

Alisher Navai's Thoughts and Dreams of a Preeminent Person

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Abstract: The comprehensive aspects of Alisher Navai's creation directly expose such concepts as the perfect individual, the author's fate, role in the world, and happiness and wellbeing. Predicated on an individual's journey to perfection, a society emerges wherein the social environment plays a significant role in determining the spiritual profile of the individual. Particularly, Navai's fully creative life works primarily to highlight the interrelationships between an individual and society, and the significant tasks imposed upon deeply ingrained ideas and views with great expectation. This article analyses and assesses the portrayal of an individual as the highest value as philosophically depicted in Navai's epic "Khamsa".

1 INTRODUCTION

We honour Alisher Navai as a thinker and poet. The term "thinker" denotes a person possessing the capability for profound and comprehensive philosophical contemplation, an endeavour that transcends the talents of an average writer. This is why, although numerous poets and writers have graced our world, only a handful are considered deserving of this honourable title.

Firstly, a contemplative writer must possess profound knowledge, a broad worldview, and substantial life experience. Secondly, they should have a vivid understanding of eternal concepts such as the meaning of life, the human condition, good and evil, love and hate, halal and haram, immortality and mortality, sophistication and negligence, friendship and hostility, religion and treason. They must be capable of deeply understanding the essence of such timeless concepts as enmity, religion, and treason and should be able to analyse them from a philosophical perspective. Thirdly, they must have advanced skills to express their opinions and thoughts vividly, concisely, and effectively using artistic devices. This is a lofty status that not every artist can attain. In essence, Alisher Navai's works serve as an encyclopaedia of life. There is scarcely a life issue, human value or feeling, virtue or vice that he has not

explored! "If we delve deeply into the work and creativity of our great humanist poet, we find ourselves astonished at how his genius encompasses all spheres of social life, ideology and culture." [1.4]

2 DISCUSSION

Indeed, nothing eluded Navai's profound insight. For instance, he discourses on the role of parents in a child's life and the duty of a child towards parents:

Boshni fido ayla ato qoshiga,
Jismni qil sadqa ano boshiga.
Tun-kununga aylagali nur fosh,
Birisin oy angla, birisin quyosh [2.139].

The above-mentioned extract translates to English as:
Devote your mind to your father's needs,
Sacrifice yourself for your mother's needs.
They illuminate your day and night
Like the moon and the sun, night and day.

Content: "Offer your mind to your father and your body to your mother. Consider one as the moon that illuminates your night and the other as the sun that lights your day."

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No one can describe the role of parents in a child's life more eloquently: parents are as essential to a child as the moon and the sun are to the world! Indeed, just as the moon gives light to the night and the sun to the day, so the father illuminates the night of the child's life, and the mother fills the day with light. Without one of them, the night will seem half light and half dark.

Reflecting on the relationship between a teacher and a student, the philosopher states, "If a person has endured hardship to teach you a single letter, you could not repay them with a hundred treasures of wealth."

Haq yo'lida senga bir harf o'qutmush ranj ila,
Aylamak bo'lmas ado oning haqqin yuz ganj ila
[2.128].

The English translation reads:

If a person teaches you even a single letter of goodness with effort,
A hundred treasures of kings would not be enough to repay them.

This is the poet's philosophical conclusion about the relationship between teacher and student. Indeed, the status of a teacher is momentous. It cannot be compared to anything. There's a saying that goes, "A teacher is as great as your father." When a wise man was asked the meaning of this saying, he replied: "Because my father brought me down from the sky, and the teacher elevated me again from the ground to the sky."

Regarding youth, Navai says:
Yig'itlig'da yig' limning mahzani,
Qarilig' chog'ida sarf qilgin ani [2.128].

It is known that the knowledge gained in youth is as enduring as a pattern carved in stone. Beyond that, individuals will be consumed with the worries of life, and will not have the opportunity to acquire knowledge. Gradually, as people say, "memory does not do what it promises."

In the preface of his first book "Badoe' ul-Bidaya", Alisher Navai underscored that literature is a tool for education. He noted that any artistic work should not be devoid of enlightening thoughts and advice, and wrote, "Let there be a ghazal, yet your speech will not be verse. If the poem lacks purpose, it will be a waste of labour and effort." After that, he emphasises that his romantic ghazals are not devoid of educational

and philosophical verses. In this sense, the poet's legacy is one of the powerful tools of spiritual and moral education. Nobody in Uzbek literature has said it as eloquently as Navai did.

