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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SA'DI

By

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Dedication

To Professor H.A. Kurani
who taught me Philosophy of
Education for the first time
and who generously encouraged,
guided, and assisted me in
completing this thesis.

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OF SA'DI

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ABSTRACT

Sa'di has been regarded as one of the most profound Iranian thinkers of the last seven centuries. Next to the Koran, his celebrated "Gulistan" has done a great deal to shape the Persian outlook. His influence has been so great that many prominent Iranian thinkers and leaders still reflect his influence in their attitudes and work, especially in education.

The present study aims at outlining Sa'di's philosophy from the study of his works and deducing the implications of his philosophy for education. The study ends with a brief critical analysis of Sa'di's ideas from the writer's point of view.

The method employed in undertaking this study is library research. The review of the available pertinent literature is supplemented by analytical and descriptive methods which are used to explain the philosophy of Sa'di and its educational implications.

Sa'di was born in Shiraz in 1184 A.D. and

received his education at the Nizamiyah College of Baghdad, He travelled extensively during his lifetime and gained a rich treasure of varied experience which he tried to disseminate in his beautiful writings. He expressed his ideas in prose as well as in Persian verse.

In the realm of Philosophy, Sa'di thinks that knowledge of reality is possible through perception, intellect, and intuition. These sources are not, according to him, opposed to one another; rather they supplement one another. Through perception and reason, one can know the external physical world, while through intuition, he can find answers to such perennial questions as the meanings of life and death. In other words, Sa'di realized the incapacity of human reason to understand such mysteries as God, immortality and eternity; and he tried to overcome the menace of skepticism through mysticism.

Sa'di attributes a significant role to education in the development of human personality. He believes that there is an evil element in man's

nature which can only be eradicated through learning. According to him, the aim of education is to form a man who, having conquered the evil element of his nature, becomes virtuous, pious and acquires an adequate skill in a vocation. Thus, Sa'di believes in the necessity of universal education and of vocational training. He also maintains that the cultivation of humanitarian sentiments in all persons should be an important function of education.

Sa'di has penetrated more deeply into the problems of teaching than any other Iranian scholar before or after him. As a result of his thinking, he came to believe in and advocate such modern concepts as the importance of individual differences, the effectiveness of reward for learning and the crucial importance of early years of one's life for his later development.

However, although Sa'di's contributions are significant to education, some of his ideas are in sharp contrast to some recent educational findings. He believes, for instance, in coupling reward with harsh discipline in teaching and maintains that a

child must be taught traits like contentment which would scarcely enable him to fit into the present Iranian society.

Therefore, in the last chapter of this thesis, an attempt has been made to analyze Sa'di's educational views and sift those which are worthy from those which are inapplicable at present. Efforts are made to supply students of education with a more objective, and a more balanced appreciation of Sa'di's contributions, thereby serving present day education in Iran, over which Sa'di has exercised such tremendous influences.

"Be thou ware where Sadi dwells;
Wisdom of the Gods is he, —
Entertain it reverently.
Gladly round that golden lamp
Sylvan deities encamp,
And simple maids and noble youth
Are welcome to the man of truth
Most welcome they who need him most,
They feed the spring which they exhaust:
For greater need
Draws better deed: —
But, critic, spare thy vanity,
Nor show thy pompous parts,
To vex with odious subtlety
The cheerer of men's hearts."

— Emerson

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Significance of the Problem

Sa'di has been regarded as one of the most profound Iranian thinkers of the last seven centuries. He has contributed greatly to the shaping of the minds of the average Iranian. His masterpieces in literature, especially the Gulistan, have been used as literary text-books in Iranian schools since his time and have constituted the fundamentals of education of most of the Iranians who have received a minimum of twelve years of education.

Sa'di has been translated into more than seventeen languages, the oldest in Latin, rendered by Thomas Hyde¹. His often-quoted maxims, his proverb-making sayings, and his exquisite teachings embody principles which are applicable to all areas of human experience, including education.

¹M. Makosteen. History of Islamic Origins of Western Education. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1964), p. 69.

Although Sa'di has presented his educational ideas in most of his works, he has not been known or credited for his educational ideas and contributions as much as for his literary achievements. His fame has been established mainly for his sage-sayings, didactic poems, exquisite style, sententious proverbs, pleasing anecdotes and aphorisms, lofty morals and elegant prose and not for his educational contributions.

In this study, therefore, the writer attempts to bring out and outline Sa'di's educational philosophy based upon his metaphysical, epistemological and axiological assumptions, thus calling the attention of his admirers to the significance of his educational contributions.

As it would be impossible to investigate the educational implications of a philosophy without understanding the basic doctrines of that philosophy, the problem is, first of all, to examine Sa'di's philosophical views as explicitly expressed or implicitly stated in his writings and, then, to draw out the implications of his philosophy for education. To the best of the writer's knowledge, there has been

no attempt made so far by anyone to outline systematically Sa'di's philosophy from which his educational ideas stem.

The Method of the Study

As the nature of every study determines the method to be followed, the method employed in this study will be library research. The review of the available pertinent literature will be supplemented by analytical and descriptive methods which will be used to explain the philosophy of Sa'di and its educational implications.

The Outline of the Work

The following procedure has been adopted for the study: First, the nature and significance of the study as well as its method, outline, and limitations are stated. This is followed by a short biographical sketch of Sa'di. Then, his chief works are mentioned.

This general approach serves as an introductory chapter to the study of certain aspects of

Sa'di's system of thought, namely, metaphysics, epistemology, and axiology, which are of special significance for the study, and which are included in the Second Chapter. Important topics in his philosophy are: God and His attributes, the cosmos, the nature of man, the ways of knowing, and his theory of value.

The above interpretation and analysis of Sa'di's thoughts serve as a foundation for building up an educational theory compatible with his views.

Some of the aspects of Sa'di's probable educational theory which are included in Chapter Three are: The aims of education as derived from his philosophy, the curriculum as based on his philosophical views, and the methods of instruction which he most likely held, including the techniques which the teacher must use for producing desirable results.

The last chapter of this thesis is devoted to the writer's critique and comments. It includes the strengths and weaknesses of Sa'di's educational ideas for the present-day Iran.

Limitations of the Study

The writer would like to emphasize the fact that only those materials from Sa'di's ideas have been included in this study that are of some significance to education. The study, therefore, will be delimited in many respects and does not claim to be an exhaustive discussion of all aspects of Sa'di's ideas.

A Biographical Sketch

Shiraz, Sa'di's birthplace, is a city which is situated down in the mountains of the South of Iran and is the capital of the province of Fars (Fars), that ancient Persia which gave its name to the land of Iran.

During the Mongol invasion of the Thirteenth Century, this city was one of the few Iranian cities which was miraculously preserved, and under her benign and enlightened rulers, managed to transmit to succeeding generations, the high traditions of culture and civilized life inherited from the past. For, it was during the Thirteenth Century that the Mongols murdered in cold blood the people of the conquered countries, including men, women, and children, burned all they found, and built into pyramids the heads of the slain.

Among the unfortunate inhabitants of other Iranian towns, there were also some scholars, who were lucky enough to escape the doomed cities and sought refuge in Shiraz under the benign rule of the Attabaks of Fars, thus making Shiraz a magnifi-

cent seat of learning. Shams i Quasi, author of the most authoritative work on Persian prosody and poetics could be mentioned as an example of those scholars who began their life anew under the protection of Sa'd-ibn-zangi, and his son and successor, Abu-Bakr-ibn Sa'd, after witnessing the terrors of the Mongols.¹

Sa'di's life coincided with the Mongol invasion, and there is no doubt that he witnessed the terror caused by the Mongols in other towns. He was fortunate though in being born in a town which enjoyed peace and stability at the time of a barbarous invasion.

The above description shows quite accurately the conditions under which Sa'di lived and the stormy background of his life in general.

Although modern research reveals Sa'di's birth to have taken place about 1208 A.D.², most

¹A.J. Arberry. Shiraz: Persian City of Saints and Poets (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 113.

²Ibid., p. 114.

biographers are of the opinion that he was born prior to that date. There is hardly any consensus of opinion mentioned concerning the dates of Sa'di's birth and death, but he is generally said to have been born in Shiraz about 1184 and to have died in 1291 A.D.¹

Sa'di's first name has also been mentioned differently by various biographers. Dowlatshah who lived some 200 years after Sa'di, and who is the author of Tazkerah-Ashshu'rra or Lives of Poets, maintains that his proper name was Mosliheddin.² The oldest known manuscript of his works shows that his name has been Musharrifu'd-Din b. Musleheddin'Abdu'llah.³

Sa'di's relatives and ancestors were all educated and were among the religious leaders of the time. He refers to this point when he declares:

"All my ancestors and relatives were religious leaders. I was taught to love thee (God) by

¹E.G. Browne. A Literary History of Persia (London: Cambridge University Press, 1928), p. 526.

²Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated with An Introduction and Notes by James Ross. (London: The Walter Scott Co. Ltd. 1823), pp. 2 - 3.

³Op.Cit., p. 526.

thy own men"¹

However, his father seems to have held some office at the court of the Atabak rulers and he must have died early in Sa'di's childhood as is revealed in the following quotation:

"Full well I know the pains that
orphans bear,
For as a child I lost my
father's care!"²

Shortly after the death of his father, Sa'di was taken under the protection of the then Atabak ruler of Fars, Sa'd-ibn-zangi, after whose name he adopted or he was given his poetic pen-name Sa'di.

Sa'di received his early education in Shiraz. Later, he was sent to pursue his studies at the Nizammyah College of Baghdad which was a great seat of oriental learning at that time.

