

Oppositional Duality in the Text "Youcef and Zoulaikha" by Abdel Rahman Al-JAMI A Comparative Structural-Genetic Study

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Abstract:

This study is based on a central hypothesis: that the text by the poet Abdel Rahman Al **JAMI** is influenced by the story of Prophet Youcef (Joseph) as presented in the Holy Qur'an.

Since influence is tied to the creator's understanding, perception, and application, uncovering the points of influence requires an abstraction of the creative work to make its structure clear and traceable.

To achieve this, the study adopts a structuralist approach, focusing on **oppositional duality** as an effective analytical tool for abstraction, which allows for identifying the influence and interaction—especially given that the text in question contains inherent conflict.

Based on this, the following questions can be posed:

- From what perspective does the poet employ the Qur'anic story of Youcef in his text, and to what end?
- Did the poet's Sufism background influence this representation?

Keywords: duality, opposition, genetic criticism, Youcef, Zulaikha, comparison.

Introduction:

The influence of the story of Youcef (Joseph) on **Jami's**⁽¹⁾ text is characterized by its directness; an initial reading of the work clearly indicates reference to the Qur'anic narrative. However, this influence is subject to a particular interpretation, derived from the perspective of the Persian poet who embraced Sufi thought. This type of influence is referred to in comparative literature studies as *interpretive influence*—that is, the author's reinterpretation of texts from other literary traditions,

An example of this is the interpretive influence of Islam and the Qur'an on Persian Sufis, who infused their understanding with elements of Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy, as well as principles from ancient Indian and Iranian mysticism⁽²⁾.

The concept of oppositional **duality** forms the backbone of structuralism in literary criticism and analysis. This concept, as a structuralist notion, stems from Claude Lévi-Strauss's studies on mythology. Structural linguistics and literary analysis utilize the idea of oppositional **duality** not only in terms of words and concepts but also in terms of textual traditions and symbols⁽³⁾.

This theoretical framework has been applied in the sociological study of literature⁽⁴⁾. Therefore, the scope of this approach can be expanded regardless of the nature of the text, as long as it supports the fundamental proposition that there is a correlation between artistic and social structures—one that cannot be understood except through a particular worldview⁽⁵⁾.

This approach allow us to understand literature within its historical connections and other contextual frameworks to the extent that it serves the nature of comparative study, which is based on the principle of influence and reception. The chosen analytical tool will thus be applied in accordance with what the texts allow.

First – Oppositional Duality in Jami's *Youcef and Zulaikha*:

In this study, we aim to dive into the layers of meaning in order to extract the oppositional **duality**⁽⁶⁾, examining through them the extent of influence from the Qur'anic text, while highlighting the modifications introduced by Al **JAMI** to steer the narrative toward his central idea , the Sufi concepts embedded within the text.

1. The Oppositional Central Generative Duality: *Dream / Reality*:

The initial reading of *Youcef and Zoulaikha* reveals that the text contains a series of oppositional **duality** that stem from a central **duality**: one pole being *dream* and the other *reality*.

From this central **duality** (*dream/reality*), a number of subsidiary **duality** emerge, particularly related to **Zoulaikha's** experiences following the dream:

1. Misery / Happiness
2. Reason / Madness
3. Freedom / Constraint
4. Madness / Sanity
5. Hope / Disappointment
6. Sin / Repentance
7. Secrecy / Revelation
8. Loss / Return of the Lost

We will trace and analyze these **duality** throughout the study.

The duality of *dream/reality* appears as a central structure in **Jami's** text, where he positions the characters **Youcef and Zulaykha** as the protagonists of his narrative. Events unfold from a dream dream experienced by both characters, in contrast to the Qur'anic narrative which assigns the dream solely to **Youcef** (peace be upon him). This indicates that **Zulaykha** takes on a central role in **Jami's** version of the story, and her experiences become a condensation of many opposing dualities rich in symbolic meaning.

