

Nomination form
International Memory of the World Register

Kulliyāt-i Sa'di

2014 - 57

1.0 Summary (max 200 words)

The historic and global fame of Sa'di, is a result of his eloquent expression, simple literature and a poetry of universal appeal. Numerous manuscripts of his works, countless translations, in a myriad of languages; scores of printings across the East and West, multiple commentaries, editions, researched thesis and studies; are all indicant of his timeless influence.

In the domain of Persian poetry and literature Sa'di has occupied a chair amongst the most articulate and eloquent speakers. For eight centuries his parables, maxims, exemplars and poems have echoed the most popular words and wisdom; his perspectives have, and continue to, enlighten the most erudite of our scholars. Countless poets of every language have breathed his air, drawn inspiration and respired new life and meaning to their own cultures; such is incandescence and illumination of this Persian flame. In the words of Emerson, Sa'di speaks in the Persian language but similar to Homer, Cervantes, Shakespeare and Manvel, his words are always immaculate and addressed to all nations.¹ The compendium of Sa'di's works known as *Kulliyāt* is a treasure of wisdom and a paradigm of knowledge that will preserves its originality until the end of time.

2.1 Name of nominator (person or organization)

Iranian National Committee for the Memory of the World

2.2 Relationship to the nominated documentary heritage

In 2012, Sa'di's works were proposed to the Iranian National Committee for the Memory of the World and in 2013, after assessing the most important known manuscripts of his works in various libraries world-wide, the manuscript of *Kulliyāt* housed at the National Library of Iran, because of its distinct features, was selected and approved by the committee to be proposed to the International Memory of the World Register.

2.3 Contact person(s) (to provide information on nomination)

Ms Fariba Farzam

2.4 Contact details

Name	Address	
Fariba Farzam	National Library and Archives of the IR of Iran National Library Blvd., Haqqani Expressway, Tehran, IRAN	
Telephone	Facsimile	Email
98-21-88644086	98-21-88644072	faribafarzam@yahoo.com

¹ . Emerson, Ralph Waldo, contemporary American poet, 1803-1882.

3.0 Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

Title: Kulliyāt-i Sa'di

Institution: National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran (NLAI)

Description: Manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*, in the handwriting of Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Aḥmad Shīrāzī, is dated 15th Jumādā II, 784/18th August 1382.² It is 416 folios, copied on *Dawlatābādī* paper, good *Naskh* script, 19 lines to a page, outside dimensions 250x150mm, text dimensions 180x100mm, boarder frame is in gold and black ink. Each section has a unique decorative epigraph overlaid with Azure and gold with the inscription of *Bismala* (in the name of Allāh) or the title of the book. At the end of each section there is an illustrated page depicting a full medallion gilded and painted with Azure containing the name of the next section. Cover binding is made of burned brown goatskin leather, decorated with gilded half and a full medallion.

Sa'di's works in this Kulliyāt, have been arranged as follow:

- Bīsūtūn's Introduction, pp. 1-4.
- Six Treatises, namely: I. *Elucidation of the Forewords*, II. *Ṣahib Dīwān's Questions and Answers*, III. *On Wisdom and Love*, IV. *Five Sermons*, V. *Admonition of Kings*, and VI. *Three Treatises*, pp. 6-87.
- *Ṣāhibiyya*, pp. 88-138.
- Discourses, pp. 140-144.
- Strophe-poems (*Tarjīāt*), pp. 146-161.
- Old Lyrics, pp. 164-182.
- Plesantry and Unpleasant Poems (*Muṭāyibāt wa khabīthāt*), pp. 184-205.
- Macaronic, Triangular and Sarcastic verses, pp. 208-232.
- Close-ups (*Khawāṭim*), pp. 234-272
- Rose Garden (*Gulistān*), pp. 274-439.
- Sa'dīnāma (*Būstān*), pp. 442-661.
- Arabic Odes, pp. 664-684.
- Persian Odes, pp. 686-752.
- Lamentations, parts of Fine Odes and parts of Rarities, pp. 754-774.
- Funny Anecdotes, 776-790.
- Quatrains, 792-816.
- Simple Distiches / Fragments, 818-831.

². Dates in this nomination form are given both in Islamic lunar and Christian calendars. Occasionally Iranian solar calendar is quoted; such cases are marked 'Sh' for Shamsī (Solar) calendar currently used in Iran.

3.4 History/provenance

The manuscript was transcribed in 784/1382 by a professional copyist in Shiraz; no further information is available on its provenance until sometime between the years 1316-40Sh/1937-61,³ when Dr Mehdī Bayānī, the then director, acquires it for the Iranian National Library. Since its acquisition, the manuscript has remained in the National library and judging from its physical appearance it seems that in the past, the manuscript has been out of public reach and has remained safe and untouched.

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)

Name: National Library and Archives of the	Address: National Library Blvd., Haqqani Expressway, Tehran, IRAN	
Telephone 982188644070	Facsimile 982188644072	Email

4.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details if different from the owner)

Name N / A	Address	
Telephone	Facsimile	Email

4.3 Legal status

The National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran is legally and administratively in charge of preserving the nominated work.

4.4 Accessibility

Accessing the original copy is only possible under certain circumstances. However, detailed information about the manuscript can be accessed from a digital copy.

4.5 Copyright status

Copyright of the Manuscript belongs to the National Library and Archives of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5.0 Assessment against the selection criteria

5.1 Authenticity:

³. With the exception of the years 1319-21Sh/1940-1943 when he was appointed as director of the Board of Education for Isfahan.

Authenticity of the manuscript is discussed in two separate sections: authenticity of the Contents and authenticity of the copy of the National Library of Iran.

