Of love and longing : a study of Ayatollah Khomeini's mystical poetry and its reception in Iran and abroad

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The Antinomian Ayatollah Khomeini: Lyrical Poems (*ghazal*s)

Ayatollah Khomeini composed 296 poems in different poetic forms. Of these, 149 are *ghazal*s, or love lyrics. By composing *ghazal*s and applying the form, themes and motifs of this well-known genre in his poems, Ayatollah Khomeini places himself in the millennium-old tradition of Persian literature. He is imitating great masters such as Hâfez, and elaborating on mystical themes used by poets such as Sanâ'i. Before starting an analysis of Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s, I will give a brief history of the Persian *ghazal*, its usage, form and contents and of the contexts in which the *ghazal* has been used.

4.1 Structure of the *Ghazal*

*Ghazal*s are poems of between five and fifteen couplets with a single rhyme. The same rhyme often appears internally within the first couplet. The last couplet often contains the poet's pen-name, or, *takhallos.*[330] A *ghazal* sometimes contains a *radif*, which means that each rhyme word is followed by a recurring personal suffix, word, or phrase.[331] All metric forms can be used for the *ghazal* except for the metre that is used for the *robâ'i* form. Each line of the *ghazal* is formed from two half-lines or hemistiches (*mesrâ*`s) and constitutes an independent poetic 'statement,' with its own specific theme, which is often expressed in the first half-line and emphasized or exemplified in the second hemistich. This variety of themes was not the case for the early *ghazal*s, in which all the lines of the *ghazal* developed the same subject. Although the themes in the various lines of the *ghazal* are different, a *ghazal* is unified by a strict poetic meter and rhyme. Because each theme is expounded in a brief scope, compact metaphors are often used.[332]

4.2 Themes and Motifs in the *Ghazal*

'Love' is the most common theme in the *ghazal* genre. In classical Persian *ghazal*s, the Beloved is generally depicted as a distant and unreachable person who is indifferent to the lover's gestures. A clear distinction can be made between the Beloved in the Arabic *ghazal* and in the classical Persian *ghazal*. While the Beloved in the Arabic *ghazal* is, as a rule,

[330] See J.T.P. de Bruijn, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under Takhallus ii. In the Sense of Pen-Name and see J. Rypka, *History of Iranian literature*, Dordrecht: Springer, 1968, p. 99.

[331] J.T.P. de Bruijn, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. History.

[332] E. Yarshater, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. Characteristics and Conventions.

female, in the classical Persian *ghazal* the Beloved is almost always male.[333] In many cases, he is a young soldier whose signs of manhood are just beginning to appear in the form of a *khatt*, 'down' or 'moustache' above his lips. This youth is an idealized beauty, whose features are extremely exaggerated and generalized. The Beloved in a poem by Hâfez, for example, cannot be distinguished from the Beloved in a poem by Sanâ'i.[334] The Beloved (whether earthly or spiritual) is referred to as the poet's friend *(dust, yâr*), Beloved (*mahbub, ma'shuq*), soul (*jân*), heart-ravisher (*delbar*) or heart-keeper (*deldâr*), moon or moon-face (*mâh-ru*) or even idol (*bot*) or Turk (*tork*). The figure of the Turkic male became extremely popular from the ninth century onwards. During that period, Turkic male slaves were the most desirable slaves. They were known for their stunning beauty. They often came as war prisoners and served at court as pages for a patron. So, unlike in the Arabic *ghazal*, the love in Persian *ghazal*s is homo-erotic. The lover does not want to show his love because it is 'a forbidden passion.' Therefore he tries to hide his 'scandal' (*rosvâ'i*) because it might cause him 'blame and shame.' But often his love is evident from his face. A pale face and weeping eyes all betray him, showing the pain he feels from the separation (*ferâq*) from his Beloved. In general, the poet presents himself as the lover who begs for some attention from the Beloved. He does everything to draw the attention of the Beloved, whose beauty has 'taken him over' at first sight. The lover is often depicted as a victim of love who sacrifices everything including his own life for the Beloved.[335]

The subject of love that is described in *ghazal*s can be both profane and divine. Since the twelfth century, mystics have used the theme of love in *ghazal*s to communicate mystical thoughts and to convey difficult mystical concepts. Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s fit into this mystical tradition. Like numerous classical poets, he has adopted many mystical motifs in his

[333] Ibid.

[334] To the why men and not women were lauded in classical Persian *ghazal*s, Yarshater says that this was because of the norms of Islam. But then, why was the depiction and praise of women accepted in the Arabic speaking Islamic world, and why was wine-drinking, which is certainly against Islamic norms, a popular theme in Persian poetry? The question requires further examination. See E. Yarshater, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. Characteristics and Conventions.

[335] Yarshater suggests this 'sacrificing' feature of the lover might have been influenced by Islamic mysticism in which the mystical also devotes himself entirely to God, to the point of having nothing but love for God. See E. Yarshater, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. Characteristics and Conventions. For a discussion of the concept of love in Persian poetry see also A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, "Martyrdom as Piety: Mysticism and National Identity in Iran-Iraq War Poetry," in *Der Islam*, Vol. 31, 2011, pp. 250-253 and idem, *Layli and Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystical Longing in Nizami's Epic Romance*, Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003.

*ghazal*s, themes such as the 'annihilation of the soul' or the antithesis between earthly love and divine love. This is not to say that every *ghazal* with a mystical motif is to be read as a mystical work. Many classical poets adopted mystical elements in their *ghazal*s, although they were not mystics. Rudaki (d. 941), for example, wrote several *ghazal*s, which can be interpreted in a mystical sense.[336] Mystical metaphors such as 'wine' for divine knowledge, or the 'moth' that flies into the candle-flame, representing self-sacrifice, became generally current for both mystical and non-mystical poets in the Persian-speaking world. [337]

The range of motifs used in a *ghazal* is diverse, including asceticism (*zohdiyyât*), antinomianism (*qalandariyyât)* and springtime *(rabi'iyyât)*. Ayatollah Khomeini follows this millennium-old tradition but, as we will see, he leans more on ascetic and *qalandari* motifs. The *qalandar* figure is a deviant mystic, whose unconventional public wine-drinking and homo-erotic behaviour provokes an orthodox religious establishment. His behaviour questions the value of superficial piety, showing how easily piety can turn into hypocrisy when it is rewarded by praise. True piety is achieved when the mystical conceals his religious life behind a disreputable exterior. Great Persian poets such as ʿAttâr (d. 1220), Hâfez and Sanâ'i wrote many *qalandariyyât* (*qalandar* poems) containing antinomian motifs such as the *kharâbât* ('ruin' or 'tavern'), *qalandar* ('beggar' or 'vagabond'), or *rend* ('rogue').[338] To contextualize Ayatollah Khomeini's qalandari *ghazal*s, certain core doctrines of antinomian mysticism should be explained.

Antinomian behaviour appeared among mystics in the twelfth century as a reaction to the institutionalization of traditional Sufism, which had started in the ninth and tenth centuries and flowered under Seljuk rule.[339] The Seljuks hoped to control the mystical brotherhoods and therefore built many Sufi hospices and set strict rules and rituals. This had much effect on the lives of the mystics. The propagation of the concept of *vahdat al-vojud* ('oneness of being') by the famous mystical philosopher Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240) also caused a change of thought and attitude among mystics. Since Ibn ʿArabi stated that God permeated the whole universe and

[336] For an elaboration on the use of court literature by mystics see E. Yarshater, *Persian Literature*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

[337] Mystics use the symbol of the moth that flies into the candle to explain the road of the mystical who also becomes one with God. With a reference to Asghar's article!

[338] J.T. P. de Bruijn, "The Qalandariyyāt in Mystical Poetry, From Sanā'ī Onwards," in *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*, ed. L. Lewisohn, London: Khanaqahi Publ., 1992, pp. 75-86.

[339] The Seljuk Empire was founded by the Seljuks, a tribe of Turko-Persian origins. Large parts of the Middle East and Central Asia were under their control from the eleventh till the fourteenth century. The Seljuks, who belonged to the Sunni branch of Islam, greatly supported Sufi groups.

therefore rejection of this world was no longer necessary, Sufis became more active and integrated in society. The antinomian mystics did not agree with this institutionalization and communalization of Sufism and purposely started to show deviating behaviour.[340] Unlike the 'traditional' mystics, they believed that voluntarily violating religious and societal norms was a necessary step to attain divine salvation. They thought to attain this goal by openly consuming religiously forbidden things, such as alcohol and hashish, or by breaching religious norms, for example by breaking the fast before sunset during Ramadan.[341]

The trend of antinomian behaviour in Sufism also affected Persian poetry. From the twelfth century onwards, Persian poets such as Sanâ'i, Attâr (d. 1220) and Hâfez started to adopt antinomian themes such as the adoration of non-Islamic figures and the consumption of forbidden things in their poems. These poems became known as *qalandariyyât*. The central figure in this poetry is the *qalandar* or *rend* (rogue). He is an antinomian mystical who, in search of wine and love, dwells on the edges of society in Christian and Zoroastrian taverns. He is also to be found in a Zoroastrian or Christian monastery, criticizing the most sacred tenets of Islam such as the pilgrimage to Mecca. The *rend* adores the Zoroastrian priest or Christian Elder because of his similar unconventional position in society and sees him as an embodiment of deviant behaviour. He recognizes himself in this un-Islamic figure since he, like him, does not respect the Islamic laws and openly drinks wine. He adores him as if he were his spiritual guide. The *rend* is dependent on him since only he has access to wine, which in mystical philosophy symbolizes divine knowledge. Another important figure in this antinomian poetry is the young wine-server who is often a young Zoroastrian (*moghbachche*) or a Christian boy (*tarsâbachche*) of stunning beauty. Like the Zoroastrian priest or the Christian Elder, the wine-server is a point of admiration for the antinomian mystic. In antinomian poetry, these 'good-hearted' unorthodox characters are placed opposite orthodox figures such as the religious preacher (*wâ'ez*), the sheikh, the scholar (*hakim*), the jurist

[340] This reaction to communalization had also taken place some centuries earlier when Islam was institutionalized at all levels of society. From that time on religious piety was no longer a private matter, but became a public affair. This became most clear with the adaption of the *ijma*'-practice as a 'source of legal authority' on which the laws could be based. The reaction of some believers to this development was that they started to turn away from society. These were the first tokens of renunciation in Islamized Iran. One of the first, or the first, to write on these ascetic practices was Shaqiq Balkhi (d. 809/10). Many ascetic poems, called *zohdiyyât*, were written during this period. The ascetics interpreted this world as being opposed to the other world. For consultation see A.T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994, pp. 1-30.