To attain the perfection the poet dreams of, one must possess mature manners, acquire all human virtues, master all the skills of their time, not separate science and craft, strive for perfection not only spiritually, but also physically, and always be ready to serve their country. To be a loyal child to one's homeland, one must place the sense of duty and responsibility above all else. The spectrum of virtues Navai desired and expected from everyone is so broad that they are too numerous to count.

In fact, were the poet's advice, opinions, requirements, and wishes related to human education collected and arranged systematically, a unique program and manual would emerge, indicating paths towards human perfection. In the great "Hamsa", we encounter a series of perfect individuals in Navai's vision of preeminence. Among them are historical figures, historical-legendary figures, and artistic images created by the poet with the highest skill.

These heroes, according to the author's purpose and their role in the epics, are depicted on different levels. Therefore, a comprehensive study is necessary to apply them in a broad and deep way. Hence, in this article, we will focus solely on the images of Farkhad and Majnun, which played a crucial role in the poet's work. Abdurauf Fitrat writes, "Navai primarily expressed his thoughts and dreams about the perfect person through these two images. 'Farhad, the main character of the play, is considered by Navai as the ideal human type,' He will prove with every action that he is mature in knowledge, talent, bravery, and strength. Secondly, he saw Socrates' image in Farhad, 'the embodiment of his faith and property'[4.110]. Navai also creates the image of an ideal man in his conception through this character who calls a person to perfection, glorifying human perfection and critiquing human shortcomings in new interpretations of 'Hamsa'".

Among the researched works, several monographs were published. These include studies by M. Muhiddinov on "The Concept of Humanity in the Works of Alisher Navai and His Predecessors" (Tashkent, 1995) and N. Gafforova on "The Symbol of Sufis in Alisher Navai's 'Hamsa'" (Tashkent, 1999).

Moreover, Abdurauf Fitrat's selected works over two volumes, (Volume 2. Tashkent, 2000, pp. 110-117) and Komilov N.'s "Sufism. The First Book" (Tashkent, 1996, 208 p. 123), emphasize the essence of all nations' literature and the art of speech in general.

With the emergence of Sufism and the development of a comprehensive set of requirements and rules aimed at leading a person to perfection, Eastern literature, originally inclined towards advice and wisdom, began to reflect this process based on a specific programme and regulation.

According to this programme, a person embarking on the path of perfection must traverse the stages of shari'a law, tariqat, and truth. In particular, the practical part of tariqat encompasses the status and situations experienced during tax regulations. Thoughts about human perfection in Sufi literature reflect the situation and thoughts of a Sufi devotee in a certain position or facing a specific situation.

Artistic maturity's long-lasting, painful, and complex path is expressed in smaller lyrical genres such as ghazal, rubai, while the process in epics is often shown from beginning to end [5.123]. For example, in Alisher Navai's work "Lison ut-tayr" (Language of Birds), the dialogue between student and teacher is reflected in "Khayrat –ul- Abror" as a tool of advice and in the epics "Farhad and Shirin" and "Layli and Majnun", it is wrapped in a cloak of artistic symbols.

N. Mallaev wrote, "Layli and Majnun is one of the saddest stories about love created in world literature" [6.21]. This sentiment can also be extended to the work "Farhod and Shirin". Indeed, when one approaches these two epics of Navai from the perspectives of secular literature and Sufism, it becomes apparent that they are stories of tragic love: the inability of two lovers to unite, which is considered heartbreaking in worldly interpretation.

According to Sufi philosophy, human life in this world is inherently sorrowful because one is separated from the Lord, who is deemed the ultimate wholeness from the beginning. Hence, the individual strives their whole life to reunite with the Lord. However, the material world, ego, and physical body pose obstacles in this pursuit. Sufi literature precisely reflects this process of an individual's liberation from ego and worldly concerns.

As per the principles of the art of speech, this concept is expressed through symbols. In recent years, there have been attempts to interpret the epics "Farkhad and Shirin" and "Layli and Majnun" from fresh perspectives. However, these analyses have generally remained confined to opinions expressed in a few articles or have been directed towards different objectives. Our intention is not to scrutinise these epics in their entirety; rather, we will examine them solely from the perspective of presenting the image of a perfect individual. Naturally, any work of art comprises several layers of meaning.

