

Values Education Using Historical-Literary Works: Turkish Language and Literature Course Curriculum (Grades 9-12) and the Work of Şifâyî Entitled “Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl”

Gökhan BİLGİÇ¹ & Sercan DEMİRGÜNEŞ²

¹ Niğde Final Education Institutions, Niğde, Turkey

² Turkish Education Department, Education Faculty, Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Niğde, Turkey

Correspondence: Sercan DEMİRGÜNEŞ, Turkish Education Department, Education Faculty, Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University, Niğde, Turkey.

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Abstract

Literary works, apart from being written with an artistic purpose, contribute to the transfer of some universal values to the reader. Thus, “values” continue to exist as they are transferred from generation to generation, similar to a context where the curriculum of a teaching process may work in the same way. The act of transferring universal values not only makes the existing work constant but also the value attempted to be taught in the same manner. The effective involvement of such works, which contain important information and the characteristics of the society of that period, has an important effect on the learning and teaching process of values. “Şebistân-ı Hayâl” is an advising work with a mixture of verse and prose written by Persian poet Fettâhî (d. 852/1448-49 or 853/1449-50) from which modern readers can also benefit. The text tries to convey universal values via using Islamic elements as a concrete base. Since *Şebistân-ı Hayâl* is written in the style of riddle, the advice that adorns the morality inside the text is difficult to understand. For this reason, according to the current information, *Şebistân-ı Hayâl* was expounded by Sürûrî in the 16th century and by Dervîş Muhammed Şifâyî in the 17th century. In this study, sample texts selected from *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, written by Dervîş Muhammed Şifâyî, are examined in terms of basic “values” (p. 6); *justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, benevolence* that takes place in the Secondary Education Turkish Language and Literature Course Curriculum (9-12 Grades). As it is stated in the curriculum (MEB, 2019, p. 6), these values will come to life in teaching and learning process, not only by themselves, but also by the sub-values they are related to and also with other basic values as well.

Keywords: values education, historical-literary works, Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl

1. Literature Review

The concept of value emerges as something that is being examined by especially rapidly evolving and changing societies. Technological, social and cultural features that have changed as a social phenomenon which is also valid for “values” as well and this made it difficult to define the concept of value. The word “value” is being defined in Turkish Language Association’s Online Contemporary Dictionary as follows:

- 1) The abstract measure for determining the importance of something, the provision of something, worth: “One understands the value of something when one is deprived of it.” – The Firsherman of Halicarnassus
- 2) The equivalent of something that can be measured in money, price, worth, charge, value: “Using all the French he knew, he managed to ask the price of the tie on the showcase.” - Nazim Hikmet
- 3) Superior quality, merit, esteem.
- 4) An outstanding person with beneficial characteristic: “I think he is such a loss, as the old saying goes, he is a lost value.” - İhsan Oktay Anar
- 5) What appears in one’s connection with the object as a demanding, needing entity.
- 6) Expression of a variable or unknown via using numbers.
- 7) All of the material and the moral elements that cover the social, cultural, economic and scientific values of

a nation: “*Would you please give us a whole view of literature, art, ideas, science and our main values, sir!*” - Ahmet Kabaklı

Values are facts that people believe and have a desire for, and they are used as a scaling factor for behaviours. The concept of value was used in social sciences by Znaniecki (as cited in Şen, 2008: 764) for the first time and it is derived from the base of “valere”, which means “being precious” and “being strong” in Latin. Values, in a broader sense, are important if they can be seen as a way of looking at the world, perceiving a person, and reflecting on today and tomorrow, and this embodiment can be important only if it is consistent and meaningful (as cited in Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli, & Çıkılı, 2008, p. 71).

Based on the above-mentioned definitions, we can define the concept of value as “the total ethical principles that shape the humanity and direct the society in time”.

