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Artistic Interpretation of Religious and Enlightenment Ideas in Contemporary Uzbek Poetry

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Abstract: This article examines the expanding scope of poems with religious and enlightenment themes, emphasizing their essential focus on the recognition of divine truth, the exemplary moral model of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the promotion of noble values such as humanity, justice, integrity, faith, and belief. The study includes selected excerpts from the works of distinguished poets who have contributed to this thematic field, illustrating the artistic representation of religious and moral ideals in contemporary poetic discourse.

Keywords: Qur'an, contemporary Uzbek poetry, religion, morality, spiritual development, perfection, prayer, mystical spirit.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is primarily a spiritual phenomenon that addresses the consciousness and inner world of the reader. A review of the history of Uzbek literature reveals that religious worldview and Islamic values have played a fundamental role in its formation and development. Classical Uzbek literature is inseparable from the Qur'an and Hadiths; therefore, a profound understanding of literary processes requires familiarity with religious-enlightenment knowledge.

The creative heritage of thinkers such as Ahmad Yugnaki, Ahmad Yassavi, Alisher Navoi, and Sufi Olloyor demonstrates that Islamic ideas served as a major source of inspiration. This tradition has continued in contemporary Uzbek poetry, especially during the independence period, acquiring new forms and meanings. Today, religious-enlightenment poetry functions as an important means of fostering spiritual growth, moral purification, and the ideal of the perfect human being.

Literature is primarily created for the reader. The essence of a writer's creative work, particularly within the context of classical Uzbek literature, cannot be fully understood without knowledge of Islam and familiarity with the Qur'an. An examination of the works of our great scholars reveals that there is scarcely any literary masterpiece detached from religious foundations. It is difficult to conceive of literature independent of religion, as the two are intrinsically interconnected. Therefore, a proper understanding of literature necessitates an understanding of religious tradition. In this regard, the creative legacies of eminent thinkers such as Ahmad Yugnaki, Alisher Navoi,

Ahmad Yassavi, and Sufi Olloyor clearly demonstrate that their works derive spiritual depth, inspiration, and intellectual perfection from Islamic teachings.

It is well known that Alisher Navoi regarded the human being as a "precious gem" and attributed exceptionally high value to the word, elevating it to the status of a "Messiah" capable of breathing life into the lifeless. Likewise, the poet Sirojiddin Sayyid, who considers the word to be the garment of the human heart, emphasizes that poetry created through the power of words contains profound wisdom and spiritual meaning.

Bu olam yashnagay ezguliklardan,

Toki insonlarda qalb va himmat bor.

She'r ham yaralmagay bekorga asli,

She'rda Rasululloh a ytgan hikmat bor[1].

The Hadith stating that "the five daily prayers are like a river flowing in front of a Muslim's door; if one bathes in it five times a day, no impurity remains on the body" is artistically rendered in Sirojiddin Sayyid's octastich poem entitled "The Five Daily Prayers."

Besh vaqt namoz go'yo beshta daryodir

Darvozang oldidan oqib o'tguvchi.

Jismu jon g'usli shu, shudir aslida

Ko'ngil ko'zgusini charaqlatguvchi[2].

Indeed, prayer (ṣalāh), as one of the obligatory acts of worship, was bestowed upon the community of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a divine gift on the Night of Ascension (Mi'rāj). This obligation is affirmed in the Holy Qur'an through the verse: "And establish prayer and fear Allah" (Al-An'ām, 6:72). In the subsequent four lines of the poem, the poet emphasizes that a person who performs the five daily prayers regularly—thereby fulfilling a divinely ordained duty and engaging in continuous spiritual purification—attains inner tranquility and illumination, as well as divine reward. By stating "Your gratitude lies in these blessings," the poet conveys that through such devotion "the heart, too, becomes filled with beautiful light," provided that one purifies oneself through prayer five times each day.

It is well established that Abdulla Oripov is regarded as one of the first poets to introduce a mystical and spiritual (irfānī) dimension into Uzbek poetry of the independence period. As a poet described as "a great interpreter of the people's heart," he was able to find timely spiritual "remedies" for the inner wounds of his nation. One of the significant opportunities afforded by independence was the renewed expression of religious faith in the consciousness of the individual, which in turn generated a strong demand for poetry imbued with wisdom and moral reflection. Consequently, the poetic cycle Haj Daftari ("The Pilgrimage Notebook"), which embodies the ethical principles of the believer and integrates a religious-philosophical spirit, emerged during this period.

