant. Love itself is important, and its celebration is valuable. For the dwelling place of love is the Heart. There is no falsehood in the

heart. If falsehood is mixed into it, the word cannot find a place in another heart; it cannot stir another heart. A word unable to arouse excitement and wonder remains unread, or, if read, has no effect. The confession and wonder in one of S. Rauf's quatrains deserve attention [S. Rauf, 2024, p. 124]:

*Is this love – to cherish but a spark of flame,
That burns in winter's fiercest frost the same?
At times it breathes new life into my lifeless frame;
At times it leaves me weary of life's game.*

The feeling called love has neither a definition nor a rule. No one can explain to anyone what it is. Each person feels and experiences it differently. The poet's depiction of love is as above: a glowing ember. On the surface, everything seems clear; every line is evident. Yet there is something mysterious in the lines, some magnetism. They draw the reader in and compel memorization. If cherishing an ember is called love, then its burning, its giving life, and its making one weary of life are natural. Loving fire is not for everyone. God deems it fitting only for His chosen servants. Let us read the next quatrain:

*A lover knows the torments Hell can send;
Like blazing fire, they haunt both dream and day.
By day, love without union burns the heart;
By night, the sun of hope still lights the way*

[S. Rauf, 2024, p. 115]

Yes, everyone defines the feeling of love in his or her own way. Is union important to the lover, or are the moments of separation bound up with the hope of tomorrow's union? For some lovers, separation is sweeter than union. For others, the dream of union gives delight. It is clear from these lines that for certain lovers, the path to union and its hope are sweeter. Lovers pass their nights until dawn with this hope.

*To meet becomes us – for the sake of love;
To smile becomes us – for the sake of love.
Though pale with longing, drinking clotted pain,
To die becomes us – for the sake of love.*

[S. Rauf, 2024, p. 109]

Many such fiery lines can be encountered in S. Rauf's poetry and enjoyed in the reading. To give pleasure to the reader's spirit, to draw the reader away from daily worries and urge a gaze into the heart, and to place in the spirit a feeling for life – this is the duty poets knowingly or unknowingly take upon themselves. Sirajiddin is among the writers who fulfill this duty with all their heart through a number of poetic collections.

A poet familiar with the feeling of love and affection also attempts to draw the picture of separation in words. In the poem beginning "You left" [S. Rauf, 2017, p. 29], he writes:

*You left –
No light could I discover, bright as the nightingale's eye,
To kindle the dark chamber of my heart*

The poem presents the lover's state when the beloved has left, amid the torment of parting and separation, in couplet-like units throughout. The truth behind this comparison is rarity. The portrayal of the lover left in separation requires even a hair's breadth of light for the darkness of the heart. A radiance like a nightingale's eye is rare – the nightingale itself is a rare bird. Can there even be speech of its eye? Has any servant truly seen it? The nightingale is also a lover. For another lover, its eye may become a source of light, and this can occur only in poetry. But it is absent.

Again:

*You left –
Loneliness did not swallow me whole;*

It hid itself within my breast

The basis of being without you is loneliness. The lover may be surrounded by people, yet lovers are always lonely. Loneliness never leaves the lover, because union is a moment and separation is eternal. It is a feeling condemned to live forever in the lover's heart.

You left –

Its arid tongues pierce me like needles;

At last, remorse drinks deep of my soul.

What is the source of regret in the lover's heart? Could he not have prevented the beloved from leaving, could he not have remained in the torment of separation? No. For in destiny, separation is more plentiful than union. However much he regrets it, in love it is not union but separation, thirst for union, and the longing to behold the beloved that prevail. Regret, too, is a feeling. Its portrayal in the poem is distinctive: "With parched tongues stabbing like awls," it "drinks the lover's life away." This is a depiction of the eternal condition of lovers.

The confession in the next stanza is connected with the beloved's return. The lover, sinking "to the depths of imagination," was saved from "certain death" and, in his excitement, did not have time to utter the word "thank goodness" a second time. As the reader encounters the depiction of the lover's condition, he or she marvels at the poet's mastery and the expression of feeling and state, and feels gratitude in the spirit for the pleasures received from words.

Creative people are always searching. Like everyone else, S. Rauf appears to have tested himself in various literary genres. His poems written in the ghazal form, his works composed as tuyuks through the device of antithesis in artistic depiction, his sonnets, and his narrative poems are the product of these searches. S. Rauf's narrative poem "*Vido*" ("Farewell") may in its content be called a philosophy of life [S. Rauf, 2024, pp. 130–148]. The author has taken as its epigraph the maxim, "Unless you lose something, you cannot find it!" The epigraph has both divine and worldly meaning. Its worldly truth is that if a person wishes to attain something greater in the course of life, or asks the Creator with particular intensity for something considered necessary, that person will surely sacrifice something to obtain it. Without this, life is impossible. At times people understand this; at times they let it pass without understanding.