1.1 Values Education

Ethical principles that shape individuals start in the family and continue in school. Values attributed to the individual in the family are reinforced at school or may change shape later on. This change goes parallel towards the direction of society’s advancement. School education should consist of more systematic and positive examples. It is expected that the curriculum that includes language teaching will give universal values systematically and appropriately. In this context, the prompt texts in the textbooks of formal educational system should be impeccable considering the concept of “value”. In addition to this, they should have a bit of a literary value that could reach to this day even after passing through certain filters over the years.

It is seen that the concept of ‘value’ is the subject of study of different fields such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, politics, etc. in the historical process and each field tries to define this phenomenon according to its own perspective (Fidan, 2018).

Values education in the school takes place when the students learn some values and virtues in the classroom, which are conveyed through reading texts and other academic practices. For this reason, stories, biographies, videos, etc. that include moral teachings are used intensely as a teaching tool, and this encourages students to imitate. In the learning and teaching process, children are told directly about the values they need to gain and it is being tried to ensure that they acquire these values (Ekşi & Katılmış, 2011, p. 16).

In this context, one of the important tools that can participate in the learning-teaching process is the works that have both historical and literary qualities, and at the very same time, these works may inspire individuals with various values. For example, the following verse of Yûnus Emre is important in terms of carrying a message that remain valid in every era where the poet invites humanity to unite, be together and love each other:

Gelün tanış olalum işi kolay kılalum,

Sevelüm sevillelüm dünya kimseye kalmaz (Tatçı, 1990, p. 114)

Modern Turkish: (Gelin tanış olalım, işi kolay kılalım; sevelim sevillelim, dünya kimseye kalmaz.)

English Translation: (Let’s meet, let’s make it easy; let’s love and be loved (eachother), the world won’t be left to anyone.)

The value of self-control, based on the notion of keeping one’s self under control, appears as the condition for one to know the God in Dîvân-ı Hikmet of Ahmet Yesevî:

Kendini bildi ise Hakk’ı bildi,

Allah’tan korktu ve insafa geldi (Bice, 2016, p. 406)

(When he knew himself, he knew of God,

In fear of Allah, he came to reason)

Nabi, being one of the important names of Divan poetry, wrote Hayriyye for his son Ebu’l-Hayr Mehmet Çelebi, and this work is an important one as it reflects the social life of its era containing advice that can be considered valid in every stage of life (Pala, 2017: 6). In the section mentioning about the good behaviours and benevolence, Nâbî warns his son to help those in need with the following lines:

Eyle hâcetleri düşdükçe revâ

Sâyeni eyle melâz-ı zu’afâ

Modern Turkish: (Sana ihtiyaçları oldukça onlara yardım et, civarını düşkünlerin sığınacakları bir yer haline getir.)

English Translation: (Help them as long as they need you, make your neighbourhood a place for the fallen on hard times.) (Pala, 2017, pp. 116-117)

Şifâyî's *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* is also very rich of values in terms of its content. This work consists of eight main chapters and various subchapters that cover topics such as faith, Islam, sultans and people in the service of the sultans, science and its importance, ascetism, morals and kinds of human beings, delicious and desired food. With the values it focuses on and the style it uses, *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* aims to develop the emotions and power of thinking with examples which may be suitable for the subject and age level of today's students. This work, brought to Turkish literature from Persian literature, appeals not only to the cultural environment of the period it was written, but also to today's readers.

Values are the most important criteria that give meaning and shape to the socio-cultural elements of society (Ulusoy & Arslan, 2016, p. 5). When the above examples are examined, it is possible to observe that our values are being fed not only from today's texts but also from our historical and literary ones. It has its bases in our traditions and the past, its stem and branches are fed from these bases and extend to present and will continue with its existence to the future (Turkish Ministry of Education, 2018, p. 5).

In this study, the basic values of *justice, friendship, honesty, self-control, patience, respect, love, responsibility, patriotism, benevolence*, which are included in the Turkish Language and Literature curriculum of MEB (Ministry of National Education) (Grades 9-12), will be described by using sample texts chosen from *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*.

