

Majallah-e-Tahqiq
 Research Journal of
 the Faculty of Oriental Learning
 Vol: 39, Sr.No.112, 2018, pp 03 – 18

مجله تحقیق
 کلیه علوم شرقیه
 جلد 39 جولای - ستمبر 2018
 شماره 112

The Symbolic Significance of Sarv Motif in Islamic Art An Inquiry into its Mystical Underpinnings

* Naela Aamir **Amjad Pervaiz

Abstract:

The *Sarv* or Cypress motif is one of the most abundantly used motif in Islamic art. It can be found on carpets, tapestries, pottery, paintings, and architectural decorations in a frequency, which easily establishes it as a powerful symbol in the Islamic visual vocabulary. The *Sarv* motif draws its significance from the very nature of representation in Islamic art, in which symbolism plays the central role. This paper focuses on the symbolic significance of the *Sarv* motif and enquires into the mystical underpinnings that gave life to its historical and repeated usage. It elaborates upon the central themes of Islamic mysticism such as *Zahir-Batin*, the doctrine of inversion and spiritual unification as the underlying concepts of mystic literature and poetry, which enrich the symbolic significance of the *Sarv* motif. The prevalence of this motif in Islamic art of the Subcontinent particularly under the Mughal becomes more understandable if seen in the light of underlying mystical concepts of the motif.

Introduction

A tree, as a life form, has remarkable similarities with human life. We relate to it in terms of traits such as growth, patience, strength, and resilience, and therefore impart a meaning and significance to its life. Since ancient times, trees served mankind as a habitat, a shelter and as a means to procure food, the association that we

* Assistant Professor, College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab
 Allama Iqbal Campus, Lahore

** Assistant Professor, College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab
 Allama Iqbal Campus, Lahore

developed has been extraordinarily intimate. It is no surprise that literature, in all its forms, is full of the metaphorical use of trees to address various issues and express a variety of ideas and sentiments.

In the ancient mythological traditions of the world, many of which later developed into organized religions, tree had a significant place. Growing from a seed and developing into a huge life form, bustling with leaves and fruits, growing upwards against all the calamities, tree has been regarded as a host of supernatural powers. In Mayan culture, tree came to be known as the center of the universe, with its roots in water and branches touching the sky.¹ In Tibetan culture, a tree was supposed to have its roots in the underworld and branches leading to heaven. In ancient Indian mythology a more detailed symbolism is associated with tree. The Upanishad states, 'the three-footed Brahman has its roots above. Its branches are space, wind, fire, water, earth and the like. This Brahman has the name of the "lone fig tree", and of it that is the radiance, which is called the Sun'.² In Babylonian myths, the tree appears as both beautiful and beneficial to man. It is said that the Babylonian hero Gilgamesh searching for a cure for the sick entered an enchanted garden and saw a 'divine and beautiful tree toward which he hastened. On its gleaming branches hung clusters of precious stones, and its leaves were of lapis lazuli'.³

In Arabian Peninsula, before the arrival of Islam, tree had a powerful mythological significance. In Mecca, there was a tree associated to the goddess Al-Ozza and it was the center of an annual ceremony amongst the pagans, who would hang their weapons and garments on the branches.⁴ Although Islam forbade divine associations with trees but the earlier cultural ethos was so powerful that it continued in various forms after Islam became an established religion. In both religious and mystical literary traditions of Islam, tree continued to have a symbolic value. In the Qur'an, there are a few but notable references to trees, but in mysticism, there is a plethora of ideas that informed the symbolic significance of tree.

Why mystic doctrines are more relevant in order to understand the symbolic significance of *Sarv*? The reason is the essential nature of mystic narratives, which themselves are symbolic references to the nature of reality. Mysticism used natural forms as symbols, in which, the literal meaning had no significance if isolated, but gained an emotional depth with reference to the context in which it was used. The *Sarv* motif that we find in Islamic art draws its significance from various ideas that can be found in mystic literature and poetry in relation to trees, and its usage as a visual device can be better understood in the context of these ideas. The various examples of art discussed in the paper show how the *Sarv* motif has a prominent position in Islamic visual vocabulary both in Persia and the Subcontinent.