¹ Sh.M. Sa'di. Complete Works or Kulliat. Edited with an Introduction and Notes by Foroghhi. (Tehran: Elmi Book Co., 1319 A.H.), p. 695.

² A. Arberry. Classical Persian Literature. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958), p. 188.

The life span of Sa'di has been divided into three periods by the famous biographer, Dowlatshah, the first period of which is called the period of study. This period which lasted till 1226 A.D., was chiefly spent at Baghdad where Sa'di commenced his studies in science and theology, and received education from scholars like Shihab-Din Suhrawardi, Aljawzi, and Abdul Kadir, the Guilani. This can be proved by the anecdotes he tells us in his Gulistan and the verses of the Bustan.

The second period of Sa'di's life which was mainly devoted to travel begins in 1226 A.D. when the disturbed conditions of Fars, forced Sa'di to quit his native town, Shiraz. It lasted for thirty or forty years, according to Dowlatshah, during which Sa'di treasured up experience and disseminated his knowledge during his travels. It was during this period that we find him lecturing at the Nizamyah College of Baghdad, preaching in the famous Mosque of Damascus, visiting Abyssinia and North Africa, fighting in the Crusades, captured by the Franks at Tripoli, forced into slave labour and saved by a friend from Aleppo, criticizing idolatry

at the temple of Kathiawar in India, and paying many pilgrimages to Mecca.

The second period of his life ends when he returns to Shiraz, probably in 1256 as mentioned by Professor E.G. Browne and to which the poet alludes in the preface to the Gulistan.¹

The third period of Sa'di's life begins at this stage, namely, after his return to Shiraz, where he stays for the rest of his life. It was during this period that Sa'di started to make his literary and educational contributions through producing his celebrated masterpieces the Gulistan and the Bustan as well as his other major works. In other words, it was during this period that he started to write about the experiences and observations that he had accumulated during the first and second stages of his life. In the following quotation, he alludes to this point:

"Much have I wandered through the realms of
earth.
And full many days passed with many men.
From every corner advantages reaped.
And gathered grain from every harvest home.

¹E.G. Browne. Op.Cit., p. 528.

And I recalled how men from Egypt bring candy
as presents for the ones at home,
Though of that candy I had none to give,
Yet I had words than candy sweeter far."¹

The above verses, quoted from the Bustan,
give Sa'di's reasons for undertaking to produce not
only his Bustan but also the idea behind all his
writings.

Such was a short biographical sketch of a
man whose far-reaching educational and moral influences
on the life of Iranians justify a closer look at his
system of thought in general and his educational ideas
in particular.

¹A.J. Arberry. Classical Persian Literature.
Op.Cit., p. 197.

Major Works

Although Sa'di has offered the fruits of his mature wisdom in many of his writings, and has written more than 22 books, his most celebrated books are the Gulistan and the Bustan, the books which one must look for to discover Sa'di's mastery, teachings, and personality.

The "Gulistan" or "the Flower Garden", composed in 1258 A.D. (656 A.H.), contains morals, maxims, and aphorisms which are intertwined with entertaining and instructive stories and episodes, wholly derived from Sa'di's personal observation and experience. In this book, as in many of his other works, Sa'di writes for every taste, and consideration is given to the reader's interest. Besides, the book is notably famous for brevity and succinctness of anecdotes and is entirely original. "The Gulistan is also the greatest work on education ever to appear in Persia!"¹

The Gulistan consists of eight chapters writ-

¹M. Nakosteen. Op.Cit., p. 89.

ten on the following subjects:

- Chapter I - The Manners of Kings
- Chapter II - The Morals of Derwishes
- Chapter III - On the Excellence of Contentment
- Chapter IV - On the Advantages of Silence
- Chapter V - On Love and Youth
- Chapter VI - On Weakness and Old Age
- Chapter VII - On the Effects of Education
- Chapter VIII - On Rules for Conduct in Life

Sa'di himself has been aware of the significance of this book. The following quotation illustrates this point:

"Of what use will be a dish of roses to thee?
Take a leaf from my rose-garden.
A flower endures but five or six days.
But this rose-garden is always delightful."¹

Indeed this may be true, and it is no exaggeration to say that along with the Bustan, it has served many generations of Iranians as a model of

¹S.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan or Rose-Garden.
Translated with an Introduction and Notes by E.
Rehatsek (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964),
p. 67.

scholarship. It has done most to shape the Persian outlook next to the Kor'an.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, after reading Gladwin's translation of the Gulistan had this to say about Sa'di at concord in 1864:

"Sa'di, though has not the lyric flights of Hafiz, has wit, practical sense and just moral sentiments. He has the instinct to teach, and from every occurrence must draw the moral like Franklin. He is the poet of friendship, love, self-devotion and serenity. There is a uniform force in his page, and conspicuously, a tone of cheerfulness, which has almost made his name synonymous for this grace. The word "Sa'di" means "fortunate". In him, the trait is no result of levity, much less of convivial habit, but first of a happy nature to which victory is habitual, easily shedding mishaps, with sensibility to pleasure, and with resources against pain. But it also results from the habitual perception of the beneficent laws that control the world. He inspires in the reader good hope. What a contrast between the cynical tone of Byron and the benevolent wisdom of Sa'di! By turn a student, a water-carrier, a traveller, a soldier fighting in the Crusades, a prisoner employed to dig trenches, and an honoured poet in his protracted old age at home, — his varied and severe experience took away all provincial tone, and gave him a facility to speak to all conditions. But, the commanding reason of his wider popularity is his deeper sense, which in his treatment, expands the local forms and tints to a cosmopolitan breadth. Through his Persian dialect, he speaks to all nations, and like Homer, Shakespeare,

"Gervantes, and Montaigne, is perpetually modern."¹

The Bustan or the "Scented Garden" which was composed in 1257 A.D. (655 A.H.) ranks only second to the Gulistan among all of Sa'di's works. This book consists of verses which have been established as proverbs. The incidents which he talks about in the Bustan lend an authority to the lessons that he seeks to teach as in the Gulistan.

Sir William Jones, the great American scholar is of the opinion that the Bustan is of such an elegant version which places Sa'di beside Pope and Dryden in poetry.²

The Bustan is in ten chapters of rhymed anecdote and moral as follows:

Chapter I - Concerning Justice, Counsel,
and Administration of Govern-
ment

Chapter II - Concerning Benevolence

Chapter III - Concerning Love

¹ A.J. Arberry. Shiraz. Op.Cit., pp. 122-123.

² A.J. Arberry. Classical Persian Literature.
Op.Cit., p. 196.

- Chapter IV - Concerning Humility
- Chapter V - Concerning Resignation
- Chapter VI - Concerning Contentment
- Chapter VII - Concerning Education
- Chapter VIII - Concerning Gratitude
- Chapter IX - Concerning Repentance
- Chapter X - Concerning Prayer

In addition to the above masterpieces, Sa'di's "Pand Nameh" or "Scroll of Wisdom", which is a small volume of poetry concerning vices and virtues is most popular throughout the Persian-speaking East. The book which has also been translated into English, deals with the following topics:

- Concerning Prayer
- In Praise of Muhammad
- Address to the Soul
- In Praise of Generosity
- Description of Benevolence,
- In Condemnation of Parsimony
- Description of Humility
- In Condemnation of Pride
- On the Excellence of Learning
- As Regards Avoiding the Society of Ignorants
- Description of Justice.
- In Condemnation of Oppression

Description of Contentment
Description of Avarice
Description of Obedience
Condemnation of Satan
Wine, Affection, and Love
Fidelity
Gratitude
Patience
Rectitude
In Condemnation of Lying
Vicissitudes of Fortune
Avoiding Placing Hope in Created Beings.

Moreover, Sa'di has also written six tracts which are educational essays, showing great depth of Sa'di's perception. They deal with the following themes:

- I. Introduction
- II. The Five-fold Assemblies
- III. On Interrogation
- IV. On Reason and Intuition
- V. On Counsel to Kings
- VI. On Royalty

The above books of Risala or tracts and the Gulistan as well as a part of his Khabisat, are written in prose or in prose and poetry, and all the

rest, namely,

The Bustan
The Persian Elegies or Qasa'id
The Arabic Elegies or Qasa'id
Mirasi or Dirges
Mulammaat or Mixed poems of Arabic & Persian
The Tarjiaat or poems with burthens
The Tayyabbat or Mystical Ghazals
The Badaya' or Rhetorical Ghazals
The Khawatim, poems composed in old age
The Ghadim, poems composed in his youth
The Sahibiya or poems of admonition
The Mocattaat
The Robayyat
The Muffradat or distiches

are in poetry.

CHAPTER II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SA'DI

Sa'di was a Moslem and received his education in a theocentric Moslem society. Therefore, in order to discuss his philosophical ideas, it would not be out of place to describe briefly some of the characteristics of such a society in the Thirteenth Century.

A theocentric society, such as Islam, is based on a grand and ordered scheme centered around one central principle which is considered as absolute, real, and true. It expresses itself pre-eminently in philosophy and theology, in mystical speculation, and in legalism and exegesis.¹

Education in the theocentric Moslem society of the Thirteenth Century, when Sa'di lived, concentrated almost exclusively on higher learning and with few exceptions, it was theological, historical,

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Trans. with an Introduction and Notes by Rehatsek. Op.Cit., pp. 36-37.

mathematical and philosophical in substance. Little attention was given in general to empirical study except in certain fields of medicine.¹

The above characteristics of the theocentric society describe the type of intellectual and social environment in which Sa'di was brought up, the kind of factors which contributed to the shaping of his system of thought, and the type of education that he received, apart from which it may be hard to understand him. Therefore, one may conclude that Sa'di's ideas are better understood and appreciated in the Islamic environment of Iran than in countries which have other types of societies.

