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**THE WOMEN'S` AESTHETICS BASED ON
THE PERSIAN LITERARY WORKS**

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We have to accept that beauty is a relative subject and we can not assume any scale or standard for it. Because people see beauty according to their taste and their point of view and they give it an artistic value.

In addition the beauty changes according to time or geographic locations. For example what seems beautiful in England may not be considered beautiful in India, and if an artistic piece was considered to be beautiful in a certain time, it is possible that it may not look beautiful if compared to fashion of the time.

Philosophers have said:" beauty is a value that is seen in things, creatures and it creates joy and satisfaction in humans. They consider beauty as harmonized elements of an object. For others beauty is the spiritual shining of a piece or a creature and they neglect the appearance. They believe that it has to be a moral symbol or play an educational role. To seek for the aesthetic standards in women in Iranian history we have to check the literature and artistic works. In our land according to the archeological and mythical concepts worshipping the goddess has an old history. In pre-historic times the artists that have created special feminine figures have been the spoken persons of their time. There were so many of these kind of sculptures in pre-Persian history that easily we can figure out that the creator of these visual arts had more than just presenting their arts in their minds. They wanted to make the values of their times as popular as people wanted. In Paleolithic age women had special places in society. They were the solid force of the earth and for this reason there are only five men figures compared to the 55 feminine figures found in this time, and those 5 have no cultural or artistic values.

In agricultural age woman was looked upon in a new way. In that era woman has been imagined to be the twin of the earth because she has the power of fertility and procreation, therefore in this era there are many figures of goddess which are symbols of power, procreation, love and fertility. Hence, in this point of view these women's bodies are closer to the nature, and automatically woman became the symbol of beauty. In this way woman became a small manifestation of the big world so that today we can see the four seasons in the woman's cast and admire it.

In this era people believe that the world is a manifestation of excellence and wholeness of woman's body, and if this body mixes with feminine spirit, the happiness and joy of the society, will become a reality based on its close relation with nature. Therefore in a short time woman became not only the sign of excellence, beauty and worldly power, but also she became an eternal force to be worshiped.

In ancient Persian texts "the best woman is full of love and kindness for her man which she has a medium top, wide chest, nice neck, small feet, small waist, cupped sole, wide fingers and soft body, her bosom like quince, nails white like snow, her color red like pomegranate, eyes like almonds, eyebrows like bow and her teeth (pearls) white and elegant, her long hair reddish black and softly spoken." (1)

This view is also apparent in minds of nowadays people. In romantic Persian poetry woman's beauty compared to the moon or flower, straightness of her body to cypress, eyes to almond, her hair to hyacinth, eyelashes to grass, breast to pomegranate, and eyebrows to bow.

These features are seen in almost all Persian poetry from beginning up to now. Poetry as an art can provoke the feeling of the reader. It can create excitement, hatred and disgust. "Horas" believes that for poetry it is not enough to be just beautiful but it should be charming and be joyous to the listener.

This feature is obvious in Persian poetry. One of the characteristics of the Persian poetry is its origination from the reality. In Persian poem the method of teaching and expressing the realities is by creating images. Each of these images is made up of animations that are formed in the mind. So it leads the reader to another world through a logical and disciplinary way.

Persian poets have followed this role even in the epic poems which is more masculine, and wherever they intended to express beauty they used the manifestation of the nature which is feminine.

As mentioned before in the Persian myth and ancient texts the sky has a masculine entity, and it protects the feminine earth like a shield. In *Shahnameh* (the masterpiece of Ferdosi) which is an epic and masculine work women's face are compared to described as the moon, and is a sign of majesty, beauty and light. In fact Ferdosi wanted to introduce woman as a part of man with this similarity. However women in *Shahnameh* are powerful and brave as men but very beautiful. In the lyrics of Hafez the beauty of a woman is compared to the nature, especially flowers, because this kind of poetry is romantic, feminine and elegant. Though we can say that Hafez knew that the earth and woman are twins and he has connected the beauty of the woman to the earth, contrary to Ferdosi who compares the face of the women to the moon. One of the common characteristics of both masculine (mythological) poetries and feminine (lyrics) poetries is that in both the straightness of the body is a sign of beauty. This might have a scientific origin.

Anatomy scientists have proven through fossils remains that "first anatomical changes in feminine hipbone has been toward straightness of physique and then in the building of spinal cord" (2).

In some holy texts woman first ate the forbidden fruit so she is the original sinner and she was the one who caused the expelling of Adam from heavens. If we accept this, then we can say that the straightening of the physique, walking on two feet (to become human) was first done by a woman.

This subject may also have some origin in the cultural age. In this era men were responsible for hunting, and women for picking fruits and seeds. May be we can accept that men have always been stalking animals because of their job and this correlates with their curved back. However women had to stand on both feet to pick fruits from trees using their hands.

