

## A Sufi View on the *Divan* of Hafiz in Ottoman Era: Mehmed Vehbi Konevi's Commentary on the *Divan* of Hafiz\*

Osman Sacid ARI\*\*

### Introduction: The Views with regards to the Connection between the *Divan* of Hafiz and Sufism

It is necessary to make a critique of the attitude of Hafiz towards religion and Sufism and the religious/mystical aspect of the *Divan* of Hafiz in a study, which addresses Hafiz and his *Divan* from the viewpoint of Sufism. There is quite little information with regards to the daily life of Hafiz in the biographical texts. This led us to attempt to make sense of this issue through the Persian tradition of poetry and the content of the poems in *Divan*. The insufficient amount of information forced both the authors in the fields of history and collection of biographies and also the modern researchers to come up with fictions, which are based on the content of the poems in the *Divan*. In this regard, the ways in which the poems of Hafiz were perceived revealed a magnificent literary accumulation, not only in terms of their content but also, from a historical perspective. The attitudes, which run afoul of each other, attempted to embrace him, and this embracement caused this accumulation to be strikingly revived in intellectual terms.<sup>1</sup> Indeed,

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\* This article is prepared on the basis of the relevant sections of our PhD thesis. See, Osman Sacid Ari, "Mehmed Vehbi Konevi'nin Hafiz Divanı Şerhi'nde Tasavvufi Unsurlar", PhD Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi SBE, İstanbul, 2016.

\*\* Phd Research Assistant, İstanbul University, Faculty of Theology.

1 Said Niyaz Kirmani, "Hafiz az Didgahha-yı Muhtelif", *Hafizshinasi*, Tahran: Neshr-i Pajeng, 1364/1985, p. 4.

Hafiz is considered to be the poet, over whom the most poignant debates are made in terms of the mystical and this-worldly features of the poetical language.<sup>2</sup>

Jan Rypka (d. 1968), who is one of the prominent names in the literature, states in his work on the history of Persian literature that Hafiz was understood within the framework of Sufism (mysticism) in the East with a few exceptions, and addressed from a more 'realistic' view in the West, again with few exceptions.<sup>3</sup> In this regard, it can be argued that there are three different attitudes towards the *Divan* of Hafiz in the works that have been addressing the *Divan*. The first attitude, which can be termed classical, considers Hafiz as a sage who has a complete grasp of secrecy, and the *Divan* as a text, which expresses "the truth dressed as metaphor". As has been stated by Rypka, the second attitude, which is adopted in the Western world and became widespread in the East particularly during the modern era, is that which considers Hafiz as a person who meant what he said in his poems, and thereby as a careless person towards religion. The third attitude, which reconciles these two, holds the view that Hafiz cannot be interpreted from a uniform perspective, and that the *Divan* has a multi-layered structure of meaning.

Within the framework of this classification, which is provided by Rypka, Murtaza Mutahhari (d. 1979) can be given as an example of the classical attitude, in which Hafiz is considered as a sage, and the *Divan* is considered as a sagacious text, even as a "book of Sufism", in the modern period. Mutahhari states that in addition to the fact that *Divan* contains literary content, it also expresses particularly Sufism, and that the substantial source in the *Divan* is Sufism, and that the reflection of this to the language of poetry can be considered as a secondary element.<sup>4</sup>

A modern version of the second attitude – according to the classification of Rypka – can be found explicitly in Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's works, which are quite remarkable in the studies on literature and Sufism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gölpınarlı presents Hafiz as a poet, who attempts to overcome the grief he experienced due to conditions of his time in an artistic and unconventional manner. In this account, Hafiz is also presented as a poet who lives in the world of deep feelings and ideas. Gölpınarlı states the following, which excludes the religious-mystical perspective in *Divan*:

2 J.T.P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997, p. 60.

3 Jan Rypka, *Iranische Literaturgeschichte*, Leipzig, VEB Leibziger Druckhaus, 1959, p. 259. This view is also shared by Annemarie Schimmel. Schimmel reckons that the mystical meaning is preferred in terms of making sense of the *Divan* in the Eastern societies. By contrast, the most of the European orientalists are influenced by Sudi's commentary, which is quite informing and useful but does not have any joy of love (Annemarie Schimmel, "Hafiz and his Critics", *Studies in Islam*, vol. XVI/1, January 1979, p. 12).

4 Murtaza Mutahhari, *Hafiz'da İrfan*, trans. Nihal Çankaya, İstanbul: İnsan Yay., 1997, p. 17, 23.

[Hafiz] mentions wine and alehouse many times in his poems. This is to the degree that the reader would be fed up with it, similar to Hayyam's usage of the terms. There are those, who consider this wine as love, prosperity, joy, or a symbol of unity, and those, who consider alehouse as the universe, Sufi lodges or the heart... Let them continue to do so; We reckon that this wine is the sheer wine, which is made out of the beautiful grapes of Shiraz and aged. We also reckon that Hafiz drinks this wine as if he would drink the rivers of Tasneem and Salsabeel in the Heaven... A thoughtful poem, who lived in a disorderly period like Hafiz, would indubitably attempt to overcome all of his grief through a glass of wine, and would consider wine and lyric book as a friend to himself, and would consider the alehouse's seat of honour as the highest post, and thereby would refrain from other things in a drunk manner.<sup>5</sup>

However, Gölpınarlı does not consider Hafiz a figure who is completely abstained from Sufism. In his account, although there are the abovementioned factors, which constitute the style of Hafiz, there are also his poems, which express the mysticism, however it is incongruent and wrong to attempt to find a metaphysical meaning in these poems:

Indeed, it is excessively naive to consider Hafiz as a strict Sufi, or a person who expresses the truth in the metaphorical language as has been defended by some, and to interpret his usage of wine and lover, which can be found in almost any of his poems in a different manner. Of course, it is not the case that Hafiz made no mention of Sufism. He wrote some lyrics, which are completely mystical. However, he never stated Sufism through a metaphorical language, he stated his views on this issue explicitly.<sup>6</sup>

5 Hafiz Şirazi, *Hafiz Divanı*, trans. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, İstanbul: M.E.B. Yay., 1992, p. X-XI. Gölpınarlı deepened his judgments on this issue in a book he wrote during the later period: "There are some who consider wine as love, prosperity, joy, or a symbol of unity, and alehouse as the universe, Sufi lodges, or heart, and the keeper of the alehouse as the saga or the real guide. However, let us leave these interpretations and considerations, which are nothing but a childish self-deception, aside; the alehouse of Hafiz is really an alehouse, and his wine is the sheer wine, which is made out of the beautiful grapes of Shiraz... We need to note that he was obviously drinking wine, that is for sure. However, he was not a boozer, who would drink for day and night, that is also for sure. If he was an alcoholic, who would not be able to see the world without drinking, he would not have time to neither reading nor writing post-scripts to religious works nor telling poems. The reason why he mentions wine so often can be understood as an occasion to run against the fanatics, to criticize bigotry, and a tool to condemn backwardness. Indeed, what is peculiar to Hafiz is him being the rival of the fanaticism and bigotry." Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Hafiz*, İstanbul: Varlık Yay., 1954, p. 17-18.

6 Gölpınarlı, *Hafiz Divanı*, p. XIV-XV. These sentences of Gölpınarlı are considered as an example of an "external view". See, Mehmet Kahraman, *Divan Edebiyatı Üzerine Tartışmalar*, İstanbul: Beyan Yay., 1996, p. 90-91.