The Symbol of Tree in Mystic Literature

It is interesting to note that the symbolic significance of a tree is not something we find explicitly in Qur'an. The Qur'an mentions three kinds of trees. One is *Zaqqum*, which is a tree in Hell and is mentioned as a cursed tree where the wrong-doers will be punished. The Qur'an mentions it as following:

Lo! We have appointed it a torment for wrong-doers.
Lo! it is a tree that springeth in the heart of Hell.
Its crop is, as it were the heads of devils.
And lo! They verily must eat thereof, and fill their bellies therewith.
(Qur'ân XXXVII: 63-6).

One cannot derive a positive value from the above. The second tree mentioned in the Qur'an is the Forbidden Tree in the Garden of Eden, which has been used to refer to the disobedience of man. The third tree is *Sidrat al-Muntaha*, the tree of utmost boundary located in the Seventh Heaven. The description of this tree becomes clear from a Hadith. It is said that this tree is massive that a horseman would take hundred years to cover its shade and at the roots of this tree rivers of water, wine, milk and honey originate. The tree providing shade is important in the Arab context where

scorching sun gives rise to a skin burning climate and the shade of tree is considered a blessing. In a Hadith, the third tree is also associated with bliss and is therefore referred to as the Tree of Bliss. In Islamic mysticism, the Tree of Immortality and Tree of Knowledge, which belong to earlier traditions, becomes characteristically intertwined with the Tree of Bliss. The following Hadith defines the complex symbolism of the Tree of Bliss:

In Paradise, there is a Tree of Bliss whose root is in my dwelling place and whose branches shelter all the mansions of heaven; nor is there mansion or dwelling place which lacks one of its branches. Every branch thereof bears every species of fruit that has been in the world. And every flower that has been in the world blossoms on that branch, but more abundantly and splendidly than the fruits of the world, and fairer than its flowers. And the Tree of Bliss bears grapes, every cluster of which is longer than a month's journey, and each single grape is as big as a swollen water skin.... Each of the blessed has his own branch with his name inscribed on it".⁵

The above Hadith also contributes to the basis of the doctrine of inversion in Islamic mysticism in which Bliss is associated to the roots of the tree, which meant that the spiritual journey should be directed inwards in order to achieve oneness with God. The doctrine of inversion finds its most definitive expression in the work of Ibne Arabi. According to him the Tree of Bliss draws sustenance from the Essence. In Islamic mystic tradition, the Essence of the Universe or God remains incomprehensible for the rational mind, however, through spiritual experience it can be felt. According to the doctrine of inversion, what we observe in the world is an inverted or incomplete image of the Essence.⁶ This position is quite similar to Plato's dichotomy of observable world which he thought was an incomplete reflection of the world of perfect forms.⁷ The difference between his approach and that upheld by the mystics is in terms of method. Plato argued that the world of perfect forms or 'Ideas' as he called it, is knowable through rational means or philosophical reflection. The mystics on

the other hand promoted personal emotional/spiritual experience as a means to know and become one with the Essence. Ibne Arabi describes this method of knowing in the following poetic expression:

When my Beloved appears,
 With what eye do I see Him?
 With His eye, not with mine,
 For none sees Him except Himself.⁸

In one piece of poetry, he refers to the process of knowing and in a few words states a defining principle of true inquiry. The above means that one cannot know God unless he is not boundless as God is. For such intimate experience of knowing one has to overcome the dichotomy of Form and Essence. The mystic doctrine of *Zahir* and *Batin* therefore emphasizes that the real meaning lies in the essence of a phenomenon and not its form. Each form therefore becomes a symbol of divine essence in the mystic approach. Al-Ghazali writes, ‘the outward symbol is a real thing, and its application to the inward meaning is a real truth. Every real thing has its corresponding real truth’.⁹

