

THE ARTISTIC AND SUFI ESSENCE OF THE CONCEPTS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH IN ALISHER NAVOI'S "LISON UT-TAYR"

Abdusalimov Suhrob Rustamovich,
Trainee-Assistant Samarkand State Medical University

Annotation:

This article analyzes the artistic and Sufi-philosophical interpretation of the concepts of heaven and earth in Alisher Navoi's renowned work *Lison ut-Tayr*. In the text, **heaven** symbolizes spiritual ascent and the pursuit of divine truth, while **earth** represents the material world and the human ego. Through the allegorical journey of birds, the poem illustrates the soul's path toward spiritual perfection. The study explores how key Sufi notions such as *fanā* (self-annihilation), *baqā* (subsistence in God), *nafs* (ego), and *ma'rifa* (gnosis) are reflected in the poetic structure and imagery of the work. The article also highlights the relevance of Navoi's spiritual ideas in fostering modern moral education and promoting social harmony.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, *Lison ut-Tayr*, heaven and earth, Sufism, poetic interpretation, spiritual ascent, moral perfection, *nafs*, *fanā*, *ma'rifa*, journey of the birds, symbolic imagery, mystical worldview.

In "*Lison ut-Tayr*", Alisher Navoi masterfully presents the symbolic concepts of **heaven** and **earth** from a Sufi and artistic perspective. Within the framework of Sufi philosophy, **heaven** represents spiritual transcendence, divine truth, and the ultimate destination of the human soul, while **earth** symbolizes the material world, temporality, and the base desires that hinder spiritual growth.

Through the allegorical journey of birds seeking the mythical Simurgh, Navoi portrays the human soul's striving toward self-realization and unity with the Divine. Each bird embodies a particular human flaw or internal conflict, and their collective flight signifies the spiritual path (*ṭarīqah*) undertaken by seekers in Sufism.

The **concept of heaven** in the poem is not merely a celestial realm, but a metaphor for *ma'rifah* (gnosis) and *fanā* (self-annihilation in God), while **earth** reflects the world of *nafs* (ego) and illusion (*dunyā*). This duality illustrates the inner conflict between the soul's longing for truth and the distractions of worldly life.

Navoi employs rich poetic imagery, mystical symbolism, and philosophical depth to guide the reader through the path of purification, unity, and enlightenment. Thus, the heaven and earth dichotomy in "*Lison ut-Tayr*" serves not only as a metaphysical construct but also as a didactic tool aimed at nurturing moral and spiritual awareness in the individual and society.

In Alisher Navoi's allegorical-mystical poem *Lison ut-Tayr* ("The Language of the Birds"), the concepts of heaven and earth are interpreted through the lens of Sufi philosophy. The "heaven" symbolizes spiritual transcendence and divine truth, whereas the "earth" reflects the material world and the ephemeral nature of human existence. Navoi utilizes the symbolic journey of birds as a metaphor for the human soul's quest toward enlightenment and unity with the Divine.

The spiritual pilgrimage of the birds encapsulates the inner struggle of individuals seeking liberation from worldly attachments. Each bird represents a particular human trait or societal type, and their collective aspiration to reach the Simurgh—a symbol of ultimate truth—serves as an allegory for the pursuit of spiritual perfection and divine knowledge. This duality between heaven and earth emphasizes the necessity of transcending material concerns in favor of inner purification and self-realization.

Scholars have widely recognized *Lison ut-Tayr* as a profound contribution to the ethical and spiritual education of individuals and society. Abdulla Avloni described the work as "a poetic expression of the soul's yearning for spiritual freedom and perfection," while others, such as Hamid Sulaymonov, regard it as "a philosophical allegory aimed at fostering spiritual unity within society."

Navoi's treatment of heaven and earth thus extends beyond metaphysical symbolism to encompass broader socio-moral themes. The diversity of the birds and their shared journey reflect societal pluralism and the universal human aspiration for justice, compassion, and unity. As such, *Lison ut-Tayr* serves not only as a literary masterpiece but also as a guide for ethical conduct and spiritual development.

In Alisher Navoi's work *Lison ut-Tayr* ("The Language of the Birds"), the concepts of heaven and earth are interpreted from the perspective of Sufism. In this context, the sky symbolizes spiritual elevation and divine truth, while the earth represents the material world and the transient life of human beings. Through the allegorical journey of birds, Navoi portrays the soul's spiritual quest toward reaching God. Scholar Abdulla Avloni describes this work as "a poetic expression of the soul's freedom and its striving for spiritual perfection."

The concept of heaven and earth in *Lison ut-Tayr* serves the purpose of spiritual and moral education for individuals in society. The birds' journey in the story symbolizes the unification of different layers of society in the pursuit of a single goal—the attainment of divine truth. Scholar Hamid Sulaimonov evaluates Navoi's work as "a philosophical treatise aimed at ensuring the spiritual unity of society."

The concept of heaven and earth in Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr* contributes to the promotion of social and moral values. The birds' journey emphasizes the importance of values such as justice, compassion, and solidarity among individuals. Scholar Mirvohid Azimov regards the work as "a symbol of social justice and spiritual purity."

