

ARCHIVUM OTTOMANICUM

Edited by György Hazai

with assistance of

P. Fodor, G. Hagen, E. İhsanoğlu,

H. İnalçık, B. Kellner-Heinkele,

H. W. Lowry, H. G. Majer,

Rh. Murphey, M. Ursinus, and E. A. Zachariadou

32 (2015)

Special Cyprus Issue

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

CHARACTER OF SÜHAN IN ŞEYH GÂLIB'S ROMANCE HÜSN Ü AŞK (BEAUTY AND LOVE)

BETUL AVCI

Introduction

Hüsn ü Aşk (Beauty and Love) is not solely acknowledged as the major work of Şeyh Gâlib (d. 1799), but is an acclaimed masterpiece of Ottoman lyric poetry. Written in the Indian style (*Sebk-i Hindî*),¹ *Hüsn ü Aşk* is a story of spiritual advancement, a romance in over two thousand couplets, combining complex imagery with rich mystical symbolism. In the romance, the use of personifications is quite remarkable, offering an abundance of personified abstractions such as *İsmet* (Chastity), *Gayret* (Zeal), as well as paradoxical functions to be found in the character of *Hayret* (Dazzle). Moreover, *Sühan* stands as a key persona combining a multilayered functionality.

As I will seek to demonstrate in this article, *Sühan* is a complex figure who merges different layers of the significance of *kalima* (word) utilized in Islamic theology and Sufi terminology, particularly in the thought of Ibn Arabî (d. 1240). Furthermore, I will endeavor to illustrate that Şeyh Gâlib not only represents the significance of the concept of *kalima* (word), but also personifies it as a concrete entity when *Sühan* appears as the caretaker, the old physician and as various birds. Additionally, I will argue that Gâlib employs this character as an embodiment of *kalima* (word) as a reference to the Word of God, the Perfect Human Being and the Reality of Muhammad.

Such an interpretation, as above described, constitutes a valuable alternative to a major approach presented by Victoria Holbrook, who translates *Sühan* into English as "poetry."² Holbrook criticizes E. J. W. Gibb for translating *Sühan* as "Logos" because of its "too narrowly Neoplatonistic" connotation, as well as being "too generic for Gâlib's usage."³ Finally, as Holbrook concludes, "in *Beauty and Love*, the

- 1 Indian Style (*Sebk-i Hindî*) is a poetic style of Indo-Persian origin inserted into Ottoman poetry by the 17th century. Indian style employs a synthetic language full of complex imagery and rich symbolism.
- 2 See Victoria R. Holbrook, *Beauty and Love* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005). *Redhouse's Turkish Dictionary* gives the meaning of *Sühan* (سخن - *sukhan*) as "A word; speech, talk, discourse."
- 3 Victoria R. Holbrook, *Beauty and Love*, p. xxiv. In *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Gibb gives information about Gâlib and his famous romance *Hüsn ü Aşk*. Moreover, Gibb offers the reader some extracts from the romance in English. Here, Gibb translates *Sühan* (*Sukhan*) as the

term *sühan* is used substantively to mean poetry, in compounds to mean poet (*sühanver*, *sühansenc*), and as the name of a character.⁴ However, as I will argue, Gâlib's *Sühan* encompasses various significances of the concept of *kalima* (word), only one of which is poetry.

Furthermore, this article provides the opportunity to argue that Şeyh Gâlib's *Sühan*, in its multifaceted nature and multiple functions, bears strong similarities to Ibn Arabî's *kalima* (word). Questions can be raised concerning the influence of Ibn Arabî on Ottoman Sufi poetry,⁵ through significant parallelisms between the two. Thus, I trust that this phenomenological-textual study will serve as a humble, preliminary attempt to substantiate the issue concerning the extent to which Ibn Arabî was influential on Ottoman Sufi poetry, particularly on Şeyh Gâlib. I should, however, emphasize that this article does not investigate the historical context, nor necessarily trace any historical connections between Ottoman Sufi poetry and Ibn Arabî's views. Unless otherwise stated, translations from Ottoman Turkish and from Arabic into English are mine.⁶

Character of *Sühan*

In the romance, Gâlib tells us the story of two lovers, *Hüsn* (Beauty) and *Aşk* (Love), who were born on the same night to the clan named Sons of Love (*Benî Mahabbet*). According to the tale, *Hüsn* and *Aşk* fall in love. When *Aşk* requests the hand of *Hüsn* in marriage from the elders of the clan, they ask him to bring alchemy (*kîmyâ*) from the Land of the Heart (*Diyâr-ı kalb*). In order to be united with his beloved, *Aşk* desperately embarks on a journey towards the Land of the Heart, but on his way he undergoes many ordeals. Time and time again, he is saved from these hardships

"Logos," whom he identifies as the Word. He notes as follows: "this Logos, who existed before the heavens were made, is none other than that Word which was in the beginning, that Primal Intelligence or Element which was the first creation of God, which is ever present with Him, and through which His voice is heard and His command conveyed throughout the universe." Elias John Wilkinson Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, Vol. 4, E. G. Browne (ed.) (London: Luzac & Co., 1905), pp. 187–188.

4 Victoria R. Holbrook, "Originality and Ottoman Poetics: In the Wilderness of the New," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 112/3 (1992) pp. 440–454, p. 445, ff. 29.