Authenticity of the Content:

Sa'di's output is diverse and plentiful, being amongst the rare talented artists skilful in both poetry and prose; he is also expert in other types of Persian and Arabic poetical compositions such as Ode (*qasīda*), Lyric (*ghazal*), Fragment (*qit'a*), Couplet-poems (*mathnawī*), Sarcastic (*mulamma'āt*), Quatrains (*rubā'ī*) and even simple distiches (*mufradāt*). The proposed item, the *Kullīyyāt*, includes the entire output of Sa'di. We do not have reliable information as when and who was the first person who collected the entire works of Sa'di. That which is certain and accepted by the majority of scholars is summarised thus: Initially, some thirty years after the death of Sa'dī, in the year 726/1325, it was 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr known as Bisutūn who ventured to collect the works of Sa'di, based on Sa'di's own hand-writings. He compiled his collection of poems in alphabetical order of the first word of each poem. Eight years later, realising that such an alphabetical order was not desirable, he rearranged the collection based on the alphabetical order of the last word of each poem and completed the job in the year 734/1333. In the prelude of the *Kullīyyāt*, Bisutūn describes his objectives and the process adopted in the compilation of the compendium and makes it clear that he has only arranged the odes and lyrics of the Divan, without any change or alteration in the content of Sa'di's *Gulistān*, *Būstān* or any of his prose writings.

The compendium of Sa'di's works is called *Kullīyyāt*, although arrangement of the content in each manuscript may vary, but on the whole they include the following sections: 1. Elucidation of the Foreword (*Taqrīr-i dībācha*); 2. The Five Sermons (*Majālis-i panjgāna*); 3. Question of Ṣahib Dīwān (*Su'al-i Ṣahib Dīwān*); 4. Wisdom and Love (*'Aql wa 'ishq*); 5. Admonition of Kings (*Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*); 6. Three Treatises (*Rasā'il-i thulāth*); Questions of Ṣahib Dīwān from Shaykh, Meeting of Shaykh with Abāqā and the story of Shamsu'dīn Tazikū); 7. The Rose Garden (*Gulistān*); 8. Sa'dīnāma (*Būstān*); 9. Persian Odes (*Qaṣā'id-i Fārsī*); 10. Arabic Odes (*Qaṣā'id-i 'Arabī*); 11. Sarcastics and Triangulars (*Mulamma'āt* and *muthallathāt*); 12. Strophe-poems (*Tarjī'āt*); 13. Funny Anecdotes (*Tāyyibāt*); 14. Rarities (*Badāy'*); 15. Close-ups (*Khwātīm*); 16. Old Lyrics (*Ghazaliyyāt-i qadīm*); 17. Ṣahibiyya, 18. Fragments (*Muqaṭṭa'āt*); 19. Quatrains (*Rubā'īyyāt*); 20. Simple Distiches (*Mufradāt*); 21. Funny Anecdotes (*Hazliyyāt*, *Muṭāyibāt* and *Muḍhakāt*); 22. Unpleasants (*Khabīthāt*).

Authenticity of the copy of Kullīyyāt in the National Library:

The National Library's copy of the *Kullīyyāt* is complete, containing all sections and has been used by Dr Ghulāmḥusayn Yūsufī, a leading contemporary Iranian specialist on Sa'dī for the preparation of his critical edition of *Gulistān* in 1368Sh/1989.⁴ In his all-encompassing endeavour, Dr Yūsufī consulted a number of manuscripts short listed from among many copies scattered in different libraries word wide. Each manuscript has its own unique provenance, some dateless, others with dubious dates, some with lacunas and some incomplete. There are also copies that have been prepared with special objectives, for example, to include only the *Gulistān* but the National Library's copy of *Kullīyyāt* proved to be an Illustrated, early, complete, properly dated, in single hand writing and extremely well preserved. Judging from its physical appearance, in the course of many centuries it has been out of reach of the public and has remained untouched.

5.2 World significance

⁴. Prior to this date in 1359Sh/1980, Yūsufī had also prepared a critical edition of the *Būstān* based on 10 manuscripts and other editions and translations of the text. Yūsufī's critical editions were reprinted many times and attracted attention of a great number of academicians, but contrary to the expectation of the academic circles, he did not find the time to prepare a critical edition of the *Kullīyyāt*.

Persian language and literature are the most noticeable manifestations of the compassionate spirit of Iranian culture and people of the world have witnessed this insignia in the writings of Sa'di. A glimpse into the wide distribution of Sa'di's works, from his own days until now, rightly justifies the above statement. In the introduction to his *Gulistān*, Sa'di writes 'The fame of Sa'di is so widespread throughout the world that his compositions are sought after as Gold leafs, in another anecdote he speaks of the fame of his poetry in Kashgar, a city in Xinjiang, China.

In 660/1261, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī the Arab literalist and scholar, corresponds with Sa'di and requests samples of his Arabic poems. In Byzantium, Sayfu'dīn Furghānī admires Sa'di's works, translates them and follows his footsteps. In the Azerbaijan, Humām-i Tabrīzi, in Tabriz, the capital city of the Mongol Ilkhānid rulers also pays homage to Sa'di and imitates his literary style. Similarly, Amīrkhusraw Dehlawī and Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī's admiration of Sa'di in the last few years of Sa'di's life or right after him is also an indication of Sa'di's fame in the Subcontinent of India. In 1348, only a few years after Sa'di's death, the famous Moroccan traveller Ibn Baṭūṭa in his travelogue records an incident when a Chinese singer recites a stanza from Sa'di's poems.⁵ After his death too, Sa'di gained unparalleled fame in two great empires of the Islamic world namely the Ottomans of Anatolia and Balkans and the Gurkanids or Moguls of India.

Farsi language has always been the means of cultural expression in the Indian Subcontinent and Sa'di's *Gulistān* and *Būstān* have been the most important text books for the learning of Farsi language. The catalogue of Sa'di's published works in India in 1363Sh/1984 records a staggering number which in itself is a sign of his popularity in the Subcontinent and his rooted influence in one of the most populated regions of the world. Sayyid 'Arif Nawshāhī in his comprehensive list records 190 prints of *Gulistān*; 145 prints of *Pandnāma* (*yā Karīmā*); 134 prints of *Būstān* and if we add selections, translations, glossaries and commentaries the number would rise to 302 for *Gulistān*, number of *Būstān*'s would be 179 and that of *Pandnāma* or *Yā-karīmā* would be 176.⁶

Translation of Sa'di's works In the Subcontinent of India begun rather late for the very reason that the attention was primarily focused on the original language of the texts, notwithstanding that there are numerous studies and translations in Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Pashtun, Bengali and Sanskrit languages. *Gulistān* has been translated into Urdu language for 29 times and the 31st print of one of them in Lucknow is dated 1301/1883.⁷ In various parts of India, we can enumerate at least 40 cities where the works of Sa'di have been printed.

