

Samandar Vokhidov's Artistic Skills in Ghazal

Saodat Narziyeva

Independent researcher of Samarkand state university, Uzbekistan

Received: 18 February 2025; **Accepted:** 17 March 2025; **Published:** 17 April 2025

Abstract: The article presents reflections on the importance of poems written in the aruz meter in studying the components of classical poetics. It explores the poetic mastery of the poet Samandar Vohidov in the art of ghazal writing, and illustrates the thematic richness of his aruz-based poems through examples. In contrast to his poems written in the syllabic (barmoq) meter, the article substantiates the distinct features of his aruz poems with samples from his ghazals and musammats. The artistic analysis also highlights how the poet, while preserving the classical traditions of his predecessors, created aruz-based ghazals inspired by the works of prominent poets such as Erkin Vohidov, Abdulla Oripov, and Jamol Kamol.

Keywords: Classic poetics, science of Aruz, ghazal, rhyme takhallus, tamsil, allegory, figurative devices yoki Literary devices artistic means of expression, mustazad, murabba', mukhammas, musaddas, qit'a, rubai, tuyugh.

Introduction: In the 1970s, when a new generation of poets emerged, composing poetry in the aruz meter became a somewhat rare literary phenomenon, even among those who continued to write prolifically during the independence period. Naturally, this was influenced by the Soviet era's perception of aruz-based poetry as a "remnant of the past." Nevertheless, prominent poets from this generation, such as Erkin Vohidov, convincingly demonstrated that such attitudes toward aruz poetry were baseless. However, it is worth noting that such moral courage was not characteristic of all poets from the 1970s generation. Due to the prevailing negative sentiment toward aruz poetry at the time, the motivation to deeply study the core elements of classical Eastern poetics - "known as "science of Aruz" (an ancient system of meter in classical poetry), science of Rhyme (the rhyme scheme in poetry), science of Rhetoric (refers to rhetorical devices or artistic expression in language) also significantly declined. Initially composing effectively in the syllabic (barmoq) meter, Samandar Vohidov was also able to create perfect melodies in the aruz form. His poetry reflects a broad thematic range, firm adherence to historical traditions, and refined use of imagery and comparisons. From a structural perspective, his verses maintain balanced and consistent measures in meter, rhythm (bahr), and foot (juzv) from beginning to end. Speaking on the delicate

nuances of aruz, Professor A. Hojiahmedov notes: "To deeply appreciate the profound ideas and artistic excellence characteristic of our classical poetry, to recognize the literary potential of every poet's pen, and to sense the exquisite harmonies and the unmatched elegance of verbal artistry, one must have thorough knowledge of the theoretical rules and practical features of the aruz metrical system, which forms the foundation of these timeless monuments." [1; p.3] The poems of Samandar Vohidov - infused with the essential rules of aruz and distinguished by thematic richness - occupy a unique place in Uzbek poetry as rare and valuable creations.

METHOD

Within the aruz poetic system, particularly in the ghazal genre, the expression of thoughts and reflections is often perceived as being somewhat constrained. This is because poets must strictly adhere to the established rules of ghazal composition, which may limit creative freedom. Addressing this debate, literary scholar A'zam Abdulla states: "Attempting to express heartfelt emotion in syllabic verse may oversimplify it, while trying to fit it into aruz may prove futile. Similarly, trying to express "aruz-based" emotions in another meter is also difficult." [2; p.7]

Nizami Aruzi Samarqandi, a great poet and literary scholar of the 11th-12th centuries, elaborates in his

work “The Four Articles” (Chahor Maqola) on the qualities a poet and poetry should possess. He writes: “Unless a poet memorizes twenty thousand couplets of classical poetry in his youth and adolescence, is familiar with ten thousand lines from his contemporaries, regularly reads his mentors’ divans, studies how they solved subtle and complex aspects of language, he will never attain a high level of poetic mastery. The various types and paths of poetry will not naturally reflect in his nature, nor will he develop an intuitive sense for what is elegant or flawed in poetry. His words will lack grandeur, and his talent will not lean toward the sublime.” [3; pp.33–34]

These thoughts, expressed as requirements for becoming a mature poet, remain universally relevant across eras. However, up until the final decade of the last century, the tradition of memorizing classical poetry, analyzing it, drawing inspiration from literary discoveries, and writing in aruz-based genres such as ghazal, mustazad, muraabba’, mukhammas, musaddas, qit’a, ruba’i, and tuyuq was gradually declining.

