

Who Are The “Enemies” In Navoi’s Ghazals?

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Abstract: This article examines the role and function of the figures that create conflict with the lover in Navoi’s ghazals, as well as their artistic-philosophical meanings and Sufi interpretation. The aim is to study and interpret more broadly the Sufi, philosophical, and symbolic meanings expressed in the poet’s ghazals through these figures.

Keywords: Lover, beloved, rival, people of the age, shaykh, Sufism, salik, nafs, beauties, nafs, pir, Satan.

Introduction: Alisher Navoi, as a poet who occupies one of the highest peaks of poetry in the literature of the Turkic peoples, is regarded not only as a classical representative of Eastern literature, but also of world literature. His ghazals are the golden treasury of Uzbek literature, embodying deep philosophical views on love, fidelity, humanity, loyalty and disloyalty, this world and the hereafter. At the same time, the poet was able to load each image and symbol in his ghazals with particular meanings, which also demonstrates Navoi’s high artistic mastery. One of such images is those who stand against the lover. It is known that in love ghazals the main figures mentioned are the lover and the beloved. From the Sufi point of view, the lover is the salik who has gathered the love of Allah in his heart and is on the path toward attaining Him, while the beloved is directly connected with the Creator. However, on this path there are also those who oppose the lover, and these too hold a special position in the ghazals. Below, we will dwell on the third persons who become an obstacle between the lover and the beloved.

METHOD

Alisher Navoi’s ghazals stand out for their diversity, their richness of meaning and content, and their varied images and symbols found through deep observation and reflection. In classical literature, no one can equal the poet in the ability to load every detail and every symbol with various meanings. “Navoi’s works are distinguished in every respect by their extremely great diversity. In them, events, heroes, nature, things,

objects, structures, space and time, as well as depiction and expression, meter, rhyme, saj’, and artistic devices are all different in every work, in every chapter, in every section, in every couplet, and in every sentence. At the same time, there is not a single chapter, section, couplet or sentence, not a single word, meaning, or sound that has no relation to the others.”

Likewise, as the “enemies” of the lover, the poet also presents in his ghazals a number of images and is able to load them with a number of meanings. Below, we analyze some of them.

The image of the shaykh. It is known that the lover is a traveler on the path toward attaining true love. In Sufism, the tavern is expressed as the place where true love is taught, and love is expressed through the symbol of wine. “It is self-evident that the wine mentioned by Navoi is not the alcoholic drink we imagine. The poet did not mean this at all. On the contrary, Navoi, who was extremely pious and pure, sharply criticized the pleasure-seeking drunkards of his time and declared the intoxicating drink to be umm ul-khabois, that is, the mother of all evils and disasters. In the epic Hayrat ul-abror, he created the mockingly satirical image of drunkards and disgraced them before the people. In the ghazals, however, the poet mentioned wine as a symbolic expression of divine love, enlightenment, the height and culmination of the desire for knowledge, the strong delight and inspiration that appeared in the lover’s heart from the contemplation of the Beloved’s beauty, and of boundless joy and happiness. To be intoxicated and to

be devoted to wine are also understood here accordingly. It is the intoxication of enjoying the source of the great light, the ecstasy of union, the beauty of life and nature, and of partaking in and yearning for the manifestation of the miracles of the Absolute Spirit, which cannot be grasped by reason and thought, but is felt by the heart.” Proceeding from this, the main aim of the lyrical hero is to go toward the tavern and, by drinking the wine of love, attain true love. But there are persons who hinder this, who lead the lover astray; these are the shaykhs. One ghazal from Navoi’s G’aroyib us-sig’ar is devoted entirely to such people.

In the khanaqah, within the circle of dhikr, the shaykh caused an uproar,

The shaykh plundered the precious time of the people of the heart.

That one was a trap, this one a grain for hunting people,
Whenever the shaykh turned to rosary and prayer rug.
Whether it was the fancy of bang or the thought of the khanaqah,

Whatever miracles and stations the shaykh disclosed.

Scattering foam, crying out, leaping about, in order to hunt fairy-faced ones,

The shaykh openly displayed acts of madness.

Coming out full from seclusion, calling himself fasting, among the ignorant\

The shaykh made very many fools enamored of his own way.

Despite his foolishness and ignorance, in order to gather disciples,

The shaykh produced many even more foolish and ignorant than himself.

I am a disciple of the pir of the tavern, whose grace is universal,

In the khanaqah the shaykh sought universal grace from the people.

In the monastery my ear found peace, O monk, blessed be your remembrance,

For at dawn, while making dhikr, the shaykh made much noise.

O Navoi, he gave away his cloak and performed a miracle,

For to me the shaykh arranged the way of pawning it for wine.

