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Special Edition for the 30th Anniversary of Independence of Republic of Uzbekistan
& Celebration of the 580th Anniversary of Alisher Navoiy's Birth



유라시아 투르크 연구소
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SPECIAL ISSUE

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The poetry of the dibacha (preface) of Sadd-i-Iskandari (Alexander's Wall) by Alisher Navoi

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Abstract

Alisher Navoi enriched Uzbek literature with many novelties and experiences. In particular, the great poet raised the tradition of writing introduction to a high level in terms of image system, composition, style, poetry and content. In the preface of his masnawi (poetic form), Alisher Navoi skillfully combines the reader's point of view, his own experiences, the content of the work and the philosophy of tasawwuf (sufizm). It is noteworthy that he is able to depict a preface on a subject and a theme in a new literary landscape and poetic variations each time.

This article discusses the preface of masnawi of Alisher Navoi's work "Sadd-i-Iskandari" (Alexander's Wall), which focuses on the poet's skills in writing the preface. The poetry of the preface of "Sadd-i-Iskandari" (Alexander's Wall), the connection of the chapters in the preface with the content of the work, as well as the role of revealing the essence of the work are analyzed. In order to enlighten the writing skill of prefacet Alisher Navoi, it is based on a comparative-historical method and is compared with the preface to Nizami Ganjavi's Eskandar-Nâmeh ('The Book of Alexander'). And it is provided necessary conclusions.

Key words: *Alisher Navoi, Sadd-i-Iskandari (Alexander's Wall), preface (debacha), Iskandar, poetics, Uzbek literature, skill*

1. Introduction

“Khamisa” (*Quintuple*) vividly reflects the characteristic ideological and poetic features of Navoi's works in comparison with his lyrical poems (Hayitmetov, 2015: 286). Especially, the prefaces of epic poems are noteworthy. Navoi follows the principle of combining each preface with the composition and gist of the work in all epic poems of “Khamisa” (Rustamov, 1979: 146 – 153). This principle is followed in the preface of “Sadd-i-Iskandari.” Bringing up the kingdom and the begging in the first verse or expressing a fighting spirit in the pre-work creative mood signify. This principle is especially evident in the titles and chapters of the *dibacha* (*preface*) of “Sadd-i-Iskandari.” The introduction is so close to the main part and content that it is very difficult to examine them separately, “It is laborious for the reader to find his way to the treasury of meanings that is as the hoard buried with symbols and emblems without getting the gist of the verses of the introduction” (Hayitov, 2000: 101 – 102).

In terms of the scientific problem in the subject, the preface of the epic poem can be fully compared, because the comparison shows the essence more clearly. Furthermore, in order to better understand the phenomena of artistic skill and creative individuality, it makes sense to have adequacy and typological aspects in the objects being compared. In this sense, the first four chapters of Alisher Navoi's “Sadd-i-Iskandari” and Nizami Ganjavi's “Eskandar-Nâme” (اسکندرنامه, *The Book of Alexander*) are conventional in this respect, so we will focus on these chapters.

2. Main part

The combination between the introduction and the main chapter, or the description and the main theme in the preface of Nizami's “Eskandar-Nâme” is not as ideal as in Navoi's. Nizami's titles are short and concise, with no rhyme, rhythm, or imagery. On the other hand, Alisher Navoi makes a great effort to skilfully combine the small title to the content of that chapter, as well as to the purpose and theme of the whole work. It can be concluded

that in Eastern literature, the principles of making a dibacha (*preface*) for an epic poem were that they "must be done in accordance with the law (law of writing a preface)" (Taroziy, 1996: 32).

Not only in the works (*about Alexander or Iskandar*) created in the tradition of writing "Khamsa," but also in the works (*about Alexander*) that do not belong to this category, the prefaces have become traditional and follow certain principles (Bünyamin, 2013: 136 – 137). The epic poems of Nizami and Navoi begin with traditional "Hamd" (Arabic: حمد "praise" in English). Epic praises differ from the lyrical ones in the meaningfulness, calmly expression, and system of images. The poetic function of tawhid (*the indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam*) had been defined before Nizami and Navoi, therefore, such chapters are a very convenient situation for observing how the same goal is expressed by the two creators, as well as creative individuality.

Navoi states his theoretical views about the wahdaniyat (وحدانيت meaning in English is *Unity*) of God in the first three verses of tawhid (oneness), and he describes the quality of Al-Khaliq (*The Creator/ Creator of the Universe/ Maker/ True Originator/ Absolute Author*) from the fourth to the hundredth verses. The quality of Al-Khaliq, which lasts a little less than a hundred verses, is described by the gradualness that is specific to the epic poetry. The description is about the axis (*Mehwar is Axes*) of the universe. The descriptions of Navoi about tawhid are as a one system, describing the process from the oneness of God to the creation of mankind as a perfect system.