What first draws our attention in **Jami's** text is the **contextual opposition**, which is defined as: "every opposition in which the relationship between the opposites is distributive."⁽⁷⁾ At first glance, this may seem distant from the structural oppositions that form the core of this study—since such oppositions emerge from a deep reading of the text and an exploration of its multiple layers. However, these contextual oppositions point—directly or indirectly—to the presence of deeper **duality** structures within the text. The apparent oppositions on the surface of **Jami's** work serve as evidence of more profound dualities beneath. "The opposition in this kind of contextual contrast does not stem from linguistic convention, but rather from the poet's own stylistic choices. The poet creates these contextual contrasts not based on a shared lexical system, but in response to his own creative faculty in artistic expression."⁽⁸⁾

The **duality** oppositions in the text stem from the duality of *dream and reality*. If we accept that this duality forms a central structure in **Jami's** work, then it becomes necessary to explore the dream narratives, for the dream did not occur just once—it unfolded over three distinct stages. Each stage of the dream triggers a transformation, giving rise to a reality marked by a sequence of generative dualities, as if moving in a reverse direction.

The First Stage of the Dream:

The first text represents the initial stage of the dream. **JAMI** writes:

"Her eyes, which had once seen the forms of material things, were now closed so that the eyes of the heart might open—powerfully and far-reaching. With these inner eyes, she suddenly saw a young man, or rather, a pure spirit, shining forth from the Kingdom of Light... No sooner had this dream appeared to Zulaykha than everything changed! Merely seeing such an extraordinary beauty—beyond human capacity, filled with awe, and unknown even among the jinn or the houris... In the end, this majestic apparition faded, leaving a deep imprint on Zulaykha's memory. She was in a state of shock, alone with herself, but after some time, she began to realize the significance of the dream and clung tightly to its interpretation."⁽⁹⁾

Based on this dream, Zulaykha's reality begins to gradually transform from one state to another. She could no longer contain what she had seen; her condition swung between misery and joy.

1. The Duality of Misery / Happiness:

The *misery/happiness* duality serves to illustrate the transformation in Zulaykha's state, which **JAMI**, through his poetic prowess, vividly describes—showing how she was before the dream, and how she became afterward. At the beginning of his text, he writes:

"Zulaykha lived a life of ease, sometimes reclining carelessly on elegant cushions of Chinese silk embroidered with silver and gold... Her heart had never experienced any kind of sorrow, not even a slight sadness. Her foot had never been injured or pricked by a thorn. She had not known love, nor had she been beloved."⁽¹⁰⁾

The text expresses a happiness unmatched, a reality that closely resembles a dream. However, the dream gives rise to a new, contrasting reality—one that Zulaykha herself articulates when she says:

"I was once a fresh rose in the garden of youth, like the waters of eternal life. No wind disturbed the clarity of my thoughts, and no thorn ever pricked my foot. Now, from just a single glimpse of you, I am scattered like dust in the wind, pierced by a thousand thorns." ⁽¹¹⁾

The surface meaning of the text aligns with its deeper significance, portraying the transformation Zulaykha undergoes after the dream. **JAMI** skillfully distributes this clear contrast across his poem, while also hinting at the rapid shift in her state. The sentences adopt a past tense structure ("Zulaykha lived..." / "I was once in the garden of youth..."), marking a definitive rupture between two realities. The concept of *sorrow* emerges as a central theme tied to her new existence. **JAMI** writes:

"When Zulaykha concealed her love, it was as if she had planted the seed of sorrow within her chest. This seed continued to grow and rise, becoming visible to others despite her efforts. She began to weep profusely, and every teardrop falling from her lashes revealed the secret of her heart." ⁽¹²⁾

The text contains a **Sufi** perspective that may be read as *educational*—an implicit guide for those who seek the Sufi path. The Sufi experience is full of things that the experimenter is obliged to keep secret. Other Sufi symbols also emerge from the texts. ⁽¹³⁾

The Second Stage of the Dream:

In its second stage, the dream forms a new, inescapable phase. It plunges Zulaykha into yet another spiral—laden with turmoil—which gives rise to a new secondary duality:

2. The Duality of Reason / Madness:

At first, Zulaykha retained her reason despite her early troubles and the loss of her peace. However, the second dream robbed her of both the comfort of her heart and the clarity of her mind.