During the past century, although poets like Sobir Abdulla, Habibiy, and Chustiy preserved this noble tradition to a certain extent, it was through the poetry of Erkin Vohidov that it once again began to reveal its grace. The aruz-based rhythms in Abdulla Oripov’s poetry and the poems written in aruz by Jamol Kamol also significantly contributed to the continuation of this tradition.

It is worth emphasizing that the talented poet from Bukhara, Samandar Vohidov, also holds a distinguished place among such figures as Erkin Vohidov, Abdulla Oripov, and Jamol Kamol, for composing aruz-based poems while fully preserving classical traditions. His collection “Your Thoughts Are With Me” (Xayoling men bilan) includes 36 ghazals, 4 mukhammas, and 1 poem dedicated to a ghazal by Babur. “Sunbula” features 45 ghazals and 5 mukhammas; “The Garden of Life” (Umr chorbog’i) includes 6 ghazals and 1 mukhammas; “The Book of Hajj” (Haj daftari) presents 10 ghazals and 1 mukhammas dedicated to Hazrati Eshon Imlo’s ghazal; “Flowers in Bloom” (Gullayotgan kunlar) contains 13 ghazals and 12 takhmis-mukhammas - including 10 dedicated to Navoi, 1 to Husayniy, and 1 to Jamol Kamol. “In This Garden, the Joy is Eternal” (Bu bog’da bahra boqiydur) comprises 1 tab’i khud and 50 takhmis-mukhammas. The ghazals included in “The World Will Never End” (Dunyo kami bitmagay), which is part of his four-volume selected works, are especially noteworthy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In ghazals such as “Spring Remained in Bukhara” (Bahor goldi Buxoroda), “To My Sister Salomat” (Singlim

Salomatga), and “The Beauty of Autumn” (Kuz jamoli), the poet reflects national pride, love and affection, and the interconnectedness between nature and the human spirit. Meanwhile, in ghazals like “Do Not Be Aimless” (Bo’lma bemaqsadki), “Have a Heart as Vast as the World” (Bag’ri keng bo’l jahonday), “Seeker” (Izlagay), “Do Not Reproach” (Qilma ta’na), and “If You Wish Not to Remain Unsuccessful” (Bo’lmayin beburd desang), noble human qualities such as the meaning and purpose of life, and the faith in living, are glorified.

To support the above idea, let us consider the ghazal “Miracle” (Mo’jiza):

“Do not despair, my heart, thinking miracles do not exist in life;

Life is a book filled with wonder and wisdom.”

A miracle refers to rare events in life that astonish human consciousness. While such phenomena may not occur frequently, it doesn’t mean they don’t exist. Life itself is likened to a book filled with wonder and wisdom. However, the poet warns against being deceived by mere appearances while seeking miracles:

“Whatever draws you into awe, consider it a miracle,

But don’t be fooled by appearances - form veils essence.”

Understanding true miracles, according to the poet, lies not in what the physical eyes see, but in grasping the essence. He suggests that when the mind is nourished by inner meaning, one can even perceive the secrets hidden within stone. He indicates that seemingly lifeless materials like dry wood and cold metal can produce melodies when crafted into a dutar, hinting at the transformative power of inner essence.

“Understand the miracle: the drifting cloud, weightless as smoke,

Carries both fire and water within its bosom, without doubt.”

What a beautiful poetic depiction of nature and its phenomena! In this line, the poet gracefully portrays how a light cloud, floating across the vast sky, holds within it both fire (lightning) and water (rain), eventually bringing life to the earth below.

The poet further illustrates how a single meadow can contain various flowers, colors, and scents, and how the human heart can hold entire universes within it - suggesting that the ability to perceive such beauty itself is a miracle. He completes the ghazal with these lines:

“O Samandar, consider each moment of life a miracle;

A heart incapable of seeking miracles is ruined by desolation.”

A ghazal is often defined as a lyrical poem with a unique rhyme scheme that expresses feelings of love and longing, delight in the beauty of nature and society, and disdain for evil and ugliness. [4; p.191] The ghazal we analyzed above masterfully conveys abstract and philosophical concepts through artistic imagery.