[341] Ibid.

(faqih), the judge (*qâdi),* the moral police *(mohtaseb),* the Sufi and the ascetic *(zâhed),* to show that religion and piety have everything to do with purity of heart and nothing to do with the observance of Islamic laws and rituals.[342]

Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s all fit into this antinomian poetic tradition. His broad adoption of this tradition raises several questions as to what he wanted to achieve by praising wine, homo-erotic relationships with the Beloved, and voiding the orthodox tenets of religion, when he was writing poetry, while upholding orthodox Shiite ideas in his political and religious *persona*.

4.3 The *Ghazal* in Historical Perspective

The *ghazal* is one of the most popular genres in the Persian literary tradition and is used in a wide range of contexts, from the amatory to mystic, religious, political and social fields. The Arabic root *gh-z-l,* refers to spinning yarn, while the word *ghazal* means flirting and courtship. By extension it was used to refer to a love poem in any form. Eventually, in Persian cultural areas, the term was used to denote a specific type of love poetry with a certain rhyme and metric pattern. The connotation of *ghazal* as a love poem probably developed out of the amatory passages in the introduction to a panegyric poem (*qaside*). As J.T.P. de Bruijn indicates, the development of the 'technical' *ghazal,* as some have termed this particular love poetry, started in the twelfth century when poetry expanded beyond the courtly environment and was used by mystics and in non-elite literary contexts. The *ghazal* form as we know it today was fully developed in the thirteenth century.[343] It contained both lyrical lines and didactic poetical themes. The oldest known 'technical' *ghazal* dates to the twelfth century and was composed by Sanâ'i, who introduced antinomian themes such as 'wine' and 'rogue' (*rend*) to the *ghazal*.[344] The introduction of mystical elements in the *ghazal* in the twelfth century, alongside the amatory connotations of the form, made the *ghazal* ambiguous, since it could have both a profane and a mystical connotation, a characteristic that continues today. A *ghazal* can usually be interpreted in terms of mystical or profane love, and sometimes in political or social senses, without downplaying other interpretative levels. The *ghazal*s of

[342] F. Lewis, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Hāfez viii. Hāfez and Rendi and J.T.P. de Bruijn, "The Qalandariyyāt in Mystical Poetry…", pp. 75-86.

[343] J.T.P. de Bruijn, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. History.

[344] I will treat the antinomian themes elaborately in chapter 4.6 of this study.

Hâfez (d. 1390) are particularly good examples of the mixing of profane and mystical elements.[345]

The *ghazal* has been used in a wide range of contexts, varying from mystical worship and instruction to courtship, and in political and social settings. In social contexts for instance, the *ghazal* has been used in bibliomancy (*fâlgiri*), the practice of consulting texts to foretell future events or get advice in difficulties. Bibliomancy has been popular in all layers of Iranian society for centuries, and remains so up to the present. The *ghazal*s of Hâfez have been among the favourite texts to be consulted for future-telling, as almost every Iranian home contains a copy of his *Divân*[346]

The classical *ghazal* has also been an important instrument to convey political ideas. Several *ghazal*s by Hâfez carry political messages and can be interpreted as pure political comments. In ghazal 41:1, Hâfez gives us a glimpse of the political and social climate in which he lived, saying:

اگر چه باده فرح بخش و باد گلبیز است	Although the breeze waft in the scent of roses and the wine bring on good cheer,
به بانگ چنگ مخور می که محتسب تیز است	beware: don't drink to the tune of the harp – for sharp is the Policeman[']s ear]. [347]

In the poem, Hâfez criticizes his Mozaffarid ruler Mobârez al-Din Mohammad (ruled 1353-1358), who was known for his orthodox way of living. Mobârez forbade all forms of cultural activities such as musical expression and put a strict ban on the consumption of alcohol.[348] In this verse, Hâfez responds to Mobârez's orthodoxy, by praising a libertine way of living. As L. Lewishon argues, "it was partly as a foil to this religious dictatorship that Ḥāfiẓ elaborated his most famous symbol– the inspired libertine (*rend*) – as a representative of the spiritual and intellectual counter-culture of the city."[349] In Hâfez's *ghazals*, the reader

[345] E. Yarshater, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Ghazal i. Characteristics and Conventions.

[346] See J. Schmidt, "Hafiz and Other Persian Authors in Ottoman Bibliomancy; The Extraordinary Case of Kevefi Hüseyn Efendi's Rāznāme (Late Sixteenth Century)," in *Persica*, No. XXI 21, Leuven: Peeters, 2006-2007, pp. 63-74. See also the articles by I. Afshār, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Fāl-nāma and M. Omidsalar, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Divination.

[347] Mohammad Shams al-Din Hāfiz, *Divân*, ed. P. Nâtel Khânlari, Tehran: Khârazmi, 1362/1983, *ghazal* 41:1. Translation is by L. Lewisohn, "Ḥāfiẓ in the Socio-historical, Literary and Mystical Milieu of Medieval Persia", in *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. L. Lewisohn, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010, p. 23.

[348] P. Avery, *The Collected Lyrics of Hafiz of Shiraz,* Cambridge: Archetype, 2007, p. 75.

[349] L. Lewisohn, "Ḥāfiẓ in the Socio-historical, Literary and Mystical Milieu of Medieval Persia,*"* p. 23.

finds not only words of praise and religious or mystical messages. His poems also serve as important historical documents and reflect the political and social climate which surrounded him.[350]

Although early classical *ghazal*s such as those of Hâfez also contain political messages, it was not until the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) that poets began to write for a new audience, after losing their position in court. Poets such as Mohammad Farrokhi Yazdi (d. 1939), Mohammad Taqi Bahâr (d. 1951), and Abu 'l-Qâsem ʿÂref Qazvini (d. 1934) used the *ghazal* to picture the social unrest and express political critique or to spread revolutionary ideas such as Iranian national identity and independence amongst the population.[351] The Constitutional poetry written during this period differed radically from the generalizing neoclassical poetry of the previous decades.[352] Classical themes such as 'the Beloved' were replaced by themes such as 'the motherland' (*vatan*). In numerous poems, constitutional poets praised their motherland as if it were their Beloved.[353] *Ghazal*s published in new print media, and widely recited, communicated messages of modernity, patriotism, the position of women and human rights to people from all layers of society. Persian poets have continued to use the *ghazal* to depict social and political realities to the present day.[354] Simin Behbahâni (1927-2014), for example, used the *ghazal* to condemn the political and social situation in Iran shortly after the Islamic Revolution (1978-79):

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[350] For Hâfez's poetic skills see J.T.P. de Bruijn, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Hafez iii. Hafez's Poetic Art. For Hâfez's Life and Work see *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, ed. L. Lewisohn.

[351] For articles on political literature see A. Karimi-Hakkak, "Iran's Literature 1977-1997; Selections from the Literature of Iran," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3-4, 1997, pp. 193-213 and N. Farzad, "Qeysar Aminpur and the Persian Poetry of Sacred Defence; Iranian Intellectuals from 1997-2007," in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 2007, pp. 351-374. For articles on Farrokhi see A. Gheissari, "The Poetry and Politics of Farrokhi Yazdi," in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1-2, 1993, pp. 33-50. For articles on Bahâr see J. Matini, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Mohammad Taqi Bahār ii. Bahār as a Poet. For articles on Aref see A. Karimi-Hakkak, "Iran's Literature 1977-1997…," pp. 193-213 and A. Karimi-Hakkak, *Recasting Persian Poetry: Scenarios of Poetic Modernity in Iran*, London: Oneworld Publications, 2012, pp. 88-96.

[352] During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Iran experienced a *bâzgashti*, a 'return,' to classical court poetry.

[353] An interesting book on *vatan* as a theme in Persian poetry was written by A. Najmabadi, "The Erotic Vatan [Homeland] as Beloved and Mother: To Love, to Possess, and To Protect," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1997, pp. 442-467.

[354] See A. Karimi-Hakkak, "Iran's Literature 1977-1997…," pp. 193-213 and N. Farzad, "Qeysar Aminpur and the Persian Poetry of Sacred Defence…," pp. 351-374.

I can't look: a corpse lies on the ground

its horrifying outline punctuated by bullets,

the swamp bubbles that were his eyes expelled from their sockets,

emptied of all joy and sadness,
separated from all hatred and love.[355]

نمی توانم ببینم ِ جنازه یٔ بر زمین است؛

که بر خطوط مهیبش ِ گلوله ها نقطه چین است:.حباب مرداب

چشمش؛ ز حفره بیرون جهیده

تهی ز اندوه و شادی ِ گسسته از مهر و کین است

Behbahâni gives an awful description of the body of a soldier killed in the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). Only the rhyme and meter reveal that the poem is actually a *ghazal*. Nothing is left of the classical *ghazal* depicting love and the Beloved's flirtations. Instead, Behbahâni uses the *ghazal* to depict the situation in Iran.

In conclusion, one can say that the *ghazal* has been used in a wide range of contexts to convey erotic, philosophical or mystical ideas, but also to spread political messages. On the one hand, Khomeini's poetry can be place in the antinomian poetic tradition dating from the twelfth century. One of the questions that will be examined in this chapter is as to why Ayatollah Khomeini adopted antinomian elements in his poetry while in public he accepted no trespasses of the Islamic norms and rules? Another question that will be examined is whether his *ghazal*s can be read as historical documents reflecting the political and social climate in which he lived? Did Ayatollah Khomeini use poetry to depict the socio-political situation in Iran? And if so, why would he use poetry for this purpose? These and multiple other similar questions will be addressed in this chapter.