Thus, this duality emerges as one of the most significant, signalling that events are beginning to take a new turn.

The dream structure shifts in this phase, adopting a dialogic form in which Zulaykha questions the **dream**, and it responds:

“I am one of the sons of Adam, a creature made from the clay of this world. You claim to love me—and if you are sincere, then remain faithful to me and do not marry for my sake...” ⁽¹⁴⁾

Zulaykha’s awakening from the dream world signifies her entry into a state of bewilderment and madness. The **dream**’s answer offered no clarity—only ambiguity and confusion:

“Her torment multiplied a hundredfold. She could no longer set limits to her bewilderment, lost her grasp on reason, and felt as though everything was slipping from her hands... She dug her nails into her face in grief and began tearing at her thick hair in pain and longing.” ⁽¹⁵⁾

The following text overflows with linguistic contrasts that intensify the duality: *“With a heart battered by shocks, Zulaykha collapsed like an animal struck by a hunter’s arrow, falling to the ground for a while. When she came to, it was as if another fit of madness had overtaken her. She began to cry at one moment, and laugh the next—alternating so that we no longer knew whether she was present or absent.”* ⁽¹⁶⁾

The oppositions in the text can be arranged as follows: (*human / animal, weeping / laughter, presence / absence*).

If we accept that the text carries a Sufi symbol—despite drawing its core material from the Qur’anic narrative—then this very tension reinforces the symbolism. *“All symbols necessarily carry a clear contradiction, stemming from the fact that one part is a thing, and the other an idea.”* ⁽¹⁷⁾

Jami’s text conveys a profound Sufi idea, one that requires deep contemplation. While this study does not aim to explore that metaphysical aspect in

full, it clearly demonstrates how the text's oppositions and dualities serve the overarching Sufi concept.

The duality of reason and madness leads us to another essential duality:

3. The Duality of Freedom / Constraint:

Freedom is a product of reason, and this is what Zulaykha enjoyed before the second **dream**. However, madness subjected her to two forms of constraint:

- A **spiritual constraint**, born from her love for **Youcef**, symbolized by his condition—that she remain unmarried as a sign of devotion;
- A **physical constraint**, imposed by her father when all attempts to treat her failed.

The latter remains until she regains her sanity, while the former binds her for the rest of her life.

The Third Stage of the Dream:

The dream renews itself in a third stage, as **Jami** writes:

*"Thus she continued to speak to her beloved—her heart's desire—until she was exhausted and sank into a deep sleep. As soon as her drowsy eyes fully closed, that same **dream** returned to visit her in the dark of night, appearing more beautiful than ever before, more magnificent than words could describe... 'I beg you by the name of the Creator of this universe, the One who made you pure and placed you above all things beautiful in this world and the next—put an end to my pain! Tell me your name and the place where you live.'*

And the answer came:

'If that is all you wish to know, I am the king-hand of Egypt, and Egypt is the land where I reside. I am one of the king's intimates, and my high rank grants me authority and honor throughout the land.' ⁽¹⁸⁾

This text suggests a **reversed duality**:

4. The Duality of Madness / Reason:

After Zulaykha had lost her reason and patience, both now return to her. She says:

“Remove the chains from my feet. You will never again need to fear madness from me. Let my father break them with his own hands.” ⁽¹⁹⁾

Breaking the chains symbolizes the birth of hope, a new life in which she sets out on a long journey to Egypt in pursuit of her desire. In response to her plea—and with great humility—her father sends a request to the vizier of Egypt for his consent to marry her. After the king agrees, a messenger came from Egypt: *“to break the chains that bound Zulaykha’s soul. When she heard the joyful news, she emptied herself of everything else to fill her being with love for the vizier. Has the rose of her happiness begun to bloom? Has the phoenix of her destiny begun to rise?”* ⁽²⁰⁾