First of all, Navoi emphasizes the absolute sovereignty of God, and then concisely describes the reason for the creation of the heavens, including its process, purpose and essence. The law of determinism is also described and is inherent in Navoi's style. At first glance, it seems that Navoi mentions the quality of Al-Waahid (*The Unique, The Single*) at the beginning of the chapter, and focuses on the description of the quality of Al-Khaliq in the rest, but eventually, Navoi connects all the details to the quality of Al-Waahid. After stating his theoretical views on the oneness of the Creator in the first three verses, he proves it in practice by describing the Islamic cosmogonical system in a rigid manner, and finally shows that the essence of creation is the main proof of the oneness of Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala). The basis of these views is love, and Navoi specifically explains important issues such as true love and the relationship between God and man in tawhid (oneness). That is, the idea, which begins with the acknowledgement of the oneness of God, eventually leads

to the conclusion that He himself is "The One who is in love, who is the beloved, and who is the only Love." Navoi's cosmogonic belief has a scientific basis. In particular, his views on the structure of the universe are entirely consistent with Beruni's scientific observations (Beruniy, 1973: 41 – 43). The Kutadgu Bilig confirms that the system of astronomical sciences and terms began to be described in detail and in a complete scientific way in the prefaces of the literature of the Turkic peoples as early as the 11th century (Hojib, 1972: 80 – 83). Yusuf Khass Hajib and Alisher Navoi had the same views on the creation, but there is a difference in the naming of astronomical terms (Sodiqov, 2007).

In the chapter on tawhid in Nizami's epic poem, there is not a strict principle in describing this cosmogonical system or the quality of wahdaniyat (*unity*) as in Navoi's. Nizami also first describes the creative quality of Allah, saying that He created the universe and man, and created the world from fire, water, air and earth. He shows that the universe has a geocentric structure:

Tuiy, k-osmonro barafroxtiy,

Zaminro guzargohi o' soxtiy (Ganjaviy, 2012: 6).

*"You created (heaven) the universe,
(And you) made the earth the path".*

It also emphasizes God's power, the omnipotence of God, and the Eternal, Absolute. Nizami pays close attention to epistemological (*gnosiological*) views in tawhid (*oneness*), and tries to emphasize the oneness and greatness of God. It is as if the poet were carefully giving his opinion about the events related to Al-Ghaib (*unseen*), such as the creation of the universe.

There is a clear line between the tawhid (*monotheism, oneness*) and the Munajat (*مناجات prayer*) in Navoi's epic poem. In Nizami's description, this line is broken, and the Munajat (*مناجات prayer*) fills a large part of the tawhid (*monotheism, oneness*). Navoi usually begins the main idea from a title. Nizami uses the title of the chapters to provide information and to distinguish one chapter from another, thus, they are short. Navoi uses the title not only to give information, but also to express the content in a new figurative way, to give an aesthetic pleasure, to show a poetic skill. The most difficult task in creating a title is, of course, to recreate the literary purpose through new expressions.

Navoi has achieved this in most of the titles in "Sadd-i-Iskandari", particularly, in the title of Munajat (مناجات prayer):

"Munojot ul Karimi Xalloq va mukarrami alal-itloqqakim, karamining "kof"i sarkashlik bila yozuq "qof"ini yerga past qilur va "ro"si royi olamoro bila ma'siyat "ayn" in ko'r etar va "mim"i lutfi emim bila xato xattig'a afv raqami chekar va o'z jurmi oloyishin demak va bahri g'ufroindin amon istamak".

In this : "... o'z jurmi oloyishin demak va bahri g'ufroindin amon istamak" the above-mentioned statement is the main thesis of the title and chapter. The first four lines are a new poetic description of this idea. This is not the repeatedly duplication, but the emphasis. The words: "Karam, mukarram, lutf, afv, shafqat, omonlik", and "munojot, yozuq, ma'siyat, xato, jurm" come in series to form the tanasub (the art of using words in the verses of a poem that close in terms of meaning to each other), which indicates the content and subject of the chapter (Look: "Xamsa"da tanosubning qo'llanishi haqida: (Haqqulov, 1986)).

Secondly, Navoi takes the first letter (Kāf "ك") of the word "karam" as the object of the description because the word begins with this letter. However, the last of the words (yozuq), which are used as synonyms in the title ma'siyat, jurm, xato, and yozuq, are used before "karam." Taking the first letter (Kāf "ك") of the word "karam" is natural, it is also requireme of the poet's poetic goal to get "yozuq", as well as the letter (Qāf "ق") of this word among the synonyms.

Navoi was able to achieve three goals by doing this:

- a) May God forgive me with his "karam" (kindness, and grace) for my "yozuq" (sins);
- b) my sins are as great as the Mount Qaf, but only one piece of "karam" (kindness, and grace) (it refers to the first letter: Kāf "ك") is enough to destroy them;
- e) to match the first letter (Kāf "ك") of the the word "karam" with the last letter (Qāf "ق") of the word "yozuq".

