

# Religious Themes In Contemporary Uzbek Literature

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**Abstract:** This article examines the ways in which religious themes are manifested in contemporary Uzbek literature. In the course of the study, the artistic interpretation of Islamic worldviews, Sufi traditions, and enlightenment-reformist ideas in the works of today's Uzbek writers is analyzed. The article explores the specific features of how religious themes are reflected in different literary genres. At the same time, it investigates the relationship between Islamic-educational themes and the historical tradition of Uzbek literature, the gradual development of the reflection of religious worldviews in fiction, the stages of poetic renewal associated with this process, and its role in the development of Uzbek literature. The article also analyzes the artistic means of expressing Islamic-educational themes, the system of symbolic images, and the ways in which they are employed. The research carried out has both theoretical and practical significance for contemporary Uzbek literary studies.

**Keywords:** Religious themes, contemporary Uzbek literature, Islamic worldview, Sufi traditions, national values, artistic interpretation, symbolic images, current literary process.

**Introduction:** In contemporary Uzbek literary studies, the exploration of religious themes is regarded as one of the pressing scholarly and theoretical issues of our time. During the years of independence, the return to national values and the strengthening of the status of Islam in the life of society have had a noticeable impact on literary creativity as well. In the works of our writers, the tradition of addressing Islamic values, moral and educational issues, and religious-philosophical views has become increasingly visible.

By religious and educational themes we understand the spiritual quests, ethical views, reflections on the relationship between the human being and God, philosophical meditations on the meaning of life, and the poetic modes of expressing religious knowledge in literary works created on the basis of a theological worldview. These themes manifest themselves not only through content, but also through the perspective of poetic expression, the system of images, and stylistic features. The history of the artistic interpretation of religious and educational themes in Uzbek literature spans many centuries. In the works of great poets such as Yusuf Khos Hojib, Ahmad Yugnaki, Lutfi, Navoi and Babur, religious values and educational ideas occupy a central position.

Unfortunately, as a result of Soviet colonial rule, the

place of religious concepts and ideas was scarcely noticeable not only in fiction but even in the life of society as a whole. In the years of independence, however, there has been an increase in scholarly research on classical works with religious content and a growth in the number of contemporary authors whose writings are saturated with religious concepts and views. The study of religious themes in today's Uzbek literature is significant for the following reasons.

1. As a result of such research, the contemporary trends and prospects of the development of our national literature are identified.
2. The complex dialectical relations between religion and literature are revealed.
3. Opportunities are created for analyzing the shared and individual poetic quests of representatives of modern Uzbek literature.

In contemporary Uzbek literary scholarship, attempts have already been made to study this area, and there are achievements in this respect. Nevertheless, a systematic analysis in this direction is still required. In particular, the artistic transformation of religious-educational motifs, their connection with the national mentality, and their place and functions in the modern literary process need to be examined in depth. Likewise, the specific ways in which Islamic-educational

motifs are manifested in different genres, and their significance in the structure of the literary text, also demand separate investigation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of studying religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literature, a number of important scholarly works have been carried out. These studies can be conditionally classified as follows:

A. General-theoretical studies. In the works of well-known scholars such as N. Komilov, O. Sharafiddinov, H. Boltaboev, T. Shermurodov, and U. Hamdam, various aspects of the modern development processes of Uzbek literature, its national-spiritual foundations, and its connection with religious values have been examined in one way or another.

B. Studies related to classical literature. In the research of scholars such as N. Komilov, I. Haqqul, K. Mullakhojayeva, and O. Davlatov, the influence of Islam on the creativity of representatives of our classical literature, the interpretation of Islamic symbols and images as Sufi emblems, and the semantic layers they imply have been scientifically explained. In particular, in N. Komilov's book *Tasavvuf ("Sufism")*, it is comprehensively discussed how the essence of the works of leading figures of classical Eastern literature—such as Attar, Rumi, Navoi and Mashrab—is grounded in Islam and its ideas, as well as the relationship between Sufism and artistic creativity.