Epics are steeped in symbolism and hinge upon the relationship between the creator and the servant. The poet underscores the primacy of divine love from the beginning to the end of his works. To understand Farhad and Majnun's love, it is essential to elucidate Navai's perception of love. It is known that in his work "Mahbub ul-Qulub", he categorises love into three parts:

"The first part pertains to the love of ordinary people; it is commonplace and prevalent among individuals. They say, 'So-and-so fell in love with so-and-so.' Those who experience this kind of love suffer from it, and therefore, they dream of true love. This love is restricted to physical pleasure and sensual lust, and its highest level is a marriage sanctioned by the sharia law. The second part is the love peculiar to those who experience special pleasures, where individuals cast a pure eye on a pure face with pure intentions and a pure heart, becoming restless with the delight of that pure face. Through this pure facial expression, a genuine lover can enjoy the beauty of true love.

The third part is the love of the siddiqs – the righteous who live in anticipation of beholding the beauty of the truth (God) openly and are, therefore, desirable. Their hopes of seeing the truth (God) with their eyes have reached a level of self-forgetfulness, and even more so, they have ascended to the status of losing and perishing." In order to make this understandable to the reader, we have used the prose description of the work, not the original text.

Navai himself was aligned with pure love, and through this, he aspired for divine love. This is why in the epics "Farhad and Shirin" and "Layli and Majnun", he demonstrates the ascension of pure love, which is "characteristic of the possessors of special virtues", and how it transforms into true love, through artistic symbols. From beginning to end in the epics, Navai repeatedly emphasises that his characters

experience pure love. For instance, Farhad was a symbol of the greatness of his youth: His heart is pure, his eyes are pure, his tongue is pure, his words are pure [8-52-54].

Farhad's destiny has always been entrenched in chastity on the path of pure love. The poet depicts his purity through Mehnbonu's language as follows: "Bonu said in her heart: this is a shame, the jewel of this world is pure. It is clear to me that action is truth, and purity is wisdom." In this brief passage, the words 'pure' and 'chastity' are mentioned four times. Whenever Navai wants to draw attention to something, he continually focuses the reader's attention on that point throughout the work, never hesitating to repeatedly mention words that may seem redundant for this purpose, because he is a master of the art of drawing the reader's attention to the necessary points. For Farhad and Majnun, Shirin and Layli were not goals but means to achieving the perfection of divine love.

In Sufism, this is referred to as mazhar. A mazhar is a person who reflects divine beauty or perfection. True lovers often reach true love by loving a joke. For Farhad and Majnun, Shirin and Layla were such a joke. In that case, the roles of Shirin and Laili become clear. In one of Rumi's mathnavis, it is said that Laila ceased to be important to Majnun after he fell in love. Both Farhad and Majnun are in love. Their narratives are characterised by burgeoning love, extraordinary circumstances, unusual nature, and talents unlike others. Both are advanced in knowledge and ethics, physically attractive. If one pays attention, all the experiences that befell both Farkhad and Majnun began after they mastered the arts of their time, because according to Sufism, perfection is achieved through love. In the preface of the epic, the poet states, "Oh mind, who is heedless in your way, a madman is wise in your way" [8.50], the poet emphasised that "this is the way to the heart". And the driving force of the day is love. The human soul's aspiration towards its origin, Almighty God, is realised in two ways: through the path (tariqat) or through love.

Here, let's draw attention to one point: Farkhad's birth was prophesied. This phenomenon is usually associated with the lives of prophets and guardians. For example, the renowned shaykh Babayi Samosi, while passing through the village of Kasri Hinduvan near Bukhara, foretells the birth of a guardian. When a man - Bahouddin Naqshband was born, he entrusted his upbringing to his student, Amir Kulol [9.42].

Similarly, the legendary sage Jomosp foretells the birth of Farkhad and entrusts Suhayla with his upbringing. Indeed, according to Navai's interpretation, Farkhad is not without the role of a governor. It is known that he was educated by several pirs (mastermind) in Sufism. After training their students to the best of their abilities, shaykhs recommended them to more powerful pirs based on their talents. After teaching Farhad everything he knew, Suhayla sends him to Socrates's school. On his journey to defeat Temir Paykar, Khizr meets Farkhad. He says, "I will not come to you" [7-164].

