

Harmony of Sufi Symbols and Poetic Figures in Alisher Navoi's Ghazals of Na't (Glorification)

Karamat Mullakhodjaeva

Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature named after Alisher Navoi, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: More than ten na't (glorification) ghazals are incorporated into each divan of "Khazoyin ul-maoni", adhering to certain standards of Eastern divan tradition. Around fifty ghazals of this category can be found in the complete works. The dictionary definition of na't is an adjective, and as a literary term, it denotes a work in praise of Rasulallah or specific chapters of a large work, as well as poems of specific genres in divans. This article explores the ghazals of the na't series dedicated to the praise of Muhammad p.b.u.h. (Peace be upon him). Firstly, the ghazals extolling him, followed by the ghazals penned down based on the event of Miraj are examined. The analysis concentrates on the Prophet's impeccable conduct, crucial aspects pertaining to his prophetic endeavours, and the artistic depiction of the Miraj event. The author provides analyses rooted in artistic criteria. This series illustrates the role and significance of imagery in ghazals, and the expression of the theme through poetic figures. Owing to the constancy of the mystical content in Navai's ghazals, particularly in these ghazals of na't, the article has specifically investigated the harmony between mystical symbols and poetic figures.

1 INTRODUCTION

A distinct segment of the ghazals in Alisher Navai's divans comprises na't ghazals. Traditionally, this series of ghazals is positioned after hamd (praises) and munojots (prayers) in every divan. The ghazals can be segregated into two categories: ghazals centred on the theme of praise and ghazals about Miraj. Even though the content of these poems is accepted as a traditional subject, they truly represent perfect exemplars for every Muslim believer — depicting the life of our prophet Muhammad p.b.u.h., the miracles bestowed upon him, specifically the account of the Miraj, and indeed, expressing infinite love for him. The content of na't ghazals is interwoven with the poet's religious and Sufi understanding, his perspectives and conceptions about Allah, the world, mankind, and Rasulallah, the ruler of the universe. Nonetheless, the poem is an outcome of artistic contemplation. It materialises driven by the aspiration to actualise the loftiest longings of the human psyche. Therefore, in the poet's na't ghazals, we gain insights into the events associated with the life of our prophet and his endeavours as the prophet on one hand, and

predominantly, we encounter an artistic expression of attitude towards him — unconditional love and a heart aflame with the desire to accept his intercession. The creation of this series of ghazals endowed the poet with inner tranquillity and spiritual fortitude, as he articulates in one of his ghazals. In the preceding series, that is, in wasf na't ghazals, the beauty, exemplary conduct, virtues, hadiths, and other qualities of this noble individual are elucidated. The second series — ghazals centred on the theme of Miraj, one of the miracles granted to Muhammad p.b.u.h., is devoted to the depiction of the Miraj event and its artistic interpretation. Occasionally, it is evident that these two distinct contents are conveyed in a single ghazal. Furthermore, among the poet's love ghazals, there are also ghazals portraying Rasulallah in the image of the beloved, and their examination necessitates special research.

2 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ghazals themed around na't and Miraj possess their own imagery and symbols, artistic and visual