In Samandar Vohidov's ghazal "Last Night From Your Lands" (Kecha sen tomonlardan), similar to the above, the lyrical persona is portrayed through the use of contrast, a poetic method. The poet creatively employs *izofa* constructions characteristic of the *aruz* meter and utilizes compound metaphors that reveal the elegance of the ghazal genre. The 3rd and 4th couplets of this 7-couplet ghazal are particularly noteworthy:

I rejoiced thinking my soul would bask
In the ecstasy of union,
Yet instead of joy,
A poisoned cup of separation arrived.
The tulip of hope -
Without parting its ruby lips,
Was uprooted, and instead,
A sharpened axe was delivered. [5; p.98]

Samandar Vohidov's emergence as a powerful poet during the early years of independence is further evidenced in his ghazal "I Lost Her on the Day of Navruz" (Yo'qotdim ayni Navro'zda), dedicated to his mother's memory. The *matla* (opening couplet) of this 8-couplet ghazal confirms our view:

I lost her on the day of Navruz -
This Navruz turned to autumn.
The joyful spring, without you,
Turned into a bitter winter. [6; p.135]

The indication of the dates when poems were composed plays an important role in tracing the emergence and development of Samandar Vohidov's tendency to write poetry in the *aruz* meter. His collection "Your Thoughts Are With Me" (Xayoling men bilan) includes several ghazals and *mukhammas*es, but not all poems in this collection mention their date of composition. Among those that do, special attention can be given to an eight-couplet ghazal that begins with the lines:

"Let the earth bear whatever the sky casts upon it without complaint,

Be it fire or snow-it shall make no claim." [7; p.149–150]

This poem, composed in 1970, stands out in this regard. The poet's name is also used as a pen name (*takhallus*) in the *maqta* (final couplet):

"What more can Samandar endure,
Having been stripped of everything?
Like a beggar hoping for fate's mercy,
He turns his face toward the Divine." [8; p.150]

This ghazal is fully in line with the classical requirements of the genre. The imagery evokes the sky casting down either fire or snow upon the earth as a form of wrath. The earth, however, bears these torments with an open chest, implying patience and endurance. The hope is expressed that someday, the heavens will show mercy and bestow blessings upon the earth. In this way, the sky is likened to a beloved, while the lyrical persona appears as a faithful lover suffering in silence. The use of the poet's name as *takhallus* in the final couplet, together with the metaphor of the beggar (*gado*), shows a high level of poetic craftsmanship and symbolic depth. It is also possible to express similar views regarding Samandar Vohidov's ghazals: the seven-bayt ghazal written in 1973 beginning with the line "Life may falter in the face of my manifold questions," the seven-bayt ghazal composed in 1977 with the opening line "If someone says: I am a fleeting guest in this world, I say: I am no guest, I am the host of this world," and the six-bayt ghazal from 1978 starting with "Do not hurl the stone of reproach, beloved, at the *mihrab* of my pure heart." In several of the poet's other ghazals, there are notes indicating that they were written during the 1980s and 1990s. At the same time, in ghazals with no recorded date of composition, certain allusions serve as meaningful clues that help determine when the poet's inclination toward composing in *aruz* meters began and became systematized.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although the poet initially entered the world of poetry through the *barmak* (syllabic) meter, over time and with increased life experience and poetic maturity, he began composing complex poems in the classical *aruz* meter as well. It must be acknowledged that Samandar Vohidov successfully and fruitfully created works in *aruz*, and the poetic legacy he left behind has continued to capture the hearts of readers both during his lifetime and beyond. Samandar Vohidov's many years of life experience elevated the artistic quality of his poetry, bestowing upon it a unique charm that resonated deeply with lovers of poetry.

REFERENCES

- Hojiahmedov, A. (1998). *Uzbek Aruz Dictionary*. Tashkent: Sharq. (p. 3)
- A'zam, A. *Aruz: Lessons from Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur*. – Tashkent: Publishing

House of the National Library of Uzbekistan named after Alisher Navoi, 2006. – p. 7.

Sources of Classical Eastern Poetics in the Interpretation of Hamidulla Boltaboev. Vol. 1. – Tashkent: Uzbekistan National Encyclopedia, 2006. – pp. 33–34.

Introduction to Literary Studies. Authors' Collective. – Tashkent: O'qituvchi Publishing House, 1979. – p. 191.

Fitrat, A. Selected Works: Textbooks, Teaching Aids, Scientific Articles and Studies. – Tashkent: Ma'naviyat, 2009. – pp. 53–54.

Vohidov, S. Longing for the Vastness. – Samarkand: Zarafshon, 1991. – p. 98.

Vohidov, S. Longing for the Vastness. – Samarkand: Zarafshon, 1991. – p. 135.

Vohidov, S. You Are in My Thoughts (Poems, Ghazals, Mukhammases, Epic Poems). – Bukhara: Bukhara, 1997. – pp. 149–150.

Vohidov, S. You Are in My Thoughts (Poems, Ghazals, Mukhammases, Epic Poems). – Bukhara: Bukhara, 1997. – p. 150.

Hojiahmedov, A. (2018). Foundations of Aruz Theory. Tashkent: Akademnashr. (p. 5)