



THE INFLUENCE OF JALAL AL-DIN RUMI'S TRADITIONS ON UZBEK LITERATURE

تأثیر سنت‌های مولوی در ادبیات ازبک

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ABSTRACT

The present article examines the influence of the ideas and spiritual essences of Masnavi-ye Ma'navi by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (Mawlānā Balkhī) on Persian Uzbek poetry and literature. Amir Alisher Navā'ī devoted a special chapter to Rūmī in his work Nasāyim al-Maḥabba. Likewise, the book Mabda'-yi Nūr by Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab represents a commentary on Rūmī's Masnavi. This study aims to examine and critically analyze the influence of Rumi's mystical and philosophical ideas on the literary heritage of Uzbek poets, with a focus on selected classical figures.

KEYWORDS: Jalāl al-Dīn Balkhī (Rūmī), Amir Alisher Navā'ī, Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab, ghazals, love, annihilation (fanā), the world, divine unity (tawḥīd).

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of human creation, issues related to spirituality, ethics, and moral education have held significance in every era. In the classical literature of the East, the expression of ideas in the form of wise and didactic discourse—whether in verse or in prose—occupies a special place, guiding the reader toward the secrets of truth, the meaning of the universe, and the essence of life.

Jalāl al-Dīn Mawlānā, recognized as a shared genius of both East and West, vividly manifested his profound love, spirituality, and intellectual freedom in the Masnavi-ye Ma'navi through instructive tales, unparalleled ghazals, and quatrains imbued with deep truths. Numerous translations and compilations of his works into the Uzbek language testify to the close affinity between Rūmī's thought and the spiritual world of our people.

Especially in the twenty-first century, an era characterized by computer technologies, the moral and ethical upbringing of the younger generation has become more complex than in the past. Undoubtedly, in such circumstances, didactic and philosophical works can serve as valuable guides. Following the attainment of independence by our homeland, a process of re-reading and re-evaluating the ancestral heritage began in accordance with contemporary conditions and needs. Examining the distinctive features of the works and teachings of great literary figures, as well as analyzing their reflection in modern poetry, constitutes a significant responsibility for literary scholars.

Navā'ī devoted a special chapter to Mawlānā in Nasāyim al-Maḥabba. In Maḥbūb al-Qulūb, he classifies men of letters into three groups: poets who praised true (divine) love, poets who

blended true and metaphorical love, and poets who described only metaphorical love. Within this classification, Navā'ī places Mawlānā—his mystical guide and spiritual master—among the first group and writes as follows:

“Now let us recall some of those great figures who belong to this noble group. Among them is Shaykh Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, who versified the pearls of mystical secrets in the Persian language; and Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, that is, Rūmī, who composed the Masnavi and became the cupbearer of the ocean of the heart. The purpose of these figures in composing poetry was the expression of divine mysteries and the dissemination of infinite knowledge.

It is evident that Uzbek literature is inseparable from the literature of the East, and particular attention to the works of Rūmī began as early as the era of Alisher Navā'ī. As can be observed in Navā'ī's writings, special emphasis is placed on mystical themes, and with regard to the concept of love, ideas closely aligned with Mawlānā's thought can be identified—an issue that has been examined in detail in a separate study. (Shoaliyeva, 2025, 17-20pp)

Among the outstanding poets and thinkers of Sufi literature in the Turkic and Persian worlds, Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab (ca. 1641–1711) occupies a distinguished position. A romantic and passionate spirit permeates his surviving literary heritage. In his ghazals, mustazāds, and murabba's, the themes of love, affection, loyalty, and sincerity hold a leading place, whereas in his mukhammas and musaddas compositions a deeper social dimension becomes evident. Religious and mystical ideas, along with certain features and emphases of the Qalandari path that was widespread during that period, are also prominently reflected in his poetry.

Mashrab composed poetry in both Uzbek and Persian; therefore, his works gained high esteem and wide recognition in Afghanistan and Central Asia. He has been described as a pious Sufi, a wise scholar, and an unparalleled intellectual, and the people of his time referred to him as a “Friend of God (Walī Allāh).” The respect and devotion shown to him were such that he earned the title “Shāh Mashrab.”