Khizr obi (obi means water) appears in many nations' literature as a prophet who sought the water of life and achieved eternal life by drinking it. He is portrayed as a saviour who rescues people from difficult situations, aids them, and guides them to their objective. N. Komilov writes, "Khizr can be considered as Farkhad's second cousin," he is a helper who appeared from nowhere to assist Farkhad, who was striving towards a great goal. Farkhad accepted Khizr's counsel, looked into the cup, and saw the mountain where Socrates resided in the cave. The greater the Shaykh, the more towering and majestic is the mountain on which he lives, and the journey to reach it is also challenging. At the same time, he does not lack traits similar to guardians: Adobi Khidayat, ahli yanglig, Ayini valoyat akhli yanglig' [9-232].

In his works, Navai portrays Farkhad and Majnun as consummate lovers, filled with pure love, who eventually attain true love. This is particularly evident in the chapter "Layli and Majnun", where he posits that love purifies the individual, liberating them from imperfections and leading them to perfection. In Navai's perspective, metaphorical love acts like an alchemical process, purifying the individual, such that their 'dusty body' is eventually transmuted into gold. This notion echoes the ancient belief held by alchemists that, under high temperatures, various substances could be transformed into gold – a concept they dedicated substantial efforts to realising.

In this context, love is also likened to grass – even if it's the most burning, most scorching grass. Under its influence, the undesirable and detrimental traits of the lover are amplified and the spirit is purified. This process is the metaphorical alchemy that Navai refers to. Love that has undergone this alchemical transformation becomes renowned worldwide. The essence of true love is the ultimate worldly experience. "Oyinai jahonnamo" is, in fact, a reference to the heart imbued with love. The heart of

an individual, liberated from worldly concerns and wholly focused on God, becomes as pure as a mirror, reflecting the world and its events.

It should be noted here that divine love, like worldly love, is reciprocal: God expresses His love through unseen signs. Both the universe and humankind are the fruits of God's love. He would not create and attract if there were no love. Conversely, without love and the drive to seek it, one cannot attain God's love. This love takes two forms: 1) God falls in love with His servant and ignites the flame of divine love in their heart; 2) the servant loves their Lord and renounces everything for the sake of this love, enduring pain and suffering. In return, God shows His mercy, making the servant one of His beloved.

For instance, in "Farkhad and Shirin", Farkhad sees Shirin and falls in love with her at first sight, yearning for her after reciting verses. Recognising his dedication, Shirin reciprocates his love purely. Conversely, God Himself initially revealed His beauty to Majnun, who, consumed by His love, abandoned worldly pursuits to seek the divine beloved. However, inevitable barriers such as the world, people, and the physical body, stood between them.

Given that the epics are named "Farkhad and Shirin" and "Layli and Majnun", it's not surprising that in one the boy and in the other the girl, take precedence. Farkhad's character, somewhat exaggeratedly, reflects the principles of futuvvat (generosity in Sufism) and Naqshbandiya. He personifies noble qualities typically attributed to young men – generosity, fervour, loyalty, and diligence – in abundance! Since his youth, he empathised with the people, strived to alleviate their hardships, showed compassion, despite possessing the strength of an elephant, never harmed even an ant, endured life's trials, and demonstrated self-sacrifice. These traits render Farkhad a true young man. Despite his extraordinary qualities and unique talent, he never distanced himself from the people or abandoned worldly pursuits, but rather lived by the motto "Dil ba yoru dast ba kor!" (Love in the heart, hand at work). He constantly thought of serving and benefiting people. This becomes particularly evident when Farkhad travels to Armenia in search of Shirin and witnesses the miners' strenuous and unproductive labour. Upon finding Shirin, he constructs a castle for his beloved, surrounded by a pond.

Given that all of these were achieved by cutting through mountain stones, the extent of Farkhad's suffering becomes clear. From this perspective, it's easy to comprehend Navai's promotion of the idea that it's crucial to engage in deeds for the country and people that ensure their satisfaction. Not only does Shirin benefit from this, but the entire nation does as well.

The poet suggests that actions performed in the name of truth bear fruit, even during the darkest of times. According to the poet's perspective, an individual's humanity is principally determined by their social activity, their contribution to the common good, and their capacity to alleviate the burdens of others. Someone who doesn't contribute to society and fails to empathise with the people's struggles can hardly be deemed a true human being. This is why Farkhad is driven to acquire knowledge and skills. Notably, Shirin also places humanity above love: 'Neither lover nor beloved are jealous of me, if I were to die, this would be my end'[8-393].