4.4 Ayatollah Khomeini's Poetry inspired by Hâfez

Ayatollah Khomeini wrote several *ghazal*s in imitation of Hâfez's poems. From the fourteenth century onwards, Hâfez had been imitated by a wide range of poets in the extensive area in which Persian was a language of literature, from the Ottoman courts to the Mughals in the Indian subcontinent.[356] By composing several *ghazal*s after Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini places

[355] First three couplets of the poem named "I can't Look" from 1980, composed by Simin Behbahâni and translated by F. Milani. See S. Behbahani, *A Cup of Sin: Selected Poems*, eds. & trs. F. Milani and K. Safa, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999, p. 89. For the original Persian lines see S. Behbahâni, *Khatti ze sor'at wa az ātash*, Tehrān: Zawwār, 1370 (1991), pp. 101-102. In 2008, the *Journal of Iranian Studies* devoted an issue (Vol. 41) entirely to Simin Behbahâni.

[356] For a specific example of imitation of one of Hâfez's *ghazal*s in the Ottoman language see K. Silay, *Nedim and the Poetics of the Ottoman Court*, Bloomington: Indiana University Turkish Studies, 1994, p. 33. For the imitation tradition in general consult the six volumes on the history of Ottoman poetry by E.J.W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. I-VI, ed. E.G. Browne, London: Luzac, 1900-1909.

himself in this firm and long-established literary and mystical tradition. To contextualize one of these 'imitations' by Ayatollah Khomeini, I will give a translation of Hâfez's first *ghazal* in his *Divân*, which was imitated by Ayatollah Khomeini:

1	O cup-bearer, bring the cup around, bring it to me, while love at first seemed easy, difficulties appeared.	الا یا ایّها السّاقی ادر کأساً و ناولها که عشق آسان نمود اول ولی افتاد مشکل ها
2	By the fragrance of the musk, Zephyr will at last unknot the locks; her musky curls making the hearts bleed.	به بوی نافه ای کاخر صبا زان طرّه بگشاید ز تاب جعد مشکینش چه خون افتاد در دل ها
3	What safety and ease can we have in the Beloved's inn, while the incessant bell proclaims: "Bind on your burdens."	مرا در منزل جانان چه امن عیش چون هر دم جرس فریاد می دارد که بربندید محمل ها
4	Dye your prayer-mat with wine if the Magian commands it, for he who has travelled knows the road and the customs of the stations.	به می سجاده رنگین کن گرت پیر مغان گوید که سالک بی خبر نبود ز راه و رسم منزل ها
5	A dark night, the fear of waves, and such a monstrous maelstrom: what can unencumbered souls ashore know of our predicament?	شب تاریک و بیم موج و گردابی چنین هایل کجا دانند حال ما سبکباران ساحل ها
6	Because I pleased myself, all I have for thanks, is infamy. When it's the subject of assemblies, how can a secret stay hidden?	همه کارم ز خود کامی به بدنامی کشید آری نهان کی ماند آن رازی کز آن سازند محفل ها
7	Hâfez, if you wish to attain her presence, be not the unseen, when you attain your wish, forsake all else, forget the world.	حضوری گر همی خواهی از او غایب مشو حافظ متی ما تلق من تهوی دع الدنیا و اهملها[357]

This *ghazal* consists of seven couplets. Hâfez begins with a hemistich in Arabic, *alâ yâ ayyohâ al-sâqi* (Oh Cupbearer) and finishes with another Arabic hemistich.[358] In this poem, Hâfez uses the metre *hazâj-e sâlem mosamman*. Each of the seven couplets ends with a word ending on -el, followed by the *radif* –hâ, which is the Persian plural form *moshkelhâ* (difficulties), *delhâ* (hearts) *mahmelhâ* (burdens) *manzelhâ* (stations) *sâhelhâ* (ashore), *mahfelhâ* (assemblies)). In addition to these Persian plurals, in two places Hâfez uses an

[357] First *ghazal* in Hâfez's *divân*, pp. 18-19.

[358] My treatment of this *ghazal* is entirely based on J.T.P. de Bruijn's insightful analysis which Seyed-Gohrab further discussed with me during one of our PhD-sessions.

Arabic plural form which consists of the suffix – *ân nâwelhâ* (to bring / to offer) and *ahmelhâ* (to forget).

Hâfez presents his *ghazal* as if it were a monologue by a poet lover. Although there is no question of a clear I-form in the poem, it is as if one follows the complaints of the lover who is separated from his Beloved. In addition to the lover and the Beloved for whom the lover laments, the 'cup-bearer' (*sâqi*) is invoked, and the Zoroastrian (Magian) Elder or spiritual guide appears in couplet three. Couplet seven contains the *takhallos*, the pen-name of the poet Hâfez, which means one who remembers. The poet is addressed in the third person by an unknown voice, who cannot be identified as the lover, and who tells him to forsake the world. So a total of six characters can be found in this first *ghazal* by Hâfez: the lover, the Beloved, the cup-bearer, the Magian Elder, Hâfez, and an unidentified voice.

The main theme in this *ghazal* is the antithesis between easy, safe love and dangerous, uncomfortable love. Another important theme is the 'journey', whether physical or spiritual. To explain these themes, Hâfez uses various motifs and imagery that have their origin in 'love poems' (*ghazaliyyât*), 'antinomianism' (*qalandariyyât*), 'praise of wine' (*khamriyyât*) and 'asceticism' (*zohdiyyât*). Wine motifs can be found throughout the poem: Hâfez speaks of 'wine' (*mey*) and 'assemblies' (*mahmelhâ*) at which the wine drinkers meet. In the first couplet, the poet mentions the 'cup-bearer', the *sâqi*, whom the poet lover addresses to fill his glass with wine. Some of these wine motifs also fit into the antinomian tradition (*qalandariyyât*). For example, the metaphor of 'staining the prayer-carpet with wine' (*be mey sajjâde rangin kon*), in couplet four, may both be found in *khamriyyât* and in antinomianism. In couplet four, Hâfez introduces the *pir-e moghân*, the leader of the Zoroastrians or Magians, who in antinomian literature has become a metaphor for the spiritual guide of the *qalandars*. In addition to these wine and antinomian motifs, numerous elements can be found in this *ghazal* that belong to asceticism. Hâfez speaks of the secret (*râz*), of 'attaining the presence' (*hozur*) and of the unseen (*ghâyeb*). There is a polarity between being in His presence and belonging to this world (*donyâ*). To attain to oneness with God and to be in His constant presence, one must detach oneself from all earthly connections and say farewell to the world. Nature is also an important motif in this *ghazal*: Hâfez speaks of the 'dark night' (*shab-e târik*), of 'fear of waves' (*bim-e mawj*) and of a 'monstrous maelstrom' (*gerdâbi chonin hâyel*). He contrasts a description of the sea to the safety of the shore (*sâhelhâ*). The nature elements help to explain the dangerous and uneasy road of the *qalandar*.

The opening couplet of Hâfez's *ghazal* starts with the theme of wine. The unidentified lover is probably at a *majles*, a drinking gathering, for he calls on the *sâqi*, the cup-bearer, to

give him wine. His desire for wine is also given in this first couplet: "while love at first seemed easy, difficulties appeared." The lover seems to be in need of wine because he is separated from his Beloved and is feeling love-sick. In this situation, wine might serve to ease the pain and expel the sad feelings from his heart and thoughts. Two polarities can be found in this first couplet that reoccur later on in the poem. On the one hand, one can find the antithesis 'easy' (*âsân*) versus 'difficulties' (*moshkelhâ*). The couplet implies that a polarity between an easy predictable love and a love accompanied by hardship and difficulties that can appear at any moment. The other contrast in the couplet is the antithesis between 'to seem' (*nemudan*) and 'appeared' (*oftâdan*). The Persian verb *nemudan* has various meanings: 'to show,' 'to seem,' or, in compound verbs, 'to do.' In this couplet *nemudan* is placed next to 'easy' (*âsân*), meaning that things 'seem easy.' It is contrasted to the verb *oftâdan* which literally means 'to fall' and often means 'actually occur.' In this couplet it is connected to 'problems' (*moshkelhâ*), that appear in the sense of actually materializing.

In the second couplet we see that the lover is not alone in his love-sickness, which afflicts numerous hearts (*delhâ*). The lover uses images common in amatory poems to describe the Beloved, referring to the 'fragrance of the musk' (*bu-ye nâfe*) and his, or her, 'musky curls' (*ja'd-e moshkin*). The couplet again incorporates a polarity, the blood of the lovers' hearts is red, while the *moshkin* means both musky in odour and black.

In couplet three, the poet speaks of the Beloved's inn (*manzel*), a travellers' hostel or staging-post, which is used metaphorically to refer to the stages attained on the mystical road towards God. But the traveller finds this is not a place to rest, as the bell that calls the caravan to load up the animals rings continually. It seems the traveller has packed his bags to continue his dangerous and insecure journey towards the next safe haven.

Couplet four again refers to the hostels on the road, with the same double meaning as in the previous couplet. The lover tells travellers to take the advice of one who has travelled himself: a Zoroastrian who may be the inn-keeper in this image. If the Magian commands it, the lovers should breach the laws of religious purity by washing the prayer-mat, the embodiment of religious purity, with 'impure' wine, which renders prayer ineffective. This *qalandari* image is one of the clearest examples of the contrast between an orthodox concern with religious rituals and rules, and an antinomian renunciation of all these rules to concentrate on purity of heart. It is not orthopraxy, but actual experience of the spiritual journey, that confers the authority to guide others.

