

Ibrahim Gafurov's Skill in Creating Historical Characters (Examined through the "GALA" Story)

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Abstract: This article discusses the interpretation of the image of the great thinker Boborahim Mashrab, as created in the stories by writer Ibrahim G'afurov. Special attention is given to the expression of Mashrab's personality in the story "Gala".

Key words: gala, freedom of the heart, philosophic nature, ego, divinity, zikr, flute, melody.

Mashrab's personality, his poetic potential, his quest for knowledge across lands, and his appearance in the world as a dervish are artistically described, which defines the value of the works written about him. This highlights the urgent task of illuminating the life and work of our great ancestor, the grand Sufi Mashrab, in literature. Indeed, to occupy a place in the hearts of the people with perfect poetry, to remain known and famous among all classes through the centuries, to be loved and sung by reciters over the ages, and to be revered as a saint, a Sufi, and a poet among several Turkic peoples, is a level not every creator achieves. And such a person, born and raised in our land, creating in our language, is rightfully one of the figures of pride and glory of the Uzbek people. The transition of King Mashrab's image from his own time into literary art, and the extent of its reinterpretation in the late 20th century and early 21st century, are evaluated from the perspective of classical thought in terms of changes in the correct interpretation of Mashrab's worldview. The selection aimed at revealing Mashrab's worldview in a concise and impactful manner, where G'afurov's characteristic scholarly contemplation and artistic skill merge, has been unveiled. The role and significance of these works in popularizing Mashrab among the people were substantiated.

Ibrahim Gafurov's "Freedom of the Heart" stories are crafted with a focus on illuminating the personality of the thinker Mashrab, providing readers of yesterday, today, and tomorrow with insights into the poet, exploring his inner world, and portraying him as a Sufi poet concerned with the fate of humanity. It is particularly noteworthy that among the works about Mashrab, Ibrahim Gafurov was the first to attempt to illuminate Mashrab's character from within, an effort recognized by a number of writers. In creating the image of Mashrab, Gafurov pays close attention to intertwining his external actions with the depiction of his inner world. Gafurov strives to depict Mashrab as a living being who, like all Sufis concerned with the fate of humanity, contemplates today and the future of humanity, and ponders the beginning and end of the world. Stories like "Gala", "At the Mother's Shrine", "The Disciple", "The Child Who Played at the Execution Ground", and "Boborahim's Yellow Flowers" successfully embody and convey the figure of the thinker and Sufi Mashrab, fully presenting his world imbued with divine love.

In the philosophically oriented lines of the "Gala" story, the divine contemplations within Mashrab's spirit directly transfer to the reader's heart and feelings. The naming of the story "Gala" itself places a significant burden on this short word, signifying a multitude of people as symbols of the ego, time, era, and space, implying that the ego and this transient world are illusions. The decrees of the Creator, however, are eternal and unchanging. The symbol of the ego and illusion, represented by Gala, may oppose Mashrab's destiny, but they can never change the predetermined fate by the Divine. This was the truth of a great Qalandar like Mashrab. Not only his truth but also a sign of his divine ascension: no matter how much Gala tries, what is written in fate will occur. Reading the story, one marvels at the author's skill in introducing a person like Mashrab to the reader. The depiction of the external world events conjures the image of a divine soul, enhancing our pure love for him through the portrayal of his spiritual essence. The sorrows and worries of the servants and young maidens were aging my lord the king.

In these descriptions, the author presents "my lord the king" as a symbol of the ancient world, while the servants and girls represent the transient desires and passions of this world. In the following lines, the image

of Mashrab is infused with the ideas of purity, nobility, and eternal, verdant divine love: "My lord the king sat somewhat mournfully, gazing at Mashrab's well-proportioned, strength and majesty pouring forth from his frame, his awe-inspiring back, and his hair, black and shiny as polished steel, spilling out from under his cap." [Freedom of the Heart, I.G., p.10]. These lines speak of the physical and spiritual impoverishment of the transient world's king in the presence of the king of the realm of hearts filled with divine love...

The story's portrayal of Mashrab's journey, reminding us that we are all but travelers in this world, and the events that unfold along the way, as well as their impact on Mashrab's actions, sometimes depict the conditions of beings and objects in reality under their influence, as beautiful illustrations of the ideal hero of perfection. The fact that the feet of the owner of divine love do not burn despite walking on worldly fire, and that his color is recognized as white, underscores not only the inner but also the outer purity and cleanliness of the lover of God's love.

Mashrab's travels continued until the end of his life. He traversed all the countries of the Near and Middle East. In the cities and villages he visited, he left behind amazing stories of his rebelliousness as a poet, his uncompromising and merciless attitude towards sheikhs and ascetics. The people spun dozens of anecdotes about Mashrab. Interestingly, in most of these anecdotes, the stark conflict between Mashrab and the sheikhs is evident. In one such anecdote, when Mashrab was wandering in Bukhara, he saw one of the Jo'ybor sheikhs beating his slave. He went over and asked what the slave's offense was. The Khwaja replied that the slave had neglected the horse, which had then eaten a chicken carcass and died. At this point, Mashrab asked the Khwaja:

— Do you have a venerable father?