Such viewpoints are also evident in "Layli and Majnun". For example, Majnun, having 'fallen in love' and 'traversed the plains of sorrow', acknowledges the power of love, but doesn't endorse Majnun's alienation from society and his wish to live in solitude. Majnun's journey began the day a spark from the divine fell into his heart, leading him to the steppe. The steppe signifies his entrance into the realm of love. In Sufism, the steppe symbolises the boundlessness of love. The poet emphasises this with the line: 'Here came the steppe, the steppe of love'[9-53]. No one has ever reached its end, nor returned from it; the human bones strewn across the steppe bear witness to this.

Majnun treads the path of Bayazid Bistami, a renowned Sufi mystic, who advocated the way of sukra – intoxication, vanity. According to Bistami, only those who are completely immersed in the love of God – considered divine wine – and forget themselves, can experience divine enlightenment. Anyone who is not a companion is not in love. This is why intoxication and drunkenness feature so prominently in classical literature. Thus, the poet likens the individual in sukra to a person who has dived into the sea and drowned, whereas the individual who has attained Sakhav is akin to a pearl diver.

For instance, whilst Majnun's actions only benefitted himself, Farkhad's labours in digging a ditch and a

pond serve not only Shirin, but the entire nation. Majnun, however, embodies the day, and his path (Majnun yuli) symbolises a journey towards truth through the heart.

Although the poet himself subscribes to the Naqshbandi teaching, he does not reject the paths of Sufis such as Ibrahim Adham, Bayazid Bistami, and Rabia al-Adawiyya. Instead, he respects their deeds and statuses, mentioning these great figures in several of his works and recounting stories related to them.

The 'madman' finds joy in the beauty of flowers and communes with animals. The flora, fauna, and the other-worldly entities sympathise with him and strive to ease his pain. It's evident that Farkhad also formed friendships with birds and animals, as when Khosrow was secluded in the Salosil cave. In reference to this, Shirin writes in a letter: "You have attained the status of Solomon"[6.21].

3 CONCLUSION

Through the depiction of heroes befriending the world of plants and animals, Navai puts forth the concept of universal unity. As both humans and plants are creations of God, there should inherently be unity and harmony between them. Indeed, Allah has imbued every particle of the universe with divine qualities.

From this perspective, destroying nature, killing birds and animals, are actions against Allah, thus they should be respected and treated as friends. God is the ruler of all. Both plants and birds sing the *zhikr* of Allah in their unique ways. These are the noble ideas put forth by Navai. Pertinently, the following anecdote concerning Bahauddin Naqshband is worth mentioning: "Hazrat Naqshband was riding a white horse. When questioned about his choice, he responded, 'On horseback, I can better hear the hymns of the animate and inanimate entities around us singing to the glory of Allah.'"

Navai does not separate spiritual beauty from humanity, and he was an advocate of a symbiotic relationship between knowledge and craftsmanship. That is, a person who is spiritually mature and also physically attractive embodies perfect beauty. Similarly, if a learned individual also possesses a craft, and a craftsman, in turn, embraces enlightenment, this is regarded as true perfection. The poet suggests it is desirable for a person to attain

maturity both physically and mentally, in both knowledge and craft. Badiuzzaman, son of Husayn Boykara, echoed this sentiment in his address to Mirza: "...Beauty is mixed with image and poetry, the exterior is handsome and the interior is perfect." All these qualities are embodied in Farkhad: he was proficient in all trades as well as in all sciences. Alisher Navai's work is a unique source of wisdom. Farkhad is not only spiritually mature but also physically robust and attractive, brave and courageous. His harmony with people, constant readiness to serve his country, and using his knowledge to alleviate people's burdens, to ensure their well-being and happiness, all demonstrate his youthful vigour and allegiance to the Naqshbandi teaching.

The Naqshbandi order promoted this path as the most effective and efficient means of attaining God. In this way, Alisher Navai conceived the image of a lover who reached the truth (God) through the means of love, through *tariqat* (Naqshbandi) in the form of Navai Farkhad, and in the case of Majnun, through love. If you seek an answer to any arising question and turn to his work, you will surely find wisdom suited to your state of mind. Your aims will be realised, and your heart will find solace. This is due to the poet's wisdom, garnered from a life observing the entire spectrum of human nature, deeply analysing the phenomena of nature and society, and measuring all things and concepts related to the universe and humanity.

The wisdom in the poet's works, drawn from life, is beautiful in form, profound in content, and elevated in artistic terms. Hence, it never loses its relevance and is universally admired. This article, referencing the judgment of wise individuals, is composed of the insightful words of this great thinker and writer, from nearly all his works, along with deep philosophical contemplations and insightful observations of life.

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