

Analysis of the figures of Aristotle and Socrates in Alisher Navoi's works

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Abstract: In Eastern classical literature, there are traditional figures that appear repeatedly in stories, legends, epics, and overall creative works, becoming widely known and popular. One of these figures is the wise man (hakim). In the literature and historical books of the near and Middle East, this figure is often referred to by names such as "hakim" (wise man) or "donishmand" (scholar).

Keywords: Eastern classical literature, Alisher Navoiy, wise man, Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Epic of Gilgamesh, "Saddi Iskandariy," epic.

Introduction: The concept of the sacred seven has been of equal importance to almost all peoples on Earth. This number, being one of the most famous magical numbers, has been especially revered in the East. Regarding the origin of this number and its connection with the planets, S. Hasanov explains it in relation to the religious beliefs of the Sumerians who lived in the south of Babylon. Zoir Ziyotov, in his book *Sumerians and the Turan Tribes*, proposes the idea that the Sumerians are actually the ancestors of the peoples of Central Asia. The epic *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which serves as an example of the creativity of this people, contains the significant motif of the number seven. Specifically, in Sumerian epic poetry, the goddess of love, Inanna, passes through seven gates of the under world, the priests in the religious temple are divided into seven levels, and so on. At that time, Babylon's powerful culture and the idea of seven main gods, including the seven famous planets, had not yet formed. As Babylon assimilated and developed Sumerian culture, astronomy became central in Babylonian civilization, and the seven planets (according to the worldview of that time) were accepted as seven gods influencing the world and human life. The seven-based week days were also formed. The seven gods were each designated as the patron of a particular domain. In the book *"Lison ut-tayr Images: The World of Symbols and Metaphors by literary critic Zuhra Mamadaliyeva*, the following

information is provided: "The concept of monotheism in Islam—Tawhid—reduced the religious and divine significance of the sevenfold harmony of the world's balance in the Islamic East. Through the religious views and culture of Babylon, heroes were no longer considered gods but were instead interpreted merely as planets. However, this harmony had become so deeply ingrained in the consciousness of Eastern peoples that it could not be entirely removed from popular thought and consumption. Furthermore, the concept of seven also gained importance within Islam. The belief that Allah created the world in seven days, the seven levels of hell and one more heaven, and the seven layers of the heavens and the earth are described in relation to the concept of the Mi'raj (ascension). The idea that the seven planets influenced the seven days of the week, the seven climates, and people's consciousness, providing patronage, and their qualities or lack thereof, was preserved in Muslim Eastern astrology. Although they no longer held divine power or were independent gods, as angels, they were depicted in the Mi'raj literature, taking pride in kissing the Prophet's saddle and being honored by the touch of his foot, and they continued to exist in some form."

It can be said that the number "seven" has symbolic meaning in Sufi literature, which is an integral part of classical literature. In Sufism, terms such as "seven stations" and "seven states" led to the emergence of symbolic representations such as "seven climates,"

"seven planets," and "seven worlds." In the earlier stages of Sufism, the levels of the soul, which were classified into four stages, were later identified as seven stages by the Naqshbandi order. These stages are as follows: nafs al-ammara (the commanding soul), nafs al-lawwama (the reproaching soul), nafs al-mulhama (the inspired soul), nafs al-mutmainna (the tranquil soul), nafs al-raziya (the content soul), nafs al-mardiya (the pleased soul), and nafs al-kamila (the perfected soul, or the soul of the Sufi).

Navoiy's Seven Wise Men are as follows: Plato (Aflotun), Socrates (Suqrot), Galen (Balinos), Hippocrates (Buqrot), Hermes (Hurmus), Pythagoras (Farfmyus), and Aristotle (Arastu). In the epic, it is stated that there are 500 wise men in total by Alexander's side, of which ten are always with him. This independent city-state later falls under the influence of Macedonia. Alisher Navoiy was a wise man who always revered and valued knowledge and enlightenment.

