

**ARTISTIC AND PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION
OF THE IMAGE OF YUSUF (A.S.) IN ALISHER NAVOI'S
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Abstract: *This article studies the artistic interpretation of the image of Yusuf (peace be upon him) in the works of Alisher Navoi. In the poet's ghazals, the story of Yusuf is enriched with symbolic, philosophical and mystical meanings based on the Holy Quran and hadiths, and is depicted as a perfect embodiment of human and divine qualities. Yusuf's patience, willpower and ideal of beauty are manifested as one of the central themes of Navoi's works. The article reveals the role of the image of Yusuf in Navoi's ghazals, highlighting the system of symbolic images, spiritual and aesthetic approaches in it.*

Keywords: *Alisher Navoi, Yusuf (peace be upon him), the Holy Quran, mysticism, symbolic image, divine love, artistic interpretation, spiritual maturity.*

Introduction

Alisher Navoi is known as a poet and thinker who occupies a high place in the history of not only Uzbek but also world literature through his immortal work. He made a great contribution to the cultural and educational life of his time by exalting human qualities and artistically depicting divine spirituality in his works. Religious and historical themes are important in Navoi's work, one of which is the image of Yusuf (a.s), formed on the basis of the Holy Quran and hadiths. The image of Yusuf (a.s) has a deep philosophical and moral significance in Islam, other divine religions, and literary sources created on their basis. This figure is represented in many religious stories and literary works as an ideal human being, and his life is an example of patience, willpower, and faith in destiny. The story of Joseph is told in the 12th chapter of the Holy Quran, namely Surah Yusuf [1]. This Surah narrates the events of Yusuf's life from his childhood to his rise to the throne.

This story includes:

- Yusuf's being teased by his brothers and thrown into a well;
- being sold by a caravan and becoming a slave in Egypt;
- Yusuf's defense of his chaste honor when he is plotted against by Zulaikha;
- his life in prison and his wisdom in interpreting dreams;
- finally, his meeting with his brothers and forgiveness as king of Egypt.

Main part. The story of Yusuf is presented in the interpretations of the Quran as an example of patience, sincerity, and boundless faith in Allah. The beauty and virtues of Yusuf describe the possibilities of receiving Allah's mercy. For this reason, Surah Yusuf is also recognized as "the most beautiful of the stories of the Quran" Navoi paid special attention to the artistic expression of the story of Yusuf in his ghazals. The figure of Yusuf is depicted as a symbol based on the Quran, reflecting the achievement of human perfection through his beauty, patience, and devotion to God [2]. Events such as Yusuf's resistance to Zulayha's temptation and his patience in prison are expressed as spiritual lessons in Navoi's works. In addition, we can see that Navoi often refers to the figure of Yusuf in his ghazals to express divine love, companionship, separation, and separation.

For example, if we pay attention to this verse,

Is it your beauty and soul-giving speech that charms the world,

Or has Messiah's spirit settled in Joseph's form untold?

(Olamoro husn ila jonbaxsh nutqungmu ekin,

Yo Masiho ruhi Yusuf jismida qilmish hulul?)

In this verse, Navoi elevates the beauty and spiritual qualities of Yusuf (a.s.) to a divine level and creates a profound artistic expression by comparing him to Masih (a.s.) [3]. The poet here depicts Yusuf's external and internal beauty in perfect harmony, expressing his embodiment of humanity and divinity. "By invoking the expression 'soul-giving speech', Navoi implicitly references the life-restoring qualities

attributed to Masih, thus suggesting that the figure of Yusuf is depicted not merely as a mortal being, but as one imbued with divine attributes”.

In the following verse, we can see that it is used in another sense:

*Desiring that idol, you appear like Yusuf on the camel of reason,
With a single ball of thread, you seem a buyer of Yusuf's person.
(Istab ul butni xirad belida zunnorin ko 'rung,
Bir kaloba ip bila Yusuf xaridorin ko 'rung.)*

This couplet, rich in symbolic imagery and the literary device of talmeh (allusion), embodies deep philosophical meanings conveyed through refined poetic skill. To fully grasp its message, one must analyze its key concepts within the context of Sufi literature. The term but (idol) in the verse refers to the beloved or a figure of beauty. However, this symbolic image goes beyond mere physical attractiveness — it represents a magnetic charm that captivates the hearts and minds of seekers. The word xirad in the verse denotes intellect or reason. The term zunnor refers to the cord traditionally worn around the waist by adherents of the Christian faith, often symbolizing servitude or religious devotion. In the second hemistich, the expressions “a single ball of thread” and “buyer of Yusuf” are enriched through the literary device of talmeh (allusion), drawing from well-known religious narratives [4]. Specifically, it refers to the story of the old woman who attempted to purchase Yusuf with nothing more than a skein of thread — a symbolic act that highlights how divine beauty and true spiritual worth are often evaluated superficially by human standards. Through this symbolism, the poet critiques the tendency of human beings to be deceived by outward appearances or trivial possessions. The irony embedded in the verse - depicting reason (‘aql) yearning for superficial beauty—is particularly striking. In Sufi philosophy, reason is often regarded as limited in its capacity to comprehend the higher realms of the soul and spiritual truths. Here, too, the poet reflects that perspective through his refined poetic expression. To fully grasp the deeper meaning of this couplet, it is

essential to study how reason and spiritual insight are discussed within the framework of Sufi literature.