The *Zahir-Batin* dichotomy is what defines mysticism in contrast to religion. It is used both as a theme in mystic writings and as a tool for interpreting meaning and truth. Even about Qur’an, the mystics are of the view that the real meaning does not lie in the literal interpretation of Qur’anic word, it is only through an enhanced self-awareness that one can find the meaning within the meaning. In mystical practices, what is pursued is a movement from the *Zahir* to the *Batin* or from Form to Essence. This dichotomy is not limited to Islamic mysticism but to most of the mystic traditions of the world. For instance, in Hindu mysticism, the world is called ‘Maya’ an illusion, which is to be shunned through an inward journey into essence of things that leads to Bliss. The state of bliss is the highest state of self-realization a man can achieve according to Indian tradition.¹⁰

The journey of achieving the spiritual ideal, i.e. the unification with God has been described as a journey with different stages of

self-awareness. It must be remembered that although the journey is directed inwards; it is inevitably vertical. It is a growth and an upwards movement. The metaphor of tree becomes all the more important in this context. It hides in the seed and then it negates its identity at its birth, it grows towards heavens through a process of struggle, and then it bears fruits. The struggle of the journey, the hardships and challenges make the growth of tree a miraculous undertaking but at the same time a painful experience. In the Mathnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi, the first tale begins in the following way:

Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations, Saying, ‘Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament has caused man and woman to moan. It is only to a bosom torn by severance that I can unfold the pain of love-desire. Everyone who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it.’¹¹

Rumi uses the symbol of reed, as it expresses through its sound the feelings of a musician but then he uses the symbol in a new way to impart a new meaning. He says that the reed cries since it was separated from the tree trunk to which it belongs. He then compares himself to the weeping reed as according to Sufi doctrine, man was separated from God and came to this world and this is why the desire to unify best defines him.

The symbol of tree, garden, fruit can also be seen frequently used by mystic poets of the Subcontinent. Mian Muhammad Bukhsh begins Saif-ul Maluk by a request: ‘O God! Turn my internal garden green with the rain of mercy and laden the plant of my garden with the ripen fruits of hope and optimism.’ We can see that he uses the metaphor of plant since it grows into a tree and bears fruit. The heart is symbolized as a garden. It is in the above context of spiritual journey, its struggle in a movement from *Zahir* to *Batin* lies the literary foundation of the symbolism of the *Sarv* motif.

The Unique Identity of Cypress

Belonging to the coniferous family, it is an evergreen tree abundantly found in southern Europe and western Asia. The tree is unique in the respect that it is associated to both masculine and feminine characteristics rendering it as a symbol of wholeness.¹² The symbolic use of *Sarv* has been rich and diverse and has assumed various forms in different regions and cultures. In all the major civilizations of the past, *Sarv* has found a definitive place in literature, religion and philosophy.

In the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia, cypress had a sacred value in fertility ceremonies.¹³ In Greek civilization, we find references wherein *Sarv* is associated to magical powers. Plato, a towering pioneer of Idealism, remarked that the leaves of cypress as symbolic of eternity with a powerful shade of sorrow. Since knowledge flowered in the Greek period, the cypress also gained importance for its medicinal benefits. A few hundred years later, in the Roman period, we find a darker meaning as Romans identified it with the god of death.¹⁴ A similar association can be seen in the ancient Chinese traditions; it is not understood as a god but had a symbolic association with death.¹⁵ It had a sacred value for the ancient Japanese culture; its wood, Hinoki, was used to build temples.¹⁶

In the East, cypress emerged as a powerful metaphor in literature and poetry and as a dominant and frequent motif in the arts. Both the uses can be traced back to the Persian culture. The first major literary references are linked to Zoroastrian belief system. It is believed that Zoroaster brought a twig from heavens and planted it in the city of Kashmar in the Khorasan province, Iran. It is argued by various scholars that the sacred value attached to cypress originated with this event in Persian culture and had a deep subconscious place in the pre-Islamic Iranian culture. The arrival of Islam changed the belief system of the Persians but the sacred value of cypress seeped into Islamic religious and mystical traditions. It found a definitive place particularly in the religious sentiments. For instance, the Shi'ite mourning connected to the

image of cypress in symbolic reference of sorrow (figure 1).¹⁷ In mystic thought, it gained importance due to the above explained doctrines and because of its unique qualities of growth and stability.