C. Studies related to the contemporary literary process. Researchers such as O. Norov and S. Raimova have focused on the manifestation of Islamic-educational motifs and ideas in the poetry of A. Oripov, Sh. Qurbon, A. Mahkam, S. Said, and A. O'ktam. In T. Shermurodov's book *Jozib izhor izlab ("In Search of Expressing Attraction")*, the didactic function of fiction and the impact of religious worldview on the development of literary thought are examined in relation to the works of contemporary Uzbek authors. However, the cases of the manifestation of religious themes in epic, lyric and dramatic genres are mainly confined to the lyric genre.

D. Comparative-typological studies. Comparative analyses of religious-educational themes in Uzbek literature and in the literatures of other peoples are found in the works on comparative literary studies by scholars such as A. Saidov, U. Jo'raqulov, and G. Halliyeva, mostly in the form of articles. At the same time, a number of gaps become apparent in the process of analyzing existing research.

- First, the problem of the representation of religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literature has not been subjected to systematic and comprehensive analysis.

- Second, the artistic transformation of these themes and their dialectical relationship with national mentality and modern life have not been sufficiently revealed.

Third, the regularities of the manifestation of religious themes in different genres have not been studied comparatively.

- Moreover, methodological approaches in this field of research are not uniform. Some scholars employ traditional methods of literary studies, while others attempt to use modern theoretical concepts. This hinders the investigation of the topic on a single, unified theoretical and methodological basis.

In conclusion, although certain work has been done in the field of studying religious-educational themes in contemporary Uzbek literature, this issue has not yet been fully elucidated and still requires deeper and more systematic research.

## RESULTS

In the process of analyzing the features of the manifestation of religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literature, a number of points have been identified.

The main types of religious themes in modern Uzbek literature are expressed in the following forms:

1. Themes of the Islamic worldview. In the works of writers, the idea of tawhid (divine oneness), the relationship between the human being and the Creator, and questions of predestination (qazo and qadar) are widely reflected. In T. Malik's novel *Shaytanat* and N. Jaloliddin's novel *Qurb*, these themes appear as a factor that shapes the ideological content. The spiritual experiences and moral choices of characters are interpreted through the prism of Islamic ethical criteria.

2. Sufi themes. In contemporary literature, Sufi modes of thinking, concepts of spiritual and loving enlightenment, and ideas of inner purification are especially visible in Uzbek poetry. In N. Jaloliddin's collection *Ko'ngil ozod* and M. Jumayev's *Hazrati ishq*, Sufi themes and Islamic tones are beautifully expressed in poetic form. In these poems, themes of love, compassion, and spiritual maturity are interpreted in an Islamic-Sufi manner.

3. Educational and reformist themes. In the independence period, writers have paid special attention to addressing the restoration of national values, the upbringing of young people, and the moral recovery of society from a religious-ethical perspective. Tohir Malik's work *Odamiylik mulki ("The Realm of Humanity")* provides clear evidence of this tendency.

4. Genre and stylistic features. Religious-

educational themes in prose.

In prose works, religious-educational themes are most often expressed through dialogues between characters, internal and external monologues, spiritual experiences, and life choices. This method is frequently used in U. Hamdam's novel *Muvozanat* and N. Jaloliddin's novel *Qurb*. Writers seek to demonstrate the relevance of religious concepts by interpreting them within the context of modern life.

5. Islamic-educational themes in poetry. These themes are becoming increasingly prominent in poetry. In particular, poets of the neoclassical trend—such as U. Azim, M. Kenjabek, and X. Hamidov—make extensive use of Islamic images and symbols in expressing their poetic thought. In their poems, Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and images of religious-historical figures acquire new meanings within the artistic context. In dramaturgy, such themes occur less frequently. Nevertheless, in the dramatic epics of writers such as U. Azim and I. Otamurod, one can observe instances where Islamic-educational concepts are employed.