In couplet five, we follow the lovers on a sea journey by night. It is dark, and the lovers are afraid of waves. Out of nowhere, a huge *gerdâb* (whirlpool) appears. The condition

of the travellers at sea is contrasted to those on the shore (*sâhelhâ*). The term unencumbered, or literally 'light-burdened' (*sabokbârân*), which Hâfez uses for those on shore might refer to a Koranic verse in which God wants to give responsibility or trusteeship (*amânat*) to the mountains and the earth and heavens, but none of these are willing to accept it. Only the human is willing to accept responsibility.[359] In this couplet, the lover implies that those who are unencumbered on the shore' (*sabokbârân sâhelhâ*) are afraid to get into the water and are therefore unable to take their responsibility: they carry no cargo. The sea travelers on the other hand have taken up the trust by entering on the journey, despite of all its dangers and difficulties.

In couplet six, two compounds immediately require attention: 'self-gratification' (*khodkâmi*, to please oneself) and 'infamy' (*badnâmi*). The internal rhyme between them indicates that they are connected. *Khodkâmi* usually refers to someone who focuses only on himself and the gratification of desires, which naturally leads to disrepute. But infamy that is deliberately invited is part of the mystical journey. By voluntarily looking for ways to attract censure, such as walking around naked or drinking alcohol in public, which at first sight seem to be mere self-gratification, the mystic will destroy his reputation and his attachment to the opinion of others. This is one of the steps towards the annihilation of the Self. The concept of achieving 'disrepute through self-gratification' is at the heart of the antinomian love tradition. A classical literary work that exemplifies this thought perfectly is the famous story by Farid al-Din ʿAttâr (d. 1221) in his "Conference of the Birds" (*Manteq al-teyr*) on Sheikh Sanʿân.[360] In the story, Sheikh Sanʿân holds the keys to the Kaʿba in Mecca, the holiest building in the eyes of the Muslims. One day, he falls in love with a young Christian woman, to the extent that he forsakes everything, including his religion, to please her. Since the girl is not at all interested in the Sheikh, she asks him to do the most repulsive things, expecting him to lose interest in her. But, contrary to her expectations, the Sheikh is prepared to do anything for her. When she asks him to burn the Koran, he does so. When she asks him to become a Christian, he does so. Sanʿân lowers himself to the most blameworthy acts, all in the name of love. ʿAttâr's story exemplifies the lover's willingness to accept and undergo anything the Beloved imposes on him, just as the sea-going lovers in this *ghazal* by Hâfez are willing to suffer any hardship on their road of love. In the second hemistich of couplet six, the lover refers to a

[359] See Koranic verse 33:72: "We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of doing so; but man carried it".

[360] Farid ud-Din ʿAttâr, *The Conference of the Birds*, trans. D. Davis and A. Darbandi, London: Penquin, 1984.

secret that cannot remain hidden. Mystics who have experienced nearness to God, known as 'witnessing,' are unable to hide this. It causes a visible change. Similarly the profane lover who has attained to the Beloved reveals it, and becomes a subject of scandal, through changes in behaviour, such as blushing.

In the last couplet, an unidentified voice addresses Hâfez. He speaks of the Beloved's presence (*hozur*) and the lover's absence (*ghâyeb*). The first connotes a formal audience, such as petitioners who are brought into the presence of the king. The second means to be absent, to be invisible, and also the mysterious and unseen world. In order to be constantly in the presence of the Beloved, one has to forsake the world and everything in it, including the self. The mundane world is the polar opposite to the court of the Beloved, the mundane self is the polar opposite of the Beloved, and also of the lover's true self, which is attained through complete detachment.

4.5 Ayatollah Khomeini's Imitation of the *Ghazal*

Having analyzed Hâfez's *ghazal*, it is time to examine Ayatollah Khomeini's imitation. The device of literary emulation (*esteqbâl*) has a long history in the Persian literary tradition. Ever since the tenth century, Persian poets have adopted the rhyme, metre, or images from famous poems to place themselves in a certain literary tradition. Some, even copied whole couplets from another poem. This last device is called *tazmin* in Persian. This fusion between old textual elements and new texts not only brings past and present together, it can also lead to new insights or new interpretations of a text.[361]

Ayatollah Khomeini's imitation of Hâfez' poem is called "The Monastery of Love" (*Khâneqâh-e del*, literally, the Monastery of the Heart) and can also be placed in this literary emulation tradition. To show where Ayatollah Khomeini has copied elements from the *ghazal* by Hâfez I will again present a translation, and discuss the form and stylistic features of Khomeini's *ghazal*, followed by an analysis.

[361] For the devise of esteqbâl see P. E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation & Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal*, Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1998, pp. 12, 107-108.

1	Oh cup-bearer, expel the grief from our hearts, for your cup immediately resolves all the secrets of our problems.	ألا یا أیها السّاقی! برون بر حسرت دلها که جامت حل نماید یکسره اسرار مشکلها
2	Block the road from reason to the monastery of love, with wine, that the home of folly may never be a place for wise men.	به می بر بند راه عقل را از خانقاه دل که این دارالجنون هرگز نباشد جای عاقلها
3	If you find any heart closed to love of the Lovely, expel that person, for this house of wine is home for none but those who have lost their hearts.	اگر دل‌بسته‌ای بر عشق جانان، جای خالی کن! که این میخانه هرگز نیست جز مأوای بیدلها
4	And you, if for one moment you come to your senses, from the wine's intoxication, depart without delay from the bounds that harbour the lotus eaters.	تو گر از نشئه‌ی می کمتر از آنی، به خود آیی برون شو! بیدرنگ از مرز خلوتگاه غافلها
5	If you see the colour of that idol in the flowers of the garden of the friend, You separated the seas and coasts from the garden of the friend.	چه از گلهای باغ دوست رنگ آن صنم دیدی جدا گشتی ز باغ دوست دریاها و ساحلها
6	You, who saw the road to heaven and paradise before you, have departed from the road of Truth and clung to falsities.	تو راه جنت و فردوس را در پیش خود دیدی جدا گشتی ز راه حق و پیوستی به باطلها
7	If you give your heart to the world of being, or to what is even higher, you tie yourself with the threads of a spider or, in truth, with chains.	اگر دل داده‌ای بر عالم هستی و بالاتر به خود بستی ز تار عنکبوتی بس سلاسلها.[362]

Like Hâfez's poem, Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal* consists of seven couplets. In imitation of Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini starts his *ghazal* with the same half-Arabic, half-Persian invocation *alâ yâ ayyohâ al-sâqi* ("O cup-bearer"). This tells the reader from the beginning that Ayatollah Khomeini is inspired by Hâfez. Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini uses the metre *hazâj-e sâlem mosamman.* As in Hâfez's *ghazal*, each couplet finishes with the rhyme –el, followed by the Persian plural form *–hâ* (*moshkelhâ, 'âqelhâ, bidelhâ, ghâfelhâ, sâhelhâ, bâtelhâ, salâselhâ*), forming a *radif* rhyme.

Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini presents his *ghazal* as a monologue by an unidentified poet lover, who first addresses the cup-bearer. The lover implies that he belongs to a larger group of lovers who adore one Beloved, when he speaks of "our hearts" in the first couplet. In couplets two and three, the cup-bearer, or some other person, is called on to bar

[362] See Ayatollah Khomeini's *Divân*, p. 46.

‘wise men’ from the house, and expel from it those whose hearts are closed to love. In couplet four, and again in couple six, the lover speaks to an unidentified “you,” a half-hearted lover. The first sign of the half-hearted lover is that he comes to his senses: his spiritual inebriation is not complete and constant. The ‘lotus eaters’ in the translation of couplet four are a western equivalent of the Persian idiom, *ghâfelhâ,* those who are heedless of the world. The purported lover who comes to his senses should know he is unworthy, and leave. He also twice speaks of a ‘friend’ (*dust*) in couplet five, in whose garden one can glimpse the colour of that idol (the Beloved). This could be the friend or spiritual guide of the ‘you’ whom the lover addresses, such as an orthodox religious leader or preacher, but it is probably a reference to God himself, who has gardens in this world.

Couplet six again addresses the ‘you,’ the half-hearted lover. This person has begun to think of the rewards of heaven, instead of giving only selfless love, and in doing so has joined partners with God. This reminds one of the mystic and saint Râbeʿa ’l-ʿAdawiyya (d. 801) who has become famous for her saying that she did not worship God for the fear of hell or the reward of paradise but for God himself. The concept of selfless love is associated with her. Couplet seven appears to be addressed to the same ‘you,’ as it has the same theme: attachment to ‘what is even higher’ is just as much an encumbrance as attachment to the world. The structure in this line suggests that attachment to the world is as a spider’s thread, while attachment to what is higher is as chains.

The lover speaks negatively of three groups of people: the ‘wise men’ (*‘âqelhâ*) in couplet two, the ‘heartless people’ (*bi-delhâ*) in couplet three, and the ‘you’ who is an unworthy lover, or at least a pilgrim in need of a stern reminder. The main theme in Ayatollah Khomeini’s *ghazal* is the polarity between the ‘road of love’ and the ‘road of reason.’ The first is the path of lovers and ‘lotus eaters,’ while in the opposite group one finds the ‘wise men’ and those with closed hearts. Another theme in this *ghazal* is the antithesis between captivation through attachment and freedom through detachment. Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini explains his themes using various metaphors and motifs from the genres of ‘antinomianism’ (*qalandariyyât*), ‘love poetry’ (*ghazalliyât*), ‘asceticism’ (*zohdiyyât*) and ‘praise of wine’ (*khamriyyât*).