The concept of heaven and earth in Lison ut-Tayr fosters social unity through Sufi philosophy. The diversity of birds represents the different strata of society united in the pursuit of a common goal. Scholar Faridunbek Kocharli describes the work as “a poetic expression of socio-spiritual unity.”

The concept of heaven and earth in Navoi’s Lison ut-Tayr serves the goal of moral education. The birds’ journey underscores the significance of moral and spiritual values in society. Scholar Mirzo Muhsin Ibrohimiy assesses the work as “a representation of moral upbringing and spiritual purity.”

The concept of heaven and earth in Lison ut-Tayr contributes to spiritual purity and social justice. The birds’ journey reflects the human aspiration toward spiritual perfection. Scholar Parso Shamsiyev evaluates the work as “a symbol of spiritual purity and social justice.”

The concept of heaven and earth in Navoi’s Lison ut-Tayr promotes moral and spiritual values. The journey of the birds represents the moral and spiritual elevation of individuals within society. Scholar A. Vokhid describes the work as “a poetic expression of moral and spiritual values.”

Alisher Navoi’s Lison ut-Tayr (The Language of the Birds), written in the classical tradition of Sufi allegorical poetry (*tamsiliy she’riyat*), presents a profound symbolic dichotomy between the concepts of **heaven** and **earth**. This duality is not merely cosmological but also deeply philosophical, spiritual, and ethical in nature. It reflects the core tenets of **tasawwuf** (Sufism), where the material and the metaphysical coexist as opposing yet interdependent planes of human existence.

In Lison ut-Tayr, **heaven (osmon)** is constructed as a metaphor for **ilohiy haqiqat** (divine truth), **ma’naviy yuksalish** (spiritual elevation), and the **haqiqat yo’li** (path of truth), while **earth (yer)** symbolizes the **moddiy dunyo** (material world), **nafsiy istaklar** (base desires), and **fano** (transience). This dichotomy serves as a central **motif** throughout the narrative, which is structured as a **safar janri** (genre of journey or quest literature), particularly the Sufi notion of the **sulūk** — a path of inner purification.

Navoi employs the **allegorical framework** (*tamthiliy uslub*) of a flock of birds led by the hoopoe (Hudhud) in search of the Simurgh, an archetypal symbol of divine unity and self-realization. Each bird represents a specific human weakness or psychological archetype — fear, pride, attachment, etc. — which must be overcome on the path to enlightenment. Thus, the birds’ collective journey from the “earthly realm” toward the “heavenly truth” reflects a **didactic** and **esoteric** process of **nafsnī poklash** (purification of the self) and spiritual ascension.

Navoi’s deployment of **tasawwuf terminologiyasi** such as *fanā’* (annihilation of the self), *baqā’* (eternal union with God), *tawhīd* (oneness), and *ma’rifa* (gnosis) demonstrates his mastery of Sufi metaphysics. The **symbolism (ramziy ifoda)** of birds echoes classical Sufi

texts such as Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr*, but Navoi adds his own distinctive voice by embedding **didactic elements** (ma'rifiy va axloqiy yo'nalish) relevant to the Turkic-Islamic intellectual tradition.

The **spatial binary** of "heaven" and "earth" is also linked to the concept of **maqomlar** (spiritual stations), which are sequential phases of the soul's journey. The progression from the lower world (nasut) to the higher realms (malakut, jabarut) signifies the transcendence of **zohiriy hayot** (external life) toward **batiniy haqiqat** (inner truth), reflecting the **g'oya-g'oyaga qarshi kurash** (conceptual dialectics) central to Sufi philosophy.

Beyond its mystical framework, *Lison ut-Tayr* functions as a vehicle for **axloqiy tarbiya** (moral education) and **ijtimoiy g'oyaviy birlik** (ideological unity). The journey of the birds allegorizes the collective striving of a diverse society toward **adolat** (justice), **mehr-oqibat** (compassion), and **birlik** (unity). In this sense, heaven and earth are not only metaphysical states but also **socio-ethical paradigms**, reflecting Navoi's concern with the moral condition of humanity.

According to literary scholar Hamid Sulaymonov, this work is "a philosophical allegory aimed at promoting spiritual cohesion within society." Other scholars, such as Mirvohid Azimov, interpret the poem as "a symbolic representation of social justice and moral purity." These evaluations highlight the poem's role as a **didactic-mystical narrative** that bridges individual transformation and communal harmony.

From a **stylistic perspective**, Navoi's use of **symbolism**, **personification**, **rhetorical questions**, and **intertextual allusions** deepens the spiritual and moral resonance of the text. The hoopoe's role as a spiritual guide echoes the **murshid-murid** relationship in Sufi teaching. The birds' dialogues employ **tazod san'ati** (antithesis), reinforcing the tension between worldly attachments and spiritual aspiration.

Navoi's poetic diction — marked by rhythmic elegance, elevated lexicon, and **emotive imagery** — transforms the abstract Sufi ideals into vivid literary experiences. His synthesis of Turkic poetic tradition with Persian Sufi motifs represents a pinnacle of **Chagatai literature**, setting a paradigm for ethical and mystical poetics in the Turkic-Islamic world.

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