5 The influence of Ibn Arabî on Ottoman poetry has drawn attention earlier. For example, Holbrook states that Ibn Arabî and his influence was in the air Ottoman poets used to breathe. See Holbrook, "Originality and Ottoman Poetics: In the Wilderness of the New," p. 449. Also as M. Erol Kılıç notes, Ibn Arabî was influential on Ottoman Sufi poets in respect to his views, though not by means of his poetic style. See Mahmut Erol Kılıç, *Sufi ve Şiir: Osmanlı Sufi Şiirinin Poetikası*, p. 83.

6 In transliterating Ottoman Turkish, a word of Arabic origin may appear in a slightly different form than its original Arabic. For example, - as the reader will note in the following pages - while "Sacred Spirit" is *Rûh al-Quds* in its Arabic transliteration, in the romance it appears as *Râhu'l-Kudüs*. In this work, I have used Muhammet Nur Doğan's edition of *Hüsn ü Aşk*. Şeyh Galib, *Hüsn ü Aşk*, Muhammet Nur Doğan (ed.), (T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, e-book, accessed on 1 September 2013) <http://ekitap.kulturturizm.gov.tr/dosya/1-215455/h/seyhgalibhusnuaskmuhammetnurdogan.pdf>.

by *Sühan*. At the beginning, while *Hüsn* and *Aşk* are still together, they go to the Garden of Meaning (*Nüzhet-gâh-ı ma'nâ*), where the Pool of Grace (*Havz-ı feyz*) is to be found. *Sühan*'s first appearance in the poem is made as an elderly man of wisdom, who is the caretaker of this garden. Gâlib gives a summary of the character in its multilayered form as follows:

686	Bir pîr-i cüvân-zamîr ü ayyâr	An intelligent old man, young in essence
	Olmuşdı o yerde mihmân-dâr	Was the caretaker at that place
687	Nâmı <i>Sühan</i> ü azîz zâtı	His name was <i>Sühan</i> and his personality the most exalted ⁷
	<i>Mesbûk idi çarhdan hayâtı</i>	<i>His life antedated the heavenly spheres</i>
688	Mâhiyyet-i hüsn ü aşka ârif	He <i>knows</i> the essence of Beauty and Love
	Hâsiyyet-i germ ü serde vâkîf	And aware of the qualities of warmth and cold
689	Endîşesi şeb-çerâğ-ı irfân	His thoughts are the night lamp of gnosis
	Sırdaş-ı zamîr-i cân u cânân	Confidant of lover's and beloved's secrets
690	Hem <i>mes'ele</i> hem <i>kitâb-ı münzel</i>	Himself both the <i>question</i> and the <i>book sent down</i> ⁸
	Hem <i>mu'cize</i> hem <i>nebiyy-i mürsel</i>	Equally, <i>prophetic miracle</i> and the <i>prophet sent</i>
696	Geh <i>âlim</i> olurdu gâh <i>şâir</i>	At times a <i>scholar</i> , at times a <i>poet</i>
	Geh <i>zâhid</i> olurdu geh <i>sâhir</i>	Sometimes a <i>devotee of God</i> , sometimes a <i>sorcerer</i>
700	Evsâf-ı zekâsı söylenilmez	Qualities of his intellect cannot be told
	<i>Ma'nâları</i> var ki kimse bilmez	He holds <i>meanings</i> unknown to all
701	Muhtâc ana cümle halk-ı âlem	All creation is in need of him
	<i>Anınla bulur hayâtı âdem</i>	<i>Existence of humanity is through him</i>
704	<i>Efkâra göre verir tesellî</i>	<i>He gives comfort according to one's thoughts</i>
	<i>Mir'âta göre eder tecellî</i>	<i>He appears according to mirror</i>

7 The parts that are in italics and bold throughout the paper are mine. They should attract attention of the reader to the sections that I quote.

8 Holbrook translates "*kitâb-ı münzel* (book sent down/revealed)" as "answer."

Albeit in appearance, *Sühan* is the caretaker of the garden, his significance offers multiple interpretation. He is the “prophetic miracle” and the “prophet sent.” Paradoxically, he is also the “issue raised” or a “question asked,” while being the answer as the “book sent down” or “revealed.” He appears in different forms and contrary natures such as a “scholar,” “poet,” “devout-ascetic” and as a “sorcerer.” Each of his multiple “meanings (*ma'nâlar*)” alludes to a different spiritual facet. He is the “knower of the essence of *Hüsn* and *Aşk*,” and of the “secret of the lover and the beloved,” as he knows the “warmth and the cold.” His concern is the understanding that illuminates; as such, he “offers comfort according to concern” and “appears according to mirror.” Finally, he is the “means for the existence of humanity,” yet his existence predates the heavenly spheres. Hence, I believe that all *Sühan*'s qualities indicate the Reality of Muhammad, on which I will focus later in this article.

Therefore, as shown above, although *Sühan* is the embodiment of different functions and natures – poetry being one of them – Holbrook's translation reflects only a partial aspect, namely poetry. Moreover, I believe that for Gâlib, *Sühan* stands for poetry to some extent as a reference to holy inspiration, i.e. *form* as manifestation of *meaning*. On this point, it is necessary to discover what Gâlib means by “poetry.”