2. Material and Methods

The data were obtained from Şifayî's *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* and Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum (Grades 9-12) via document scanning method, and then these data were described in the context of basic values cited in the Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum (Grades 9-12).

Official or individual documents are referenced among valid data sources that can be used in qualitative research (Bryman, 2004, cited in Güler et al., 2013, p. 127). The database of the study was created by scanning the copy of *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, which is registered in the Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul, Turkey, Serez no 2656.

3. Findings

In this section, the values directly related to the basic values in the Turkish Language and Literature Curriculum (Grades 9-12) (*justice, friendship, truthfulness/honesty, love, patience, self-control, benevolence, generosity*) have been analysed using examples in the aforementioned work, *Şerh-i Şebistân Hayâl*.

3.1 Justice

Justice means to act accordingly in behaviour and judgment, pass judgement according to what is right; being equal, making it equal (Çağrı, 1988, p. 341). Justice, taking its base from the divine power, has formed the basic concept of the state; among with law and economic policy, and these concepts encompass human beings starting from a single individual to a whole family, from a single family to a whole society, from a single society to a whole state administration (Çınar, 2001, p. 297).

In *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, which consists of eight chapters and various subchapters inside, justice is described as an asset found in the sultans, as well as being a value that will make people happy and help them to be accepted to heaven. It is stated in the Qur'an that people should rule with justice among people: "*Allah doth command you to render back your trusts to those to whom they are due; And when you judge between people, that you judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who hear and see all things.*" (Women (Nisa) 4/58). In the text, Fettâhî states that the justice of a sultan can only be ensured by keeping his eyes on the dervishes, that is, by looking out for the dervishes. Şifâyî explains the hidden meaning in this statement as follows; when the letter *âin* (ع), which means "eye", comes before the word *del* (دل), which means "heart", they form the word '*adl*' (عدل). In other words, when '*âin*', being the eye of the sultan, comes before the *del* (heart) of the dervishes, it forms the word which means justice.

Pâdişâh adli oldu ki gözi dervişler gönli üzre tuta ya'ni dervişler hâtırın gözede san'at çeşmden harf-i 'ayn irâde olunur evvelki dil lafzı üzre ola 'adl olur (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 159)

Modern Turkish: (Padişah adaleti odur ki gözünü dervişlerin üzerine tutsun. Yani dervişleri sevindirsin.)

English Translation: (The justice of the sultan is to keep an eye on the dervishes. So, make the dervishes happy.)

In the following quote, it is stated that justice will take man to heaven and also guide the sultan accordingly. Therefore, the *âlif* letter (ا) in the middle of the word *dâd* (داد), which means *truth* and *justice*, is associated with

the correct path, since the *âlif* letter is formed of a single vertical line. The two letters, *dâl* (د), on both sides of the letter *âlif* correspond to the state and religion, which guide the sultan:

Dâd ortasında elifi togrı yol bil cennete devlet ü dînün iki dâlı anun yol göstericisi iki taraftan san'at dâd lafzındaki elifi râh-ı râsta teşbih idüp iki taraftaki iki dâlı ism i'tibârı ile rehnumâ ve harf i'tibârı ile devlet ü dîne işâret i'tibâr itdi (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 163)

Modern Turkish: (Dâd kelimesinin ortasındaki elifi cennete giden doğru yol olarak bil. Devlet ve dînün iki dâl harfî, onun iki taraftan yol göstericisidir.)

English Translation: (Know that the âlif in the middle of the word dâd as the right path to heaven. The two dâls, state and religion, are its guides on both sides)

3.2 Friendship

The word friendship in the Islamic sense, which comes from the word *friend*, meaning “loving, beloved, lover” in Persian, may also be substitute with other terms such as loyalty, brotherhood, love, and conversation; and in addition to that the words of parent and spouse also have senses that means friend (Çağrıç, 1994, p. 511). In the dictionaries (Parlatır, 2009, p. 360; Sami, 2009, p. 626), friendship is defined as “the state of being friend, love”.