If a servant remains content with what has been given, offers thanks, and continues to live and strive with good intentions and good deeds, he or she will not encounter unexpected or extraordinarily great losses or problems beyond the possibility of resolution. Yet human beings are such that, rather than contentment, the urge toward success, fame, and some material gain is strong within them; it is present in the nature of most people. Perhaps it is not natural, but a quality acquired in the world of life. Attaining what one wants and dreams of, or asking God insistently to grant it, necessarily comes at the price of losing something else. Asking for more than has been ordained demands sacrifice. In my view, the epigraph seems to emphasize precisely this truth. This is the worldly description of the idea.

The divine foundations of the truth embodied in the epigraph's meaning can be understood through an analysis of "*Vido*". The narrative poem begins with the following lines:

A single cry, a single tear,

Leaps upward to the open sky –

The wounded soul's unspoken pain,

Or its rebellion's anguished cry.

A great parting came to pass;

Some perceived it, some did not.

A heart cut off from the Eternal yearns;

Now this soul is but the sport of the mortal world.

*It passes through a hundred sieves untired;
No trial lets it leave untouched or whole.
At times, a lifetime is not long enough
To free life's hidden kernel from its stone.*

These lines express the depiction of the spirit's arrival in the world of life, parted from its own essence: a great separation has occurred. Yet almost no one notices it. Humanity rejoices in one aspect of the situation – the event of birth. Once born, the Heart (spirit) is condemned to endure the trials of the world of life; it becomes the plaything of the transient world. The wordplay used at the end of every stanza in the second part of the first chapter – "This is a human life; ah, the life of a moment!" – embodies a great truth. From these lines one can discern that the dispositions, conduct, diversions, and experiences enumerated in the quatrains of the bearer of a spirit torn from its essence form the very substance of human life; yet when viewed by the Creator's measure, that life is but a moment, a mere instant. The word "human" and the phrase "ah, a moment" bear distinctive qualities differing from one another in meaning, expression, and sound. Through a single comma, the author has managed to distinguish the mysteries of humanity and the universe. Entering the essence of the lines, the reader is compelled to believe the truth discovered by the author and offered to the reader: that this life, a moment and an instant, is a trust and a trial, and that the servant who forgets this deserves punishment. In this blessing called life, in which "at every moment separation may appear" from the spirit, a person comes to understand that a servant has sacrifices corresponding to his or her deeds.

*For the first time he scanned the skies,
Though wrapped in infancy so slight;
Thus, life's pure pilgrimage did rise,
With Seeing born, and Knowing's light.*

A child born with the creature called spirit within the body is the highest gift God has given to His servant. As the second stanza of the narrative poem celebrates the place and significance of this gift in the lives of parents, the poet raises another question: "Yet they do not know / What is in this little jar. / Perhaps dreams as wide as the world, / Perhaps sorrow is uppermost..." What does this blessing called life, between the servant's birth and death, give to a human being? Innocent, carefree childhood; prosperous and abundant life; knowing the mysteries of the world and humanity; and the desire to see the life-giving manifestation of the Creator – all are mercies granted to the person by this "moment." Yet is this "little jar" filled with joy, prosperity, and gratitude, or is it companion to lifelong worries? And what is it the product of? What are the causes of the outcome, why has it come to be so? Life will show this.

*As long as a person lives, he or she remains in search:
His heart was won by learning's noble light;
One day he set his course for distant skies.
That he might soar like an arrow from the bow,
His parents bent themselves like yielding bows.*

Conversely, the second chapter of the narrative poem depicts the place and significance of the child in the parents' lives. This, too, is a law of life. As one grows, one wishes to know the mysteries of the world and human beings; one struggles to understand and recognize oneself and find one's place in life. That is: "The one who has passed beyond himself will find himself." Thus, in order to know life's and divinity's truths and the world's mysteries, understand life, and recognize the power that created him or her, a person must give up comfort, taste life's bitter and sweet, pass along rough roads, and search. One must discover people and destinies for oneself: "Looking all about him, the young man / Bit his finger in astonishment. / Before his eyes appeared in one form / The illogical doings of life."

