



THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF THE CONCEPTS OF SPIRITUALITY AND LOYALTY THROUGH THE IMAGE OF "QORAKO'Z MAJNUN" IN SAID AHMAD'S SHORT STORIES

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
This article examines the artistic interpretation of loyalty, faithfulness, and spiritual values in Said Ahmad's short story Qorako'z Majnun. Through the characters of Saodat Aya and Qorako'z, the story portrays the profound spiritual bond between humans and animals, the highest expression of loyalty, and the significance of national and religious-moral values in society. The symbolic meaning of the narrative is interpreted in harmony with the principles of kindness, compassion, and faithfulness reflected in the Qur'an and the Hadiths. The study concludes that Qorako'z Majnun is one of the most influential works of Uzbek prose, artistically expressing the concepts of loyalty and spirituality with deep philosophical and aesthetic significance.	Loyalty, faithfulness, spirituality, character, symbol, humanity, religious and moral values, symbolism, artistic interpretation.

INTRODUCTION

In Uzbek literature, the expression of human values through animal characters has a long-standing and rich tradition. From classical works such as Alisher Navoi's Farhod and Shirin to Abdulla Qodiriy's Bygone Days (O'tgan kunlar) and extending to contemporary Uzbek prose, this literary tradition has continued to evolve. In his short story Qorako'z Majnun, Said Ahmad carries this tradition forward with a distinctive artistic style, presenting the concepts of loyalty and faithfulness through a profound philosophical and spiritual perspective.

Said Ahmad (1920–2007) was one of the most prominent figures in Uzbek literature. His works are distinguished by their ability to transform ordinary episodes of everyday life into narratives of deep philosophical significance. In Qorako'z Majnun, the author employs what initially appears to be a simple story about an elderly woman and her dog to reveal, in a remarkably moving manner, the essence of human spirituality, national and religious values, and unwavering loyalty.

This article analyzes the principal characters of the story and examines the artistic representation of the concept of loyalty, highlighting its moral, spiritual, and symbolic dimensions.

The opening of Qorako'z Majnun with verses from the Qur'an and a Hadith establishes a profound religious and spiritual foundation for the story. At the beginning of the narrative, a verse from the Holy Qur'an is quoted:

«“And whoever among you renounces his religion and dies as a disbeliever, then their deeds will become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and they will be the inhabitants of the Fire, abiding therein forever.”»

The Qur'anic verse continues as follows:

«“...their deeds will become void in this world and the Hereafter. They are the inhabitants of the Fire, where they will abide forever.” (Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:217)»

The story is also introduced with a Hadith:

«“One of the ten animals that will enter Paradise is the faithful dog of the Companions of the Cave Ashab al-Kahf).” (Al-Jami' al-Kabir)»

This introduction is not accidental. Through these religious references, the author emphasizes that loyalty is not merely a social virtue but also a divine and spiritual value. In Islamic teachings, faithfulness, keeping one's promises, and showing compassion toward others are regarded as among the highest moral qualities. Said Ahmad constructs the entire narrative upon this spiritual foundation, thereby elevating the story from an ordinary domestic event to a profound moral and national-spiritual lesson.

This spiritual atmosphere is evident from the very first description of Saodat Aya. She embodies the wisdom and piety traditionally associated with devout Uzbek Muslim grandmothers, whose lives are guided by concern for both this world and the Hereafter. This thoughtful and principled nature becomes even more apparent when she learns that her son has turned away from his religious beliefs and makes a firm moral decision in response.

Saodat Aya is one of the most memorable maternal figures in Uzbek literature. For decades, she patiently waits for her son, Bo'rixon, who left to serve in the army. Every dawn, during her prayers, she remembers him, prays for him, and longs for his return. Her waiting is not simply an expression of a mother's love for her child; it also symbolizes deep faith, hope, and spiritual devotion. The author describes the elderly woman as a strong-willed and self-respecting person who never yielded to others. She possesses determination, dignity, and an unshakable sense of personal integrity. However, the news that her son has abandoned his faith shatters her inner strength. The once resolute woman becomes overwhelmed with grief and withdraws into the solitude of her home. This transformation is one of the most powerful artistic details in the story. The old woman's emotional collapse represents not only a personal tragedy but also a natural response to the violation of deeply rooted national and spiritual values. Consequently, when Bo'rixon finally returns home, his mother no longer welcomes him with the same feelings. Her perception of her son has changed profoundly after learning that he has embraced a lifestyle associated with alcohol and practices contrary to the religious and moral principles she had cherished throughout her life.

The smell of alcohol emanating from her son's home is enough for the author to convey, in a single image, the collapse of an entire moral and spiritual foundation. Saodat Aya symbolically removes her son, who has renounced his faith, from her life. When he leaves, she turns her face away from him, and even before her death, she no longer mentions his name. For a mother, this is the greatest possible punishment. Yet this decision is not an expression of hatred; rather, it reflects a profound faith that places national and religious values above even maternal love.

