

INTERPRETATION OF IMAGES AND SYMBOLS IN ALISHER NAVOI'S ROMANTIC GHAZALS

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Annotation: This article analyzes the poetic imagery and symbols in the 250th ghazal of G'aroyib us-sig'ar (The Wonders of Youth), the first divan in Hazrat Mir Alisher Navoi's Xazoyin ul-maoniy. The symbols of yellow and red represent maturity, while elements such as sarvinoz (graceful cypress), zulf (lock of hair), sahbo (wine), kalom (word), and ko'ngul (heart) are interpreted from a Sufi perspective.

This ghazal belongs to the category of romantic ghazals. In terms of composition, it follows a voqeaband (narrative) and unified structure, where the idea from one couplet continues and develops in the next, maintaining logical coherence throughout.

Keywords: sarvinoz(graceful cypress), zulf(hair), sahbo(wine), yellow, red, romantic, kalom(word), ko'ngul(heart), saki.

It is known that in classical literature, ghazals were written on various themes. Some are about love, some about the carefree life, and others about mysticism, and so on. In the works of Alisher Navoi, love-themed ghazals occupy a significant place. Ghazals on this theme are the most widespread type in terms of subject matter, depicting the beloved and her beauty, her cruelty, her mercilessness toward the true lover, her kindness to an unworthy rival, and the lover's burning with pain and jealousy.

In love ghazals, there are usually three traditional images: the lover, the beloved, and the rival. The lover's love for the beloved is intertwined with his love for the True Beloved — God. The rival symbolizes not only the other lovers of the beloved but also the lover's own ego and inner vices. To reach the beloved, one must overcome the rivals; however difficult it may be, only those who endure can achieve their goal.

This ghazal was written in the hazaji musammani solim meter of aruz.

Afoyi tafoyili:

Mafo'iylun/Mafo'iylun/Mafo'iylun/Mafo'iylun/

Taqte'si :

V-- -- --/ V-- -- --/ V-- -- --/ V-- -- --/

This ghazal rhymes in the form a-a, b-a, d-a, e-a, f-a, g-a, h-a, i-a, j-a.

Rhyming words: bormish(has gone)-sarg'armish(has yellowed)-boshqarmish(has ruled)-qutqarmish(has saved)-axtarmish(has searched)-yormish(has torn)-qisqarmish(has shortened)-yolbormish(has pleaded)-qaytarmish(has sent back)-sipqarmish(has gulped).

In these words, the letter “r” is considered the rhyme letter (ravi), and according to its position, it is classified as an absolute rhyme (mutlaq qafiya).

In this ghazal, rhetorical and verbal devices such as husn al-ta'lil, metaphor, simile, personification, parable, pun, paronomasia, and repetition are skillfully used.

Sarig' gul demakim, chun sarvinozim bog' aro bormish,

Yuzin ko'rgach qizil gul za'f etib, ul nav' sarg'armish.

(To call it the yellow rose — for when my cypress-tall beloved came into the garden,

Seeing her face, the red rose grew pale and thus turned yellow.)

This couplet is the opening verse (matla) of the ghazal, in which the lover compares himself to a yellow flower in the garden of love, the followers of the path of tariqat. He explains the reason for his yellow color by saying that the tall and graceful beloved (sarvinoz) came into the garden, and seeing her, the red flower became weak and turned yellow — this is beautifully expressed through the art of husni ta'lil (beautiful justification).

This is the literal meaning of the couplet; now let us turn to its inner (spiritual) meaning. It is known that in Sufi literature, special attention is paid to the symbolism of colors. Colors reflect the spiritual state of the lover and the stages of his journey toward God. At the stage of tariqat, love awakens in the heart of the seeker (salik); he lives in remembrance of Allah, and this corresponds to the yellow color. In Navoiy's works, this color symbolizes humility and love. The yellow¹ color resembles the golden rays of the sun. When one looks at the sun, the heart and face seem illuminated, just as true love brings the lover closer to the Origin and Eternity — that is, to Allah Himself.

The red² color, however, symbolizes the ego (nafs) in man — it represents outer vitality and flowing blood. When a person frees himself from his ego and turns to divine attributes, the red color becomes the color of gnosis (ma'rifat) and divine knowledge (irfon). Because love is life, it is the understanding of divine truth, and this forms the inner interpretation of the couplet.