In the domain of Ottomans too, Sa'di's works, especially the *Gulistān* and *Būstān*, have been received with public admiration. The first Turkish translation of *Gulistān* is attributed to Sa'di's contemporary Sayfu'dīn Furghānī (d. ca 705/1305). In the current century also new translations into Turkish language⁸ have been produced.⁹ Comprehensive commentaries on *Gulistān* by Sūdī and Shamī, in addition to translations, are also vivid evidences for the importance of Sa'di's work in the domain of the Ottoman empire.

Crossing the borders of two great Islamic empires where Farsi language was the means of cultural exchange, the fame of Sa'di's articulation reached the Western hemisphere and *Gulistān* was the first Farsi book ever to be translated into a European language. For the

⁵. It was a stanza from Sa'di's '*Ṭayyibāt*', corrected by the late Muḥammad Qazwīnī. It reads: 'Deep in the ocean of my thought, since fallen in love with you, I think, I am always praying and you are sitting on the adytum.'

⁶. For a categorised list of Sa'di's published works in India see Nawshāhī, Sayyid 'Arif, *A Catalogue of Sa'di's Works Printed in the Subcontinent: Including Selections, Tadmīns, Dictionaries, Translations and Commentaries*, Memorial issue of the 800th anniversary of Sa'di's Birthday. Islamabad: Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1363Sh/1984.

⁷. For more information, see Rāhī, Akhtar, Translation of Persian texts into Languages of Pakistan (*Tarjuma-yi mutūn-i Fārsī bi-zabānhā-yi Pākistānī*), Islamabad, Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1365Sh/1986.

⁸. Maḥmūd Manīṣā'ī, 9th/15th Century, and Ḥasan Rīzā'ī Efandī in 1080/1669 have produced new translations of *Gulistān* into Turkish language.

⁹. Recent translations of *Gulistān* have been carried out by Hikmat Il-Idīn (1946) and Muḥammad Kānār (2001). Sa'di's Quatrains and Lyrics also have been translated into Turkish language by Nūrī Ganj 'Uthmān (1947).

philosophers of the renaissance age, indeed, Sa'di was the favourite poet. They admired his ideas and were infatuated by the beauty of his expressions. For the first time in 1634, It was Andre du Ryer (d. ca 1660)¹⁰ who translated parts of the Gulistān into French language. This was Europe's first acquaintance with Sa'di and it was so tantalising that after a year in 1635, Friedrich Ochsenbach (d. 1658) translated Ryer's translation into German language which was printed in Tübingen. No longer after this and for a second time Adam Olearius (d.1671),¹¹ who had learned Farsi language in Iran, prepared a full German translation of the Gulistān with the assistance of an Iranian named Ḥaqqwerdī. This translation was published at Schleswig in 1654. This translation because of its popularity was reprinted in 1660, 1663, 1671 and 1696. Gradually the works of Sa'di were translated into almost all the languages of the world. Based on Henri Massé's famous work *Essai sur le poète Saadi, suivi d'une bibliographie* (Paris, 1919), only Gulistān has been translated 55 times and each translation has been reprinted many times.

Apart from many translations of Sa'di's works into French,¹² German¹³ and English¹⁴ languages, the first translations of Gulistān in different languages are: In Latin, Gentius (Amsterdam, 1651); Dutch, J. V. Duisburg (Amsterdam, 1654); Urdu, Mīr Shīr 'Alī Afsūs (Calcutta, 1802); Arabic, Khwāja Jibrā'il b. Yūsufī, known as al-Mukhallā' (Bulāq, 1846);

¹⁰. *Gulistan ou l'empire des roses*. Tr. Par André du Ryer, Paris: Ant. De Sommerville. 1634.

¹¹. Adam Olearius was member of a delegation on behalf of Friedrich III that visited Russia and Iran. In his introduction to Gulistān Adam writes: when I visited Iran, there was no one who could read and write and did not possess a copy of the Gulistān... those considered knowledgeable had memorised parts of the Gulistān...children after learning the Qur'ān were memorising poems of the *Gulistān* and studied *Būstān*...

¹². For a while after Ryer translation in 1634, no other translation in French language was carried out. In 1694 a selection of Gulistān and Būstān was published, There appeared a translation of Būstān by the famous French traveller Jean Chardin in 1711. Abbe Gaudin translated the complete text of the Gulistān in 1789. A precise and eloquent translation of Būstān was carried out by Semelet in 1834. Charles Defremery published his translation of Gulistān in 1858. Nikola, minister plenipotentiary of France in Iran in 1869, translated the Būstān into French language. Barbier de Meynard translated the Gulistān in 1880. Franz Toussaint in 1913 published the translation of Gulistān and Būstān in one volume which was introduced by the French-Romanian poet Comtesse Anna de Noailles. In 1919, one of the most important works about Sa'di was published by Henri Massé, later; in 1950 he produced a new translation of both Gulistān and Būstān. Among the new translations of Gulistān, mention should be made of Omar Ali-Shah's translation along with a detailed exposition of Sa'di's influence on western writers edited by Naẓār Ma'rūf and Anny Michal, Paris, 1997.