As in Hâfez’s *ghazal,* wine motifs abound in Ayatollah Khomeini’s lyrical poem. On five occasions Ayatollah Khomeini has adopted motifs that fit into the wine-praising tradition: the ‘cup-bearer’ (*sâqi*), ‘wine’ (*mey*), ‘the home of folly’ (*dâr al-jonun*), and the ‘house of wine’ (*meykhâne*). The ‘home of folly’ may refer to a place where people drink wine, although the word for folly here also connotes madness. As such it may also refer to a place

where antinomian mystics gather. They look as if they have lost their minds and are completely mad but, for themselves, they concentrate on their love for God by abandoning the community of men and taking refuge in the home of folly. This contact with God can only be made through the heart and not with the mind. In this sense, the house of folly belongs to the antinomian tradition. Another antinomian motif can be found in couplet four in which Ayatollah Khomeini says that a person who comes to himself for a moment cannot remain among those who have forgotten all. Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini refers to his conviction that self-gratification leads to disrepute and then to annihilation. Several motifs in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal* can be placed in an 'ascetic' setting. Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini speaks of 'secrets' (*asrâr*), although Hâfez used the Persian term *râz*. In couplet six, Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the pilgrimage on the 'road of Truth.' The final couplet further emphasizes this focus on withdrawal from the world when Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the lover's task to free himself from his chains by cutting the 'threads of a spider' in which the soul is captivated.

In addition to this strong reference to captivation in the final couplet, the resolution of problems in the first couplet also implies a situation of entanglement. In couplet two Ayatollah Khomeini refers to blocking the road of reason, and in the following couplet, in a negative sense, to the closing of the heart. The following couplet refers to boundaries (*marz*). As in Hâfez's *ghazal*, numerous elements from nature can be found in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*. In couplet five, Ayatollah Khomeini speaks of 'flowers' (*golhâ*), a 'garden' (*bâgh*) and of 'seas' (*daryâhâ*) and 'coasts' (*sâhelhâ*).

Ayatollah Khomeini, like Hâfez, opens his poem with the theme of wine. The poet lover asks the cup-bearer to give the lovers relief from their grief. The plural form indicates that the lover is in a larger group of lovers. The cup-bearer in this couplet represents the spiritual guide of the lovers. As the rest of the couplet indicates his cup (forgetting oneself) is the remedy to all of love's problems.

As in the poems of Hâfez, the Zoroastrian priest or 'Magian Elder' plays a central role in Ayatollah Khomeini's antinomian poetry. It is common, in this genre, to favour non-Islamic religions over Islam. In several of his other *ghazal*s, (but not explicitely in this poem), Ayatollah Khomeini speaks of the Zoroastrians, whom he calls 'fire worshippers' (*moghân*)[363] and 'wine-sellers'(*mey-forushân*).[364] In several *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini refers to this

[363] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *moghân* in *ghazal* 73,3; 83,2; 131;138,2;138,4;155,6 and 167,2.

[364] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *mey-forushâ n* in *ghazal* 99,5; 116,3 and 131,1.

person as the *mowbed* (‘Zoroastrian priest’),[365] the *pir-e moghân* (‘the Elder or spiritual guide of the fire worshippers’),[366] the *pir-e kharâbât* (‘the Elder of the Tavern’),[367] the *pir-e sawme‘e* (‘the Elder of the Monastery’),[368] the *pir-e meykade* (‘the Elder of the Wine-house’),[369] the *pir-e meyforush* (‘the Elder of the wine-seller’),[370] and the *pir-e râh* (‘the guide on the mystical road’) or just the *pir (*‘spiritual guide or Elder’).[371] An example of these allusions in Ayatollah Khomeini’s *Divân* is the following:

The Sufi has his cloak, the ascetic his prayer-mat, while I have come to the fire-temple of the Elder, singing sweet melodies.	صوفی و خرقه‌ی خود، زاهد و سجّاده‌ی خویش من، سوی دیر مُغان نغمه‌نواز آمده‌ام.[372]

The way Ayatollah Khomeini venerates the Zoroastrian priest in his *ghazal*s perfectly suits the antinomian poetical tradition. His positive reference to the Magian elder in these lines corresponds with what we have seen in Hâfez’s first *ghazal* in his *Divân.* As in Hâfez’s poetry, in Ayatollah Khomeini’s *ghazal*s the poetic persona is completely at the service of the Zoroastrian priest. In the antinomian poetical tradition, the Zoroastrian priest functions as a spiritual guide who leads the mystic towards the divine mysteries. Another example of this in Ayatollah Khomeini’s *ghazal*s reads:

1	Kiss the hand of that sheikh who called me an infidel, Caress the police for putting me in chains.	دست آن شیخ ببوسید که تکفیرم کرد محتسب را بنوازید که زنجیرم کرد
2	From now on, I’m devoted to worship at the door of the Magian elder. For he took me beyond this world and the next, through one draught of wine.	معتکف گشتم از این پس به در پیر مغان که به یک جرعه می از هر دو جهان سیرم کرد
3	I drink no water at the Fountain of Kawthar, I owe no debt to the gardens of Paradise: The light that shines from your face, O Friend, has made me a world-conqueror.	آب کوثر نخورم، منّت رضوان نبرم پرتو روی تو ای دوست! جهانگیرم کرد

[365] *Ghazal* 132, couplet 7.

[366] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir-e moghân* in *ghazal* 83; 83,2; 83,5; 110,6; 131; 138,2;155,6 and 167,2.

[367] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir-e kharabât* in *ghazal* 39,6; 122,7; 142,5 and 157,3.

[368] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir-e sawm'e* in *ghazal* 40,8.

[369] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir-e meykade* in *ghazal* 85,1; 85,6; 122,2 and 129,5.

[370] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir-e meyforush* in *ghazal* 131,1.

[371] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the *pir*, in *ghazal* 79,2; 79,4; 130,3; (139,7;140,3;161;161,3;) and 173,1.

[372] *Ghazal* 138, couplet 4.

4	Seize on the heart of the dervish, for he unveiled the secret of the day of alast, and showed me my destiny.	دل درویش به دست آر که از سرّ الست پرده برداشته، آگاه ز تقدیرم کرد
5	Let me sing the praises of the Elder of the wine-house who, with the blow of one hand, annihilated me, made me naught and made me a captive.	پیر میخانه بنازم! که به سر پنجه‌ی خویش فانیم کرده، عدم کرده و، تسخیرم کرد
6	I am the slave at the gate of the Elder who for his own satisfaction Made me forget myself and turned me upside down.	خادم درگه پیرم که ز دلجویی خود غافل از خویش نمود و زبر و زیرم کرد.[373]

In several *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini pretends to be completely obedient to a Zoroastrian priest or mystical guide or Elder. Like the mystic, the Zoroastrian priest has a marginal position in Islamic society. Both figures oppose orthodox Islam. In the eyes of the orthodox Muslims, the Zoroastrian priest is the embodiment of unconventional religiosity, so admiring him is an indirect critique on orthodox Islamic society.[374]

Ayatollah Khomeini's praise of non-Islamic figures such as the cup-bearer or the Zoroastrian priest in his *ghazal*s does not mean that he actually admired these persons. It is merely a metaphor copied from classical mystical poets to criticize society. This use of the antinomian religious figure in Persian poetry became popular from the twelfth century onwards. Iran had a large community of Zoroastrians and Christians. Both groups were known for their gentleness and hospitality.[375] As Aryân Qamar says, Christians have been fairly well tolerated by Muslims in Iran, despite their differing opinions on various religious thoughts, such as the trinity of God.[376] Motifs and metaphors from these religions abound in medieval Persian poetry and in the *ghazal* genre, but one can question how far these motifs and metaphors reflect real life in the medieval period. It is a fascinating subject, which goes beyond the scope of this study. One can think of the poems in which Sanâ'i praises the Christians and Zoroastrians for their gentle character.[377] Soon, other mystical poets adopted these religious figures as metaphors for their similar unconventional position in society. For example, the Christian monastery (*deyr*) became a metaphor for the Sufi lodge or hospice

[373] *Ghazal* 83.

[374] J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Bāda.

[375] A. Schimmel, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under Christianity vii. Christian Influences in Persian Poetry.

[376] A. Qamar, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Christianity vi. In Persian Literature.

[377] On Christians in Persian poetry see article by S.S. Soroudi, "On Jesus' Image in Modern Persian Poetry," in *The Muslim World*, Vol. 69, No. 4, 1979, pp. 221-228.

(*khâneqâh*) because it too was an unorthodox place of worship. And a young Zoroastrian (*moghbachche*) or Christian boy (*tarsâbachche*), found in the Zoroastrian temple or Christian monastery, represented the mystical guide (*morshed*). His beauty, just like the knowledge of the sheikh, was a focus for the aspirant mystic's admiration. When lost in admiration, the pupil might escape the earthly world.[378]

In couplet two of The Monastery of Love, the lover indicates how the problems of the lovers can be solved: 'by blocking the road from reason with wine.' The couplet shows that the lovers are in a 'monastery of love,' which the poet lover also calls the 'home of folly,' another indication that it is a gathering-place where wine is served. There is a polarity between the 'road of reason' and 'the place for wise men' on the one hand, and the 'monastery of love' and the 'home of folly' on the other hand.

In couplet three the lover gives advice to an unidentified listener, perhaps the cup-bearer or the landlord of the tavern: he should keep the tavern exclusively for those who have lost their hearts. The couplet demonstrates that the gatherings are only accessable for initiated mystics, and those mystics that have reached a certain spiritual level. In couplet four the lover explains how the drinking of wine leads to disrepute and consequently to total purity of the heart. Once the lover has passed this stage of disrepute and has gotten rid of all forms of otherness, he will reach his pure Self ('you come to your senses), which is in essence the same as God. A contrast can be found between 'impurity' (wine's intoxication) and 'purity' (coming to your senses), where the first leads to the latter. In the next part of the couplet the lover urges the unidentified listener to join the lovers and to take distance from the 'lotus eaters', the moment he does no longer experience this 'spiritual intoxication' and has come to his senses. The couplet implies that the addressed might be a novice on the 'road of love.' The central thought in this couplet that impurity leads to purity, or disrepute leads to purity, can also be found in couplet six of Hâfez's *ghazal*, perhaps indicating that Ayatollah Khomeini purposely places himself in the same antinomian poetic tradition as Hâfez.

