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Original Research Article

Representation of Generosity in the Futuwwa Tradition (Case Study: The Miniature Painting «The Arab in the Transaction of Kindness and Generosity»)

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Abstract

Introduction: In the current era, when ethical crises have disrupted the structure of human relationships, revisiting the texts of Futuwwa-namas as a strategy for reconstructing society's moral capital warrants attention. These texts, in addition to teaching professional skills, elucidate human values as the foundation of professional ethics. The following article, with the aim of promoting noble generosity, examines a painting titled «The Arab in the Transaction of Benevolence and Generosity» and seeks to answer the fundamental question: «Through which visual mechanisms does this painting depict the central tenets of chivalry, particularly the principle of generosity?»
Research Method: A qualitative study was conducted by gathering the foundations and principles of the Futuwwa through library research and primary sources, including Futuwwa-namas. Then, a miniature painting illustrating the principle of generosity, one of the core components of Futuwwa, was selected. In the following, the visual symbols present in it, in line with the theme of the tale, were identified using a descriptive-analytical method and with a «textual reading» approach.
Findings: This research shows that futuwwa is based on two fundamental principles: «generosity» and «bravery», and hospitality, as a prominent symbol of generosity, has specific etiquette, the most important of which is the absence of any expectation of material reward. This miniature painting, derived from a tale by Abdul Rahman Jami, seems to depict this concept, where an Arab nomad, despite his poverty, hosts guests by sacrificing his camels and refrains from accepting any material reward.
Conclusion: The analysis of the visual symbols in this painting, in line with the principles of Futuwwa, concluded that the green color in the host's outer garment corresponds to spiritual growth and flourishing, the orange color in his inner garment symbolizes movement and dynamism, the yellow pants indicate vitality, and the style of his headwear aligns with his honesty and righteousness.

Keywords

Futuwwa, Generosity, the Miniature Painting of the Arab's Benevolence, Hospitality

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Introduction and Problem Definition

In the contemporary world, with the accelerating pace of technology and the dominance of materialistic values, authentic moral values in human relations have been marginalized. In such circumstances, revisiting the original ethical-mystical texts rooted in the rich Persian-Islamic culture has become an unavoidable necessity. In this context, the Futuwwa-namas hold a special place as an authentic treasure of practical wisdom for practitioners of various crafts. These texts, by combining art, mysticism, and professional ethics, outline a network of human values. Revisiting this cultural heritage in an era dominated by extreme individualism, which has weakened human connections, is significant for two reasons: first, as an authentic response to the crisis of spirituality and instrumental relationships in the contemporary world; and second, as a discovery of the latent capacities of committed Persian art in conveying timeless ethical messages. From this perspective, these kinds of studies are not merely historical research but rather a revival of an authentic and practical ethical tradition. Despite the wide range of Futuwwa-namas for various professions, there are very few independent sources that specifically address the customs of the painters' guild. The prominent work in this field is «Qanun al-Suwar» by Sadiq Beg Afshar, which emphasizes ethical principles, such as liberation from the shackles of envy, that go beyond the techniques of painting. This is while the art of miniature painting has often carried profound philosophical and ethical themes. Similarly, although valuable studies have examined the concept of "Futuwwa" and its manifestations in literature and history, a systematic exploration of the reflection of this tradition in the art of miniature painting, particularly through the analysis of the visual symbols of a specific work, remains the missing link in this field of research. In this context, the painting «The Arab in the Transaction of Benevolence and Generosity», derived from the poetry of Abdul Rahman Jami, has been chosen as the case study for this research. The centrality of the concept of «generosity» in this tale, one of the two main principles of Futuwwa, provides an opportunity to explore the inseparable connection among literature, ethics, and visual art. The present research, focusing on this central concept, seeks to demonstrate how this abstract moral value has been embodied as a story and, ultimately, as an artistic work. This research aims to elucidate the relationship between the subject and visual elements of the painting in question and the principles and customs of chivalry, and to analyze the artwork's visual symbols within the framework of Futuwwa. Based on this, the central research question is as follows: «How can the symbolism of the visual elements in the painting «The Arab in the Transaction of Benevolence and Generosity» be explained in light of the concept of «generosity» in Futuwwa?»