* Corresponding author

means, more specifically, their own stylistic and artistic characteristics, thereby enabling their easy distinction from the composition of any *divan*. A sincere love for Rasulullah, and the fervour and intensity of this emotion, underpin the creation of this series of *ghazals*. The grounds for this love are disclosed in Quranic verses, hadiths and indeed, in the poet's *ghazals*. The poet speaks about this fiery love. The essence of this love is unveiled through the image of a *samandar* in the *beyt*. In classical texts, this creature, imagined as being born from and living in fire, symbolically represents the lover who dwells in the flames of love. The poet employs the symbol-tashbeh of *samandar* in the *beyt*, highlighting that love for Rasulullah constitutes the meaning of life for a believer. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali wrote: "Loving the Prophet is praiseworthy, as he is God's beloved, God's *habib!* That is, the beloved of our beloved is also our beloved" (Alisher Navoi. (1990); 239 Fazzālī). Love for Rasulullah, who has become a symbol of perfection in appearance, is associated with love for Allah. In literary works, especially in Navai's *ghazals*, the image of this noble individual is unparalleled in beauty and character, serving as a model. That's why the poet, while describing him in his *na't ghazals*, compares him to the Moon and the Sun, and regards his lovers, including himself, as equal to *vafodor* it, *xor-u xas*, *zarra*, *g'ubor*. All this allows us, on the one hand, to study the spiritual-moral world of the poet, and on the other hand, to appreciate his artistic skills. In the views of many scholars, including Navai, the life of our saintly Prophet serves as an example. For instance, while discussing Maulana Rumi in the work "Nasoyimul-muhabbat", the poet writes: "Shaykh Rukniddin Alouddawla said that this person's words are very welcome. If they ask me about my life, if I have anything at home? They used to say there's nothing, they would rejoice and give thanks, stating that today our house is like the Prophet's house and they would say the kitchen is ready, claiming that this house smells like the house of the Pharaoh" (Tahuri. (1370 Hijri); 327). Certainly, these views aren't expressed to promote poverty. This solace lies with a man who has learnt to control his ego, who has already conquered it, and whose soul is connected to the divine world. Navai's *na't ghazals* praising our prophet contain numerous symbolic references to nature, its elements, and events. This should be connected with the creative individual's need to live in harmony with the universe and nature.

In the opening verse of the poem, the poet likens the eyebrows of Allah's Messenger to the *hilol* - crescent, i.e., the new moon, utilising the expression '*oy boshiga*' as a play on words, in order to convey two different meanings and to lend charm to the *beyt*. The eyebrows are compared to a crescent, the face is likened to the Sun - it is underscored that the faces of the Sun and the Prophet are like two facets of a single apple.

It is evident that in *na't ghazals*, significant attention was given to portraying the external beauty of Rasuli Akram. However, this is not merely a description, but one can sense that it is in harmony with his perfect behaviour, and the verses are illuminated by the light of reason.

The poet admires the Prophet's face and eyes as a manifestation of the perfection of God's power. These verses can also be employed to explicate the significance of these symbols, which have ascended to the status of a term in Sufi poetry. "It is said the face signifies light and images, which culminate in pleasure, and the opening of the light of faith and the doors of knowledge, and the lifting of the veils of true beauty" (Chulpon. (1993); 44). And the eye is the revelation of the divine world, the perfect man himself. Because the eye sees everything but itself. Thus, these qualities are embodied in the beauty of a perfect person like Rasulullah - in his face and eyes. The poet develops this thought.

The first hemistich of the *beyt* can be interpreted as follows: "The mirror of the sura called '*vash-shams*' (oath to the Sun) fell on your beauty moon, more accurately, on your moon-like beauty." In this surah, the main emphasis is on the salvation of a person who keeps his soul pure. The explanation given after the ten ayats of the '*vash-shams*' surah states: "...whenever the Prophet, peace be upon him, recites the aforementioned ayats, he prays to God Almighty: 'O Allah, bestow piety on my *nafs* - my soul. You yourself are its keeper and you are the best purifier of it..." (Alikhantora Soguni. (1991); 505). Thus, the *beyt* says the reason why this sura was associated with the depiction of his beauty, which is clear and beautiful like the moon, and with the fact that he recognised the happiness of the Messenger of Allah, the Prophet p.b.u.h., who asked for salvation from the Purifier in order to acquire the piety of the soul, and live with this desire, imagination and lifestyle. However, every Sufi considered the attainment of self-righteousness as an important task on the path to their goal. From the viewpoint of artistic representation, it can be observed that poetic figures of *belgisiz tashbeh* and *lutf* are utilised in this *beyt*. That is, the word '*oyina*' (mirror) alludes to two

meanings: 1) mirror and 2) moon (jamoling oyiga). Also, mirror-looking glass concepts necessitate the figure of takrir (repetition of meaning). The words 'ko'zning qorasi', 'mozoga va surma' are also similar in meaning.

This image has assisted the poet in vividly expressing his love for the Prophet PBUH, as well as the Sufi concept.

The sun is one of Navai's favourite symbols and metaphors. In one ghazal, this symbol-tashbeh is compared with the beauty of the Prophet, in another couplet, it appears as his admirer, and it becomes a symbol of humility.