The abovementioned explanations of Gölpınarlı point to an old controversy on the relationship between the truth and the metaphor, and in this regard they target the classical statements of Abdurrahman Jami and his work *Nafahat al-uns*.<sup>7</sup>

By contrast, Annemarie Schimmel, who diverges from these “mystical” and “realist” attitudes and does not completely ignore both of them by adopting a third attitude, reckons that it is incongruent to consider Hafiz and other classical period Persian poets as completely mystical or completely this-worldly. For these poems are told to have multiple meanings. Moreover, the indecisiveness between these layers of meaning seems to be consciously persevered.<sup>8</sup> Schimmel mentions a miniature, which can be found in a copy of the *Divan* dated to 1527 and depicts Hafiz in a manner that does not clearly express whether he is drunk due to wine or due to religious reasons. In the miniature, Hafiz, who is drunk, sits next to a big bottle of wine and next to them the angels dance to a music, which is played by the dervishes.<sup>9</sup> The presence of such a miniature is remarkable in terms of representing the differences among the interests towards Hafiz during the pre-modern eras. Is Hafiz a this-worldly figure, whose statements are manifestations of the this-worldly pleasures or worries? Or is he a person, who united the wisdom with art by embedding mystical level with the this-worldly elements? Firstly, the fundamental reason why Hafiz was perceived in different ways in the succeeding periods and made the subject matter of the mystical commentaries in this regard is deeply rooted in the fact that Hafiz made frequent use of motives and imaginations that had already been instilled into the literary memory by Hafiz’s own life-time. The attempt to consider the *Divan* of Hafiz on so many different bases is not independent from the following: he always made use of a flexible structure in his poems, there are many transitive elements, which make both a mystical and a this-worldly interpretation possible, in any of his lyrics.<sup>10</sup>

7 For another example of this attitude in the modern literature, see, Ehsan Yarshater, “Hafez, I. An Overview”, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York, Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation, 2003, XI, p. 464. In this work, Yarshater denies the view that mystical meanings can be derived from the *Divan*. Similarly, Hammer, who translated the *Divan* into German for the first time, also reckons that Hafiz does not express divine love but the sensory pleasure. See, the quote from Hammer’s *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens* Schimmel, “Hafiz and His Critics”, p. 15.

8 Annemarie Schimmel, *İslamın Mistik Boyutları*, trans. Ergün Kocabıyık, İstanbul: Kabalıcı Yay., 2001, p. 284. Ömür Ceylan also states that old poetry does not have a single meaning, rather it contains many meanings which are either related to each other or independent. For someone who focuses on one of the meanings, the other meanings would remain to be latent. See, Ömür Ceylan, *Böyle Buyurdu Sûfî –Tasavvuf ve Şerh Edebiyatı Araştırmaları–*, İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2005, p. 104.

9 Schimmel, *ibid*, p. 11.

10 Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, p. 61.

The controversy with regards to Hafiz, as has been mentioned above, has its roots in the classical period. There are two perspectives: either appropriating Hafiz completely to Sufism or limiting him to the this-worldly pleasures and worries. It can be found out that the fundamental problem here is the focus on the emphasis to the monosemy in the poetry. The issue, whether the meaning attempted in the poetry can be perceived in the form that is the same as the version in the poet's mind, or not, turns into a crucial question in the case of Hafiz. For, in the account of the monosemy, it is possible that the reader is infallible in terms of making sense of the meaning; however, the differentiation of the literary language in terms of meaning, through different philosophical or metaphysical elements, requires reviewing the prevailing assumptions. Acknowledging that the meaning can differentiate, without changing the literary language and the established patterns, may lead one to read Hafiz from a mystical stance. In case of denying such an acknowledgement, it is not possible to make a mystical reading of Hafiz. Actually, this is the point, to which all controversy with regards to the connection between the poetry and the mystical content is indexed.<sup>11</sup>

If we follow the example of Schimmel, who attempts to adopt a golden mean between the abovementioned different extremes, at this point it would be found out that the following terms become remarkable: figuring out that the *Divan* of Hafiz has a multi-layered structure of meaning, and thereby, considering it as a multi-directional text. For this reason, the perspectives, in which social conventions are considered together with the religious pursuits, manifest themselves. Actually, the metaphysical connotations, which represent the main idea of the tradition with regards to the issue, are not inherited by adhering to the exclusive readings of the "realist" conception. This is the reason why such viewpoints emerged in the literature. In this account, the poetics of the classical poetry constitutes neither a completely mystical nor a completely this-worldly nature. Since the intellectual base and the literary habits count Sufism as part of high culture, the poets cannot be independent from mystical discourse. There is a particular perception of aesthetics that operates in the emergence of the metaphorical themes and its adoption for centuries, and Sufism is a determinant factor in terms of combining this perception of aesthetics with the metaphysics.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the changes in the meaning, which occurred within the framework of the relationship between the truth and the metaphor, happened generally by way of Sufism. The most popular example of this situation is the usage of the notions of drinking and those related to the drinking in the Sufi works and the change of meanings, which are signified by the usage of them in the poetry. As a consequence of this change, "drink" is

11 For a different reading in this issue, see, İsmet Verçin, "Hafiz Divanı'nda Yer Alan İlk Gazel Üzerinde Bir Açıklama Hermeneutiği Uygulaması", Master Thesis, Ankara Ü. SBE, 2006, p. 1-19.

12 Mahmud Erol Kılıç, *Sûfi ve Şiir*, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2005, p. 14.

no longer understood in its popular meaning: the drink that makes one drunk, but the “divine love”; and thanks to Sufism, the metaphorical meaning of the notion came to be expressing its true meaning.<sup>13</sup>

It is a *de facto* situation that the metaphysics of Sufism and other social conventions are synthesized in terms of lyrics in the classical poetry; there is a style, in which the relevant vocabulary, no matter how many this-worldly elements it contains, can be ascended to a religious level in any case. Whereas it is possible to question the statement that Sufi-religious discourse was the only determinant factor in the classical period nowadays, it is highly unlikely to encounter a literary work that does not contain such a potential in case of being subjected to interpretation. At this point, what can be said about the classical Persian or Ottoman poetry and Sufism would resemble to each other.<sup>14</sup>

The presence of these different perspectives demonstrates that generally classical literature and particularly the poems of Hafiz are not culturally independent from the attitudes of those who deal with poetry. For meaning is a process, which is composed of the inner world of the reader as much as it is made out of the text of the poem.

### **The Pre-Konevi Commentaries on the *Divan* of Hafiz in the Ottoman and Sufism**

If we exclude the separate commentaries, written on the verses and lyrics in the *Divan* during the Ottoman era,<sup>15</sup> there are four works, which make commentary on the full text of the *Divan*. The three of these commentaries, which belong to Sururi, Shem’i, and Sudi, were written in 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the fourth, which belongs to Mehmet Vehbi Konevi and constitutes the subject matter of this article, was written in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Sururi and Shem’i approached to the verses of the *Divan* from a Sufi perspective. By contrast, although Sudi acknowledged the religious-mystical identity of Hafiz, he made his commentary on the verses within the framework of the rules of grammar and cultural history and attempted to avoid stating mystical meanings unless necessary.

13 Yekta Saraç, “Tasavvuf Edebiyatında İçki Kavramına Giriş ve Yunus Emre Örneği”, *İlmî Araştırmalar: Dil, Edebiyat, Tarih İncelemeleri*, 2000, vol. 10, p. 135-154. Saraç consequently reckons in this article that Yunus Emre used the notion of drink and those notions related to the drink in a manner, which is open to be expanded into the metaphysical meanings, when the context, in which they were used, and other notions, to which they are associated, are taken into account.