This passage also hints at another duality emerging from the madness/reason , which is:

5. The Duality of Hope / Disappointment:

The return of reason to Zulaykha and her father’s request to the vizier of Egypt for her hand in marriage revived in her a new sense of hope. Yet this hope quickly turned into disappointment and sorrow. Her dreams shattered when she saw the vizier to whom she had been promised:

“He is not the man I saw in my dream! The one I seek—the one who has cost me all this misery—is he who stole my reason and let madness flow through the veins of my heart...” ⁽²¹⁾

But in the height of her despair, the bird of divine mercy and providence appears, saying:

“Rise, O wretched one! Your misfortunes shall pass. The vizier may not be the beloved of your heart, but without him, you will never reach your true love. Give thanks to this vizier who shall guide you to your goal. In the end, you shall look upon your beloved with full eyes and drink in his beauty. Let not your heart recoil from the minister’s company, for he shall leave your silver well untouched. He shall not

violate it; his key is as soft as wax, and from an empty mouth, no hand extends to brandish a dagger." ⁽²²⁾

Jami's inspiration from the Qur'anic narrative is evident here, particularly from the moment when Gabriel descends upon **Youcef** in the darkness of the well to reassure him of his eventual rescue and future vindication.

For those who contemplate these dualities, it becomes clear that there are notable differences from the Qur'anic text. Zulaykha, in **Jami's** narrative, sees a dream that is never mentioned in the Qur'an. She travels to Egypt, whereas the Qur'anic account presents her as already being from Egypt. In the Qur'an, she is merely a figure along **Youcef's** journey, but in **Jami's** retelling, her dream becomes the structural center around which all the other dualities are generated.

Zulaykha's struggle with reality does not end here. The sequence of dualities continues to unfold with the appearance of another key contrast:

The Duality of Sin / Repentance

Sin expands and takes significant steps, perhaps due to Zulaykha revealing her feelings to the governess who accompanies and advises her. By doing so, she comes under the influence of both the demon of jinn and the demon of mankind, which leads to the widening of her sin and her passage through multiple phases:

The First Phase:

This is the phase of prolonged looking at the face of **Youcef**: *"Her tender gaze never left that face which had overshadowed her life, while he, on the other hand, would constantly cast his eyes to the ground, avoiding hers—for he knew that meeting her eyes meant exposing himself to the temptation of seduction."*

This presents a clear duality: the tender gaze vs. the averted gaze, affirmation vs. negation, desire vs. restraint.

The depth of Zulaykha's suffering is reflected in the change in her condition and appearance:

"She began to grow thin and frail, overcome by despair... She no longer combed her hair or braided her fragrant locks." ⁽²³⁾

In this phase, Zulaykha finds herself locked in an inner psychological conflict between her blaming soul and her actions—a soul that blames and denies. At this point, the fear of scandal or disgrace no longer holds any weight for her.

The governess plays a significant role in the progression of Zulaykha's sin, placing her under the burden of her own desires and the governess's encouragement. This becomes more evident in the second phase.

Stage Two:

This stage evokes a striking verbal **paradox** when the woman who aids **Zoulaikha** in her sin is referred to as a *nursemaid*, a title that traditionally implies virtue and guidance. Yet, she leads **Zoulaikha** into a world of vice. This **paradox** invites the reader to engage in a reflective reading that uncovers the deep contradiction embedded in the event. It exemplifies a narrative technique designed to leave the question of literal meaning unresolved, implying a perpetual deferral of interpretation. The old definition of **paradox**—as saying one thing and meaning its opposite—has evolved into a broader concept. **Paradox** now refers to saying something in a way that resists a single interpretation, instead evoking a chain of endless meanings ⁽²⁴⁾.