Research Method

This research is qualitative and seeks to understand the hidden layers of meaning in one of the paintings of the Mashhad school through an interpretive-analytical approach. To address the main research question, the work process has been designed in two complementary steps: The first step is dedicated to the collection of foundational data, during which, using the library method and referring to the original texts of Futuwwa, Ibn Battuta's travelog, and the works of great figures such as Ibn Arabi and Abdul Razzaq Kashani, the components and key concepts related to generosity in Futuwwa were extracted. In the second step, a prominent painting from the Mashhad school, clearly related to the theme of «generosity», was selected as the case study. To decode the visual signs of this painting, a hybrid approach was adopted, in which two methods—traditional semiotics (drawing on the symbolic background of Futuwwa) and textual reading (emphasizing historical context, composition,

and narrative within the image)—were employed together. This methodological coexistence enables a multi-layered reading of the artwork, through which the relationship between visual elements and the ethical-ritual concepts of Futuwwa can be systematically recognized and analyzed.

Research Background

This research has sought to investigate a painting on the theme of Futuwwa, and the only similar study was conducted by «Emadi and Hatam» (2010) in an article entitled «Miniature 'Harun in the Bath-House': The Futuwwa Painting of Barbers», which examined the symbols of the Futuwwa ritual in a painting by Kamal al-Din Behzad. The aim of the research was to analyze visual signs of Futuwwa in Timurid-period art, using a qualitative approach and a descriptive-analytical method. In this research, the large volume of towels in the painting has been identified as a symbol of «the trousers of Futuwwa». However, considering that the content of the tale has no connection to the principles of Futuwwa and the depiction of the «izar» or loincloth is more suited to the atmosphere of a public bath and does not necessarily relate to the trousers of the young men, attributing this illustration to the discussion of Futuwwa requires more evidence. «Keykhay Farzaneh and Vafaei» (2014) in a study titled «Sa'di's Criticism and Futuwwa Thoughts on His Ghazals» examined the reflection of chivalric concepts in Saadi's Divan. The aim of the research was to examine the components of the concept of Futuwwa in Saadi's ghazals, using a quantitative approach and statistical content analysis. The results showed that the high frequency of words such as «keeping promises» indicates Saadi's Futuwwa influence. «Mousavi» (2011), in the article «Islamic Art Mirrored in Futuwwa-Namas; Emphasis on the Chitsazan Futuwwa-Nama», examined the relationship between art and principles of Futuwwa. The aim of the research was to elucidate the role of art and esthetics in Futuwwa-namas, using a qualitative approach and content analysis of historical texts. The research results showed that the young men believed in an inseparable bond among life, art, and worship, and at every stage, they connected the artistic spirit to spiritual concepts. «Feyzabi» (2008), in a study titled «Examining the Traditions of Art Education in Futuwwa-Namas», explored the methods of teaching artistic skills within the framework of the futuwwa tradition. The aim of the research was to identify traditional methods of art transmission within the context of guilds' ethical codes, and it was conducted using a qualitative approach and document analysis. The results of this research refer to the characteristics of the people of Futuwwa, including the integration of Iranian customs with Islamic values. «Arasteh and Mahmoudi» (2014), in their article «A Comparative Study of Art in Islamic Futuwwa and Zen Buddhism Rituals», compared the foundations of art in the two traditions of Futuwwa and Zen. The aim of the research was to identify the commonalities and differences in perceptions of art between the two mystical-ethical schools, and it was conducted using a qualitative approach and a comparative method. Researchers identified similarities in the roles of the master, spiritual exercises, and creativity among the artists of Fityan and Zen. What distinguishes the present study from previous research is its focus on the content of the narrative; that is, an image with the theme of generosity, as one of the fundamental principles of futuwwa, was first selected, and then its visual elements were examined and analyzed in relation to the customs and principles of Futuwwa.

Theoretical Foundations

Futuwwa is one of the fundamental concepts of Islamic and mystical culture, recognized in various texts as chivalry, manliness, generosity, forgiveness, and service to others. Although