In the Persian poetry, to express the beauty of the lovers they have compared them to cypress which is a sign of straightness. Another standard of aesthetic of woman is "hair" which in the Persian poetry its length, blackness and fragrance has been considered. In the classic literature the hair and tresses of woman is described as a symbol. For example in Shahnameh there is a romantic story about a Persian hero named Zal and a girl called Rodabeh from another country. When Zal comes to her land, one of his companions tells him of the beauty of the princess. He describes Rodabeh as such" her skin is as white as ivory, her face is as beautiful as heaven, her tress is like lasso, and her eye brows is like a bow.

Zal falls in love with Rudabeh without seeing her and wishes to meet her. On the other hand Rudabeh's father after meeting Zal describes him as a handsome and matchless hero. Rudabeh also falls in love with Zal. Rudabeh orders to have a nice house ready in the palace. She sends a messenger asking Zal to come secretly to the house. Zal sees her from below, while admiring her he can not find a way up. Rudabeh throws her tress, which is very long and beautiful to Zal asking him to use the tress to come up from the walls of the palace. Zal surprised of the length of the hair kisses them and says he would not do that, instead, he uses his lasso and goes up to her bedroom.

In this story the strength and length of Rudabeh's hair, which can handle the weight of the hero, is noticeable to the reader. But is this possible to have such a hair on such a beautiful woman in reality? If the mythological experts wanted to make this understood, how should they describe this hair?

Undoubtedly, the answer is: from a point of view beyond ordinary appearances of words, Rudabeh's hair is a symbol, which is interpretable. Maybe the power within Rudabeh's hair in fact is a symbol of the power of the ancient woman. Because as it was said before, to worship the original feminine existence (goddess) is very ancient. In the descriptions of Persian goddesses they all had power, beauty and wisdom, but feminine beauty in mystic texts has a different meaning. Some of the mystics see beauty as an obstacle toward enlightenment and they believe that humans faded by beauties of the world will lose the future life or would be delayed or never reach God. They see beauty as a cause of promiscuity.

But real mystics like Molana value worshipping beauty a way to know and witness God's beauty. In mystic literature God created man to show his "power" and created woman to show his "beauty". In this way woman became the manifestation of beauty and man

became the manifestation of greatness. In Koran also says that "God is beautiful and he loves beauty".

Ebne Arabi says in Foses:" man witnesses God's manifestation in woman's face ". (3) Baha Valad Molavi's father says: "In Koran nymph means God says: "I have shown My friendship in nymphs, if you love Me see Me in their delicious spring, see My charm in them. Without them you will not reach My grace."(4)

Good Monbin says:" nymphs have Persian roots and from Persian sources they have found their way to the mythological stories of the nations of the west." (5) Berteles also believes that nymphs are the same Zoroastrian entities who have changed forms as girls. (6) Mystics do not see nymphs as materialistic phenomena, but spiritual creatures and a reward or secret or exemplary manifestations of God's virtues, which marry men's spirit in a mystical way.

In many Persian romantic texts many of the poets see beauty as creator of love, and sometimes, love creator of beauty. They see love as an alchemy that changes humans from copper to gold. Beauty and its connection to love have been mentioned in some Persian poetry. A lover never doubts the beauty of his beloved. He defends his beloved against whom they complain about her, with enthusiasm describing her virtues, which attracted him.

Hafez prefers the beauty of his beloved to all other beautiful things, even heaven's palaces, gardens and its nymphs are worthless in comparison to his lovers. Now we have to see the characteristic of Hafez's beloved in his view? Hafez's beloved as he describes her, is a woman taller than any cypress, long black disheveled hair, eyebrows like bows, eyes like almond, lips smaller than atom and a waist smaller than a hair.

Standards of beauty which was noticed by poets of romantic poetry may not look beautiful today because of changes of times. Even the reader might be surprised how Sa'adi and Hafez (the greatest mystic man) with all of their skills in composing such beautiful poems can fall in love with a woman who lacks the standards of beauty today. This shows the relativity of beauty and also the time factor in changing the standards of beauty.

In romantic Persian poems, love gives life. In poets thoughts life is also the most beautiful gift of God and only high-spirited people attain beauty. We should end this with a sentence from Gustav Young the famous psychologist. "Gustavo Young" believes what has caused Taj Mahal to be beautiful is love. After seeing Taj Mahal in India he says:" these Mongolian emperors of India love beauty with such romance and elegance. In a world full of inhumanity and violence a heavenly dream has manifested in stones, Taj Mahal".

Here is the first place in the world which beauty has manifested in a wonderful building. Taj Mahal is the purest face of love. There are no secrets or symbols. Perhaps it is an expression of an outstanding love of a human to another." (7)

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