¹Ibid., pp. 36-37.

Metaphysics

As a devout Moslem, Sa'di believed that there is a single, eternal, absolute and necessary Being called God. He is the Ultimate Reality Who is more than the cosmos and through Whom the cosmos exists. He is greater than the natural order, and outside or beyond Him, there is no existence.¹

God, according to Sa'di, is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is perfect, and His omnipotence is only limited by His wisdom and kindness. Unlike the knowledge of finite beings, God's omniscience recognizes no limits of time and space. Besides, He is the Creator of the universe, and the universe is being sustained by Him. He is a peerless God and His kingdom is eternal.²

Moreover, Sa'di's God is merciful towards man and He does not deprive any man from His bounty and grace though he may be a sinner. In his pro-

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Trans. by H. Edwards. (New York: Dutton Co., 1911), pp. 19-20.

²Ibid., pp. 19-20.

logue to the Bustan, Sa'di declares:

"In the name of Him who created
and sustains the world, the Sage
who endowed tongue with speech.
He attains no honour who turns the
face from the door of His mercy.
The kings of the earth prostrate
themselves before Him in supplication
He seizes not in haste the disobedient,
Nor drives away the penitent with violence
The two worlds are as a drop of water
in the ocean of His knowledge
He withholds not His bounty though
His servants sin; upon the surface
of the earth has He spread a feast,
In which both friend and foe
may share.
Peerless He is and His kingdom
is eternal.

Behind the veil He seeth all and
concealth our faults with His
own goodness.

He causeth the moon and the sun
to revolve, and spreadeth water
upon the earth.
In the heart of a stone hath
He placed a jewel; from nothing
hath He created all that is."¹

Concerning the nature of the cosmos, its
origin and development, Sa'di maintains that the
universe came to be as a result of a creative
cause, namely God. He believes in the reality of

¹Ibid., pp. 19-20.

the external world which is material, and which has been created by God for the sake of man. In the following quotation from the Bustan, he alludes to this point:

"For thee is set the bright moon
in the sky by night, the world-illuminating
Sun by day. Like a chamberlain,
the heavens spread for thee the
carpet of the spring.
The wind and snow, the clouds
and rain, the roaring thunder
and the lightening glittering
as a sword —

From the bee He giveth thee honey
and manna from the wind; fresh
dates from the date-tree and
the date-tree from a seed.
For thee are the sun, moon, and
the Pleides; They are as Lanterns
upon the roof of thy house.
He bringeth roses from the thorn
and musk from a pod; gold from
the mine and green leaves from
a withered stick. "1

That the external world is real and is created by God to serve man so that man can survive and worship God, can also be seen in the following quotation from the Gulistan, where he says:

¹Ibid., p. 102.

"Cloud and wind, moon and sun move in the sky
That thou mayest gain bread, and not eat it un-
concerned. For thee all are revolving and
obedient. It is against the requirements of
justice if thou obeyest not."¹

Although the essence of God is too lofty for
the frail human mind to grasp, Sa'di holds that His
presence can be noticed in the objects of the ex-
ternal world such as the rippling stream, blooming
flowers, and chirping nightingales.

"To the eye of the intelligent the foliage
of the grove displays, in every leaf
a volume of Creator's works."²

As it can be seen in the above quotations,
the universe has been created by God to serve man,
and there is purpose in the universe. In other
words, the world is not an occurrence by chance,
rather, there has been purpose in the universe from
the very beginning.

Man, among all created beings, enjoys a
unique position which is bestowed upon him by God

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by
Rehafsek, Op.Cit., p. 58.

²Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by
James Ross, Op.Cit., p. 12.

and he is placed above everything else in the universe. His life is teleologically determined and he should show his obedience to God through his service.

However, although man enjoys a unique position among all creatures, he should not forget the fact that he is made out of dust:

"Thou, O creature of God, wast created of dust; therefore be humble as the dust."¹

According to Sa'di, man is made up of two basic substances, body and mind, both of which exist. In other words, concerning the issue of ontology, Sa'di believes that reality is more than one, namely body or mind. He affirms that both mind and body are identical with existence, but mind is more fundamental than body.²

However, Sa'di does not make any attempt to explain exactly how mind stands in relation to body, and he does not show any reconciliation of these

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Op.Cit., p. 56.

²Ibid., p. 88.

two realities throughout his works.

Concerning the nature of human nature, Sa'di believes that man's material body is the seat of both good and evil. As good and evil are both embedded in man's nature, thus one may conclude that man is partially good and partially evil. In the light of reason and learning, man should try to harness and overwhelm the evil element of his nature and enable the good element to dominate. He says:

"Thy earthly body is a city, containing both good and evil: Thou art the king and reason is thy wise minister. In this city, the headstrong men pursue their trades of avarice and greed. Resignation and temperance are citizens of fame and virtue: lust and wantonness the thieves and pickpockets. The passions of evil, envy, and hatred are inherent in thee as in the blood of thy veins. If these, thine enemies gained in strength, they would turn their heads from thy rule and counsel; no resistance do they offer, when they see the mailed fist of reason."¹

According to Sa'di, one must try to destroy this evil element which is found in the material part of his nature and not allow that to gain in

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Op.Cit., p. 88.

strength and dominate the good element in his nature. Elsewhere in the Bustan he alludes to this point when he declares:

"He whose wishes thou fulfillest
will obey thy command. Contrary
to passion, which will command,
when obeyed."¹

In fact, Sa'di constantly warns man that he should be enlightened concerning his greatest enemy which exists within his nature and advises him to be on his guard ^{against} /it throughout his works. He holds that enlightenment concerning one's own nature can be achieved through the development of rational and intellectual powers which can be brought about through education.²

Therefore, one can say that contrary to many of his predecessors and successors, who believed that man's nature was entirely corrupt due to this evil element, Sa'di is not pessimistic with regard

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan, Translated by Rehatsek. Op.Cit., p. 225.

²Issa Sadigh. A Cultural History of Persian Education. (Teheran: Teheran University Press, 1956 (1338 A.H.)), p. 166.

to man's nature. Like one of his great admirers, Emerson, he has confidence in the powers of education for correcting the weakness of human nature. In other words, Sa'di is optimistic about the possibilities of education to strengthen reason in order to enable man conquer the evil element of his nature. To the extent that the good element of man's nature outweighs the evil element, education becomes effective.¹

Moreover, Sa'di considers it the duty of every human being to reform his nature so that he can be happy in the next world. In fact, he holds that this world is the trial ground and this life is the trial period during which man is required to eradicate the evil part of his nature for the life after.²

Concerning the problem of man's freedom and the extent to which man is free to act in his life, Sa'di does not explicitly state his position. How-

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. Kulliat, Op.Cit., p. 563.

²Ibid., p. 15.

ever, the very assumption behind all his moral and educational writings is that he considers man to be free and capable of genuine initiative. A glance at his writings shows that he preaches and advises everybody to use his reason and choose the right direction as he considers man a rational being who has the power of choice.

Sa'di repeatedly warns and reminds man that he will be held responsible for his acts, and that he will reap in the next world what he sows in this world. Thus, one can say that had Sa'di not believed in the freedom of will, he would never write so extensively, advising man to use his reason in order to distinguish between right and wrong and act according to what is right.

However, one should not conclude that Sa'di's position on the question of free will is that man has absolute freedom, and that man's power of choice is an absolute one.

After his deep reflections, observations and travels, Sa'di came to believe that human efforts, knowledge and ingenuity are necessary but they will

not suffice to bring man success in this world, if his efforts are not supported by Divine will. That is to say, Sa'di's system of thought does not entirely ignore the role that the stern reality of fate may play in human affairs, which has been expressed by Moslem fatalists. In this connection he says:

"Power and fortune depend not on knowledge,
They are obtained through the aid of heaven,
for it has often happened in this world
that the illiterate are honoured, and
the wise held in scorn. The fool in his
idleness found a treasure under a ruin;
the chemist or projector fell the victim
of disappointment and chagrin."¹

Therefore, one may conclude that Sa'di is neither an absolute fatalist nor a believer in man's absolute freedom of action. One can say that he has a unique position in this respect and he seeks, through his efforts, to advocate moral virtues and good deeds, but, at the same time, reminds his audience of the fact that in case of failure they should turn to God. For, human efforts are necessary for success, but they are not considered as an adequate

¹Sh. M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Ross, Op.Cit., p. 123.

guarantee for one's success unless such efforts are supported by Divine Will.¹

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. Sa'di's Scroll of Wisdom.
Translated by A. Wollastan. (New York: Dutton and
Co., 1910), pp. 60-63.

Epistemology

Sa'di does not offer any explicit statement about his theory of knowledge. However, when one looks deeply into his writings, he may form an idea about the epistemological views which Sa'di most likely held.

Unlike the agnostics who hold that the knowledge of Ultimate Reality is an impossibility and contrary to the skeptics who have a questioning attitude towards the possibility of knowledge, Sa'di believes that the knowledge of Ultimate Reality is possible. He declares:

"Man is able to reach that stage where he experiences the Ultimate Reality (God) Imagine how significant man's position in the Universe can be!"¹

This attitude towards the possibility of knowledge does not necessarily mean that there is just one instrument for gaining knowledge. Analyzing the sources of knowledge in Sa'di's system of thought, we find that he mentions three distinct

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. Kulliat. Op.Cit., p. 563.

ways of knowing, which far from being contradictory, are complementary to one another. These sources are the senses, reason, and intuition. Besides these three sources, Sa'di also singles out the prophets who acquire their knowledge through revelation as distinct from the above three sources. Revelation as a source of knowledge is not available to ordinary human beings.