Many of Mashrab's poems clearly reflect the spiritual atmosphere and worldview of Mawlānā. Themes such as love, faith, affection, friendship, trust in God (tawakkul), annihilation (fanā) and subsistence (baqā), as well as spiritual states and stations (aḥwāl and maqāmāt), appear in the works of both poets. This shared thematic framework reflects their common mystical worldview and their continuous quest for the discovery of divine truth.

Mawlānā states:

ملت عشق از همه دینها جداست
عاشقان را ملت و مذهب خداست
مشرّب میگوید:

The nation of love is separate from all religions;
For lovers, God alone is nation and creed.

Mashrab declares:

اناالحق گوی ایچادم، تجلی پرور عشقم
مدام از خون منصورم میی درساغر عشقم
نه از کفرم تمنّایی، نه از اسلامم امید

I am the utterer of “Ana al-Ḥaqq,” born of love, a nurturer of divine manifestation;
Ever since I drink from the blood of Manṣūr, my cup is filled with love.



I desire neither unbelief nor do I hope for Islam;
I no longer distinguish the Ka'ba from the idol-temple—for I am a disbeliever in love.
An example of Mashrab's poetry in the Uzbek language reads as follows:

اۆتر
اگر عاشقلىغيم انتسم، كويوب جان و جهان اۆتر،
بو عشق سيريىن بيان ايتسم، تقى اول خانمان اۆتر
كيشيگه عشق اۆتيدىن زره يى يتسه، بۆلور گريان،
بۆلوب بى صبر و بى طاقت، يوره ك بغرى چنان ارتر

If I speak of my love, it burns both soul and world;
If I reveal the secret of this love, it sets even the household aflame.
When even a particle of love touches a person, he becomes tearful;
Losing patience and endurance, the heart and breast are torn apart.

In 1994, the book *Mabda'-yi Nūr*, which is in fact a commentary on Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* and attributed to Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab, was published. The first volume of this work contains 46 narratives, the second volume 59 narratives, and the third volume 27 narratives, amounting to a total of 132 stories. *Mabda'-yi Nūr* is devoted to the explanation and interpretation of well-known verses from the opening section *Nay-Nama* ("The Tale of the Reed") of Rūmī's *Masnavi*. The work begins with a free translation accompanied by commentary.

Anglag'il nay ne hikoyatlar qilur,
Kim judolig'din shikoyatlar qilur,
Nay vujudi orifiy bilohdur,
Chiqsa naydin har sado dono bilur,
Har zamon naydin chiqur savtu sado,
Bas quloq solsang barisi bir nido.
Xayru sharni on qadar tahqiq qil,
Ey Aminiddin mani pandimni bil.
Sargaron aylar sani kibru g'urur,
Garchi munda bilmasang marg bildirur. (Mabda' al-Nūr, 1994, p.3)

Hear the reed and all the tales it tells,
How of separation it laments and dwells.
The reed's own being is the knower of God;
Every sound it breathes is wisdom's nod.
At every moment from the reed a voice is born,
Yet if you listen well, all cries are one.
Probe good and evil to their deepest core—
O Aminiddin, heed the counsel I implore.
Pride and arrogance will leave you lost and blind;
Though you know it not, they herald death of mind.

In these opening verses of *Mabda' al-Nūr*, Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab reinterprets the meaning embedded in *Mawlānā Rūmī's Masnavi* through his own philosophical and mystical perspectives. In this way, he regards the human being and the Creator God as essentially one

and indivisible, while perceiving human existence as a reed in which the soul is concealed. A spirit separated from its origin, yearning for reunion and return to the Absolute Being, gives rise to the burning lamentations that emerge from the reed. Mashrab also openly expresses his sincerity and devotion to Mawlānā in his verses:

Kecha kunduz erurman yaxshilar payravi,
Bul sababdin haq manga yetkurdi holo Ma'naviy. (Ziyouz.com, 2010)

Night and day I walk in the footsteps of the righteous;
For this very reason the Truth has now granted me the Ma'navī.

His spiritual guide. Through the blessing of his masters' guidance, he attained divine grace, and God bestowed upon him the Ma'navī. Here, two meanings are implied: first, the arduous and eventful path of love, filled with hardship and suffering, which ultimately delivers the seeker to the Divine Presence; and second, Mawlānā's book, the Masnavi-ye Ma'navi. In that mirror, Mashrab discovered his inner world and, with the help of the Masnavi, devoted his life to the refinement of the soul and spirit. He endeavored step by step to retrace the footsteps of Mawlānā Rūmī—footsteps from which spiritual ecstasy, sama', and dance arise, born of divine attraction. Subsequent expressions and phrases further expand and reinforce this image.