Thirdly, there is a fighting spirit in the saying, "The first letter (Kāf "ك") of the the word "karam" has lowered the last letter (Qāf "ق") of the word "yozuq" to the ground with

disobedience (*sarkashlik*)." The meanings of the word disobedience (*sarkashlik*) and the phrase "lowered to the ground (*yerga past qilmoq*) served as the basis. There are semantics of the the word *sarkashlik* (disobedience), such as disobedient (*bosh bermas*), stubborn (*o'jar*), naughty (*itoatsiz*). Navoi, on the one hand, hints at the origin of sins, and on the other hand, is able to infuse the subject and the fighting spirit by quoting this word under this heading.

Fourthly, in the following statement: "*karamining ro (ر) si royi olamoro bila ma'siyat aynini ko'r etar*" the letter (*Rā' ر*) is used in figuratively describing to mil (a tube-shaped iron used in history to make permanently blind the human eye), and *ayn (ع)* is used in figuratively describing the eye.

The state of being like the letter (*Rā' ر*) of the word "*karam*" in terms of shape to the sword or mil is used as the basis to take the word "*ma'siyat*" from four synonyms in accordance with "*karam*." Of the four synonyms, only the word "*ma'siyat*" has the letter (*ayn ع*). The author's main purpose is not only the hope of forgiveness of his sins, but also he was skillfully able to describe the political conflicts between the king and princes of his time, which is a hint of the theme and style of the epic poem.

Fifthly, in the following statement "*karamining mim (م) i zo'r lutf bilan xato sahfisiga afv hukmini yozar*," Navoi reflects his hope that his sins will be forgiven by the grace of God on the basis that the letter *mim* was compared to the mouth in classical literature. Furthermore, the words *karam* (kindness), *lutf* (grace), *xato* (sin), *afv* (forgiveness) express a type of *hamd* (praise), as well as its essence accordingly. Navoi skillfully uses everything that is needed to perfectly describe the creative conception, from graphic, phonetic, lexical and morphological resources, including the selection of images, sentence construction, and description styles. First of all, it is an obvious testament to the poetic and artistic mastery of Navoi that he was able to give a unique description of the meaning of *munajat* (prayer) based on the three letters of the word "*karam*". Unfortunately, Nizami's headlines do not allow for such thinking.

Navoi also begins the *munajat* (prayer) by acknowledging the oneness of God, but here the *wahdaniyat* (واحدانيت meaning in English is Unity) is interpreted with other qualities:

Lakal-hamd, yo Akramal-Akramin,
Karam ahlin etgan gadoyi kamin.
Karim o'lsa olamda har nav' shoh,
Anga sen karam qilding ul dastgoh (Navoiy, 1993: 11).

In the first verse of the tawheed, Navoi refers to the attribute of God's sovereignty in terms of the literary tradition, the main theme and the purpose of the work, and the essence of the chapter. According to this, he also follows the same principle in the munajat (*prayer*), turning to Allah by mentioning the attribute of Al-Karim (*The Noble/ Bountiful/ Generous/ Precious/ Honored/ Benefactor*) because the content of the chapter required the above reference. In the following verses, Navoi substantiates the theoretical idea of "Akramal-Akramin", that is, the most Generous of the Generous, with some poetic arguments. Navoi's first example in this regard is also about kings, that is, whichever king in the world is generous because Allah has bestowed generosity upon him, so it is correct to consider him a cause, not a noble one. Thus, Navoi substantiates the phrase "Akramal-Akramin" in the first verse in verses.

Although the munajat (*prayer*) in Navoi's epic poem does not have a clear realistic story, there are parts, such as a theoretical idea or basis and its practical proof, and an internal connection between them. This sequence, first of all, serves to make the ideas of the poet more impressive. However, this feature is not so noticeable in the munajat (*prayer*) in Nizami's epic poem. His descriptions are in the same tone and meaning: O God, You are omnipotent, forgive my sins (*ey Tangrim, har narsaga qodirsan, gunohlarimni kechir*). He does not cite various grounds for his opinion as Navoi. Rather, he only states that "whether I am good or bad, it is because of your destiny." In addition, Navoi gives Akobir men's (*the great scholars*) opinion on the forgiveness of human sins, the legend of Harun (*Aaron*), and other logical proofs. The reason is to give special importance to a sense of hope, as it were, hopefulness in Navoi's munajat (*prayer*) is a priority, unlike Nizami's. Navoi does not list his sins in general, but also he gives specific examples and blames himself more. He unites the whole description in the chapter to the quality of Al-Karim (*the Noble*), and even connects the title to this point. He interprets the different meanings of the phrase "Akramul-Akramin", and draws logical conclusions. In Nizami's work, asking for Hidayah (Arabic: هداية meaning "guidance") is in the first place. He does not focus on any of God's

attributes, such as Al-Karim (*the Generous*) or Al-Rahim (*the Merciful*), but tries to turn directly to God, and speak about His power. In Nizami's work, the last verse also serves to combine the two chapters.