While Gâlib's evaluation of poetry is scattered throughout the romance, the Digression (*Mebâhis-i dîger*) is the section where Gâlib steps out of the story of *Hüsn* and *Aşk* in order to propound his personal opinion on poetry and poethood.⁹ In this section, Gâlib criticizes those who confuse real poetry with imitation, scribes for their masquerade and scholars of religion who pretend to compose poetry.¹⁰ Consequently, he continues, by explaining the nature of poetry proper.¹¹

For Gâlib, the created world manifests the names and attributes of God and hence, the names and corporeal forms are like “twins.”¹² According to Gâlib, just as the creation is a reflection of God and is renewed ceaselessly, so too should poetry be constantly renewed as a manifestation of the *Kelâm* (Speech of God).¹³ Thus, real poetry composed in meter and rhyme is a manifestation of God's attribute of Speech. Likewise, for Gâlib, poetic eloquence is a witness to the inimitability of the Qur'an, because, as Gâlib claims, he proved his talent and silenced his rivals with his poetry.¹⁴

9 This section begins with verse 737. After evaluating poetry and poethood, Gâlib continues with the story of *Hüsn* and *Aşk* in verse 830.

10 V. 708–726.

11 V. 739–801.

12 V. 740–745.

13 V. 748–754.

14 V. 762–766. According to classical Islamic theology, the Qur'an is inimitable as a reference to the Qur'an Chapter 17:88.

According to Gâlib, a poet is the one who is endowed with the "revelation of the heart" (*vahy-i dil*) and the one who knows the "meaning."¹⁵ As a manifestation of God's Speech, revelation in the heart of the poet - *meaning* in its initial state - acquires the *form* of poetry. Although talent is disabled in other poets, Gâlib recounts that he does not compose poetry out of thought.¹⁶ Thus, poetry has two functions for Gâlib. Firstly, it is the manifestation of God's Speech, because revelation within the heart of the poet (i.e. meaning) develops into letters and meter as poetry (i.e. form). Secondly, poetic eloquence is a proof of God's inimitable word, the Qur'an. Real poetry is both a witness to God's word and a manifestation of the creating act of God through speech.¹⁷

Let us now consider the vocabulary in the romance. Gâlib mainly uses the term "*şâir*"¹⁸ for "poet;" "*müteşâir*"¹⁹ for "poet-to-be;" "*şâirlik*"²⁰ for "poethood;" "*eş'âr*,"²¹ "*nazm*"²² and "*şi'r*"²³ for "poetry." The term "*sühan*" appears for "word" in general, and for "poetry" in particular.²⁴ When Gâlib reverts to narrating the story of *Hüsn* and *Aşk*, *Sühan* signifies poetry as revelation of the heart of the poet.

Sühan as Poetry, Inspiration and Revelation of the Heart

Further in the romance, Gâlib recounts numerous troubles encountered by *Aşk* during his journey to the Land of the Heart. He falls into a well in which he is imprisoned by a fiery goliath. After climbing out of the well, he passes through the Ruin of Heartache (*Harâbe-i gam*) where he is trapped by a witch. Later, he comes across a sea of fire, fights wild animals and demons and, towards the end of the romance, reaches a pleasant beach where he encounters the Mind Robber (*Hüsrübâ*). In this pleasant land, *Sühan* appears in the guise of a green parrot with a red beak²⁵ and as a pheasant.²⁶ Despite warning *Aşk* not to be deceived by the Mind Robber, *Aşk* is tricked and imprisoned by her in the Fortress of Forms (*Kal'a-i Zâtü's-suver*). *Aşk* prays to God to be saved and, at this point, *Sühan* appears in the form of a drunken nightingale.²⁷ On this occasion, *Sühan* tells *Aşk* to set a fire in the fortress and, in doing so, *Aşk* escapes. In this section, I believe that there are very significant allusions to *Sühan* as a poet, because he comes as an inspiration in the form of

15 V. 775. Also see v. 220-222.

16 V. 1370-1372.

17 Although I view speech primarily as the uttered word, I do not make a sharp distinction between speech and word in this paper.

18 V. 712, 733, 764, 773, 789.

19 V. 727.

20 V. 732, 776.

21 V. 721, 723, 756.

22 V. 726, 734, 793.

23 V. 763.

24 V. 764, 788, 794, 795.

25 V. 1620.

26 V. 1688.

27 V. 1758.

various kinds of birds. In Ottoman poetry a parrot is noteworthy because of its beauty and ability to speak. Likewise, a nightingale is occasionally mentioned together with a parrot because of its beautiful voice. As Gâlib provides his assessment of real poets earlier in the romance, he calls them nightingales who sang about love:

173	Bir meclis-i ünse mahrem oldum Ol cennet içinde Âdem oldum	I entered a gathering of acquaintances and became Adam in that paradise
174	Meclis velî gülşen-i mahabbet <i>Bülbülleri</i> yek-ser ehl-i ülfet	Not just a gathering, but a rose garden of love Whose <i>nightingales</i> are the folk of amity
175	Her birisi şâir-i sühan-senc Gencîneler elde cümlesi genc	Each is a <i>poet</i> , skilled in words All young, carrying their treasures in hand
176	Ülfetleri şî'r ü fazl u irfân Sohbetleri <i>nazm</i> u <i>nesr</i> ü elhân	Their amity was on <i>poetry</i> , virtue and gnosis They talked about <i>verse</i> , <i>prose</i> and melodies