The senses, which are avenues for acquiring the knowledge of the external world, provide us with the knowledge of the lowest level. This knowledge, gained through the senses can not be reliable by itself unless reasoning and reflection help in its interpretation.¹

Through bodily activities and direct experience rather than by relying on the experience of others, one should acquire knowledge of the external world. Such a method, which has been recommended by Sa'di, may well show the reasons for which he travelled so extensively. He refers to the significance of direct experience in his Bustan when he declares:

¹Ibid., p. 359.

"Much have I wandered through the
realm of earth, and passed full
many days with many men
From every corner rich advantages
reaped. And gathered grain
at every harvest home."¹

It should not be forgotten that to advocate the importance of the senses as a way of arriving at knowledge of the external world was not popular during the Thirteenth Century.² It was almost an impossibility to question anything which had been confirmed by authorities then, and the theocentric society of Iran would not welcome the idea of contradicting authority and relying upon knowledge which had been acquired through sensory experience.

Therefore, we can see that Sa'di's support of the use of the senses as a means of acquiring knowledge³, required courage of a rare order which Sa'di possessed.

However, although Sa'di believed that knowledge of the external world might be derived from

¹A.J. Arberry. Classical Persian Literature.
Op.Cit., p. 197.

²Issa Sadigh. Op.Cit., p. 169.

³Sh.M. Sa'di. Kulliat. Op.Cit., p. 359.

sense experience, he did not necessarily mean that sense experience was sufficient as an instrument of knowledge. He maintained that there are certain times when the senses cannot provide us with reliable knowledge of the outside world, and, therefore, we must use our reason to comprehend things.¹ In other words, although the process of acquiring knowledge begins with the senses, it does not necessarily end there. It is important to note that Sa'di does not specify exactly the sphere of activity of these sources of knowledge.

Sa'di attached so much importance to reason that , when quoting the Prophet, Muhammad, in his Fourth Risala, he declared:

"اول ما خلق الله تعالى العقل ، فقال له
اقبل فاقبل ثم قال له ادبر ، فادبره
قال عزتي وجلالي : ما خلقت خلقا اكبر
ويك اعطى ويك اتيب ويك اعاقب."²

¹ Ibid., p. 77.

² Ibid., p. 40.

"The first thing that God, the Magnificent created was Reason. Then, He ordered reason to come, so it came. Then, He ordered reason to go, so it went. Then, He said: O! My glory and My magnificence! I did not create anything nobler than thee, and through thee, I grant, through thee I reward, and through thee I punish."

Continuing his discussion about reason, Sa'di holds that reason serves as an instrument for acquiring knowledge of Reality. However, while criticizing reason for its being a necessary though not an adequate instrument of knowledge, he compares it to a light which is indispensable for man to find his way, but it does not necessarily guarantee that one would reach his destination. In other words, although reason is useful in understanding reality, it can only serve as a guide which would just enlighten man to distinguish light from darkness, but it would not be able to lead man to the Ultimate Reality.¹

Sa'di, like Alghazali, realized the incapacity of human reason for understanding such mysteries as God, immortality, eternity, and he tried to over-

¹Ibid., pp. 40-41.

come the menace of skepticism through mysticism, thus believing in the occurrence of an immediate flash of insight for providing the answers to such problems. However, unlike Alghazali, he did not resort to an ascetic kind of life, nor did he advocate it.

Later in his discussion concerning the role of reason and intuition, Sa'di reaffirms the fact that senses, perception, reason and experience may all be inadequate for gaining knowledge of reality, and they should be supplemented by intuition.¹ He refers to the limitation of reason for understanding ultimate reality in his Bustan again when he says:

"Reason may lead you nowhere but to a labyrinth if you depend on it entirely. The mystics, on the other hand, may get to the Ultimate Reality through intuition. -----" ²

What Sa'di wants to convey to his readers is that man should not rest content with the rela-

¹Ibid., p. 42.

²Ibid., p. 306.

tive knowledge which he may gain through sense perception and reason. He should go beyond the stages of relative knowledge and try to seek mystic experience through intuition in order to satisfy his yearning for perfect knowledge. In these respects, one may say, he agrees with Alghazali in his meaning and interpretation of the value of "Qalb" "قلب" which is the medium of intuitional knowledge. He also realizes that the heart is a pathway which brings us into contact with those aspects of reality which are not open either to sense perception or to reason. The act of intuition, it must be born in mind, grasps reality in a single moment in wholeness and not in isolated parts. Intuition is an immediate experience of the real and it is different from thought as the latter is always mediate and indirect.

However, what has been said concerning the three distinct ways of knowing does not mean that they are, in any way, in conflict with one another, for Sa'di does not overlook the significance of perception and thought, or sense experience and reason, as ways of knowledge. In the sphere of the physical world, Sa'di accepts the mastery of reason and in-

tellekt aided by sense perception, but disapproves of the attitude of those who confine the knowledge of reality to sense perception or intellect alone.¹

One may conclude this statement on Sa'di's answers to the problem of knowledge by saying that as an adherent to the principles of Islam, Sa'di seeks to provide answers to the perennial questions of Ultimate Reality, immortality, and the purpose of existence by resorting to intuition as a medium of knowledge, while, at the same time, stressing the significance of senses and reason in gaining knowledge of the external world. His devotion to the Islamic principles does not allow him to confine the sources of knowledge of human beings to the sense experience and intellect alone, in which case many of man's questions would be left unanswered.

¹Ibid., pp. 42-43.

Axiology

Sa'di's answers to the questions concerning the nature of values are implicit in his previous assumptions that God is a unitary being and His existence is necessary, and that God is a perfect and absolute being. In other words, Sa'di's theory of value, takes its roots from his belief in the unity of a necessary, absolute, and perfect God who has created the universe with a purpose. In such a case, one may infer that values, according to Sa'di, are deeply rooted in existence, and they are absolute and fixed.

As a unitarian sage, Sa'di believed that the Summum Bonum which is real happiness can only be attained by those who are infatuated by the love of God. For, happiness, in the real sense, is a state of mind which is the highest good and it is the ultimate objective of existence. By its very nature, happiness cannot serve as a means to another end. He emphatically declares this point in the following quotation when he says:

"Happy are the days of them that are infatuated by love of Him, whether they

"be sorrowed by separation from Him or made joyous by His presence."¹

However, not all men, according to Sa'di are capable of reaching this stage of happiness and have access to the Summum Bonum which he talks about.²

Before reaching this stage of ultimate happiness, one is required to lead a virtuous life, through which one might be able to approach God, whose love brings this ultimate happiness. These virtues, Sa'di believes, are essential for bringing man the love of God which is the real happiness.³

The list of virtues that Sa'di talks about in his works is a long one, many of which resemble those virtues that Aristotle talked about earlier, and Franklin mentioned in his Autobiography.⁴

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Op.Cit., p. 48.

²Ibid., p. 48.

³Sh.M. Sa'di. Sa'di's Scroll of Wisdom. Op.Cit., pp. 30-44.

⁴R. Ulich. Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 426-438.

The following virtues may be mentioned as examples of the moral virtues which Sa'di talks about repeatedly throughout his works: Justice, contentment, humility, generosity, courage, moderation, gratitude, benevolence, and resignation.

After a careful examination of the virtues that Sa'di talks about in his works, one may find that Sa'di follows the doctrine of the Golden Mean of Aristotle and he advocates the virtues of moderation. Through the virtues of moderation, Sa'di seeks to prepare people for a happy life about which he spoke already. As an example, one may find that while Sa'di condemns parsimony and extravagance which are both extreme ways of doing things, he praises generosity, which he considers to be a virtue. On another occasion, Sa'di advises all to be courageous, which makes them virtuous, while denouncing both cowardice as well as recklessness.¹

The virtues of moderation in one's life lie between the two extremes of doing things, as was the case in the above examples. In one's daily life,

¹ Op.Cit., pp. 30-44.

even in matters concerning eating and drinking, Sa'di finds no better way of doing things than being moderate. He says:

"Be moderate. Eat and drink not to excess. Eat not so much that it comes up thy mouth. Nor so little that from weakness thy soul comes up."¹

Such virtues, in all walks of life, would pave the way for the attainment of the highest good.

The criterion for determining the mean, according to Sa'di, is one's own judgment regarding the point in question after his rational and intellectual powers have been developed. In other words, when a man has succeeded in dominating the evil element of his nature, all his decisions will stem from his reason, and he will be in a position to tell right from wrong, following the golden mean in his life.

Sa'di's social philosophy can be inferred from the following:

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Rehatsek, Op.Cit., p. 151.

"All Adam's sons are limbs of one another,
Each of the self-same substance as his
brother. So while one member suffers ache
and grief. The other members cannot win
relief. Thou, who are heedless of thy
brother's pain it is not right at all to
call thee man."¹

Moreover, Sa'di's sympathies extend beyond
man. They envelope all living creatures:

"Crush not yon ant, who stores the golden
grain: He lives with pleasure and will
die with pain. Learn from him rather
to secure the spoil of patient care and
preserving toil."²

It is important to note that Sa'di advocated
virtue and truth as well as sympathy for all in a
time of red terror and preached justice to princes
and contentment to masses when few people had cour-
age to do so.