On various occasions in the poem, Ayatollah Khomeini's refers to wine drinking. The poetic persona that Ayatollah Khomeini introduces in this poem is completely at the service of this Zoroastrian priest, because he gives access to wine. Christian monasteries and Zoroastrian temples in medieval Iran were popular, especially amongst mystics, because wine was served there, which was an extremely uncommon practice in an orthodox Islamic

[378] A. Qamar, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Christianity vi. In Persian Literature.

society.[379] In his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini connects the *rendân* and the travellers on the path of love to the drinking of wine and to the tavern where they often dwelled. Wine has always been a popular theme in Persian poetry.[380] Although the consumption of wine was forbidden on religious grounds, wine was nevertheless a central theme from the outset of Persian poetry in the ninth and tenth centuries, as it is connected to feasts and formalities at the court. Wine also had a medical function. In the famous eleventh-century *Shah-name,* or 'Book of Kings,' wine is not only served at festivities, it is also used as a treatment for pain.[381] In the twelfth century, when Sufism spread rapidly throughout Iran, mystical elements were added to this wine poetry so that the wine terminology could be interpreted in a spiritual way. In this mystical poetry, life no longer revolves around the court, but rather, around the Sufi lodge, *khâneqah*, which is presented as the "diametric opposite of court and mosque." [382] The wine in this poetry symbolizes the mystic's rejection of orthodoxy. It also symbolizes his "irrational behaviour" [383] and shows that he concentrates on the soul instead of the intellect. Moreover, according to the mystic, wine "silences his rationality, which in mystical theory is an obstacle on the path of love"[384] Wine transports the mystic to another spiritual state in which he has access to divine knowledge. Wine drinking, which mostly takes place in a company of people, also symbolizes the mystical brotherhood. So, under the influence of mysticism, from the twelfth century onwards wine was presented as an adjunct to religious piety rather than as a religiously forbidden good.[385] Often in Persian poetry, the mystic's relationship with God is presented as a love relationship. In such a connection, wine is often extolled in Persian *ghazal*s as the 'medicine' for the heart-ache of the lover who is devastated by separation from his Beloved, i.e. God. The lover longs for this liquid because it can help him deal with his pain. He not only admires the beloved, but also tries to seduce the cup-bearer, the *sâqi*, who has the 'medicine' for his heart-ache. This *sâqi* is often a beautiful

[379] J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Bāda.

[380] See P. Losensky, in *Encylopaedia Iranica,* under Sāqī-nāma and see J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica,* under Bāda.

[381] See J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Bāda. See also A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, *The Mirror of Meanings*, Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2002, pp. xxxix-xlii, and E. Yarshater, "The Theme of Wine and Wine-drinking and the Concept of the Beloved in Early Persian Poetry," in *Studia Islamica,* No. 13, 1960, pp. 43-53.

[382] J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Bāda.

[383] Ibid.

[384] A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, "Khomeini the Poet Mystic," p. 454.

[385] J.W. Clinton, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Bāda.

young Zoroastrian or Christian boy. Ayatollah Khomeini has adopted these antinomian themes in his poetry, in that his *ghazal*s are filled with '*rend*-like' figures, 'wine,' and 'cup-bearers', as in his imitation of Hâfez's *ghazal*. For uninitiated readers, it may be rather surprising to read that the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran begs, in his poems, for a glass of wine from a beloved male cup-bearer. Two words for wine, *bâde*[386] and *mey*[387], are the most frequently recurring words in his *ghazal*s. On numerous occasions, Ayatollah Khomeini presents himself as a drinker of wine who frequents the Magian monastery:

از آن می ده جانم را، ز قید خود رها سازد
به خود گیرم زمامم را، فرو ریزد مقامم را.[388]

Give me of this wine, that it may release my soul from its chains,
That it may seize my reins in its hands and throw me down to infamy.

Ayatollah Khomeini, like Hâfez, in his poetry, prefers the tavern to the mosque. By doing so, he criticizes the hypocritical behaviour of the orthodox. While the *rend* drinks wine in public, the clergy condemns it but, he might drink it in secret, Ayatollah Khomeini prefers the first to the second as they avoid hypocrisy. Hâfez considered the drinking of wine a means of avoiding hypocrisy (*tazwir/riyâ*) and washing away the desires of the selfish ego.[389] Ayatollah Khomeini uses the tavern to represent avoiding the hypocrisy of the orthodox in mosques, and also avoiding the Sufi lodge, which he says is full of 'deceitful games.'[390] The wine from this tavern is a metaphor for divine knowledge, bringing its drinker to another spiritual level:

آنچه روح‌افزاست، جام باده از دست نگار است
نی مُدرّس، نی مُربّی، نی حکیم و، نی خطیب است.[391]

That which sets the soul on fire is a cup of wine from the hand of a friend,
Not from the hand of a mentor, or teacher, a wise man, or preacher.

[386] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to *bâde* ('wine') in *ghazal* 51,1; 56,2; 56,5; 64,6; 67,2; 69,1; 75,3; 77,1; 79,6; 82,7; 86,3; 109,3; 109,5; 113,6; 115,3; 116,1; 116,3; 88,2;121,5; 117,6;121,7;121,4; 122;162,3;122,7;124,3; 130,2; 173; 173,3; 137,3; 137,4;145,4; 173,6; 149,5; 155,4; 164,5; 177; 177,5;166,6 and 170,6.

[387] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to *mey* ('wine') in *ghazal* 39,4; 40,1; 40,2; 40,3; 40,4; 43,6; 46, 4; 51,1; 51,6; 56,6; 57,5; 64,6; 64,7; 73,4; 79,5; 80,3; 80,4; 83,2; 89,5; 97,2; 99,6; 100,3; 106,3; 117,2;121,2;121,7; 123;125,1;131,8;142,6;151,1;157,2;161,7;162,2;163,4;164,3;168,4; 171;171,6;171,5;184,4 and 131,1.

[388] *Ghazal* 40, couplet 3.

[389] F. Lewis, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, under Hāfez viii. Hāfez and Rendi.

[390] *Ghazal* 140, couplet 1.

[391] *Ghazal* 51, couplet 2.

The ‘wine’ in Ayatollah Khomeini’s poetry should not be interpreted literally, although there have been numerous mystics who did consume wine. Ayatollah Khomeini emphasizes this in one of his *ghazal*s by saying: “These sober ones, knowledge sellers and Sufis, do not use wine as we use it in our daily language,”[392] implying that these three groups consider the wine which is lauded in mystical poetry to be real wine. By ‘sober ones,’ Ayatollah Khomeini means those believers who have not (yet) been in touch with or ‘intoxicated’ by real divine knowledge. In one of his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini also mentions these sober ones in connection to his opponents:

آنچه دیدم ز حریفان، همه هشیاری بود
در صف می زده، بیداری من خواب من است.[393]

What I have seen from my opponents is that they all were sober,
As for me, it is the drinking of wine which keeps me from sleep.

It is not clear whether Ayatollah Khomeini, in this particular couplet, refers to actual opponents. We know that from the very beginning of his studies in Qom, Ayatollah Khomeini had a strained relationship with the orthodox clergy. Even later in life, when he was the highest Islamic authority of Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini remained unappreciated by many Islamic clerics because of his mystical affiliations. One reading of this poem is that Ayatollah Khomeini refers to those who actually condemned him for his unconventional ideas, while according to him, they were the ones who had no real knowledge.

Couplet five addresses the pilgrim’s need to leave behind his first spiritual inspirations: the reflection of the Beloved seen once in a garden should prompt the lover to set out in search of the reality. Ayatollah Khomeini calls the Beloved an ‘idol’ (*sanam*), which is a common metaphor for one’s lover. At a first reading, Ayatollah Khomeini says that if you see even the colour of a polytheist idol, put the seas behind you, that is, escape from that place. But because the colour of the idol is seen in the friend’s garden, and this is a mystical poem, and the idol could be a beloved mistress, we understand that he is telling the aspirant lover to set out and cross the seas in a quest for the loved one. The strong contrast between escape and quest, in the first and second reading, gives the reader a sense of discovery. In couplet six, the lover explains that the road towards divine salvation is not about merely following the religious rules and rituals and focusing on a place in Paradise. Divine salvation can rather be found by focusing on the heart and on the disciplining of the soul and annihilation of the Self.

[392] *Ghazal* 55, couplet 6.

[393] *Ghazal* 57, couplet 3.

In the last couplet, the lover explains the last stage on the road of love. It is the point at which the mystic has freed himself of all possible attachments of the world. As A. Schimmel explains, at this stage "the spirit sees what is beyond all vision."[394] His soul will return to his initial state in which he was one with God.[395] Ayatollah Khomeini explains this thought with the image of one who is a captive in the web of a spider. After he has broken all the threads of the web that have kept him in captivity, he is able to fly to freedom. Likewise, the soul of the lover will return to its original state of union with God, once he has purified his soul of all forms of otherness.

It is not the poetical value of Ayatollah Khomeini's imitations of Hâfez's *ghazal*s, such as the one above, that demands our attention. As I explained earlier, any Iranian could have written such a poem, since poetry plays a prominent role in Persian society. It is rather the fact that Ayatollah Khomeini, in his position as an Ayatollah and later as the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, composes antinomian poetry and purposely places himself in this 'unorthodox' poetic tradition. As we will shortly see, Ayatollah Khomeini wrote many similar poems with antinomian themes.

4.6 Antinomian Elements in Ayatollah Khomeini's *Ghazal*s

The previous poem is only one example of Ayatollah Khomeini's 149 *ghazal*s.[396] He composed these poems in two different periods: before 1936, during his time as a student and teacher in Qom, and then from 1979 to March 1984, and from April 1985 until his death in 1989.[397] Ayatollah Khomeini finished many of his older *ghazal*s with the penname 'Hindi,'[398] by which he referred to his forefathers who had lived in India from the beginning of the eighteenth century, but who returned to Iran in the 1830s.[399] While Ayatollah Khomeini's oldest *ghazal*s have been preserved with a date of composition, a large part of his more recent poems were found on loose papers, and the majority of them are dated between 1984 and 1988 (1363-1367). These poems are gathered by his son and later by his followers. Each of

[394] See A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, pp. 4, 16, 58.