¹³. After Ochsenbach's translation of Gulistān in 1635 and Olearius' translation in 1654, Olearius produced a translation of Būstān in 1696. In 1827, the famous expert on Iranian studies, Bernhard Dorn translated three chapters of the Gulistān. In 1841, Philipp Wolf translated the entire text of the Gulistān. In 1846, Karl Heinrich Graf's important translation of Gulistān was published and was followed by his remarkable versified translation of Būstān in 1850. Both works deserved appreciation. In 1855, Graf translated Sa'di's odes and lyrics. Tireless efforts of the distinguished German scholar of the Nineteenth century Friedrich Rückert resulted at a new translation of Sa'di's Būstān and Gulistān in 1882 and 1895 respectively. In 1893, Rückert translated parts of the *Kullīyyāt* and in 1894 wrote a book entitled Sa'di the poet-politician. Once more, in the Twentieth century with the efforts of Rudolf Gelpke the Gulistān was translated again in 1967.

¹⁴. In 1774, for the first time, samples of Sa'di's works were translated into English language by William Jones. In 1791, Harrington translated the *Kullīyyāt* which was published in Calcutta. In 1806, a translation of Gulistān was first published in India and later, in 1808 Gladwin published a reprint of it in England. This is one of the best translations of the Gulistān and its print is still reproduced. In 1823 James Ross produced a new translation of the Gulistān. In 1827, the Persian text of Gulistān was also published in London. In 1850, the famous translation of Gulistān by Eastwick along with a detailed lexicon in both Persian and English languages was published. In 1851 the Austrian orientalist Alvis Sprenger, published the text of the Gulistān in the original Persian language applying diacritical signs and modern punctuations. In 1879, Wilberforce Clark published an authenticated translation of the *Būstān*. In 1921, Richard Burton, the famous translator of the One thousand and One Night (*hizār wa yak shab*) published a highly eloquent and reliable translation of the Gulistān. From among the new translations, translation of the first chapter of the Gulistān by Arberry in 1945 and translation of the Būstān by Wickens along with notes and commentaries in 1974 are worth of mention. The latest translation of Būstān was published by Mīrza 'Aqīl Ḥusayn Bārlās in 1997. Lyrics and other works of Sa'di have not attracted much attention of the English translators. In 1902 Sa'di's lyrics were translated by Mullā Suhrabji and published in India. A selection of Sa'di's lyrics was translated by Lucas in 1926 and published with an introduction by Reynold Nicholson.

Russian, S. Nazariyān (Moscow, 1857); Italian, Vincentus (Naples, 1873); Turkish, Mullā Asad Efandī (Constantinople, 1873); Polish, Biberstein Kazimirski (Paris, 1876); Pashtu, H. G. Raverty (London, 1880); Provençal, L. Piat (Montpellier, 1888); Salvia, Krimski (1894); Romanian, G. Popesco Ciocanel (Ploesti, 1905).¹⁵

In 1927, the famous Chinese scholar Jen Jin Do in his *History of World Literature* devoted a chapter to Sa'di and translated some of his works into Chinese language. In 1948, for the first time, a Chinese Muslim known as Jin Jay Van translated the Gulistān into Chinese language. In 1958, in commemoration of Sa'di's 700 anniversary of the compilation of Gulistān, another translation of the Gulistān was published by Jian Fu Shvei. In 1950, Professor Sawa, chair of the International Studies; University of Osaka published a free translation of Gulistān. In 1964, Professor Gamo, chair of the International Studies, university of Tokyo, published the complete translation of the Gulistān in the Japanese language.

Soon or late, each a every work of Sa'di was published by the cultural institutions world-wide, here, for summary knowledge, we enlist the earliest editions as they appear in Henri Massé's catalogue: Gulistān (Amsterdam, 1651); Selected Works (Vienna, 1778); Book of Advice (*Pandnāma*, Calcutta, 1788); Kulliyāt, (Calcutta, vol. 1, 1791; vol. 2, 1795); Treatises (Calcutta, 1791); Būstān (Calcutta, 1824).

In Europe, prior to 1791, when the Kulliyāt was published in Calcutta, Sa'di was only known through the Gulistān and Būstān and apart from Gulistān no other work of him had ever been translated or published. It was only after the publication of Kulliyāt in Calcutta that majority of his works were translated into major languages of Europe and Sa'di and his works were better known all over the world.

French philosopher Denis Diderot (d. 1784), wrote an essay about the Gulistān. Voltaire studied the Gulistān with great care. Lord Byron compared Sa'di with Gaius Valerius Catullus (84-54 BC), who is considered as the greatest writer of Latin lyrics. Goethe, in his praise of Adam Olearius for his translation of Gulistān wrote: 'In return, in the light of his diligent and delightful translation, he introduced the great Sa'di to the German people.' In his *Court West – East* (*Vest-Östlicher Divan*), Goethe has quoted Sa'di and following is part of his eulogy:

Sa'di says:

منت خدای را عزّ و جلّ که طاعتش موجب قربت است
و به شکر اندرش مزید نعمت؛
هر نفسی که فرو می‌رود ممدّ حیات است و چون بر می‌آید مفرح ذات.
پس در هر نفسی دو نعمت موجود است و بر هر نعمتی شکری واجب.

In every breath we breathe two graces
The in draught and the outflow;
That is a toil, but this refreshment brings;
So marvellous are our life's co-minglings,
Thank God when thou dost feel His hand constrain,
And thank when He releases Thee again.

Goethe says:

*Im Atemholen sind zweierler Gnaden:
Die Luft einziehen, sich ihrer entladen;
Jenes bedrängt, dieses erfrischt;*

¹⁵. For more information on the translations of Sa'di's work in different languages under each title, see Henri Massé, *Essai sur le poète Saadi* (Paris, 1919).

