

BEDIL AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSONALITY: INNER CONFLICT AND HARMONY

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Annotation: This article explores the philosophical and psychological dimensions of the works of Mirza Abdulqadir Bedil (1642–1720), one of the greatest representatives of Indo-Persian mystical literature. By interpreting Bedil’s views through the lens of personality psychology, the study highlights his understanding of the human inner world — the dynamics of conflict, transformation, and harmony. Bedil’s philosophy is shown to anticipate many modern psychological theories concerning the struggle between reason and passion, the process of individuation, and the realization of the “true self.” His concept of inner balance is compared to humanistic and existential approaches in psychology, particularly those of Freud, Jung, and Maslow. The article concludes that Bedil’s synthesis of mystical intuition and rational reflection forms a unique psychological model of self-awareness and inner harmony, relevant to the moral and mental development of modern humanity.

Keywords: Bedil, psychology of personality, self-awareness, inner conflict, harmony, mysticism, Sufism, humanistic psychology.

The philosophy of Mirza Abdulqadir Bedil occupies a special place in the intellectual history of the East. As a poet, philosopher, and mystic, Bedil sought to understand the deepest layers of human consciousness and the relationship between the individual and the Absolute. His reflections on the soul, love, and truth reveal not only metaphysical depth but also a remarkable psychological sensitivity.

In modern times, when psychology has become a science of human behavior and inner experience, the works of Bedil acquire new significance. They provide a bridge between mystical introspection and psychological analysis. Bedil’s ideas resonate with central concepts of personality psychology — such as the unity of consciousness, self-realization, motivation, and emotional balance.

The purpose of this research is to interpret Bedil’s concept of personality in light of contemporary psychological theories. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

How does Bedil describe the inner conflict within the human being?

What mechanisms of psychological transformation and harmony does he propose?

How can Bedil’s philosophical insights contribute to modern psychology and the understanding of the human self?

The methodology of this study is based on an interdisciplinary approach that combines philosophical hermeneutics, literary analysis, and psychological interpretation.

Textual and hermeneutic analysis: Key concepts such as *nafs* (lower self), *ruh* (spirit), and *insan-i kamil* (perfect man) are examined within the context of Bedil’s poetry and philosophical prose.

Comparative method: Bedil's understanding of inner conflict is compared with Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Jung's theory of individuation, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Conceptual synthesis: The study integrates Bedil's spiritual-mystical categories with psychological constructs such as self-concept, defense mechanisms, and self-actualization.

The data are derived from Bedil's major works — "Tilism-e-Hayrat" (The Enigma of Wonder), "Chahar Unsur" (The Four Elements), and "Irfan" (Knowledge) — and supported by commentaries from Eastern scholars and modern psychologists.

Bedil presents the human being as a microcosm in which the divine and the material coexist in tension. The nafs represents desires, impulses, and attachment to the world, while the ruh embodies the eternal and transcendent dimension of existence. The conflict between these two aspects creates psychological suffering but also drives inner growth.

This vision parallels Freud's structure of personality — the constant dialogue between the id (instincts), ego (reason), and superego (morality). However, unlike Freud, Bedil views the conflict not as pathology but as a necessary stage in spiritual evolution.

For Bedil, the resolution of conflict lies in transformation, not suppression. Through awareness (ma'rifa) and purification (tazkiya), the individual learns to integrate contradictory impulses into a higher unity.

He writes:

"The mirror of the heart must be polished by pain, for only through suffering does the truth reveal its light."

This statement anticipates the ideas of existential psychology — that personal growth emerges from facing inner anxiety, guilt, and imperfection. Similarly, Abraham Maslow's notion of self-actualization echoes Bedil's ideal of the perfect human, who transcends egocentric desires and realizes universal harmony.

In Bedil's worldview, harmony does not mean the absence of conflict but its conscious acceptance and transformation into wisdom. Reason and emotion, doubt and faith, individual and collective — all must coexist in balance.

This holistic approach aligns with Jung's concept of individuation, where the self becomes whole by integrating shadow aspects of the psyche. Bedil's spiritual psychology suggests that only by embracing the multiplicity of one's inner life can a person achieve authentic peace.

Bedil often employs metaphors of light and darkness, mirrors, gardens, and oceans to express the dynamics of consciousness. The mirror symbolizes self-reflection; the garden — the mind cultivated through wisdom; the ocean — the infinite depth of the soul. These symbols correspond to archetypal patterns that modern analytical psychology associates with the unconscious and its transformative power.

The psychological relevance of Bedil's thought lies in his deep insight into the processes of self-awareness and transformation. His mystical language can be read as an early form of psychological introspection — a poetic phenomenology of the human soul.

While Western psychology often separates the rational and emotional dimensions of human nature, Bedil unites them in a single holistic vision. He does not view inner conflict as a disorder but as the dynamic energy that fuels personal and spiritual evolution.

In this respect, Bedil's perspective resonates with the principles of humanistic psychology — particularly the belief in the inherent potential of the individual for growth and creativity. Like Carl Rogers, Bedil believes that self-realization requires authenticity, empathy, and the acceptance of one's inner truth.

Moreover, Bedil's emphasis on love (ishq) as the ultimate unifying force parallels the idea of the "peak experience" in Maslow's theory, where love and transcendence merge into a sense of unity with the universe.

Bedil's integration of reason and mysticism also offers an important model for modern cross-cultural psychology. In an age marked by fragmentation and anxiety, his teachings remind us that psychological harmony depends not only on mental balance but also on moral and spiritual awareness.

Mirza Abdulqadir Bedil's legacy demonstrates that the boundaries between philosophy, mysticism, and psychology are fluid. His exploration of inner conflict, transformation, and harmony anticipates many ideas later developed by modern psychology.

Through poetic symbolism and spiritual depth, Bedil presents a comprehensive vision of personality as a dynamic unity of opposing forces — a vision that combines introspection with universal humanism.

Understanding Bedil through psychological interpretation allows contemporary readers to rediscover the spiritual dimension of the human psyche and its capacity for healing, creativity, and love.

In the modern context, Bedil's philosophy can inspire new directions in positive psychology, psychotherapy, and moral education by emphasizing that harmony is not the absence of struggle but the awareness of one's own complexity and the striving for inner unity.

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