In the couplet, Navai very beautifully illustrates the scene created by the image of the sun; that is, the sun descending from the sky and finally setting, which the poet describes as the sun's desire to caress its face against the soil at the doorstep of the Prophet PBUH's house. The sun, considered one of the largest celestial bodies in the universe, shows no hesitation in pressing itself against the soil at the door of the lord of the universe. The poet manages to create beautiful and unique landscapes by applying the method of personification, attributing human characteristics to inanimate objects - using the features of the tashhis figure. Simultaneously, hyperbole and antithesis have also been employed here.

The symbol of the sun, which has gained special importance in the ghazals dedicated to the Messenger of Allah, serves as a critical source and tool for expressing various facets of the poet's creative intent. If we consider that the symbol of the sun in the praise ghazals mainly represents the source of theology, then in this couplet, the sun is equated with the Prophet PBUH through the use of the tashbeh figure. A poet who uses the contrast of the symbols of the sun and the particle (with Navai considering himself a particle in the face of the Prophet's sun) in order to enhance the impact of his thoughts, employs the images of the slave and master through the use of tashbeh and antithesis, and beautifully illustrates the state of the lyrical hero – the lover, and the position of the Messenger of God. After all, the words, lifestyle, and guidance of our Prophet are blessings for his ummah to achieve happiness in both worlds, and they serve as examples for saliks. This noble person who calls his ummah to purity, honesty, and the path of the Truth in this world, will provide his intercession in the next. Bearing these in mind, the poet-lover compares himself to a particle and a slave, and compares this noble person to the sun and a master. A particle is the smallest object that moves irregularly within the sun. It can be compared to a person who wanders amidst the worries and joys of

the world. Without the Sun, not even a particle would exist. This point can be further substantiated by Navai's couplets.

In Arabic, "lav lok" in the couplet translates to "if you were not". We come across the Hadith Qudsi in the sources, "O my Messenger, if you were not, I would not have created the worlds". The purpose of creating the universe is humanity, and the purpose of creating man is to develop a perfect human being, like our Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him. This is acknowledged elsewhere.

"If there was no Messenger, God would not have created anything. Others are like a tree sprouting from a lateral root. Rasulullah is a grand tree spread throughout the world." Thoughts consistent with this sentiment are expressed in numerous works, including the aforementioned couplet. "Praise and glorification are due to Allah, the supreme power, who made the light of Muhammad and created the world for his sake. The purpose of creating the world was to create man... Therefore, Allah created a group of individuals with great spirit and purity among the people and assigned them the task of being the envoy between Himself and His servants. The first among these is the father of all people, our father Hazrat Safiyullah. The best of all, the last prophet Muhammad Mustafa, may God bless him and grant him peace" (Istanbul. (1995); 6).

The couplet suggests that when the clay of the Messenger of Allah was fashioned, Khizr and Isa, peace be upon him, were created from its excess. This concept refers to the fact that Prophet Muhammad is the prophet of all prophets. Couplets with this content are often found in the poet's poems.

This couplet corresponds to the ayah in the Holy Quran: "Muhammad is not the father of any of you, but he is the prophet of God and the last of the prophets..." (5; 307). In expressing this fact, the poet beautifully utilises the semantic possibilities of the word 'khotam', drawing attention to the creation of the "body of dough" relating to Prophet Muhammad. Professor Najmiddin Komilov briefly comments on the cosmic concepts of Sufism, i.e., the visions of the universe's structure, and says: "According to the philosophy of Sufism, Allah the Highest (also called Jawhari zot, Absolute spirit, Aqli kull) first created the light of Muhammad, peace be upon him. He then created worlds and people because of this light. Thus, the light of Muhammad or the truth of Muhammad lies at the foundation of the universe. Since the light of Muhammad existed at the beginning of the worlds, Adam Safiyullah, the first human being, can be referred to as the son of Muhammad, in other words,

both father and son in relation to Muhammad" (Alisher Navoi. (1987); 42).