*So wunderbar ist das Leben gemischt.
Du danke Gott wenn er dich preßt
Und dank ihm wenn er dich wieder entläßt*

Goethe brings his *Divan* to an end by quoting the colophon of *Gulistān* in full with its German translation. Friedrich Rückert (d. 1866) praised Sa'di in his poems. Victor Hugo (d. 1885) in *Les Orientales* quotes from the *Gulistān*. Sa'di, in one way or another, has also attracted the attention of Jean de La Fontaine (d. 1695); Jean François de Saint Lambert (d. 1803); Madame Roland (d. 1793); Johan Herder Gottfried (d. 1803); Lorenzo Pignotti (d. 1812); Honoré de Balzac (d. 1850); Alfred de Musset (d. 1857); Eugene Manuel (d. 1901) and many others. James Thomson (d. 1748), the 18th century Scottish Poet, seems to have been totally absorbed in Sa'di's visions, speeches and feelings and did not feel too distanced from Shiraz of the 13th century. The American philosopher Amos Branson Alcott (d. 1888) equated the works of Sa'di to those of Socrates, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton and Goethe. Others too composed poems and wrote eulogies of Sa'di: Ernest Renan (d. 1892) says: In fact Sa'di is one of our speakers; English poet Arnold Edwin (d. 1904) Says: Sa'di belongs both to the past and the present; Emerson (d. 1803), the American poet and writer says: Humanity is in love with Sa'di, he is the poet of affection, friendship, championship, generosity, liberality, kindness, purity and divine favour... Among a million souls Sa'di stands distinct and unrivalled... The sun that shines in his heart radiates from his words. The American writer and thinker Henry David Thoreau (d. 1862) said: I do not see any substantial difference between myself and Sa'di, he does not belong to Iran alone, he is not an ancient poet, he is not alien to me, because of the resemblance of his thought with my thought, he has endured and is alive.

Wide-ranging fame of *Gulistān* encouraged many writers in Iran, India and the Ottoman lands to imitate the *Gulistān* and compile books in the same style. Among them, to name a few, are *Nagāristān* by Mu'īnī-yi Juwaynī, *Bahāristān* by Jāmī and the *Parīshān* of Ghā'ānī.

Sa'di is a poet that, more than any other person, has made the Persian language sweeter, more eloquent and expressive and cannot be compared with any other poet except Ferdowsi.

5.3 Comparative criteria: Does the heritage meet any of the following tests?

1 Time

Sa'di's lifetime¹⁶ coincided with the Mongol invasion and dawn of the decline of a culture that had started and blossomed since the 4th/10th century. Based on historical evidences, Iran had never had worst distractive years than Sa'di's era. Devastation of cities, burning of libraries and dwelling places, killing people and looting properties are all talking pictures of this epoch. Historiographers have recorded the year 616/1219 as the beginning of the first wave of the Mongol invasion, the second wave commenced in the year 656/1258, that is, the time when Hülegü invaded Baghdad which brought about the downfall of Abbasids and the end of the Islamic Caliphate, this being one of the greatest catastrophes ever encountered Islam. Ironically, this is also the time when the *Gulistān* is composed. *Būstān* being compiled a bit earlier in the year 655/1257.

In such turbulent and volatile period, a capable ruler in Fars, a province in the centre of Iran, namely Atābak, Abū Bakr Sa'd b. Zangī governed the province for 34 years, from 623/1226 to 658/1259 and his prudent measures kept the Fars province immune from the Mongol invasion.

¹⁶. There is much controversy about Sa'di's date of birth and death. Two dates for his birthday have attracted more attentions, they are 585/1189 and 606/1209, each drawing support from the text of the *Gulistān* and *Būstān*. The same applies to his date of death. On the whole, based on general consensus, the majority of scholars have accepted 606/1209 and 691/1291 as his dates of birth and death.

This is about the time when Sa'di, after a long journey around the Islamic world, had returned to Shiraz.¹⁷ Sa'di dedicated both the Gulistān and the Būstān to the Atābak, Abū Bakr, in the prelude of Gulistān he praises the ruler and in the Būstān mentions the ransom that he paid the Mongols to prevent their invasion of Fars.

After the death of Atābak Abū Bakr, patron of Sa'di and the famous ruler of Fars, other Atābaks, one after another, ruled Shiraz and Sa'di has praised some of them in his poems. After the death of Hülegü in 663/1264 Abāqā khān, his son and successor, appointed a Mongol chieftain named Ankīyānu in 667/1268 as the ruler of Fars. His reign lasted four years; there are few poems mainly of the type of advice and admonition dedicated to him by Sa'di. Abāqā died in 680/1281 and was replaced by another son of Hülegü namely Aḥmad Takūdār which soon afterword was assassinated and Arghūn khān the son of Abāqā took charge of the affair in the year 683/1284. Under his command a number of Ilkhānid chieftains were dispatched to Shiraz until the death of Ābish Khātūn in 685/1286, when the semi-independent rule of the Sulghurids dynasty of Fars came to an end. As such, the Mongols took possession of Fars and a new chapter was opened in the history of this region. During this period, Sa'di also lost his greatest patron in the Mongol court, namely the Juwaynī family. Soon after the death of Arghūn in 690/1291, Sa'di too being a worn-out old man departed from this perishable world.

As for the Farsi or Persian language, in a time when prose and poetry books, one collection after another, were put to fire, or buried under the ruins of dwelling places, the appearance of Sa'di was just like a miracle. With his writings in prose and poetry Sa'di re-build the ruins and revived the Persian language and made and created a style that became the standard for the excellence of Persian language.

The bliss and mayhems of this period have been depicted in Sa'di's writings most fluently and the best of elocutions, and as such, being a mirror of historical narratives, Sa'di's deliberations forms an eternal piece of literature that surpasses the boundaries of time.

2 Place

Sa'di was born in Shiraz, Ibn Baṭūṭa describes the city around this period thus: "In the Eastern lands, in so far as the beauty of bazars, gardens, irrigation system and its people are concerned, except Shiraz no other city can compete with Damascus. Shiraz is a famous, ancient, affluent and extended city...In this city a unique system of governance is dominant..."