14 Walter G. Andrews, *Şiirin Sesi Toplumun Şarkısı*, İstanbul: İletişim Yay., 2000, p. 107.

15 As an example of the partial commentaries, the following works can be mentioned: Kemalpaşazade’s (d. 940/1534) commentary (See. Kadir Turgut, “Kemalpaşazâde’nin Hâfiz’a Ait Bir Beytin Şerhini İçeren Farsça Risalesi”, *Doğu Araştırmaları*, vol. 11, 2013/1, p. 25-48) and Bursevi’s (d. 1137/1725) commentaries (İsmail Hakkı Bursevî, *Mecmûatu’l-Esrâr*, Atatürk Kitaplığı Osman Ergin Yazmaları 591, also. 98<sup>b</sup>-100<sup>a</sup>).

In the introduction of his work, Sururi expressed the view that he aimed to comment on the real meaning, which is of Sufi nature, by explaining the metaphorical/lexical meaning of the *Divan* in a concise manner. Here, the Sufi explanations mostly represent the main ideas. Whereas, these explanations are broader in the first parts of the Commentary, the verses are explained briefly in the following parts.<sup>16</sup> In the Commentary of Shem'i, similar to that of Sururi, there are Sufi explanations, which are inferred from the expressions in the poem, after the concise explanations on the translation and the words.<sup>17</sup> Sudi, who wrote his commentary after these two commentaries, states in the introduction of his work that he attempted to write a commentary that does not contain any Sufism. In addition to this, Sudi acknowledged that Hafiz was a dervish, and in this regard, he occasionally gave mystical meanings to the poems of Hafiz. Indeed, at one place, he describes the poem of Hafiz as pure wisdom.<sup>18</sup> Sudi did not actually attempt to explain the Sufi meanings in his commentary, although he did not deny it.<sup>19</sup> In his case, the following might have been influential: the fact that two commentaries, which were written before him, were made through a Sufi perspective, and the consideration of Sudi that they contained grammatical errors. Therefore, he probably aimed to demonstrate the proper meaning the *Divan* by identifying the rules of grammar in his commentary.

It can be argued that the pre-Konevi commentators on Hafiz considered him as a person, who is interested in Sufism, and even as a Sufi, who has the status of a *Veli* (saint). The fact that the main aim of Sururi and Shem'i was to explain the Sufi meanings in the *Divan* turns this evaluation into an even stronger argument. Whereas Sudi did consider Hafiz as a *veli*, he did not attempt to demonstrate the Sufi meaning in the *Divan*; this does not mean that he diverged from Sururi and Shem'i in terms of the perception of Hafiz. Therefore, it can be argued that these three commentaries maintained the abovementioned classical attitude in terms of perceiving Hafiz as a mystical character. However, Konevi's commentary constitutes an exact example of perceiving the *Divan* within a Sufi framework in all respects.

16 There are two master theses on Sururi's commentary of the *Divan* of Hafiz: Ahmet Faruk Çelik, "Sürûri'nin Hâfız Divanı Şerhi'nin İncelenmesi", Master Thesis, Selçuk Ü. SBE, 1996; Meral (Ortaç) Oğuz, "Sürûri'nin Şerh-i Dîvân-ı Hâfız'ı", Master Thesis, Ege Ü. SBE, 1998.

17 Shem'i's work was prepared as a PhD thesis recently. See. Naser Soleimanzadeshekarab, "Şem'i Şem'ullah ve Şerh-i Dîvân-ı Hâfız", PhD Thesis, Gazi Ü. SBE, 2019.

18 Sibel Özer, "Sûdî-i Bosnavî'nin Şerh-i Dîvân-ı Hâfız'ının Bilgi Dökümü ve İspata Dayandırılması", Master's Thesis, İstanbul Ü. SBE, 2007, p. 63.

19 Also see, İbrahim Kaya, "Sûdî'nin Hafız Divanı Şerhindeki Tasavvufî Yaklaşımları", *Turkish Studies*, vol. 6/2 Spring 2011, p. 609-610.

## Mehmed Vehbi Konevi and his Commentary on the *Divan* of Hafiz

### 1. Biographical Information on Konevî

Although his work was printed three times in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and became a popular text in the circles of Sufis, there is no biographical information with regards to Mehmed Vehbi Konevi in the texts that refer to him. The core information on Konevi is accessed through the introduction of his commentary's 1273/1857 edition, namely in the edition which was published by Bulak Press twenty eight years after the death of the author. According to this information, Konevi was one of the *Mawlawis* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and his father's name was Hasan Ash'ari al-Konevi.<sup>20</sup> Bursali Mehmet Tahir takes this information one step further in the work titled *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, at the section "Konevi Mehmed Vehbi Efendi". He notes that Konevi died in 1244 (1828/29) and that his tomb is next to *Mawlana* Lodge.<sup>21</sup> This information provided by Bursali Mehmet Tahir is compatible with the tombstone, which was identified in the work prepared by Veli Sabri Uyar (d. 1954) in 1940s. According to the consideration in this work, Konevi's tomb is located in the *Üçler* Cemetery, which is close to the *Mawlana* Lodge.<sup>22</sup>

All of the biographical information, which can be accessed, with regards to Mehmed Vehbi Konevi is confined to the accounts reported in these three sources. Any other descriptive information, with regards to him being Mawlawi and buried in the cemetery of the Mawlawi Lodge in Konya, cannot be identified apart from these records.

As far as is known, the only work of Konevi is his commentary on the *Divan* of Hafiz. Therefore, the opinions with regards to the scholarly and Sufi character of Konevi would remain to be ideas that are derived from his commentary. However, the only detail, which can be counted as an auto-biographical information of the author, is that he dedicated his work to Sultan Mahmud II. Konevi implies in the introduction that either the Sultan himself or one of the High State Officials asked this work to be written by stating that the reason why he wrote the commentary was that during the era of Sultan Mahmud II, writing commentary on the wise words of Hafiz was considered to be lovely. The historical information, which can be derived from this praise of the Sultan, is that the work was written between

20 Konevi Mehmed Vehbi Efendi, *Sherh-i Divan-i Hafiz*, Bulak, 1273, vol. 1, p. 1.

21 Bursali Mehmet Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, İstanbul, Matbaa-i Amire, 1333, vol. 1, p. 149. It is also stated in the work *Hediyyet al-arifin* that Konevi died in 1244 and that he wrote a commentary on the *Divan* of Hafiz in Turkish (See, İsmail Paşa Bağdâdî, *Hediyyetü'l-ârifin*, prep. İbnülemin Mahmûd Kemal İnal-Avni Aktuç, İstanbul: MEB Yay., 1990, vol. 2, p. 363).

22 Veli Sabri Uyar, "Konya Bilginleri" (Yazı Dizisi), *Konya Halkevi Kültür Dergisi*, vol. 123-124, 1949, p. 33.



1808 and 1828-29, given that Sultan Mahmud II was on the throne between 1808-1839 and that Mehmed Vehbi Konevi died in 1828-29.