The hearts of these poets are pure and are similar to the Pool of Grace.²⁸ While the Garden of Meaning quenches from the Pool of Grace, these poets receive “revelation of the heart (*vahy-i dil*).”²⁹ However, the ones who imitate poetry are like the birds that do not soar high.³⁰ There are further references in the romance where Gâlib compares poets to flying birds.³¹ Furthermore, Gâlib’s assessment of the Mind Robber as a mute beauty is quite significant with regard to speech. The Mind Robber greatly resembles *Hüsn* in form; however, she does not have a mouth, and therefore lacks the ability to speak.³² On the other hand, *Hüsn*, who symbolizes God, has the power of speech and communicates with *Aşk* sometimes with explicit written words when she sends him letters, and at other times through revelations of the heart, when she sends him *Sühan*.

To cite Holbrook, “poetic language is not imitation of phenomenal reality but manifestation of spiritual meaning.”³³ In her assessment of Gâlib’s ideas on poetry, she rightly proposes that “the orator characterized poetry as revelation, in

28 V. 685.

29 V. 675–685 and 775.

30 V. 192.

31 V. 215 and 223.

32 V. 1636–1641.

33 Victoria R. Holbrook, *The Unreadable Shores of Love: Turkish Modernity and Mystic Romance* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994), p. 91.

contradistinction to production in meter and rhyme based on learning.³⁴ Thus, I agree with Holbrook, recognizing *Sühan* as poetry that is proposed spiritual meaning, manifested in meter and rhyme. However, as I will demonstrate in the following section, *Sühan* not only signifies poetry but also plays the role of the creative word.

***Sühan* as Poetry and/or the Creative Word**

In the early stages of the story, before *Aşk* commences his journey towards the Land of the Heart, the two lovers are separated. Meanwhile, *Sühan* – in the form of the caretaker – plays the role of intermediary. He carries letters between the two and tells them about each other's inner feelings. In this section, we see *Sühan* as the carrier of written words, of expressed and unexpressed inner feelings. He knows the secret in their hearts. Here, *Sühan* mediates between the two, first, by means of the *uttered word* because he informs *Aşk* of the inner feelings of *Hüsn*; second, by means of the *written word* because he carries letters between them. In the meantime, *İsmet* (Chastity), the mistress of *Hüsn*, suggests *Hüsn* to keep her feelings unuttered, by not revealing her love towards *Aşk*.³⁵ Following the suggestion, *Hüsn* decides no longer to reveal her love towards *Aşk*, despite being deeply enamoured with him. This is the moment when *Aşk* is beside herself with love of *Hüsn*.

Later in the romance, on the way to the Land of the Heart, *Aşk* and his companion *Gayret* (Zeal) fall into a well. At this moment, *Sühan* appears in the form of the caretaker of the garden and tells them how to climb out of the well. They do so by holding a rope that is protected by the "greatest name of God (*ism-i a'zam*)."³⁶ Here, *Sühan* comes to their assistance, like the mysterious *Khidr* (*Hızır*), then transforms into a bird and returns to the land of the beloved.³⁷ Later, while *Aşk* passes through the Ruin of Heartache, he is imprisoned by a witch. *Aşk* calls God and once more *Sühan* appears as a messenger and aid from the beloved.³⁸ He tells *Aşk* that he found himself in this difficult situation because he forgot to say the name of his beloved and upon remembrance of *Hüsn*'s name he should be saved.³⁹ Here, *Sühan* comes directly from God as God's word "*kün*" (be!)⁴⁰ and brings a sword as the "mirror of divine aid (*âyîne-i nusret-i ilâhî*)"⁴¹ and a horse⁴² from *Hüsn*. *Aşk* passes through the Ruin of Heartache on this horse.

34 Victoria R. Holbrook, *The Unreadable Shores of Love*, p. 57.

35 V. 1015.

36 V. 1302–1305. It is significant that for Ibn Arabî, human being in general, the Perfect Human Being and the Prophet Muhammad in particular, is the greatest name of God, namely the most special locus of manifestation of God. For further information, see Souad al-Hakim, *al-Mu'jam al-Sufî* (Bayrut: Dar al-Nadra, 1981), p. 601.

37 V. 1318–1320.

38 V. 1438–1459.

39 V. 1456.

40 V. 1439.

41 V. 1462.

In this section, *Sūhan* assumes the role of the creative word/command of God “*kun*” (be!). In classical Islamic theology, God’s creative word/command “*kun*” (be!) is related to His power of creating. As it is related in the Qur’an, God creates with the word “*kun*” (be!) “and it is” (*fa-yakūn*).⁴³ As a reference to God’s creating with the word/command “*kun*” (be!), early Māturīdī theologians applied the term “*takwīn*” (God’s power of creating), both of which derive from the Arabic trilateral root *K-W-N*. This indicates God’s act of creating out of nothing.⁴⁴ Thus, the created world, according to classical Islamic theologians, was created with an *uttered word/command* of God.⁴⁵ Moreover, for Ibn Arabī too, the created world stemmed from God’s word/command “*kun*” (be!) and each created entity is a *kalima* (word) of God: “All existent things are the inexhaustible words (*kalimāt*) of God. They are from the [command] be and ‘be’ is the word (*kalima*) of God.”⁴⁶

Consequently, here *Sūhan* stands as a manifestation of the creating act/power of God (i.e. *takwīn*) that realizes itself through His creative word/command “*kun*” (be!). Going back to Holbrook’s preference of *Sūhan* to signify “poetry,” one may also argue that the creating act/power is a power and process of composing poetry on the part of the poet. Thus, *Sūhan* too refers to poethood as the creating power of poetry. However, as its third layer of significance, *Sūhan* stands for the Prophet Muhammad. Now, we will look more closely at this third layer of significance.