Friendship in *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* is used with rich associations. It is stated in the text that the basic rule of friendship is loyalty. Additionally, according to the *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, one should comply with every pedestal of friendship without a failure. If loyalty, which is the basic rule of friendship, decreases, this friendship turns into a disaster. If the dot is removed from the letter *qóf* (ق) in the word (صدقات) *loyalty (sadâkat)*, it will become *sad afat* (افت صد). *Sad* (صد) means face in dictionary.

In the following quote, the formula of love is said to rely on acting and deciding in a joint manner with the one being loved. It is necessary not to deviate from the promised word and keep the promises that are made within the friendship. According to the hidden meaning here, the words *love* (محبت) and *sadness* (محنت) are written similar in Arabic letters. The dot of the letter *bâ* (ب) in the word *mohabat* (محبت), which means *friendship* in the dictionary, is under the base form of the letter, if it were to change its position and appear above the base form then the word would be *mihnet* (محنت), which means *trouble, grief, and worry*.

Ve meveddet ya'nî mahabbet kâ'idesi oldur ki her kavlı u va'de ki dost ile ortada getürmiş olalar ve ikrâr itmiş bir nokta ile ol söze aşığı yukarı itmeyeler tâ mihnet u 'itâb u nîzâ'a mübtelâ olmayalar bul ki eger mahabbet lafzında bâ noktasını ki mukarrerdür aşığıdan yukarıya iletüsün mahabbet mihnet olur san'at mahabbet lafzı mihnet lafzı imlâsındadır noktayı aşığı kosa mahabbet olur yukarı kosa mihnet olur (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 236).

Modern Turkish: (Meveddet yani muhabbet kaidesi odur ki her sözde dostla ortak karar verilmiş olsun. Bir nokta ile o söze aşığı yukarı etmesinler, uysunlar. Verilen sözlere uyarlarsa sıkıntı, darılma ve kavga olmaz. Eğer muhabbet kelimesinde bâ harfinin noktası aşığıdan yukarıya çıkarsa muhabbet, mihnet olur.)

English Translation: (The formula of love (mavadat) is that in every word of the decision has been decided jointly. They should not do against that word, let them comply. If they comply with the promises, there will be no trouble, frustration and quarrel. If the dot of the letter bâ in the word of mohabat(love) changes from the bottom to the top, then muhabat becomes a mihnet (betrayal).)

3.3 Truthfulness/Honesty

Truthfulness is defined as “the state of being true, sidq;” (Parlatır, 2009, p. 356). *Sidq*, as a moral term, is defined as “honesty in intention; righteousness and truthfulness in words and behaviours” (Çağrıç, 2009, p. 98).

Truth, in *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, is one of the most important values. In the below excerpt, it is stated that one should not leave the right path in being a vizier. If one leaves the path of the truth, one becomes a sinner. If the letter *âlif* (ل), which symbolizes the accuracy in the word *vezâret* (وزارت), is removed according to the hidden meaning here, the word *vizret* (وزرت) would be formed and it means *your sin* in Arabic, literally. To put it in other words, it is stated that a vizier will become a sinner if one leaves the right path.

Vezâretde elif gibi togru kalem ara eger ol elif olmaya senün günahun yirindedür san'at vezâret lafzındaki elifi râst kaleme teşbih itdi elifden mâ'adâsı vizret lafzıdır işâretdür ki vezâretde kalemün togru yolda olmazsa günâhun mukarrerdür (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 169).

Modern Turkish: (Vezirlikte elif gibi doğru kalem ara. O elif harfi olmazsa senin günahın kesindir.)

English Translation: (When you are the vizier, look for the straight person, like the âlif. Without that âlif letter, your sin is certain.)

3.4 Love/Goodness

According to TDK (Turkish Linguistics Association, Tr.: Türk Dil Kurumu), goodness is defined as “state of well-being, aid without asking a return, blessing, grace, kindness, benevolence, mercy”.