All that one can say is that Sa'di was an
ethical teacher, and, as a devout Moslem, he wanted
to reform every individual through inculcating moral
virtues in him such as justice, moderation, courage
and generosity. These virtues, he thought, would

¹A. Arberry. Shiraz: Persian City of Saints
and Poets. Op.Cit., p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 123.

enable man to attain the highest good, namely the ultimate happiness which is the love of God and His satisfaction. A society, which would be formed of virtuous men, would naturally be an ideal society, and, thus, we can conclude that through the reform of the individual, Sa'di also aimed at reforming the society.

CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS OF SA'DI

As was stated in the previous chapter, Sa'di holds that there are good as well as evil elements embedded in human nature, and that man must develop his rational and intellectual powers through learning so as to be able to conquer the evil element of his nature. It is for these reasons that we find Sa'di attaching so much importance to education in his writings.

The Aims

The educational aims of any system of philosophy are primarily based on the axiological assumptions of that philosophy, which in almost all cases take their root from the metaphysical presuppositions of that philosophy. Sa'di's philosophy is based on metaphysical assumptions. Therefore, in order to infer Sa'di's educational aims, one must ultimately turn to his metaphysical views.

Sa'di believes in a purposeful universe which has been created by God in order to enable man to

know God and understand His will. Thereby, man can fulfil his responsibilities towards God. Besides, Sa'di believes in an absolute God who expects man to perform certain preordained acts which are of value in order to merit God's approbation. These preordained acts should not only be performed in the sphere of religious practices, but they should also be performed in all the spheres of life including education and the pursuit of knowledge.

Unlike those thinkers who advocated the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, Sa'di believed that knowledge must be pursued primarily for the sake of knowing God, understanding His will, and serving Him.¹ Therefore, as God occupies the central part of Sa'di's system of thought, all human activities are judged in terms of their relationship to God's will. For this reason, one may speak of Sa'di's system of thought as God-centered and thus religion-oriented. He says:

"(Knowledge) learning is intended to fortify

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Ross. Op.Cit., p. 273.

"religious practice, and not to gratify worldly traffic. Whoever prostituted his temperance, piety, and science, gathered his harvest into a heap and set fire to it."¹

In this connection, it is important to point to an aspect of Sa'di's functional approach to knowledge as revealed by the following quotation from the Gulistan:

"Two persons laboured to a vain, and studied to an unprofitable end: he who hoarded wealth and did not spend it, and he who acquired science and did not practice it: - "However much thou art read in theory, if thou hast no practice, thou art ignorant. He is neither a sage philosopher, nor an acute divine, but a beast of burden with a load of books. How can that brainless head know or comprehend whether he carries on his back a library or bundle of fagots?"²

However, it should be stressed that Sa'di does not intend to advocate the pursuit of knowledge merely for its practical consequences without any concern for ultimate ends. Contrary to some pragmatists who are primarily concerned with proxi-

¹Ibid., p. 273.

²Ibid., p. 273.

mate material ends, Sa'di believes that one should pursue knowledge in order to apply that knowledge for ends which are consonant with God's will.

It is obvious from the above that Sa'di's adherence to the principles of Islam has influenced him to such an extent that he considers the ultimate goal of all human activities including all educational efforts, to be religious. This ultimate aim which is basically implied in Sa'di's metaphysical presuppositions, and is rooted in his philosophy, is fixed, immutable, and absolute.

In addition to this ultimate aim of education, there are, according to Sa'di, some objectives, which are more proximate, immediate, and specific, and which, when realized, would become resources for achieving the ultimate aim. These specific objectives are closely related to the ultimate aim as well as to one another. Specifically, these objectives are: devotion to God, inculcation of moral virtues, training children in piety, wisdom and good conduct, and in being sensitive and helpful in solving the problems of their fellowmen.¹

¹Issa, Sadigh. Op.Cit., p. 166.

Because of the importance which Sa'di attaches to character development as an aim of education, it is necessary to specify the traits which he includes under character. These are honesty, prudence, gratitude, courage, justice, humility, temperance, contentment, fidelity, patience, generosity, and rectitude, which were mentioned under the virtues of moderation in our discussion of his axiology.¹ He affirms that children should be taught to love these virtues and adopt them willingly as guiding principles in their lives through the process of habit-formation.

For example, it is of interest at this point to compare and contrast Sa'di's views on the issue of moral training with those enunciated by Herbart centuries later. According to Herbart, education should aim at the development of a person with character and humane convictions.² Sa'di's views differ from Herbart's in that Sa'di's system of thought, as was stated earlier, has religion as its basis, while,

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. Sa'di's Scroll of Wisdom.
Trans. by Wollaston. Op.Cit., pp. 31-55.

²R. Ulich. Op.Cit., p. 508.

Herbart believes that one must perform an act of morality as a good in itself.¹

In the following quotation, Sa'di alludes to the point of bringing up children to be virtuous.

"Teach thy son to be pious, virtuous, and wise if thou really love him; do not spoil him."²

It is interesting to note the variety of methods which Sa'di so skilfully employes and through which he seeks to influence his readers to train their children to be virtuous and wise. For those people who are not aware of the benefits of education and avoid sending their children to school, Sa'di promises them of celebrity which they will gain after their death through having virtuous children. In the seventh chapter of the Bustan which is entitled "Concerning Education", Sa'di says:

"If thou desire that thy name should remain, train thy son in knowledge and virtue, for if he possesses not these,

¹Ibid., pp. 508.

²Sh.M. Sa'di. The Kulliat. Op.Cit., p. 368.

"thou diest obscure, with no one to commemorate thy name."¹

Moreover, besides intellectual and moral excellence which he considers to be the main objectives of education, Sa'di believes that every child should learn a trade or a handicraft as well. He attaches great importance to vocational education. In fact, one can say that Sa'di believes in universal vocational education, as he believes that the knowledge of a craft, besides making one able to be economically independent, it is a part of making one virtuous. For, it enables him not to be a parasite, depending on other's toil for a living.²

In order to persuade his readers to teach their children a craft, Sa'di recounts the economic rewards which craftsmanship would bring. He says:

"Teach him (thy child) a handicraft, though thou be as rich as Korah. A bag of silver is emptied; the purse of an artisan remains filled."³

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Op.Cit., p. 98.

²Issa, Sadigh. Op.Cit., p. 166.

³Op.Cit. p. 98.

This is probably what Rousseau recommended in Book III of his Emile more than five centuries Later. Rousseau declares:

"My child learn a trade!

I am desirous of investing him (the child) with a title that cannot be taken from him, that will in all times and places command respect; and, I can tell you whatever you may think of it, he will have fewer equals in this rank than in that he may derive from you."¹

Sa'di has put the above idea beautifully in the following paragraph which is quoted from chapter VII of the Gulistan, dealing with the effects of education:

"A sage, instructing boys, said to them: 'O darlings of your fathers, learn a trade because property and riches of the world are not to be relied upon; also silver and coin are an occasion of danger because either a thief may steal them at once or the owner spend them gradually; but a trade is a living fountain and permanent wealth; and although a tradesman may lose riches, it does not matter because a trade is itself wealth, and wherever he goes he will enjoy respect and sit in high places, whereas he who has no trade will glean crumbs and see hardships.'"²

¹Ulich, R. Op.Cit., p. 416.

²Sa'di, Sh.M. The Gulistan. Trans. by Rehatsek, Op.Cit., p. 212.

The writer believes that Sa'di probably intended to promote the living conditions of the people by persuading them to learn a trade and engage in some constructive activities. He wanted them to enjoy life in this world so that they can know God better through the life which is good to live instead of abandoning this life. The fact that the people who had survived the Mongol massacres of the Thirteenth Century in Iran, had abandoned hope and lost interest in bettering their living conditions stands to reason.

In the seventh chapter of the Bustan, concerning the training of sons, Sa'di also declares:

"Make thy son good and independent, so that he may not be beholden to any man."¹

Obviously, Sa'di has economic independence in mind in the above quotation.

As stated earlier, sensitiveness to social problems and the love of one's fellowmen are among

¹Sa'di, Sh.M. The Bustan, Op.Cit., p. 98.

the important objectives which Sa'di recommends for education, and which are essential for forming the real man.¹

It is significant that while his people were suffering from the oppression of the invading Mongols, Sa'di proclaimed the inter-dependence of man everywhere. He stresses the bonds which link mankind together and advocates their cultivation as may be inferred from the following quotation:

"All Adams sons are limbs of one another,
Each of the self-same substance as his brother
So while one member suffers ache and grief
The other members cannot win relief
Thou who are heedless of thy brother's pain
It is not right at all to call thee man."²

It seems that Sa'di learned the hardening effects of the massacres which the Mongolian invasions had left on the behavior of the people. He sought, therefore, to reawaken their sympathy and compassion which were lost due to that invasion.

¹Arberry A. Shiraz. Op.Cit., p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 123.

The Curriculum: Introductory Remarks:

Sa'di maintains that the above-mentioned aims of education cannot be equally achieved by all human beings due to the individual differences, which are the result of differences in heredity and environment.¹ The following quotation shows Sa'di's deep insight into the nature of individual differences:

"A king gave his son into the charge of a preceptor and said: This is your child, educate him as you would one of your own. For some years, he laboured in teaching him, but to no good purpose; whilst the sons of the preceptor excelled in eloquence and knowledge. The king blamed the learned man, and remonstrated with him, saying: You have violated your trust, and infringed the terms of your engagement. He replied: O king, their education is the same, but their capacities are different! —

Though silver and gold are extracted from stones, yet it is not in every stone that gold and silver are found. The Sohail, or star canopus, is shedding his rays all over the globe. In one place he produces common leather, in another, or in Yamin that called a dim, or perfumed."²

¹M.Nakosteen. Op.Cit., pp. 87-9.

²Sh.M., Sa'di. The Gulistan. Trans. by Ross. Op.Cit., p. 250.

