

ALISHER NAVOI'S "NASOYIMU-L-MUHABBAT" TALEK AS A LITERARY WORK

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Alisher Navoi's *Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat* as a literary work, highlighting its role in the preservation and dissemination of Sufi knowledge. Navoi's *tazkira* draws upon the works of prominent Sufi figures, including Junayd al-Baghdadi, Mansur Hallaj, Shaykh Farid al-Din Attar, Shaykh Sa'di Shirazi, and others. Through vivid poetic expressions, symbolic narratives, and citations of classical Sufi texts, the work reflects spiritual truths, divine mysteries, and the stages of spiritual perfection. This study emphasizes Navoi's literary artistry, his method of illustrating complex spiritual concepts, and the enduring impact of his *tazkira* in enriching the intellectual and moral understanding of readers.

Keywords: *tazkira*, Sufism, spiritual literature, Islamic mysticism, literary analysis.

Literature serves as a primary source for shaping human spirituality, and its significance in nurturing morally and spiritually developed generations is invaluable. A literary work organizes the seemingly chaotic flow of events into a coherent system, enabling readers to derive meaning and understanding for both mind and perception. It is accessible to all, from children to the elderly, and each reader can extract insights according to their intellectual and emotional capacity. Thus, literature functions as a school of moral guidance and a nurturer of love and compassion. Classical literature, in particular, possesses the power to convey the inner essence of existence through symbolic representations, serving as a means to harmonize the human soul with the truth of being.

In *Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat*, Navoi highlights the works of earlier Sufi masters. The poetry of Shaykh Farid al-Din Attar reflects the truths of divine mystery and ecstatic joy. Shaykh Sa'di Shirazi is praised as possessing "the complete ocean of knowledge and the perfect share of moral virtues," with the widespread renown of his *Bustan* and *Gulistan* emphasized. Shaykh Nizami is portrayed as living a life of piety and seclusion, "never appealing to worldly rulers like ordinary poets, nor yielding to desire or ambition." Shaykh Mahmud Shabistari's *Gulshan-i Raz* is noted for elucidating the essence of true knowledge and the secrets of spiritual truth.

It is particularly noteworthy that masters of the word depicted the subtle aspects of Sufi and monotheistic knowledge – the mysteries of spiritual enlightenment, the ranks of the *tariqa*, the process of purification, and the levels of spiritual perfection – through symbolic and allegorical narratives, as well as in vivid and emotionally charged poetic lines. This method allowed for a profound understanding of the theoretical meanings of Sufism while also facilitating the dissemination of Sufi ideas to a wider audience.

In discussing Sayyid al-Tu'ifa Junayd al-Baghdadi, Navoi employs his artistic style to describe him:

"Va ham aning so'zidurkim, [himmatingni Allohu azza va jalla tomonga qarat. Zinhor Allohu azza va jallani mushohada qiladigan basirat ko'zingni undan boshqasiga qaratmaginki, Allohning nazaridan qolasan. Junayddan so'radilar: amalsiz ato bo'ladimi? Aytdi: Har bir amaliing o'zi uning lufu inoyatidindur. Shayx Abu Ja'far Haddod debdurki, agar aql kishi suratia kirsar erdi, Junayd surati bo'lg'oy erdi".

Junayd al-Baghdadi, relying on his profound religious and philosophical knowledge, was able to reason logically and draw bold conclusions:



A human being cannot perform any service solely on their own. Every action is considered a blessing from Allah, and it is not logical to seek reward for these actions.

The teachings of Junayd al-Baghdadi sparked a powerful wave in the history of Sufism. His ideas have been repeatedly referenced throughout the history of Sufi thought .

Navoi writes in “Nasoyim”: «Chun bu tabaqada Junayd (vft. 909) paydo bo‘ldi, bu ilmg‘a tartib berib, bast qilib kutib bitidi. Chun Shibliy (vft. 946) arog‘a kirdi, bu ilmni minbar ustida aytib oshkoro qildi. Junayd so‘zidurkim, biz bu asroni yoshurun uylarda va sarbadorlarda mahramlarg‘a aytur erduk, Shibliy minbar ustidan oshkor qildi».

Thus, starting from the 11th century, the era of intellectual Sufism began. Among these figures, the teachings of Mansur Hallaj (858–922) occupy a special place.

Hallaj was born in 858 in a region called Tur in the province of Fars. His grandfather adhered to the Zoroastrian faith. Between 873 and 897, he studied Sufism under several sheikhs and also received instruction from Junayd al-Baghdadi. Later, he embarked on journeys dedicated to the propagation of Sufism, traveling through Ahvaz, Fars, Khorasan, Central Asia, and India. In 908, he returned to Baghdad via Mecca, gathering numerous disciples around him. His activities, however, provoked opposition from various currents, leading to his persecution. He was imprisoned for eight years, and in 921, after a seven-month trial, he was sentenced to death. On the 26th of March 922, following severe interrogation, he was crucified and his body burned.

His accusation stemmed from his doctrine of unity with God. Hallaj advanced the idea that God’s essence surpasses human comprehension and reason:

There exists a divine spirit, self-existent (not created), which the dervish seeking unity with God can unite with through his own created soul and partially manifest. In this state, the dervish ascends to the level of the saints and becomes a living witness of divine existence. Upon experiencing this state, Hallaj famously declared, “Anal-Haq” (“I am the Truth”). At one point, Bayazid Bastami had also attempted to explain this concept. Throughout history, those who opposed Hallaj argued that his teachings contradicted Islam. According to orthodox Islamic belief, even prophets cannot engage in direct communion with God; such interaction should occur exclusively through the angel Gabriel.

In his tazkira, Navoi employs a particularly fluent and elegant style to reflect the reverence and respect felt by readers. For example, he cites earlier Sufi figures such as Hasan Basri, Abu Yazid Bastami, Ibrahim Adham, Zunnun al-Misri, Abu Hafiz al-Haddad, Junayd al-Baghdadi, Mansur Hallaj, and Ali bin Usman Raznavi. Navoi’s tazkira draws upon Abdurahman Jami’s Nafahat al-Uns and Farid al-Din Attar’s Tazkirat al-Awliya, which explains the wealth of engaging information on these prominent figures.

To enhance the literary quality of his work, Navoi illustrates the teachings of some masters with examples from their poetry. In particular, in describing Ibrahim Havvos, he quotes the following verses (translation provided here):

When you express love for God, you may also act rebelliously toward Him.

And yet you boast of your love. Your action is curious.

But if you are sincere in love, obey God!

For surely the lover obeys the beloved .

One of the most important aspects of the literary artistry of the tazkira is Navoi’s proud citation of examples from the works of saints or the titles of the works they authored. Among these are Ali bin Usman al-Ghaznavi’s Kashf al-Mahjub, Abdullah Ansari’s Tabaqat al-Sufiyya and Manazil al-Sa’irin, Muhammad al-Ghazali’s Kimiya-yi Sa’adat, and Farid al-Din Attar’s Asrarnama. These references undoubtedly serve to provide readers with deeper knowledge and insight into these significant Sufi works.



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