

## An Investigation of the Word “MEYZAR” in Bustân by Sa’adi

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### Abstract

Evolved briefly, the word “MEYZAR” [meʔzar/meyzar] is used in many traditional Persian texts. For instance, Sa’adi uses this word twice in his book *Bustân*, which is defined as loincloth, trousers and similar meanings. However, the meanings provided by *Bustân* explications for the word “MEYZAR” are not correct for etymological, textual, sociological, and contextual reasons. Research on textual and metatextual evidence shows that such meanings must have been indicated in the margins of the verses. These equivalents borrowed from Arabic dictionaries create ambiguity. According to the evidence presented in this paper, this word means ‘turban,’ and we believe that the rest of the equivalents are just secondary. Studying the explications of Sa’adi poems by valuable commentators is an indication of their lexical mastery over Arabic language and Arabic clothing

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culture rather than literary knowledge. Presenting evidence from different dimensions clarifies the meanings of the word so that ultimately both stanzas of *Bustân* are disambiguated.

**Keywords:** *Bustân, Meyzar/Me'zar, Ezār, Saadi's description of Bostan, classical Persian poetry.*

### 1. Introduction

This study focuses on the relationship between society and literature. For a better comprehension of Literary texts, we should investigate social, geographical, cultural and tribal evidence. As a result, the history of clothes is part of the social criticism of literature which explicates the mutual effects of society and literature on each other. Hence, this study collected different literary texts to investigate the most appropriate meaning of the word 'Meyzar' in *Bustân* by Sa'adi.

### Research Question(s)

- 1- What is the meaning of MEYZAR in *Bustân* by Sa'adi?
- 2- What are the social, cultural and tribal pieces of evidence to determine the appropriate meaning of the word?

### 2. Literature Review

The word MEYZAR is used in literature with many different meanings, some of which are presented here. Dekhoda dictionary registers this inventory as "the turban or cloth that they wear around their head." (Vol. 13) while Nafisi provides two meanings for it: In its Arabic origin is "Abaya or Cloak, pajamas, or pants" and in its Persian origin, it is "turban."

Sokhan dictionary mentions that *meyzar* is originated from the Arabic word *me'zar*, which had been a cloth they wear around their waist or trousers (vol. 7; Meyzar inventory).

For the word '*izār*', two meanings are provided: First meaning deals with whatever people wear. Second meaning of this word relates to "the downward part of everything" (Vol. 1).

It seems that the dictionary inventories are influenced by Arabic dictionaries and reflect the historical date related to the dress code of some regions in Iran. In contrast, in most Iranian cultures including Lores, Kurds, Laks and Sistanies, different forms of the word *Meyzar* are considered as turban or what they wear around their head.

### 3. Methodology

This research follows a library as well as a sociological method. First, different meanings of the word *Meyzar* is searched in many dictionaries and literary texts. This means that the word may be used in different contexts, signifying many different meanings. Second, the word is investigated in different Iranian cultures to identify what meaning each culture or tribe provide for the word since the majority rule may be applied to this word.

### 4. Results

In this section, studies related to clothing, old texts, and general culture are presented to be able to conclude what the meaning of this word is in Bustān.

#### 4.1. Studies related to clothing

The different functions of 'Meyzar' in clothing is presented in Table 1

Place	Meaning	Source
Shahr Ashoub,	What people wear when they want to bathe	Kharazmi (1364, p. 313)
Early Islamic periods	Headscarf, cloak for women	Manazer Ahsan (1369, pp. 56 & 57)
Pre-Islamic era	It had been evolved to wear around head for men and women with or without hat	Shahshahani (1374, pp. 16 -200)
Islamic countries	It had been a cloth that had been worn to cover face and body	Dozy (1359, pp. 24-37)
-	In dictionaries it means headcover or turban. It had been worn around the head to show power.	Mousavi (1397, pp. 50-59)

#### 4.2. Evidence from old texts

Different functions of *Meyzar* in old texts is presented in Table 2

Meaning	Sources
When <i>Meyzar</i> and 'izar are used interchangeably	Modaberi (1370), Naserkhosrow (1368), Sana'i (1362), Beyhaghi (1362)
When <i>Meyzar</i> means headcover and turban	Sa'adi (1370), Asadi (1354), Khaleghi Motlagh (1363),

	Molavi (-), Ohadi Maraghe'i (1357), Kamal O-Din Esma'eil (1348), Jami (1368), Nezam Ghari (1359), Habib Khorasani (1361), Yaghma Jandaghi (1367), Bahar (1354)
<i>Meyzar</i> as what had been necessarily worn with turban	Meybodi (1389)
<i>Meyzar</i> used as pants	Sana'ei (1362), Khaghani (1375), Khajuye Kermani (581), Attar (1399)
<i>Meyzar</i> had been generally used as clothing or covering	Maghamat Hamidi (1362), Sana'i (1362), Adib Al-Mamalek (1312), Lotf Allah Ibn Abi Sa'eid (1371)

#### 4.3. Contextual approach in popular culture

This section deals with two approaches towards popular culture:

1. From the perspective of textual and inter-textual cues and symbols that refer to etiquette within the social context.
2. From the perspective of the history of clothing and textiles of Iranian ethnic groups, and with attention to the words, phrases, and poems that exist within their cultural context.

Domain	Sources
Gambling	Shafi'ei Kadkani (1397), Sana'ei (1362), Molavi (1378), Majd Hamgar (1375), Yaghma Jandaghi (1367)
Bathhouse	Sana'ei (1359; 1362), Attar (1399), Ansari (1371), Monavar Mihani (1367), Forghani (1357)
Headcoverings	Bustān, Mousavi (1397), Noban (1378), Sharafkandi (1369), Kianoush (1392), Dopari (1379), Abdollahi et al (1395), Edmonds (1367)

### 5. Conclusion

The study concludes that the term "mizr" in Sa'di's Bustan should be interpreted beyond its literal meaning to encompass its symbolic and cultural significance. This broader understanding enriches the appreciation of the text's imagery and deepens our understanding of Persian culture. Further research is recommended to fully elucidate the etymological connections and historical usage of "mizr" and related

terms. Lastly, it should be born in mind that the word “meyzar” is used as turban or what men wear around their head in most Iranian accents and dialects.

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