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### THE POETRY OF THE DIBACHA (PROLOGUE) OF *SADD-I-ISKANDARI* BY ALISHER NAVOI

#### ABSTRACT

Alisher Navoi made significant contributions to Uzbek literature through his innovations and experiences. The renowned poet elevated the tradition of writing the dibacha (prologue) to a high standard in terms of imagery, composition, style, poetry, and content. In the dibacha of his masnawi (a poetic form), Alisher Navoi adeptly integrates the reader's perspective, his own experiences, the content of the work, and the philosophy of tasawwuf (Sufism). Remarkably, he can present a dibacha on a subject and theme in a fresh literary landscape and poetic variations each time.

The tradition of writing about Iskandar has a long history. Influenced by Islam and existing written traditions, Eastern artists wrote special dibachas for works on this topic. In the tradition of homonymy, which is widely popular in Eastern literature, it was necessary to dedicate a separate epic to the theme of Iskandari. This gave creators the responsibility of showing originality within the tradition of writing a dibacha. Comparing the dibachas of Nizami Ganjavi, Khusrav Dehlavi, Abdurahman Jami, and Alisher Navoi's iskandarnamas shows that Navoi was able to show creative individuality in this regard too. Alisher Navoi took a new path in creating the dibacha of the epic "Saddi Iskandari", arranging the chapters of the dibacha not in sequence, but in perfect composition.

This article discusses the dibacha of the "Sadd-i-Iskandari" ("Alexander's Wall") in Alisher Navoi's work "Masnawi". It focuses

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### ALISHER NAVOIYNING "SADDI ISKANDARIY" DOSTONI DEBOCHASI BADIYATI

#### ANNOTATSIYA

Alisher Navoiy o'zbek adabiyotini ko'plab yangiliklar, tajribalar bilan boyitdi. Jumladan, ulug' shoir debochanavislik an'anasini obrazlar sistemasi, kompozitsiya, uslub, badiiyat va mazmun jihatdan yuksak darajaga ko'tardi. Alisher Navoiy masnaviylari debochasida kitobxon nuqtayi nazari, o'z kechinmalari, asar mazmuni va tasavvuf falsafasini mahirona uyg'unlashtiradi. E'tiborlisi, bir masala va mavzuga bag'ishlangan debochani har safar yangi-yangi badiiy manzara va poetik variatsiyalarda tasvirlay oladi.

Iskandar haqida badiiy asar yozish an'anasi uzoq tarixga ega bo'lib, sharqlik ijodkorlar islom g'oyalari va mavjud yozma an'analar ta'sirida ushbu mavzudagi asarlarga ham maxsus debochalar yozishgan. Xususan, sharq adabiyotida keng ommalashgan xamsanavislik an'anasida alohida bir dostonni Iskandar mavzusiga bag'ishlash shart qilib qo'yilgan va bu, tabiiyki, ijodkorlarga debocha yozish an'anasi doirasida originallik ko'rsatish mas'uliyatini yuklagan. Nizomiy Ganjaviy, Xusrav Dehlaviy, Abdurahmon Jomiy va Alisher Navoiy iskandarnomalari debochalarini qiyoslash shuni ko'rsatadiki, Navoiy bu borada ham ijodiy individualikni namoyish eta olgan. Alisher Navoiy "Saddi Iskandariy" dostoni debochasini yozishda yangi yo'ldan borgan, debocha tarkibidagi boblarni ketma-ketlik asosida emas, balki mukammal kompozitsiya asosida tartiblagan. Mazkur dostonning 10 bobdan iborat debochasini mantiqiy izchillik bilan, biri ikkinchisini to'ldirib boradigan tarzda joylashtirgan. Qismlar o'rtasida

on the poet's writing skills in the dibacha, the poetry within it, the connection of the chapters in the dibacha with the content of the work, and the role of revealing the essence of the work. To analyze Alisher Navoi's writing skill in the dibacha, a comparative-historical method is used, comparing it with the dibacha to Nizami Ganjavi's "Eskandar-Nâme" ("The Book of Alexander"), and drawing necessary conclusions.

**Key words:** Alisher Navoi, Sadd-i-Iskandari, Alexander's Wall, prologue, dibacha, Iskandar, poetics, Uzbek literature, skill.

va har bir bobning ichki strukturasi o'zaro aloqadorlikni qat'iy ta'minlagan. Alisher Navoiy dahosiga xos bo'lgan mukammal kompozitsiya shakllantirish fazilati "Xamsa" tarkibidagi boshqa dostonlarga nisbatan aynan "Saddi Iskandariy" dostoni debochasi yorqin namoyon bo'ladi.