the definitions provided by scholars and Sufi masters differ, most emphasize selflessness, sacrifice, and a preference for others over oneself. In this sense, Futuwwa is not merely an individual virtue, but a way of ethical and social living in which a person prioritizes the interests and comfort of others over their own desires (Ibn Arabi, n.d.; Qushayri, 2006; Kashani, 2001). The concept of Futuwwa in Islamic tradition has a deep connection with religious models. In exegetical sources and Futuwwa-namas, figures such as Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH), Prophet Yusuf (PBUH), Joshua, and the Companions of the Cave are introduced as examples of Futuwwa. Each of these figures represents an aspect of chivalry, ranging from hospitality and generosity to chastity, the pursuit of knowledge, and self-sacrifice in the path of truth. Continuing this tradition, Imam Ali (PBUH) is recognized as the most complete embodiment of chivalry, and many authors of chivalric texts have considered him the foremost among the chivalrous (Kashefi, 1971; Kashani, 2001; Amoli, 2002). An examination of Futuwwa texts shows that, despite differences in the number and type of chivalrous virtues, two components hold a central place in most sources: courage and generosity. Courage in these texts is not merely individual bravery but also encompasses defending the oppressed and confronting oppression. In contrast, generosity is a conscious, selfless act of giving done without expecting reward, fame, or personal benefit. Therefore, both virtues serve the realization of a common goal: supporting others and maintaining the public good (Riyaz, 1991; Kashefi, 1971). Among these two principles, generosity has found a special place. Many thinkers of Futuwwa have considered generosity not merely one of the virtues of knighthood, but its practical essence. In this view, the value of generosity is not limited to material giving; its quality and intention also matter. Giving should be done without request, without expectation, and in accordance with the recipient's merit. Accordingly, generosity in the Futuwwa tradition is seen as a manifestation of self-sacrifice and prioritizing others over oneself, and it becomes one of the most important criteria for measuring nobility (Salmi, 1990; Kashani, 2001; Kashefi, 1971).

The Generosity of People of Futuwwa and its Etiquette

Generosity is one of the principles of Futuwwa, and hospitality is an essential aspect of generosity. Saadi has composed two tales of Hatim's generosity in verse. In one of them, the Sultan of Rome, having heard of Hatam's generosity, sends an envoy to take his beloved horse and test his generosity. Hatam, unaware of the guest's true intentions, kills and roasts his beloved horse to entertain him. When this news reaches the Sultan of Rome, he admires Hatim. In another tale, the envious king of Yemen orders Hatim's execution, and the agent inquires of Hatim himself about his whereabouts. When Hatim learns of his intention, he says, «I am Hatim; take my head to the king». This behavior embarrassed the officer and made him beg at Hatem's feet (Sa'di, 2024, 243-242). The people of Futuwwa spent their earnings in a place called «zawiya» to host guests. «Kashani» writes: The young men, unlike the Sufis, did not abandon their work, and their social aspect was more evident than that of the Sufis (Kashani, 2001, 190). Ibn Battuta (703-779 A.H.), during his travels to Mongolia, Mecca, and Konya, reports on the hospitality of the people of Futuwwa in a corner (Ibn Battuta, 1996, 172-173). Ibn Arabi and Qushayri report a shared story about the hospitality of the people of Futuwwa: A sheik instructed his disciple to bring the table to the guests, but he delayed because of the ants on it and did not shake them off. The Sheik said to him: You were meticulous in considering the weak (the ant)! But you did not show generosity to the guests (due to the delay) (Ibn Arabi, n.d., 244; Qushayri, 2006, 362-363). Ibn Arabi continues to write that if time is short and the satisfaction of one causes the displeasure of another, whichever is closer to God according to the time and circumstance in the Sharia