Sūhan as the Prophet Muhammad⁴⁷

Here I would argue that Holbrook’s interpretation poses a second problem, arising from her translation of the “book sent down” or “revealed (*kitāb-ı münzel*)” as “answer”:

690 Hem *mes’ele* hem *kitāb-ı münzel* Himself both the *question* and the *book sent down*

Hem *mu’cize* hem *nebiyy-i mürsel* Equally, *prophetic miracle* and the *prophet sent*

For Gâlib, the “book sent down” or “revealed (*kitāb-ı münzel*)” stands partially as a response to the “issue raised” or “question asked (i.e. *mes’ele*).” However, Holbrook’s generalization of *kitāb-ı münzel* as the “answer” presents a restricted

42 V. 1481.

43 Q. 2:117; 3:47, 59; 36:82.

44 See İskender Pala, “Kün,” *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 26, pp. 552–553.

45 God’s creative word/command is not the same as His attribute of Speech (*Kalām*). Classical Islamic theologians used to distinguish between God’s attribute of Speech (*Kalām*) and His attribute of Creating (*Takwīn*). Also Ibn Arabī notes a distinction between the two attributes of God.

46 Ibn Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, Abu’l Ala al-Afifi (ed.) (Bayrut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1980), p. 142: “فالموجودات كلها كلمات الله التي لا تنفد فإنها عن كُن،” وكن كلمة الله.” This is a reference to the Qur’anic verses 2:117; 3:47 and 36:82.

47 Throughout the paper, I do not make a distinction between the historical and spiritual existence of the Prophet, hence I use the expressions “the Prophet Muhammad” and “the Reality of Muhammad” interchangeably.

perception of Gâlib's use of the term. Her translation seems to serve poetic purposes quite well. Nevertheless, I think, *kitâb-ı münzel* is a key phrase that is relevant to the significance of *Sühan* as the Prophet Muhammad, who embodies the Qur'an, the Book sent down or revealed. Here I refer to the section towards the end of the romance where *Sühan* appears in the form of a sage, an old physician in order to cure *Aşk*.⁴⁸

In this section, *Aşk* is in the state of passing away. When he remembers his beloved *Hüsn*, *Sühan* appears. He tells *Aşk* that he came to cure him with the alchemy *Aşk* was supposed to bring as bride-price for *Hüsn*. Here, Gâlib introduces *Sühan* as follows:

1883	<i>Mir'ât-ı kemâline</i> Aristû	Amazed by his [<i>Sühan</i> 's] <i>mirror of perfectness</i>
	Hayretle hemîşe ser-be-zânû	Aristotle always lay his head on his knee
1884	İskender'e re'yi meş'al-i râh	His thought is a torch that illuminated Alexander's path
	Dünbâle-revânî ⁴⁹ mihr ile mâh	The sun and the moon followed his trail
1885	Gerdûn gibi câme-pûş-ı hadrâ	Like earth, he wore a green robe
	Dârende-i zeyli Hızr-ı ma'nâ	<i>Khidr</i> of meaning was holding its tail
1886	<i>Rûhu'l-Kudüs'ün emîn-i râzı</i>	<i>He is the repository of the Sacred Spirit</i>
	<i>Gencîne-i vahy kâr-sâzı</i>	<i>He regulates the treasury of revelation</i>
1887	Pür-şa'saa rûyî müyî esfid	His face gleaming with his white beard
	Mehtâbda hemçü kurs-ı hurşîd	Same as the sun's disk in full moon
1888	Vird-i lebi <i>Seb'a-i Mesânî</i>	He recited <i>Seven Verses</i> at all times
	Şâgird-i kemâli <i>akl-ı sâni</i>	<i>Second intellect</i> is student of his perfectness
1889	<i>Gencûr-ı mücerredât-ı esmâ</i>	<i>He is the treasurer of abstractions of the divine names</i>
	<i>Cem'-âver-i müfredât-ı ma'nâ</i>	<i>He gathered up the particulars of meaning</i>
1890	<i>Sübbûh-künân o pertev-i cân</i>	<i>He, the light of the soul, praises God</i>
	<i>İndi o yere çü nûr-ı Kur'ân</i>	<i>As the Qur'anic light came down to that place</i>

48 V. 1876–1898.

49 Gölpinarlı edition has “devânî” in lieu of “revânî.”

In the above-mentioned verses, it does not seem far-fetched to suggest that Gâlib openly announces *Sūhan* as a metaphor of the Prophet Muhammad, who is the embodiment of the Qur'an. Now, I will examine each point in detail.