The epic "Saddi Iskandariy" is one of Alisher Navoiy's works in which the figures of wise men are prominently featured. The wise men mentioned in this work are Naqumojis (Naqumohis, Nikomaxos, the father of Aratun in the epic), Aristotle (Arastu), Plato (Filotun-Aflotun), Socrates (Suqrot), Galen (Asqalinos), Hippocrates (Buqrot), Hermes (Hurmus), and Pythagoras (Faysog'urs). It is well-known that from ancient times, Greek scholars and philosophers, especially Aristotle, Socrates, Hippocrates, and others, were also widely known to the peoples of the Near and Middle East. Many of their works were translated into Arabic, commented on, analyzed, and some were creatively reworked by scholars in Central Asia and other countries. Stories and legends about Aristotle, Plato, and others, as well as literary works, emerged over time. Undoubtedly, Navoiy was well-acquainted with most of these. However, Navoiy did not aim to create historical representations of Greek scholars and philosophers or to provide information about their scientific activities in "Saddi Iskandariy", nor did he intend to expound their social and philosophical views. The ideological and aesthetic purpose of the work did not require this. Following tradition, Navoiy uses the names of these scholars but through their figures, he seeks to shed light on the social and political issues, as well as educational and upbringing matters of his time. Just as he moved Alexander from the ancient world to his own era, or more precisely, to the world of progressive thought and dreams of his time, Navoiy also brings the scholars into the context of his own time and place. The scholars in "Saddi Iskandariy", with their worldview and social-political ideals, represent the progressive thinkers of Navoiy's era. The ideas expressed through their voices are, in fact, Navoiy's

own thoughts and reflections.

In "Saddi Iskandariy", Navoiy promotes the idea that rulers should work in consultation with the council of scholars and wise men. He presents a range of social, political, and ethical-educational issues through the voices of these scholars. This is most commonly expressed in the form of a question from Alexander and an answer from Aristotle.

The figures of the wise men play a significant role in the development of the epic's ideological motifs. They complement and enhance the character of the main hero, Alexander. Alexander consults with the wise men on every matter, follows their rational advice, solves problems with their assistance, and overcomes dangers. In this way, the wise men in "Saddi Iskandariy" do not remain confined to their scientific activities; they actively participate in social and political life, advocating for the practical, life-changing results of science and thought. Navoiy aspired for scholars and the intellectual community to be like this, dreaming of a world where they could engage in such a way.

Navoiy promotes the idea that rulers should act in consultation with scholars and the council of wise men. He addresses a number of social, political, and ethical-educational issues through the voices of these scholars. This is predominantly expressed in the form of a question from Alexander and an answer from Aristotle.

Navoiy portrays the relationship between Alexander and the wise men in such a close manner that they are depicted not as a king and his subordinates, but as close friends. Alexander is shown as a talented scholar, a herald and patron of knowledge and enlightenment. Having been educated by Naqumojis in his youth, Alexander remains in the company of scholars like Aristotle and Plato throughout his life. He follows their advice and supports their scientific endeavors. In the epic, it is mentioned that Alexander has a total of five hundred wise men by his side, ten of whom are always with him.

Bor erdi janobida besh yuz hakim,

Alardin o'ni kecha-kunduz nadim:

Filotun, Arastu, Balinos ham,

Yana Arashmidus, Shaminos ham.

Qilinmunu Volisu Farfurnus

Ki, Suqrotu Hurmus kibi xokbo's.

Although it is stated that there are ten wise men here, in fact, the primary role of the seven lies in their distinction from others. Among these seven wise men, the most frequently mentioned figures in the epic are those of Aristotle and Socrates.

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, is the Eastern name

for Plato's disciple. Born in 384 BCE in the city of Stagira, located on the Aegean Sea, he is sometimes referred to as Aristotle of Stagira. This independent city-state, which later fell under the influence of Macedonia, had once separated from the Hellenic League. Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, came from a family of physicians and served in the court of King Amyntas III of Macedonia. In 367 BCE, Aristotle entered Plato's renowned Academy in Athens, where he studied for twelve years before starting to teach there. Plato took pride in his disciple Aristotle. From a young age, Aristotle was a close companion of King Philip II's son, Alexander. When Philip II ascended the throne in 340 BCE, Aristotle was invited to the Macedonian capital, Pella, and appointed as the tutor of the 13-year-old Alexander. Aristotle began to educate his pupil in the spirit of the heroic ideals expressed in Homer's "Iliad".