should be preferred (Ibn Arabi, n.d., 244). A true gentleman has ample knowledge in understanding the capacity of individuals (Ibn Arabi, n.d., 241). But what were the customs of hospitality among the people of Futuwwa? Kashafi writes about this: Providing the guest with halal and pure food, hosting the guest for the sake of God, honoring the guest and seating them in a good place, being open-hearted with the guest, not frowning even if the guest appears, giving extra respect to an uninvited guest, not being stingy and not withholding anything within one's means from the guest, not being pretentious and providing what is possible, asking the guest what type of food they prefer and offering them better food, not being overly formal (excessive politeness) in eating, accompanying the guest a short distance when they leave, not apologizing as it may seem self-serving, and not imposing a favor on the guest (Kashafi, 1971, 247-248). Regarding the lack of formality, it is narrated that Shibli hosted Abu Hafs for four months, bringing him various dishes and sweets every day. At the time of parting, Abu Hafs said, «If you come to Nishapur, I will teach you chivalry». Shibli said, «What did I do?» Abu Hafs replied that you acted pretentiously, and a pretentious person is not a gentleman. One should treat a guest so that their arrival is not burdensome and their departure does not bring joy. Whoever behaves in such a manner out of pretense is not a gentleman (Attar Neyshabouri, 2007, 345-346). Kashafi also refers to the special etiquette of guests: Go to the gatherings of righteous people, not the wicked and the gluttons. Do not attend a gathering where you know there is something illicit, unless you know they will refrain out of respect for you. When invited, he should respond without delay and not ask what food will be served. When leaving, do not go in front of the host. When he reaches the door of the house, he should step in with his right foot. When he enters the house, he greets. Wherever he is seated, he should sit. He does not look up, down, left, or right. Eat the food in a way that pleases the host. He should not take food from his own plate too soon. When the meal is finished, he should get up quickly unless the host does not allow it. After finishing, he should pray for the host, and when he leaves, he should express gratitude and not complain (Kashefi, 1971, 249). «Salmi» refers to three etiquettes of hospitality: the guest should not look at his brother's morsel while eating, should not precede others in eating, and should start after everyone else. The host should also love the guest and treat them kindly (Salmi, 1990, 235 & 242). In Surah Al-Imran, verse 200 of the Holy Quran, it is advised to maintain connections and stability in social relationships, and hospitality is considered one way to achieve this. Certainly, failing to observe etiquette for both hosts and guests can lead to resentment and weaken relationships. For this reason, the people of virtue have introduced etiquettes for hosting that combine religious rulings, such as avoiding forbidden foods and spying, and Islamic etiquettes, such as getting up soon after finishing a meal (Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 53), along with subtle details of social etiquette, such as not looking at others' food. This set of etiquette ultimately leads to the flourishing of gatherings and the deepening of human relationships.

Social Futuwwa

Regarding the origin of social Futuwwa, there are two theories: first, social Futuwwa originated in ancient civilized countries conquered by the Arabs, especially the cities of Eastern Rome and the Sassanids. Trousers were specific to Asian tribes for whom horseback riding was customary, and in Iran, they had been common at least since the Achaemenid era, whereas the Arabs had no need for them. Louis Massignon, the French orientalist, rightly speculates that this matter began with the guild organizations of the city of Ctesiphon, the Sassanid capital (Hakemi, 2003, 36-37). The cultural amalgamation between

Arabs and non-Arab civilizations, especially Iran, has played a significant role in the formation and evolution of the chivalric code. On the other hand, the expansion of the Islamic realm and the cultural influence of Muslims in various lands provided the grounds for the transfer and spread of chivalric customs in different regions, especially Khorasan. As a result, Futuwwa gradually transcended a limited Arab tradition and, through interaction with local cultures and customs, transformed into a broader ethical and social system (Riyaz, 1991, 25, 290-291). «Shams al-Din Muhammad Ameli», the famous philosopher of the 8th century A.H., attributes the origin of this ceremony to the prophetic tradition, which, after Imam Ali (AS) forgave the sin of a man and a woman, gave him the title of 'gentleman', offered him water and salt, tied his waist, covered him with his own garment, and said: 'I have completed you'. After that, he instructed Salman to drink from Ali's hand and Huzaifah al-Yamani to drink from Salman's hand (Amoli, 2002, 118; Riyaz, 1991, 216). This narration shows that although trousers or pants were not common among the Arabs, the practice of tying the «izar» was prevalent. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani documents the tradition of salt and water before the advent of Islam, stating that the Prophet, in his teenage years, had forty noble attendants who would eat salt and water in his blessed name (Riyaz, 1991, 287-288); however, the tradition of wearing trousers became official during the time of the Abbasid Caliph al-Nasir li-Din Allah, and anyone who did not wear such trousers could not participate in shooting practice (Zaydan, 1993, 1029). Hakimi attributes the Abbasid Caliph's interest in chivalry to strengthening and organizing military affairs. He counts the 'Ayaran', 'Shatran', 'Zawaqil', and 'Saalik' among the youths and attributes this classification to Jurji Zaydan (Hakemi, 2003, 38-45). Jurji Zaydan considered these individuals to be from the "common classes" rather than the classes of chivalrous men (Zaydan, 1993, Vol. 5, 907). Hakemi introduces social Futuwwa as a group of bandits and libertines and cites verses from Owhadi Maraghei in Jam-e Jam (Hakemi, 2003, 31-32); another reference of his is to Franz Taeschner's lecture in 1956 at Tehran University, where he emphasized that the chivalrous meant a certain way of life that often lacked moral aspects, and that good eating and drinking, dancing and playing, and most importantly, promiscuous sexual relations were the foundation of their lives (Hakemi, 2003, 32). Mohammad Riaz also considers the Ayarans and Shatars to be a type of chivalrous men and attributes their licentiousness among the Akhis to their being called Luti, while the anchors were identified as centers of corruption. He considers the causes of the decline and fall of social Futuwwa to be the inaction and hypocritical pretense of some followers of this doctrine, which ultimately led to the closure of the chivalrous men by the order of Shah Abbas Safavi. He also cites verses from Owḥadi Maraghei and a phrase from Mir Seyyed Ali Hamadani in this regard: «A group of people of noble souls present someone to themselves and call him their brother. They engage in hypocritical conversations for a few days under the pretext of fulfilling their desires, which ultimately leads to fear and enmity» (Riyaz, 1991, 291-324). Ibn Mi'mar considers bandits, agents of oppression, and those who commit major sins to be outside the chivalrous men (Ibn Mi'mar, 1958, 173); however, he enumerates three innovations among the people of chivalry: if one of the people of chivalry is accused of immorality, without the truth being proven by four witnesses, his execution is deemed obligatory. The second innovation is the killing of tyrannical governors, and the third innovation pertains to seizing people's property and invading their sanctuaries, which has led some to become instigators of strife and enmity (Ibn Mi'mar, 1958, 287-289). In response to critics, the existence of pseudo-chivalrous people cannot be denied, and Abdul Razzaq Kashani speaks of «pretenders» and «claimants» among the chivalrous men (Kashani, 2001, 509). However, what this article is based on are the reports of great figures

