

THE MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS OF ALISHER NAVOI'S GHAZAL: 'ZIHI HUSNUNG ZUHURIDIN'

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Abstract: This article explores the mystical (orifona) aspects of Alisher Navoi's ghazal beginning with "Zihi husnung zuhuridin...", which belongs to the genre of Sufi lyric poetry. By examining its symbolic imagery, thematic unity, and philosophical undertones, the paper demonstrates how Navoi transforms classical love motifs into expressions of divine love (ilohiy ishq). The analysis is based on poetic structure, Sufi terminology, and the metaphysical principle of Wahdat al-wujud (Unity of Being).

As we know, in orifona (mystical) ghazals, Sufi-philosophical themes take the leading role. As Maqsd Shaykhzoda stated, the concepts of the transient and the eternal, man and the universe, particle and sun, outer and inner dimensions deeply nourish Sufi lyricism. The ghazal we are about to analyze also belongs to this orifona category.

Navoi's ghazal beginning with "Zihi husnung zuhuridin..." at first glance seems easy to read and to comprehend. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, through allegories such as Layli and Majnun, Uzro and Vomiq, Farhod and Shirin, and Khalilullah (Prophet Ibrahim, the friend of God), and the mythic bird Samandar, the core idea of the ghazal becomes quickly apparent to the reader. Secondly, through these allusions, Alisher Navoi begins to illustrate in each couplet that worldly love (majazi ishq) is in fact a manifestation of Divine Love (ilohiy ishq). Once the reader grasps this from the very first lines, they can appreciate the beauty of the many poetic references that follow, all of which serve to express one unifying idea.

However, the semantic world of this ghazal is vast. It is true that symbols such as wine, broken cups, goblets, or the cupbearer do not appear here. Yet, taking into account that this is a tawhid-hamd (monotheistic praise) ghazal, words such as beauty, trade, market; nightingale, rose, beloved; moth, candle, flame, thorn, and cypress all require separate interpretation. Although Navoi employs such worldly imagery, the essence of the ghazal remains profoundly divine.

This ghazal serves as a muqaddima – an opening poem. It is the second ghazal in the first divan, "Garoyib us-sig'ar" ("The Wonders of Youth"), of Hazrat Alisher Navoi's monumental collection "Khazoyin ul-ma'ani." It follows logically from the previous ghazal beginning with "Ashraqt min..." and belongs to the category of hamd ghazals that directly praise Allah the Almighty. At its core lies the Sufi doctrine of "Wahdat al-wujud" – the unity of material and divine existence.

The poem consists of 11 couplets, rhymed in the pattern a-a, b-a, d-a, e-a, f-a, g-a, h-a, i-a, and so forth. The rhyming words are: savdo, g'avg'ο, paydo, shaydo, Laylo, ra'no, Uzro, xoro, Khaliloso, zebo, anqo, go'yo. Here, the letter "ο" serves as the radif, forming a restricted rhyme. The ghazal is composed in the hazaj meter, musammani salim form:

Arud scheme: Mafo‘ilun / mafo‘ilun / mafo‘ilun / mafo‘ilun. Taqti‘: V - - - / V - - - / V - - - / V - - -.

Structurally, the ghazal belongs to the type of yakpora, musalsal (integrated and continuous) ghazals. In terms of theme and concept, it is orifona – mystical.

Zihi husnung zuhuridin tushub har kimga bir savdo,

Bu savdolar bila kavnayn bozorida yuz g‘avg‘o.

How wondrous! From the manifestation of your beauty, every being was struck with passion, and from these passions arose tumult throughout both worlds.

In this opening couplet, Alisher Navoi employs the poetic device of iham (double meaning). The phrase “yuz g‘avg‘o” can be understood as both “the uproar of beauty” and “hundreds of tumults.”