Throughout the ghazal, from beginning to end, the poet subjects the shaykh to criticism and states that he is hypocritical, false, and deceitful. For example, in the fourth bayt of the ghazal, the shaykh is condemned for foaming at the mouth, crying out, and jumping about in

order to win over the fairy-faced ones (those he needed) to himself through various antics; and in the fifth bayt, another hypocritical deed characteristic of the shaykh is severely condemned—calling himself fasting while eating in seclusion, and turning ignorant people like himself onto his own path.

Therefore, the lyrical hero regards it as a guiding principle not to be deceived by their trickery:

Take the cup from the pir of the tavern, for in this transient world

If you understand well, both the shaykh and the preacher practice hypocrisy.

In the bayt, the idea is advanced that in this passing world one should take the cup from the pir of the tavern (learn love) and not be deceived by the words of shaykhs and preachers. In classical literature, *dayr* in the *irfanic* sense means the human world and also the assembly of gnostics and saints, while the *pir* of the *dayr* is the perfected guide who watches over the steady burning of the fire of love and longing in the heart of the *salik* who has entered the path of *tariqa*, fills his heart to the brim with the wine of gnosis, and thereby guides him to acquire annihilation on the path of the Truth.

“It is possible to explain the main demand and essential meaning of the path of *fano* as follows: a person’s choice and will—his qualities, in other words, the qualities of the individual—express his choice and will. But by his human will he is separated from the Truth. That is, will is the veil in between. Therefore, man does not possess the possibility and capacity, by himself, to overcome completely his weakness, imperfection, and powerlessness. He must renounce the transient and attain the eternal.”

In the following bayt taken from the *divan* G’aroyib us-sig’ar, another vice characteristic of the shaykh is condemned:

O Navoi, if Satan has not put a bridle on the shaykh,

Then why does he always jest with that long turban?

In the bayt, the poet criticizes the shaykh for making jokes and wearing a long turban because he has fallen under Satan’s bridle. In the following bayt, in a symbolic meaning, *dastor* points to greed for rank and position, and to the pursuit of reputation:

The turban on the shaykh’s head must be a calamity,

For it became an obstacle to hearing the mysteries of love.

Thus, if we take it in a general way, the image of the shaykh is the symbol of hypocritical people. Therefore, for the lover on the path toward union with the true Beloved—Allah—it is very important not to be deceived

by the tricks and intrigues of such people. For from the religious point of view as well, it has been said in many places that hypocrisy is an even worse vice than unbelief.

People of the age. In classical literature, the concept of *dahr eli* can be interpreted in two meanings: one is any person living in this world, and the second is those who are attached to the world and to property. In Navoi's ghazals, mainly the people of the second meaning are intended, although in some poems other meanings are also loaded onto this image. For example, in the following bayt taken from the *divan* Badoye ul-vasat, there is talk about the faithlessness of the people of the world:

O Navoi, whether the people of the age be a thousand or one, do not recognize them,

For I cannot suppose even one out of a thousand to be faithful.

In the bayt, Navoi complains with poetic anguish about people's faithlessness.

Even if he tests a thousand people, he does not believe that even one faithful person will emerge from among them.

If you stake your life for the base, in hardship he will not recognize you for a moment,

Such are the people of the age, so you too do not recognize them.

In the above bayt, *dahr eli* is used in the meaning both of people greedy for the world and of ordinary faithless people. In the bayt, the poet says: "If you do good to base people, in a difficult time they will not recognize you; the people of the world are like that, therefore you too should not recognize them, do not draw close to them." Through this, Navoi also says that the people of the world are base and ignorant persons.

Thus, another enemy of the lover—lyrical hero is the people of this world. In most of Navoi's ghazals, this image appears as a symbol of faithlessness.

Rivals. "The love propagated by Navoi is true human love. Navoi's lyrical hero is a human being in the pure and clear sense. All human feelings, virtues, and shortcomings are characteristic of him. He loves. On the path of love he becomes afflicted with various misfortunes." In most of Navoi's love ghazals, along with the lover and the beloved, there are also mentioned those who become an obstacle between them—the rivals. The poet was able to load this image as well with various subtle meanings. The *salik* on the path of true love will certainly also encounter things that lead him astray from this path. In most of Navoi's ghazals, the image of the rival is often interpreted precisely as a symbol of such misleading things: the

nafs, satanic desire, and worldly pleasures:

If your rival drives me from the table of union, despite his spite

Let me, as my heart desires, be your guest in imagination.

In the bayt, the lover says that if the rival drives him away from the table of union, he will ignore this and, as his heart desires, host the beloved in his imagination. Through this, the poet shows that no matter how much the desires of the nafs may pursue one, one must never give up or turn back from one's true aim. Or in the following bayt, where the rival, seeing the lover's lamentations, throws the stone of cruelty at him, in the Sufi meaning this points to the fact that on the path of Allah, Satan and the armies of the nafs attack more fiercely the servant who implores Him:

If the rival's hand throws many stones of cruelty, it is because of my sigh,

Just as a sharp wind scatters fruit from the branch in every direction.