## 2. The Manuscripts of the Commentary and its Printed Copies

As far as we identified, there are three records in the libraries with regards to the manuscripts of Konevi's *Commentary on the Divan of Hafiz*. The first is located at Konya Mawlana Museum, no. 7383. Since this manuscript, which was introduced by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı when the catalogue of the relevant library was prepared, does not contain any letter of conveyance<sup>23</sup> and the last part of the present volume is missing; it is not possible to make an evaluation by comparing it with the printed versions. It is also not possible to make a precise back-dating about the copy since the volume is incomplete and there is no information with regards to the handwriting of the manuscript. However, since the text is in agreement with the preferences of the Bulak Print version and since there are some partial contributions to the text through the corrections, which were probably done on the basis of the printed copy, one is led to reckon that this copy, in its present form, was written after the Bulak Print version.

According to the present records, another copy of the handwritten manuscript is located in the Egypt National Library, at Turkish Manuscript Section, no. 187. In the catalogue, where the Turkish Manuscripts in the Egypt Libraries are introduced, it is stated that this copy, which was recorded in the section "187 Edeb Türki" as a volume that is composed of 568 leaves, belongs to Konevi and that the sides of the pages were tabulated in gold in this commentary, which was hand-written in *ta'lik* style.<sup>24</sup> However, when we had access to this copy through this catalogue information after much effort on our part, we found out that this is not Konevi's commentary but it belongs to Sudi. Although it is highly likely that the holograph of the work would be located in the Egypt libraries when we consider that the Commentary of Konevi was first published in the Bulak Press, Cairo and that it is stated in the record, which is at the end of this print, that it was based on the holograph; one cannot arrive at any information in this regard on the basis of the present catalogues. Thereby, except for the copy which was mistakenly recorded under the name of Konevi, it is necessary to make separate inquiries on the present Commentaries on the *Divan* of Hafiz<sup>25</sup> in the Egypt libraries and to describe them in detail.

23 See. *Mevlânâ Müzesi Yazmalar Kataloğu*, prep. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1994, vol. 4, p. 115.

24 al-Hay'a al-Misriyye al-amme li'l-kutub, *Fihris al-Mahtûtât at-Turkiyye al-Osmaniyye*, 1990, vol. 3, p. 38. According to the information provided here, the copy begins with the commentary of the first lyric of Hafiz and there is no information with regards to the date of hand writing.

25 Ibid. In the pages 34-38, almost twenty manuscripts, which belong to Sudi, Sururi and Shem'i's commentaries on the *Divan* of Hafiz, are introduced.

The copy, which seems to be located in Edirne Selimiye Manuscript Library no: 2272/I-II according to the catalogue records, is not a manuscript but a printed copy. Therefore, the only manuscript of Konevi's Commentary is located at Konya Mawlana Library, since the records with regards to others do not represent correct information. However, the printed copies of Konevi's Commentary are quite common in the libraries and the reason why there are so few manuscripts is probably rooted in the fact that it was printed three times during the fifty years-long period after its compilation.

Konevi's *Commentary on the Divan of Hafiz* was printed three times in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the first print was published in 1273/1857 at Cairo, Bulak Print; then it was published in 1286/1870 at Istanbul, Hacı Muharrem Print; the last printed version was published in 1289/1872 at Istanbul, Amire Print. According to the information recorded at the end of the second volume of Bulak print version, this version was prepared on the basis of the holograph, twenty-eight years after the death of Konevi.<sup>26</sup> One of the distinctive features of the Amire Print version, from that of Bulak and Hacı Muharrem, is that Sudi's *Commentary* is quoted in the side notes (*hamish*). The publication of such a print demonstrates not only that Konevi's *Commentary* found many respondents and drew attention during the period, but that it is a trademark of the consideration that the readers perceive that there are connections and similarities between these two commentaries.

### 3. The Construction of the Text in Konevi's Commentary

Since Mehmed Vehbi Konevi's work is a text which is featured to have the nature of a commentary, it contains more than one particular style. It is found out that the nature of the *Divan* of Hafiz and the issues Konevi aimed to express to his respondents were influential on the composition of Konevi's style. In terms of the formal structure, the commentary has the construction of the text that is made out of the following: the verse, the literal translation of the verse, the meanings of the words expressed in the verse, and the Sufi meanings attributed to the verse. The verses of Qur'an, the hadiths, and the quotes from Sufis provide variety to the construction of the text, particularly in the parts where the Sufi meaning is revealed. Moreover, the sentences of blessing, the connotations of the terms of Sufism, and the suggestions towards members of the dervish orders occupy a significant place in the relationship the author develops with his respondents.

In the Commentary format of Konevi, first a verse of the lyric is provided in Persian, then the prosaic translation of the verse is cited by following the line number of the verse. In the "Müfredat" (The glossary) part, which is located after the translation of the verse, Turkish equivalents of some words are stated.

<sup>26</sup> *Sherh-i Divan-i Hâfiz*, vol. 2, p. 460 (Bulak).

This part is followed by the main section, which is titled “Mâ'nâ-yı işâretî” (The meaning it indicates), where the mystical meaning is given to the verse:

اگر آن ترک شیرازی به دست آرد دل ما را به خال هندویش بخشم سمرقند و بخارا را

If that beloved of Shiraz takes over our soul, I bestow Samarqand and Bukhara for her black beauty spot.

**The glossary:** اگر if; آن that; ترک the beloved one; شیراز the city of Hafiz; یا attribution; بدست to hand; آرد gets; دل the letter mim;<sup>27</sup> مارا the letter mim; با mixing; خال beauty spot; هندو black; ش pronoun; بخشم I bestow; و باخارا و سمرقند name of the two cities.

**The meaning it indicates:** If the real beloved [who is situated] in the original abode and the eternal world bestows union to my heart and the light of gnosis to my secret from His perfect benevolence and I become protected ‘within His two fingers’ and under His handling power, [then] I would give His unique being ‘this world and the hereafter’, which are ‘forbidden for the people of Allah’ and I would annihilate myself in Allah and follow the path of seclusion.<sup>28</sup>

The translation of the verses in the *Commentary* is mostly made through a style, which can be termed “broken translation”, without using a fluent and artistic way of expression, and sometimes just some phrases, which only follow the order of the words in the verse and do not compose a sentence, are included. When Konevi's translations are compared to preceding commentators, it would be found out that these literal translations are mostly based on Shem'i's work. Konevi also sometimes made use of Sururi in terms of translation. Konevi pays attention to the order of the words in the verse in literal translations, while he demonstrates a style, in which he takes the integrity of the verse into account, in the parts where he explains the Sufi meaning. It can be considered that this is due to his adherence to Shem'i and Sururi in terms of translating the verses.

The main parts of the *Commentary*, titled “Ma'nâ-yı işâretî” (The meaning it indicates), constitute a uniform structure, in which a strong and aesthetic style is adopted contrary to the literal translation. Also, in this part, multiple groups of meanings are brought together in a skilful manner without disrupting the flow

27 As will be mentioned later in this section, the letter “mim” is probably used instead of the words which are considered to be known and thereby do not need any explanation.

28 G. 2/8 (In this work, the first lyric number corresponds to the Naini publication [*Divan-i Haje Shemseddin Muhammed Hafiz*, prep. Seyyid Muhammed Riza Jelali Naini, Tahran, Neshr-i Penjere, 1384/2005], and the second corresponds to the translation of Gölpinarlı); Konevi, vol. 1, p. 33 (The volume and page numbers given in this work are taken from the Bulak Print version of Konevi's work).

of the sentence, and the content integrity is preserved even when the sentence becomes longer. It has been stated that Konevi based his translations on that of Shem'i and Sururi. This also reveals the reason why there is a difference in style between the literal translation and the Sufi commentary. Moreover, this difference seems to be a deliberative preference, when we take into account Konevi's aim in the commentary. Konevi was content with a minimalistic translation style, which would transfer the literal meaning into Turkish, by making use of the preceding commentators when the literal meaning of the *Divan* is relevant. As for the commentary parts, he diverged from the preceding commentators by demonstrating his talents in terms of the content integrity and ability to express himself.

