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THE ARTISTIC SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL MOTIFS AS A COMPONENT OF LITERARY TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

This article briefly discusses the study of religious and educational motifs, the analysis of religious-themed works created in folk literature, religious history, and classical literature. It also partially examines the influence of these motifs on modern literature.

KEYWORDS: *Religious-Educational Motif, Synthesis, Folk Books, Classical Literature, Modern Literature, Research, Literary Tradition.*

As a nation strives for self-awareness, literature first and foremost plays the role of a spiritual guide on this path. Without a proper understanding of religion, history, and spiritual values, dreaming of true freedom and a great future is a difficult task. In this regard, since the early 1990s, the research and analysis of literary samples created on religious themes or reflecting religious values has begun with renewed intensity. Most importantly, attention has been paid to this process through a purposeful approach based on the categories of systematicity and gradualism. Indeed, exploring the spiritual wealth of the people opens the way for the study of literary samples created by specific authors, paving the way for the formation of a unique methodology within literary studies.

In the early years of independence, special attention was paid to folk books and their study. Notably, the research of scholars such as R.Jumaniyozov, B.Valikhojayev, and Kh.Okbotayev [1] comprehensively examined the genesis, development factors, dissemination processes, and distinctive features such as imagery, meaning, and depiction of folk books. In the 1990s, bold steps were taken to publish and prepare prefaces for books highlighting events related to the history of Islam and Islamic culture. Scholars like M.Hasaniy, B.Sarimsoqov, S.Rafiddinov, and N.Abdulahatov [2] prepared works on Islamic history with prefaces and commentaries, while studies by S.Eshonova, D. Khunzekr, and D. Urayeva [3] conducted monographic research on sources dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad's descendants, particularly Imam Husayn. Thus, it becomes clear that in the early period of independence, research in folkloristics focused more on works with religious themes. This, naturally, was an expected development.

As the spiritual values of the people are expressed in the art of words, their spirit, faith, and worldview live in harmony with their emotions, that is, they are revived through words in the delicate nuances of literature. Studying the expression of religious motifs and views in samples of folk creativity, which are products of life processes, on the one hand, allows for definite conclusions regarding the historical roots and gradual development of religious themes in literature; on the other hand, it invites reflection on the interests and beliefs of our ancestors. At the same time, in the early years of independence, attempts to publish works about historical figures who played an important role in the history, consolidation, and spread of Islam led the way. Professors N.Komilov and U. Uvatov achieved commendable work in this field [14]. In particular, regarding hagiographic works and their historicity, I.Ostonakulov scientifically analyzed and published the 18th-century work "Tazkiratu-l-avliyo" by Muhammad Siddik Rushdiy. Researching such works clarified that the main aim is to emphasize that the knowledge acquired by great saints through spiritual practice serves to nurture the human soul via the concepts of "spiritual state" and "rank" [4]. Undoubtedly, these ideas have influenced modern Uzbek literature.

Research shows that religious-themed works, including those covering Islamic history, were widespread in 18th-19th century Uzbek literature. In poetic works created in the 17th century, it was common to mention religious figures, allude to them, and present events from Islamic history as moral lessons. For example, in Sufi Allayar's work "Sabot ul-ojizin," the story "Hikoyati Hajjoj" artistically portrays the figure of Hajjoj. Historically, Hajjoj ibn Yusuf is known for his harsh methods in spreading Islam and is remembered as a tyrannical ruler during the Umayyad period [5].

Sufi Allayar emphasized these traits by depicting how Muslims prayed for Hajjoj's soul to be taken early, so that his sins would be fewer and others would suffer less from his oppression. The author also mentions "The Battle of Uhud," artistically describing the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) loss of teeth and the martyrdom of seventy Muslims, as well as how Abu Sufyan, Khalid ibn Valid, and the unbelievers of Uhud converted to Islam due to the Prophet's prayers [6]. Indeed, works reflecting religious themes constitute a significant portion of classical Uzbek literature. Their vivid and engaging narrative style ensures they remain readable and popular.

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Particularly important are narratives about religious heroes who inspired the masses. Many works created in the 18th-19th centuries are in the form of stories and belong to the purely religious-didactic genre [7]. Considering that the main criterion of didactics is to influence through reality and example, the significant attention given to religious-themed literary works is understandable. "Works depicting Islamic history in Uzbek literature cover a wide range of topics, from the heroism of historical figures who fought for the spread of religion to events related to Hazrat Ali, Amir Hamza, the battles of Uhud and Khaybar, and the history of Imam Husayn. Also, the numerous versions of works about prominent Islamic figures such as Muhammad Hanifa, Muhammad Baqir, and Sayyid Battol Gaziy demonstrate the high respect of the people for religious personalities [8]." When tracing the interpretation, genesis, and development of religious-educational themes in modern literature back to classical literary traditions, we particularly noted that this was based on the unity of thought and spirit as well as the constancy of faith.

Indeed, it is evident that modern Uzbek literature has grown out of and been nourished by the depths of classical literature. For example, Sa'dulla Siyoyev's work "Yassaviy" stands out as a unique artistic interpretation of a religious figure's activity in the early literature of independence. The work strongly emphasizes realism characteristic of classical hagiographic texts. The poetic novel dedicated to Ismoil al-Bukhari by the writer Dushan Fayzi also stands out for its richness in biographical information. The dominance of traditionalism, classical stylistic elements, and the principle of the writer-narrator in these two works indicates that some of our earlier observations regarding religious themes in modern literature may need to be viewed with certain nuances.

Overall, the study of religious-themed works created in classical literature has opened wide paths in Uzbek literary scholarship for understanding the worldview, ideology, and creative directions of authors, as well as for recognizing the bright principles of modern literature.