Ushbu maqolada Alisher Navoiyning "Saddi Iskandariy" masnaviysi debochasi tadqiq etilgan va unda shoirning debochanavislik mahoratiga e'tibor qaratilgan. "Saddi Iskandariy" debochasi badiiyati, debochadagi sarlavhalarning bob hamda asar mazmuni bilan aloqasi, asar mohiyatini ochishdagi o'rni tahlil etilgan. Navoiyning debochanavislik mahoratini ochib berishda qiyosiy-tarixiy metodga tayanilgan hamda Nizomiy Ganjaviyning "Iskandarnoma"si debochasi bilan qiyoslangan, zarur xulosalar chiqarilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Alisher Navoiy, Saddi Iskandariy, debocha, Iskandar, poetika, o'zbek adabiyoti, mahorat.

## INTRODUCTION

"Khamasa" (*Quintuple*) vividly reflects the characteristic ideological and poetic features of Alisher Navoi's works in comparison with his lyrical poems [Hayitmetov, 2015; 286]. Especially, the dibachas (*prologues*) of epic poems are noteworthy in terms of that. Navoi follows the principle of combining each dibacha with the composition and gist of the work in all epic poems of "Khamasa" [Rustamov, 1979]. This principle is followed in the dibacha 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 signifies that. This principle is especially evident in the titles and chapters of the dibacha 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 dibacha of the epic poem can be fully compared because the comparison shows the essence more clearly. Furthermore, 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. Studies on the dastan "Saddi Iskandariy", including the research conducted by Y.E. Bertels [Bertels, 1965], A.Kayumov [Kayumov, 1975], F.Baynazarov [Baynazarov, 1990], M.Hamidova [Hamidova, 1994], Y.Azimov [Azimov, 1996], N.Kamilov [Kamilov,

2005], and I. Ismoilov [Ismoilov, 2019] played a significant role in practice.

## METHODS

The combination between the introduction and the main chapter, the description and the main theme in the dibacha of Nizami's "Eskandar-Nâme" is not as ideal as in Navoi's. Nizami's titles are short, with no rhyme, rhythm, or imagery. On the other hand, Alisher Navoi makes a great effort to skillfully combine a small title with the content of that chapter, as well as the purpose and theme of the whole work. It can be concluded that in Eastern literature, the principles of making a dibacha for an epic poem "must be done following the law (law of writing a dibacha)" [Tarazi, 1996; 32].

Not only in the works (about Alexander or Iskandar) created in the tradition of writing "Khamasa", but also in the works (about Alexander) that do not belong to this category, the dibachas have become traditional, as well as according to certain principles [Bünyamin, 2013; 136-137]. The epic poems of Nizami and Navoi begin with traditional "Hamd" (Arabic: حمد "praise" in English). Epic praises (Hamd, Arabic: حمد) differ from lyrical ones in their meaningfulness, calm 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 two creators, as well as creative individuality. To enlighten the writing skill of the dibacha of Alisher Navoi, it is based on a comparative-historical method and compared with the dibacha to Nizami Ganjavi's "Eskandar-Nâme" and it is provided necessary conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alisher Navoi states his theoretical views about the wahdaniyat (واحدانيت meaning in English is *unity*) of God in the first three verses of tawhid (*oneness*), 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 (*The Creator / Creator of the Universe / Maker / True Originator / Absolute Author*), which lasts a little less than a hundred verses, is described by the gradualness which 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 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 that is inherent in the Navoi 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 rigidly describing the Islamic cosmogonical system 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. That is, the idea, which begins with the acknowledgement of the oneness of God, eventually leads to the conclusion that He 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 [Beruni, 1973]. *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 *dibachas* of the literature of the Turkic peoples as early as the 11th century [Khajib, 1972]. Yusuf Khass Hajib and Alisher Navoi had the same views on the creation, but there is a difference in the naming of astronomical terms [Sadikov, 2007].

In the chapter on tawhid in Nizami's epic poem, there is not a strict principle in describing this cosmogonical system and the quality of wahdaniyat 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 [Ganjavi, 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, 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 fills a large part of the tawhid. 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 aesthetic pleasure, and 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:

"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 repeated 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 (See “*Xamsa*”da *tanosubning qo’llanishi haqida* [Hakkulov, 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*, used before “*karam*”. Taking the first letter (Kāf “ك”) of the word “*karam*” is natural, it is also a requirement 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 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*” (it refers to the first letter: Kāf “ك”) is enough to destroy them;
- c) 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 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 (meaning) of the word *sarkashlik* (disobedience), such as disobedient (*bosh bermas*), stubborn (*o’jar*), and naughty (*itoatsiz*). Navoi, on the one hand, hints at the origin of sins, and on the other hand, can 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 to the eye.