The "*Müfredât*" parts, which follow the translation of the verses, resemble Konevi's style in the translation. For the equivalents of the words in the verse are mostly given in one word, and only the letter "mim" is put next to some words: this is tantamount to saying that what is meant is explicit. The format of the usage of propositions in the sentence is also explained in one word. As for the verbs, quite rarely, short grammatical explanations are made, such as the past tense, or the present tense, in terms of conveying their meaning. Throughout the commentary, there are quite few grammatical explanations. In the "*Müfredât*" part, he confined himself to providing minimum information, but this demonstrates that he did not have any concern in terms of instructing Persian, and that he was not primarily interested in the linguistic features of the poems. By contrast, Konevi quite rarely provided information with regards to the historical and cultural factors, which took place in the poems.

One of the peculiarities in which the Konevi's commentary diverges significantly from other commentaries on the poetry during the Ottoman era, is that each verse is considered as a unity in the "*ma'nâ-yı işâretî*" parts, which compose the main part of the commentary, and that this part, for most of the time, ended in one or two sentences in terms of preserving the integrity of the commentary. In this part, excluding some exceptional mystical equivalents of the expressions of the verse, no such explanation as "what is meant by the ..." or "... means to be" is given.<sup>29</sup> The relationship between the words and the groups of words in the verse is taken into account when explaining the Sufi meaning. In addition to this, the commentary is written in a manner, through which the Sufi meanings, which are given in the expressions in the verse, can be followed one by one. Thus, it is explicitly found out from the commentary which meanings are attributed to the components and which are expressed in the verse, in mystical terms.

In Shem'i's and Sururi's commentaries, which were written before Konevi on the basis of a Sufi point of view, mostly, the mystical meanings of the particular words are given or the mystical meaning, to which the verse points, is explained

29 For one of the exceptional examples, see. Konevi, vol. 1, p. 209.

as a main idea. Konevi expressed the meaning, which is pointed in the verse, in an integral manner together with their connotations in the culture of Sufism. He also applied this method to all of the lyrics. These represent the significant style of the commentary; through which he diverged from the preceding commentators.

Since the verses contain a meaning and a notion, an image and a comprehension; Konevi attempted occasionally to supplement the elements, which are left to the imagination of the respondent, in the verses in the “*ma'nâ-yi işâretî*” parts. Thereby, he found an opportunity to pass to other notions, which are related to the issue, through cause-effect relations and connotations. In this sense, the meanings, which are revealed by the verse directly or at the first glance, constitute the starting point for Konevi's commentary. For most of the time, Konevi expanded the meaning, which is pointed or revealed by the verses, within the framework of the main idea that he saw in the lyric. One of the examples, in the sense that Konevi made sense of Hafiz's expressions through a wider framework and interpreted them in this regard, is his writings on the *Laylat-al Qadr* (The Night of Decree). Whereas Hafiz mentions only the *Laylat al-Qadr* in one of the verses,<sup>30</sup> Konevi's interpretation is almost in the form of an explanation of the complete Surah (*the Surah al-Qadr*).<sup>31</sup>

Konevi is not concerned with providing information with regards to the issues such as the usage of the words in the verse, literary arts, or historical details or making explanations in these regards in the commentary section of his work. Konevi is explicitly not interested in these aspects of the issue. It can be considered that this attitude is partly due to Konevi's aim in terms of writing Sufi commentary and partly due to the fact that Sudi demonstrated such details to a certain degree, which cannot be transcended by the Ottoman culture. When we analyse the in-text parts of Konevi's commentary as a general framework, it can be stated that it has the following features: it is based on Shem'i and Sururi, it makes use of Sudi in terms of identifying minimal translation and grammar information, however it becomes independent in case of Sufi meaning and provides original examples.

#### **4. Konevi's Initiation (*Intisab*) to Hafiz: The Spiritual Aim in the Commentary**

The commentators of the Ottoman era wrote their works with particular aims which they generally stated in the introduction of their works in detail or in short. Konevi, in accordance with this style of writing, began his work by stating that the aim in writing the commentary to the potentially spiritual verses of Hafiz, who was considered to be a “*veli*” and the “perfect human” by Konevi, was to acquire a “spiritual initiation” as much as possible and, in this regard, to arrive

30 G. 18/39

31 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 61-62.

at a meaning, which is appropriate to the content of the verses.<sup>32</sup> The notion of initiation is used by Koneví in this work in terms of its primary meaning, being subject to the education of a *murshid* (guide), and in addition to this, in terms of pointing to the spiritual inclinations of the Sufis since the early period and relating them with the truth. Koneví explained his usage of the notion of initiation with a completely spiritual aim. In this regard, he implied that he pushed the following issues, which come to one's mind in analysing a commentary as a type of compilation, into the background: those with regards to the usage of language, the explanations with regards to grammar and the history of culture. Konevi expressed this issue, which he stated in the introduction, throughout the commentary, and he attempted to derive meanings from all of the verses in terms of reminding the Sufi truths, which would lead the respondents to the rules of spiritual wayfaring (*sülûk âdâbi*) and spiritual development.

How would it be possible to acquire spiritual initiation through the *Divan*? This question is answered by the "liveliness of the *kalam* (word)" in the introduction and within the text of the commentary. Koneví stated in the introduction that Hafiz, as had been mentioned in *Nafahat*, gave the secrets of the invisible world and true meanings dressed as metaphor and appearance. He also stated that his poem is not a "dead *kalam* like that of many poems who value using explicit language".<sup>33</sup> However, if a word is alive and gives liveliness to the respondents, this would be thanks to divine inspiration, which is reached through proximity and initiation to God:

Oh you who compose poems merely on terminology and fluency! Do not be jealous of this Hafiz's poetry for there is no sweetness and spirit in your poems. The sweetness and spirituality in Hafiz's word (*kalam*) result from his intimacy with Allah through his awake soul and [the fact that] his works are all [produced by] divine inspiration. Therefore, one can not find the taste of spirituality in the words of every eloquent and fluent person (Konevi, I, 73).