Later, Alexander is said to have remarked, "I respect Aristotle as I do my father, because my father gave me life, while Aristotle gave me the values of life." In 339 BCE, after ascending to the throne, Alexander returned to his hometown of Stagira. The city, which had been destroyed during the wars of Philip II, was rebuilt by Alexander in honor of his teacher. In Firdawsī's "Shahnameh", Aristotle is acknowledged as Alexander's teacher. In Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandarnama" and Khusrāw Dehlavī's "Oyinai Iskandariy", Aristotle is depicted as Alexander's primary mentor and companion, accompanying him even on his sea voyages. In Jami's "Khiradnama-i-Iskandar", he also assumes this role. In "Saddi Iskandariy", the central philosopher and teacher of Alexander, Aristotle continues to guide him throughout his reign until the end of his life. Aristotle's advice played a crucial role in shaping the great conqueror into a renowned philosopher-king. He leads a hundred scholars, including Hippocrates, in creating a mirror that shows the world to Alexander. Nizami Ganjavi's "Iskandarnama", dedicated to Alexander the Great (Zulqarnayn), consists of two parts: "Iqbolnoma" and "Sharafnoma". The second part of the epic, "Sharafnoma", is composed of conversations between the conqueror and scholars. In this section, the figure of Aristotle is depicted as the central symbol of wisdom. The story tells of the Egyptian queen, Maryam, who, while ruling over Syria, finds herself in a dire situation due to the powerful Ethiopian army's attack on her kingdom. Seeking help to defend her state, Maryam appeals to the great conqueror, Alexander. Listening to her plea, Alexander sends her to his teacher, Aristotle, for advice. Before offering military assistance, Aristotle imparts much wisdom and knowledge related to the sciences and philosophy to the queen. According to

Nizami's epic, Aristotle's status in Alexander's court was so high that kings and queens would dream of performing the humble task of pouring water for him while he washed his hands. Specifically, Queen Maryam is granted the honor of performing this task. Aristotle advises the queen that, in order to strengthen her kingdom, she must take care of her army and people. He explains that for this, wealth, influence, and resources are essential, and teaches her the craft of turning copper into gold, known as "Alchemy." By mastering these sciences and fair governance, Queen Maryam succeeds in elevating her country to the ranks of powerful states.

In Jami's "Iskandarnoma", D. Yusupova, a Candidate of Philosophy, comments on the work, stating that in "Xiradnama-i-Iskandar" ("The Wisdom of Alexander"), Alexander is portrayed as a mystic who built his life upon Sufism. In this epic, Aristotle is again depicted as Alexander's teacher, imparting lessons on ethics, morality, and the secrets of kingship, as per the instructions of Alexander's father. The story of Alexander's birth, education, maturation, and his ascension to the throne after his father's death is briefly summarized, and the work primarily consists of the "Xiradnomalar" (wisdom teachings). Returning to "Saddi Iskandariy", among the seven Greek philosophers and Navoiy's seven wise men, only Socrates and Pythagoras correspond to each other. If we consider Alexander (Alexander the Great) and his contemporaries, the list narrows down even further, as only Aristotle and Diogenes were actually his contemporaries. This indicates that Navoiy did not pay attention to the issue of chronology and instead, he included Greek philosophers who were well known and prominent in his own time alongside his version of Alexander. In this work, all the Greek philosophers are depicted within the framework of Islamic ideology. They only appear independently when offering condolences and advice to Alexander's mother, Banu, and in the "Xiradnomalar" presented at the end of the epic. In other sections, Aristotle, followed by Socrates, and partially by Plato, plays the main roles.

It is well known that in both the East and the West, Aristotle was revered as the "Master of Logic" and "Father of Logic." Therefore, Navoiy assigns Aristotle to be Alexander's chief mentor in his conquest of the seven climates of the world. Aristotle enters the epic in Chapter XVIII of "Saddi Iskandariy". The central part of the epic has a distinctive composition. Inspired by the game presented by the King of Chin, Alexander motivates the scholars to come up with new scientific inventions. Under the leadership of Plato and Socrates, the scholars invent the astrolabe, which reveals the realm of stars, and under the guidance of Aristotle and

Hippocrates, they discover a game that demonstrates the phenomena of the earthly realm, and the hellish world.

At Alexander's initiative, the natural and geographical features of the regions are studied, and markers are established to show distances in various places. By listing all these activities, Navoiy's aim is to emphasize the need for every ruler to pay attention to knowledge, enlightenment, and education, and that with this focus, any state's prosperity and rise are achievable.

In Alisher Navoiy's epics *Farhod* and *Shirin*, *Saddi Iskandariy*, the figure of Socrates holds a special place. In his work "Tarixi anbiyo va hukamo" (The History of Prophets and Philosophers), Navoiy also mentions Socrates among the wise men. According to Navoiy, Socrates was a disciple of the wise man Hippocrates and lived during the time of Humay bint Bahman. In his words, Navoiy reflects on Socrates' teachings, stating, "To show humility to an ignorant person is like giving water to someone who cannot drink enough, no matter how much they drink, it remains bitter." Furthermore, he comments on the idea that attempting to do good without knowledge is worse than the worst actions, and that one could know their enemy by consulting with them, as long as they are aware of their enmity.

Poem:

Cheksa dushman sening salohingga til,
Mahzi afsod bo'lg'usidur bil.

In all of Navoiy's works, Socrates is described as a wise figure with a profound understanding of both outward and inward knowledge. He is portrayed as having access to the treasury of secrets, a pure heart, and being the master of wisdom. Navoiy does not apply such qualities to any other character in his works. In "Farhod va Shirin" and "Saddi Iskandariy", Socrates appears at crucial turning points in the heroes' destinies, resolving difficult problems that no one else could solve. This approach by the author serves as a foundation for imagining Socrates as the epitome of a perfect human being.

The role of Socrates in Navoiy's "Farhod va Shirin" has been extensively studied in Navoiy studies. However, this is not the only interpretation of Socrates as a perfect human in Navoiy's works. In the fifteenth chapter of the epic "Khamsa", Socrates is depicted as a symbol of the perfect human. The components of this chapter—"Mulohaza" (Reflection), "Hikoyat" (Story), "Hikmat" (Wisdom), and "Voqea" (Event)—serve as a basis for this interpretation. Through these sections, Navoiy emphasizes Socrates' embodiment of ideal human qualities, further solidifying his portrayal as a figure of wisdom and perfection in the author's

philosophy.

In the events depicted, Aristotle leads Alexander's journey on land, while Socrates guides him on the sea voyage. This reflects Socrates' role as a true knower of realities and a spiritual guide, indicating his perfection as a master. In Sufi literature, water is often used as a symbol representing certain truths. Thus, Socrates' association with the sea signifies his deep understanding of spiritual and existential truths, further reinforcing his image as a guide to higher knowledge and enlightenment.

The purpose of extensively portraying the figure of the wise men was, in fact, to highlight this very concept. Based on the ideas mentioned above, it can be concluded that:

1. Abdurahman Jami's "Khiradnama-i-Iskandar" and Alisher Navoiy's "Saddi Iskandariy" were created in almost the same period, in 1485. Hazrat Navoiy's *Saddi Iskandariy* is significantly larger in size, consisting of 7,215 verses. This is three times the length of Jami's epic. In Jami's work, the focus is not on Alexander's conquests, but on his wisdom, whereas Alisher Navoiy embodies his dreams of a just king through the figure of Alexander.

2. Alexander the Great (*Zulqarnayn*) is also portrayed as a wise man, as evidenced by his act of gathering these wise men and assigning them the task of discovering various things. This act itself is a testament to his wisdom, as it shows his recognition of the importance of knowledge and his ability to lead and guide those who can contribute to the advancement of understanding.

3. Although the wise men lived in different periods of history, they are depicted in the work as scholars from the same era. This suggests that Navoiy is not concerned with the specific time period in which these philosophers lived, but rather emphasizes that the knowledge they created is always valuable and necessary, regardless of time.

4. In this epic, Navoiy underscores that any ruler should have wise men around them and make decisions based on their counsel. Through this, Navoiy conveys the idea that wisdom and guidance are essential for just and successful governance.

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