Many mystic poets of Persia used the symbol of cypress in a variety of contexts to connote various meanings. It was used to denote freedom, truthfulness, and righteousness, which were thought to be essential features of human character in the mystic path. Rumi, the most well-known mystic poet of Persia, used cypress as a symbol of *tawhid*, which forms the central tenet of mysticism by signifying unity with the beloved or God. He also imparts meaning to cypress by identifying it as a manifestation of divine attributes when he wrote ‘The cypress give hint of His majesty’. The cypress also comes to show the straightness of the direction in the path of love leading to spiritual height. Rumi wrote:

I am the tall cypress, which I can show you a sign of straightness,
There is no sign of more straightness, other than the cypress height.¹⁸

At another instance, while describing the state of union, Rumi compares himself with cypress: ‘In a dream I saw myself as a cypress, my face as bed of tulips, my body as roses and jasmine’.¹⁹ Saadi of Sheraz also uses the cypress in a symbolic reference for the height of the Beloved.²⁰ Fariduddin Attar uses the height of cypress as a symbol for the search of beloved when he wrote:

The moon, sun and the sky searching for You
The cypress, rose and jasmine are looking for You
Day, night and holy spirits in heaven are alphabet
Learners on Love’s page, You are showing, for You.²¹

Hafez praises cypress for its uniqueness and defines it as the only required tree for his own spiritual journey in the following poetry:

Why would my garden choose another tree above the cypress?

Is the cypress I planted myself less than another tree?
 I have a cypress in my house
 I don't long for another tree.²²

In Persian literature and poetry, there are many traits used for the cypress such as genuine, tall, prideful, rebellious, fresh, young, glory, loyalty, adornment, empty-handed. In many cases, the cypress implies the height of the lover, which comes along with traits such as elegant, fluid, compassionate, green-dressed, etc. However, the context of this motif slightly transformed once it was absorbed into the Subcontinent's sensibility. In Sufi symbolism, the cypress tree is the symbol of the perfect man.²³ The upright tree, slightly bent at the top, symbolizes the perfect man or Prophet's submissiveness to Allah's will.²⁴ In Anatolian graveyards it is placed on tombstones with the belief that it symbolizes the vertical powers between the soul of the dead and Paradise (figure 3.2). Its shape is said to be pointing towards the Heavens, rather the Throne of Allah.²⁵

The Cypress Motif in Islamic Art

The use of cypress motif in art can be traced back to pre-Islamic Persia. The Assyrians used the motif with a sacred value; it can be observed as a cypress tree placed in a pot. The decorative imagery in architecture also featured this motif. For instance, the stairs of Apadana façade, Persepolis use a row of cypress trees bordering the frieze (figure 2). The carpets of Iran, which are considered finest till date, use this motif as a recurring theme. It takes many forms in the textiles of Iran; the most frequent is the *booteh* motif (figure 3, 4).²⁶ It is completely understandable how the motif travelled to the Subcontinent with the Mughals. The founder of the Mughal Empire, Babur, came from Central Asia and was well versed in Persian aesthetic tradition. It became a favorite motif of the Mughal visual vocabulary and can be seen on carpets and tapestries that adorn Mughal courts and residential quarters. The cypress tree found a significance place in the Mughal garden.

The carpets of Mughal period, especially those which were made in North India and Kashmir display a floral vocabulary with cypress tree as a dominant motif. It was Akbar, who established an imperial workshop of carpet making and under his patronage, the Persian and Indian motifs found a remarkable synthesis. In both traditions symbolism had a central importance. Lahore thrived as a manufacturing enterprise of carpets under the patronage of Jahangir. Francis Pelsaert, in Agra from 1620-1627 as an agent for the East India Company, notes that the carpets of Lahore were sold at Agra, the main commercial center.²⁷

