

A Comparative Study of the Three Elements of Love, the Lover, and the Beloved in the Divans of Saeb Tabrizi and Bidel Dehlavi

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Love is a central theme in many of the world's literary works and a fundamental topic in Persian literature, especially in lyrical poetry. It is a passionate subject that poets, writers, and thinkers throughout human history have consistently explored. Among these figures, Saib Tabrizi and Bidel Dehlavi, two great poets of the Indian style, also paid attention to this key element and its constant companion, the beloved, in their poetry collections. This descriptive-analytical article aims to compare the ghazals of these two poets, examining their views on love and the characteristics of the beloved, both physical and moral. The findings reveal that, despite Saib Tabrizi's Divan being known for its proverbs and sayings, he perceives love as flowing through all elements of existence and the natural world, making it a significant topic in his poetry. In contrast, Bidel's ghazals are framed within the concepts of mysticism, ethics, and philosophy, with some ghazals containing only one romantic verse. The love expressed in most of Bidel's works is often mystical and divine.

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Introduction

Lyrical literature is one of the pillars of Persian poetry, a genre where the poet expresses personal emotions, internal states, and philosophical reflections, primarily centered on the interplay between love, the lover, and the beloved. Within the Indian Style of Persian poetry (Sabk-e Hendi), two towering figures stand out: Saeb Tabrizi, an 11th-century master known for his thematic diversity and aphoristic style, and Mirza Abdul-Qadir Bidel Dehlavi, renowned for his complex, philosophical, and mystical approach. While Saeb is celebrated for capturing the vivid details of human life and nature as manifestations of love, Bidel's poetry is often characterized by a deeper integration of Gnostic (mystical) thought and philosophical abstraction. This study examines the comparative representation of love, the lover, and the beloved in the ghazals of these two poets, addressing the scholarly gap regarding a direct comparative analysis of these specific lyrical elements in their respective Divans.

Method

This research employs a descriptive-analytical methodology to examine the lyrical content of the Divans of Saeb Tabrizi and Bidel Dehlavi. By surveying the ghazals of both poets, the study categorizes and compares their perspectives on the nature of love, the characteristics of the lover, and the descriptive imagery of the beloved. The analysis focuses on both moral/philosophical attributes and physical descriptions, identifying points of convergence and divergence in their literary traditions.

Results

The comparative analysis reveals distinct nuances in how these two masters approach the "three elements" of lyrical poetry:

- **Love:** Saeb Tabrizi views love as the singular, life-giving essence of existence. For Saeb, love is pervasive, touching all elements of nature and human experience, and he frequently contrasts the vitality of love with the rigidity of formal asceticism (*zohd*). Conversely, while Bidel's poetry is not devoid of human emotion, love is primarily framed within the paradigms of mysticism, ethics, and philosophy. In Bidel's work, love is often an abstract, divine

force, and many of his ghazals reflect an intellectualized longing that transcends earthly relationships.

- **The Lover:** In both poets' works, the lover is depicted as a figure of endurance, sacrifice, and steadfastness. However, Saeb's lover is often portrayed in a more relatable, human context—someone experiencing the trials of worldly affection. Bidel's lover is frequently a more archetypal figure of spiritual submission, reflecting the poet's own philosophical struggle and the soul's journey toward the Beloved.
- **The Beloved:** Both poets utilize the established, intricate imagery of the Indian Style to describe the beloved. Common attributes include aloofness, pride, cruelty (*sang-deli*), and indifference toward the lover's suffering. Physical depictions—ranging from the beloved's dark, rebellious locks and piercing eyes to the beauty spot (*khal*) and lips—are rich in traditional metaphorical language. However, Bidel's imagery often leans into greater complexity and abstraction, whereas Saeb's descriptions often feel more grounded in the specific, tangible details of beauty.

Conclusion

The study concludes that although Saeb Tabrizi and Bidel Dehlavi both belong to the Indian Style, their lyrical priorities differ significantly. Saeb treats the world as a vibrant reflection of love, making his poetry more accessible and varied in its emotional range. Bidel, while maintaining the traditional tropes of Persian lyrical poetry, synthesizes these tropes with a dense, mystical-philosophical framework that elevates his work toward metaphysical inquiry. Despite these differences, both poets share a mastery of the "Indian Style" imagery, utilizing it to portray the beloved as an inaccessible yet essential focus of the lover's devotion. The research highlights that understanding these two poets requires recognizing that Saeb emphasizes the *experience* of love as a worldly reality, while Bidel emphasizes the *essence* of love as a transcendental truth.