Before going into a discussion of the curriculum through which these aims are implemented, it is important to examine in greater detail Sa'di's ideas concerning the role of heredity and environment in producing individual differences.

Sa'di seems to be equally aware of the necessity of a good nature and the indispensability of an effective nurture. Education, according to Sa'di, cannot do the impossible. In other words, what one becomes in any environment, largely depends on his potentialities and limitations. He says:

"The rays of the virtuous cannot illuminate such as are radically vicious: To give education to the worthless is like throwing walnuts upon a dome."¹

Elsewhere in the Gulistan, he says:

"When a nature is originally receptive
Instruction will take effect thereon
No kind of polishing will improve iron
whose essence is originally bad."²

On the other hand, Sa'di believes that a

¹Ibid., p. 83.

²Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Rehatsek. Op.Cit., p. 212.

corrupt environment could also corrupt the best of natures, and a good environment might encourage the development of one's potentialities. The following analogy proves this point in Sa'di's system of thought:

"Engaged one day in the public bath, I had a piece of scented clay handed to me by my friend. I addressed it, saying: Art thou ambergris or musk for I am charmed with thy graceful odour? It replied; I was a worthless piece of clay, but one day, for a while, associated with a rose. Thence I partook of the sweetness of my companion. Otherwise, I am that vile piece of clay I seem."¹

The following quotations which are taken from the Gulistan also illustrate the role of environment in shaping the character of man.

"The son of Noah became a friend of the wicked. His race of prophets became extinct."²

"He can see no good who will associate with the wicked. Were an angel from heaven to associate with a demon, he would learn his brutality, perfidity

¹Op.Cit., p. 65.

²Op.Cit., p. 79.

"and hypocrisy. Virtue, though never canst learn from the viscious."¹

The above quotations show that Sa'di recognizes the importance of both nature as well as nurture in education.

Although Sa'di does not state specifically what activities or courses of study must be selected and included in the curriculum, a careful study of his writings would indicate that Sa'di's content of curriculum is so closely related to his objectives that one cannot separate the two. Moreover, not only his educational objectives but also his type of curriculum take their root from his philosophical presuppositions.

Sa'di holds that all human beings are born in a purposeful universe which is created by God. They have to learn about their responsibilities in this world and try to fulfil those responsibilities in order to be saved after death. The implications of these metaphysical presuppositions for

¹Op.Cit., p. 285.

the curriculum are that religious instruction should constitute the essential part of the curriculum, as it orients every individual with his responsibilities in this world. For this reason, religious instruction must also receive a major emphasis in a curriculum and it should be uniform and of equal weight in all schools. It must also be required of all students.

The study of religion, religious text-books, and writings would naturally require a knowledge of reading and writing as well as arithmetic, without which one cannot study and follow the instructions given to him by God and the Prophet. These, therefore, must also be included in the curriculum.

Moreover, one of the metaphysical assumptions of Sa'di's philosophy is that the external world is real and knowledge of it is possible. A knowledge of this external world is required for understanding and appreciating God's magnificence.¹

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Ross. Op.Cit., p. 12.

The educational implications of these metaphysical views are clear. The study of the physical world must also form an integral part of the curriculum.

Sa'di also holds that in order to form a real man, we should teach him to be sensitive to the pains and problems of his fellowmen.¹ To do this, we should teach him about other people, their way of life and the places where they live. This calls for a broad curriculum which would include studies about other people, other societies as well as facts concerning their countries and cultures.

One of the most important aims of education, according to Sa'di, is vocational training as vocational skill is a necessity for every individual, which enables him to become economically secure and independent. It is interesting to note this emphasis on universal vocational training and on work by every member of society, princes or paupers.² This

¹Supra, Chapter III, p. 56.

²Ibid., pp. 53-54.

ideal of the universal necessity for work which Sa'di expressed some seven centuries ago is only lately being recognized. It should be pointed out, however, that Sa'di did not assume that vocational training would necessarily be given in schools but most likely conducted as apprenticeship.

For the inculcation of moral virtues, Sa'di would probably recommend a separate course in ethics to supplement religious instruction. This is required in order to reinforce the influence of religious instruction on the character of the learner.

One may conclude that the subjects required of all students in Sa'di's curriculum would be reading and writing of Persian as well as of Arabic, (which is the religious language), arithmetic, ethics, practical ethics, studies of the physical world, social studies, history, geography, crowning all of these subjects stands religious instruction.

For those who will be trained for administrative jobs, Sa'di proposes the following subjects in addition to the above subjects: Rhetoric, the art of speech and discussion, art of refined deportment,

and the rules of eloquence.¹

Methods

Method is the structure in which curriculum is cast in order to accomplish certain educational aims in a satisfactory manner. Method is closely related to the conception of the nature of curriculum as well as to the aims of education.

Sa'di's methods of instruction are, therefore, determined by the kind of individuals that he seeks to bring up through education. As was stated earlier in this chapter, Sa'di aims to train children to be virtuous, God-fearing, pious, religious, and to have skill in a craft. He wants them to learn and to put into practice whatever knowledge they acquire. His methods, therefore, are based on his educational aims which in turn take root from his philosophy.

To inculcate moral virtues in children, for

¹Issa, Sadigh. Op.Cit., p. 177.

instance, he recommends admonishing and preaching as a method of teaching. Such a method is consonant with his calling as a preacher. In the following quotation, he refers to this method and the extent to which he has depended on it. He says:

"We gave advice in its proper place
Spending a life-time in the task
If it should not touch anyone's ear of desire
The messenger told his tale, it is enough."¹

In order to reinforce this method of teaching through the spoken word, Sa'di suggests that the teacher should live what he preaches, as his pupils are usually quick to discern hypocrisy. In other words, Sa'di maintains that, in order to serve as a proper model for his students, the teacher must be careful in what he says and does. In this connection he says:

"The son of a Faqih said to his father:
These heart-ravishing words of moralists
make no impression upon me, because
I do not see that their actions
are in conformity with their speeches.
They teach people to abandon the world.

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Rehatsek, Op.Cit., p. 265.

"But themselves accumulate silver and coin. A scholar who preaches only and nothing more, will not impress any one when he speaks. He is scholar who commits no evils, not he who speaks to men but acts not himself."¹

"Will you enjoin virtue to mankind and forget your own souls? A scholar who follows his lusts and panders to his body is himself lost although he may show the way."²

Besides, while advising people to acquire certain virtues, Sa'di, throughout his works, never fails to use analogies and useful instances of possessing these virtues. In this way, he feels that people will form desirable habits when they become convinced.³

One may conclude that as Sa'di believes in the powers of human reason for gaining knowledge, he also advocates the attainment of moral excellence by man as an essential requirement of a sound education.

¹Ibid., p. 140.

²Ibid., p. 140.

³Ibid., pp. 140-141.

Although Sa'di believes in the importance and necessity for vocational training, the writer was not able to find any specific references in his writings about the methods to be used. Most likely he approves of the apprenticeship system which emphasizes learning by doing.

In child-rearing practices, one might say that Sa'di agrees with modern psychologists who hold that early years of one's life constitute the formative periods. The formation of attitudes, conscience, habits and character take place during those early years in one's life, and, therefore, special care and attention must be given by parents to the child's growth during this crucial period. The following quotation illustrates this point:

"Whoever was not taught good manners in his boyhood, fortune will forsake him when he becomes a man. Thou mayest bend the green bough as thou likest; but let it once get dry and it will require heat to straighten it. Verily, thou mayest bend the tender branch, but it were labour lost to attempt making straight a crooked billet."¹

¹Sh.M. Sa'di, The Gulistan. Trans. by Ross.Op.Cit.
p. 246.

Concerning various techniques which the teacher should use to teach effectively, Sa'di again seems to agree with modern psychologists¹ that teaching through rewarding the learner would prove to be more efficient than teaching through punishing him. He says:

"Praise and reward would prove to be better than punishment and threat."²

However, unlike some modern educationists, Sa'di holds that corporal punishment must be used by the teacher in case the above method of praise and reward fails. His idea of the need for corporal punishment probably stems from his belief in the fact that human nature has an evil element which should be subjugated and dominated by all means, including corporal punishment. He himself has been brought up in this manner as he states:

"A boy who suffers not at the hands of his teacher, suffers at ~~the~~ hands of time. Dost thou not know how Sa'di attained to rank?
He journeyed not over the plains, nor

¹H. Taba. Curriculum Development. (San Francisco: State College, 1962), p. 86.

²Sh.M. Sa'di. The Kulliat. Op.Cit., p. 368.

"crossed the seas. In his youth, he served under the yoke of the learned. God granted him distinction in after-life. And it is not long before he who serves obtains command."¹

Moreover, Sa'di agrees with the advocates of a severe discipline in teaching and believes that the child should get used to a hard life, and endurance and discipline should be cultivated in him. He affirms that once a child is used to having a comfortable and luxurious life, he will suffer when the time of troubles comes.²

In one of his stories in the Gulistan, Sa'di recounts the advantages of a severe teacher over a lenient one and affirms that a teacher must be harsh on students. He says:

"In the west of Africa, I saw a schoolmaster of a sour aspect and bitter speech, crabbed, misanthropic, beggarly, and intemperate, in so much that the sight of him would derange the ecstasies of the orthodox; and his manner of reading the Koran cast a gloom over the minds of the pious. A

¹ Sh.M. Sa'di. The Bustan. Op.Cit., p. 98.

² Sh.M. Sa'di. The Gulistan. Trans. by Ross, pp. 246-7.

"number of handsome boys and lovely virgins were subjects to his despotic sway, who had neither the permission of a smile nor the option of a word, for this moment he would smite the silver cheek of one of them with his hand, and the next put the crystalline legs of another in the stocks.