In classical literature, there is a tradition of comparing the beloved (yar) to the cypress tree (sarv). In this couplet, too, the beloved is depicted through the image of sarvinoz. As we know,

¹ The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Alisher Navoi's Works. Volume 1. — Tashkent: “Sharq” Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company Editorial Board, 2016. Page 502.

² The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Alisher Navoi's Works. Volume 2. — Tashkent: “Sharq” Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company Editorial Board, 2016. Page 195.

the cypress³ grows upright, and for that reason it is described as free from worldly desires, symbolizing the Beloved (Allah). In classical poetics, the cypress tree is interpreted in three ways:

Sarvi sihiy – a straight, two-branched cypress;

Sarvi noz – a cypress with branches bent gracefully to the sides like human arms;

Sarvi ozod – a branchless, straight-growing cypress.

Thus, when the red color — the color of worldly desire and life — is conquered by the love (yellow color) in the lover's heart, it becomes weak, and the lover's color turns yellow in longing for the sarvinoz's beauty and love. In this couplet, the weakening and yellowing of the red flower is expressed through the art of personification (tashxis), and the sarvinoz through metaphor (isti'ora) — creating a refined expression that leaves a deep aesthetic impression on the reader.

Ko'ngul atrofida ochqan uchun hijron o'qi yo'llar,

Balo xaylini ishqing shahnasi ul sari boshqarmish.

(For the arrow of separation has opened paths around the heart,

The army of affliction has been led there by the sovereign of your love.)

The lover is far from his beloved, and because of this, the arrows of separation are opening paths around his heart — that is, they are penetrating into his heart. These arrows are likened to a group of calamities (balo xayli), and the guard of love within the lover's heart allows them to enter. However, the guard's duty was to protect love, yet he is opening the way for the army of misfortune. So, why is that? To answer this question, let us pay attention to the diagnosis (symbolic meaning) of the heart.

As we know, the heart is the dwelling place of Allah, the place where His manifestation (tajalli) descends. In classical literature, it is compared to a cup (jom) or a glass goblet (ayog'). When a person is born, that cup is filled with the water of the ego (nafs) and Satan. When the love of Allah enters it, the cup breaks, and all evil qualities leave it. Then it is filled with wine (may), which in Sufi symbolism represents divine love. It is not without reason that in the first couplet, yellow was called the color of brokenness, and in the first ghazal of the divan "G'aroyib us-sig'ar", the heart was compared to a "broken bowl" (sing'on safol).

Now let us turn to the image of "balo" (calamity). Through the art of metaphor (isti'ora), bala represents misfortune, disaster, and the ego (nafs). In the mystical (irfoniyy) sense, it refers to the physical and spiritual trials that strengthen the willpower and spirit of the seeker (salik) on his path toward union with God (Haq).

³ The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Alisher Navoi's Works. Volume 1. — Tashkent: "Sharq" Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company Editorial Board, 2016. Page 501.

Thus, the lover's heart has been struck by love, and the arrows of separation have broken it, while the army of calamity (bala xayli) has tempered and purified it, striving to drive out the misfortune of the ego (nafs balo) within.

G'aming minnat qo'yub jonoldi,vah,jonimg'a yuzminnat

Ki,xud bori tiriglik minnatidan jonni qutqarmish.

(By yielding to the burden of your sorrow, the soul departed — ah! infinite gratitude,

For it has freed itself from the very burden of existence itself.)

As we mentioned above, since this ghazal is a narrative ghazal, the poet's idea continues in the third couplet as well. In this couplet, the lover's heart has fallen in love, and this is called sorrow — that is, the pain of attaining true, divine love. That sorrow, as a blessing and favor, took my soul and, as if, saved it from all the troubles of worldly life that inflicted hundreds of reproaches upon my soul. Thus, in this couplet, the art of metaphor is manifested in the word sorrow, while its act of taking and saving the soul creates the artistic devices of personification and antithesis, depicting how love has entered and firmly settled in the lover's heart, bringing him benefit and delight.

Why, then, is the lover whose soul is taken away so happy? Because the lover has killed his ego, sacrificed his soul, and freed himself from the burden of mortal worldly life. Indeed, as stated in the hadith: "Die before you die!"—that is, kill the ego within yourself before your physical death.

