



Article

Interpretation of the Concept of Rindlik in the Works of Alisher Navoi

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Abstract: The concept of *rindlik* represents one of the most profound and philosophically rich ideas in classical Eastern and Sufi literature, symbolizing a state of spiritual freedom, moral integrity, and divine love. In the works of Alisher Navoi, particularly *Mahbub ul-Qulub* and *Lison ut-Tayr*, the poet reinterprets the image of the *rind*, transforming it from a figure associated with indulgence and carelessness into one embodying ascetic wisdom, ethical strength, and enlightenment. His depiction of *rindlik* reflects the fifteenth-century Timurid intellectual milieu and reveals his mastery in blending mysticism with poetic expression. Despite extensive studies on Navoi's philosophical ideas, the artistic and moral dimensions of *rindlik* have not been comprehensively analyzed as a unifying ethical and aesthetic concept within his works. This study aims to explore the spiritual, moral, and artistic meaning of *rindlik* in Navoi's writings and to interpret its symbolic function within the framework of Sufi philosophy and literary tradition. The analysis reveals that Navoi presents the *rind* as a seeker of divine truth, one who transcends worldly attachments through repentance, sincerity, and spiritual devotion. Figures such as Sheikh San'on and Sayyid Hasan Ardasher exemplify this ideal. The research establishes *rindlik* as a key ethical-philosophical category that integrates mysticism, aesthetics, and humanism in Navoi's worldview. The findings contribute to understanding Navoi's role in redefining moral and spiritual ideals in Turkic literature, emphasizing that true freedom lies in the liberation of the soul through divine wisdom and moral perfection.

Keywords: Didactic Narrator, Sage, Mystic, *Rindlik*, Dervish Path, Freedom, Spirituality, Independent Thinking, Divinity, Path of Truth, Moral Decline, *Lison Ut-Tayr*, Repentance

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1. Introduction

The concept of *rindlik* occupies a distinctive place in classical Eastern literature, representing one of the most complex and symbolically rich spiritual-philosophical ideas. In Sufi tradition, the image of the *rind* embodies a person who is free in spirit, detached from worldly concerns, and devoted to divine love and truth. While in ordinary dictionaries the term *rind* is often defined as a frivolous, careless, or pleasure-seeking individual, in classical literature it acquires a noble and enlightened meaning, symbolizing a seeker of spiritual perfection and moral freedom. Among Turkic thinkers, Alisher Navoi played a decisive role in reinterpreting and elevating the image of the *rind* to the level of an ethical and philosophical ideal. In his works *Mahbub ul-Qulub* and *Lison ut-Tayr*, Navoi presents *rindlik* as a manifestation of divine love, ascetic wisdom, and independent thought. The poet transforms the *rind* from a figure of indulgence into a person who transcends material existence in pursuit of higher spiritual truth. This transformation reveals Navoi's exceptional ability to merge mystical philosophy with poetic expression. His interpretation of *rindlik* not only reflects the spiritual and cultural context of the

fifteenth century but also expresses universal ideas of freedom, sincerity, and inner enlightenment. Therefore, exploring the artistic and moral dimensions of *rindlik* in Navoi's works contributes to a deeper understanding of his worldview and reveals how this timeless concept continues to embody humanity's eternal striving toward truth, divine love, and intellectual independence [1].

2. Materials and Methods

The methodological framework of this study is grounded in historical-literary, analytical, and comparative approaches aimed at interpreting the concept of *rindlik* in Alisher Navoi's works. The research employs descriptive and hermeneutic methods to explore the multifaceted meanings of the *rind* image in Navoi's *Mahbub ul-Qulub* and *Lison ut-Tayr*, focusing on its ethical, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions. Primary textual analysis was carried out to examine how Navoi redefined the traditional understanding of *rindlik*, shifting it from its negative connotations in dictionaries to a symbol of moral freedom, divine love, and intellectual courage. The study draws on philological tools to analyze key poetic and prose passages, identifying metaphors, symbols, and allegorical expressions associated with the *rind* and its connection to Sufi philosophy. Comparative analysis was used to juxtapose Navoi's interpretation with earlier literary representations, particularly those found in Persian-Tajik literature, including the works of Saadi Shirazi and other classical thinkers. Contextual analysis was also applied to trace the socio-cultural and spiritual influences that shaped Navoi's perception of *rindlik*, particularly within the framework of fifteenth-century Timurid intellectual life. The research incorporates historical references to real-life prototypes such as Sayyid Hasan Ardasher, linking Navoi's artistic imagination to actual figures of spiritual independence. By combining literary, philosophical, and historical methods, this study reveals *rindlik* as a central ethical and aesthetic category in Navoi's worldview—embodying freedom of spirit, divine love, and the pursuit of truth beyond conventional norms [2].

