

PERFECTION OF AESTHETIC IDEALS (ILLUSTRATED THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF SHIREEN'S IMAGE)

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ABSTRACT

This article briefly examines the genesis of Shireen's image, which has become the image of an aesthetic ideal heroine not only in Uzbek classical literature, but also in Persian, Azerbaijani and Turkic literature. The poets of all time did not share the image of Shireen. The article collected the opinions of many literary scholars about the image of Shireen created by such poets as Firdowsi, Nizami, Dehlavi, Navoi, and its development in the transition from epics to epics. It is a question of the etymology of the word Shireen, its historical origin, and lastly, that this image became more refined from year to year, from century to century, from people to people, which has attained the poetic perfection from the usual historical and passive image of the woman, acquiring the embodiment of divine beauty, as well as the socio-political activity of women in it. This implies that the image of Shireen created by Alisher Navoi is a symbol of such perfection and divine love.

KEYWORDS: *Hamsa, Firdowsi, Nizami, Dehlavi, Navoi, Arifardabeli, Sura, Sira, Shir, Love, Faithfulness, Perfection, Divine Incarnation.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the symbols that played an important role in the development and enrichment of literary ties between the peoples of the East is the image of Shireen. This image is the main hero in the history of Eastern literature: in "Khusrav and Shireen" by the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi, "Shireen and Khusrav" by the Persian poet Khusrav Dehlavi, who was originally from Shahrisabz, "Farhod and Shireen" by the founder of Uzbek classical literature Alisher Navoi. In particular, both in the period from Khusrav Dehlavi to Alisher Navoi, between 1302 and 1483, and even to this day creating a series of five epics is continued.

Oriental studies and literary studies have accumulated a great experience of studying Khusrav, Farhod and Shireen. These major works include the works of Czech scientist H.V. Duda, Azerbaijani scientist G. Aliyev, Russian scientists E. Bertels, K. Traver, Uzbek literary critic S. Erkinov and others. As the literary critic Nathan Mallayev notes, "Research shows that the roots of "Khusrav and Shireen" or "Farhod and Shireen" ("Farhodnoma" by Arif Ardabili) rest on the history, on the one hand, and on the folklore tradition, on the other".

In written literature, Abulkosim Firdowsi first created the dastan of Khusrav and Shireen. It is noteworthy that the images of Khusrav and Shireen in «Shahnameh» are depicted from a historical point of view.

First of all, speaking about the etymology of the name of Shireen, it is worth to cite the following opinion of Professor K. Traver: “The words of Sura and Sira, denoting water in ‘Avesto’, are close to the word of Shireen. If the word Sura means water, can’t we possibly see the mythological image of Ardivisura, which was in the early stages of development, in the beautiful image of Shireen”, - writes the scientist¹. There is ample evidence to support this view of K. Traver. The name Shireen of the wife of Khusrav Parvezis also found in ancient historical writings not only in the form of Shireen, but also in the form of the Sira. Gibbon, author of many works on Iranian history, also called Shireen as Sira. This suggests that Ardivisura was called Sura or Sira, until it took the form of Shireen. One reason why Traver came to this conclusion is that Shireen has been portrayed throughout history as a water defender, a water hero.

G. Aliyev says that Shireen means ‘taste’ if otherwise it does not stand for a changed form of another word. There are also opinions that Shireen has the meaning of ‘milk’, which comes from the word ‘sheer’ that stands for milk in Persian².

A number of studies on Eastern literature claim that Shireen was a historical figure. Shireen, known in the history, lived in the late 6th and early 7th centuries. The question of her nationality and place of birth is not resolved. The first information about Shireen can be found in the book “History” of the Byzantine historian Theophylact Simocatta. According to the scientist, Shireen was a Roman Christian³. In the «Anonymous Chronicles of Syria» Shireen is described as an Aramean. The book tells the story of Khusrav Parvez, who had two Christian wives, Shireen an Aramean and Maryam a Roman. The fact that Shireen is called an Armenian girl or, according to the folk etymology of Shireen, that she is called an Iranian girl, is very common in studies about Khusrav and Shireen. In legends created in Central Asia, Shireen is mentioned as the daughter of the Khorezmshah.

There is also disagreement about Shireen’s homeland. According to Simocatta, Sira (Shireen) is a Roman Christian. Khusrav breaks with the Shah tradition and marries a Christian girl. It is a source of disappointment for the palace. A year later only, Shireen is recognized as Princess of the Palace. Sebeos describes Shireen as a Christian girl and her country as Khuzestan (Sogdiana) in the chapter “On the nobility of Princess Shireen, wife of King Khusrav”, dedicated to the kingdom of Parvez. According to Syrian sources, Sira (Shireen) is from Iran. This source mentions another wife of Khusrov, Maryam (who is also a Christian). According to E. Bertels: “The source is not really ‘Aramaic’, but ‘Armenian’. In this case, it becomes clear why the Middle Eastern traditions consider Shireen ‘Armenian’, Sebeos says.