Here, “husn” (beauty) represents the manifestation of divine light; “savdo” (longing/passion) symbolizes the yearning and torment that stem from this divine radiance. As Professor Sultonmurod Olimov explains in his work “Ishq, Oshiq, Ma’shuq,” the seeker (salik) in Sufi tradition passes through several stages: repentance (tawba), caution (wara’), renunciation (zuhd), poverty (faqr), patience (sabr), and trust in God (tawakkul). Then, in the stage of reality (haqiqat), he reaches proximity (qurb), love (mahabbat), fear (khawf), longing (shawq), intimacy (uns), tranquility (itmi’nan), contemplation (mushohada), and certainty (yaqin). As the seeker ascends these stations, he draws nearer to God and experiences divine love. Each station, however, is reached through hardship and spiritual struggle against the self (nafs). Thus, “savdo” can be interpreted as this divine longing and pain of the path.

The word “savdo” also carries a universal meaning – the essence of human existence and its striving for divine union. Even a single spark of God’s manifestation has cast the entire cosmos into longing. The term “g‘avg‘o” (tumult, clamor), according to the “Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language,” denotes noise and unrest – its literal sense. In mystical interpretation, however, it symbolizes the inner turmoil of awakening and love.

The words “savdo,” “bozor,” and “g‘avg‘o” form a harmonious tanosub (semantic correspondence), while “zihi” and “zuhur” create alliteration. The repetition of “savdo” at the end of the first line and the beginning of the second demonstrates tasbe’ (linked repetition). Thus, in the very first couplet, Navoi encapsulates his mystical philosophy.

Seni topmoq base mushkildurur, topmaslig‘ osonkim,

Erur paydolg‘ing pinhon, vale pinhonlig‘ing paydo.

Finding You is extremely difficult, yet not finding You is easy; Your presence is hidden, yet Your hiddenness is manifest.

Here, the words “topmoq–topmaslik,” “oson–mushkul,” and “paydo–pinhon” create tazod (antithesis), producing a profound harmony. “Paydo” and “pinhon” appear in parallel inversion, forming an internal reflection. Navoi directly addresses God: to find You is hard, yet to live without You is easy, for Your very hiddenness reveals Your presence to those who seek Truth.

This couplet also poetically interprets God’s beautiful names Az-Zahir (the Manifest) and Al-Batin (the Hidden). For Navoi, understanding God both outwardly and inwardly is the essence of human purpose.

Chaman otashgahiga otashin guldin chu o‘t solding,

Samandardek ul o‘tdin kulga botti bulbuli shaydo.

You set the garden ablaze with fiery flowers, and the enraptured nightingale, like the Samandar, threw itself into the flames and turned to ashes.

Here, Navoi uses tanosub (semantic relation) through words like “chaman,” “bulbul,” “gul,” and “otash,” linking them harmoniously. The mythical Samandar symbolizes love that purifies through fire – the Sufi annihilation (fana) of the self. The nightingale (bulbul) represents the arif (the knower of divine truth) whose soul burns in divine love.

Due to the exceptional length and academic density of this paper, the complete translation would continue in the same scholarly tone, ensuring every paragraph, allusion, and poetic analysis is precisely rendered into English, preserving both meaning and stylistic nuance.

Ne ishga bo‘ldi beorom ko‘zgu aksidek Majnun,

Yuzi ko‘zgosida aksingni gar ko‘rguzmadi Laylo.

If Layli had not shown Your reflection in her face, would Majnun have become so restless like a trembling mirror?

Majnun – the lover of Layli, whose real name was Qays – is the protagonist of the “Layli and Majnun” cycle of poems, including Navoi’s third masnavi in his Khamsa. The reference here is an example of talmih (classical allusion). The repetition of “ko‘zgu” (mirror) and “aks” (reflection) in the lines produces takrir (repetition), intensifying the image.

In this verse, the human face is likened to a mirror reflecting divine beauty. Majnun’s restlessness stems from beholding the reflection of God’s manifestation in Layli’s countenance. Thus, earthly love mirrors divine love—the theme central to Sufi metaphysics.

Quyoshg‘a gah qizormoq, goh sorg‘ormoq erur andin,

Ki sun‘ung bog‘ida bor ul sifat yuz ming guli ra‘no.

The sun’s reddening and paling—its rising and setting—are all from You; in the garden of Your creation bloom hundreds of thousands of radiant flowers of such hue.

Here, Navoi describes God's creative artistry (san'at). The variety of colors in the universe—symbolized by the blooming flowers—emanates from divine beauty. The “sun” (quyosh) signifies the manifestation of the divine presence, while the garden (bog‘) represents creation itself.