such as Ibn Arabi, Abdul Razzaq Kashani, Mullah Hossein Kashafi, and Ibn Battuta regarding the commendable actions and virtues of the young men, which testify to the claim that the movement of pretenders to chivalry was not significant enough to tarnish the reputation of the entire authentic chivalric movement. In this regard, Henri Corbin writes: According to historical research, the emergence of the [social class] of the chivalrous men was in the early fourth century A.H., and at that time, this name was associated with the Ayarans, Wanderers, and Outlaws; however, we do not see a connection between them and the chivalrous men (Corbin, 2004, 5).

The Arab in the Transaction of Benevolence and Generosity

Abdul Rahman Jami, in «Sabhat al-Abrar», one of the seven sections of Haft Awrang, addresses a tale titled «The Tale of the Bedouin Who, Regarding the Exchange of Generosity and Kindness, Retook the Purses of Dinars and Dirhams from the Guests by Frightening Them with the Threat of a Spear Wound». Jami introduces the benefactor as a Bedouin Arab whose livelihood is sustained by camel's milk. The guests are a group of distinguished individuals, and there is no mention of their kinship with the host. The Bedouin sacrifices a camel to host them. The next day, the guests expect to be served the leftovers from the previous day's meal; however, the Arab man sacrifices another camel and goes out himself. After their meal, the guests give his wife a bag of gold and leave. A little later, the Arab man returns and learns about the incident. He picked up the bag of gold, followed the guests with a spear, and threatened them that if they did not return the bag, he would take their lives with the spear. The guests, reluctantly, take back the money and continue on their way (Jami, 1999, 660-659). A similar example of this tale has previously appeared in the works of Qushayri, with the difference that the guest is a man named Qays ibn Sa'd, who, in gratitude, gives one hundred dinars to the Arab man's family; however, the host returns the money under the threat of a spear. In this tale, considering the host's economic situation, it is expected that his hospitality would be limited to his usual food, which is camel milk and possibly a piece of bread; however, he uses his main source of wealth (the camel) to entertain the guests. On the second day, the guests expect to eat the remaining parts of the same camel; however, the host sacrifices another camel to feed them. Qushayri quotes Deqaq as saying that generosity is when the destitute gives to the wealthy from their own nothingness (Qushayri, 2006, 416-406). This story is a clear example of the destitute's generosity toward the wealthy. Qushayri describes the levels of generosity as follows: Generosity is to give some and take some back; however, munificence is to give more and keep something for oneself, and selflessness is to give a little when in difficulty (Qushayri, 2006, 402). Jami used the word «jood» in this poem (Jami, 1999, 659); that is, the host still has camels and has not reached the stage of self-sacrifice, because the two camels he has given away are more than what he possesses.