In classical Islamic theology and philosophy, Sacred Spirit (*Rūḥ al-Quds*) is considered as the messenger of revelation, namely the Angel Gabriel who brought the Qur'anic revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. Likewise, here *Sūhan* is the "repository of the Sacred Spirit" and the one who "regulates the treasury of revelation." Correspondingly, *Sūhan* repeats the "Seven Verses," which traditionally refer to the first chapter of the Qur'an. In the Qur'an, God addresses the Prophet Muhammad as follows: "We have given thee seven of the oft-repeated (verses) and the great Qur'an."⁵⁰ Accordingly, the Prophet states that the "Seven Verses (*as-sab'ul-mathānī*)" form the first chapter of the Qur'an, namely the magnificent Qur'an he was endowed with.⁵¹

Moreover, in the Sufi perception (for instance, according to Ibn Arabī), the Prophet Muhammad is the most perfect human being who embodies the traits of all the divine names, similar to Gâlib's *Sūhan*, who holds "abstractions of the divine names" and the one who "gathered up the particulars of meaning."⁵² For Ibn Arabī, the Qur'an contains, in its essence, the totality of realities and hence, is identical to microcosmos or the human being in general and the Perfect Human Being and the Reality of Muhammad in particular.⁵³ The Qur'an is the totality of words (*kalimât*), as Ibn Arabī notes in the *Futuḥât*: "all creation is letters, words, chapters of the Qur'an and Qur'anic verses, creation is the grand Qur'an."⁵⁴ Besides, the Prophet Muhammad is the embodiment of the Qur'an:

Anyone from his community who has not met with the messenger of God should look at the Qur'an. There is no difference between looking at the Qur'an and looking at the Prophet (PBU). It is as if the Qur'an appeared in bodily form, called Muhammad, the son of Abdullah, the son of Abdulmuttalib. The Qur'an is the Speech (*kalâm*) of God and an attribute of His. Therefore, Muhammad has become an attribute of the Reality (*Haqq*) altogether.⁵⁵

In a similar fashion, Gâlib's *Sūhan* endows the "mirror of perfectness (*mir'ât-ı kemâl*)" in reference to the Perfect Human Being who is the most perfect reflection

50 Q. 15:87.

51 This *ḥadīth* is cited by Bukhārī and others. For further elaboration on this see Abdülhamit Birışık, "es-Seb'u'l-Mesānī," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 36, pp. 261-262.

52 V. 1889.

53 See Souad al-Hakim, *al-Mu'jam al-Sufi*, p. 906.

54 Ibn Arabī, *Futuḥât al-Makkiyya*, Vol. 7, Nawaf Jarrah (ed.) (Bayrut: Dar Sader, 2004), p. 191: "فالوجود كله حروف وكلمات و سور و آيات فهو القرآن الكريم"

55 Ibn Arabī, *Futuḥât al-Makkiyya*, Vol. 7, pp. 68-69.

"من لم يدركه من أمته فلينظر إلى القرآن فإذا نظر فيه فلا فرق بين النظر إليه وبين النظر إلى رسول الله [ص] فكان القرآن انتشاً صورة جسدية يقال لها محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب و القرآن كلام الله وهو صفة، فكان محمد صفة الحق تعالى بجملة"

Moreover, the Qur'an is the Perfect Human Being. See *Futuḥât*, Vol. 1, p. 265:

"و هو الإنسان الكامل"

of God. *Sühan* silences any rational endeavor, as his "mirror of perfectness" outranks the mirror Aristotle fashioned for Alexander the Great.⁵⁶

By the same token, the above-mentioned verses (i.e. 1883–1890) are a very close parallel to the *na'i* (praise) section at the beginning of the romance where Gâlib summarizes his whole idea of the Prophet in a Sufi discourse. Gâlib mentions the *Qudsî hadîth* "*Levlâk*," with which God addresses the Prophet Muhammad "If not for you, I would not have created the heavens."⁵⁷ Gâlib continues as follows:

23	" <i>Levlâk</i> " ile zât-ı pâki mevsûf <i>Kur'ân'a sıfâtı zarf u mazrûf</i>	By " <i>If not for you</i> " his pure essence is qualified <i>The Qur'an is a container for and is contained by his attributes</i>
27	Çün <i>evvel-i mâ halakdır ol nûr</i> <i>Sânî-i Hudâ</i> desem de ma'zûr	Because, <i>He, the Light, is the first of the creation</i> and so may be called the <i>second one after God</i>
35	<i>Îcâdı vücûd-ı kevne bâis</i> Ümmetleri sırr-ı ilme vâris	<i>His creation is the reason for the existence of the world</i> His community is the heir to the secret of knowledge
36	Âyîne-i vahdet-i ilâhî Mir'ât-ı vücûdudur kemâhî	Mirror of the divine unity is the same as the mirror of His being

This section in which Gâlib refers to the Prophet, is a close parallel to the point in which he tells us about *Sühan*, who appears in the guise of an old physician. For Gâlib, the Prophet's nature is the embodiment of the Qur'an. Likewise, as noted above, *Sühan* is the "repository of the Sacred Spirit," who brings down the revelation. Moreover, for Gâlib, the Prophet is the one for whom God created the world and the heavens and he precedes the creation. Similarly, when presented as the caretaker of the garden, *Sühan* was prior to heavenly spheres.⁵⁸ Such depiction of *Sühan* corresponds to the famous Sufi idea of creation, also known as *dawr* (rotation).⁵⁹

56 The mirror of Alexander (*Âyîne-i İskender*) is a legendary mirror that is occasionally mentioned in Ottoman poetry as a reference to the Perfect Human Being. There are various narrations about this mirror, almost all of which are legends. According to a version of the story, Aristotle fashions a mirror for his pupil Alexander the Great. This mirror gets placed on top of a lighthouse in Alexandria and not only illuminates the city and the port but also guides the ships that pass through. For further information see İskender Pala, "Âyîne-i İskender," *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 4, p. 252.