3. Results and Discussion

It is known that *Mahbub ul-Qulub* is a unique prose-poetic work written by Alisher Navoi in the last years of his life. According to our observations, the great master of words manifests in this work in several images, including:

- The didactic narrator
- The philosopher
- The scholar
- The sage
- The *rind*

In each "story" or "admonition," the poet, in fact, confronts his own "self," in our view. Moreover, in *Mahbub ul-Qulub*, the various social, political, cultural, and literary issues of Navoi's era are thoroughly revealed [3].

"If we generalize the persona of Navoi, we encounter a unique genius whose poetry stems from scholarship, whose mysticism comes from philosophical thought, whose passionate love reflects wisdom, and whose statesmanship demonstrates courage—thus, we face a singular figure of unparalleled excellence".

These virtues are vividly expressed in *Mahbub ul-Qulub*. In this article, we discuss the theme of *rindlik* in the work. Dictionaries provide various interpretations of the word *rind*. For example, according to the *Farhang-i Nafisiy* dictionary, a "rind" is described as:

"a wise, alert, cunning, indifferent, fearless, pleasure-loving, drunkard, immoral, traveler, insolent, and playful person. Additionally, a person who is outwardly blameworthy but inwardly righteous" [4].

The prominent representative of Persian-Tajik literature, Saadi Shirazi, in his work *Gulistan*, defines *rindlik* and dervishhood as follows:

“Remembrance (*zikr*), gratitude (*shukr*), service, obedience, secrecy, contentment, monotheism (*tawhid*), reliance on God (*tawakkul*), submission (to God’s rewards and punishments), and endurance belong to the path of dervishhood. Whoever embodies these qualities is truly a dervish, an ascetic... Those who speak whatever comes to their tongue are called *rinds*” [5].

In general, in dictionaries, *rind* is mostly interpreted as a figure possessing negative traits. However, in classical literature, the concept is presented in a completely opposite sense: as a person whose heart is free, whose spirit is inclined toward knowledge, and who embodies a noble and virtuous character. According to S. Uludoğ, a *rind* is “a philosopher who is not afraid of public reproach, acts according to the judgment of the heart, may be intoxicated, is inwardly full of wisdom, knowledgeable, and does not harm people despite their faults. They are mostly people of contentment and consider every event and incident as truth. Those who have reached the highest level of reliance on God (*tawakkul*). *Rinds* are people who, like reproachers or ascetics, uphold free-thinking, and they have mostly lived their lives intoxicated with divine knowledge”. Indeed, in classical literature, a *rind* is considered a complex poetic figure who is awakened to this world, who observes worldly events with the eye of the heart, and who has embarked on the path of truth [6].

In classical literature, literary scholar M. Asadov, who studied the meaning of *rind* and the character of the lyrical hero in a monographic manner, writes that in Arabic literature the emergence of the *hamriyat* genre was influenced by Greek mythology—namely, the cult of the grape and wine, the god of wine, and the praise sung in honor of Dionysus, the patron of wings symbolizing freedom and liberty. Moreover, relying on the views of Orientalists, the scholar emphasizes that from ancient times among the Persian-Tajik speaking peoples there existed the belief that grapes and wine possessed a magical power capable of expanding human worldview and intellectual horizons. Undoubtedly, not only the symbol of wine (*may*), but also the emergence of the *rind* image was influenced by popular beliefs. As is well known, the symbol of wine represents divine love and knowledge (*ishq-ma’rifat*), the strong inspiration and delight that arise in the heart of a lover from witnessing the beauty of the beloved, and is a symbolic expression of immense joy and ecstasy. In Sufism, *wine devotion* (*mayparastlik*) is interpreted as “experiencing pleasure from this great source of light, the joy of union, and the beauty of life and nature” [7].