[395] Ibid., pp. 4, 16, 58.

[396] Together the 149 *ghazal*s comprise 986 couplets.

[397] See B. Reinert, "Ḫumainī im Spiegel seiner Gedichte", in *Islamische Grenzen und Grenzübergänge*, Monographie Vol. 4, Bern: Peter Lang AG, 2007, pp. 232-233.

[398] These are the *ghazal*s on pp. 50, 68, 78, 81, 92, 131, 139, 156 and 128.

[399] B. Reinert, "Ḫumainī im Spiegel seiner Gedichte," pp. 232-242.

the words is explained in notes that give a mystical interpretation, removing any secular meaning. It is because of this uncertainty that many Iranians doubt the originality of the *ghazal*s. An attempt to relate these poems to historical events during the 1980s remains purely speculative as these *ghazal*s do not describe or even allude to historical events, rather focusing on the poet's spiritual piety and modes of religiosity, quite in line with medieval Persian mystical *ghazal*s.

The character of his oldest *ghazal*s [400] is quite different from his younger ones. Most of the later *ghazal*s in his *Divân* are, like his imitation of the *ghazal* by Hâfez, antinomian. In his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini frequently rejects Islamic orthodoxy and organized Sufi institutions. When reading these poems, a clear distinction must be made between Ayatollah Khomeini as a mystical poet and Ayatollah Khomeini as a politician and religious leader, because he is adopting a stance and vocabulary typical of antinomian poetry that does not necessarely has to conform with his political and theological convictions. In the tradition of classical poets such as Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini contrasts orthodox religious figures such as the theologian, the Islamic judge, and the organized Sufi to figures at the margins of society, such as the beggar (*gedâ*), the *qalandar*, the *rend*, the wine-drinker, the Magian elder and the Christian boy. Ayatollah Khomeini attacks the former group and praises the latter. Although Ayatollah Khomeini himself had become the highest political authority, his *ghazal*s give the reader the impression that he could not find religious satisfaction in the mosque or other religious institutes. For example in *ghazal* 186 he writes: "The problems have not been solved in the *madrase* or by the talks of the sheikh."[401] In another *ghazal* he writes: "In the *madrase* we have not read one book about the friend, in the place where the call to prayer is sounded, we have not heard one sound calling the Beloved."[402] It appears from Ayatollah Khomeini's poems that he sees Islam's public representatives as incapable of understanding the deeper meaning behind creation. According to him, the clergy and the preacher command people to observe the religious laws but do not practice what they preach. In his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini pretends to search for spiritual satisfaction amongst the drinkers of wine, because it is only here that his soul can be 'set on fire.' He openly says that he is not at all attracted by Islamic or mystical institutions, saying: "My love for you has driven me away

[400] According to B. Reinert the oldest *ghazal*s can be found on pp. 50, 78, 92, 128, 156, 299, 296-298, 303, 305b, 306a and 307b. See B. Reinert, "Ḫumainī im Spiegel seiner Gedichte," pp. 222-223.

[401] *Ghazal* 186, couplet 3.

[402] *Ghazal* 187, couplet 2.

from *madrase* and Sufi fraternity. He has made me a slave[403] of the wine."[404] In several of his *ghazal*s he states that he has turned away from the orthodox institutions in order to go to the lands of the Beloved.

The way Ayatollah Khomeini has composed his *ghazal*s fits into the antinomian love tradition; the force of the mystic's love for the Beloved is so strong that he abandons everything including the religious school and Sufi fraternity to look for reunion with God. He does this by taking refuge to wine, symbolizing divine knowledge, and that can be found in the heart. Ayatollah Khomeini confirms this thought by writing: "The Islamic scholar has his institute and the Sufi has his place of seclusion, we belong to the 'lands of the idol,' and wander astonished. I have left the *madrase* and temple and tavern, So I could serve (or beg) at the door of Meeting."[405] Instead of tolerating the "deceiving games of the Sufis", the poet-lover in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s chooses to join the lovers, who are connected to the tavern.[406] In the tradition of classical Persian poets, Ayatollah Khomeini has used antinomian themes such as wine and erotic love to condemn false piety. This does not mean that Ayatollah Khomeini actually drank wine or adored the Zoroastrian priest. He has adopted these metaphors to express the idea that a true Muslim should not merely observe the Islamic rules, but should -- more importantly -- discipline the soul to be true of heart.

4.7 Censure of the House of God in Mecca in Ayatollah Khomeini's *Ghazal*s

Another antinomian topic that can be found in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s, in addition to the wine theme and honouring non-Islamic figures, is the rejection of the Kaʿba in Mecca. For Muslims, a visit to the House of God is compulsory once in their life time, if they are financially and physically able to do so. In an orthodox context, there is only one Kaʿba, the physical building in Mecca. Ayatollah Khomeini, on the other hand, distinguishes between two Kaʿbas: the Kaʿba of clay (*Ka'be-ye gel)*, which is situated in Mecca and the 'Kaʿba of the heart' (*Kaʿbe-ye del*). Like classical Islamic mystics, Ayatollah Khomeini demonstrates in numerous *ghazal*s his preference for the spiritual experience of travelling to the House of

[403] It literally says: *'a person with a ring in the ear',* which refers to slaves, who could be recognized by their pierced ears, or to beggars.

[404] *Ghazal* 82, couplet 6.

[405] *Ghazal* 130, couplet 4-6.

[406] See for example *ghazal* 140, couplet 1, in which he says: "I have arrived at the door of the wine-house with sighs and cries, I am fed up with the deceitful games of the Sufis."

God, renouncing the physical Kaʿba.[407] Ayatollah Khomeini has dedicated four of his *ghazal*s to the Kaʿba. Their titles suggest that Ayatollah Khomeini uses the word Kaʿba in the spiritual sense of the word: he speaks of the Kaʿba of Love (*Kaʿbe-ye ʿeshq*),[408] the Kaʿba of the Goal (*Kaʿbe-ye maqsud*),[409] the Kaʿba of the Heart (*Kaʿbe-ye del*)[410] and of the Kaʿba in Chains (*Kaʿbe-ye dar zanjir)*.[411] I will translate and analyse the Kaʿba of Love:

1	No sign, no name of my Beloved in the temple of the idols, Nor was his splendour contemplated in the Kaʿba.	از دلبرم به بُتکده نام و نشان نبود در کعبه نیز، جلوه‌ای از او عیان نبود
2	No mention of that rose-cheeked beauty in the Sufi lodge, No word speaks of him in the monastery or church.	در خانقاه، ذکری از آن گُلعِذار نیست در دیر و، در کنیسه، کلامی از آن نبود
3	In the school of law, there's nothing but disputes and discussions. In the courtroom, no one spoke of him.	در مَدْرسِ فقیه، به جُز قیل و قال نیست در دادگاه، هیچ از او داستان نبود
4	I attended the salon of the cultured man, but only so that I might find the Beloved, I found the conversation was of nothing more than the ideas on figures of speech.	در محضر ادیب شدم، بلکه یابمش دیدم کلام جُز ز «معانی بیان» نبود
5	I was astonished by the rows of *qalandar*s: There, there was nothing but the praise of the ruffians.	حیرت‌زده، شدم به صفوف قلندران آنجا به جُز مدیحتی از قُلدران نبود
6	One drop of wine from your cup, O heart-beguiling Beloved, gives what cannot be gained in all the world's kingdoms.	یک قطره می، ز جام تو ای یار دلفریب! آن می‌دهد که در همه ملک جهان نبود
7	He flirted, pouring in the soul such sparks, the like of which the holy court gives not to any angel.	یک غمزه کرد و ریخت به جان یک شرر، کز آن در بارگاه قُدس برِ قُدسیان نبود.[412]

[407] Ayatollah Khomeini refers to the Kaʿba in *ghazal* 60,5; 71,1; 108; 108,1; 137,7;140,5;145,8;147; 147,4;164;164,2;164,5;171,4;176 and 176,5.

[408] *Ghazal* 108.

[409] *Ghazal* 147.

[410] *Ghazal* 164.

[411] *Ghazal* 176.

[412] *Ghazal* 108.

Like a medieval wandering mystic, the persona in this poem travels to all places to find the Beloved. He realizes that the Beloved cannot be found in a holy place such as a mosque or Sufi lodge, and that He cannot even be found in God's House, the Kaʿba. Instead, the lover finds the Beloved in his own heart. The message conveyed in mystical *ghazal*s such as this has given rise to the dual motif of 'Kaʿba of the heart' and the 'Kaʿba of clay,' found in the writings of classical mystics, who declared that worshipping at the Kaʿba is not about the building but about the Reality it represents, which is God. According to these mystics, undertaking the journey to Mecca could be interpreted as flaunting one's piety, which they considered to be a pitfall on the mystical path. This is also why *qalandari* mystics avoided pious acts; in reality, they purposely drew criticism to protect themselves from becoming self-centered. As world-denying lovers, they should stay far away from worldly entanglements which could pollute the soul. Renouncing the pilgrimage to Mecca is part of this, for *qalandaris* as for the classical mystics.[413] As the previous *ghazal* demonstrates, Ayatollah Khomeini has followed this antinomian trend in his poetry.