Indeed, the central idea of the poems included in this cycle is that every individual who claims true faith should internalize the exemplary model of perfect humanity embodied by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), strive to attain the purity of the "Kaaba of the heart," pursue noble aims, and draw moral guidance from individuals of sound faith and conviction. Through the infusion of mystical ideas into his poetry, the poet guides the reader toward goodness, while the meanings of the Hadiths are artistically incorporated into the compositional structure of the poetic

[1] S. Sayyid, The Path of the Word, vol. 2. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Sharq, 2008, p. 260.

[2] S. Sayyid, *The Path of the Word*, vol. 2. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Sharq, 2008, p. 250.

themes. As a result, refined examples of descriptive lyric poetry emerge, viewed from the perspective of the object of lyrical experience:

U senga ko‘rsatdi hidoyat yo‘lin,

Yurgil yo yurmassan, o‘zing bil, inson.

Balki sen tutgaysan Iblisning qo‘lin,

Yaratgan Xoliqqa barchasi ayon[3].

Although the poet does not present the original text of the Hadiths in the manner of classical arba’in writers, understanding the lyrical narrative does not require specialized preparation from the reader. On the contrary, the meaning and tone embedded in the composed lines resonate deeply within the reader’s heart and consciousness. The poet’s use of this method reflects a distinctive style that embodies his wise Islamic-philosophical worldview. Moreover, through the artistic interpretation of Qur’anic verses and Hadiths, the poet seeks to depict the image of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the supreme model of the perfect human being. Readers wishing to comprehend the meaning of the Hadiths underlying each poem frequently encounter the phrase “Rasul addressed…”, which allows them, through the poet’s literary imagination, to witness the Prophet speaking across time to the people of the present era. One of the earliest poems in the cycle, entitled “The Prophet,” is composed in the form of na’t—poetic praise of the Prophet—similar to that found in classical literature.

Yo, Alloh Rasuli, tengi yo‘q Inson,

Sizning yo‘lingizni yoritgay Qur’on,

Siz – Olam sarvari, Siz – nuri jahon,

Assalomu alayka, yo Muhammad,

Assalomu alayka, yo Ahmad[4].

Similar to the classical predecessors, the poet describes the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) using exalted epithets such as “the unparalleled human,” “the sovereign of the world,” and “the light of the universe.” Furthermore, an informed reader will also recognize that the Prophet bears the name Ahmad, which the poet subtly acknowledges within the poetic text.

The classical arba’in genre traditions in Uzbek literature have been continued in the works of contemporary poets in a renewed and genre-adapted form. A comparison between classical arba’in poetry and the modern arbain compositions reveals that contemporary poets approach the classical literary genre with greater creative freedom. The primary objective and guiding focus of modern poets is to illuminate the human heart with the light of spiritual knowledge and to nourish the mind with virtue through artistic interpretations of the Qur’an and Hadiths, thereby transforming and purifying the consciousness and psychology of contemporary individuals.

The wisdom-infused philosophical and enlightenment content of poetry produced in the independence era, along with its aesthetic expressiveness, should be understood as a manifestation of the art of words that emerged in response to the spiritual needs of individuals and society as well as the demands of the era. The main artistic aim of religious-enlightenment interpretation—the expression of moral and spiritual generalizations—demonstrates the unique creative individuality of the poet’s worldview and serves as an artistic instrument that influences human spirituality.

[3] A. Oripov, *Selected Works*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Sharq, 2019, p. 343.
[4] A. Oripov, Selected Works. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Sharq, 2019, p. 344.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary Uzbek poetry, religious-enlightenment themes have become a central and influential dimension, reflecting both spiritual and moral concerns of society. Through the reinterpretation of Qur'anic verses and Hadiths, poets such as Abdulla Oripov and Sirojiddin Sayyid guide readers toward ethical conduct, spiritual purification, and the pursuit of noble ideals. Their works exemplify how classical literary traditions, such as the arba'in genre, can be creatively adapted to address modern sensibilities while preserving the essence of Islamic teachings.

The primary artistic objective of these poems is to illuminate the human heart with the light of knowledge, inspire moral integrity, and foster the development of the perfect human being as modeled by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). By blending philosophical wisdom, mystical insights, and lyrical artistry, contemporary religious-enlightenment poetry not only enriches literary aesthetics but also contributes to the moral and spiritual development of individuals and society. Consequently, this poetic tradition continues to play a vital role in shaping the consciousness, values, and inner life of modern readers, bridging classical heritage and contemporary literary innovation.

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