As a young man, perhaps in response to the dictate of time, Sa'di departs from Shiraz and begins a long journey that lands him as a student in the Nizāmiyya of Baghdad. Later he visits Mesopotamia and the boarders of Syria. For a while he stays in Damascus and Aleppo and moves on to Palestine, Lebanon and Baalbek. In Tripoli he is captured and sold as a slave. The outermost boarders of the Western Islamic lands are also described in Sa'di's works. In Aksaray, Sa'di meets Sayfu'dīn Furghānī, in Konya he meets the famous mystic Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rumi and in between performs Ḥajj pilgrimage to Mecca fourteen times. In Sana, gets married and a child in born which dies infant. In the eastern Iran, in Quhistān and Bīrjand, he meets Nizārī-yi Quhistānī. He travels to Balkh, Bāmiyān and Kashgar in China and describes the outermost boarders of the Islamic lands in the East. Ultimately when in Syria he decides to return to Shiraz. He arrives at Shiraz around the year 655/1257, by this time he was a famous and respected poet and deservingly, both government and masses welcomed him with honour and great admiration. He resided in a beautiful residential place in the suburb of the city, close to the famous Ruknābād waters, attached to a complex that housed a school, a mosque and a Khāniqāh (Monastery).

Sa'di's writings are packed with description of places that he visited or lived, but the impact and wide-spread influence of his works are not confined to a unique place or domain. In the

¹⁷. As a young man in 620-21/1223-4, Sa'di starts a long journey, firstly to study in the Nizāmiyya of Baghdad, and secondly to travel and gain experience of the Islamic world. He returns to Shiraz in 655/1257, a time when Mongols have invaded almost the entire Iran, Fars has accepted Mongol's sovereignty while preserving her independence.

course of centuries, his fame has travelled far and wide and has reached the four corners of the earth.

3 People

Sa'di's stories in the *Gulistān* are portrayals of day-to-day life of the people of the 7th/13th century Shiraz and Fars; or stories about the people with whom Sa'di lived, mingled, or had a discussion with during his travels. There is a sign, a reference, an anecdote or a story about each and every creed, religion and faith; stories about a society mainly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry and ruled by despotic governments where industry meets the need of everyday life and commerce belongs to the well-off strata in the society. In his stories Sa'di concentrates on individual lives and highlights their specific social characters. In the *Būstān* however, stories are depicted to convey morality, enhance refinement of ethical characters and improve the wellbeing of the society. The kind of morality that Sa'di proposes for the improvement of society addresses life both in this world and in the hereafter. There is no doubt that the ethics advocated by Sa'di in the *Būstān* is an Islamic one, imbedded in it is his own personal experiences, his reflection on the prerequisites of life in various classes of people. An experience that he had the opportunity to gain during his deliberations on the philosophy of life during his studies in the *Nizāmiyya* of Baghdad and the time when he was delivering sermons, lectures, admonitions and advice in cities such as Damascus, Quds and Baalbek. The style that Sa'di adopts in the narration of his stories transforms words of wisdom and advice into a kind of the philosophy of ethics. Allegory takes the place of syllogism and his preachings while corresponding to the taste and understanding of masses appears to conform to the high standards of ethics. Each story ends with a universal significance; his personages being either sages of politician, pious or complacent, rich or poor, young or old, knowledgeable or ignorant has a story to tell which in conjunction with each other they create a story that conveys a strong sense of admonition and ethical warning. Stories narrated in the *Gulistān* and *Būstān* are the chronicle of the above mentioned exemplary people, there are lessons that they should learn and admonition to be conveyed to them. Sa'di depicts the innermost feelings and sentiments of human being and exposes mankind's basic and essential nature. And this is how his writings are a reflection of human life.

4 Subject and theme

Būstān or *Sa'dīnāma*, the first book composed by Sa'di is a versified *Mathnawī* (couplet-poem) in which verses have the same rhythm and meter. It contains approximately 4000 verses that constitute 10 chapters: Chapter 1: Concerning justice, council and the administration of government (*'adl wa tadbīr wa ra'y*); Chapter 2: Concerning benevolence (*Ihsān*); Chapter 3: Concerning love, intoxication and fervour (*Ishq wa mastī wa shūr*); Chapter 4: Concerning humility (*tawādu*); Chapter 5: Concerning resignation (*riqā*); Chapter 6: Concerning contentment (*qinā'at*); Chapter 7: Concerning education (*'alam-i tarbiyat*); Chapter 8: Concerning gratitude and welfare (*shukr bar 'āfiyat*); Chapter 9: Concerning repentance and the path to reward (*tauba wa rāh-i thawāb*); Chapter 10: Concerning supplication and the end of book (*munājāt wa khatm-i kitāb*). In the *Būstān* world is visualized as how it should be and not as what it is. To reach the ideal position, society needs to be refined and it is only through the refinement of manners and human characters that mankind can move from where he is to a place where he should be.

Soon after the completion of *Būstān* Sa'di embarked on the writing of *Gulistān*, an embellished rimed text, both in poetry and prose. The content includes eight chapters: Chapter 1: On manners of kings (*sīrat-i pādishāhān*); Chapter 2: On manners of mendicants (*akhilāq-i darwishān*); Chapter 3: On the excellence of content (*faḍilat-i qinā'at*); Chapter 4: On the advantages of silence (*fawā'id-i Khāmūshī*); Chapter 5: On love and youth (*'ishq wa jawānī*); Chapter 6: On weakness and old age (*ḍa'f wa pīrī*); Chapter 7: On the effect of education (*ta'thir-i tarbiyat*); Chapter 8: On rules of conduct (*ādāb-i ṣuḥbat*). In the *Gulistān*, Sa'di's vision of life is a factual one; he looks at the world as it is. His portrayal of life in Shiraz is a mirror image of life in the wider society of his time which is an Islamic society composed of various

social classes with all its attractions and repulsions.

Apart from these two books, other works of Sa'di composed during his life-time which are moulded in various patterns of poetry are collected in the *Kulliyyāt*, which was described earlier. Sa'di's output can categorically be classified into two classes: works that basically deal with ethics, promote ethical education and contain advice and admonition; and books that deal with love, affection and take the form of lyrics and speak of amusement and pleasure. So, Sa'di can be both, a promoter of ethical virtues or an advocate of love.