Chapters III to IV are examples of "Prophet's Literature." Chapter 3 describes the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) as sayyid ul-mursaleen (*the greatest of the prophets*). Navoi's views at the beginning of the chapter are based on the teachings of Nūr-i Muḥammadī (*the Light of Muhammad*), that is, "...The Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allah be upon him*) was the last of the prophets in the world of testimony, but he was the first of them in the world of Al-Ghayb (*the unseen*). The Prophet mentioned, "Kuntu Nabiiyyan wa adamu bayni-l-ma'i wa-t-tin" – "I was a Prophet when Adam was between water and clay." The meaning of this hadith is that the possessor of greatness and generosity was in the beginning (in the beginning) – Allah was the only one at that time, and no other things were created. When He first manifested (*Tajalli*. (Persian: تجلی, *divine self-manifestation*) is the appearance and disclosure of God as truth in Islamic theoretical mysticism) himself without any other being, the origin of everything was in God alone. In this, the reality of existence was not separated from the Divine Presence, and from each other. This is called "taayyuni awwal" and "the Truth of Muhammad" ("Haqiqat-i Muhammadiy or Haqiqat-i Muhammadiyya"¹⁾), "the truths of all other beings are the parts and details of that Truth. The Tajalli (*divine self-manifestation*) of their image in the unseen world is spread from its manifestation in the form of truth (Jomiy, 2014: 30 – 31).

After proving that the divine presence of the Prophet is based on creation, Navoi states that the holy books contain information about him, and that the source of Islamic theology "the Kalam" (*the study of Islamic doctrine*) was arranged because of him. There were prophecies about Muhammad (s.a.w.) before he was born. For example, Irbad bin Sariya (r.a.) said that the beloved Prophet ṣallāllāhu ālayhi wa sallam said: "I was a Prophet (*I was written by the name of Khatam ul-Anbiya (the last of the prophets) in the presence of Allah*) when Adam was between the water and the mud -before he came into existence." May I tell you about the beginning of my existence?! Abraham (pbuh) prayed, "O Lord, send them a prophet from among themselves, so that he may recite to them Your ayahs

1) Haqiqat-i Muhammadiyya: in the terminology of mystics and 'arifcen (A seeker of ma'rifa is called 'arif, "the one who knows"), it is used as "taayyuni awwal" (first creation), and the mazhar ("appearance", "figure", "countenance", "demeanor") of all the names of Allah (Sajjodiy 1370 (h), 325).

(*evidence, sign, or miracle*).² And Jesus, son of Mary, said, "O children of Israel! I am truly Allah's messenger to you, confirming the "Torah" which came before me, and giving good news of a messenger after me whose name will be Ahmad." "My mother, Amina, dreamed that a light came out of her and lit up the castles of Damascus (aš-Šām مَشْأَم)" (Jomiy, 2014:35). Jami also cites the evidence about Muhammad (s.a.w.) in the Torah, the Psalms, and the Bible (Jomiy, 2014: 35 – 38). Navoi relies on this evidence when he writes: "Nechakim kutubi osmoniy kelib, Borisinda sendin nishoniy kelib" (*How many divine books were revealed?, All of them had a good news about you*).

It is also obvious that the sequence was strictly adhered to. It is first about the presence of the Prophet, then the relationship of Adam, the whole prophets, and the universe with the truth of Muhammad (s.a.w.), then the prophecies about him in the divine books, then the birth of the Prophet, the proof of prophecy, in particular, the description of Muhri nubuvvat²) (*the seal of the prophecy*), followed by the description of the The Shamā'il Muhammadiyyah (*"The Sublime Qualities of Muhammad"*), and finally the revelation of the Qur'an and the refusal of other religions. The oyah (21:107) "Wa maaa arsalnaaka illaa rahmatal lil'aalameen," the hadith "Kuntu Nabiyyan wa adamu bayni-l-ma'i wa-t-tin," the phrases such as "shafe'ul-muznib," "alayhi afzalus-salavot va akmalut-tahiyot," and other Arabic words also show the complexity of the language of prefaces of Navoi's works. According to Khadija Toran's statistics, overall, 6,327 words were used in "Sadd-i-Iskandari". Of these words, 1249 (19.741%) are Turkic, 2379 (37.600%) are Arabic, and 2270 (35%) are Persian. 163 Persian and 54 Arabic words were joined by Turkic affixes to create new words. There are 124 personal names (*names of people*), 74 place names, 11 tribal names and 2 Greek words (Tören, 1990: 11). However, new research shows that the above-mentioned information about the volume, language and vocabulary of the epic poem "Sadd-i-Iskandari" is slightly different. For example, "Alisher Navoiyning "Saddi Iskandariy" dostoni konkordansi" states that the epic poem consists of 7,303 verses, using 16,936 word-forms (Alisher Navoiyning..., 2016). The complexity of the language of Navoi's works later led to the variant readings of "Khamsa" epics in the style of folk tales (Navoiy, 2013: 3).