Analysis of the Miniature Painting «The Arab in the Transaction of Kindness and Generosity»

The painting in question belongs to the Mashhad book design school and dates to 964 A.H. (1557). It is housed in the Freer Gallery in Washington. This manuscript was commissioned by Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, the Safavid prince and ruler of Mashhad, and is considered one of the masterpieces of the Safavid period, influenced by the Tabriz school and the local pictorial traditions of Khorasan (Fig. 1). The religious atmosphere and the conditions prevailing in the holy city of Mashhad during the reign of Ibrahim Mirza suggest that, likely due to the young ruler's interest in the works of Abdul Rahman Jami, there was special

attention and respect for copying ethical and mystical themes (Ahmadi & Farokhfar, 2020). Among the characteristics of the Mashhad school, one can mention elements such as color emphasis and the varied rhythm of lines and white spots, which have given the scene a dynamic quality; soft, curved lines have clearly prevailed. The young people appear thin with long necks and round faces, and the rocks are fragmented, while the ancient, gnarled trees are present. Occasionally, due to the pull of elements toward the margins, the image's solid structure has been lost (Pakbaz, 2001, 94). Each of the schools of Persian book illustration has presented unique patterns and characteristics in their miniature paintings. These visual characteristics have manifested in areas such as composition and structure, coloring, landscape depiction, figure painting, portraiture, perspective, and other visual elements. In examining this painting in light of the characteristics of the Mashhad school, several points stand out. In addition to studying these features, the colors used in the painting are also examined from a symbolic perspective. The technique of executing the work involves color and gold on paper, accompanied by illuminated borders and a Nastaliq inscription. The color highlights in the clothing and the varied rhythm of the lines and white spots on the men's turbans have given the scene a dynamic, lively quality. The painting's frame is broken, and the faces have a Mongolian appearance. The shape of the faces is oval, the eyes are small and elongated, and the eyebrows are round and crescent-shaped. Most faces are depicted in a three-quarter view. In this illustration, the image space is flat and lacks linear depth. The story takes place in an open, expansive space where a group of riders in formal attire stands near a tent. The composition of this image is vertical, with the main focus on the interaction between the figures. This version of «Haft Awrang» is considered one of the most complete examples of book design from the Safavid period. In this miniature painting, the figures are depicted in two groups: the first group consists of guests, portrayed as horsemen engaged in conversation and interaction, dressed in various outfits, and the second group includes the host and his family members. The tent and the presence of standing individuals at its entrance indicate readiness to host the guests. The color palette of this painting includes orange, green, pink, light brown, azure blue, and gold, which have been used sparingly but effectively. In this color scheme, warm colors dominate, and the contrast between dark and light colors is well observed; the background is rendered in light colors, while the elements and figures are rendered in darker colors. Usually, Persian paintings depict people as slender; however, in this work, the painter has portrayed one of the guests as plumper to reflect their favorable financial status, and has also meticulously illustrated the details of the saddle and the luxurious fabrics on the horse (Fig. 2). The large number of guests, depicted in groups of six, reinforces the significance of this hospitality. The painter has depicted the guests' reluctance to take back their gifts by showing that, of the six guests, only one has fully returned their gift to the Arab man on horseback. In Jami's poem, the setting is the desert, a vast, dry land with sparse vegetation. In Persian literature and culture, living in the desert symbolizes a simple life in the heart of a harsh nature. In this painting, two hills leading to the horizon and four trees are depicted to symbolize water and life. The largest tree is located near the tent and, in addition to providing shade for the family, it also serves as a place to tie up the camel. The tree is so large that part of its crown is outside the picture frame. Additionally, the depiction of shrubs, which are important for livestock and animal husbandry, is another detail that shows the artist's attention to the characteristics of the nomads' living environment. The background of this painting is colored with pink and brown spots, representing small flowers, bushes, and pebbles. The use of pink for the ground, considered a fanciful and imaginary color, has given the scene an abstract, exemplary quality, although the back hill is depicted in earthy colors and aligns

