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OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE CREATIVE INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN TAHIR MALIK'S SHORT STORY "FALAK"

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ABSTRACT

The literary works of nations embody their national spirit, philosophy, and moral values, with religious and spiritual elements playing crucial roles. By the late 20th century, there was a resurgence of interest in religion, mysticism, and the integration of these themes into literature. Uzbek literature, especially post-independence, reflects a strong influence of Islamic educational themes, continuing a thousand-year tradition. Tahir Malik, a significant figure in modern Uzbek prose, adeptly integrates religious concepts into his narratives, exemplifying the deep connection between Islamic teachings and artistic expression. His work "Falak" merges historical and fantastical elements, emphasizing the enduring importance of faith, justice, and knowledge. Malik's narratives reveal the interplay of spiritual and worldly concerns, highlighting the societal implications of religious beliefs and ethical values.

KEY WORDS: *national spirit, uzbek literature, religious themes, islamic education, Tahir Malik, modern prose, spirituality, mysticism, faith, justice, knowledge, ethical values.*

Literature of every nation reflects its national spirit, way of thinking, experiences of its scholars, moral, spiritual, religious, and divine concepts and values. Therefore, disregarding these aspects makes it impossible to define the essence of the literary process and to correctly evaluate the role and significance of literary traditions in artistic creation.

Indeed, meaning, emotions, or truth in artistic creation are not discovered out of thin air. Religion and philosophy, enlightenment and spirituality, thought and moral values all have their place and importance here. As a result, by the end of the 20th century, a renewed interest in language, history, religion, and mysticism emerged. "Historically, it is well-known that Sufism has been one of the teachings that strongly influenced the social, cultural, philosophical, and literary life of the Uzbek people [Jalilov B, 2010: 20]." Since the early years of independence, Uzbek literary critics have been paying attention to the content and essence of works on religious-educational themes, their development as a continuation and distinct direction of a thousand-year tradition, and the research into their unique characteristics. The change in the creative climate in the era of globalization, the variety in the manner of expression by creators, the processes of inter-genre synthesis, the integration of modern world literature standards with classical literature into new forms, depend on the talent of the creator.

In general, any literary work requires extensive knowledge, high intellect, and genuine discoveries from the author. "Every author must work devotedly on their work, honing their talent to capture the reader's heart [Sharafiddinov O, 2004:184]".

At the same time, the entry of religious motives into the literature of this period demanded a distinct religious-educational direction. Since the early days of independence, the content and essence of modern Uzbek prose and its main object of depiction have begun to reflect the Islamic-educational ideas that have been the main themes in classical Uzbek literature for a thousand years. Studying the integration of Quranic themes into world and Uzbek literature is not only instructive from a religious perspective but also helps revive the genealogical, unbroken connections of Eastern literature from the past. The considerations about the commonality of religious and secular literature illuminate new facets of our ancient heritage [Karomatov H, 1993: 5].

In modern Uzbek prose, the ability to deeply integrate religious and educational motives into the artistic essence of a work requires profound knowledge and experience from the writer. In this regard, Tahir Malik's creativity draws our attention, as his works reflect unique artistic mastery through the interpretation of religious concepts. During the years of independence, the productive creativity of Tahir Malik exhibited a wisdom-infused spirit that emphasized restraining desires, avoiding Satan's tricks, and believing in the inevitability of death. According to the theoretical standards of classical literary criticism, Malik's works are

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founded on the idea of the hand being busy with labor while the heart remains with God. The seemingly simple stylistic features of his stories and novellas conceal significant life lessons. The protagonists in his works are often depicted as individuals striving to attain a state of spiritual union, learning from the examples of saints and sheikhs along their arduous paths.

Malik masterfully weaves notions of respect for religion and Islamic rulings into his narratives. In the story "Falak", we observe how human emotions intertwined with history and the future are closely linked both religiously and worldly. Written in a fantastical style, this work captures the complex inner world of individuals living within spiritual fragrances and the deep artistic-philosophical perspectives filled with the author's torments.

In "Falak" the need for religion and faith throughout every era of humanity is highlighted, showing that the concept of faith alone keeps the world in harmony. "The issue of faith is a human issue. All human actions, including good deeds for the sake of goodness, ultimately stem from faith [Karimov H, 2010: page 153]". The narrative skillfully portrays the turmoil during the era of Mirzo Ulugbek, the injustices resulting from ignorance, and the plight of people suffering from the decisions of self-proclaimed pious judges who misinterpret religion.