2) In "The Shamā'il Muhammadiyyah" ("The Sublime Qualities of Muhammad") by Al-Tirmidhi, it was narrated from the hadiths that the seal of the prophecy is like a dove's egg between the Prophet's two shoulders, with more flesh around it.

Nizami's style of expression is not as complex as Navoi's, and verses or hadiths are relatively rare in his work. Synchronizing the expression with the theme and essence of the work is also not typical of Nizami's style. Nizami focused on the fact that the whole being was created because of Muhammad (s.a.w.), and that all creatures came into being after him, that is, the teachings of Nūr-i Muḥammadī (*the Light of Muhammad*). Referring to the same verse, Nizami likens the Prophet to the light in two places (Ganjaviy, 2012: 12). It should be noted that the followers of the Nūr-i Muḥammadī (*the Light of Muhammad*) also consider verse 35 of Sura "Al-Nur" (Qur'oni Karim, 2001: 354) to be related to this doctrine. Imam al-Ghazali elaborated on this verse in Mishkat al-Anwar (*The Niche of Light*). According to Al-Tabari, some mufasssirs (*those who write a tafsir to the Qur'an*) claim that the meaning of the word "mishkat" in the verse refers to the Prophet (s.a.w.) (Taberî, 147 – 149).

The comparisons show that Nizami and Navoi's outlook on the Truth of Muhammad (*Haqiqati Muhammadi*) are similar:

№	Nizami	Navoi
1.	Ideas are expressed in a more literary (artistic) way	Opinions are relatively obvious, and even the position of Adam and the other prophets toward Muhammad (s.a.w.) is clearly stated
2.	He focused on emphasizing the Prophet's courage in the development of Islam, stating the greatness and honour of the Prophet. To substantiate his claims, he discusses the miracles of the Prophet, in particular, the miracle of the "Splitting of the moon", and the Prophet's military actions.	Although he expresses his views on divine miracles, he speaks more about the prophet's establishment of a new sharia (Islamic law) and its consequences.
3.	There is no in-depth expressions of the time from the image of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.)	In addition to providing clear proof and sequence in the poetic interpretation, he was able to describe perfectly that the creation of

observed in Navoi's epic poem to the revelation of the Qur'an to him in the naat part of the work.	the universe also has a certain order, including that Muhammad (s.a.w.) played an important role in that process.
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Table 1.

Both authors separately describe in Chapter IV the journey of Muhammad (s.a.w.) to the Throne (*Arabic: العرش Al-'Arsh*) on the Night Journey (*The Isra' and Mi'raj. Arabic: الإسراء والمعراج al-'Isrā' wal-Mi'rāj*). The two surahs (17:1 and 53:4-8) of the Qur'an contain the roots of the Night Journey that is widely described in the literature of Islamic-influenced regions (Qur'oni Karim, 2001: 282, 526). Thereafter, the hadiths contain information about this, and in the tafsirs (*exegesis of the Quran*), this Journey is enriched with new information. These texts show the fundamental aspects of the formation of the Night Journey in the early days of Islam (Gruber, 2005: 16). As K. Gruber mentioned, mystical poets in the early twelfth century described the Night Journey of the Prophet Muhammad in their poetic works, taking this theme as the main symbol of divine connection. And they used the image of Mi'raj (*Night Journey*) as an expression of their spiritual uplift (Gruber, 2005: 54). There are some reasons why the preface pays special attention to the image of the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*). First of all, this chapter is aimed at emphasizing the greatness and honour of the Prophet because the culmination of the description is the moment when the Prophet was honoured with meeting Allah, which is the greatest honour according to Islamic teachings. It is the pride of the entire Muslim world that no other prophet in the history of the Prophecy has been honoured with such an honour except for Muhammad (s.a.w.). This sense of pride and desire to express love for the Prophet were the main factors to have the stable place in the prefaces of Islamic literature. Nizami scholar Sirojiddin Haji notes that the purpose of the naats (*praise of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad*) is to teach, protect and spread the idea of the tawhid (*the indivisible oneness concept of monotheism in Islam*) (Haci, 2010: 69). Thereafter, such chapters became a traditional part of the prefaces of Eastern epic poetry and became a test of skill for each poet. The difficulty with this is that the object and essence of the description is known in advance, and this would naturally cause certain typological cases. However, each poet had to strive for individuality. As you can see, the style of the theoretical ideas and poetic illustration that are used widely in masnavis (*a kind of poem*

written in rhyming couplets) appear in the first four chapters. As it were, Tawhid is the theoretical part of hamd (praise), Munajat is the practical part of (hamd) praise, Tawsif is the theoretical part of naat (praise of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad), Miraj is the practical part naat (praise of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad).

