

Copies and Manuscripts of *Siraj Al-Muslimin*

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Abstract. *This article discusses the origins of Alisher Navoi's work "Siroj ul-Muslimin", examining its manuscripts preserved in both national and global collections. It also highlights the significance and role of the work within the history of Uzbek classical literature.*

Key words: *Muslim, The Lantern of Muslims, five pillars of Islam, manuscript, photocopy.*

1. Introduction

Our land has produced great thinkers and scholars in various fields of science. In particular, eminent experts in Islamic sciences have contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge. It is difficult to list all the works they authored in this field. Most importantly, our classical writers also spared no effort in the development of religious and legal (fiqh) sciences. Although many books on jurisprudence were written by our scholars, works composed in verse possess a unique spirit. Alisher Navoiy is one such scholar mentioned above.

During the Soviet era, several poets remained unstudied under the "religious-mystical" label. The dominant atheistic ideology of that period strictly prohibited the publication of works by prominent national figures and Sufis, such as Ahmad Yassawi and Sufi Allahyor. However, in all fairness, Navoi's literary heritage received some scholarly attention during this time. Nevertheless, while his works were examined, the profound Islamic and spiritual dimensions of his life were often overlooked:

"Naqdi jon chiqqanda iymon gavharin ko'nglumga sol,
Aylagil jondin judo, lek etma iymondin judo".

There is no reason to call the poet who prayed to Allah an atheist. Religious and mystical meanings were removed from his works and only half of them were published. It became a dream for a Navoi scholar with a little integrity to tell the truth. Thank God, thanks to independence, the material and spiritual wealth that our people dreamed of became ours. Among other things, we were fortunate enough to literally study the life and work of Alisher Navoi. We think that the publication of Navoi's works and the compilation of comparative or critical texts will continue¹.

In his work "Siroj ul-Muslimin" ("The Lantern of Muslims"), Alisher Navoi wrote about Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) in verse. In this work, the poet reflects on the daily practices and obligations that every Muslim should know. Since the book was intended for the general public, legal matters are explained in a concise and straightforward manner. Without delving too deeply into the complexities of the five pillars of Islam, he limited himself to highlighting the most essential primary issues for a Muslim. Regarding the reason for writing this work, the author explains the following:

Tushub bu nuktadin jismin aro pech,

¹ Sayfiddin Rafiddinov (PhD in Philological Sciences, Senior Researcher at the Academy of Sciences) – From his review of the book "Navoiydan chu topqaylar navoe".

Chu bildim, chin emish, dam urmadim hech.

Dedimkim, aylayin bir nusxa mastur

Ki, bo 'lg'ay dini islom uyi ma 'mur².

In the introduction to “Siroj ul-Muslimin”, the poet explains his reasons for writing the work. During a gathering, a person praises Navoi’s noble deeds, specifically mentioning a caravanserai (rabot) he had built and how much it benefits the people. However, one of the king’s close associates speaks up, questioning the value of such charitable acts if the poet has already “corrupted” people’s minds with themes of passionate love, wine, and longing, thereby undermining their faith.

Instead of responding harshly, Navoi acts in the humble manner typical of Sufi practitioners. Although he could have argued that the critic simply misunderstood the deeper meaning of his writings, he chooses to take the “blame” upon himself. He reflects that while he had written many works on Sufism, he had not yet composed a work in a simple language that ordinary people could easily grasp.

“That man’s words set a fire within me”, he remarks. He concludes that while Sufi initiates might understand his poetry, common Muslims might not fully comprehend it or might even misinterpret certain Sufi terms in a negative way. Thus, he decides it is necessary to fill this gap.

The poet kept this intention in his heart, yet due to state affairs and other commitments, he could not find the opportunity to embark on the task. One day, a senior disciple of Khoja Ahror Valiy³ - the great spiritual master (pir-u murshid) of the region at that time - arrived in Herat from Samarkand. Hazrat Navoiy visited the honored guest to pay his respects and engage in conversation. During their meeting, a lively discussion on jurisprudence (fiqh) arose. The guest shared that his master, the late Khoja, had fondly remembered Alisher Navoi in one of his gatherings, praising his poetic mastery and suggesting that it would be beneficial if he were to compose a work on the science of fiqh in verse.

Navoi wholeheartedly accepted this spiritual guidance (irshad) from his revered master. Encouraged by the guest’s words, he made a firm resolve to fulfill the task he had long envisioned. This event took place during the final years of the poet’s life, specifically between 1499 and 15004.