In the third chapter of the narrative poem, the truths the protagonist – a person of thought who seeks to know the mysteries of humanity and the universe – sees around him are these:

*Though sharing roads, they are not kindred souls
In secret, they behold each other as sworn foes.
The base-born schemes to bring his fellow down—
And surely earns the answer that he sows*

*Within the shell, the precious pearl lies veiled;
The truth of man resides within the heart.
Alas, the crowd can scarcely grasp this secret—
They judge by outward form, not inner worth.*

The truths portrayed in what the protagonist sees in life after growing up in the shelter of love and affection, lacking nothing in the parental home, and going out into the world to seek himself are painful and anguished but, alas, true. In several stanzas the author has drawn the portrayal of life's truth in the narrative poem exactly as it is. In the fourth stanza are these lines: "Like a bazaar: hurt, longing, and shame / Mingled together in the world..." This too is one of the qualities of the world of life discovered by the protagonist. The words bazaar, hurt, longing, and shame in the first line express the dispositions of the world and of the people who live in it. As the protagonist – the bearer of the spirit – travels through the universe, he understands that the world is a bazaar, and that its entire condition of living is hurt. In this bright world, some crave love and affection, some a morsel of bread, some gold and adornment. People of honor – "scholars who split a single hair into forty" – must helplessly listen to the word of the ignorant. This is shame: honor for humanity. Yes, a person cannot close his eyes to the truths of this base world. As the next chapter of the narrative poem depicts people's conduct for the sake of this transient world:

*All seem righteous at a passing glance;
"Allah" is ever on their lips.
Faith performed for human praise is vain –
Who are the false-hearted trying to eclipse?*

These are the truths the spirit discovers after parting from its origin, entering Adam's body, and coming into the world. Is this world worth the spirit's separation from its essence? Is this bright world worthy of a human being's birth? What has humanity found by coming into the world, and what does it attain when it leaves?

These questions, raised by the author in the voice of the narrative poem's protagonist, dwell in the heart of every person who has come to understand the self. Like the protagonist:

*At last, he tired of drifting with the tide,
Of living out a pale and colorless life.
Before a wise old sage he bowed his head:
"Master, grant my life a ray of light."*

Having lost his way along the paths of life, a person must think with the great sage – the venerable spiritual master, a knower of Allah's teaching; in one's own way, one must turn toward prayer and strive to understand God's truths. What he asked the great sage was this: "If I lose myself and become light, / Will the delight of union be granted to me?" The truth reflected in the sage's answer is:

*Open the inward eye of your heart wide;
Flee every shadow, every trace of gloom.
If you would find a miracle on earth,
Look to the depths where your own spirit blooms.*

A hundred blessings grace the face of earth;

*The seeing heart alone can find them there.
Each day the rainbow writes its song in light;
Each night the Milky Way makes heaven fair -
A hundred blessings grace the face of earth.*

Thus, if a human being can renounce the things bound to the body – the material things of the bright world, the body's needs and comforts – he or she attains the truth the heart desires: "...the delight of union?" As the heart leaves the body, it returns to its origin as the blessing and breath of the Creator. It attains union and tastes its delight. Only the person who, following the instruction of the perfected spiritual guide, can turn a gaze toward the possession called the heart and understand the truths there before this event occurs, can see the hundreds of blessings and beauties that have shown their faces in this bright world – the manifestations of Allah – and take delight in them. In the narrative poem's final stanzas, the author portrays the changes in the spiritual world of a person who turns toward the heart when the protagonist turns away from the desires of this worldly life and becomes light:

*A flower you'll be, a bird you'll be – perhaps a dream;
Each breath will blossom into peace and sweet repose.
To lose yourself becomes the truest state of grace;
The cage falls open, feather by feather, as it goes –
A flower you'll be, a bird you'll be – perhaps a dream.*

*The child of earth dissolves into the Whole.
O forest, river, boundless plain I greet you all!
No split remains between the inner and the outer self.
O One, the Only One, Eternal One – I bow in awe.
The child of earth dissolves into the Whole.*

The child of earth dissolves into the Whole.

To be blessed with the vision of Allah's beauty, one must renounce the self and turn away from this world's pleasures and comforts. The degrees attained by Islamic saints and those who understand this truth belong only to people who turn toward the heart—the possession of Allah. How delightful it is to renounce the self and one's materiality, and how the human being mingles and unites with Being—this portrayal encompasses the content and essence of the narrative poem.

There is also a distinctiveness in the repetition of the first lines of both stanzas as their final lines. What form and name the spirit – God's breath blown into the human being—takes when it leaves the body, God knows. The truth is that the spirit which turns away from all materiality attains ease and serenity and mingles with Being. In the second stanza are the lines "O forest, river, and desert, we salute you... / O Sole, Unique One, we salute You." All God's creations are symbols of His power and skill. A servant cannot help saluting their beauty and the fact that each was created for humanity. The title "Vido" ("Farewell") – inal leave-taking, separation, parting – also suggests, in my view, a parting from the materiality of the self, renouncing it, and bidding farewell to a human world not worth self-sacrifice, while following the promptings of one's inner being. Perhaps only special servants are capable of this⁷.

Conclusion. In short, through his works the poet Sirajiddin Rauf continues to write as one who strives to raise both himself and his admirers one step above their present spiritual condition. The personality absorbed into the essence of his works shows this clearly. The reader who

⁷ Sallamno: to greet or salute.

understands this personality also feels himself or herself rising, to some degree, up the steps of spiritual attainment.

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