According to Sufi teachings, reason ('aql) serves as a tool that guides individuals toward outward, apparent truths. However, to truly comprehend spiritual realities, one must rely on the power of the heart (qalb) and the soul (ruh). These inner faculties transcend rationality and provide access to the deeper layers of meaning.

In Alisher Navoi's ghazals, we encounter numerous verses dedicated to the figure of Yusuf. In several poems, the poet makes references to both Ya'qub and Yusuf, at times constructing layered dialogues between the two. In one particular ghazal, Navoi presents himself simultaneously in the image of Ya'qub and also addresses Ya'qub directly using the second person - a stylistic technique that reflects the depth of mystical identification and poetic self-reflection. The verse reads:

"A sigh of pain descended like fire into the chamber of my heart..."

(Tushti o't ko'nglum uyiga ohi dardolud ila)

In this poem, Navoi describes an atmosphere where darkness and smoke pervade everything — the night appears endless, and the heavens seem motionless, as if the celestial sphere has ceased to turn. According to the poet, fully exposing oneself is not ideal, yet entirely concealing one's inner truth is also unwise. In this ghazal, Navoi portrays the preacher (va'iz) as a kind of merchant — but not even a good one. The preacher attempts to buy the rose, a metaphor for Yusuf, with a few old dirhams. This alludes to the Qur'anic story of Yusuf being sold cheaply by traders [5]. Here, the rose symbolizes divine beauty and purity, while the preacher represents those who superficially assess sacred value without understanding its spiritual depth. In Navoi's depiction, the preacher (voiz), likened to a merchant, hardly understands either Joseph or the moon. He may recognize that the moon is a celestial body, yet fails to grasp that it has become someone's beloved - a symbol of unattainable beauty and spiritual intimacy. The preacher knows that a stone can be cast wherever one pleases, but

remains unaware that the stone lodged in the heart - the stone of sorrow - sometimes cannot be dislodged at all.

*O Yusuf, had you not been sold in beauty's marketplace,
Had my beloved arrived — what wonder would your market face?
(O'zungni sotmag'ungda husn savdosidin ey Yusuf,
Habibim yetsa erdi, ne ushalg'ay erdi bozoring.)*

O Yusuf, had my beloved arrived while you were selling yourself in the market of beauty, your marketplace would have been ruined, says the poet playfully. Navoi usually mentions the name Yusuf in the middle of his ghazals, but in two cases, he uses it in the opening verse. These verses appear in ghazals where words expressing sorrow and its synonyms are more prominent. For example:

*The heart that longs for your union is wounded on every side by cruelty;
It is like a buyer of Yusuf — with nothing but a few old coins.
(Ko'ngul kim vasling istar har taraf dog'i sitam birla,
Erur Yusuf xaridori necha eski diram birla.)*

My heart, which is full of wounds of oppression and longs for your peace, will become a buyer of Yusuf with a few old dirhams [3]. Navoi here connects the scars in the heart with sorrow, but they, according to the poet, can also turn into coins. The poet believes that if it were possible to buy Yusuf with that coin, it would be very good. Navoi often describes the story of Yusuf's sale not in a dramatic way, but in a philosophical and meaningful way. In his ghazals, the poet describes various aspects of this story - trade, seller, buyer, dirham, market - in different orders. For example:

- Sometimes Yusuf becomes the poet's lover, even the poet's lover is described as more beautiful than Yusuf.
- The poet himself appears as Joseph's owner or appears as the buyer.
- The coins are sometimes depicted as the sun, sometimes as mountains of the heart.

In Navoi's ghazals, the story of the sale Yusuf is not deeply dramatic, but is more symbolic and inner-thoughtful. Through these images, the poet conveys to the reader his philosophy about human emotions, heartache, and love.

Conclusion. The article analyzes the extent to which the story of Yusuf was reflected in Navoi's ghazals, highlighting its symbolic and philosophical meanings, analogies and allusions based on mystical ideas. Navoi presented the image of Yusuf not only in a historical and religious context, but also as a symbol on the path to spiritual maturity. Inspired by the figure of Yusuf in his ghazals, the poet broadly revealed themes based on beauty, divine love and patience. This article deeply analyzes the place of the story of Yusuf in Navoi's work, its artistic interpretation and the system of symbolic expressions. This analysis serves to reveal many aspects of the image of Yusuf in Navoi's ghazals.

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