According to "Siza Qassem", **paradox** is used "to kill excessive sentimentality, to eliminate false appearances, and to expose intellectual exaggeration" ⁽²⁵⁾.

The issue does not stop at the title "nursemaid." **Zoulaikha** even addresses her as "mother" when she confides in her about her suffering with **Youcef**. Later, she is referred to as the *maidservant* when **Zoulaikha** sends her to **Youcef**. This shifting nomenclature suggests that she is a diabolical figure capable of transformation—one who conceals her true self behind a gentle facade. She approaches **Youcef** with extravagant linguistic skill, pleading: "Be merciful to her. You hold on your lips the water that grants life—can you not spare her a single drop? Let her extinguish her desire on those lips, twisted and red like carnelian..."

but **Youcef** becomes more resolute in his refusal. His reply is clear and unwavering:

"Erase from your mind the thought that I might disobey the commands of my Creator, glorified be He. As for that fleeting lust, I do not even consider it, nor will I let it lead me down the path of betrayal" ⁽²⁶⁾.

Stage Three:

The Attempt to Seduce Him through the Maidens and Deceive **Youcef**

Stage Four:

Following the Nursemaid's Advice to Build a Palace with Seven Chambers ;Here, the influence of a pivotal moment from Surah **Youcef** becomes evident, particularly in the verse:

"And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, 'Come to me.'" [Youcef, 23]

Jami opens a wide door for imaginative elaboration by allowing himself to enumerate the palace chambers, making them seven in total, inspired by the Qur'anic phrase *"and she closed the doors."* He was also influenced by Qur'anic exegesis that explains the expression by stating that the doors were seven in number. The use of the verb in the intensified form *"closed"* (instead of the simple *"closed"*) suggests either multiple doors or emphasis on their secure locking: **"It is said they were seven; hence the verb came in the intensified form rather than the simple one, and some say it emphasizes the thoroughness of the act"** ⁽²⁷⁾.

Jami's narrative structure rests upon key elements of the Qur'anic story, drawing upon the Qur'an's rhetorical miracle—its ability to condense a complex tale into a few verses. A single Qur'anic word often contains a wealth of imaginative and multi-layered meanings. This quality is clearly reflected in **Jami's** text. His mention of the seventh chamber and the specific use of the number seven point to a Sufi conception embedded within the narrative—subtle at times, more apparent at others.

While the Qur'anic surah mentions only the act of seduction (*"raawadat-hu"*) in its unmatched conciseness and alludes to the scene with the phrase *"and she closed*

the doors”, leaving the reader to envision limitless imagery, **Jami** expands on the details of her sin (the act of seduction). This expansion is in keeping with the nature of human storytelling, which cannot achieve the Qur’an’s miraculous conciseness and persuasive power except through elaboration and explanation. This is not to draw a comparison between his work and the Qur’anic text—such a comparison is beyond the scope of this study and the Qur’an remains inimitable without question. Rather, the goal is to examine how deeply **Jami** was influenced by the Qur’anic narrative, and how a single Qur’anic word inspired him to construct a story with, symbolic meanings.

Stage Five:

Inspiration at the Moment of sin comes from the fact that **Zoulaikha** hid the idol out of shame—embarrassed to commit the act of disobedience in front of what she regarded as a deity. This act might also be interpreted as a moment of awakening for **Youcef** himself. Here, **Jami**’s influence by the Qur’anic verse is evident: **“Had he not seen the proof of his Lord...”** [**Youcef**, 24].

Scholars have long debated the nature of this "proof," which gave **Jami** creative license to imagine symbolic «evidence» that reflects his narrative ingenuity. He portrays **Youcef** crying out with a thunderous voice:

“If your faith is worth a dinar, then mine is worth not even a falls (a small coin)! You feel shame before an inanimate object, and I—without shame—stand here before the One who sees all, the Eternal, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing!”