Nizami and Navoi's views on Mi'raj (the Night Journey) are very similar. Moreover, in this chapter, Navoi strives to follow a new way in accordance with his creative principles. His first step in this regard begins with the title: "*Ul humoyi balandparvoz tayronining sur'ati ta'rifidakim, me'roj shabistonida ko'zi nargisi bila ko'ngli g'unchasi «ma zog'al basaru va ma tag'o» jo'yboridin shodobdurur va taqarrub ayvonida muqavvas qoshlari «qoba qavsayni av adno» e'tiboridin bahrayob*". Two verses are quoted in this title. The text of the former is complete. "*Ma zog'al basaru va ma tag'o*" that is, "The Prophet's sight never wandered, nor did it overreach". The latter is abbreviated, and the full text is as follows: "*Fakana qoba qavsayni aw adna*". That is, "And was (at) a distance (of) two bow-(lengths) or nearer" (Qur'oni Karim, 2001: 526).

Although it is clear what the title of the chapter is about, the main character is not revealed. But, he is referred to by the above-mentioned verses, and this artistic method arouses the reader's interest. But the main character is meant by the above-mentioned verses. Both verses are directly related to the poetic purpose of the chapter, and Navoi uses the first verse in its meaning and the second verse to describe how close the prophet was to God. This did not happen spontaneously, but in mystical literature (the literature of *tasawwuf*) this verse is interpreted more in this meaning, with the parts "qoba qavsayn" and "aw adna" being used as separate terms. According to 'arifs (A seeker of ma'rifa is called 'arif, "the one who knows"), Qoba Qavsayn {(at) a distance (of) two bow-(lengths)}, the *maqam* (a spiritual stage that periodically marks the long path followed by Sufis leading to the vision of and union with God) of the divine and celestial *qurb* (nearness, closeness) that are accepted among the names in the divine command. These words are *ibdo*, *ioda*, *nuzul*, *uruj*, *foiliyyat*, *qobiliyyat*, and they are called the circle of *vujud* (presence, existence, being). In addition to that, "qob" is a sign of *wujub* (obligatory) and scope, "qavsayn" is said that it refers to these two circles. If a *salik* (a *sālik* is a follower of Sufism) steps out of existence, he becomes *fani* (liter. mortal), being in the effacement of one's individuality in contemplating the unity of God. The scope of possibility approaches the scope of *wujub*, and the *wujub* and possibility form the unity (Sajjodiy, 1370(h): 631). However, it is also

noted that this *qurb* (*nearness, closeness*) is just related to the "quality," nothing more. After that, there is another *maqam* (*a spiritual stage*) of "*Av adno*" (*even nearer or closer*). "*Qoba qavsayn*," being in union with God, is the equivalent of the *baqaa* (*permanency*) of the separation (good from evil) called unity. And "*av adno*" refers to the *Ahadiya* (*Ahadiya literally means oneness, or singleness, without having a second or like*). In "*av adno*," the separations and important duality disappear because of the true effacement of one's individuality in contemplating the unity of God and the perfect unity between the slave and Truth (Uludağ, 1995: 58).

In the chapter, Navoi aims to describe the issues of *wahdati sirf* (*pure unity*) because the *Mi'raj* conveniently shows a unique solution to such delicate issues and expresses his position (Mullaxo'jaeva, 2005: 55). Therefore, Navoi clarifies these issues in detail through the above-mentioned terms. In Nizami's epic poem, we do not see the same situation because he did not have the same purpose as Navoi. Nizami also talks about the *wahdat* (*unity*), but there is no attempt to describe it in detail or to express it in high pathos. The above-mentioned two verses quoted by Navoi are important because they contain the essence of the whole chapter, or rather its most important aspect.

Shabe, k-osmon majlisafrō'z kard,

Shab az ravshaniy da'vii ro'z kard.

Saropardai haft sulton sarir,

Baromuda gavhar ba chiniy harir (Ganjaviy, 2012: 13).

That is, one such night, the sky made its meeting bright, and the night began to claim that it was not night, but day because of its brightness. The tent of the seven sultans, who were the owners of the throne, pinned pearls in his Chinese silk (*the seven heavens were adorned with stars*) (*this is our translation – I.I.*). The details of the chapter begin with the beautiful description above provided by Nizami. He gives his opinions with a few more verses, and continues to describe the ascension of Muhammad (s.a.w.) from the nine-storey heaven. Such cases show that Nizami tried to give a shorter, more concise description in the image of *Mi'raj* than Navoi, and did not pay much attention to giving it a romantic spirit. In Navoi's descriptions, the harmony between the essence of the theme and issue and the psyche of the poet, as well as his attempt to express the essence of the issue

wholeheartedly are clear as day. Navoi also begins the chapter with impressive metaphors,

Ne shom ul shabistoni farxundafol,
Bo'lub ofarinish uzorig'a xol.
Demay xolkim, gesuyi mushkrez,
Qilib ofarinish uza mushkbez (Navoiy, 1993: 17).

