

(**khanegah**) to the Tavern so that he may come to his senses from the intoxication of asceticism and

heart on the day when I became one of the dwellers of your Court, the Elder of the Magians (**pir-e-moghan**)

see; In such a place, O wonder! Shines out such

was very important for the followers of Mithra, for it symbolized the mysteries of divine love and eternal life. This is the source of the many references to wine, wine-driking, taverns and wine-sellers in Persian literature.

The many references to wine in Hafiz poetry are usually to spiritual love. Hafiz often refers to himself as a **rend**, a drinker or reveler, one who drunk of the wine of divine love at the Tavern of the Magian Elder and through his intoxication reached such a state of ecstasy that he is no longer bound down by the fetters of custom, convention and creed. He is interested only in truth and reality, and despises those who adhere to the strict letter of the law, as represented by the type of the unenlightened literalist or **zahed**. Hafiz says:

**zahid** was filled with pride; he could not traverse the Path: the **rend**, through love, reached

**rend** am I, intoxicated and devoid of memory of myself. And undisturbed am I by any

Although the **rend** is a Gnostic, an enlightened person who has attained divine wisdom through the wine of love and who is the recipient of many spiritual secrets, he gives no external sign of this, for it is not thought advisable for such matters to become common knowledge. By hiding his secrets from those unworthy of them, he is able to deflect possible opposition and antagonism. Instead, such things are spoken of only in seclusion or with those who themselves share this knowledge.

in concealing the mysteries of

C- I have concluded in my assay that it is not right to isolate these points on Mithraism as Dr Homayouni does from the rest of

of Hafiz can similarly and equally be ac

version of the creation of Adan in whom God blow something of His spirit,

and life from God to the world and Ibn

- wujud) and the manifestation of God throughout the universe. By way of example, here we cite a famous poem from his Divan which is fully in agreement with the illuminist school of Islamic philosophy.

In eternity past the ray of your beauty breathed of its unveilings.

Thus was love revealed and world set ablaze.

Your visage created glory, the Angel saw but conceived no love.

Thereby incensed he became the essence of fire and struck down at Man.

Reason desired to kindle a torch at the flame.

There flashed forth the lightening of jealousy so that the world was destroyed.

The adversary desired then to visit the place where secret things are visible.

The hand of the Mysterious came and pierced the breast of that uninitiated one.

Others die of fate desiring only joy.

It was grief-stricken heart alone which threw the grief again.

From on high the soul held a passion for the dimple in your chin.

Its hand dallied with those curling tresses of yours.

# HAFIZ of SHIRAZ

Shams al-Din Mohammad Hafiz Shirazi (d. 792 AH/1389 A.D.) is the most popular poet in Iran. He is the greatest master of the Sonnet (Ghazal) in Persian and at the same time he is regarded as the symbol of the Iranian national identity. The first essay on Hafiz in the present issue is by this editor. This attempts to describe him in the light of the religious, cultural and political values of his time.

Who was Hafiz?

A- Attempts have been made to link Hafiz with various Sufi sects, such as the Malamatiyah (an offshoot of the followers of Jamal al-Din Mujarrad) or Qalandariyah (the followers of Sharaf al-Din Abu Ali

Kirman). The inferences made out of

propositions remain inconclusive. Indeed Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 898 AH/1492 AD) does not include Hafiz in **nafahat al-uns** as a Sufi, hence his actual adherence to Sufi orders is in doubt.

B- Yet some contemporary writers such as the late Dr Massoud Homayouni have linked Hafiz with the doctrines and practices of Mithraism, a spiritual path which began in Iran many thousand years ago and which is generally called sun worshipping (mehr in

They argue that Hafiz himself tells us in his poetry that he has become the disciple of a Magian Elder (*pir-e moghan*), whom he constantly refers to as a wise man with an enlightened heart full of spiritual mysteries, the manifestation of absolute purity and perfection, to whom he is indebted for all the knows:

the Magian Elder who releases me from ignorance. Whatever my Master

of the Wine of Love exists, my head will be the

Dr Homayouni, relying on Mithraic terminology, argues that the various figures in

fictitious, but all refer to the same Mithraic Elder. He cites the following:

**pir-e khorabat**), and by gratitude for his favour, I swear that there is nothing in my head but desire to serve

The same Elder or Master is also described as referring not to his name, but his red robes, in contrast with other dervishes at

-Coloured Master (**pir-e gol-rangh**) has often spoken to me of the blue-robed ones (**azraq**), If only would permit me to speak, what stories I c

Homayouni further explains the difference between a Magian Elder and other spiritual guides. The Magian Elder, who is devoid of selfishness and egotism, shuns ostentation and refuses to be bound by rules and conventions. He always lives in concealment and passes most of his time in traveling from place to place until he finds those of spiritual potential in need of training. Ordinary people either do not make his acquaintance, or they do, are not aware of their true status, which is why the Master of Hafiz has always been considered to be an imaginary figure.

Without citing any documentary evidence it has been claimed that Hafiz was admitted to the court of this Magian Elder. For instance, Homayouni goes on to say that Hafiz was given a goblet of wine, a wine which intoxicated him with divine love. Realizing the futility of his past way of life Hafiz discarded his worry beads and cloak to become the disciple of this Magian Elder. The texts from Hafiz put forward to establish a case for his being a Mithraic disciple are the following: