

PAPER

SYMBOLIC MEANING AND IMAGERY IN THE POETRY OF SAMANDAR VOHIDOV

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Abstract

The article provides an objective evaluation of modern interpretations of classical Uzbek prosody (aruz), the development of Samandar Vohidov's inclination toward composing poetry in aruz meter, as well as his poetic collections, poetic style, and translation activities. The analysis explores poetic devices, symbols, intertextual elements, and religious-mystical connotations.

Key words: The science of aruz, the science of rhyme, ramali musammani maksur, dedication, ghazal, qasida, mukhammas, masnavi, classical poetics.

Introduction

In a poet's creative work, the symbolic essence of imagery and motifs is manifested in the ability to use words and expressions that convey both literal and figurative meanings within a poetic text. As seen above, Samandar Vohidov, for example, was able to create numerous symbolic images in his ghazals, such as depicting a fish as a symbol of a person who values the homeland, and a frog as a symbol of someone who cannot feel that value. To achieve this, he skillfully employed types of figurative language like allusion, hint, and gesture, and was able to form words, phrases, and images that acquire symbolic meaning within the context of the text. Such symbols that carry metaphorical meaning are significant because they reveal both literal and figurative meanings in the poem.

Main part

In the ghazal "Daryo" (The River), analyzed earlier, the river is not only used in its literal sense, but also symbolizes a person who has lost their identity, thus elevating the image to a symbolic level. It becomes evident that symbolism arises from various figures of speech such as metaphor and allegory. As we saw above, Samandar Vohidov created numerous symbolic images through artistic devices like metaphor (*isti'ora*), simile (*tashbeh*), and parable (*tamsil*). Now, let us consider the mastery with which symbolic imagery is created in his ghazals, similar to what is observed in Cho'lpon's poem "Binafsha" (Violet) and Oybek's

"Na'matak" (Wild Rose). In many of Samandar Vohidov's ghazals, such as "Daryo" [Anthology II, p. 128], "Orzu guli" (Flower of Desire) [Anthology II, p. 110], "Kuz" (Autumn) [Anthology II, p. 107], "Bu toshlarni" (These Stones) [Anthology II, p. 120], and "Sham" (The Candle) [Anthology II, p. 133], we observe the presence of symbolic images and motifs. It is also evident that in creating these images, the poet relied on a gradual development of ideas through the sequence of couplets in the ghazal, beginning with the opening verse (*matla*). His six-couplet ghazal "Kuz" (Autumn), in which he reflects on the transience of life with a unique philosophical introspection, is of particular importance in this regard.

Tillo karvondin judo
Azmi safar aylaydi kuz.
Dard-u armonin yig'ib,
Ko'chmoqqa ko'ch boylaydi kuz.
Ko'z ochib ko'rgan uyidan
Noiloj kechgan ayol –
Singari ko'zyosh to'kib
Taqdirini qarg'aydi kuz.
Loy aro qotgan xazonmas
Qatra-qatra xotira,
Xotira uzra yurib,
Mungli navo aylaydi kuz.
Qo'yni-kunji liq to'la
Ne'matlaridan mosivo,
Qo'li bo'sh-u, ko'ngli bo'sh,

Xurjunga g'am joylaydi kuz.
 Kecha yoz taxtin olib,
 O'z shavkatidan mast-alast
 Voh, bugun xor-u zabun
 Qish yo'lini poylaydi kuz.
 Ey, Samandar, ibrat olgin
 Benajot kuz holidan
 "Davlati dunyo vafo qilmas"
 Debon yig'laydi kuz [Saylanma II, 107].

It is well known that autumn is a season of abundance—a time when all fruits ripen and are harvested, when vast heaps of cotton are gathered. In the ghazal, however, the poet depicts the end of autumn and the onset of winter. Samandar Vohidov intentionally uses the changes of this particular moment to engage in poetic contemplation. In this context, autumn is portrayed as a traveler, having shed its golden leaves—its “golden caravans”—to the ground and now setting off on a journey. This creates the image of autumn as a dignified elder, reminiscent of a wealthy, aged individual who has dispersed all their worldly possessions. Autumn, like an old person, is burdened with sorrow and longing, ready to depart carrying all its memories. Yet, it has not arrived at this state instantly. The poet compares its current condition to a woman being separated from the home she was born and raised in—she sheds tears unwillingly and laments her fate. Autumn brings frequent rains, and the surroundings become muddy, covered in fallen leaves. These are not just ordinary leaves; they appear as autumn's memories. Autumn walks upon these memories and sings a melancholic tune, reminiscent of the sorrowful sound of the wind during this season. Though once brimming with abundance, autumn now finds itself empty-handed—separated from its former treasures. Its satchel is filled only with grief. Just yesterday, it ruled like a king in summer's palace, basking in glory; today, it stands weakened, watching the path that leads to winter. In the ghazal, autumn is not just presented with its seasonal traits; it also embodies the qualities of a once-wealthy elder. For the poet, this symbolic image of autumn is central. The anticipation of winter represents the nearing end of an old person's life. The symbol of winter in the ghazal holds a deeper meaning and helps convey the poet's literary intention through layered interpretation. In the final verse (maqta), the poet invites readers to reflect on the sorrowful state of autumn, drawing attention to its lament—“the wealth and world are unfaithful”—which poetically underscores the transience of life. The poet's skillful use of autumn as a symbolic image greatly contributes to this artistic message. Through symbolic images and motifs in his ghazals, Samandar Vohidov also succeeds in artistically exposing social flaws. In his seven-verse ghazal “Bu toshlarni...” (These Stones...), the symbol of water is elevated to a metaphorical level. In contrast, the stones are portrayed as symbols of indifferent people and obstacles in society.

Surolmassan bu toshlarni,
 Yorilgay manglaying, ammo
 Yorolmassan bu toshlarni.
 Onang – chashma kabi shaffof
 Ishonchingga ishongaysan.
 Bu toshlar toshligi rost-ku,
 Yuvolmaysan bu toshlarni.
 Sening umring – oqar lahza
 Ularining umri tosh qotgan,
 O'zing istar tomon sudrab
 Borolmaysan bu toshlarni.
 Ketar zoye bu tug'yoning
 Qahrdan qo'zg'ama qa'ring,
 Qorilgaysan o'zing, loyga –
 Qorolmassan bu toshlarni.
 Ular toshqin yo'lin to'smay
 Yashasa toshligi qolmas,
 Seni yo'ldan burar

Yo'ldan burolmassan bu toshlarni.
 Men ham toshlar ila umrim
 Talashlarda tamom etdim,
 Va bildim: tig'idan tikka
 Turolmassan bu toshlarni.
 O'zingni qiynama, ey suv,
 Men-u senga shudir qismat,
 Umr ufqi sari chetlab
 Yurolmassan bu toshlarni [Saylanma II, 120].

In the matla (opening verse) of the ghazal, the image of water begins to reveal unique, human-like qualities. The water strikes against the stone but cannot move the stones from their place, which is a very natural occurrence. However, the fact that the water continuously hits the stone but cannot achieve its goal—and despite even splitting the stone's surface, it cannot break through—shows how human characteristics have been artistically transferred to the water through the literary device of metaphor (istiora).

Results and Discussions

Thus, the symbolic image of water in the poem represents a person who, despite many efforts to realize their desires, constantly faces rigid, stone-like obstacles. The water's image as a symbol of a kind-hearted person is reinforced by the comparison to its “mother” as a clear spring, signifying trust and faith, but it is powerless to wash away the stones because the stones remain stubborn and unmoved. In the poet's view, the stones have become eternal obstacles blocking the path of goodness. While the water's life is fleeting, quickly flowing away, the stones have hardened like themselves, making it impossible for the water to drag them along in any direction. The poet vividly depicts the clear, flowing water as a symbol of a passionate young person who is strongly committed to pursuing good deeds, with a heart beating with this very intention. As the lyrical hero continues his address to the water, it appears as a wise, enlightened person. He advises the water to endure these torrents without anger, warning that although it may be muddy and cannot melt the stones despite all efforts, it should be aware that even those with noble intentions might eventually give up on their desires, fall prey to selfish desires, and become trapped by their own passions. However, the water, relentlessly striking its head against the stone, often ignores such advice. Yet, the lyrical hero persists in giving counsel. From the poet's artistic reflections that if the stones do not obstruct the path of floods, they lose their hardness, it becomes clear that the stones symbolize people who have always been obstacles to goodness and who dedicate their lives to opposing good deeds. Because such people constantly block the way of the good, they can mislead and divert the one who strives for goodness from their path. However much the water tries, it cannot redirect the stones' path toward good. After artistically expressing these warnings, the poet reveals his own fate related to the stones that have blocked his way. From his reflections on spending a lifetime in struggles with these stones, the water emerges as a symbol of a person who perseveres firmly on the path toward their dreams. The lyrical hero warns the water that even a person who remains steadfast in their pledge cannot endure standing on the edge of these stones—that is, the obstacles—nor withstand the resistance that sometimes requires risking life itself. In the face of these obstacles, weakness is inevitable. In the ghazal's concluding couplet (maqta), the poet again advises the water not to torment itself. He points out that their fates are intertwined, providing evidence for his counsel to the water. The poet informs the water that it cannot circumvent these stones along the horizon of its life, reminding that obstacles will always exist on the path of goodness, and a person with noble intentions will inevitably encounter them throughout life. The ghazal portrays that no person can surpass the limits of their

will, as symbolized by the image of water. Since a human life is insufficient to remove all obstacles in existence, it urges living without wasting time on endless futile struggles. The water as a symbolic image in this ghazal serves an essential ideological and artistic role, standing in opposition to the symbolic stones and expressing the poet's philosophical views on life in an artistic manner.

Conclusion

The poet is also considered skillful in creating symbolic images and symbols in certain ghazals. In these works, the poetic thought or literary scene in the matla (opening verse) is formed around a symbolic image, and this poetic idea or literary scene is gradually developed through the sequence of the couplets. The portrayal of the lyrical hero in such ghazals as a wise, enlightened figure holds particular significance. The manifestation of the lyrical hero in this specific form requires the poet to possess extensive life experience and a deep, insightful perspective on existence and social life. Samandar Vohidov, being a highly talented poet with such qualities, succeeds in demonstrating this through the symbolic images in his ghazals, endowing them with profound meaning.

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