The most original and emotionally powerful aspect of the story is the character of Qorako'z. The author describes the dog as “a small dog with two stripes across its back like a belt—one black and the other brown—with a black muzzle, jet-black eyes, and a short eyebrow above one eye.” Through

this vivid description, Said Ahmad creates an unforgettable image that remains in the reader's memory.

Results

Throughout the story, Qorako'z is portrayed as Saodat Aya's constant companion. His movements, joyful leaps, swift running like the wind, moments of happiness and sadness, his playful habit of raising one ear while letting the other droop, chasing cats, and barking at the doves in the trees are all depicted with remarkable artistic skill. These details present Qorako'z not merely as a dog but as a spiritual companion who shares his owner's loneliness, grief, and emotional life.

Saodat Aya speaks to Qorako'z as if he were her closest confidant:

«“Shall we go to your brother Abdumalik's house or to your sister Dilbar's? Dilbar lives in an apartment. She's afraid of dogs and won't let you inside. So, what shall we do now?”»

This monologue vividly expresses the old woman's loneliness and the boundless affection she feels for her faithful companion. Qorako'z proves worthy of that affection: he never betrays her and never abandons her.

When Bo'rixon returns, it is Qorako'z who first senses him as a stranger, growling at him without pause. The animal's instinct proves sharper than human perception. Even before the mother fully realizes it, Qorako'z understands that this man no longer truly belongs to the household. At this point, the image of Qorako'z acquires a profound symbolic meaning, representing unwavering loyalty, moral intuition, and spiritual purity.

At this point, Qorako'z emerges as the faithful guardian of national and spiritual values.

Bo'rixon is not portrayed directly in the story; rather, his character is revealed through his long absence and the profound psychological impact of his return on his mother. Having spent many years in a foreign land, he abandons the Islamic faith of his ancestors and adopts another religion. In Said Ahmad's artistic vision, this is not merely a personal choice but a symbolic representation of estrangement from one's national and spiritual identity.

Discussion

The author addresses this issue not through direct accusation or ideological preaching but through subtle psychological analysis. Bo'rixon's spiritual transformation destroys the emotional bond between mother and son. Although they are physically reunited, they remain spiritually distant, becoming strangers to one another.

In Qorako'z Majnun, Said Ahmad creates a striking paradox: the human being—Bo'rixon—betrays his mother, his homeland, and his faith, whereas the animal—Qorako'z—remains steadfast, never abandoning the one to whom he is devoted. This contrast is deliberate. Through it, the author raises a profound philosophical question: Is loyalty an exclusively human virtue, or is it a divine quality inherent in all living beings?

In Uzbek literary tradition, the word majnun is commonly understood to mean "mad" or "insane." In this story, however, the title Qorako'z Majnun acquires a different symbolic meaning. Qorako'z's "madness" represents his unconditional, selfless, and unwavering love and loyalty toward Saodat Aya. This form of "madness" is not a sign of weakness but an expression of the highest moral and spiritual virtue.

Conclusion

Said Ahmad's Qorako'z Majnun occupies a distinguished place in Uzbek literature as one of the most powerful artistic expressions of loyalty and spiritual values. In this work, the author simultaneously explores three fundamental themes: the significance of national and religious values in human life, the boundless love and patience of a mother, and the idea that loyalty can be embodied not only by human beings but also by animals.

Through the character of Saodat Aya, Said Ahmad portrays the faith, perseverance, and unwavering commitment of the Uzbek woman to her national and spiritual values. She symbolizes moral integrity, maternal devotion, and spiritual resilience. At the same time, the character of Qorako'z transcends the role of an ordinary animal, becoming a universal symbol of unconditional loyalty, sincerity, and moral purity. Together, these two characters convey the central message of the story: true loyalty is one of the highest human and spiritual values, capable of transcending words, status, and even the boundaries between humans and animals.

Through the character of Saodat Aya, Said Ahmad portrays the faith, patience, perseverance, and unwavering commitment of the Uzbek woman to her national and spiritual values. This character is not merely a literary creation; rather, she represents the spiritual portrait of the Uzbek people. In contrast, the character of Bo'rixon illustrates the tragic consequences of losing one's identity and turning away from national and religious values.

Qorako'z, however, stands at the very heart of the story as its central symbol. Free from human flaws, he embodies pure, unwavering, and unconditional loyalty. His "madness" (majnunlik) is, in reality, the highest form of moral virtue, for his love is never dependent upon conditions, and he is incapable of betrayal. Through this story, Said Ahmad conveys a profound message to the reader: spirituality is not merely a matter of words but of actions, and loyalty is not simply an emotion but a way of life. A person who loses these virtues may fall below even a faithful dog like Qorako'z. This moral lesson remains just as relevant and meaningful in contemporary society as it was when the story was written.

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