Utilising the *muvozana* figure, the poet achieves a melodious effect due to the harmony of words in the hemistiches of the couplets, and reveals the essence of thought through the *tazod* figure (image-meaning, parent-child), asserting:

"Adam, peace be upon him, who regarded all mankind as his children (who was the father of all mankind), is outwardly a father to you (to Muhammad p.b.u.h.), but in essence, he is your child." "In this, contrary to what some people think, it's not the historical personality of the blessed one, as stated multiple times in mystical sources, but Muhammad, who was a prophet when the clay of Adam p.b.u.h. was fashioned, that is, the true Muhammadiyah, which should be taken into account" (Alisher Navoi. (1988);76).

Every Sufi striving for perfection and perfect behaviour considers Rasuli Akram as their model, hence this aspect is given significant attention. Noting that not only ordinary people - believers and Muslims, but also those chosen for them - prophets are examples of greatness, the poet underscores the role and importance of the Messenger of Allah in humanity's destiny. If we view the children of Adam - the prophets sent to guide people worldwide on the right path, as a ring (circle), Rasulullah p.b.u.h. is recognised as the name (essence) inscribed in the eye that binds the ring, and it is the essence of life, of vitality.

Symbols associated with the life and activities of the Prophet, such as the Kaaba, Makkah, and Madinah play a vital role in the expression of religious views in Navoi's poems. The poet intertwines his love for Rasulullah with the happiest or most unhappy days in this noble person's life.

The thoughts expressed in this verse through the depiction of scenes are related to our prophet's migration from Makkah to Madinah. It's known that in the thirteenth year of the prophethood, the Prophet p.b.u.h. migrated from Makkah to Madinah. Expressing this event through the *tashhis* figure in the couplet, the poet draws attention to the colour and shape of Kabatullah, i.e., "If the Kaaba isn't mourning for the loss of you (of Rasulullah – K.M.), why is it clad in a black mourning dress with a sewn collar?" When interpreting the image of the Kaaba in the couplet in conjunction with the symbolic-Sufi meaning of "soul", one senses that the people who couldn't migrate with the Messenger of God, and concurrently, despite the time and place, the lovers suffering from his migration, including the poet, are reflected.

Batkho is the name of a gorge near Makkah. Sometimes, it's also used to refer to Makkah. Reinforcing the idea expressed in the previous couplet, the poet now employs the art of *tafrii*, denying the nature of the real scene, linking it with his mental anguish, and justifying it in a unique way (*tafrii* typically corresponds to the *tashbihi tafsil*), stating: "This Batkho, that is, stretched over Makkah, is not sands, but its (Makkah's) body has fallen to pieces in your grief." A very beautiful and moving analogy. If the people of Makkah are missing the Messenger of Allah after his departure, the people of Madinah are eagerly awaiting him, and the poet expresses this event in the following couplet through *tafrii* and *tashhis*.

Yasrib is the ancient name of the city of Medina. When news of the Prophet p.b.u.h.'s resettlement spread, the trip would sometimes be delayed. In Medina, not only people but everything - roads, gorges, valleys - were waiting for him. The poet was able to convey people's condition and mood with the help of the image of the road, stating: "It is not the road, but after separation from you, it fell into this situation by tearing off his face with his fingernails." The poet seems to have found the most potent influence when he compares the roads of Madinah stretching across the sand dunes to the situation of a lover living in separation.

One can observe that the image of a dog is appropriately used to express sincere love and devotion to Rasulullah. In our classical literature, a dog is a symbol of love, loyalty, devotion, and humility. The opportunity to express the mental state of a true lover is extensive.

The quality of loyal love of "it" is understood in the couplet. The poet conveys its content through the *tazod* figure (*mahrum*, i.e., unattainable, and *mahram*, i.e., friend, confidant) and *tajnis* figure (*mahram - mahrum // tajnisi noqis* or *tajnisi hatti*). It's noteworthy that both special *mahrams* and *mahzum mahrum* are expressed as 'it' in the image of fidelity. The image of a dog is also employed in *ghazals* and *beyts*, instilling a desire to receive the Prophet's intercession. In essence, "On the Day of Reckoning — Judgment Day, the sins of those who have received the intercession of the Messenger of Allah will be more readily forgiven. The poet expresses lovers of the Messenger of God through the image of a dog, elucidating his thoughts by figures such as *takrir* (repetition) and *ishtiqoq* (*hisob*, *behisob*, *mahsub*)."