While in the previous poem Ayatollah Khomeini says only that the Beloved is not to be found in the Kaʿba in Mecca, in the following poem he is more critical:

1	Oh Sâqi, open the door of the tavern before me,	ساقی بروی من در میخانه باز کن
	take me beyond the need for lessons, debates, asceticism and hypocrisy.	از درس و بحث و زهد و ریا بی نیاز کن
2	Place a strand of your wavy hair in my way.	تاری ز زلف خم خود در رهم بنه
	Release me from scholarship and the mosque, from lessons and from prayer.	فارغ ز علم و مسجد و درس و نماز کن
3	Bring me a bowl and croon a song, like David,	داوود وار نغمه زنان ساغری بیار
	Make me forget the pains of glory, of descending and ascending.	غافل ز درد جاه و نشیب و فراز کن
4	Remove the veil from the beautiful face and hair of the Beloved.	بر چین حجاب از رخ زیبا و زلف یار
	Banish me from the Kaʿba and from the Kingdom of Hejâz.	بیگانه ام ز کعبه و ملک حجاز کن

[413] See A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, *Layli and Majnun*, pp. 227-34, and idem, "Khomeini the Poet Mystic," pp. 455-457; See also Farid al-Din 'Attâr, *Tadhkerat al-owliyâ*, ed. H. Khalili, Tehran: Manuchehri.

5	Fill my jug to the brim with that pure wine. Turn [my] heart from Mount Safa [at Mecca] to that ravishing idol.[414]	لبریز کن از آن می صافی سبوی من دل از صفا بسوی بت ترکتاز کن
6	Sorrow at separation, from the face of the friend, leaves me broken. Call me to that goblet of the wine that restores.	بیچاره گشته ام ز غم هجر روی دوست دعوت مرا بجام می چاره ساز کن.[415]

In the fourth couplet, the poet lover asks to be banished from the Kaʿba, and from the 'kingdom of Hejâz,' the region of Saudi Arabia that includes Mecca and Medina. This does not mean that Ayatollah Khomeini would not go to Mecca in reality. In line with the tradition of antinomian mystics, he is using the Kaʿba as a metaphor for outward religion, to indicate his own high spiritual piety. While the 'average' Muslim merely focuses on the observance of the Islamic rules and rituals, Ayatollah Khomeini focuses on disciplining the soul, which is the next stadium on the mystical road. His rejection of the Kaʿba in Mecca indirectly indicates that he believes he is more pious than the 'average' Muslim.[416]

The poem raises the question of what piety actually means. How have mystics approached piety? And how can we interpret piety in a broader context? As L. Lewisohn indicates, the term *taqwâ*, the Arabic equivalent for piety, God-fearing obedience, and for abstinence, has a central place in the Koran. There are numerous references to the duty of the believer to be pious and God-fearing. There have been multiple interpretations of *taqwâ*. In the exoteric sense, it refers to the believer's observance of religious practices. In an esoteric sense, it refers to the piety of the believer's heart. In a mystical context, the term *taqwâ* is often used to refer to abstinence. Early mystics used it to refer to the duty of the believer to physically abstain from everything but God. In another sense it referred to the condition of the heart of the mystical lover, which should contain nothing but God. Medieval mystics rejected the previous interpretations of the term, and began highlighting the pitfall of piety, pointing to the self-consciousness which it could generate. Many classical poets such as Hâfez and Saʿdi responded to this reinterpretation of piety. They considered *qalandariyyât* to be true piety.[417]

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[414] The line also means: "Turn [my] heart through purity to that ravishing idol."

[415] *Ghazal* 171.

[416] For articles on piety see the article by L. Lewisohn, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under Taḳwā. See also A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, "Martyrdom as Piety…," pp. 248-266 and idem., *Layli and Majnun*, pp. 227-34. See also J.T.P. de Bruijn, "The Qalandariyyāt in Mystical Poetry…," pp. 75-86.

[417] See L. Lewisohn, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (2), under Taḳwā.

Certain elements in the previous *ghazal* by Ayatollah Khomeini require closer examination. Was Ayatollah Khomeini simply adopting this antithesis found in classical mystical poetry, because he writes in that poetical tradition, or did he have other reasons for placing the Kaʿba of the heart in opposition to the physical Kaʿba in Mecca? Given the political context in which Ayatollah Khomeini wrote these *ghazal*s on the Kaʿba, it is possible that he wrote of banishment from the Kaʿba not only in the symbolic sense, in the tradition of antinomian mystics and as a way of showing his piety, but, as I also argued in my chapter on Khomeini's *robâ'i*s, also in a more literal sense, referring to the frustrated relation between Iran and Saudi Arabia at the time of writing. Why, in couplet four for example, does Ayatollah Khomeini refer to Saudi Arabia as the 'Kingdom of Hejâz.' He could for example have said, 'from Mecca and Medina.' Is it because of his refusal to recognize their monarchial government? Could political problems with Saudi Arabia in actual life also have been at the basis of these anti-Kaʿba poems? Might the anti-sentiments towards the Kaʿba be a reflection of the ban on Iranians to Saudi Arabia by the Saudi government, after the massacre amongst Iranian and Saudi pilgrims of July 31st 1987, which was followed by an actual ban on the pilgrimige to Mecca by Khomeini in 1988? We will probably never know, but it is striking to see a similar tone in Ayatollah Khomeini's public stance towards Saudi Arabia and in his private documents, such as in his *robâ'i*s and in these *ghazal*s.

The antinomian motif of the two Kaʿbas has been popular in Iranian culture since the twelfth century. During the Iran-Iraq war, when Ayatollah Khomeini wrote these *ghazal*s, mystical aspects of the classical *ghazal*s on this subject were often put to music. Numerous popular pop musicians, such as Sattâr and Hâyede basing themselves on classical poems, sang these songs, advising people not to go to the physical Kaʿba but to attain to the Kaʿba of the heart. By using this motif, Iranians were both spiritually and politically encouraged to offer their lives for a symbolic Beloved. God as the owner of the Kaʿba had become more important than the House itself. Using such motifs, poets popularized martyrdom during the Iran-Iraq war. As Seyed-Gohrab indicates "Iranian soldiers hurried to the front lines, shouting words of blasphemy like mystics."[418] Antinomian themes and motifs, which could essentially be characterized as blasphemy, were thus exploited on a large scale through Iranian war poetry. Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s also fit into this tradition. Unfortunately, we do not know whether his *ghazal*s were known to a larger audience and encouraged people to go to the front lines, but such antinomian elements in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s are indicative

[418] See A.A. Seyed-Gohrab, "Martyrdom as Piety…," p. 267.

of Iranians' attitude and sentiments towards the holy tenets of Islam.[419]

Conclusion

One of the questions repeatedly posed after the publication of Ayatollah Khomeini's collected poetry was how to read these unorthodox poems on love, wine and intoxication. Was Ayatollah Khomeini a libertine, like a medieval *qalandar,* or should these poems be interpreted purely as metaphors? In my view, Ayatollah Khomeini has adopted *qalandari* motifs in his poetry to demonstrate piety. Like numerous classical poets before him, Ayatollah Khomeini followed the antinomian poetic tradition to show that he had attained a certain spiritual level that transcended that of the average Muslim. It is striking to see the similarities between the attitudes of Hâfez and Ayatollah Khomeini to religious piety. Mystical concepts such as the spiritual master, annihilation and non-existence abound in his youngest *ghazal*s. However antinomian themes such as wine, love, the tavern, drunkenness and the rogue are even more prominent. In fact, while 'love' is the most common key term in Ayatollah Khomeini's *ghazal*s, it is followed by 'wine' and 'drunkenness.' To show his superior spirituality, Ayatollah Khomeini presents the poet lover in his *ghazal*s as a follower of the tavern and the Magian Elder. He has adopted the Kaʿba theme for the same purpose. The fact that his poetic *persona* rejects the most holy building of the Muslims does not mean that he would not go to Mecca in actual life; it is merely an antinomian thought used to indicate that true piety transcends the observance of Islamic rules.

By imitating the classical poet Hâfez in one of his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini tries to place himself in a certain poetical tradition. The images which Ayatollah Khomeini has adopted in his *ghazal*s are not novel, but fit into the mystical poetical tradition. Like Hâfez, Ayatollah Khomeini has used antinomian elements such as love and wine to emphasize that observance of the Islamic law is not the sole condition for salvation. In his *ghazal*s, Ayatollah Khomeini wanted to demonstrate that a Muslim should focus on sincerity of the heart. His expressions of praise and love for the Magian elder or the Christian cup-bearer, who both occupy an unconventional position in an Islamic society, should not be read as reflections of actual life experiences, but rather as a perpetuation of 'protest' poetry against religious insincerity originating from the twelfth century. For ages, the figure of the *rend* has been used in antinomian poetry to highlight preference of "honest sin to hypocritical piety."[420]

[419] For articles on the use of mystical images in Iranian war poetry see ibid., pp. 248-266.

[420] J. Scott Meisami, "The Ghazal as Fiction: Implied Speakers and Implied Audience in Hafiz's Ghazals," in

By identifying himself in his poetry with this unconventional *rend* figure, Ayatollah Khomeini criticizes religious hypocrisy, which is one of the greatest pitfalls on the road of the mystic. Khomeini's poems demonstrate that from an early age he was interested in mystical poetry and that his interest in mysticism increased even further as he grew older. One can only guess as to why the amount of mystical topics in his poetry grew over the years. It could be that he was disappointed in many clerics who condemned him for his mystical prelediction. While one should be cautious and separate literary and mystical activity from political views, it is interesting to note that Ayatollah Khomeini's censure of the physical Kaʿba in his *ghazal*s corresponds with his political views on Saudi Arabia. Although we may never discover why Ayatollah Khomeini wrote these unorthodox poems, we can conclude that Ayatollah Khomeini was very familiar with the antinomian mystical tradition. As we have seen in the comparison between Hâfez's and Khomeini's *ghazal*s, the literary and artistic merits of Khomeini's poetry are limited. Modelling himself on Hâfez helps to borrow the antinomian mystical frame to create layers of meanings, but what makes Khomeini's *ghazal* and his poetry interesting is the ideology, and the kind of thoughts that can often only be found in his poetry.

Intoxication, Earthly and Heavenly; Seven Studies on the Poet Hafiz of Shiraz, eds. M. Glunz and J.C. Burgel, Bern: Lang, 1991, pp. 94.