While speaking, he stood up, as if awakening from a bed of pleasure... ⁽²⁸⁾

After losing **Youcef** through her own actions, **Zoulaikha** laments: **“At that moment, the bird of hope flew away!”**

That bird of hope had once consoled her when she first saw the **Vizier** (the noble of Egypt); at that time, she had loved only a spirit. But now, she had fallen for nothing more than a human body. It was then she realized—the bird of hope would never return.

Stage Six:

The accusation and **Zoulaikha's** request to imprison **Youcef** closely resemble the Qur'anic wording in the verse:

“She said, ‘What is the reward for the one who intended evil against your wife, except that he be imprisoned or punished with a painful punishment?’” [**Youcef**, 25].

In **Jami's** narrative, she states: **“Now, all you have to do is imprison him for a while or command his torture, so that he may become an example to others.”**

In the Qur'an, the witness to **Youcef's** innocence is not specified, but **Jami** specifies that it was a speaking infant, inspired by the Hadith of the Prophet Mouhamed (PBUH), where a speaking infant testified for a mother's innocence.

From the words of the **Vizier**:

“Ask forgiveness from Allah for your sin. Turn your back to the wall in shame, and wash this sin from the record with burning tears. As for you, Youcef, keep your silence about this incident. Seal your lips, and do not let anyone know of it. Your innocence and purity are the most powerful testimony for you, so do not walk the path of slander. It is better to cover this incident with a curtain than to tear that curtain in two.”(29)

The text here presents a notable paradox called a **“paradox of the situation,”** where the reader might expect an emotional reaction from the **Vizier** upon discovering the truth about his wife, Zulaikha. However, this reaction is not as intense as anticipated. The Qur'anic text also reflects this paradox, which manifests in the following **duality** opposition:

7. The Duality of Secret / Revelation

The narrative reveals the **duality** opposition of *secret versus Revelation*, which propels the plot forward and escalates the sin.

Vizier was initially keen on keeping the matter hidden, but somehow the news spread among the women of the city. This closely mirrors the Qur'anic approach, which also omits the method by which the women learned of **Zoulaikha's** affair with **Youcef**:

“**And when the women in the city said...**” [Youcef, 30]. **Jami** follows this by stating: “*When the noblewomen of Egypt heard the news, they began to spread gossip and scandal*” (30). Like the Qur'an, he does not elaborate on how they discovered the affair.

In the Qur'anic verse, **Zoulaikha** commands **Youcef**: “**Come out before them.**” [Youcef, 31]

However, **Jami** alters this by portraying **Youcef** initially refusing to come when summoned by a servant. **Zoulaikha** then goes herself, pleading and attempting to persuade him through persistent entreaty. When he finally appears, **Jami** faithfully quotes the Qur'anic verses without addition. The women of the city sympathize with **Zoulaikha** and attempt to convince **Youcef** to fulfill her desire, offering him a choice between imprisonment and submission. Just as in the Qur'an, **Youcef** chooses imprisonment. The presence of the city's women in **Jami**'s text parallels that of the Qur'an, though he expands creatively on the Qur'anic phrase: “**And she prepared for them a banquet...**” [Youcef, 31]

Jami elaborates with vivid detail: “*She immediately ordered a grand banquet and invited the most distinguished women of the city. A banquet? No, it was a royal feast, offering every imaginable delicacy...*” ⁽³¹⁾.

After **Youcef** is released from prison and the women openly confess the truth, their courage to speak reflects a clear act of repentance—marking the second element of the sin/repentance **duality**.

This narrative progression gives rise to yet another **duality** tied to the overarching theme of sin and repentance :

9. The Duality of Loss / Return of the Lost

Zoulaikha experiences a sequence of losses: first, she loses **Youcef**, as she can no longer see him; second, she loses her husband. **Jami** writes: “*As for al-‘Vizier, Zoulaikha’s husband—when he saw his fortunes dwindling and the banner of his high rank falling from the heights and cast aside, his heart could not bear such a fall.*”

He immediately became a target for death” ⁽³²⁾.