That is: What a fortunate night it was! It was fortunate enough to be a birthmark on the face of the universe. It is not a birthmark, it is the hair that spreads a pleasant fragrance to the whole world. It is noteworthy that the poet has a vivid and great imagination to compare the sky to the face, and the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*) to the birthmark on the face (*figuratively the sky*). A poet must be of remarkable ability to describe and compare the universe to the face, and the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*) to the black hair that is adjoining to it. While Nizami begins to describe the brightness of the night, Navoi first focuses on the darkness of the night and then on the brightness. He creates such a beautiful image in the first verse, but it is not his main purpose. Furthermore, it is not adventitious and unplanned that, unlike Nizami, he emphasizes the blackness and compares the dark night of the *Mi'raj* (*the Night Journey*) to the birthmark and hair.

Until the end of the chapter, Navoi continues his views on the meaning of the verse "Fa kana qoba qavsayni av adno" in the title, and tries to clarify the truth about the ascension of the soul to the presence of Allah through these verses. In the East, the event of *Mi'raj* (*the Night Journey*) is also considered as a guidance of spiritual perfectness, and this view leads to the first two verses of the night of *Mi'raj* being likened to the birthmark and hair. *Xol* (birthmark) is the path according to *saliks* (a *sālik* is a follower of Sufism), and a real point of the *wahdat* (unity) for those who are in love (*true lovers*). In Sufi terminology, it refers to the point of *wahdat* (*unity*) that is the beginning and end of bounty (*kasrat*

كثرت). It is similar to the *ghaybi huwiyat* (the absolute truth that encompasses all truths), because this is hidden from imagination and consciousness (Sajjodiy, 1370(h): 344). *Gisu* (hair) is a sign of the path to the world of *huwiyat* (the absolute truth that encompasses all truths), and *hablal matn* (firm rope, string, line; Qur'an, divine commands) consists of that (Sajjodiy, 1370(h): 676). In other words, Navoi describes in the chapter the path to the Truth, the truths of the *wahdat* (*unity*) when he compares the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*)

to the birthmark. Or when Navoi likens the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*) to gisu (*hair*), he attempts to describe the divine commands that help to get Qurbat (*closeness to God*), and the wisdom of the miracle of the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*). This aspect that Navoi emphasizes the most that makes his chapter about the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*) exactly different from Nizami's.

Paying close attention to every detail is peculiar to Navoi's description about the Night Journey (*Mi'raj*), he focuses on showing that it took place in an ideal environment before describing the divine miracle. Nizami's work also contains a description of the Night, but it is short and not enough for the explanation of the situation in which the miracle took place. Somehow, Nizami pays great attention to the image of Buraq (*the Buraq carried the Islamic prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) from Mecca to Jerusalem and up in the heavens and back by night.*), and the fact that the Prophet rode on it and ascended to the seven heavens like lightning. On the other hand, Navoi describes the appropriate condition firstly, then he reminds the Prophet's place. Afterwards, he describes that suddenly lightning flashes and the sky is filled with light, and Gabriel, who moves as fast as lightning, leads the horse that is like lightning, Buraq, to the Prophet's doorstep. Navoi gives information about the events in a logical sequence. Nizami does not provides information about how Buraq was brought to the Prophet, how the process took place, or whether Gabriel came or not.

Navoi focuses on these combinations. For instance, he brings the detail of "miraculous flash" to the image, after that he begins to describe the main events of the miracle of *Mi'raj* (*the Night Journey*). Sources also contain information about that on the night of the *Mi'raj* (*the Night Journey*), Gabriel (a.s.) descended with several angels and brought with him "the horse of Buraq that is smaller than a mule and bigger than a donkey" (Sog'uniy, 2013: 93). There are not such features in Nizami's description. In addition, Navoi emphasizes that Gabriel gave durud (*praise*) to Muhammad from God:

Yuzin mehrdek aylagach xoksud,
Habibig'a yetkurdi Haqdin durud.
Ki, hijron bisotin tay etmak kerak,
Qo'pub Haq visolig'a yetmak kerak (Navoiy, 1993: 19).

Nizami does not describe the dialogue between Muhammad and Gabriel, but Navoi needs

to include the conversation. Because of this conversation, it would be possible to emphasize the idea of going through the separation, and meeting with the Truth.

Nizami created a spectacular view in the description of the journey of Muhammad (s.a.w.) to the seven planets. He likens the seven planets to the sea. According to this, as if the Prophet was purified in those seas, and as a result of devoting all his qualities except the pure pearl in his being to every star and celestial body, he reached the 'Arsh (*Throne of God*), and the only thing in his being was his soul (*the purest heart*). Nizami says that the prophet gave each planet a quality of his own (*the cradle of sleep to the moon, the pen to Utarid (Mercury), the physical lust to Nahid (Venus), round shape to Khurshid (the Sun), wrath to Mirrikh (Mars), arrogance to Mushtari (Jupiter), and darkness to Kaywan (Saturn)*). In fact, these were the features of those planets in Eastern cosmogony. Accordingly, Nizami was able to describe the process of being close of the Prophet (to God) in the figurative sense, as well as the characteristics of the seven planets.