In short, their parents, I heard, were made aware of a part of disloyal violence, and beat and drove him from his charge. And they made over his school to a peaceable creature, so pious, meek, simple, and good-natured that he never spoke till forced to do so, nor would he utter a word that could offend any body.

The children forgot that awe in which they had held their first master, and remarking the angelic disposition of their second master, they became one after another as wicked as devils; and relying on his clemency, they would so neglect their studies as to pass most part of their time at play, and break the tablets of their unfinished tasks over each others' heads: —

"When the school-master relaxes in his discipline, the children will stop to play at marbles in the market-place."

A fortnight after, I passed by the gate of that mosque and saw the first school-master, with whom they had been obliged to make friends, and to restore him to his place.

I was in truth offended, calling God to witness, asked, saying: Why have they again made a devil the preceptor of angels? A facetious old gentleman, who had seen much of life, listened to me and replied: Have you not heard what they have said: —

"A king sent his son to school, and hung a tablet of silver round his neck. On the face of the tablet he had written in golden letters: The severity of the master is more useful than the love of the father."¹

¹Ibid., pp. 247-248.

It is noteworthy in Sa'di's methods that the interest of the learner must be considered in teaching. The learner's predispositions must determine the method to be used as well as the content to be taught. He repeatedly declares this point as in the following quotation.

"Tell thy tale according to thy hearer's temper."¹

To conclude this chapter on the educational views of Sa'di, it is important to note that Sa'di does not devote any part of his writings to physical education. Nor does he directly or explicitly mention any thing concerning the education of women. Nevertheless, it must be born in mind that as it appears in his writings, he never advocates the renunciation of worldly pleasures and physical education. He actually recommends all people to follow moderation in eating and drinking in order to possess a sound body. From what he says in these respects, one may conclude that he believes a sound

¹Sh.M., Sa'di. The Gulistan. Translated by Rehatsek, Op.Cit., p. 256.

mind to be in a sound body.

Concerning the education of women, although Sa'di does not explicitly state his idea in this connection, one may infer from his stories that he does not discriminate girls from boys in educational matters.¹

¹Issa Sadigh. Op.Cit., p. 172.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SA'DI

In the foregoing chapters, the basic foundations of Sa'di's philosophy of education were deduced from an examination of his major works. In the following chapter, an attempt will be made to examine this educational philosophy critically, pointing out its weaknesses and points of strength.

A. Strong Points:

Sa'di's words and ideas have had a tremendous impact on the life of the people of Iran during the last seven centuries. This is because his words express eloquently the aspirations, ideals, and values which have been dearly held and highly esteemed in different milieus in Iran¹. Sa'di's words and ideas have served as guiding principles, shaping the mind and character of many individual Iranians, and many thoughtful Iranian leaders believe that Sa'di's ideas must still be cherished despite

¹Sh.M. Sa'di. The Kulliat. Op.Cit., pp.ii-x.

the fact that they were expressed some seven centuries ago.¹

A major point of strength in Sa'di's system of thought lies in his belief that life on earth is also important and worthwhile for its own sake. Comparing Sa'di's views to those which were prevalent among the Medieval Monastic schools, we find that Sa'di's views differ greatly in that he never encourages the renunciation of this world, nor of one's life in it for the sake of the life-after. He feels that a life of meditation is important and one must try to practice it, but he must not seek a life of meditation at the expense of living concerns.

The above idea stands nowadays as significant as during Sa'di's time, and it must be regarded as an important factor in determining the educational philosophy of the Iranian system of education.

Another view which is worth noting in Sa'di is his great faith in the powers of education. Here Sa'di attributes to education a significant role as

¹Ibid., pp. V-X.

he considers it capable of modifying the evil in human nature.

Sa'di seeks to persuade all people, regardless of their status in the society, whether they are princes or paupers, to provide their children with an education. It is for this reason that he is proclaimed as the author of universal education for the children of Iran.

It is interesting to note that his appeal for the cause of universal education was skilfully made in a variety of ways. He used analogies, allegories, proverbs, as well as pertinent stories.

Unlike Aristotle, who grouped the members of the society into different classes and categorically excluded some, like slaves, from the benefits of an education, Sa'di stresses the universal need for culture, never excluding any class of people from correcting their nature through education.

Sa'di's great faith in education persuaded many Iranians of different backgrounds, who came under his influence, to send their children to

school and appreciate learning and scholarship.

Sa'di's type of education is primarily concerned with character development and the inculcation of virtues in children. To train honest children who have certain acceptable guiding moral principles in life has always been one of the major goals of education throughout history and most likely it will continue to be so. It is to Sa'di's credit that he fell in line with the thinking that considers moral training as one of the supreme aims of education.

With the spread of skepticism concerning moral issues among many young people today, Sa'di's call for stress on moral principles and ethical values comes as a refreshing and most needed appeal.

Sa'di must also be credited for his recognition of the value of universal vocational training. For, he emphasizes the universal necessity for vocational training not only as a means of increasing productivity, but also for training children in independence and self-respect. This is proven by the

frequent quotations from Sa'di in which he extols the value of work. As a by-product of his stress on the importance of vocational training, Sa'di sought to inculcate in the people of Iran, a respect for manual labour and the love of artistic crafts in which Iranians have excelled ever since.

It is the writer's opinion that, because of the influence of such thinkers like Sa'di, the idea of establishing vocational schools **have** ~~may~~ been more cordially received in Iran than in countries which have lacked Sa'di's tradition.

The emphasis which Sa'di has laid upon the practical aspect of education, is also noteworthy. It should be born in mind that education, in the Thirteenth Century Iran, focused primarily on theoretical rather than practical aspects. A great deal of educational effort was thus wasted in useless speculation. It required a courageous genius like Sa'di to advocate the importance of functional knowledge versus theoretical speculation.

The cultivation of humanitarian sentiments

which Sa'di has so strongly recommended, is evidently another major strength in his system of thought. Through his moral and educational writings, Sa'di has so admirably called the attention of all individuals to the bonds which exist among mankind everywhere and to the necessity of their cultivation. The love of one's neighbours and feelings of sympathy and compassion for others which are still among the ideals in the Iranian society to-day, stem from Sa'di's teachings.

Another point of strength which is not difficult to discern in Sa'di's system is his affirmation of the possibility of knowledge through direct contact with the environment. He emphasized that one must not limit himself to the information received from others or always rely on others for the verification of what one wants to investigate.

Sa'di's awareness of and his deep insight into the nature of methods of instruction is revealed through his advocacy of sense experience in education. He maintains that the method of sense perception must be used for discovering the external world.

However, this method, he holds, should be supplemented by reason.

Among other points of strength in Sa'di's philosophy of education, one may name his recognition of the role of heredity and environment in producing individual differences. To understand that differences exist among individuals, and to accept them as facts in teaching, was a manifestation of a penetrating insight which Sa'di arrived at intuitively as far back as the Thirteenth Century.

In this connection, he always stresses that differences exist not only in the abilities of different individuals but in their interests also.

These differences stem from various hereditary and environmental factors, including the peer group. He constantly warns parents to keep their children away from evil associates who will influence their children. This idea has been supported by recent findings in psychology, and the role of peer group in shaping one's character, has been underlined in modern literature.

Due to his belief in individual differences, Sa'di has recommended that the interest of the learner should be considered in teaching. As early as the Thirteenth Century, Sa'di had the insight to discern that effective learning requires the consideration of the interest of the learner.

Sa'di's recognition of this point is manifested in his writings, chiefly in the Gulistan. Here he has sought to avoid monotony in his writings and he has diversified his style and material to appeal to the readers of extremely different tastes and backgrounds. He has constantly sought to admonish teachers to use this method for teaching effectively.

The above points of strength in Sa'di's educational philosophy suggest that Sa'di has some wise and penetrating educational insights which can still serve as guidelines and provide direction for the present Iranian system of education.

However, the writer is of the opinion that a careful re-examination of Sa'di's ideas is indispensable for determining the value of his views in

the light of the present needs, attitudes, habits and aspirations of Iran as well as the modern approach to education. To arrive at a balanced and objective evaluation of Sa'di's educational views, the weak points and inconsistencies of his beliefs must be stated and explained.

Weaknesses of His Ideas:

Sa'di lived in the Thirteenth Century Moslem society, during the Mongol invasion of Asia. Naturally, his writings must reflect the attitudes, feelings, aspirations, values and the way of life of his life of his time, which are different from those prevalent to-day.

Sa'di's universe was simple in structure. Most probably, it was a geocentric type of universe in which man enjoyed a supreme position among all created beings. For Sa'di, man was the noblest of God's creatures whose life was teleologically determined. He believed firmly in God and he felt that man had to serve and worship God. This, he believed, was the end of man's existence. In other words, his conception of God, man, life, death, and the universe

were religious. They were much less sophisticated than those of an ordinary person living to-day.

An average man, in recent years, has had many opportunities to hear and learn about various systems of thought which might be more acceptable to him than that of Sa'di's. He has had the occasion to hear what the modern scientists have confirmed concerning such views which were expressed by Sa'di. He has listened to such mass communication media as radio and television and heard about different scientific discoveries and explorations of the universe. He has become familiar with many other systems of thought in addition to that of Sa'di's, and, thus, he tends to be sophisticated about such ideas and concepts as God, man, and the universe. Modern man would hesitate to take for granted what Sa'di held. Consequently, he would no longer tend to believe that the end of all human activities including all educational efforts, is religious, thus adhering to a religion-oriented system of belief.

