



Love and Death in Hafez's Poetry based on the Hades Archetyp

::: Manizheh Abdollahi :::

In the previous article, it was mentioned that one of the main reasons for the general popularity of Hafez's poetry lies in his tendency and attention to the ancient foundations of human thinking. Many human archetypes, are, consciously or unconsciously, well represented in the poems of Hafez. The basis of the present study is displaying the manifestations of one of the archetypes, reflected in the Hafez's poems, full of mysterious teachings and mystical concepts. In Greek mythology, this archetype is known as "Hades" or the god of the underworld. He is the lord of the underworld, and although he rules the land of the dead, he should not be equated with Satan or the devil or the evil spirit. Hades is also known as Plouton, which, in Greek, literary means rich and wealthy. He has a tree branch in his hand, from which various fruits or jewelry, gold and silver hang, symbolically representing richness. Hades is the lord of the depths, depicting the dark aspects of life, sorrow, anxiety, and emotional turmoil. He is the archetype of the unconscious status of and the depths within an individual. And just as in order to attain the riches of the earth, one must explore the depths and discover the gems inside, so one must travel to the depths of unconsciousness to acquire rich insight. Accordingly, Hafez's poem has spoken a lot about the

"value of well-being" which is found in *the corner of ease* and contentment:

Go not to the house of the Lord void of liberality of the age/ For the corner of ease in the dwelling of one's self is.

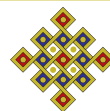
If there's no golden treasure, at least satisfied I remain/ He who gave that to the king, made this the lot of the knave.

The natural outcome for one who penetrates to his/her own inner-being and wins the treasures within is to run away from the outside and hue of this world. This accomplishment, according to Hafez, leaves no desires for watching the world out there anymore.

To him who has seclusion chosen, of new and strange What need? /To him who in love's lane is quartered, o'er wilds to range, What need?

That is why, in Hafez' poems, contentment and finding a calm and temperate place have been praised several times. Encompassing this point alone, current in his poems, Hafez seems to stir the spirit of freedom as well as the state of standing on one's feet, and that of complete independence of the hostile world", as seen in the following poem:

He who forswears contentment's corner, seduced by this world so/ Truly doth vend Egyptian Joseph, to win but a paltry gain.



Mystical intuition, together with the unconscious realm of enlightenment and mysticism, is another doctrine associated with the archetype of Hades because the spiritual inspiration and the discovery of the mystery of existence can be achieved after living a life of seclusion and traveling to the depths of being and depths of darkness:

At dawn from the onrush of sorrows I was relieved/ In the darkness of night, the water of life I received.

Furthermore, the apparent irony of “the water of life in the darkness of night” is exactly in line with the realm of Hades, who attains consciousness and enlightenment on a journey through the inner labyrinth. That’s why, most poems of Hafez in the field of mysticism and in discovering the mystery of existence happens at night, hidden in sole darkness and within inside:

Last night within my heart the love for thee was cried/ And in my yearning bosom the echo yet doth bide.

The subject of death and death awareness as well as the dual approach taken in Hafez’s poems can also be interpreted based on this archetype. Suffice it to say that in the most ancient mythological doctrines, the underworld or the realm of Hades, in its most negative form, reminds one of the “hell” and death. However, the word ‘hell’, before Christianity, was referred to a womb, a sacred cave or a pot full of purifying fire. It is on this basis that Hafez has taken death as a horrible and undesirable phenomenon and at the same time, the same world of horror becomes acceptable and even desirable with the presence of the beloved (an

allusion to the mother, the feminine element), reducing the feeling of horror.

O graceful cypress, my cherisher! By the dust of thy foot, /On the day of events, take not off Thy foot from the head of my dust.

In other words, as in Hades’ archetype, one may step into his realm through depression and death, but as soon as he enters there, he is no longer afraid of death. This is well reflected in Hafez’s poetry, especially in his famous sonnet, vividly adopting Hades’ archetypal view of death.

Arouse thee! Show thy lofty stature, Idol of winning mien/Enable me, as soul-reft HAFIZ, from Nature’s scene

In other words, the horror of death in Hafez’s poetry is softened by the symbolic presence of the feminine element or the beloved. Hence, another window opens on the concept of love in Hafez’s poem, describing it as the other side of the “death” coin. Perhaps one of the reasons for the dual nature of the image of the beloved in Persian poetry, which, on the one hand, is described as a murderer, *a lover killer*, and on the other hand, as one soothing the soul and the heart lies in this Hades’ approach to the concepts of love¹ and death (especially in mystical teachings).

1 In Greek mythology as well as in Sumerian legends, there were heroes who, provoked by love, traveled to the underworld to bring back the beloved (Orpheus went to the underworld in search of his wife Eurydice, and the Sumerian goddess Ishtar went to the realm of death or the underworld in search of his husband, Tammuz). Love and mysticism can bring the hero to the realm of Hades. Perhaps it is the continuation of this image that has lasted until the contemporary era, just as Ahmad Shamloo considers love to be the sister of death.

