

Philosophical And Moral Themes In Ajiniyaz's Poetry

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Abstract: Ajiniyaz Qosibay uli (1824–1878) stands as a seminal figure in Karakalpak literature. This article offers a deep reading of Ajiniyaz's poetic corpus with a focus on its philosophical and moral dimensions. By situating his work within the socio-historical context of the mid-19th century (notably the Kungrad rebellion and the Bozataw tragedy), the study shows how Ajiniyaz negotiates personal anguish, communal grief, ethical reflection, and political protest. Moreover, it argues that Ajiniyaz's poetry synthesizes folk lyricism, didactic moralism, and a proto-humanist ethic that calls for social justice, compassion, and cultural continuity. Consequently, his verse functions both as an aesthetic achievement and as a moral archive for the Karakalpak people.

Keywords: Ajiniyaz; Karakalpak poetry; Bozataw; Kungrad rebellion; moral themes; justice; humanism; exile; Sufi influence.

Introduction: Ajiniyaz occupies a central place in Karakalpak letters. Consequently, any serious study of Karakalpak ethical imagination must begin with his work. Indeed, although his poetry is rooted in oral tradition and collective memory, it also articulates universal philosophical problems: suffering, justice, fate, love, and the ethical duties of the poet toward society. Therefore, this article examines how Ajiniyaz's poems develop moral argument through imagery, narrative events, and formal choices. Furthermore, throughout the analysis linking words such as consequently, moreover, and however are used to clarify logical connections between claims.

Ajiniyaz was born in 1824 in the region near the southern Aral Sea, at a time when the Khanate of Khiva exercised political influence over the area. During his life he experienced social upheaval, notably the Kungrad rebellion of 1858–1859, and the subsequent Bozataw tragedy that left deep scars on Karakalpak society. In addition, Ajiniyaz spent years in deportation and in Kazakhstan, where he took part in poetic competitions (aytis) and translated works by other Turkic poets. Accordingly, his lived experience—marked by exile, resistance, and cultural exchange—shapes the moral concerns of his poetry [4, 45-47].

Ajiniyaz writes at the intersection of multiple genres. On the one hand, his verse draws on oral epic and folk

lyric; on the other hand, it displays didactic tendencies characteristic of poets who feel an ethical responsibility toward their community. As such, his voice is at once personal and communal: he speaks in the first person yet frequently evokes the fate of the tribe, the homeland, and the moral obligations owed to future generations. Thus, form and voice work together to make moral appeals both intimate and collective.

First and foremost, Ajiniyaz's poetry bears witness to trauma. For example, in pieces that respond to the Bozataw events, he converts collective pain into language so as to preserve public memory. Consequently, the poems function as ethical memorials: by remembering, the community resists erasure. Moreover, Ajiniyaz's insistence on recounting suffering is not merely descriptive; it is prescriptive. In other words, remembering obliges moral action—one must acknowledge injustice and care for those wronged [2].

Secondly, Ajiniyaz articulates a clear moral critique of tyrannical rule and social injustice. Accordingly, his poems accuse authorities who harm the people, and they dignify ordinary life as a site of moral worth. Therefore, his poetry aligns ethical judgment with political protest. Nevertheless, Ajiniyaz rarely adopts mere invective; instead, he frames critique within ethical reflection, asking what justice would mean for his people in practical terms. Thus, poetry becomes a

medium of civic conscience.

Thirdly, exile and the theme of homeland recur in Ajiniyaz's verse. Notably, being uprooted deepens his reflection on belonging: if identity binds one to a land, then losing that land raises moral questions about continuity and duty. Consequently, the poet urges attachment that is ethical rather than merely sentimental—attachment that compels protection of communal institutions and care for the vulnerable.

Moreover, Ajiniyaz's work exhibits a proto-humanist ethic. In particular, he foregrounds compassion as the moral response to suffering. Whether describing the plight of captives, exiles, or peasants, Ajiniyaz underscores human dignity. Therefore, his ethics emphasize relational obligations: the poet calls on readers to alleviate suffering, share resources, and sustain social bonds. In this respect, Ajiniyaz's poetry resonates with universal humanistic values while remaining culturally specific.

Ajiniyaz often invokes fate and misfortune, which reflects the worldview of his historical milieu. Nevertheless, he does not resign to fatalism. Instead, his work negotiates the tension between destiny and agency: while misfortunes are acknowledged as part of historical life, moral agency remains crucial. Thus, Ajiniyaz urges active responses—education, solidarity, and resistance—rather than passive acceptance.

Additionally, the theme of love in Ajiniyaz's poetry serves an ethical function. Love is frequently depicted not only as romantic attachment but also as devotion to community and homeland. Consequently, love becomes a force that reinforces moral ties and motivates ethical behavior. Therefore, love's role is both private and political: it sustains identity and fuels commitment to justice.

Finally, Ajiniyaz's poetic lexicon contains spiritual motifs that recall Sufi thought—humility before God, inner purification, and ethical self-examination. Even when not explicitly religious, his poems prompt moral introspection: readers are invited to assess their virtues and shortcomings. Consequently, spirituality in his work supports a moral project of inner reform that complements social reform.

The poem "Bozataw" (a response to the Bozataw tragedy) exemplifies Ajiniyaz's moral poetics. First, the poem memorializes an event where land and lives were devastated, and, second, it mobilizes grief into an ethical narrative. For instance, Ajiniyaz's repeated reference to the land as "bread-winner" serves to personify territory, thereby making the loss both tangible and morally poignant. Consequently, this personification strengthens the moral claim: when land is taken, people are denied life's basic goods, which is

an injustice that must be resisted.

Moreover, Ajiniyaz uses contrast rhetorically—before and after the tragedy, freedom and subjugation—to heighten moral urgency. In addition, the poem's collective voice—"we won't forget"—functions as a vow, transforming memory into ethical duty. Therefore, the text instructs the community not simply to remember, but to act so that such suffering does not recur.

During his years in Kazakhstan Ajiniyaz participated in *aytis*—improvised lyrical contests. These performances are dialogic by nature and demand quick moral and rhetorical thinking. Hence, the *aytis* context highlights Ajiniyaz's skill in negotiating moral argument in public. Furthermore, in *aytis* he refines persuasive devices—repetition, rhetorical questioning, and moral exempla—that he later deploys in poems addressing injustice. Thus, the public, competitive setting of *aytis* contributes to his development as a moral voice.

While in deportation Ajiniyaz translated works by Maktumkuli and other Turkic poets. This activity reveals an ethical openness: translation is an act of cultural exchange that fosters mutual understanding. Therefore, by translating, Ajiniyaz expands the moral horizon of his audience, suggesting that solidarity ought to cross tribal and linguistic boundaries.

Ajiniyaz's poetry relies on vivid imagery (land, bread, chains, fire) to make ethical claims feel immediate. Linking words—such as "thus," "therefore," and "nevertheless"—appear in his rhetorical structures as logical connectors that lead readers from recognition of suffering to normative conclusions. Moreover, his use of collective pronouns and imperative forms converts private sentiment into public command, thereby mobilizing ethical will.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Ajiniyaz's poetry combines aesthetic power with moral force. By remembering trauma, condemning injustice, and urging compassionate responsibility, he forges an ethical canon that remains relevant for Karakalpak society today. Consequently, his work is not only a historical record but also a continuing call to moral reflection and action. Therefore, scholars and readers should approach Ajiniyaz's verse as both literature and moral philosophy—texts that teach values through narrative, image, and musicality.

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