On the contrary, the average educated Iran-

ian to-day, who most probably belongs to the Middle Class group of the society, and shares in their mentality, seeks ends in education which are not absolutely compatible with those of Sa'di's. He seeks social mobility and status through education as well as the religious ends. He feels that education must promote his understanding of worldly affairs and serve as a way of arriving at a better knowledge of God. In brief such a person, while respecting those fundamental values which were highly esteemed by Sa'di, believes that there are also additional values of worldly nature which present day education should achieve.

Therefore, the writer believes that there is a real need for reexamination of Sa'di's educational views in their application to the needs and aspirations of modern youth in Iran.

To the best of writer's knowledge no Iranian scholar has so far attempted to point out the weak points of Sa'di's educational writings. His influence has been so great that any disagreement with his ideas would have been strongly resisted, and, may expose the scholar

who dared disagree with Sa'di, to disdain and ridicule.

However, in the interest of truth and of the youth of Iran, the writer believes that the weaknesses of Sa'di's viewpoints should be brought to the attention of the influential people as well as the students. This can be done with the full appreciation of Sa'di's great contributions to education in Iran.

It should be admitted that Sa'di, like all other philosophers and thinkers, has exaggerated certain points, overlooked others, and has shown inconsistencies in his views. This is neither strange nor unique with Sa'di, especially that his main concern was not education.

As an example of his inaccuracies one may turn to his ideas concerning the role of education and human destiny. Here, while he believes in predestination, he advocates that one must develop his rational powers. He does not explicitly state the limits which exist to human freedom and he does not clarify exactly how far education can be effective

in developing one's reason which in turn results in increasing his freedom of action.

Another example is his answer to the problem of knowledge. While he affirms that there are three distinct ways of knowing, namely sense experience, reason, and intuition, he fails to specify the scope and limits of each of these sources of knowledge.

Moreover, he conceives of human nature as an entity containing evil elements which must be suppressed. He repeatedly points to the evil elements, which exist in man, and maintains that education must be directed to overcoming the evil elements without mentioning anything concerning the development of the good elements in man's nature. Unlike his admirer Emerson, who advocated the growth of individuality and creativeness in children as aims of education,¹ Sa'di pays no attention to such points in his system. He constantly recommends an education of the conventional type and at no time does he mention how education should encourage individual growth.

¹R. Ulich. Op.Cit., p. 577-8.

The education of the conventional type has been subject to widespread criticism in recent years, and it has been categorically rejected by many educationists like Jean Jacques Rousseau.

A major weakness which appears among Sa'di's views in his over emphasis on religious instruction in the school curriculum.

To-day, one cannot afford to study merely in order to fortify his religious practices. Religious instruction cannot occupy the most prominent place in the school curriculum as Sa'di has recommended. It cannot be placed above all subjects in the curriculum and the progress in educational activities cannot be evaluated in terms of the progress made in religious teachings.

Moreover, Sa'di believes in this connection that all children must receive instruction in religion. He does not ~~explain~~ explain specifically what other areas of knowledge should be included in the curriculum, nor how the teacher should teach them. While the indoctrination may be essential for teaching religion, indoctrination as a general method of edu-

cation, is questioned by modern educators. Instead of allowing the child to grow mentally and use his intellect independently, the pupil, in Sa'di's system, is a passive learner who must recite what the teacher has given or what is found in the book. This method is still the prevailing practice in most Iranian schools. However, although Sa'di has contributed, through his influence, to perpetuate this method, he should not be blamed for its widespread prevalence. For, this method was used before him and in many lands other than Iran.

Another major weakness among Sa'di's views, which is not difficult to discern, is that he does not offer any criterion for determining the golden mean which he considers to be the best way for distinguishing the good from the evil. He assumes that as a person is educated and develops in rational and intellectual powers, he will be able to discover the golden mean in his daily affairs, ignoring the fact that one's personal judgment is ^a subjective criterion for discerning the good from the evil. For instance, he assumes that courage, generosity, and humility are virtues, and every learned man can easily arrive at understanding this point. There would never be any disagreement among those who are educated as to what is a virtue.

Furthermore, he never tries to define the limits of courage, patience and other virtues and he does not specify exactly what the properties of such virtues would be.

Sa'di also mentions character development as a major aim of education. However, he tends to include such traits under character which would not be acceptable by the majority of cultured people to-day. His ideal type of person who is trained in morality would scarcely fit into the Iranian society of the present day. For instance, he mentions contentment as a virtue which should be inculcated in the child and man must be so trained as to easily recognize the value of such a trait.

One has little difficulty in discerning the fact that the present Iranian society, like other societies in the contemporary world, is made up of three major classes of people who are divided according to their socio-economic status. Evidently, each of the three classes possesses a different mentality and different set of values which it inculcates in its members.

The need for achievement and social mobility is one which is most strongly felt among the members of the Middle class today. This class of people constitutes the major portion of the Iranian society, and its mentality is such that it requires each member to seek promotion and never remain content with the present achievement. Contentment, which Sa'di considers to be of universal value, will undoubtedly not fit into the mentality of such people and, therefore, it would be regarded as a value which characterizes the mentality of the lower class.

Consequently, it would never be justifiable to impose on all the members the characteristic of a few lower class members of the society which Sa'di has constantly advised. His views concerning character development, do have such weaknesses, though they are in principle acceptable. Their adoption without adaptation however must be resisted.

The fact that Sa'di has considered the development of a good character to be possible only through religious instruction may also be regarded as a weakness of his philosophy of education. Implicit in this attitude is that one cannot teach mo-

rality through other methods and in other contexts.

This also cannot be accepted, as, many a time people who have moral convictions may not happen to adhere to any kind of religious principles. One may even be an atheist or irreligious and still have a good character; or one may, at the hands of conscientious and educated parents, have formed a set of desirable moral principles which would serve as his guide without recourse to religion. Therefore, the development of a good character need not necessarily be a function of religion only.

Another weakness found in Sa'di's educational views is that while he stresses the importance of developing man's rational and intellectual powers, he ignores completely the importance of health and the physical education. Thus, he overlooks the interrelationship between all aspects of the child development - spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical. This is not surprising, however, as the wholistic approach to the education of the child was not known during the Thirteenth Century.

Although Sa'di did not explicitly and cate-

gorically exclude any one from enjoying the advantages of an education, there is no mention in his writings concerning the education of women. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Sa'di seems to have ignored the fact that women require an education of a type different from that of men in Iran, as women have different roles to play in society. This, however, is another weakpoint in his system of belief.

In spite of his recognition of individual differences, such recognition does not seem to be adequately implemented either in the curriculum or methods which Sa'di advocates.

It should be recognized, however, that in those days, instruction was mainly individual. No classes or grades as we know them to-day, existed in schools at that time.

Moreover, although Sa'di shows his deep insight into the problem of differences which exist among individuals, due to the hereditary and environmental factors, he fails to offer adequate methods for teaching the slow learners. One gets

the impression from some of his tales in the Gulistan, that he recommends the teacher to give up the teaching of those who are slow to learn.

Sa'di advocates the administration of corporal punishment in schools. This is obviously in direct conflict with modern principles of educational psychology. It must be admitted, however, that even to-day authorities differ on the subject. We cannot, therefore, be too critical of this point of an educator who lived seven centuries ago.

Because Sa'di was taken as a model by many Iranian teachers, his views on corporal punishment have resulted in a great deal of harm to the students up to recent years. Many crude methods of discipline were employed in Iran. Sticks were used in almost all Iranian elementary schools for beating the child in front of his classmates for the slightest mistakes whether in spelling, dictation or coming to school late.

Finally, it must be stressed that Sa'di does not only suggest that physical punishment must be

used in teaching, but he also recounts the advantages of a severe teacher who would never allow any of his pupils to smile or express his emotions through laughing.

In one of his stories in the Gulistan, Sa'di condemns a lenient teacher and maintains that leniency in teaching would lead students to commit evil acts and bring out the wickedness of their natures. He recommends the teacher to inspire awe in pupils so that they can learn their lessons well. In this respect, Sa'di is in agreement with the strictest of the proponents of harsh discipline.

It is surprising, however, to find that a man of such wisdom as Sa'di recommends such severe methods of teaching which are in direct opposition to the humanitarian standards as well as to his deep understanding of human nature.

It is interesting to note that teachers in Iran who still believe in harsh discipline justify their practice by reference to Sa'di. Whenever they are asked for their reasons in using severe measures in their classes, they always quote Sa'di's sayings:

and poems for supporting their inhumane actions.

One of the important methods of improving education in Iran is to work to bring about a more thorough understanding of Sa'di's educational ideas. The strong as well as the weakpoints should be brought to the attention of the teacher objectively and in a scholarly manner. This is however, easier said than done due to the almost worshipful attitude held by many teachers, and learned men towards Sa'di and his writings. The halo effect of Sa'di's beautiful poetry is reflected on his educational writings, so it will not be a simple task to bring about a balanced evaluation of them. But, **it is essential** to make this attempt.

One important positive method for achieving this more balanced attitude towards Sa'di's educational views is to promote professional education among the teachers of Iran's elementary and secondary schools; to bring them the findings of modern psychological experimentation and philosophical thinking on education. In this manner, the teacher can be freed from blind adherence to some dated

ideas and enabled to select those ideas which are pertinent to-day.

Finally, in every one of Sa'di's works which touches on education and is used as a text-book, a preface should be added which provides the pupil with a balanced view of Sa'di's works and the reasons why he wrote as he did.

It is the writer's hope that this thesis or parts of it may be used to provide the Iranian teacher with an appreciation of Sa'di's educational philosophy and a more balanced view of his contributions.

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