The state of being like the letter (Rā’ “ر”) of the word “*karam*” in terms of shape to the sword or mil (a tube-shaped iron used in history to make permanently blind the human eye) is used as the basis to take the word “*ma’siyat*” from four synonyms by “*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 sahifasiga 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 describe perfectly the creative conception, from graphic, phonetic, lexical and morphological resources, including the selection of the image, the sentence construction, and the description style. 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 based on the three letters of the word “*karam*”. Unfortunately, Nizami’s headlines do not allow for such thinking.

Navoi also begins the munajat by acknowledging the oneness of God, but here the wahdaniyat 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 [Navoi, 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, 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 upon him, so it is correct to consider him as a cause, not a noble one. Thus, Navoi substantiates the phrase *Akramal-Akramin* in the first verse in verses.

Although the munajat 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 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, he only states that “whether I am good or bad, it is because of your destiny”. In addition, Navoi gives the 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 is a priority, unlike Nizami’s. Navoi does not list his sins in general, but also, 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.), 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 Nabiyyan 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*”<sup>1</sup> )”, 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 [Jami, 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.) narrated the beloved Prophet ṣallAllāhu 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 (*evidence, sign, or miracle*)”. 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 Aḥmad”. “My mother, Amina, dreamed that a light came out of her and lit up the castles of Damascus (aš-Šām الشَّام)” [Jami, 2014; 35]. Jami also cites the evidence about Muhammad (s.a.w.) in the Torah, the Psalms, and the Bible [Jami, 2014]. 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 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

<sup>1</sup> Haqiqat-i Muhammadiya: in the terminology of mystics and ‘arifeen (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 [Sajjadi, 1370(h); 325].

divine books, then the birth of the Prophet, the proof of prophecy, in particular, the description of Muhri nubuvvat<sup>1</sup> (*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-muznnib*", "*alayhi afzal-us-salavot va akmalut-tahiyot*", and other Arabic words also show the complexity of the language of dibachas 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" (*"Alisher Navoi's "Saddi-i-Iskandari" epic concordance"*) states that the epic poem consists of 7,303 verses, using 16,936 word-forms [Kuranbekov et al., 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 [Navoi, 2013; 3].

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 [Ganjavi, 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" [The Holy Qur'an, 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.) [Tabari, 2017]. The comparisons show that Nizami and Navoi's outlook on the Truth of Muhammad (*Haqiqati Muhammadi*) are similar:

**Table 1.** Nizami and Navoi's outlook on the Truth of Muhammad

| №  | 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. |

<sup>1</sup> 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.

|    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 are no in-depth expressions of the time from the image of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) observed in Navoi's epic poem to the revelation of the Qur'an to him in the naat part of the work.                                                                                                   | In addition to providing clear proof and sequence in the poetic interpretation, he was able to describe perfectly that the creation of the universe also has a certain order, including that Muhammad (s.a.w.) played an important role in that process. |

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 are widely described in the literature of Islamic-influenced regions [The Holy Qur'an, 2001; 282, 526]. Thereafter, the hadiths contain information about this, and in the tafsirs (*exegesis of the Qur'an*), 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. 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 *dibacha* pays special attention to the image of the Night Journey. First of all, this chapter is aimed at emphasizing the greatness and honour of the Prophet. 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 a stable place in the *dibachas* 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 *dibachas* 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 to certain typological cases. However, each poet had to strive for individuality. As you can see, the style of the theoretical ideas and poetic illustration which 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*, *Miraj* is the practical part *naat*.

Nizami and Navoi's views on Mi'raj are very similar, moreover, in this chapter, Navoi strives to follow a new way following 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 qaba qawsayni aw adna*". That is, "*And was (at) a distance (of) two bow-(lengths) or nearer*" [The Holy Qur'an, 2001; 526].