In *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, it also puts emphasis on how teachers should treat children. If a teacher treats children bad tempered, it is not possible to collect knowledge from that person. Those who are tasked with teaching science should treat children well with love and goodness. In the below excerpt, it is stated that the word *etfâl* (اطفال), which means children, will become *eltâf* (الطاف), mean grace and goodness, by using *kalb-i ba'z*. *Kalb-i ba'z* can be defined as changing the order of the letters in a word in a nonsequential manner (Tarlan, 1936: 21; Bilkan, 2000: 87-88).

Sıbyâna şefkat gözi sâdı eger oynamakdan mâni' olmaya beyân belâgâtına irmezler ve etfâle ki eltâfdan gayr ile terbiyet virmeyeler anların tağılması mücibi olur san'at çeşmi sâda teşbîh idüp ve ism i'tibârî ile anı men' ma'nâsına saddan ism-i fâ'il i'tibâr itdi ve harf-i sâd beyân lafzına iricek sıbyân olur ve etfâl lafz-ı kalb-i ba'zla eltâf olur (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 233).

Modern Turkish: (Çocuklara şefkat gözü sadı oynamaktan mâni olmazsa çocuklar beyan belagatına ermezler. Çocuklara ki nezaketle terbiye verilmezse bu onların dağılmasına sebep olur.)

English Translation: (If children are not hold from only playing, then they will not be able to reach to the statement of eloquence. If the children are not disciplined with kindness, this will cause them to disrupt.)

3.5 Patience

The lexical meaning of the word patience can be defined as being strong, resistant and enduring against any kind of disaster and pain that is being faced (Parlatır, 2009, p. 1429; Çağrı, 2008, p. 337; Sâmî, 2009, p. 817). In a moral context, it can be defined as “resisting against sadness, trouble and worry; fortitude shown to turn negativities into positivity” (Çağrı, 2008, p. 337). In *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, it is stated that a person who is patient will attain all the beauties with the help of God.

In the last section of the eighth chapter of *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, under the title of “Advice”, Sufi interpretations of words such as poor, abandonment, repentance, patience, and faith are being described using and playing with various words and phrases. Patience takes place in *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* as the fourth degree of *sul'k*, which means becoming a member of a religious sect and/or the process of spiritual ascension. According to the text, patience is a reward of Allah and it is necessary to demand that reward. In the excerpt below, the enigmatic line of the first letter of the word *rûy* (رُوی), namely *râ* (ر), is combined with the last letter of the word demand, *bâ* (ب), and this forms the word *Rab* (رب). Thus, it points out that one should demand the reward of Allah.

Sabr ister isen Rab ihsânı üzre çeşmi rûy it rûydan taleb altında ya'nî dâyim talebden hâli olma san'at rûy lafzı yüzi râ taleb lafzı altı bâya yüz olicak Rab olur pes sülûkun dördüncü mertebesin sabr idüp sabr ihsân-ı Rab oldugını ifâde idüp talebden hâli olmamak lüzûmına işâret itdi (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 364).

Modern Turkish: (Sabır istersen Rab ihsanı üzerine çeşmi rûy yap. Daima Allah'ın ihsanını talep et.)

English Translation: (If you want patience, face the God's reward. Always demand the reward of Allah.)

3.6 Self-Control

Self-control, in the dictionary is defined as follows; “Controlling and restricting one's reactions, behaviours or tendency towards another goal, in order to achieve a more important goal, auto-control.” (TDK, 2019).

In *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, self-control is handled mostly in relation to opposing the desires and wishes of the nafs. The idea that is being described in the text is that one always struggles with one's own nafs and that one will approach God only if the nafs is away from desires and wishes. According to Fettâhî, if subjects perform their worship from within their hearts and with much effort, they will become *âbid* (one who worships), but if they act according to the will of nafs, they will move away from the God:

'İbâd gerek ki gözi gönül d'ebi ya'nî nefis cidd ü ta'abı üzre tuta eger 'âbid 'aceb 'aynını kendü dervîşi ayagı üzre tuta ger gün eb'ad olur (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 204).