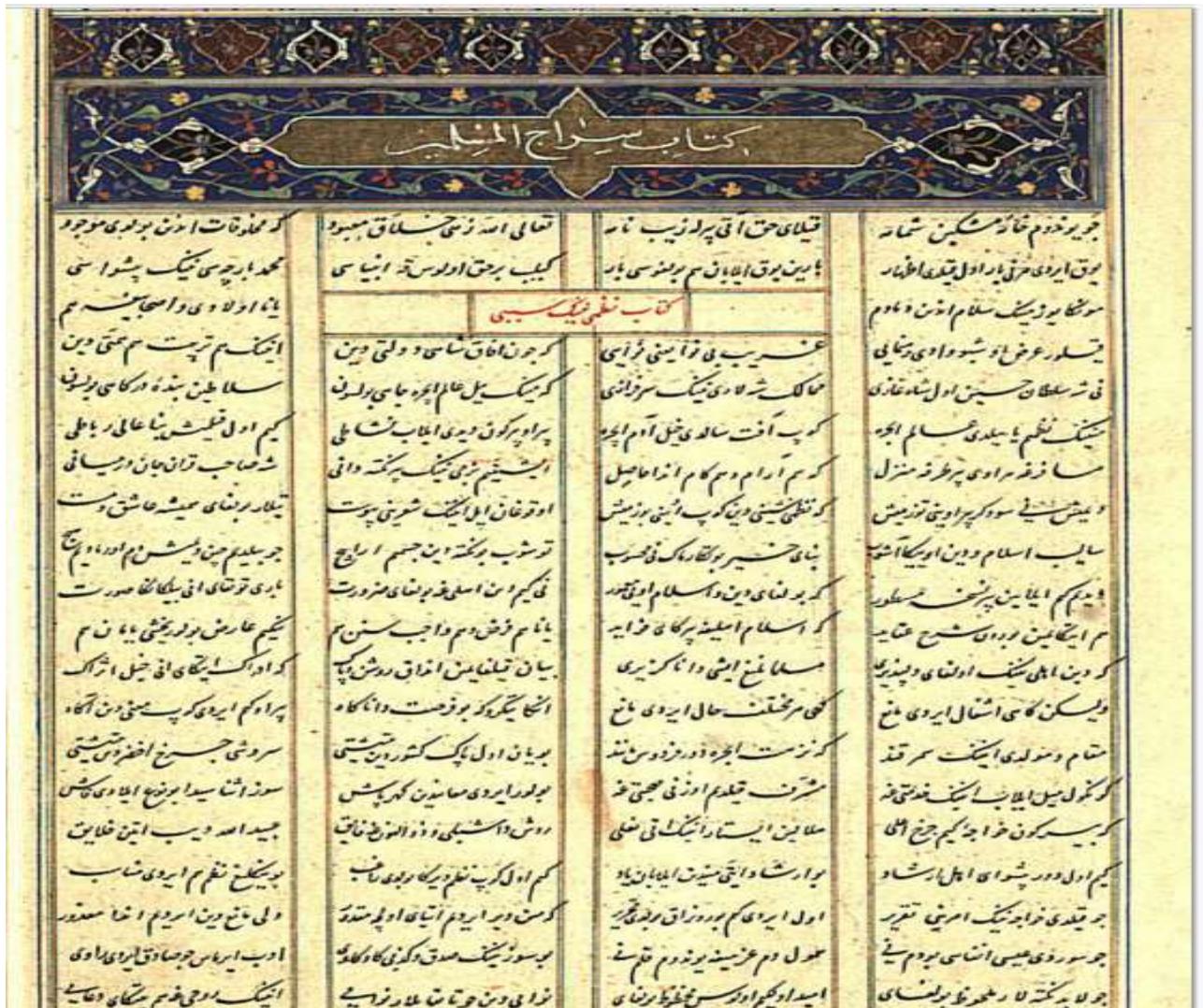
“Siroj ul-Muslimin” was first published in the Cyrillic alphabet as part of Alisher Navoi’s collected works. Later, it was also published as a standalone book. Notably, a beautiful edition was prepared by the academician and Navoiy scholar, Alibek Rustamov. In 2000, the Alisher Navoiy Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan prepared the work for publication. This edition was included in the sixteenth volume of Alisher Navoi’s “Complete Collection of Works”, alongside titles such as “Muhokamat ul-Lug‘atayn”, “Mezon ul-Avzon”, “Tarixi Anbiyo va Hukamo”, “Tarixi Muluki Ajam”, “Arba’in”, “Munojot”, and “Risolayi Tiyr Andoxtan”.