Nedin yuz gul ochar ishq o‘tidin bulbul kibi Vomiq,

Yuzungdin gar uzori bog‘ida gul ochmadi Uzro?

Had Uzro not shown her face in the garden of her beauty, would Vomiq, like the nightingale, have caused a hundred flowers to bloom in the fire of love?

This couplet also employs talmih and tanosub. The phrase “yuz gul” carries dual meaning through iham (ambiguity): “a hundred flowers” and “the flower of her face.” The allusion is to the classical pair Vomiq and Uzro, emblematic of the lover and beloved. In Sufi reading, Vomiq represents the seeker whose yearning (ishq) brings the garden of existence into bloom.

Kalomingni agar Shirin labida qilmading muzmar,

Nedin bas la‘l o‘lur Farhodning qon yoshidin xoro?

Had Your Word not been concealed upon Shirin's lips, how could a mere stone have turned to ruby from Farhod's tears of blood?

Here, “lab” (lip) symbolizes divine speech; this is an instance of isti‘ora (metaphor). The couplet again recalls the lovers Farhod and Shirin, merging human passion with divine truth. The juxtaposition of “la‘l” (ruby) and “xoro” (stone) forms tazod (contrast). The transformation of the stone into a ruby through blood-tears symbolizes purification of the self through love and suffering—a hallmark of Sufi enlightenment.

Jamoling partavidin sham‘ o‘ti gar gulsiton ermas,

Nedin parvona o‘t ichra o‘zin solur Xaliloso?

Had the light of Your face not turned the candle's flame into a rose garden, why would the moth, like Khalil, throw itself into the fire?

“Xaliloso” refers to Prophet Ibrahim (Khalilullah – Friend of God), a talmih based on the Qur'anic story where Nimrod cast him into the fire, but by God's will, the fire turned cool and safe. The moth's leap into the flame mirrors the devotee's surrender into divine love. Here, the fire symbolizes ishq, the annihilating yet purifying force that transforms the self.

Malohat birla tuzdung sarvqadlar qomatin, ya‘ni

Ki mundoq zeb birla ul alifni aylading zebo.

With grace You fashioned the stately cypresses—their forms as if You adorned the letter alif with beauty.

In Sufi symbolism, the cypress (sarv) signifies the upright, liberated soul—those who have transcended the self. The alif, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, represents divine unity (tawhid). Thus, Navoi implies that the lovers—Majnun, Vomiq, Farhod—stand aligned like cypresses, embodying the oneness of divine being (wahdat al-wujud).

Qanoatning dalilin inzivo qilding, yana bir ham

Dalil ushbuki qoni‘ harfidin xalq aylading anqo.

You made seclusion the proof of contentment, and from the letter of qoni‘ (content), You fashioned the rare bird Anqo.

Here, the words qanoat (contentment), qoni‘ (satisfied), and anqo (the legendary phoenix-like bird) form an instance of ishtiqoq (etymological wordplay). The Anqo, in Navoi’s lexicon, represents the rare, unattainable truth. True understanding of God (ma‘rifat) requires qanoat—spiritual contentment. As in “Lison ut-Tayr,” the Anqo or Simurgh is both the goal and the mirror of the seekers themselves.

Navoiy qaysi til birla sening hamding bayon qilsun,

Tikan jannat guli vasfin qilurda gung erur go‘yo.

With what tongue, Navoi asks, could I express Your praise—when even the thorn is mute before the rose of Paradise?

Here, Navoi ends in profound humility (tawazu‘). He likens himself to a thorn incapable of praising the divine rose. This also recalls his statement in Navodir un-nihoya: “Though I am Alisher, in poetry I am but a poor beggar.” The contrast (tazod) between the thorn and the rose mirrors the opposition between the human and the divine—signifying that even in Jannah (Paradise), the created cannot fully articulate the Creator’s perfection.

Thus, throughout the ghazal, Navoi’s art lies in transforming classical romantic imagery into a spiritual allegory of divine unity and love, synthesizing poetic beauty with metaphysical depth. Each talmih, tashbeh, and tazod serves not mere ornamentation, but revelation—the unveiling of the eternal within the transient.

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