Modern Turkish: (Kullar; gönülden emek vererek ibadetlerini ciddiyetle yaparsa âbid olur, eğer kendi nefsinin isteklerine göre hareket ederse her gün (Hak'tan) daha da uzaklaşır.)

English Translation: (If the subjects do their worship solemnly by giving a wholehearted effort, they become worshippers; if they act according to the wishes of their own nafs, they will move further away (from the God) every day.)

According to Fettâhî, one should settle for the whatever worldly goods they have and avoid longing to possess others' property:

Dünyâ ol kadar kifâfdur ya'nî karâr tutmasıdır ki kimseler mâlından men' tutıcı ide nefsânî tama'dan (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 269).

Modern Turkish: (Nefsin açgözlülüğü ile başka kimselerin malına göz dikmeyecek kadar olan dünya malı yeterlidir.)

English Translation: (The amount of the worldly goods, without the greed of the nafs for others' belongings, is sufficient.)

3.7 Charity/Generosity

Being fond of helping those in need and the poor, value of charity and generosity is encouraged in *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* via using various words and word plays. Benevolence is given great importance and it was stated that one should always protect and take care of the poor and spend one's wealth in the way of Allah instead of saving up, this good deed will bestow Allah's favour upon one.

In the excerpt below, Fettâhî; states that the word 'atâ (عطا), which means *donating, giving, and bestowing*, is the sun of nine destinies. According to the hidden meaning here, in the word 'atâ' the letter 'âin (ع) is above to (ط). Another meaning of 'âin is the sun. Therefore, it points to the sun. The equivalent of to (ط), in abjad numerals is nine, so it refers to the nine destinies. When Dervîş Muhammed Şifâyî is written in Arabic letters, it states that a mot is not meant to be on the last letter of the word 'atâ (عطا), the âlif:

'Ayn-ı 'atâ ya'nî 'atâ zâtı bir güneşdür ki şerefde tokuz felek yukarısına togmuş ve yaldıramış san'at 'atâ lafzında 'ayn tâ üzredür ol tâyı hisâb i'tibarıyla tokuz felege işâret idüp 'aynı 'aynun bir ma'nîsi âfitâb olmagla âfitâba işâret itdi lîkin elife nükte beyân itmedi (Bilgiç, 2019, p. 223).

Modern Turkish: (İhsan bir güneşdir ki şerefte dokuz felek yukarısına doğar ve parlar.)

English Translation: (Benevolence is a sun that rises up to nine destinies and shines.)

4. Results and Recommendations

Classical literary works, which have historical importance, also focuses on values in many respects and advise these values to the readers. These advices, of course, are the result of a wide experience. Literary works, in every kind and form they exist, handle individual, social or universal values in various types and forms beginning from the moment they are written. These works, which are not limited to the period they were written and restricted to the society they exist, offer a recipe for survival from the negativities they reside, via many advices that embellish the values and ethics they contain. From this point of view, it is clear that literary works are important tools and resources in terms of values education.

Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl, has a very rich content written by Dervîş Muhammed Şifâyî. Verses that advise basic values of justice, friendship, truthfulness/honesty, love, patience, self-control, benevolence, generosity should be included in the textbooks, as they are already among the values that exist in the curriculum of Turkish Language and Literature (Grades 9-12). It is clear that the examples chosen from the *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl*, considering that they are suitable for the subject and age level, can contribute to students' emotional development and power of thinking.

To sum up, universal values, doctrines and ideas in *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* are dealt with using various words and word plays. It can be seen that the basic values are studied with a rich connotation power. From this point of view, the texts chosen from *Şerh-i Şebistân-ı Hayâl* and such works, in accordance with the appropriate subject and level, can help students gain aesthetic value, acquire universal doctrines, and internalize cultural and ethical values. Thus, an effective step will be taken in raising the "good individual" that many programs in the world have prioritized.

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