Third, she loses her wealth and riches. Fourth, she loses her beauty.

Then, a remarkable reversal occurs—one marked by a profound paradox: when she breaks the idol and believes in **Youcef**'s Lord, everything she had lost is returned to her. Her dream is finally realized, and she marries **Youcef** after her youth is restored.

The Qur'an does not recount any of these events. Rather, they are the imaginative creation of the poet, who infuses each moment with a Sufi vision—a spiritual, pedagogical message for every seeker on the path of “sufi” love.

Conclusion:

It is evident that **duality** oppositions served to illuminate the texts. Between each pair of opposites, this study has traced passages that reveal both direct and indirect influence of Jami's work by *Surah Youcef*.

It also highlighted the points where he diverged from the Qur'anic narrative to better serve his central thematic purpose.

In Jami's narrative, **Zoulaikha** forms the structural and emotional core of the story, whereas in the Qur'anic text, she remains a secondary figure. Jami's inspiration was not limited to the Surah itself; he was also deeply influenced by its interpretations (tafsir), as evidenced by clear examples throughout the text—especially given that he was himself a Qur'anic exegete and authored works in this field.

His engagement with the Qur'anic lexicon was not simply at the surface level of the words themselves but extended to the imaginative power those words evoked. This conferred a literary richness to Jami's text, particularly in terms of imagery and symbolism—an important point, as the Qur'an, in its rhetorical inimitability, plays a profound role in refining an author's literary faculty and sharpening creative expression.

Jami was also influenced by the Qur'anic *irony of situation*—as seen in the moment when **Vizier** learns the truth about **Zoulaikha's** deception—echoing it in his narrative while altering the context but preserving the core structure of the dialogue.

A central theme that Jami's text repeatedly emphasizes is **tawhīd** (the oneness of God), which forms the cornerstone of his narrative. **Zoulaikha's** vision is only fulfilled after she destroys the idol and turns to God. The idea of monotheism and faith in Allah is also one of the fundamental teachings found in *Surah Youcef*.

Notably, each time Jami diverges from the Qur'anic version, he does so to embed a Sufi principle or profound spiritual idea. He seeks to unfold these insights in a form that, while more accessible than traditional Sufi literary modes, still retains their depth and contemplative nature.

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FOOTNOTES:

(1) **'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī** was a renowned poet and scholar who passed away in 898 AH. He is considered the last of the great Sufi poets. See: 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām, *Al-Taṣawwuf 'inda Farīd al-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 2010), p. 58.

Al-Jāmī was influenced by the story of Joseph in the Qur'an, like many Persian poets, and composed his own version in verse. He was one of the eminent masters of the Sufi path, delivering lessons in pure, divine love for God through his characters. This was a common path followed by many Persian poets and writers such as Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī, Farīd al-Dīn al-'Aṭṭār al-Nīsābūrī, Niẓāmī al-Ganjawī, and many others, as Sufism is fundamentally based on love above all.

Al-Jāmī, a Persian Muslim poet, was, like his contemporaries, deeply influenced by the Qur'an, a fact that is clearly reflected in his poem *Yūsuf and Zulaykhā*. Qur'anic exegesis also had its share in his body of work. The researcher 'Ā'isha 'Iffat Zakariyyā mentions in her introduction that al-Jāmī had prose works, including epistles interpreting certain Qur'anic verses or explaining some prophetic traditions.

See: 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *Yūsuf and Zulaykhā: A Sufi Vision*, trans. 'Ā'isha 'Iffat Zakariyyā (Damascus: Dār al-Manhal li-l-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, 2003), pp. 6, 9.

(2) See: Mouhamed Ghunaymī Hilāl, *Comparative Literature*, 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dār Nahdat Miṣr, n.d.), p. 20.