The wine devotee (*mayparast*) is such a beautiful image, and the *rind* is depicted in a similar way. The first part of *Mahbub ul-Qulub* (“The Conditions and Deeds of People and the Mood of Affairs”), specifically Chapter 39 (“On the Mention of the People of the Tavern”), is dedicated to defining *rinds*. The great poet describes the “tavern *rind*” as follows:

“The tavern *rind* passes time drinking wine, with the air of the cup like bubbles above the head, and rests like a serpent at the edge of the ground. In the gathering, wherever he sees a festivity, he stretches himself luxuriously by gentle means. Wearing the sash of honor on his head, he places it at the foot of a wine-seller for a moment. At the tavern he shows audacity without hesitation, untouched by the cup, he seizes the wine vessel from every corner. His pride and delight increase like Jamshid, and before the faces of the wine cups, he appears as an idolater, while before the master of the tavern his head bows low to the ground” [8].

This passage vividly portrays the *rind* as a sophisticated, audacious, and free-spirited figure, deeply immersed in the world of wine and social gatherings, while simultaneously observing certain codes of honor and hierarchy.

It is evident that in Navoi’s works, it is not drunkenness or indulgence in wine (*mayparastlik*) that leads a person to moral decline, but rather the pursuit of spiritual pleasure and enlightenment (*ma’naviy huzur-halovat*) that is exalted. The *rind*, in turn, is

described as a person possessing spiritual knowledge and perfection. This is because, in the fifteenth chapter of the epic *Hayrat ul-Abror*, which begins with "In the art of wine-sellers," the great thinker sharply criticizes indulgence in wine (*mayparastlik*):

*Kim, erur ushbu ishi qallosliq,
Rind-u qalandaryash-u avboshliq.
Ko'ngliga kirmai bu malomat aning,
Jonini olmay bu xijolat aning.*

In other words, those who stagger drunkenly in the streets—immoral and imperfect people—are sharply different from the true lovers (*rinds*) recognized in literature. For this reason, the poet depicts the state of a *rind* who has attained the rank of "repentance" (*tavba*) with artistic colors as follows: "The repentance house of the Rind of the Israelites, with its elevated structure, the arch stones reaching the sky, and the wine flood that destroyed the building:"

*"Ko'p qilibon tavba, vale sindirub,
Ko'nglini tavba ishidin tindurub.
Baski qilib tavbada nuqs oshkor,
Tavba qilurdin bo'lubon tavbakor
Bir sahar qildi havoyi subuh,
Yetti inoyat eshigidin futuh.
Hotife un chektiki, ey bulfuzul,
Tavba qil emdiki, yetishdi qabul".*

In the epic *Lison ut-Tayr*, it is no coincidence that Shah Ibrahim ibn Adham of Balkh, who renounced the crown and entered the path of asceticism, is described as a lover (*rind*). This is because a *rind* is completely distant from worldly desires, illuminated by the light of spiritual poverty in the heart, intoxicated by divine love—a true lover of the Truth [9].

*"Kim bu yo'lda mulku taxtu kishvarin-
O'ynadi, tashlab boshidin afsarin.
Janda kydi ko'rguzib yuz ming niyoz,
Yo'lga tushdi shohi rindi pokboz."*

For *rinds*, who possess true courage and generosity, giving an entire treasure to a single dervish is but a simple act. A *rind* is far from greed; hypocrisy is alien to their nature [10].

*"Rindi sohib himmat onda chun yetar,
Ul surukni bir gado'ga bazl etadi.
Rindga himmat bila bo'lsa karam,
Naqdi anjumdur anga xarji diram."*

True *rinds* are men of courage. In *Mahbub ul-Qulub*, Navoi describes courageous people as men. A person of great courage is likened to a high-flying falcon, whereas the timid are compared to a rat-hunting hawk:

"A man without courage is not a true man in spirit, and a body without a soul cannot be called alive. Great courage is like a kingly falcon soaring high, and the cowardly are hawks that chase rats".