with realistic features. The color gold for depicting the sky has been widely used in the painting schools of Herat and Bukhara, and in this painting from the Mashhad school, it likely represents daylight and the shimmer of sunlight. The outer garments of all the guests, unlike the host's, have short sleeves, so that the color of their inner garments is visible from the arm to the wrist. All the male figures in this painting are wearing turbans wrapped around tall hats. This type of attire is frequently observed in Persian miniatures after the Mongol invasion, especially in the schools of Tabriz and Herat. The colors of the guests' horses are also diverse; two horses are depicted in black and orange, and two others in brown and gray. The painter adorned his work with illumination and Nastaliq verses in the upper and lower margins to clarify and emphasize the subject. The beginning of these verses is from the eleventh couplet of Jami's Masnavi: «They opened their hands of kindness and generosity/ And gave a purse of gold to his family». The painter has placed the spear in the left hand and the white bag in the right hand of the generous man to indicate that his intention is not combat and violence; rather, it is the insistence on returning the guests' gifts, and that there is no pretense involved (Fig. 3). The Arab man's family is depicted as a woman and a young boy. The boy, wearing a conical hat and a blue shirt, looks at his mother, unaware of the situation; however, his mother, wearing a scarf and a long dress, looks at the guests to see how they will react.

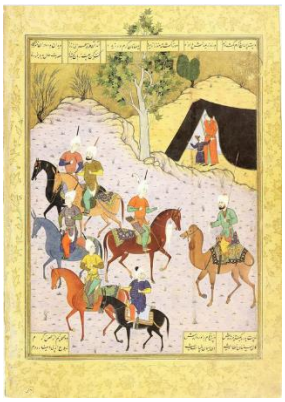


Fig. 1. Miniature painting of the story of the Bedouin in the transaction of kindness and generosity from Haft Awrang by Jami. Source: Sheve Simpson, 1997, 160.



Fig. 2. Part of the story of the Bedouin in the transaction of kindness and generosity, the figure of the corpulent guest. Source: Sheve Simpson, 1997, 160.

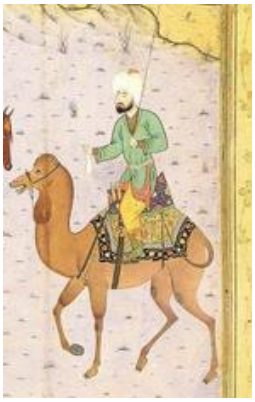


Fig. 3. Part of the story of the Bedouin in the transaction of kindness and generosity, the figure of the host. Source: Sheve Simpson, 1997, 160.

In Persian miniature painting, the meaning of color is not merely its physical, tangible aspect but rather a sign of the concepts and sacred forms of the ideal world. Colors are manifestations of the inner meanings flowing within the essence of the tale. The use of metals like gold and silver in painting produces a luminous, brilliant effect, evoking ideal concepts of light. The use of these colors reflects light and creates rays that establish a spiritual connection with the viewer's soul. The golden sky in the painting alludes to suspension in timelessness and placelessness and is considered a symbol of the eternal forms of the Divine (A'yan Thabitah), forms whose essence and origin, according to Suhrawardi, are from light (Moradkhani & Atighechi, 2019). The guest, who has returned to the host for a conversation and on behalf of others, is placed at the center of the painting and is distinguished from the others by his orange robe, green trousers, a feather on his hat,