As can be inferred from these statements, Konevi does not limit language to literal or formal components. Correspondingly, he acknowledges that the meaning, which is conveyed through the language and spirituality, would transform the human beings. It can be found out that this acknowledgment is decisive on each level in terms of Konevi's interpretation and making sense of Hafiz. Indeed, it is stated throughout the Commentary that the words, which are stated without a spiritual initiation through apparent efforts, cannot have a lasting effect on

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<sup>32</sup> Konevi, vol. 1, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

the respondents and establish a spiritual relationship with them no matter how explicit or eloquent they are:

نه هر کو نقش نظمى زد کلامش دلپزير آمد      تذرو طرفه من گيرم که چالاکست شاهينم

Whoever composes poetry, his words isn't acceptable. However since my hawk is agile, I catch the fabulously beautiful pheasant.<sup>34</sup> (G. 317/315)

In the commentary of the abovementioned verse, Konevi expresses once more the relationship between the contact, which is forged through the spiritual initiation, and the liveliness and acceptability of the word:

Whoever composes poetry merely by eloquent and fluent words without having any initiation to the people of Allah and also lacking spirituality and the purity of soul, his inanimate word doesn't get accepted by the people of heart. Yet my soul derives subtle and wonderful meanings as well as original innate sciences from the highest point and the sacred divinity and I explain these in the language of the unseen. Therefore, my [word] is accepted among the gnostics (Konevi, vol. 2, p. 125).<sup>35</sup>

Konevi reckons that the respondents of the meaning of Hafiz's lyrics, which are expressed through "the inspiration" reached as a consequence of "proximity and initiation to God", are those who are in the same path and reached the divine secrets or asked to reach them. Since those who are ignorant of these secrets cannot understand what is meant by the word, they consider that Hafiz's poems are nothing but metaphorical expressions, as it is the case with the poems of other poets:

Hafiz used the gazel form in explaining the secrets of oneness (*tawhid*) and subtleties of gnosis that flew to our heart by divine instruction in order to conceal them from the lay people. The subtleties, secrets and spiritual allusions conveyed in Hafiz's word are known by Allah the Most High and those [who are the] mines of the secrets of Allah. The lay people [who are] like insects would think that it is a love poetry (*ghazal*) or metaphor like the word of other poets. Yet it is as a whole the language of the unseen and the etiquette of wayfaring, known to the people [worthy] of it (Konevi, vol 1, p. 87).

Thereby Konevi points to the consideration that in order to become a respondent to the meaning in the poems of Hafiz, one needs to understand not only the

34 Gölpinarlı, *Hafız Divanı*, p. 314.

35 Similar meanings are expressed at various places in the Commentary, See. Konevi, vol. 2, p. 56, 216-217.

appearance but the meaning and signs beyond it. This is also one of the reasons why different views on the poems of Hafiz emerged.

### 5. Konevi's Main Attitudes in the Commentary

In accordance with his aim, which he stated in the introduction as to acquire "spiritual initiation", Konevî wrote his commentary on all of the lyrics on the basis of spiritual journeying and wayfaring (*seyr u suluk*). The components, which are placed in the text on which the commentary is written, are related to Sufi aims by Konevi and they are transformed into a content that would define and explain the various aspects of spiritual journeying and wayfaring. Indeed, Konevi stated that the lyrics of Hafiz completely express the morals of spiritual journeying and wayfaring.<sup>36</sup> In this regard, the following subjects are primarily mentioned throughout the Commentary: the states of the *murshid*, the relationship between *murid* (disciple)-*murshid* (guide), the *murshid* as a perfect human and *Veli*; Prophet Muhammad and the light of Prophet; the relationship between the *murid* and the folk, the preacher and ascetics and his status compared to them; the states, such as the *tacalli*, prosperity, and the ecstasy, experienced by the wayfarer (*salik*) in his spiritual journeying and wayfaring; the merit, sight, and ultimate union arrived through spiritual journeying and wayfaring; *melametiyye* as a particular path of spiritual journeying and wayfaring; the relationship between the wayfarer and the *nefs*/world; the love, which is located at the centre of the spiritual journeying and wayfaring; the states of the wayfarer as a lover, the authentic beloved one and the ultimate union. In this regard, Konevi represents a competent example of reading the *Divan* of Hafiz in the circles of the sects with the aims of Sufi education and showing the true path (*irshad*).

Konevi, who attempted to explain the *Divan* with a Commentary conception on the basis of spiritual journeying and wayfaring in order to acquire a spiritual refinement, hinges on the consideration that "the ones who love God", and Hafiz as one of them, meant the truth no matter what they state with regards to the material elements in this world, namely in metaphorical terms:<sup>37</sup>

Whatever the lovers of Allah say, they mean the true beloved. They use metaphorical language to hide the secrets of love from the lay people. For the metaphorical beloved, who is in stature like the cypress, receives

36 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 87: "The lyrics of Hafiz are nothing but the morals of spiritual journeying and wayfaring and the language of the invisible realm, and this is explicit to the one who can see."

37 Ömür Ceylan states that Sufis, who seek the absolute reality beyond the world of appearance, hide the absolute truths in their poems, and that the commentators of these poems attempt to arrive at these truths on the basis of mystical thought and reconstructions. See. *Böyle Buyurdu Süfi*, p. 123-124.



all its existence, subtlety and beauty from Allah, in relation to whom the existence [of the beloved] is nothing.<sup>38</sup>

Thereby, Konevi is able to associate any topic of the *Divan* to the real beloved one, and make the spiritual journeying and wayfaring, which is the path to arrive at the divine love, as the main theme of the Commentary by considering the love, which is one of the main topics of the lyrics, as the divine love. For Konevi considered the poems of Sufis as examples, in which the secrets of being a dervish and the states and ranks of dervishes are explained after completing the spiritual journeying and wayfaring.<sup>39</sup>

One of the remarkable attitudes of Konevi in the Commentary is his wider perspective in which he paid attention to the association of apparent/esoteric and *sharia-tariqa-haqiqa* (Islamic law and rules- Sufism- Truth).<sup>40</sup>

در طریقت هر چه پیش سالک آید خیر اوست      بر صراط مستقیم ای دل کسی گمراه نیست

Whatever reveals to the wayfarer (salik) in the tariqa that is the beneficence.  
O heart, nobody stray away from the right path.<sup>41</sup> (G. 65/86)

Konevi had the opportunity to demonstrate his attitude in this regard, since both the notion of *tariqa* and *the straight path* are mentioned in the abovementioned verse of Hafiz. Konevi, who considered that the notion of straight path is met by the "sharia", stated that compliance to sharia is a necessary condition, if the spiritual journeying and wayfaring is to lead to love, divinity and accomplishment.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, Konevi considered that the *ahl-ul-Allah* (*The People of Allah*) wrote their works without separating sharia, tariqa and haqiqa and that the lyrics of Hafiz are among the works which are written by *ahl-ul-Allah*. Indeed, Konevi stated that the lyrics describe these three aspects of the religion, namely the secrets of the sharia, the attitudes of *tariqa*, and the lights of *haqiqa* when he explained the expression "*sefine-i gazel*" (the ship of love poetry

38 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 205.

39 Konevi, explains in one of the verses the expression *defter-i esh'âr* (G. 83/26) as follows: "The books of Sufism explain in poetry and prose the states and the stations of the people of Allah as well as the secrets of the order (*tariqa*) after [explaining] wayfaring" (Konevi, vol. 1, p. 101). Similarly, telling lyric *-gazel goftî-* (G. 2/8) means to be "stating the secrets of tariqa in the form of lyric". (Konevi, vol. 1, p. 35)

40 For the details of this issue, see. Hacı Bayram Başer, *Şeriat ve Hakikat: Tasavvufun Teşekkül Süreci*, İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2017. Başer attempts to demonstrate in his work that the controversy on the *sharia* and *haqiqah* emerged thanks to the attempts of Sufis to make room for Sufism in the social and intellectual life, and that Sufis reckon that Sufism and other religious sciences are connected.

41 Gölpinarlı, *Hafız Divanı*, p. 89.

42 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 65.

- *ghazal*) in a verse.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, in addition to this mystical perspective prevalent in the Commentary, Konevi made explanations and warnings with regards to the technicalities of sharia and creed as much as occasion serves. For example, Konevi considers that the expression “*âşiyâne-i tû*” (your home)<sup>44</sup> means to be a sign to the heart, which is the location of the disclosure of God as truth (*zat tecellisi*). Moreover, he stated that Allah is exempt from directions and space by quoting the 114<sup>th</sup> verse of the Surah Taha, before providing the commentary.<sup>45</sup> The citation of this verse by Konevi is directed towards expressing that the heart is home to Allah not in spatial terms by reminding the creed in terms of this exemption before the commentary.