6. Poetic perspectives of expression. In the poetic expression of Islamic-educational ideas, the following devices are widely used:

System of symbolic images. Images such as light, darkness, road, destination, journey, mountain, and river are interpreted in a religious-philosophical sense. Through these images, writers strive to depict a person's spiritual path and inner perfection.

Qur'anic allusions. In the works of contemporary writers, references to Qur'anic verses, stories, and figures occur quite frequently. Authors interpret this material in an original way within the artistic context.

Themes of national-religious traditions and rituals. Religious practices such as the holidays of Hayit, fasting (ro'za), prayer (namoz), and pilgrimage (ziyosat) are used in works not only as everyday details, but also as means of revealing the spiritual state of the characters.

7. Contemporary trends. The development of religious themes in today's Uzbek literature displays the following tendencies:

o Awareness of national identity.

Writers interpret religious values as an important part of national identity. This process has intensified particularly during the years of independence.

o Religious interpretation of contemporary issues.

Authors try to address today's pressing problems—such as ecology, globalization, and moral decline—from an Islamic point of view.

o The importance of religious themes in the upbringing of youth.

In many works, the issue of educating young people from a religious and ethical perspective is brought to the fore.

## RESULTS

On the basis of the analysis carried out, the following results can be recorded:

1. In contemporary Uzbek literature, religious themes occupy an important place not only at the level of subject matter, but also at the levels of worldview and style.

2. These themes are developing in close connection with the historical traditions of our national literature, while at the same time acquiring new forms adapted to the conditions of modern life.

3. Religious themes are manifested in various genres in their own specific ways, with the lyric genre predominating over others.

4. Authors do not confine themselves to a dogmatic interpretation of religious concepts, but seek ways to enrich them artistically and aesthetically.

5. The development of these themes plays an important role in strengthening the national and spiritual characteristics of Uzbek literature and in determining its place within the contemporary literary process.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the study of religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literature, a number of important conclusions and generalizations have been made.

First, in modern Uzbek literature, Islamic-educational themes are manifested actively not only as subject matter, but also at the level of writers' worldview, modes of artistic thinking, and aesthetic principles. This confirms the organic connection of our national literature with its historical roots and determines its prospects for contemporary development.

Second, in the Uzbek literature of the independence period, a process of enrichment and deepening of religious themes is observed. This is closely linked to the restoration of national values in our society, spiritual revival, and the process of realizing national identity. Writers, without interpreting religious values dogmatically, are creatively reworking and presenting them within the context of modern life.

Third, religious themes are manifested in distinctive ways across different genres and forms. This is clearly visible in lyric and epic works, while in dramatic genres such themes are almost not observed.

Fourth, contemporary writers are achieving a harmonious synthesis of traditional and new artistic devices in expressing religious themes. Qur'anic images, Sufi symbols, and national-religious traditions acquire new meanings and values within the modern artistic context.

Fifth, the manifestation of these themes is of great importance for strengthening the national foundations of Uzbek literature and for determining its distinctive place among the literatures of other peoples.

The theoretical significance of the research lies in the fact that it contributes to the systematic study of religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literary scholarship and creates a theoretical basis for new studies in this field. From a practical point of view, the analysis conducted can be used in the process of teaching literature, in educating young writers, and in activities aimed at forming national and spiritual values.

The following prospects are outlined for future research: A monographic study of religious themes in the works of individual authors; a comparative-typological analysis of these themes; and the investigation of their place in the context of world literature all require separate, focused research. Likewise, the specific features of the manifestation of these themes in the works of the new generation of writers, as well as their role and prospects within the contemporary literary process, also demand in-depth study. The influence of religious themes on readers' consciousness and their educational significance must be examined from pedagogical and psychological perspectives. This, in turn, requires an interdisciplinary approach and cooperation among specialists from various fields.

In conclusion, religious themes in contemporary Uzbek literature are developing as an important component of our national literature and serve as one of the decisive factors in determining its future directions. The continuation of research in this area is necessary and urgent for the further development of our national literary studies.

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