— No, — replied the Khwaja.

— What happened to him? — Mashrab asked curiously.

— He has passed away! — said the slave owner.

In these vivid portrayals by Ibrahim Gafurov, the king is represented as a symbol of the ancient world, while the servants and girls embody the transient desires and whims of this world. In contrast, the subsequent lines infuse the character of Mashrab with the notion of purity, loftiness, and the eternal freshness of divine love. The king, observing Mashrab's well-formed physique, his commanding presence, and his thick, flowing black hair that shimmered beneath his cap, sat a bit more somberly. These lines suggest that the temporal king, in the presence of the king of a heart filled with divine love, feels physically and spiritually impoverished. The story further illustrates Mashrab's journey, reminding us that we are all travelers in this world, with events along the way and their impact on Mashrab's actions, sometimes reflecting the condition of living beings and objects under their influence, serving as beautiful examples of the ideal hero of perfection. The owner of divine love, whose feet might be engulfed in worldly fire without being burnt, recognized for his purity, signifies not only the inner but also the external cleanliness and purity of the lover of God's love.

Mashrab's travels continued until the end of his life, traversing the Near and Middle East. In every city and village he visited, he left behind remarkable stories of his rebelliousness, his uncompromising and merciless attitude towards sheikhs and ascetics. The people crafted dozens of anecdotes about Mashrab, with the majority highlighting the fierce battle between Mashrab and the sheikhs. In one such anecdote, when Mashrab encountered one of the Jo'ybor sheikhs in Bukhara beating his slave, he asked about the slave's fault. The sheikh replied that the slave had negligently allowed a horse to eat a chicken (resulting in the horse's death). Mashrab then inquires humorously about the sheikh's late father, mocking the absurdity of the punishment and highlighting the cruelty and hypocrisy of the religious elite. This instance illustrates how, despite the reverence shown by the likes of the Bukhara amir and the Jo'ybor sheikhs, Mashrab boldly ridiculed them, demonstrating his fearless spirit. As Mashrab traveled from place to place, he witnessed the hardships of the working people, irrespective of their religion or ethnicity, encapsulating his observations in poignant verses about the suffering and love-stricken state of the populace. Mashrab's social rebellion is best understood through his progressive views for his time, with every character in the story symbolizing a concept. For example, Mashrab's dog, Barfoq, symbolizes loyalty and fidelity, while the lion, the ruler of the ruins, represents power, majesty, and inevitability, yet appears weak and submissive before a being like Mashrab. The story describes how the lion, without aggression, approached the tents and sniffed around, eventually finding Mashrab's white foot outside a tent. The lion sniffed the foot from a distance, then gently began to lick it, treating both feet with his large, meaty tongue without drooling. Mashrab, meanwhile, dreamt of his mother applying fat to his cracked feet, warming and soothing them, indicating a divine comfort spreading through

his body. This narrative not only highlights the divine protection over Mashrab but also the respect and reverence that even wild beasts, not known to show submission easily, had for him, as detailed in the pages from "Freedom of the Heart" by Ibrahim Gafurov.

The resonance of Mashrab's heart, transcending the material world through the sounds of the flute and rubab, proving to captivate and devastate the hearts and beings of those who hear it, is vividly demonstrated in these lines from the story: As the rain continued to pour from his forehead, Mashrab took out a double flute from its cover. A sharp, piercing sound that seemed to chant, "Ollohumma! Huv-huv ollo-huv! Ollohumma! Huv-huv ollohuv!" emanated from the double flute. Mashrab played the flute with such mastery that as the melody soared to its peak, anyone nearby would rise to their feet, join in dance, or fall to the ground in a daze. Literary critic Ibrahim Haqqul has emphasized, "The voice of a poet with the fervor of dervishhood resonates differently. His personality shines brightly. Such a voice is purified and sincere. A character of this nature is remarkably humble, genuine, and full of poetic energy and power. Only such a poet can intoxicate people with the wine of love and wisdom, unexpectedly focusing attention on the truths of the heart, and raising high the flag of spirit and spiritual leadership."

In the 20th-century Uzbek prose, the portrayal of Mashrab represents a unique blend of historical and artistic interpretation by talented representatives of spiritual thought and progressive-minded writers. Their creativity embodies a distinctive path of life and creation, taste and talent, style, and direction, making their works incomparable. Their narratives align and complement each other in promoting humanitarian and national values, patriotism, and enlightenment. They critique societal flaws, advocate noble human virtues, and engage creatively with folk literature and the traditions of classical literature. Particularly, the stories interpreting the character of Boborahim Mashrab by Ibrahim Gafurov deserve high recognition. This depiction underscores the profound impact of Mashrab's spirituality, not only through his poetry but also through his ability to invoke deep emotional and spiritual responses in others. His use of music as a medium to express his innermost feelings and thoughts bridges the material and spiritual worlds, reflecting his profound connection with the divine and his capacity to move people's souls. This ability to evoke such powerful reactions underscores Mashrab's exceptional place in literature and culture, showcasing his enduring influence across centuries.

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