(3) See: Samar al-Diyūb, *Binary Oppositions: Studies in Classical Arabic Poetry* (Damascus: General Book Authority, 2009), p. 5; also see: Mouhamed Ṣāliḥ al-Shanṭī, *Modern Literary Criticism: Its Schools, Approaches, and Issues*, 3rd ed. (Hā'il: Dār al-Andalus li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzī', 2005), p. 204.

(4) Ṣalāḥ Faḍl, *Structuralist Theory in Literary Criticism* (Cairo: al-Shurūq Publishing, 1998), p. 128.

(5) See: Jamāl Shaḥīd, *Structuralist Hermeneutics: A Study in the Method of Lucien Goldmann* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Rushd, 1982), pp. 71–72.

(6) Duality oppositions arise from the principle of polarity, a concept adopted by poetics and given critical significance in structuralist studies. It has demonstrated high procedural efficiency, allowing critics to grasp what is essential during analysis. See: Mouhamed 'Azzām, *Analyzing Literary Discourse in Light of Modern Critical Approaches (A Study in Criticism of Criticism)*, Arab Writers Union Publications, Damascus, 2003, pp. 193–194.

(7) Mouhamed al-Hādī al-Ṭarābulusī, *Stylistic Features in al-Shawqiyyāt* (Tunis: Tunisian University Publications, 1981), p. 227.

(8) Lakhamīsī Sharafī, "The Strategy of Antithesis and Its Relationship to the Sufi Tendency in the Poetry of 'Abd Allāh al-'Ashshī," *Al-Makhbar Journal*, Studies in Language and Literature, Algeria, Issue 7, 2011, p. 227.

Examples in Jāmī's text include:

- "He was both the wound and the healing balm to his father's heart at the same time." See: 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, p. 23.
- "I was once the fresh rose of the garden of youth, like the water of eternal life. No breeze clouded the clarity of my thoughts, nor did a single thorn prick my foot. Now, a single glance from you scattered me like dust in the wind and filled my resting place with countless thorns." *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(9) Al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 27–28.

(10) *Ibid.*, p. 26.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(12) *Ibid.*, p. 31.

(13) "Alas! The treasure I seek is invisible... And how could I tell you about a bird that has flown from the nest in which the Phoenix dwells..." *Ibid.*, p. 33.

(14) *Ibid.*, p. 36.

(15) Al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, p. 37.

(16) *Ibid.*

(17) See: Mukhtār Abū Ghālī, *Poetry and the Language of Opposition: Vision and Application, Annals of the College of Arts*, published by the Scientific Publication Council, University of Kuwait, Vol. 15, (1415 AH / 1994), p. 17; quoted in: ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Lu’lu’ah, *Encyclopedia of Narrative Terminology*, pp. 252–253.

(18) Al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.

(19) *Ibid.*, p. 39.

(20) *Ibid.*, p. 44.

(21) Al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, p. 39.

(22) *Ibid.*, p. 50.

(23) *Ibid.*, p. 81.

(24) D. C. Muecke, *Encyclopedia of Narrative Terms (Irony)*, 2nd ed., trans. ‘Abd al-Wāḥid Lu’lu’ah (Baghdad: Dār al-Ma’ mūn wa-al-Ḥurba, n.d.), p. 42.

(25) Sīzā Qāsim, *Irony in Contemporary Arabic Fiction, Fusūl*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1995, p. 144.

(26) Al-Jāmī, *Op. Cit.*, p. 85.

(27) See: Aboū al-Soūd, *Guiding the Sound Mind to the Merits of the Noble Qur’an* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī), vol. 4, p. 265.

Note: Aboū al-Soūd lived after Jāmī’s time but was influenced by earlier commentators. It is possible that Jāmī consulted a prior tafsīr in which the number of doors was specified, which later appeared in Abū al-Su‘ūd’s interpretation.

(28) *Ibid.*, p. 104.

(29) *Ibid.*, p. 109.

(30) *Ibid.*, p. 110.

(31) *Ibid.*, p. 110.

(32) *Ibid.*, p. 136.