A systematic study of works on religious themes inevitably reveals the prominent aspects of Uzbek literary criticism. Notably, in addition to the study of folk books, religious history, and classical literature, the next stage included works emerging in the Jadid literary movement. The publication of literary products by representatives of the national awakening and Jadid literature, as well as the need to study the religious-educational ideas contained therein, elevated literary scholarship to a new level. The religious-themed stories, narratives, and journalistic articles by Abdulla Avloniy, Munavvarkari Abdurashidkhanov, Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy, and Abdurauf Fitrat laid sufficient groundwork for discussing the defining features of early 20th-century Uzbek literature and assessing their strong influence on later literary periods. Scholars such as S.Kasimov, B.Kasimov, A.Aliyev, S.Ahmedov, N.Karimov, Sh.Turdiyev, U.Dalimov, N.Jabborov, and H.Saidov have also touched on religious-educational themes in their research on Behbudiy's legacy. Furthermore, the two-volume selected works of Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy, initially prepared by Professor B.Kasimov and later by S.Ahmedov, introduced a broad readership to the accomplished writer, playwright, and publicist [10].

The national awakening's need for self-awareness, attention to the nation's past, and high spiritual values is clear. In this process, religion and religious belief have always held a leading position. Naturally, without deeply studying the history of religion, it is impossible to comprehensively reflect on its essence, meaning, and educational significance. For this reason, Mahmudkhuja Behbudiy's treatise "Brief History of Islam" (1913) and Abdurauf Fitrat's "Brief History of Islam" (1915, in Persian) were created.

We also know from literary history that M.Abdurashidkhanov and Shakir Sulaymon authored concise histories of Islam.
Abdulla Avloniy's book "Brief History of the Prophets and History of Islam" is likewise imbued with a national spirit and serves as a unique didactic guide aimed at human perfection. Literary scholar H.Boltaboyev, evaluating the religious-themed works of Fitrat and Avloniy, notes: "While Fitrat's work pays particular attention to historicity, Avloniy's treatise focuses more on the pedagogical aspect, aiming to convey ideas more easily to readers" [11]. Indeed, the emergence of ideas and themes in literature is connected, to some degree, with the creative spiritual "self" of the time and era. The internal dynamics of literature relate not only to the realm of ideas but also directly to changes in the nature of the creator under external influences. That is, "creation is a particular form of a person's attitude, evaluation, and aesthetic position toward society and life, as well as their conclusions about the world and humanity" [12].

During his career, Abdulla Avloniy seriously engaged in educational work, opened schools, and taught. Accordingly, in his works, the voice of a devoted patriot and teacher is distinctly heard. The author tries to provide brief, clear, but detailed information about the history of the prophets, which facilitates quick memorization and increases the impact of the narratives.

Later-period literature, including that after independence, continued the style and expressive methods of such works created on religious themes in literary history. Writers enriched artistic works with new ideas based on criteria of vividness and artistic merit. In summary, the study of religious-educational themes, motifs, and images in literature clarifies many issues: the main principles of Uzbek literature, its aesthetic taste, artistic standards, people's worldview, and the creative spiritual world of writers.

The continuity and vitality of ideas, themes, and images in literature relate to the organic unity of existing literary traditions. Professor D.Kuranov defined literary tradition as follows: "As important internal factors of artistic literary development, literary heritage and inheritance, tradition and innovation are always present in the literary process. Today's literature develops and feeds on the heritage of past literature. Literary heritage refers to universally valuable literary and artistic values created in the past that have overcome the test of time. Today's literature is the heir to this past literary heritage. Literary traditions are formed on the basis of literary heritage. Literary tradition is a living legacy valuable to contemporary

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literature and is constantly active. In the continuous process of literary development, each era absorbs the best features of previous eras, refines them, perfects them, and simultaneously strives to add rare innovations. This ensures the uninterrupted development of literature" [13].

Modern Uzbek literature, which has grown and matured from the depths of literary traditions, has produced new artistic works. Studying monographically their common and differing features with other works reflecting religious themes, as well as examining factors of literary development from the perspectives of tradition and literary influence, is an important task for literary scholarship.

By the 1970s and 1980s, a new wave formed in literature. Writers of this period, while striving for classical literary traditions and national identity, developed a new literary thinking. Modern heroes aiming to radically change life began to be reflected in a series of artistic images. The reemergence of religious-mystical themes, long prohibited, in literature also brought qualitative changes. Our earlier analysis confirms that these qualitative changes arose from the republication of works once banned during the Soviet era. The translation of the Qur'an into Uzbek, the publication of the Prophet's hadiths, and the works of great theorists of Islam such as at-Tirmizi and Ismail Bukhari, as well as Sufi poets like Ahmad Yassavi, Sulaymon Bakirganiy, and Sufi Allayar, introduced a fresh, pure breath of ancient themes into the art of words.

The development of religious-educational themes in the independence era and the study of creative works embodying universal ideas remain among the pressing issues in contemporary literary scholarship. The independence period of Uzbek prose is characterized by ideological and artistic renewal and change. Especially, the artistic synthesis of religious-educational motifs has increased.

In short, great literary traditions created with steadfastness to religious beliefs never fall outside the criteria of vitality over centuries. Modern literature, matured under the influence of immortal feelings of classical literature and infused with optimistic ideas in artistic expression, has been further inspired by religious-educational themes, expanding its expressive possibilities. Steps taken to publish classical literary works and efforts in researching religious texts have laid the groundwork for qualitative and substantive changes in subsequent literature. The renewal of the creative process, ideas of freedom and liberty, and religious-educational themes and motifs testify to the distinctive principles of modern literature.

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