In one of the carpets from Thyssen Bornemisza Collection in Spain, the cypress motif can be identified as colonettes in a multi-cusped arch.²⁸ The carpet is a prayer mat and the cypress motif appears in naturalistic form and is shown growing from the ground. In a carpet from Northern India, the motif is stylized and is shown growing from a pedestal. This difference in appearance is certainly due to the infusion of indigenous Indian motifs with the Persian. The pedestal base is a frequent convention used in Indian symbolism such as Purna-Kalasa. The use of the cypress motif with a pot was prevalent in Iran in the fourteenth century as well. A wooden Qur'an stand from Central Asia depicts the motif with a planter (figure 3.12). In the Subcontinental sensibility, this composite symbol of cypress, where it intertwines with leaves and flowers is a reference to the paradise especially when used on prayer mats. In addition to prayer mats and carpets, the cypress motif found its place in the imperial utensils of the Mughal Empire. The *booteh* motif of Iran found a Subcontinental transformation in the Kashmiri Shawls where it became as the Keri motif in local vocabulary.²⁹

The cypress motif can also be observed in the embellishments and surface decorations of Mughal architecture. It was considered a necessary component of Royal gardens. Peter Mundy noted that in the garden plans of seventeenth century Mughal India, cypress trees were used for lining the walkways. Lord Curzon who was engaged in restoring the Mughal monuments and gardens in Agra clearly mentions the cypress trees as part of the original garden

plan.³⁰ The Mughal miniatures also depict the cypress trees in most of the renditions of gardens (figure 3.10).

The tile decorations of the Mughal period also show frequent use of the motif. In the Shahjehan Mosque of Thattha, shows colonettes adorned with stylized cypress motif leading to arabesque patterns, a theme that is reminiscent of gateway to paradise (3.13).

In the religious architecture of Central Asia and Subcontinent, there are various examples of the cypress motif, frequently used for its religious and mystical connotations. The Tillya Karri Mosque of Samarqand depicts the motif used as surface decoration of the interior of the dome as well as for adorning the squinches (figure 3.16). Similarly, examples of the motif can be seen in Mariam Zamani Mosque, Lahore. The shrines of Shah Shams Sabzwari in Multan, and Sultan Ahmed Qatal in Jalalpur Pirwala display many examples of the use of the motif.

The Imperial Mughal architecture that had a significant facelift under Shahjehan also depicts the use of this motif as a decorative element. Various examples can be seen in the Shish Mahal and Naulakha Pavilion. In the case of Shish Mahal, glass mosaic technique has been used for surface decoration and the cypress motif is repeatedly visible. In Naulakha Pavilion, the motif is made using *pietra-dura*. A rather colorful depiction of the motif can be seen in the Wazir Khan Mosque on the neck of the minarets. The cypress tree is also rendered in the vestibule area squinches, they are rendered in fresco (figure 3.24). The tree is entwined by a creeper *bel*. The Badshahi mosque displays the motif in stucco.

A rather unusual presentation of this motif can be observed at the mid-eighteenth century mausoleum, named after this motif, the *Sarv Wala Maqbara*, Lahore, here again in faience mosaic (figure 3.26). This tomb is located near Gulabi Bagh at Grand Trunk Road, Lahore. The tomb belongs to Sharf-un Nisa Begum who was a sister of Nawab Zakriya Khan, the governor of Lahore in the reign of Muhammad Shah. The exterior of the tomb is embellished

with colorful cypress trees. These cypresses, four on each side, are intercepted by little blooming flower plants, all in enameled square tile mosaic work on the plaster base.

Mughal art is abundant with the symbolic use of cypress motif. There are plenty of other examples where the motif has been dominantly used but the above few examples serve the purpose of showing how the *Sarv* motif is used as a decorative element in the backdrop of a spiritual significance.