It highlights the societal negligence towards a young girl married off due to her father's debt, and the lack of objection from the contemporary religious leaders, reflecting the flaws of ignorance in society at that time. To address such injustices, Purdil Palvan extends a helping hand to the girl, only to be ordered by the disguised religious judge to be stoned without any evidence, labeling them sinners and adulterers without proper investigation. The hero Shamsibek's declaration, "Your Excellency, as you know, the merciful Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) always thoroughly investigated before ordering stoning for adultery. There is no need to remind you of the honorable hadiths on this matter. Shamsibek and Qamariddin clarify the situation, finding witnesses to prove the innocence of the young couple. "Allah is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing, who protects His innocent servants [T. Malik, 2017: page 43]. These words beautifully synthesize the aesthetic moment in the narrative.

Through this work, the author enriches our consciousness with both historical and religious knowledge. Some characters in the story highlight how ignorance and superstition can lead to severe consequences. There are conversations in the work that are crucial for understanding the true meaning and essence of the story, based on the societal position and worldviews of the participants. These are not the conversations of the ignorant or the uneducated, but of characters who possess both worldly and religious knowledge and strive to understand their place in society. "For it is a miracle that Allah, with His perfect wisdom and complete power, created Adam (peace be upon him), and sent some of his descendants as prophets to guide people on the right path. Let us remember Allah's words on this matter in the "Yasin" verses: There are many signs on earth for His servants to see the power and miracle of God. One of these signs is that Allah makes the night disappear and brings forth the day. During the celestial rotation, one person rejoices with happiness, while another lives under the cloud of sorrow [T. Malik, 2017: 55]". This excerpt from the chapter "Executed Judgment" is not included by chance. Through these sentences, the author conveys that the birth, life, and creation of humanity are indeed miracles, drawing upon verses from the Quran. Another line from this conversation illustrates the author's ability to deeply integrate religious and educational motives into the artistic essence of the work: "Allah has set two paths for His servants. He has given reason and intelligence so that they may choose the path of the Merciful and attain happiness. The Master of the Universe, Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: 'If Allah has done good to you, do good to others [T. Malik, 2017: 56]". Indeed, each religious-educational motif in the work serves to perfectly convey the story's message to the reader. The hadiths and verses included are not aimed at a specific person but at all of humanity. By integrating religious and educational ideas, the author has enriched the artistic essence of the work.

At first glance, the work seems to be a fantastical story, and at another, it appears to be a historical one. However, at its core, the work embodies a profound meaning and significance that connects the past and the future. The Islamic ideas and religious tones presented in the story are closely intertwined with the events happening to the characters. In particular, the fact that Mirzo Ulugbek is considered the Sultan of the science of astronomy is a true statement. The writer has also demonstrated the religious significance of Ulugbek's role as a teacher during the periods mentioned in the story. Allah created knowledge along with Adam (peace be upon him). Astronomy does not undermine religion; rather, it serves the progress of our religion. The observatory scholars determine prayer times, the moments for Ramadan fasting, sunrise and sunset times, intentions and obligations, and the timing of solar and lunar eclipses based on celestial changes [T. Malik, 2017: 90]. As Shamsibek strives to advance his knowledge in Mirzo Ulugbek's court, his interest in the universe grows. This results in the creation of a beautiful, handwoven "falak" by his wife. Indeed, the story reflects both artistic imagination and historical truths. The truths in this work are further enhanced through religious motifs, drawing readers in even more. In the story, we see another statement that has proven itself true both historically and today, demonstrating the writer's skill: "Women are also servants of Allah... Muslim women would be greatly pleased if they could gain knowledge, as the honorable hadith states, Seeking knowledge is a duty for every Muslim man and woman" [T. Malik, 2017: 93]. The hadith presented by the writer in this work reflects an absolute truth in every era. In any society, the education of women lays the foundation for a bright future for that society. This is undoubtedly a historical truth. The story ends tragically, but it teaches readers numerous lessons about history, the future, religion, the world, good and evil. The religious tones hold a special

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significance in the artistic expression of the ideas in the story. Overall, through his "Falak", Tahir Malik has conveyed his thoughts to humanity in a comprehensive manner.

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