It is clear that the *Story of Sheikh San'on* is one of the most famous tales in Eastern literature. The great poet Navoi devotes a special place to this story in his work *Lison ut-Tayr*. In particular, it is mentioned that Sheikh becomes intoxicated from the wine of love:

*"Boda ichmak, rindu mast olmoqni ham,
Tark etib din, butparast olmoqni ham.*

*Oshiqu majnunu maydin mast ham,
Dardu behudluq bila hamdast ham."*

The Sheikh, who fell in love with Tarso's daughter, is tested through hardships and spiritual exercises, and the prayers and devotions of his disciple—a pure and devoted *rind*—also help him experience the mystical joy of union with the True Beloved. In the story, the *rind* is depicted as morally upright, respectful to the master, bold in speech, and rebellious in character. The story also portrays other disciples, who have not yet reached perfection, as imperfect individuals who quickly give up when faced with difficulties and obstacles on the path of love. This allows for a clearer understanding of the image of the rebellious *rind* [11].

*"Tengri dargohida rindi pokboz,
Kechayu kunduz to'kar edi niyoz.
Ish unga qilmoq munojotu duo,
Aylabon shayhiga makhlus muddao."*

Sheikh San'on was initially a devout ascetic, attaining religious knowledge through piety and devotion. In the land of Rome, he met the daughter of Tarso and fell in love with her. The Sheikh becomes intoxicated with the "wine of love" (*sharobi antahūr*) and enters a state of spiritual ecstasy. Through the daughter of Tarso, the Sheikh is tested with various trials. This, in essence, represents the path of spiritual elevation. This path signifies the transition from the stage of Sharia to *Tariqa* and *Ma'rifa* (mystical knowledge) [12].

Moreover, in Alisher Navoi's work, the *rind* also has a real-life prototype. This was Sayyid Hasan Ardasher. Hasan Sayyid was a dervish *rind*. He belonged to Navoi's era and was morally upright, detached from worldly positions and wealth, serving as a spiritual mentor to carefree *rinds*, and opposed injustice and oppression not through overt confrontation but through steadfastness in his spiritual station [13]. According to Navoi, "And from the poets, noblemen, and intellectuals of the time, none could surpass them; rather, the dervishes and the people of God always honored them and engaged in discourse with them." It is evident that Sayyid Hasan Ardasher loved life like the *rinds* and highly valued literature and the arts [14].

Overall, the *rind* figure, as a symbol of moral beauty, holds a special position not only in Alisher Navoi's works but also in classical Uzbek literature. Our observations regarding *Mahbub ul-Qulub* serve as a clear confirmation of this perspective [15].

4. Conclusion

The concept of *rindlik* in the works of Alisher Navoi occupies a significant philosophical and artistic position, embodying the poet's synthesis of spiritual independence, moral integrity, and divine love. The study reveals that Navoi, through works such as *Mahbub ul-Qulub* and *Lison ut-Tayr*, redefined the traditional notion of the *rind*, transforming it from an image associated with indulgence into a symbol of freedom, asceticism, and enlightenment. In Navoi's interpretation, the *rind* becomes a seeker of truth—one who rejects hypocrisy, greed, and worldly ambition in pursuit of spiritual perfection. The figure of the *rind* is deeply linked to the mystical philosophy of Sufism, representing the path of divine love, repentance, and moral awakening. The examples analyzed in the study, including the stories of Sheikh San'on and Sayyid Hasan Ardasher, illustrate how the *rind* serves as a bridge between human fallibility and divine truth. Navoi's creative vision presents the *rind* not as a mere social rebel but as an enlightened individual who attains harmony between the earthly and the spiritual worlds. His portrayal of the *rind* also emphasizes courage, sincerity, and humility as essential virtues of human perfection. Ultimately, *rindlik* in Navoi's works transcends literary boundaries to become an ethical and philosophical principle that unites art, spirituality, and humanity.

It reflects the poet's universal message: that true freedom lies not in rebellion against the world, but in the liberation of the soul through divine knowledge and moral excellence.

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