Navoi was also able to show his own individuality in the description of the Prophet passing through seven heavens. The Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the twelve constellations are happy from the arrival of the Prophet, and even feel ashamed in the presence of him. Navoi's main purpose in these images is to emphasize that the Prophet is Sayyid ul-Mursalin (*the greatest of the prophets*), so the poet, relying on the art of tazad (*the act of using the opposite meaning words in poetry*) and tashkhis (*the act of representing something abstract as a person in the poetry*), personalizes the whole universe and directs their words and actions to the main goal (Mullaxo'jaeva, 2005: 55). As in Tawhid (*oneness*), the eight stages of heaven are described on the occasion of Muhammad's journey in the Mi'raj (*the Night Journey*). But, in contrast to hamd (*praise*), the image of the universe and the constellations have vertical orientations in the naat (*praise of the Islamic prophet, Muhammad*). Navoi allocates two verses to the description of each planet, and provides enough details of their specific features for the expression of his purpose. The conciseness is peculiar to the description of Nizami. Nizami does not pay attention to the constellations and the eighth stage of the heaven where the stationary stars are located, while Navoi describes the twelve constellations in detail. He considers it a necessary condition before describing the depiction of the 'Arsh (*Throne of God*).

After the depiction of the Prophet's journey in the heavens, both poets move on to the depiction of the 'Arsh (*Throne of God*) and La-makan (*place in placelessness or without*

place). While Navoi states that Gabriel (*Archangel Jibrīl or Jibrā'il*) and Buraq stopped accompanying him after going beyond Rafrāf, Nizami says that the Prophet's companions stopped accompanying him before going beyond Rafrāf. In the statement of the remaining issues, the two poets have almost the same opinion. There is also a natural similarity between the descriptions of La-makan (*place in placelessness or without place*) and Muhammad (s.a.w.) there, but Nizami's descriptions about the condition of the prophet and the issue of wahdat (unity) are more conclusive, simple and unimpressive. Nizami's main conclusion in the matter of selfness is about that. He does not attempt to provide details of this issue, and he does not use literary terms related to wahdat (unity). Navoi takes this opportunity to express his views on selfness and wahdat (unity), skillfully using the opportunities of the poetic variation (To'xliiev, 2013: 67–96). It is noteworthy that Navoi was able to show originality in the description by combining the issues of selfness and tawhid (*oneness*) with love.

Both poets were able to provide a unique description in their depiction of the prophet's return from the presence of God. While Navoi points out that Muhammad (s.a.w.) returned from the momentary journey by improving his ummah (*the Islamic community*) with his great generosity, Nizami praises the first four Caliphs of Islam after the event of Mi'raj (*the Night Journey*). These descriptions of Nizami are in accordance with the tradition of art of writing a dibacha (*preface*), as in the prefaces of the East, manaqib (*a genre in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literature*) was considered a permanent component (Taroziy, 1996: 32).

In conclusion, as in Tawhid (*oneness*), the eight stages of the heaven are described on the occasion of Muhammad's (s.a.w.) journey. The fighting spirit is predominant in the description of ascending through the eight heavens and twelve constellations, as if Muhammad (s.a.w.) had conquered the eight heavens, the twelve constellations and the 'Arsh (*Throne of God*). Such variable features in the preface, as well as the rhythm of the description are like two peas in a pod and parallel with the theme of the work and its intended literary purpose. The regular use of logical contrasts in the description of the eight heavens and twelve constellations also serves to emphasize the greatness of the prophet.

3. Conclusion

1. In "Sadd-i-Iskandari," Navoi follows the principle of harmonizing the preface to the content of the work. The chapters in both epics, such as Tawhid, Munajat, Tasif Naat, and Mi'raj Nat, have common similarities because they are traditional. The rest of the chapters differ in purpose and content, and the differences are explained by the passage of time.

2. The style of Navoi in the preface is systemic. His cosmogonical thought is entirely based on scientific sources. In the chapter on Tawhid (*oneness*), Nizami freely approaches the description of this cosmogonical system and wahdaniyat (*unity*). He focuses on the epistemological views and emphasis on the oneness of God.

3. There are some reasons to pay special attention to the description of Mi'raj (*the Night Journey*) in the prefaces. First of all, in this chapter, a poet focuses on the greatness of the prophet, because the culmination of the description is the Prophet's being in the presence of Allah. Secondly, the expression of this unseen truth is based on the poet's romantic world.

4. The "series" that connects the chapters of Nizami's preface has risen to the level of "sequence" in the preface of Navoi, and the introductory tenth chapter is a unique composition. The systematic approach that is peculiar to the way of thinking and style of depiction of Navoi is clearly shown in the order and description of the chapters in the preface of the epic poem.

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