and arrows tied to his waist. The use of yellow, orange, and green, colors within the warm color spectrum, in the guests' attire, aligns with the warm, intimate atmosphere of the scene and with the master's interpretation of a cup from them. Since the characteristics of the hospitable Arab man align with the traits of the people of chivalry, it is possible that the painter, in choosing the color green for his clothing, considered the meanings of the color of the cloak among the people of chivalry, who have written: «Green is the color of greenery and water, belonging to the noble and the lively, and the Prophet (PBUH) wore this color frequently». Whoever wears this color should be like a smiling, joyful green plant and like life-giving, pleasant water (Kashani, 2001, 168). The color green symbolizes growth, tranquility, fertility, and joy (Shojaei, 2017, 69-70). Among these meanings, growth and flourishing are aligned with the meaning of generosity. Generosity leads to the spiritual growth of the generous person and brings peace and joy to those around them. For this reason, despite the Arab's limited means, as depicted in the painting, where he lives in a black tent, his wife's clothing is orange. Orange is a symbol of activity, movement, youth, and hope (Shojaei, 2017, 81). Orange is a blend of the energy of red and the joy of yellow; therefore, it is associated with happiness and warmth. Additionally, orange signifies enthusiasm and passion, creativity, and constructiveness (Ayatollahi et al., 2018, 58). In this miniature painting, the Arab man's wife is dressed in orange to show that, despite their nomadic, difficult life, their family's spirit is joyful and energetic. The woman's undergarment is depicted in green, which may symbolize her inner alignment with her husband's generosity and spiritual growth. On the other hand, the Arab man's undergarment is chosen in orange, which corresponds to his dynamism and liveliness throughout the story. The bright yellow color symbolizes wisdom, intuition, faith, and goodness. Yellow is a symbol of joy and happiness (Ayatollahi et al., 2018, 57) and also represents hope and sweet dreams (Shojaei, 2017, 68). It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (PBUH) that: We wear yellow clothes at home (Al-Kulayni, 1987, 448). The painter has used this color in the host's trousers to display his joy, satisfaction, and happiness. The Arab man's headwear is a turban wrapped around a cap. Regarding the felt hat of the gallant, it is said: «If one asks what it means to place felt on the crown, Say that the letter 'alif' represents truth, and when it is wrapped in a circle around the crown, the circle symbolizes truth, meaning that we do not step outside the circle of truth, and whoever is truthful, we place our heads among them» (Kashefi, 1971, 188). Therefore, the hat and turban of the Arab man can be interpreted in accordance with his qualities of honesty, integrity, and righteousness (Table 1).

Table 1. Symbols and Signs in the Miniature Painting «the Bedouin in the Transaction of Kindness and Generosity». Source: The authors.

Symbol		Sign	Description
Colors	Green	Growth and flourishing	The green in the host's attire aligns with the meaning of generosity, growth, and his spiritual vitality.
	Orange	Activity and movement	The orange indicates the host's activity.
	Yellow	Joy and happiness	The yellow in the host's pants is a symbol of happiness and joy despite limited means.
	Gold	Ideal space	The golden sky refers to suspension in timelessness and placelessness.
	Pink	Imaginary space	The pink represents a fantasy and ideal space.

Symbol	Sign	Description
Turban around the hat	Truth and honesty	This garment among the chivalrous men means not stepping outside the righteousness.
The figure of the corpulent guest	The guest's suitable financial situation	The type of clothing and his plumpness are shown to be in accordance with a good financial status.
The figure of a host holding a bag of gold and a spear	No expectation in generosity (From Futuwwa principles)	It is a sign of a host who insists on returning the bag of gold.

Conclusion

The examination of the miniature painting «Arab's Kindness» within the framework of Futuwwa principles is not merely an analysis of an artwork but rather an opening of a window into a worldview in which art and ethics are inextricably intertwined. This research demonstrated how a simple tale of hospitality, relying on the painter's delicate symbolism, has transformed into a transcendent and timeless expression of human principles. A noteworthy point is the artist's emphasis on «abstaining from material rewards» and giving despite need; a principle that contrasts with the prevailing logic of worldly exchanges. This matter reflects the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, which praise giving only for God's pleasure. In fact, the artist, by depicting the Arab man holding a bag of money in his right hand and a spear in his left, seeks to show that the spear signifies his seriousness about returning the gift and his denial of any pretense or heartfelt desire to receive compensation. In the code of chivalry, generosity is considered a fundamental principle, and courage and even acts of violence are overshadowed by kindness. According to Kashafi, it is understood as a means to prevent harm to friends. The painter has depicted the host's poverty through the surrounding environment and a black tent in the desert, and by choosing the color green for the host's outer garment, he has represented his generosity and spiritual growth. Additionally, the use of orange and yellow in his undergarments and trousers conveys movement, dynamism, liveliness, and vitality. Moreover, the Arab man's felt hat and turban, as interpreted in Kashafi's Futuwwa-nama, can be read as symbols of his honesty and righteousness. The present research has been conducted to revisit and examine the cultural heritage of the «People of Futuwwa», a tradition that promotes selfless generosity, sacrifice in the face of poverty, and social solidarity as fundamental ethical principles. Given the contemporary crises of social solidarity and the urgent need for today's societies to revive benevolent actions and hospitality, returning to the ethical models of the Futuwwa school is not merely a traditionalist approach but a rational and strategic necessity for rebuilding interpersonal relationships and strengthening social cohesion.

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The author (s) declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest related to this research, in writing, and publication of this article

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