The first category contains educational literature, promoting the refinement of characters;¹⁸ In the east, and in particular Iran, the best examples of this genre are the gnostic works of Sanā'ī, 'Aṭṭār, Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, the epical work of Ferdowsi and Sa'di's *Gulistān*, *Būstān* and his odes and admonitions. In this genre of literature if the artistic, poetical and magical attraction of the style is removed, what remains would be a bunch of tedious and repetitive narratives that resembles the explanation of the obvious. Any poet repeating betrayal and infidelity of the world or avoiding attachment to it, as Sa'di does, his words would have been the most boring and distasteful piece of literature. But the norm of Sa'di's deliberations is such that the reader fails to notice that Sa'di has repeated the point many times. This is for the reason that Sa'di's advice is expressed differently, Sometime friendly and polite, else with anticipation and eagerness, aggressive and belligerent, with wit and humour, or in the tongue of a third person and in time it appears indifferent and uncaring but in all of them there is an anticipation and emphasis that makes them exert their influence.

To sum up, we can state that Sa'di's style in his odes are rhetoric, provocative and high-handedly, and in the *Būstān*, the style is subtle, parentally and affectionate. But, in both cases Sa'di is confident, explicit, unapologetic, authoritative and devoid of any weakness. Consequently reader is bound to listen to him and feel no resentment in accepting his admonition and advice.

Here few samples are quoted:

*Damn not, good reputation of those departed,
May the good name of you remain untouched!*

*Time cares not for our presence
Flowers will blossom, and springs will pass!*

*You steal and rob Muslims, but are quick to shout and yell,
You are not Muslims! When they pilfer from you!*

*Humanity is an expression of generosity, wisdom and grace,
Else, you are a beast in human shape!*

*Respond to my provocation with caution,
You may see it as an advice or react with anger!*

*One road ends at good fortune and joy
Else commiserations, you decide!*

The second group of Sa'di's works are his love poems and the lyrics that portray tenderness and passion. Lyric or love literature similar to ethical writing has a vast domain; this is for the reason that all over the world, expression of passion, affection, love and emotion is the most popular form of poetry. In Persian language too, lyric is the most popular style of love poetry. Lyrics of Sa'di, parallel to depicting human love and affection in its pure worldly and physical

¹⁸. Educational literature stands for a branch of literature that describes a set of theoretical or applied knowledge in an influential and imaginative manner that proposes a philosophical, religious or ethical theory. In the history of world literature, *Divine Comedy* of Dante and *Lost Paradise* of Milton are among this genre of literature. For more details see: M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3rd Ed (New York, 1970), pp. 39-40.

form, is saturated with divine affection and benevolence. In Persian poetry of the classical time, what we may call the poetry of lust and seduction was first versified in the poems of Sa'di, reached its pinnacle in his poetry and after him did not enjoy much popularity. Although the date of composition of six hundred lyrics of Sa'di in his *Kulliyāt* cannot be clearly established and we cannot pinpoint how many were composed in his youth and how many in the later periods of his life, but one thing is certain that almost two hundred of his lyric poems are depicting him at the peak of his adolescence with an overflowing fervour of love and passion:

*You entered my life, and I lost myself,
As if, I died and reborn in another world!*

*O Cameleer, move not so fast, my beloved, is your passenger
The heart that I owned, my beloved takes it away!
In departing soul from body, speeches are plenty,
But with my own eye, I witnessed my soul depart.*

In his gnostic poems, Sa'di speaks of love in a wider sense where there is room for Divine grace, God's mercy and the supplication and devotion of the faithful to God. In this genre of Gnosticism, the relationship of God with the perceptual world and God's relation with human being occupies a lofty place. So, Sa'di is a poet of Gnosticism too, although he is more famous as a composer of lyrics:

Here, jubilant I am, because the entire existence is jubilant of Him,
World is dear to me, since it belongs to Him.

Similarly, a great part of his lyrics are devoted to advice and admonition and many of them have turned into proverbs:

Having a caring soul, makes human body pretty,
Beauty is not just having pretty dress.

Sa'di is a poet of peace and friendship, his ethical instructions follows no objective except love for humanity and the recognition of human dignity and its noble status. The following fragment from *Gulistān* beyond the barriers of time and space is a universal motto:

*Humans are peers of a united race,
Thus in creation, share the same base.
If one is affected with pain,
Others share the faith of same.
When you are indifferent to this pain,
You shall not earn the Humans' name.*

Literary critics consider Sa'di the greatest personality among the classical poets of Iran; they speak of him as a universal sage.¹⁹ This is an indication that perhaps Sa'di's own predication has been realised that all over the world his works will be known and men of letters and intellectuals will be captivated by his sayings. Goethe in the supplements to his *East-West*

¹⁹. See Wickens, G. M. *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned: The Bustan of Sa'di*, Leiden, Brill and Toronto University Press, 1974.

Divan writes: In this infinite world, the great Sa'di is pulled from all directions, and every seeker, in the multifarious realms of experience obtains limitless treasures and from each field extract a point that certainty needs to be collected and imparted, thus as a resourceful base we feel more obliged to him than anybody else.

5 Form and style

The strength of Sa'di is concealed in his style of expression and the manner of his speech; no one has ever been able to speak more fluently while mixing the talent of simplicity with the firmness of elocution. Fluency of Sa'di's speech is the criterion for integrity and the limit for the elocution of Persian language. Sa'di has captivated, deceived and mislead the poets who came after him. His simplicity of language has misled them since no one of them has ever been able to deliver a speech so soft and firm comparable to him. Sa'di's poems have been described as 'impossibly simple' meaning simple in appearance, but impossible to imitate. Dynamism in the language of Sa'di is the composition of sentence and not the application of allegory, symbolism and other poetic figures of speech. In the 7th/13th century, when the application of artistic methods were much appreciated among poets, Sa'di backtracked to the simplicity of his predecessors of the 4-5th/10-11th centuries such as Rūdakī and Ferdowsi and remained aloof from non-realistic and artificial mannerism popular in his time. Over and above, Sa'di's style is distinct from his predecessors in so far as it is simple, fluent and closer to the mode of expression current among the masses. Such a distinction is an outcome of the differences that existed between Persian language spoken in the Eastern and Western Iran during the 3th/9th to 7th/13th centuries. In other words Sa'di stands at the apex of a curve that represents the transformation of Persian language and since his time no major transformation has occurred in this language. Consequently, after Ferdowsi, the Persian language owes its refinement to no one but Sa'di.