Konevi, in terms of the commentary technique, identifies the common meanings, to which the verses point, and then he attempts to write a commentary on a single lyric within a single or a few topics. This is the most significant aspect, which is adopted throughout the Commentary and determines the conceptual structure of the commentary. Konevi demonstrated that he did not consider the verses and the meanings as separate units, which are polished off in themselves, in the lyrics by using this technique. He reckoned that the lyrics turn into a form of poetry, in which particular topics are addressed; and the verses are interrelated components, which contain various aspects of a common theme or notion. These issues, which are prevalent throughout the work of Konevi, need to be always taken into account when reading the text of the Commentary. We reckon that this is the point which is ignored particularly by the assessments on Konevi in the modern period. In the literature, the continuity of meaning between the verses of the lyric, which is considered as a form of poem, is not sought and for this reason the lyrics, which express one theme from the beginning till the end, are termed *yek-ahenk*.<sup>46</sup> In this regard, it can be argued that Konevi considered almost all of the lyrics in the Divan as *yek-ahenk*.

This technique, which is applied to lyrics by Konevi in terms of approaching them within the framework of a particular theme, is influential on identifying the Sufi meanings of the expression in the verse. Thus, when a commentary on a lyric is written within the framework of a particular theme, a meaning is given to a particular word of the lyric within the framework of that particular theme. The same word can be considered to mean a different meaning when it is interpreted within the framework of another theme in another lyric. For example, the term *beloved one* in the lyrics is mostly considered to express the real beloved one, namely Allah; however, it is sometimes understood as Prophet Muhammed

43 Konevî, vol. 1, p. 97.

44 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 54.

45 Taha, 20/114: فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ.

46 Haluk İpekten, “Gazel”, *DİA*, vol. 13, p. 442.

or the *murshid*, and thereby, other components of the lyrics are interpreted in compliance with the meaning given to the term *beloved one*.

One distinctive feature of Konevi is that he relates the verses to each other through "chains of concepts" when writing his commentary on the lyrics within the framework of a particular theme. At the beginning and the end of many commentaries on the verses, the concepts, which relate the common theme with the commentaries of the preceding and succeeding verses, are mentioned in a manner that constitutes an integrity with the common theme. This enables assessing the themes, which are addressed at different verses of a lyric, in an integral manner and bringing the themes together within a wider framework.

Konevi wrote commentaries on the lyrics within the framework of particular themes and connected the verses conceptually to each other. This demonstrates that he did not consider the mystical equivalents of the expressions in the poem as having a fixed and stable nature. We reckon that identifying this commentary style is significant in terms of evaluating the commentary. For a concept or a theme, which is located in the commentary of a verse and from the particular verse of which the context of commentary cannot be understood, can be made sense when the commentary of the preceding or succeeding verse is seen. This connection is forged not only in the successive verses but also with another verse of the relevant lyric. Moreover, it is required to note that through the connection forged by Konevi in the Commentary, a connection between the verses of Hafiz is also forged. Thus, Konevi relates not only the themes, on which he wrote commentary, but the themes that are expressed in the verses of Hafiz to each other.

Konevi's attitude towards the verses, which is open to different connotations, enabled him to include almost all of the components of the verses into the commentary and enriched the Sufi explanations in the commentary. To some words, a meaning is given in the works, which explain mystical symbols, and in other mystical commentaries through a particular framework of meaning; however quite different meanings are given to such words by Konevi. This can be described as an incoherency and arbitrariness from a literal point of view. However, when it is taken into account that the expressions in the verses are interpreted through relating them to each other by forging a chain of concepts within a common Sufi theme, and that the manner, in which the given-meaning is reached, is either explicitly or implicitly stated; it would be found out that this is not an incoherency and arbitrariness, rather it is a method, which is adopted deliberately, as a consequence of the integral way of thinking.

It is significant to identify who expressed the verses, and to whom these were directed, in terms of identifying the mystical implications of the verses in the lyrics. For, those who speak can be metaphorical components such as bulbul, rose or cypress in the *Divan* or it can be the case that they are deliberately left ambiguous.

When the lyrics are interpreted within particular themes, it is considered that it is significant to identify the speaker and the audience in terms of identifying the fundamental components of the commentary. Konevi reckoned that Hafiz, who is usually the speaker in the verse, namely the one who expresses the verses, is mostly a wayfarer, who experiences various states of spiritual journeying and wayfaring. In most of the verses, where Hafiz used the first-person singular and first-person plural pronouns, Konevi identifies the speaker not only as Hafiz but also the loving ones and the wayfarers since he considered Hafiz as one of the loving ones and sages, and thereby he brings the meaning of the verse into a wider mystical framework:

To me and to the wayfarer, who is our exemplary (Konevi, I, 18).

Ours and our exemplary's, who is in glory and gnosis of Allah (I, 24).

We are the true lovers (I, 75).

We are the community of lovers (I, 79).

This attitude of Konevi is compatible with his view that the lyrics narrate the morals of the spiritual journeying and wayfaring.

The commentaries on the particular names mentioned in the *Divan* represent the most substantial examples of Konevi's consistent attempt to elevate the lyrics from their material/this-worldly meanings to a level of spiritual/Sufi meaning. In the lyrics of Hafiz, some personal names such as Asaf, Karun, Firavun, Hacı Kivam, and geographical names such as Shiraz, Samarkand, Bukhara are used. However, Konevi wrote his commentaries on these usually by either through metaphor or by relating them to a Sufi meaning on the basis of the connotations which are derived from the features of the mentioned particular names. Thereby, he elevated these names, which point to particular persons and places, to a completely mystical level of meaning compatible with his way of understanding Hafiz and the *Divan*.

His commentary on the city Shiraz can be given as an example of this. Hafiz mentions his hometown Shiraz many times in the *Divan*.<sup>47</sup> Konevi gives meaning to the expression '*Turk-i Shirazi*'<sup>48</sup> by relating it to the notion of "vatan-ı asli" (the primary homeland) since it is the hometown of Hafiz, and thereby the beloved one from Shiraz is understood to mean "the real beloved one who is in the *vatan-ı asli* and in the eternal universe".<sup>49</sup> It is also found out that Konevi sometimes made mystical connotations on the basis of the letter resemblance rather than the equivalents of the proper names in the real life. For example, the expression "the residents of the city Yazd"<sup>50</sup> is explained as "The Glorious Persons who are

47 Shiraz is mentioned for 12 times in the *Divan* (See. Mehinduh Sıddikiyan, *Farhang-i vajenuma-yi Hafiz*, Tahran, Çâbhâne-i Hayderi, 1383/2004, p. 649).

48 G. 2/8.

49 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 33.

50 G. 3/9: *Sakinan-i shehr-i Yezd*.

entitled to reside in God Almighty's Spiritual Porte and the Supreme Lodge" on the basis of the connotation, which is rooted in the letter resemblance.<sup>51</sup>

The personal names, which belong directly to particular historical figures in the *Divan*, are brought to a spiritual framework from the historical processes, and interpreted in this regard. For example, Konevi explained the Grand vizier of Abu Ishak, Haci Kivam as the *murshid* who guides the folk to the right path and teaches the *tariqa* of the benevolence, by making sense of the expression within the Sufi framework.<sup>52</sup> Thus, Konevi interpreted even the personal and geographical names within the framework of the spiritual journeying and wayfaring, by leaving the historical context aside, on the basis of the mystical connotations. This is Konevi's commentary writing style, which demonstrates the integral feature of his attitude.