In order to explain certain passages in previous editions and to fill the gaps that ordinary readers might find difficult to understand, a new edition was published by the brothers Hasankhon and Husaynhon Yahyo Abdulmajid through the 'Hilol-Nashr' publishing house. This edition, titled 'Navoiydan chu

² Alisher Navoi. Siroj ul-Muslimin. Prepared for publication by S. Ganieva. – Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, 2000.

³ His real name was Khoja Ubaydullah; he was a famous shaykh, a highly influential religious figure, and one of the prominent saints of the Naqshbandi order. Born in 1404 in the village of Bogiston near Tashkent, he passed away in 1490 in Samarkand.

⁴ Hasankhon and Husaynhon Yahyo Abdulmajid. Navoiydan chu topqaylar navoe. – Tashkent: “Hilol-Nashr” Publishing House, 2023.



In addition to “Siroj ul-Muslimin”, this Kulliyat (Collected Works) includes the following works by Alisher Navoi: “Munojot” (Supplications), “Chihl Hadis” (“Arba’in” / Forty Hadiths), “Nazmul Javohir” (String of Pearls), “Lison ut-Tayr” (The Language of the Birds), “Nasoyim ul-Muhabbat” (The Breezes of Love), and the “Khamsa” (The Quintet), which comprises “Hayrat ul-Abrar”, “Farhod va Shirin”, “Layli va Majnun”, “Sab’ ai Sayyor” and “Saddi Iskandariy”.

It also contains the “Chor Devon” (The Four Divans), consisting of “G‘aroyib us-Sig‘ar”, “Navodur ush-Shabob”, “Badoye’ ul-Vasat”, and “Favoyid ul-Kibar”; as well as “Mezon ul-Avzon”, “Majolis un-Nafoyis”, “Xamsat ul-Mutahayyirin”, “Tarixi Anbiyo”, “Tarixi Muluki Ajam”, “Holoti Sayyid Hasan Ardasher”, “Holoti Pahlavon Muhammad”, “Vaqfiya”, “Munshaot” and “Muhokamat ul-Lug‘atayn”.

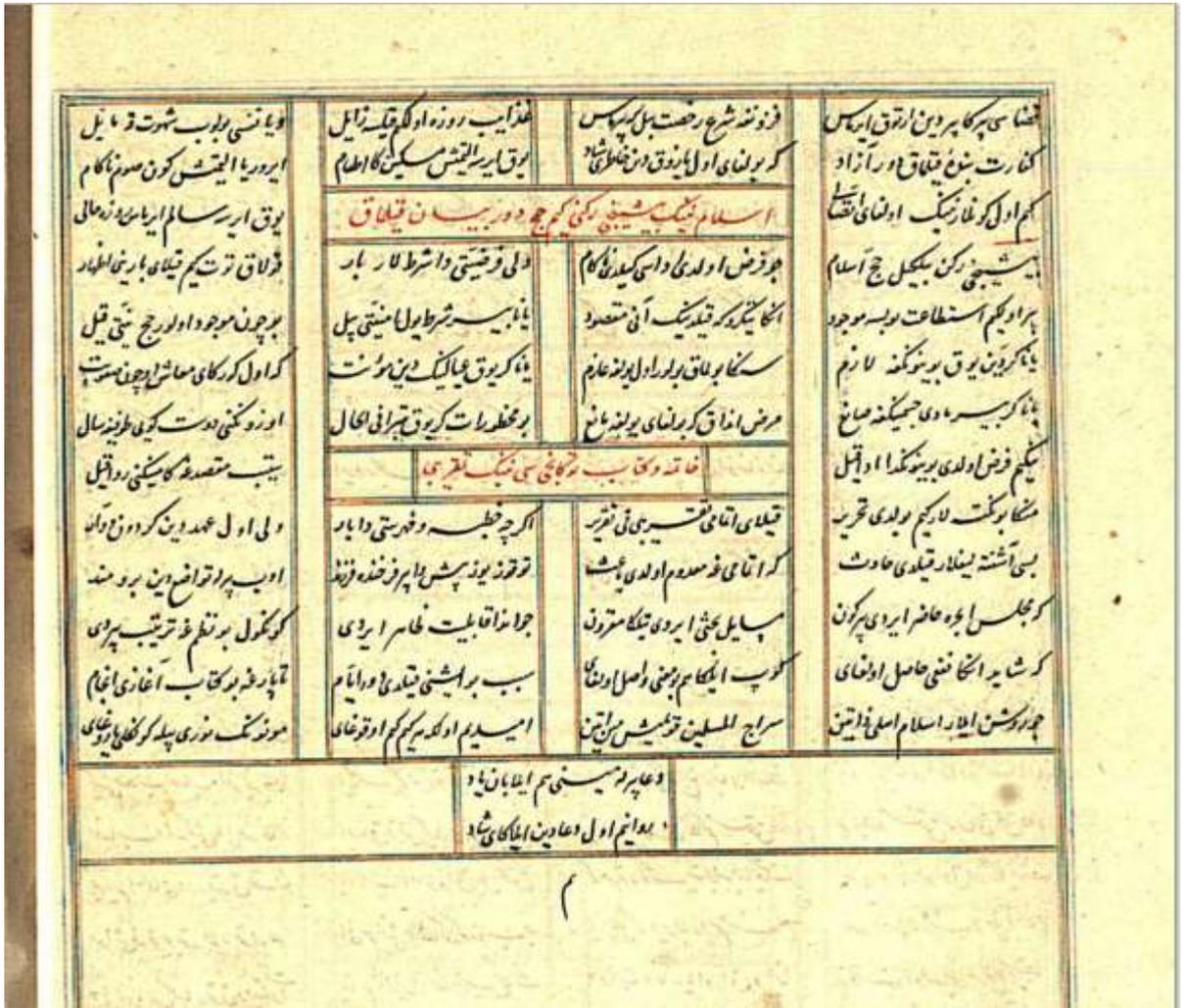
The reason for writing the book is provided at the beginning of the work. In the manuscript, the headings of the work are written in the center in red ink to make them stand out.