In the next bayt, while loading the image of the rival with such meanings, the poet intends, in order to find refuge from him, to tear the "veil of safety" and encounter pain. For in Sufism there are views that only a person who has pain can become close to Allah:

Set the dogs of that quarter on me from every side, O rival,

For my heart desires the veil of safety to be torn into a hundred pieces.

At the same time, Navoi also states when such enemies attack the lover:

In weakness the rival drags me from that quarter by pulling my hand,

As though he would separate me from the bond, if he exerts sudden force.

In the bayt, the reason why the lyrical hero has fallen into this state—being dragged by the rival pulling his hand—is weakness: distance from Allah and the lack of firmness of his faith. Thus, in order to rid oneself of such satanic vices, a person must strengthen his faith. In the bayt, the philosopher-poet points to this as well.

In the following bayt, another vice characteristic of rivals is condemned. This is that the rival spread among people the fire of the lover's love (the servant's hidden good deeds):

The fire of your love, which I concealed, the rival spread among the people,

For if one keeps a fever hidden, death makes it known.

It is also the nafs that urges a person to show his good quality to others and that forces him to display himself

and gain false reputation. In the above bayt, the rival is used precisely in this meaning.

In a general sense, we may say that the image of the rival signifies ugly intentions, desires of the nafs, and satanic feelings that lead a person astray. The great thinker uses this image in order to call people to keep away from such vices.

Beauties. In the terminology of classical works, this word comes in the meaning of “beauties” and “good ones.” Like the above images, Navoi also loaded this symbol with several meanings. The main one of them is people belonging to this world or the desires and aspirations of this world. It is known that for a person whose heart is occupied by love for this world, the true world has no attraction. But this love brings only calamity to the servant:

The cruelty of beauties ruins the kingdom of the heart, indeed,

There is much difference from a tyrant king to a just one.

It is natural that hearts attached to the world and its beauties suffer oppression. For, first, any feeling belonging to this world is transient, and this torments a person; second, the above bayt expresses that Allah may punish servants who attach their hearts to others besides Him. A similar state is shown in the following bayt—the wound of a heart attached to worldly beauties:

My torn heart found injury among the hearts of beauties,

Alas, can a cracked glass remain whole among anvils?

Therefore, in most of his ghazals the poet urges one not to be deceived by the beauty of beauties and not to pay attention to them, repeatedly stressing that their beauty is transient:

O Navoi, there is no straightness in the stature of beauties,

Why then does human stature resemble the cypress more than they do?

In the above bayt as well, through the lack of straightness in the stature of beauties, it is indicated that both they themselves and attachment to them are wrong. Or in the following bayt, a person who expects fidelity from the beauties of the age is like one who asks people for fire, but receives water:

Whoever expects fidelity from the beauties of the age

Asks for fire, but water reveals its spark.

While warning against “beauties,” the poet at the same time also shows their rank before the truly beautiful Beloved—Allah:

If beauties revive the dead through speech,

My moon-faced beloved, it seems, teaches hadith to them all.

In the bayt, this rank is shown through the fact that even the skill of the beauties is actually by the grace of the Creator. Thus, through this image as well, the philosopher emphasizes not becoming too attached to the blessings of this world and the transience and faithlessness of everything.

In general, the poet also reveals the way to free oneself from such “enemies.” This is to take a pir, to learn true love, and to renounce worldly desires. “...since human nature is composed of two foundations—the elements of the spiritual and material worlds—there is a struggle between these elements. If the demands of the body, which is the material foundation, grow stronger, a person becomes trapped in greed, lust, and the snare of the animal nafs, and grows ever more degraded. In order to prevent this danger, a person must constantly satisfy his spiritual and moral needs and commit himself to cultivating this aspect. In this task, a more perfect human being than himself—the pir—guides him. By pir or arif, the people of Sufism meant a wise and intellectually mature person, whose heart is filled to the brim with the light of enlightenment, and who possesses pure intention and pure morality. The pir is the confidant of the heart, a sympathizer, and a kindred soul.”

CONCLUSION

From the analyses we have considered, it becomes clear that through the images in his lyrical works, Navoi calls a person to the right path, not to become attached to the world, and not to forget the hereafter; he sets apart the images of the shaykh, the people of the age, the rival, and the beauties, loads them with symbolic meanings, and also points to the ways and methods of struggling against them. This work is the introduction and brief description of the above topic. In the future, we hope that researchers will carry out broader analyses of this topic.

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