Exclusivity of Sa'di's language is not restricted to his poetical outputs, in prose writing too he is an innovator and genuine thinker. After four centuries of growth and development in the field of poetry, Persian language had gained strength and versatility but in the field of prose writing had stagnated and moved towards decay and deterioration. Iranian scholars and men of letter use to write in Arabic language. Arabic was the language of religion and politics, it was official language of the Umayyad and the Abbasid Caliphates, it was the medium of cultural and philosophical exchange and in practice it was the language of science among all Islamic countries. At the time Arabic was considered 'the best of all languages' and Iranian intellectuals too wrote in this language, a language which was richer, so far as technological and scientific terms were concerned and all Islamic communities were familiar to it. Scribes and secretaries had been addicted to embellish their writings with Arabic proverbs, maxims, quotations from the holy Qur'ān and traditions narrated from Prophet Muḥammad; they considered application of synonyms, pleonasm and unnecessary clichés as the art of good writing and plunged into the rough terrain of unfamiliar words to identify a suitable rhythm. Such an approach resulted in the decline of Persian prose writing. Sa'di's prose on the other hand had the ingenuity and resourcefulness to cut through these prominent and compulsive barriers and free the Persian prose writing from all its distractive aggrandizements without losing its beauty. Sa'di's *Gulistān* occupies a place between the earlier phase of Persian prose writing which was committed to the expression of ideas in the simplest form and the artistic norms adopted in later periods where decoration and embellishment were considered the norm of beautiful compositions. Similar to its prelude, the entire *Gulistān* is a simple prose stripped of needless frills, but at the same time illustrated with amazing poems, parables and the words of wisdom. In the *Gulistān* and *Būstān*, Sa'di is an instructor and guide and as such opposed to sophisticated phraseology. Taking care of simplicity, avoiding obsolete expressions, usage of needless protractions and many other subtle points have turned the *Gulistān* into a masterpiece of Sa'di's prose writings and consequently turned it into a book of advice and admonition for all mankind. In his style and manner Sa'di does not follow any other person and shows no similarity with others. He is the originator and the master of a style that

has been imitated by others and as such recognised as the most eloquent person (*afṣaḥ al-mutakallimīn*).²⁰

6 Social/ spiritual/ community significance:

Today, while standing at the apex of the transformation of Farsi language, Sa'di's compositions are the point of reference and model for a language that people speak with.²¹ Additionally, in view of the blending of Arabic words with Persian vocabulary, the accepted and appreciated level of such a mixture are the standards set up in Sa'di's works. As for the influence of Sa'di among the Persian speaking people and popularity of his expressions as anecdotes and words of wisdom among masses, it is justified to say that Sa'di enjoys the same status as that of the Shakespeare among the English speaking people.²² The fame of Sa'di among Persian speaking people and the circulation of his words for such a long time is a proof that his language meets the prerequisites and requirements of being accepted as words of wisdom, anecdotes and parables. The gist of Sa'di's words and their connotations are mirror images of what the earlier sages and men of wisdom have already said. It is their appropriateness and admonitory effects, in addition to Sa'di's own experiences that makes his reiterations, style and mannerism worthy of being repeated by generation one after another to the degree of being accepted as anecdotes and popular words of wisdom among the Farsi speaking people of the world.

6.0 Contextual information

6.1 Rarity

In the course of time a great number of Sa'di's works have been reproduced in manuscript form which are scattered in libraries, museums and personal collections all over the world: According to the *catalogue of manuscripts in Iran*,²³ there are 393 copies of *Kullīyyāt*, 375 copies of *Gulistān*, 137 copies of *Divan* and 225 copies of *Būstān* in libraries and museums of Iran. Apart from few copies of the 7th-8th/13th-14th centuries, the rest mostly belongs to the 9th/15th up to second half of the 14th/20th centuries. There are many copies preserved in the libraries and museums of other countries: According to a catalogue of Pakistan libraries, published in 1985, there are over 1160 manuscripts of Sa'di's works in that country.²⁴

Having mentioned the multitude number of manuscripts, it should be noted that each and every one of them has its own distinct feature, Some, while complete are of late provenance and some are defective. The copy proposed for the register is a genuine, dated, ancient, complete, well preserved and spotless copy.

²⁰. Our predecessors have nicknamed Sa'di as the *afṣaḥ al-mutakallimīn*. This is in response to his artistic talent and magical application of language in the writing of poetry and prose. Similarly they have named Ferdowsi as Master philosopher (*hakīm*) and Hāfiẓ as the 'Tongue of the spiritual world (*lisān al-ghayb*)' and Jāmī as 'the seal of poets (*khātam al-shu'arā*)'. These are not official titles bestowed in recognition of official services; they are given by masses and cannot be acquired.

²¹. Muḥammad 'Alī Frūghī (d. 1942), the editor of Sa'di's *Kullīyyāt*, in his introduction says: Enlightened people occasionally are amazed that Sa'di speaks in a language that Iranian speak today, the truth is that, after 700 years, we speak in a language that we have learned from him.

²². In relation to Shakespeare's status among English speaking people it is said that over 450 sentences of his writings are popular figure of speech and over 2000 of his phrases are quoted in various dialogues.

²³. *Catalogue of Manuscripts in Iran* under the auspices of the National Library and Archives of Iran started in 1390Sh/2011 and is continued with the publication of volume 28 in 1392Sh/2013. Total volumes are envisaged to be 45.

²⁴. For more information on the number of copies of Sa'di's output, under each title, see Munzawī, Aḥmad, *Sa'di through the manuscripts of Pakistan*, Islamabad, Iran Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, 1363Sh/1985, published on the 800th anniversary of Sa'di's birthday. This catalogue contains useful information about various commentaries, translations, imitations, glossaries and the selections of Sa'di's works.