Conclusion

It is clear from the above usage that Mughal sensibilities drew various essential aesthetic considerations from the Persian repertoire. The *Sarv* motif, was in line with the vision of Mughal emperors, who were inclined to establish their identity distinct from local rulers and for this purpose the Persian background was much instrumental. The significance of the *Sarv* motif changed from a spiritual character to a decorative one but still its prevalence suggests its roots in the mystic sensibility. It must also be noted that Islam spread in the Subcontinent through the Sufis and since they had an all-encompassing ideology that did not distinguish between cast, creed and religious affiliation, the mystic bent was a part of Subcontinent's literary and poetic tradition before the arrival of Mughals. The mystic inclinations were also supported by the indigenous culture, where Hinduism already had a language of symbols. The concept of Brahma continuously fostered an orientation in which God was essentially formless. The world of the senses was regarded an illusion and the ultimate purpose was to become one with God. This position absorbed the mystic teachings in a profound way and a fusion of Persian and Indian sensibilities was inevitable. This was the reason why Mughals were able to establish an empire not only in administrative terms but more importantly in the cultural paradigms of Indian society.

The symbolic significance of *Sarv* motif or cypress motif is rooted in the mystic tradition of Islam. The general understanding of the significance of tree has been derived from the Qur'an but the usage

of the motif was enriched by the mystic thinking that primarily relied on a symbolic language to convey a complex meaning. The mystic wisdom is inherent in the use of a particular symbol for metaphor because it is through the use that the meaning is altered, new perspective is incorporated, and a possibility of new understanding is provided. The use of the symbol or metaphor points towards an order of reality or a law of nature, which was not previously focused by the individual. Symbols provide a multi-layered meaning which is otherwise difficult to be understood. By engaging the common sense of the individual, and by giving examples from the reality that surrounds and individual, a pattern of how things operate is unveiled. Since the mindset exists till date, so does the significance of *Sarv* motif.

Bibliography

- Aijmer, Göran. *New Year Celebrations in Central China in Late Imperial Times*. Chinese University Press, 2004.
- Arbasi, Fariborz. *Rumi on Change by Love and Reason*. Fariborz Arbasi, 2013.
- 'Attar: *Selected Poems*. New Humanity Books, n.d.
- Azmayesh, Seyed Mostafa. *The Pearl of Sufism*. Lulu.com, 2012.
- Bakhtiar, Laleh. *Sufi: Expressions of the Mystic Quest*. Thames and Hudson, 1976.
- Chwalkowski, Farrin. *Symbols in Arts, Religion and Culture: The Soul of Nature*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.
- Clévenot, Dominique, and Gérard Degeorge. *Splendors of Islam: Architecture, Decoration, and Design*. Vendome Press, 2000.
- Hastings, James, John Alexander Selbie, and Louis Herbert Gray. *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. Scribner, 1961.
- Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society*. The Society, 2005.
- Koch, Ebba. *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*. Thames & Hudson, 2011.

- Martin, John H., and Phyllis G. Martin. *Kyoto a Cultural Guide: Revised Edition*. Tuttle Publishing, 2012.
- Mashita, Hiroyuki. *Theology, Ethics and Metaphysics: Royal Asiatic Society Classics of Islam*. Taylor & Francis, 2003.
- Muhaiyaddeen, M. R. Bawa. *The Divine Luminous Wisdom: That Dispels the Darkness*. The Fellowship Press, 1972.
- Palacios, Miguel Asin. *Islam and the Divine Comedy*. Psychology Press, 1968.
- Philpot, J. H. *The Sacred Tree; Or, the Tree in Religion and Myth*. Creative Media Partners, LLC, 2018.
- Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli, and Daniel E. Bassuk. *Incarnation in Hinduism and Christianity: The Myth of the God-Man*. Humanities Press International, 1987.
- Ridpath, John Clark. *The West Aryans (Cont.) Semites and Hamites*. Jones Bros. Publishing Company, 1893.
- Rumi, Jalal al-Din. *Mystical Poems of Rumi*. University of Chicago Press, 2010.
- Sa□dī. *Translation and Explanation of the Fifty Odes of Saadi (51-100) Prescribed for the Previous Examination of 1893: Together with an Account of the Life of Saadi, Proverbs and Figures of Speech Occurring in the Prescribed Odes, the Metres and Feet of the Same, Etc.* Mrs. Radhabai Atmaram Sagoon, 1893.
- Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Univ of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- Sheffield, Frisbee, and James Warren. *Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy*. Routledge, 2013.
- Studies in Comparative Religion*. Perennial Books, 1975.
- Vaughan-Lee, Llewellyn. *Travelling the Path of Love: Sayings of Sufi Masters*. The Golden Sufi Center, 1995.
- Walker, Daniel S., and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York N.Y.). *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997.
- Wearden, Jennifer, and Patricia Baker. *Iranian Textiles*. Harry N. Abrams, 2010.