At all times, the attitude of the poets to Khusrav’s wife was dissimilar. Although Nizamulmulk, the vizier, who ruled in the eleventh century, described the adventures of Khusrav and Shireen as a famous story, in his book “Siyasatnoma” he looked at Shireen from a negative point of view: “Khusrav loved Shireen so much that he even gave her the power over the state. He was ready to do whatever she wanted. But Shireen fell into an obscene state and fell in love with Farhod under a king like Khusrav”. Court poets looked at Shireen with irony, ridicule, and even hatred. But such casual relationships could not destroy Shireen’s tradition. Shireen’s image is portrayed as a faithful companion in both spoken and written literature.

Azerbaijani researcher Saodat Shikhiyeva presented her report to the scientific community in 2021: “Shireen is proud of her Turkic continuity. Based on the work of Nizami ‘Khusrav and Shireen’”. This article gives us a brief overview of the genesis of the image of Shireen. According to the article, in many places the epic “Khusrav and Shireen” poet Nizami pays attention to the national origin of Shireen, sometimes openly, and sometimes using sign language. One of them is the nomadic way of life of the Armenian Shireen, which has so far eluded the attention of researchers, both the way of life of the inhabitants of the area ruled by Nizami’s main heroine - Shireen’s aunt, and Shireen’s life are described in accordance with the life of nomadic Turks. In fact, the pride of belong to Turkic people in an epic is reflected not only in Mehinbonu’s speech, but also in Shireen’s expressions. It is interesting that Nizami does not admit an analogy to the word «Turki», which he uses in connection with Shireen. In the chapter «Shireen answers Khusrav» Shireen says that «there is no Turkic girl who does not know flirting», «there is a Turkic man who hunts with the heart», «eyes like the overcast Turk» and «I am not a Turkic girl who does not know Arabic». It seems that Nizami managed to create a systematic picture of the Turkic origin of Shireen. This aspect confirms that the poet impressed the reader with the Turkic belonging of his heroine through every detail connected with her (words of kinship, friendship, respect, appearance, lifestyle, etc.⁵).

When we read the works of Firdowsi and Nizami, Dehlavi and Navoi, we do not always think about how contemporaries of the distant past understood the legacy of these geniuses. The time lapse is 5 to 10 centuries. At present, we may sometimes find it difficult to understand and analyze these works and their protagonists. Since surely, there is a difference between modern and classical poetry, between modern heroes and medieval aesthetic ideals. But no matter how long it takes, the heroes who embody love, loyalty, patriotism, courage, knowledge and wisdom created by our poets will live forever.

When we talk about the image of Shireen created by Alisher Navoi, we see that she is a very beautiful, morally perfect, true hero of true human love. What mattered to Shireen was true humanity, not a kingdom and royal bloodline. Shireen is a girl in love with someone with the highest human qualities. Farhad was such a noble man. Shireen is worthy of Farhad, the symbol of perfection. When Shireen learns of Farhad’s death, she reveals her devotion to her love and bids her life away, sleeping forever.

Alisher Navoi was closely acquainted with the historical and legendary sources and traditions of Shireen. This is evidenced, in particular, by the information in “Tarikhimuluki Azham” (“History of property of Azham”). Along with the use of traditional knowledge, legends and myths, Navoi also departs from the traditional Shireen through a new idea-aesthetic essence of the epic, conception, event series and images. His Shireen is very different not only from legends and myths, but also from the traditional image of Shireen in Hamsa. She is not a bride, nor the wife of Khusrav, but a beloved one of hard-working and strong Farhod, she is not just the initiator of a “canal” (this would greatly limit the spiritual world of Shireen), but she is one of the initiators of «Nahrul-hayat» and «Bahr un-najot» which brought «life» and «rescue» to the people. (Many folk legends also link Shireen’s activities with water, the opening of a canal). Shireen is like a wonderful, courageous and intelligent girl in folk epics. Shireen’s image by Navoi and by Arif Ardabili is more closely related. Whether or not Navoi is familiar with the epic of Arif Ardabili, this suggests that new works, different from the old traditional legends and myths of Shireen have appeared, and Navoi, and Arif Ardabili were inspired by them.

The name Shireen is associated with many legends and myths. One of the traditions of folk art is the hero's connection with his country. According to this tradition, Shireen is depicted in folklore belonging to different nations, a number of villages, buildings, streams, springs, etc. are named after her. But attempts to reconstruct the "history" of Shireen on the basis of these terms would, of course, be useless. That's because Shireen has already crossed the line from the personality to the image, the symbol of beauty, loyalty, intelligence, the embodiment of popular folk ideas and dreams about water. According to Navoi, the perfect love between Farhad and Shireen had not yet been seen. Shireen's image was perfected, as was Farhad's.

In conclusion, we note that the image of Shireen is one of the most popular images in the Eastern literature of the Middle Ages, and this image, year after year, from century to century, from nation to nation, was increasingly refined and poetically improved. Shireen, who is considered a historical figure, has reached the level of divine incarnation from the symbol of sublime love. The image of Shireen created by Alisher Navoi is a symbol of such perfection and divine love.

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