57 Although this *hadîth* is often considered as forgery by theologians, many Sufis based their view of the Prophet Muhammad in relation to it.

58 V. 687.

59 Many Sufis used to call the beginning of creation a *dawr* (rotation), because of the cyclical character of creation from its beginning to end that indicates a return to the origin. Moreover,

According to Niyâzî Mısrî (d. 1693), as he expounds in his *Risâla al-Dawriyya* (*Treatise of Rotation*), when God wanted to be known, He created a light that is called the Light of Muhammad. God looked at this light with love and it became water out of awe. Thus, the Light of Muhammad is the first substance out of which everything else was created. It is also called the First Intellect or the Entirety of Intellect.⁶⁰ In a similar fashion, for Ibn Arabî, the Reality of Muhammad, also called the First Intellect, is the first entity that has come into being.⁶¹ As he notes, the “beginning of creation is *habâ*’ (primordial dust) and the first thing to exist in *habâ*’ is the Reality of Muhammad.”⁶² Likewise, the Reality of Muhammad is primordial, as a reference to a *hadîth* Ibn Arabî cites repeatedly: “I was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay.”⁶³ Moreover, for Ibn Arabî, the Reality of Muhammad is the mediator in creation: “He [Muhammad] is the most perfect creature of the human race. For this reason things begin with him and will be sealed by him: he was a prophet when Adam was between water and clay; and when he appeared in his elemental form, he was the Seal of the Prophets.”⁶⁴

In Gâlib’s poem, as cited above, the Prophet is the second one after God. He is the first one created and his creation is the means for all the creation. One may suggest that when Gâlib talks about *Sûhan*, I believe in reference to the Prophet, he defines *Sûhan* as the First Intellect, because the “Second Intellect (*akl-ı sâni*) is student of his perfectness:”

1888 Şâgird-i kemâlî *akl-ı sâni* *Second intellect* is student of his perfectness
The Prophet Muhammad is the most celebrated one after God Himself and the mirror of his reality is the “mirror of the divine unity.”⁶⁵ On his ascension, Gâlib openly announces him as the Qur’an and in his person the “primordial meaning acquired a form:”

the genre that expounds the beginning of creation, its origin and end is called *dawriyya* (rotation).

60 Niyâzî Mısrî, *Risâla al-Dâwriyya*, p. 126. This treatise is fully restored by Abdurrahman Küçük in his article “Niyazi-i Mısrî’nin Gözden Kaçan Bir Eseri: *Risale-i Devriye*,” *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları* 17–21/1–2 (1979–1983), pp. 121–139.

61 According to Niyâzî Mısrî, the Second Intellect appeared out of the First Intellect’s cognizance of God. See Mısrî, *Risâla al-Dawriyya*, p. 131: However, for Ibn Arabî, the entity that is below the First Intellect is the Universal Soul. See Souad al-Hakim, *al-Mu’jam al-Sufi*, p. 40.

62 Ibn Arabî, *Futuhât al-Makkiyya*, Vol. 1, p. 150:

”بدء الخلق: الهباء، وأول موجود فيه الحقيقة المحمدية.“

63 Ibn Arabî, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, p. 64: “كنت نبياً و آدم بين الماء و الطين” This *hadîth* is also cited on p. 214. This *hadîth* appears in Bukhârî 61:80. For the Ḥanbalites, this *hadîth* is a forgery and the only permissible version is the one quoted by Ibn Ḥanbal and Tirmidhî as “I was a prophet when Adam was between spirit and flesh.” For further discussion on this issue see Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints: Prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d’Ibn Arabî* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), p. 80.

64 Ibn Arabî, *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam*, p. 214:

لأنه أكمل موجود في هذا النوع الإنساني، ولهذا بدأ به الأمر و ختم: فكان نبياً و آدم بين الماء و الطين، ثم كان بنشأته العنصرية خاتم النبيين

65 V. 36.

71	Her şey olur aslına şitâbân <i>Çıktı yine âsmâna Kur'ân</i>	As each thing runs back to its origin <i>The Qur'an ascended to heaven again</i>
74	Cûş eyledi çün muhît-i vahdet <i>Ma'nâya mübeddel oldu sûret</i>	As the ocean of unity gushed <i>Form turned into meaning</i>
75	Hem sûrete girdi sırr-ı vahdet <i>Ma'nâ-yı kadîm buldı sûret</i>	The mystery of unity gained form <i>Primordial meaning acquired a form</i>

While the “primordial meaning” descends on earth with the revelation of the Qur'an, as Gâlib notes, in the ascension of the Prophet, who is the embodiment of the Qur'an, the “form” turns back into “meaning.”⁶⁶ This is what Gâlib refers to with the verse “the Qur'an ascended to heaven.” In a parallel way, Gâlib depicts *Sühan* as endowed with the Qur'anic light:

1890	<i>Sübbûh-künân o pertev-i cân</i> <i>İndi o yere çü nûr-ı Kur'ân</i>	<i>He [Sühan], the light of the soul, praises God</i> <i>As the Qur'anic light came down to that place</i>
------	--	---

By the same token, even in the section where *Sühan* appears for the first time as the caretaker of the garden, there are very significant references to the Prophet, some of which I have already elaborated (i.e. his being prior to the existence and means for it). Furthermore, *Sühan*'s embracing contrary characteristics, “giving comfort according to one's views” and “appearing according to mirror” suggest explicit reference to a narration cited in the *Mathnawî* in which the Prophet designates himself as a mirror:

Abū Jahl said to the Prophet that he was ugly, and the Prophet replied he was impertinent but right. Abū Bakr said to the Prophet he was a sun beyond East and West and was beautiful, and the Prophet said he was right. People asked how two such contradictory things could be both right and the Prophet said:

66 For Ibn Arabî, while meaning (*ma'nâ*) is the primary entity which is spiritual and from the spiritual world, it acquires an imaginal or sensual form (*şûra*) in order to become intelligible to the corporeal world. Similarly, as Ibn Arabî presents us, the transcendent God manifests Himself in the universe through His essence, attributes and actions as sensible and imaginal forms. Likewise, divine revelation is such a mode of manifestation. The Word of God (or God's Speech), which is the uncreated meaning in its initial state, takes created form of divine revelation as sound and letters. Similarly, for Ibn Arabî, dream is another mode of knowledge through which a spiritual entity becomes intelligible to the senses through the world of imagination. For further elaboration on this see Joseph Chapter of *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* and Chapter 188 of *Futuḥât al-Makkiyya*. Also see Michel Chodkiewicz, “The Vision of God,” (e-source accessed on 31 August 2013) <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/visionofgod.html>.

“I am a mirror polished by the Divine hand and people see in me what there is in themselves.”⁶⁷

Finally, Şeyh Gâlib, a Mawlawî himself, would appear to be very familiar with the Sufi perception of the Prophet. For Gâlib, the Prophet Muhammad, as the embodiment of the Qur’an and as the first one created, holds exactly the same characteristics as *Sühan* in the form of an old physician and as the caretaker of the garden. Thus, as the third layer of *Sühan*’s significance, we may very well note the Prophet Muhammad.

Sühan as Word (kalima):

As I have sought to demonstrate thus far, there are three layers of significance of *Sühan* in Şeyh Gâlib’s *Hüsn ü Aşk*. The first layer is the manifestation of *kalima* (word) – or Speech – of God as poetry. In this sense it is both the revelation of the heart that is *meaning* in its initial stage and the created *form*, namely letters and symbols. The second layer is the creating act/power of God through his word/command, “*kun*” (be!). When God says “*kun*” (be!), it is. This may as well refer to poethood as creating act/power of poetry. As the third layer, *Sühan* signifies the Prophet Muhammad, whom Gâlib views as the embodiment of the Qur’an. For Gâlib, the Prophet, who is light, is prior to all creation and the means for its existence. Therefore, although the term poetry holds the significance of *Sühan* partially, it fails to express other connotations explicitly.

Considering an English-speaking audience who does not have access to the original work, and/or may not be well acquainted with the Sufi discourse Gâlib is very much dependent upon, the term *Sühan* should either be left un-translated or translated with a detailed footnote, indicating its different layers of significance. Moreover, regarding *Sühan* etymologically and its multilayered functionality reflected by Gâlib throughout the romance, I prefer to translate *Sühan* as *word* and to interpret it as similar to the concept of *kalima* (word) in the work of Ibn Arabî. Obviously, my preference may be deemed a return to an understanding of *Sühan* that is closer to Gibb’s original translation as *logos*. This choice is also reinforced by the customary representation of Ibn Arabî’s *kalima* as *logos*.

In conclusion, I believe that such a multilayered and broader reading of *Sühan*, i.e. as *word* enhances our understanding not only of Gâlib’s *Hüsn ü Aşk* but also of Ottoman Sufi poetry in various dimensions. Firstly, it provides a neat example of the conception of *logos*-word that lies at the intersection of philosophy, theology and literature. Moreover, this provides a significant contribution to *logos* theologies-philosophies, exhibiting a strong parallelism between Islamic theology, philosophy

67 Although this narration does not appear in *hadîth* collections, it is cited in Rûmî’s *Mathnawî*, Vol. 1, verses 2365–2370. I have taken the English version of this narration from S. Ghahreman Safavi and Simon Weightman, *Rûmî’s Mystical Design: Reading the Mathnawî*, Book One (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), p. 152. It is also worthwhile to mention that *Hüsn ü Aşk* includes an introductory section in praise of Rûmî.

and Sufi terminology on the one hand and the Greek-Biblical tradition on the other. Secondly, the role of the Prophet Muhammad in Sufi worldview is not limited to a traditional praise section – mostly at the beginning – of a literary work such as *Hüsn ü Aşk*. Considering the crucial role *Sühan* plays in the romance, I believe that rendering *Sühan* as *kalima*-word gives the romance its due value as a work of praise of the Prophet Muhammad. Thirdly, strong resemblance between Ibn Arabî's articulation of *kalima* and Gâlib's depiction of *Sühan* substantiates close connection, either historical or not, between the two authors and their worldviews.