

THE USE OF STYLISTIC DEVICES IN “NASOYIM UL-MUHABBAT”

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Abstract: This article examines the stylistic devices used in Alisher Navoi’s “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat.” It discusses how lexical units in the work move beyond their ordinary dictionary meanings and form a complex semantic system through which Sufi philosophy and ethical concepts are expressed.

Keywords: symbolic meaning, Sufism, lexical meaning, metaphor, hyperbole, artistic speech, discourse

Alisher Navoi’s “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat” is an important source that illuminates the lives and spiritual development of Sufi figures. The work is distinguished by its artistic quality in terms of language and style, and it makes extensive use of various stylistic devices. This article analyses the functional significance of these devices in the text through selected examples.

Metaphorical expressions are widely used in the work to convey Sufi concepts in greater depth. For example: “The pen is powerless, and the pen is bewildered.”

In this expression, the “pen” serves as a symbol of human speech. Its powerlessness conveys the greatness of the person being described. Through this metaphor, the author intensifies the meaning and idealizes the figure.

Dialogic speech is also actively employed as a stylistic device. For example: “He asked me, ‘What is your intention?’ I replied, ‘I intend to perform the Hajj.’ He asked, ‘Do you have a mother?’ I replied, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Then go and devote yourself to serving your mother!’”

Through these brief and pointed exchanges, the author conveys a direct moral judgment without lengthy explanation. Stylistically, this technique makes the speech

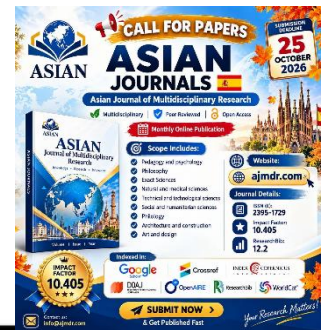
more concise and delivers the message with maximum impact. The brevity and sharpness of the dialogue also strengthen its imperative tone.

In the work, stylistic devices are used systematically not only in individual examples but also throughout the discourse. The following passage is particularly noteworthy: “Your capital is your heart and your time. If you occupy your heart with something, every doubt and suspicion that enters your mind will cause you to waste your time on something unworthy and undeserving. How can one make a profit by turning capital into a loss?”

In this example, economic and financial terms such as “capital,” “profit,” and “loss” are transformed through metaphorical transfer into artistic concepts that express the human inner world and the notion of time. As a result, abstract spiritual concepts—including the heart, time, and the flow of thought—are made more concrete through an economic model. This stylistic approach gives rise to a cognitive metaphor characteristic of Sufi texts: human life is interpreted as “capital,” while the use of that capital is understood in terms of “profit or loss.” In this way, the author equates wasting time with an economic loss, creating a powerful didactic and ethical effect on the reader.

The following passage is also stylistically significant: “The fast of the heart is more difficult than any other fast: it means allowing nothing other than God, Glorified and Exalted, to enter one’s thoughts; and the heart is commanded to maintain this fast continually.”

In this example, the lexical item “fast” departs from its conventional religious and everyday meaning and, through metaphorical transfer, is transformed into a concept describing the state of the heart. Consequently, the central semantic focus shifts from a physical act of worship to a state of spiritual and intellectual purification. The phrase “the fast of the heart” expresses the idea, characteristic of Sufi thought, of inner



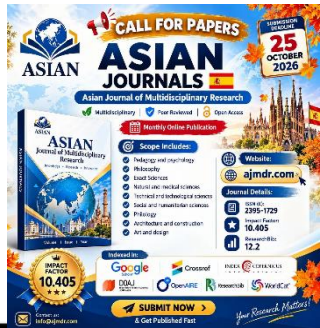
discipline and directing consciousness towards the Divine. The expression “allowing nothing other than God, Glorified and Exalted, to enter one’s thoughts” signifies complete concentration of the mind and detachment from worldly images. In this respect, the stylistic construction is a clear example of internalization in Sufi texts: an outward religious practice is transformed into an inner psychological and spiritual experience. Fasting is thus conceptualized not merely as external restraint but as a continuous state of consciousness.

Syntactic parallelism and repetition also play an important role as stylistic devices in “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat.” The following passage provides a clear example: “Preventing the eyes from looking at what is forbidden, the ears from hearing forbidden sounds, and the feet from taking forbidden steps...”

In this example, the repetition of the same syntactic pattern gives the speech a rhythmic and orderly structure. Stylistically, this technique serves an emphatic function, strongly stressing the need to keep each bodily faculty under control. Such repetition reinforces the didactic character of the text and helps the message become more firmly established in the reader’s mind.

A stylistic strategy based on praise is consistently observed in the depiction of saints in the work. For example: “He was the shaykh of shaykhs... His spiritual stations were exalted and renowned, and his miracles were magnificent and without limit...” The sequence of descriptive expressions and intensifying elements idealizes the figure to the greatest possible degree. Words and phrases such as “exalted,” “renowned,” “magnificent miracles,” and “without limit” create a sense of boundlessness, elevating the person described beyond ordinary human standards to a position of great spiritual rank. Through this stylistic technique, the text acquires not only artistic value but also religious and spiritual force.

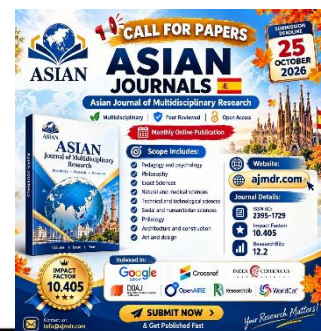
The passage above also illustrates a stylistic device in which meaning is gradually



intensified. The successive use of descriptive expressions progressively strengthens the portrayal. An initial description is expanded by subsequent expressions and ultimately brought to a sense of boundlessness. This gradational structure performs the stylistic function of intensification, serving to elevate the status of the person being described to the highest degree. The reader’s perception of the figure’s greatness is consequently shaped through an effect that increases step by step.

In “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat,” stylistic contrast appears not only as antithesis in the narrow sense but also in the broader form of opposition. The following statement is noteworthy: “A person is better off in their own worn clothing than in someone else’s new clothes.” The opposition between “new clothes” and “worn clothing” artistically expresses the conceptual contrast between outward material luxury and inner contentment. This antithetical structure emphasizes that, within a person’s system of values, spiritual steadfastness and contentment take precedence over material possessions. Stylistically, the construction communicates an ethical position not through a direct declaration of a rule, but through contrast. Rather than giving the reader an explicit moral instruction, the author encourages understanding by placing opposing concepts side by side. As a result, antithesis strengthens the semantic force of the text, broadens its didactic and educational impact, and provides an aesthetic expression of the Sufi conception of ethics.

In general, “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat” possesses a complex and multilayered stylistic system. Metaphor, hyperbole, contrast, antithesis, gradation, and repetition operate in harmony throughout the work. These stylistic units not only enhance the text’s aesthetic impact but also help express Sufi and philosophical ideas in a profound and multifaceted manner. Consequently, the work transcends the limits of a simple biographical or historical account and rises to the level of a distinctive artistic and philosophical discourse. The author’s stylistic mastery is revealed through these



devices: the text not only provides readers with information but also invites spiritual reflection and ethical contemplation.

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