Although it is clear what the title of the chapter is about, the main character is not revealed. But he is referred by the above-mentioned verses, and this artistic method has aroused the reader's interest. But the main character is meant by the above-mentioned verses, and this poetic method has aroused the interest of the reader. 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 the mystical literature (*the literature of tasawwuf*) this verse is interpreted more in this meaning, with the parts "qaba qawsayn" and "aw adna" being used as separate terms. According to 'arifs (*A seeker of ma'rifa is called 'arif, "the one who knows"*), Qoba Qawsayn (*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 all that, and they are called the circle of wujud (*presence, existence, being*). In addition to that, "qob" is a sign of wujub (obligatory) and scope, "qawsayn" is said to refer 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 [Sajjadi, 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 qawsayn", 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 means oneness, or singleness, without having a second or like*). In "av adno", the separations and important twoness 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 is very convenient to show a unique solution to such delicate issues and express his position [Mullakhujaeva, 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*, but there is no attempt to describe it in detail, 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 majlisafro‘z kard,  
Shab az ravshaniy da‘vii ro‘z kard.  
Saropardai haft sulton sarir,  
Baromuda gavhar ba chiniy harir [Ganjavi, 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 of 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 [Navoi, 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 to the birthmark on the face (*figuratively the sky*). A poet must be of a remarkable ability to describe and compare the universe to the face, and the Night Journey 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 night of the Mi‘raj 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 as much as possible the truth about the ascension of the soul to the presence of Allah through these verses. In the East, the event of Mi‘raj 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* for those who are in

love (*true lovers*). In Sufi terminology, it refers to the point of *wahdat* that is the beginning and end of bounty (*kasrat* کسرت). It is similar to the *ghaybi huwiyat* (the absolute truth that encompasses all truths) because this is hidden from imagination and consciousness [Sajjadi, 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 [Sajjodi, 1370(h); 676]. In other words, Navoi describes in the chapter the path to the Truth, the truths of the *wahdat* when he compares the Night Journey to the birthmark. Or when Navoi likens the Night Journey to *gisu*, 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. This aspect that Navoi emphasizes the most makes his chapter about the Night Journey exactly different from Nizami's.

Paying close attention to every detail is peculiar to Navoi's description of the Night Journey, 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 first, 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 provide 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 a "miraculous flash" to the image, and after that he begins to describe the main events of the miracle of Mi'raj. Sources also contain information about how on the night of the Mi'raj, 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" [Soguni, 2013; 93]. There are no 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 [Navoi, 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 accordingly, 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 (*accordingly, the cradle of sleep to the moon, the pen to Utarid (Mercury), the physical lust to Nahid (Venus), the round shape to Khurshid (the Sun), wrath to Mirrikh (Mars), arrogance to Mushtari (Jupiter), and darkness to Kaywan (Saturn)*). These were the features of those planets in Eastern cosmogony. In this way, Nizami was able to describe the process of being close to 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. The main purpose of Navoi 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 [Mullakhujaeva, 2005; 55]. As in Tawhid, the eight stages of heaven are described on the occasion of Muhammad’s journey in the Mi’raj, but in contrast to hamd, the image of the universe and the constellations has a vertical orientation in the naat. 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 heaven where the stationary stars are located, while Navoi describes the twelve constellations in detail. He considers a necessary condition before describing the depiction of the ‘Arsh.

After the depiction of the Prophet’s journey in the heavens, both poets move on to the depiction of the ‘Arsh and La-makan (*place in placelessness or without place*). While Navoi states that Gabriel (*Archangel Jibrīl or Jibrā’īl*) 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 are more concluding, simple and unimpressive. Nizami’s main conclusion in the matter of selfness is about that. He does not attempt to provide details on this issue, and he does not use literary terms related to wahdat. Navoi takes this opportunity to express his views on selfness and wahdat, skillfully using the opportunities of poetic variation [Tukhliev, 2013]. It is noteworthy that Navoi was able to show originality in the description by combining the issues of selfness and tawhid 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 making good of his ummah (*the Islamic community*) with his great generosity, Nizami praises the first four Caliphs of Islam after the event of Mi'raj. These descriptions of Nizami are by the tradition of the art of writing a dibacha, as in the dibachas of the East, manaqib (*a genre in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian literature*) was considered a permanent component [Tarazi, 1996; 32].

In conclusion, as in Tawhid, the eight stages of 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. Such variable features in the dibacha, 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.

## CONCLUSION

1. In "Sadd-i-Iskandari", Navoi also follows the principle of harmonizing the dibacha 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 dibacha is systemic. His cosmogonical thought is entirely based on scientific sources. In the chapter on Tawhid, Nizami freely approaches the description of this cosmogonical system and wahdaniyat. He focuses on the epistemological views and emphasises the oneness of God.

3. There are some reasons to pay special attention to the description of Mi'raj in the dibachas. First of all, in this chapter, the 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 dibacha has risen to the level of "sequence" in the dibacha of Navoi, and the introductory ten chapters have become 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 dibacha of the epic poem.

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