Beautiful examples of this imagery can also be found in *beyts* dedicated to the image of the sky in *Miraj's ghazals*.

Sheri gardun is Asad, which is considered the fifth sign of the sky. In terms of its name and position, Asad is the strongest of the celestial constellations. The poet, utilising the poetic possibilities of the word "sher" (lion), the namesake of Asad, states: "Asad, who keeps the dogs of your door (other zodiac signs) close to him, becomes a dog with a chained neck." Love for Rasulullah is manifested in various forms in the na't ghazals. Among these, the ghazals related to the miracles of Miraj are particularly eye-catching. "The great status (Miraj – K.M.) that no one else has been given allows the people of Sufism to draw closer to the Truth, to communicate with God, and to receive God's grand gifts and blessings. It represents the most authentic and exemplary form of mortality and immortality..."

Qurb in beyt is a case of tariqat. Qurb signifies closeness or approach. Salik's state of feeling close to God, directly sensing God's presence, also implies that God's gaze falls upon him. Sufis often equate qurb with Muhammad Mustafa's arrival to Allah on the night of Miraj. The ultimate dream of Sufis is to achieve this status. Emphasising that the Prophet attained this position under the guidance of Jabroil, peace be upon him, the poet utilises Hudhud and his companions as talmeh. That is to say, it was not Jabroil, like Hudhud, but Rasulullah, like simurgh, who achieved this status.

"Miraj" is interpreted in Sufism dictionaries as the elevation of the soul and spiritual journey. Miraj provides great spiritual and moral sustenance and strength for Sufi people (ain ul-yakin), who consider their whole desire and the meaning of their life to reach Allah's will. This is precisely why, in Navoi's Miraj ghazals, the supremacy of the Sufi spirit can be discerned.

Sufis categorise the acquired sciences in understanding the truth as follows: a) ilm ul-yaqin, that is, belief through knowledge, complete understanding, and experience; b) ayn ul-yaqin, that is, assurance by seeing with one's own eyes, grounded in observation; c) haqq ul-yaqin — a genuine trust, a science of reaching the truth.

The people of ayn-ul-yaqin, who regard the Messenger of Allah as part of the people of haqq-ul-yaqin, know that the Prophet, may peace be upon him, ascended to heaven on the night of Miraj, and they believe that the dust stirred by the horse's feet is a tutiyo that enlightens their eyes. At the heart of these metaphors, it is clearly conveyed that our Prophet's lifestyle and activities are an example for Sufis to achieve perfection and fulfil their objectives.

"You are a Sufi of the world of purity, messengers - companions of other prophets (your friends,

companions). The throne is an excellent home for you."

On the night the Prophet ascended to heaven, he met the prophets who came before him, including Adam, Jesus, and Yahya, Yusuf, Idris, Musa, and Ibrahim, in each heaven. (They only reached the positions that the Messenger of God attained on this night posthumously.) The poet interprets this event in a Sufi way, expresses it artistically, and it became a significant event in the history of Sufism. The fact that the Messenger of Allah is Allah's protector is often explained by the phrase qoba qawsayn.

The phrase qoba qawsayn in the beyt signifies a distance as close as two bows (i.e., two eyebrows), or even closer, an incredibly small distance. It serves as an expression, and it signifies that our Prophet was extremely close to Allah on the night of Miraj. The poet, with special emphasis on this event, which can be considered the highest peak — the culmination of the Night of Miraj, believes that for the salik who dedicated his whole life to the pursuit of Truth, this would perfect his priesthood.

The content of the ghazals focusing on the topic of Miraj is an amalgamation of the events of Miraj and the poet's own imaginings and experiences tied to it. Within these, the imagery of koinot and tungi samo (the universe and the night sky, respectively) is particularly pivotal, as the miracles of Miraj are deeply interconnected with the night, the universe, and its celestial bodies.