Konevi frequently quotes the verses of the Qur'an and the hadiths, and mentions the quotes from Sufis without disrupting the content integrity of the commentary. The majority of the verses of Qur'an and the hadiths, which are mentioned in the commentary by relating them to the relevant themes, are frequently used in the text of Sufism in a similar context. Moreover, some of the hadiths became popular by their usage in these texts and in this regard, they constitute the narratives which are central to particular themes in Sufism. The quotes from Sufis, which are mentioned throughout the Commentary, are placed in the works of Sufis including Kusheyri, Ghazali, Abdullah Ansari, Aynulkudat Hamadani, Abdulkadir Geylani, Ahmed Aflaki. The numerous quotes from these works, in an integral manner to the themes mentioned in the commentary, demonstrate that Konevi had a good grasp of the relevant literature.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, when Konevi explained the addressed Sufi theme by referring to the verses, the hadiths and the quotes from Sufis, he also forged a connection between these references and the verses of Hafiz. Forging such a relationship can be considered as providing an evidence in favour of the view that there is a connection between Hafiz, his *Divan* and the religion, and Sufism.

### Conclusion

Hafiz was considered as a poet who is closely connected to Sufism until the modern era. His *Divan* was made sense as a work which points to the Sufi meanings and expresses "the truth dressed as metaphors". In the modern studies, the connection between Hafiz and religion/Sufism is pushed to the background, and the literal meanings in his poems are brought to the forward. Poets and

51 Konevi, vol. 1, p. 22.

52 Konevi, vol. 2, p. 202; G. 358/346.

53 For a list of the verses of Quran, the hadiths, and the quotes from Sufis that are mentioned in Konevi's Commentary, See, Ari, "Mehmed Vehbi Konevi'nin Hâfiz Dîvân'ı Şerhi'nde Tasavvufî Unsurlar", p. 364-398.

Sufis, particularly in the Ottoman era, made sense of Hafiz and his *Divan* from a Sufi perspective, and the commentators maintained this attitude. Sudi, in the introduction to his Commentary of the *Divan* of Hafiz, stated that he will not mention Sufism and mostly abstained from expressing mystical meanings while he wrote his commentary. This led to the emergence of the view that Sudi denied the mystical content of Hafiz, as can be seen in the example of Gölpinarli. However, this commentating style of Sudi is probably a deliberative preference, which constitutes a criticism of the two preceding commentators. Moreover, it can be found out from his Commentary that this preference did not deny the Sufi aspect of Hafiz and the mystical content of the *Divan*.

There was a general attitude, which was composed by the Ottoman Sufis and poets, towards Hafiz and his *Divan* in terms of Sufism. This attitude was reflected by Konevi throughout the *Divan* and on the basis of it, he wrote his Commentary on the lyrics of Hafiz within the framework of spiritual journeying and wayfaring from a systematic perspective. Konevi considered Hafiz as a *Veli*, and he wrote his Commentary with the aim to get into contact with the spirituality of Hafiz. These represent a remarkable example of the classical attitude, which brings the Sufi aspect of Hafiz to forward. The following features are remarkable peculiarities of his Commentary: he considered the verses of the lyrics as components which supplement each other in terms of meaning; he accepted the view that the lyrics are poems in which particular themes of Sufism are narrated; he forged strong connections between the verses and the hadiths, the verses of the Qur'an and the popular quotes from Sufis; he paid attention to the unity of sharia-tariqa while writing the commentary.

Konevi's Commentary of the *Divan* is a strong response to the ancient question: "Does the *Divan* of Hafiz possess mystical meanings?" Konevi's Commentary provided us with a significant opportunity to identify the connection between Hafiz, in particular, and other poets in Persian and Ottoman geography in general, and Sufism. It also functions as an opportunity to reveal the extent to which the potential meanings of the poems can amount to. The studies, which compare the content of the Commentary in detail to other commentaries on the *Divan* of Hafiz and also to commentaries on other poems, would enable us to better understand the content of the commentary and provide us with the opportunity to test the validity of its method.

## A Sufi View on the *Divan* of Hafiz in Ottoman Era: Mehmed Vehbi Konevi's Commentary on the *Divan* of Hafiz

Osman Sacid ARI

### Abstract

The *Divan* (Collected Poems) of Hafiz is considered as one of the most influential Persian texts, known to Ottoman Sufis and poets since the early period, on the literature of Sufism and poetry in Ottoman era. In addition to the fact that the poets compared their own poetical abilities to that of Hafiz and considered him as an ideal model, there emerged commentaries, which were distinctively written on the *Divan* of Hafiz by the Ottoman authors since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Three complete commentaries, which were written by Sururi, Shem'i and Sudi in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, demonstrate the influence of this *Divan* on the Ottoman Sufism-literature circles. The commentary, which was written by Mehmet Vehbi Konevi completely from the viewpoint of Sufism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, will be the subject matter of this study. In this article, we will firstly address some different views on Hafiz with regards to the connection between his *Divan* and religion and Sufism. Afterwards, we will shortly address the three commentaries, which were written in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, on his *Divan*. Lastly, we will attempt to address the *Divan* in terms of the structure of the text, the commentary style and the main attitudes of Konevi, who considered Hafiz as a *Veli* (the friend of God, Saint).

**Keywords:** Poetry, commentary, Ottoman Era, Sufism, Hafiz Divanı, Mehmed Vehbi Konevi.

## Osmanlı'da Hâfız Dîvânı'na Sûfî Bakış: Mehmed Vehbî Konevî'nin Şerh-i Dîvân-ı Hâfız'ı

Osman Sacid ARI

### Özet

Hâfız'ın *Dîvân*'ı erken dönemlerden itibaren Osmanlı sûfîleri ve şairleri tarafından okunan ve yorumlanan bir ideal örnek olarak kabul edilmiştir. Şairlerin kendi şiir kabiliyetlerini Hâfız'la karşılaştırmaları ve Hâfız'ı örnek almalarının yanı sıra, XVI. yüzyıldan itibaren *Hâfız Dîvânı*, Osmanlı müellifleri tarafından şerh edilmeye başlanmıştır. XVI. yüzyıldaki Sürûrî, Şem'î ve Sûdî'ye ait üç tam şerh, *Dîvân*'ın Osmanlı tasavvuf-edebiyat çevrelerindeki etkisini açık bir şekilde gösterir. Bu üç şerhten sonra XIX. yüzyılda Konevî'nin tamamen tasavvufî bir perspektifle yaptığı şerh, bu çalışmanın ana konusunu oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışmada önce, din ve tasavvufun irtibatı açısından Hâfız'la ilgili farklı görüşleri değerlendireceğiz. Ardından XVI. yüzyılda kaleme alınan üç şerhe kısaca değinip, Hâfız'ı tasavvufî bir şahsiyet olarak kabul ederek, *Dîvân*'ı manevî bir perspektifle şerh eden Konevî'nin eserindeki şerh üslubunu ve temel yaklaşımlarını tespit etmeye çalışacağız.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Şiir, şerh, Osmanlı dönemi, tasavvuf, Hafız Divanı, Mehmed Vehbi Konevi.