Kaloming gavharidek topmamish,garchi sabo ilgi

Yoqasin g'unchaning yirtib nechakim qo'ynin axtarmish.

(Though the morning breeze has searched the bosom of the bud, tearing it apart,

It has not found a word as precious as your speech, like a gem.)

In the 4th couplet, the art of iham (double entendre) is created through the word "Kalom," which means both the beloved's speech and the Word of the Beloved — that is, the Qur'an, which is the Word of Allah. "Kalom" is compared to a pearl; if we understand it as the Qur'an, then each of its words is likened to a pearl. In this couplet, the poet animates the zephyr, thus creating the art of personification, and through its hand, he depicts it tearing the collar of the bud and searching inside its bosom, its heart, but finding nothing comparable to the pearl-like word of the Beloved. In this couplet, the idea from the third couplet continues: in the heart of the lover who has been freed from his soul — that is, from his ego — true love has indeed taken possession of his heart.

Ko'ngulni chok-chok etgach,yetishti o'qi har yondin,

O'tun qo'ymoqqa go'yokim bu o'tning tush-tushin yormish.

(Having torn the heart to pieces, the arrow struck from every side,

As though to set the fire, it split apart the ribs to feed the flame.)

In the 5th couplet, through the words *chok-chok* and *tush-tush*, the art of repetition (*mukarrar*) appears; through the words *o't* (fire) and *o'tun* (wood), the art of derivation (*ishtiqoq*) is revealed; and through the words *o't* (fire) and *o'q* (arrow), the art of metaphor (*istiora*) emerges. Thus, in the lover's heart the sun of guidance has risen, and this light of love, this radiance of enlightenment, not fitting within the heart, rends it to pieces. As if that light, that radiance, is this fire — that is, the lover's passionate heart — and, in order to cast wood upon it, to fuel it, it has split his *tush-tush*, that is, his breast. Through the word *o'tun* the art of pun (*iyhom*) comes into being, creating a beautiful expression, for in our daily life we add wood to the fire to make it blaze higher, and “to split the bosom” is said; thus, the thought in the first hemistich of the couplet is supported by a living example, giving rise to the art of allegory (*tamsil*).

Nechakim qad chekar, sarkashlik aylar anbarin zulfı,

Agarchi kun biyik chiqqanda soya doim qisqarmish.

(However tall he stands, his rebellious amber-scented locks prevail,

Though when the sun rises high, the shadow always grows short.)

In the 6th couplet, the beloved rises from her place, and her jet-black, fragrant hair acts rebelliously, unwilling to submit. But why does it act so, when in life, as the sun rises to its height, the shadow always shortens? To understand the meaning of this couplet, one must pay attention to the word *zulf*⁴. *Zulf* refers to the beloved's hair, and here it is rebellious. This is an allusion to the beloved's bewilderment in the path of love. Long hair signifies the long and smooth road of the spiritual path. Yet here it is not long and orderly, but disheveled hair — which raises the shadow of the lover's journey to ecstasy, to the sun of guidance, to union with love. The lover has not yet rid himself of worldly desire, of his own “self.” One particular point to note is that in the first couplet the beloved was compared not to the *sarvi sihiy* (straight cypress), but to the *sarvinoz*. The reason becomes clear in this couplet: its branches bend to the sides like human arms, alluding to the beloved's tresses. Thus, the lover longs to reach union with the beloved — that is, the beloved's face shines like the sun, and he yearns to behold it, yet the disheveled, rebellious, coquettish locks spread out in every direction, covering her face. The word *zulf* is most often used of curled locks, and for this reason it is rebellious.

Ilig bo'g'ziga eltib, shisha to'kmish qon yoshin mendek,

Magar soqiy ayog'in o'pkali ul dag'I yolbormish.

(Carrying it to his throat, he poured the glass of bloody tears like me,

Perhaps the cupbearer's goblet, too, was filled with sorrow and supplication.)

⁴ The Encyclopedic Dictionary of Alisher Navoi's Works. Volume 1. — Tashkent: “Sharq” Publishing and Printing Joint-Stock Company Editorial Board, 2016. Page 502.