Sahli pand aro tiyma, nodoni ey mardi qaviy,
Siynayi pokimga jodur kulli sharhi masnaviy,
Do not deem my counsel easy, O strong-souled man, though you be unknowing;
Within my purified breast is inscribed the entire commentary of the Masnavī.

The "Commentary on the Masnavi" has entirely settled within the heart of the author of these lines and merged with his very being.

Sarguzashtimdan eshit, avval xudo ochdi yo'lim,
Bir kecha uyqumga hozir bo'ldi Mavlonayi Rum,
Listen to my adventure, first God opened my path,
One night, Mawlānā of Rūm appeared in my dream.

Closely connected to, the lives of great Sufis. These resemble the instructive, ethical, and didactic tales long known in the written and oral traditions of the Muslim East—narrated in Arabic and Persian—about prophets, kings and rulers, saints, spiritual masters, ascetics, and other eminent figures.

Mabda' al-Nūr is a poetic and artistic work composed in the spiritual atmosphere of Sufism and bears a distinctly moral and educational character. In this book, Mashrab considers living in constant remembrance of the One God, complete self-effacement, renunciation of meaningless pleasures and delights, purity and sincerity, righteousness, true piety, avoidance of violating others' rights, kindness toward orphans and the needy, generosity, and magnanimity as the highest human virtues, and he calls people to embody them. In describing the positive and negative aspects of human life, the author consistently supports his views with evidence from the Qur'ān and the Prophetic traditions, grounding his thought firmly in the laws and practices of Islam.

Jiyfai dunyoga har kim bo'ldi g'arq,
Kufru iymonni qilolmas hech farq (Mabda' al-Nūr, 1994, p. 155).
Everyone in the world drowned in desires,
No one could make a difference by turning disbelief into faith.

Humility, gentleness, and modesty are among the noblest human qualities and are regarded as clear signs of true Islam. One who boasts of wealth and rank and despises others can never be a true believer.

O'zingdan pastni ko'rsang, qil tavoze, bermagin ozor,

Hamisha go'shi dilga bu edi murshidni takrori (Mabda' al-Nūr, 1994, pp. 1–33).

If you see someone lower than yourself, show humility, do not cause harm;

This was always the teacher's repeated advice to the heart.

Ey birodar, mulkka qo'yma iqtido,

Dushmani joning erur g'ayri Xudo (Mabda' al-Nūr, 1994, p. 19).

O brother, do not place your desire on wealth,

Anything other than God is the enemy of your soul.

Bābā Raḥīm Mashrab explained Mawlānā's Masnavi in an exceptionally popular manner—that is, in a simple, fluent, and heartfelt style. In this commentary, educational and ethical aspects predominate, aspects that have retained their value and significance to this day. The stories he composed under the influence of Mawlānā are clear and accessible, while his ghazals contain a fire of love and a burning inner pain that closely resemble Mawlānā's tone and spiritual intensity. No one interpreted the Masnavi as Mashrab did, for he himself was a walī Allāh and a poet of mystical temperament. In his work Mabda' al-Nūr, he rendered the Masnavi in poetic and artistic form and, in some instances, sought to demonstrate his own poetic power and mastery.

Asqar Mahkam aptly states: "Mashrab's merit lies in the fact that he interpreted the Masnavi not merely from the perspectives of various philosophical schools or religious doctrines, but as a true saint or a Perfect Human Being (al-insān al-kāmil). He even translated certain verses of the Masnavi and accompanied them with explanations .

In this regard, Mashrab drew inspiration from Mawlānā's pain and burning love, and for this very reason he succeeded in reflecting Rūmī's concept of love in the Uzbek language and securing a special place within Uzbek literature. His sincere expression, emotional richness, and mystical outlook played a major role in the flourishing of the Uzbek poetic tradition and continue to serve subsequent generations of poets as a spiritual treasury.

In the history of Eastern literature, mystical themes first appeared clearly in the works of Sanā'ī; Mawlānā elevated them to their highest peak and revealed new possibilities of mysticism; and Mashrab, as a continuer of this path, created the most beautiful examples of mystical poetry in the Uzbek language.

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