References

- ¹ James Hastings, John Alexander Selbie, and Louis Herbert Gray, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Scribner, 1961).
- ² Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Daniel E. Bassuk, *Incarnation in Hinduism and Christianity: The Myth of the God-Man* (Humanities Press International, 1987), 818.
- ³ *Studies in Comparative Religion* (Perennial Books, 1975), 818.
- ⁴ J. H. Philpot, *The Sacred Tree; Or, the Tree in Religion and Myth* (Creative Media Partners, LLC, 2018), 45.
- ⁵ Miguel Asin Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (Psychology Press, 1968), 152.
- ⁶ *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society* (The Society, 2005), 56.
- ⁷ Frisbee Sheffield and James Warren, *Routledge Companion to Ancient Philosophy* (Routledge, 2013), 214.
- ⁸ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Univ of North Carolina Press, 2011), 266.
- ⁹ Hiroyuki Mashita, *Theology, Ethics and Metaphysics: Royal Asiatic Society Classics of Islam* (Taylor & Francis, 2003), 79.
- ¹⁰ M. R. Bawa Muhaideen, *The Divine Luminous Wisdom: That Dispels the Darkness* (The Fellowship Press, 1972), 81.
- ¹¹ Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, *Travelling the Path of Love: Sayings of Sufi Masters* (The Golden Sufi Center, 1995), 48.
- ¹² Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi: Expressions of the Mystic Quest* (Thames and Hudson, 1976), 68.
- ¹³ John Clark Ridpath, *The West Aryans (Cont.) Semites and Hamites* (Jones Bros. Publishing Company, 1893), 324.
- ¹⁴ Farrin Chwalkowski, *Symbols in Arts, Religion and Culture: The Soul of Nature* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 150.
- ¹⁵ Göran Aijmer, *New Year Celebrations in Central China in Late Imperial Times* (Chinese University Press, 2004), 75.
- ¹⁶ John H. Martin and Phyllis G. Martin, *Kyoto a Cultural Guide: Revised Edition* (Tuttle Publishing, 2012).
- ¹⁷ Dominique Clévenot and Gérard Degeorge, *Splendors of Islam: Architecture, Decoration, and Design* (Vendome Press, 2000), 334.
- ¹⁸ Fariborz Arbasi, *Rumi on Change by Love and Reason* (Fariborz Arbasi, 2013), 62.

¹⁹ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Mystical Poems of Rumi* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), 247.

²⁰ Saʿdī, *Translation and Explanation of the Fifty Odes of Saadi (51-100) Prescribed for the Previous Examination of 1893: Together with an Account of the Life of Saadi, Proverbs and Figures of Speech Occurring in the Prescribed Odes, the Metres and Feet of the Same, Etc* (Mrs. Radhabai Atmaram Sagoon, 1893), 5.

²¹ 'Attar: *Selected Poems* (New Humanity Books, n.d.), 12.

²² Seyed Mostafa Azmayesh, *The Pearl of Sufism* (Lulu.com, 2012), 99.

²³ Symbolizing the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH).

²⁴ Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi; Expressions of a Mystic Quest*, 68.

²⁵ Sonny Berntsson. "Prayer Rug with Function and Ritual"
<http://www.akrep.se/akrepny/35E%20Cypress.htm> (accessed February 9th 2014)

²⁶ Jennifer Wearden and Patricia Baker, *Iranian Textiles* (Harry N. Abrams, 2010), 162.

²⁷ Daniel S. Walker and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York N.Y.), *Flowers Underfoot: Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 8.

²⁸ Daniel Walker, *Flowers Underfoot, Indian Carpets of the Mughal Era*, 94.

²⁹ Sherry Rehman and Naheed Jafri, *The Kashmiri Shawl; from Jamavar to Paisley*. (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2006), 84.

³⁰ Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (Thames & Hudson, 2011), 138.