کتاب نظمیں سبھی

<p>کہ جو نفاق شامی و ولایتی دین کہ کینک میل عالم اجڑہ جاسی بولسرف پرا اوپر کون ویری ایلاب نشاطی ایشیتیم نژی کینک پرکتہ دانی او تو خان ایل ایشک شورینی پوست تو شوب پرکتہ دین جسم اسراج نی کیم دن اسلی خد بولغای منورست یانام فوشن دسم واجب کسنن ہم بیان قیلغایمن اخراق روشن کپا اشکا یگر و کہ بو فوجست داناکا بر بیان اول پاک کتور دین شیتی بو کور ایردی معاندین کدر پشش روش و اششیلکی و ذوالنورخ فایق کم اول کرپ نظم دیرک ریدی شب کومن ویر ایردیم اتیای اول پرستور بو سوز یشک صدق و کذب کا دکا نوازی دین جوتان یلار فراسی</p>	<p>عسریب بی تو ایستی نوازی محاکک شکر لاری کینک سرفرازی کہ پ آفت سلاوی خیل آدم اجڑہ کہ سم آرام دسم کام انزا حاصل کہ تنظیم شینی دین کوپ ایشی بوزیش بنای حسنیر بو کتار ماگ فی محسوب کہ بولغای دین و اسلام اوتی نور کہ اسلام امیلند پرکای فرایر مسلمانغ ایشی داناکریری کئی مختلف حال ایردی مانغ کہ نرست اجڑہ دور مزدوسن تند مشرف قیلدم اونانی جھتی خد سلا بین ایستار ایشک تی منلی بو ارش و ایچی منیت ایلابان یاد اول ایردی کم بو روزاق رولدی عدول دم عزیزیند یونو دم قلم سنه امید او کیم اول کس منظر بولغای</p>
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The work “Siroj ul-Muslimin” concludes with the following couplets by Hazrat Navoiy:

*Duo birla meni ham aylabon yod,
 Ravonim ul duodin aylagay shod.*



In conclusion, we can emphasize that the treatise “Siroj ul-Muslimin” is not only one of the rare artistic gems in Alisher Navoi’s heritage but also holds a significant place in the history of Uzbek classical literature. The existence of its preserved manuscript copies in the Topkapi Museum, the Sultoniya Library in Istanbul, and the National Library of France in Paris testifies to the great global interest in this work. These manuscripts allow for the study of the formation of Navoi’s creativity across different periods, his approach to clarifying jurisprudential (fiqh) themes, and his unique artistic expression.

A reader engaging with this work experiences not only jurisprudential information but also a high level of literary artistry. In turn, one witnesses Navoi’s mastery as a scholar of Islamic sciences. The preservation of these manuscript copies and the study of their details confirm the work's historical accuracy, textual stability, and artistic perfection. Therefore, deeply studying this work and presenting it to the general public is of great importance - not only for academic research but also for the preservation of our spiritual heritage.

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