When the position of the Messenger of God on the night of Miraj aligns with the heavenly bodies, the poet creates a metaphor comparing the Prophet and the stars surrounding him to a lamp on a dewy field at night and the sparkles reflected from its light. Here, 'oraz' symbolises a nightlight and the stars are likened to dew drops cascading from it.

The heavenly symbolism in the image of Miraj can be attributed, on the one hand, to the magnificence of the night of Miraj, and on the other, to the poet's love for Rasulullah. The poet artfully demonstrates the expressions of the celestial image on the night of Uruj, especially employing symbols such as mehr (sun), badr (moon), subh (dawn), nujum (star), and charkh (celestial sphere).

Miraj took place over a single night (transpiring in mere seconds, according to the Earth's time). The poet uses the figure of tashhis, expressing that the dawn, as an eyewitness to this nocturnal event, laments missing this particular evening and mourns daily. This affirms not just people, but all existence as being in love with the Prophet.

The poet describes, "The reason why the sky does not close its eyes each night (a hundred thousand eyes – representing a hundred thousand stars, i.e., *istiora* - a metaphor) is due to their longing for another vision of you." The figure of *tashhis*, frequently used in the *na't* ghazals, is also deployed in this *beyt*. From a religious perspective, not only humans but all things in the world glorify the Messenger of God and send blessings upon him. Thus, the anthropomorphisation of inanimate objects or non-human entities primarily concerns issues of artistry and, secondarily, relates to the aforementioned points.

It is acknowledged that *Rasulullah* ascended to heaven on the horse *Buroq*. The sanctity of this journey is also emphasised in this verse. The eyes of the stars (likened to the human eye) shine due to the dust (heavenly dust) stirred up by *Buroq*'s hooves. When *antimony* is applied to the eye, it becomes clearer. This is the sentiment the poet intended in the *beyt*, and in other instances, he compares this dust to *totiyo* (an ointment).

The poet uses the figure of *muvozana* in the verse, "I cannot extol your beauty as rapidly as the sky, because it moves faster than the sky, and I cannot liken your beauty to the moon, because the moon itself derives its light from your beauty." In accordance with this, the words in the *beyt* are used equivalently in terms of measurement. The use of this figure in the quoted *beyt* lends it a melodious quality. The theme of *na't*'s ghazals is vast. The poet, viewing the life of the Messenger of God as a model for his own life, like any believer, has transcribed many events tied to his life into verse, and has presented him as a role model for others. In this study, we confine ourselves to the poet's ghazals centred around the topics of *na't* and *miraj*. However, within the "*Khazayin ul-maoni*" collection, this series of ghazals occupies a substantial space. By studying them, one can acquire a much more profound understanding of our Prophet's personality and way of life

3 CONCLUSION

Thus, *na't* ghazals also align with the poet's religious and Sufi perspectives. *Na't* ghazals can be categorised into two groups based on their theme. The first series of ghazals glorifies *Rasulullah*, the Lord of the world, while the second artistically describes one of the miracles attributed to him — the events of *Miraj*. In the laudatory *na'ts*, primary attention is given to the artistic portrayal of his lifestyle, image, poetry, and hadiths, with the poet recognising him as a symbol of perfection. The poet emphasises that the

purpose of creating the world and mankind was to produce a perfect individual like *Rasulullah*. The ghazals themed around *Miraj* enable the poet to articulate his Sufi views whilst exalting the miracle of *Miraj*. The poet's ghazals confirm that the description of *Miraj* can be the most accurate and beautiful tool for expressing the dreams of an ardent lover yearning to approach the truth. To communicate this theme and meaning, the poet invokes numerous images and symbols, utilises allusions, refers to events from the Prophet's life, and employs figures such as *tashbeh*, *tazod*, *tashhis*, *husni taalil*, and others in correspondence with them. In this series of ghazals, especially those themed around *Miraj*, the dominance of the *tashhis* figure is palpable. This should be understood in relation to the events of *Miraj* and the manner of thinking intrinsic to religious imagination, i.e., all entities — the entire existence — send blessings to the Messenger of Allah.

The specific symbols and poetic figures employed to articulate the theme and meaning of the ghazals cultivate the unique artistic and stylistic traits of this series of ghazals.

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