Raising his hand to his throat, he sheds his bloody tears like me, perhaps again begging to kiss the cupbearer's foot (both the foot and the wine-goblet). In this verse, the glass is the mirror of the heart. The cupbearer is the symbol of the wine-pourer, the master, the guide. "Foot" creates the art of iham, meaning both the cupbearer's foot and the wine-goblet. In this verse, Navoi skillfully uses folk expressions such as "to take the hand to the throat," "to kiss the foot," and "to weep blood." Thus, the heart pleads with the cupbearer to pour him wine, while shedding bloody tears. The tears are not without reason called "blood": as mentioned earlier, the red color, if there is desire in man, is the symbol of life and attachment to the world, but now it flows out of the lover's heart in the form of tears, and its place must be filled with love.

Yugurma rizq uchun ne yetsa haqdin anglakim, komil

Ne kelturgil demish, ne g'aybdan kelganni qaytarmish.

(Do not chase after livelihood; know that whatever comes is from God.

The wise person does not ask for more, nor reject what comes unseen.)

In the 8th bayt, do not run anxiously for your sustenance; whatever comes upon you, know it is from God. The perfect human neither says "bring" (that is, desires something from God), nor returns what comes from the unseen (from God), that is, he does not try to change it. N. Komilov in his work *Tasavvuf* writes: "...Shaykh Najmuddin Kubra developed special methods of training disciples in the khanqah, showing that there are ways of passing through the stations of the tariqat and reaching purification and gnosis based on ten requirements. In the books "Risola at-turuq" ("Treatise on the Paths") and "Al-usul al-ashara" ("Ten Principles") it is noted that the following ten requirements are important in the education of Sufis: Repentance (Tawba), Asceticism (Zuhd), Trust in God (Tawakkul), Contentment (Qanoat), Seclusion (Uzlat), Remembrance (Zikr), Turning towards God (Tavajjuh), Patience (Sabr), Vigilance (Muroqaba), Satisfaction (Rizo)."⁵ In this bayt, the seeker who has attained the requirement of Rizo (Satisfaction) is depicted. Rizo is when the seeker, having deeply felt God's power and knowledge, completely surrenders himself to His will and begins to delight in God's world. God draws near to him and he draws near to God.

Firoqu zuhd daf'ig'a Navoiy ishq sahbosin

Magar to'qquz tutub, to'qquz falak jomini sipqarmish.

(To drive away separation and asceticism, Navoi drank the cup of love,

As if holding nine, he drained the goblet of the nine heavens.)

In the prelude, the poet says that in order to distance himself from separation and piety, he took the wine of love as "to'qqiz," that is, among our people, the precious gifts sent by the groom to the bride before the wedding are called "to'qqiz," and he drained the goblet of the nine heavens, that is, drank the wine in it. Thus, true love is the treasure, the "to'qqiz," that reveals the secrets

⁵ Najmiddin Komilov. *Tasavvuf* — Tashkent: Yozuvchi Publishing House, 1996. Page 6.

and truths of the nine layers of heaven. Zuhd, that is, piety, practitioners are called ascetics, and in Navoi's works they are often opposed to true lovers. The reason for this is that, although ascetics adopted seclusion and piety as their occupation, they were people deprived of love and gnosis (divine knowledge). Ascetics were accused of desiring paradise, because in the eyes of Sufis, worship done in the hope of paradise is also a form of desire. The following passage from N. Komilov's book *Tasavvuf* is a clear example of this: "The famous female Sufi Rabia al-Adawiyya, lamenting in her prayers to God, would say: 'O my Lord, O my Beloved Friend, if I worship You out of desire for paradise, deprive me of Your paradise; if I worship You out of fear of Your hell, burn me in the fire of hell—I consent a thousand times! But if I spend the nights awake for the sake of Your beauty, I beg You, do not deprive me of Your beauty!'"

In conclusion, in this ghazal of Navoi, true humanity, man's genuine love for God, and man's striving for gnosis and truth, as well as overcoming the ego, are praised. These are revealed through various images and symbols in the ghazal. For example, let us take the symbolism of colors. As we have seen, in the *matla*, the red color was the symbol of attachment to the world and of life, while in the *maqta* it is mentioned in the image of *sahbo*, that is, the red high-quality wine, as the symbol of gnosis and spiritual knowledge. From this it follows that the lover who strives for love passes through all trials and reaches gnosis. In the process of reading and analyzing this ghazal, we once again become convinced that our ancestor Navoi is truly "the king of words." Indeed, to understand Navoi is to understand all humanity!

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