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SEMANTIC AND SYMBOLIC FEATURES OF THEONYMS IN THE GHAZALS OF ALISHER NAVOI'S "FONI"

Sabohat Majitova

Associate Professor, Department of Tajik Philology
and Oriental Languages, Samarkand State University

Robiya Hojimurodova

Master's Student, Faculty of Philology,
Samarkand State University

Abstract

This article analyzes the semantic and symbolic features of theonyms in the ghazals of Alisher Navoi's *Divan "Foni"*. Theonyms, as a special group of proper names in literary texts, perform not only a nominative function but also play a significant role in meaning formation, symbolization, and the expression of the poet's mystical and ethical worldview. Based on the analysis of theonyms such as *Khudo*, *Khudovand*, *Rab*, *Kirdigor*, *Ezid*, *Olloh*, and *Samad*, it is demonstrated that these names are associated in the text with concepts such as absolute truth, divine will, destiny, submission, consent, annihilation (*fanā*), spiritual knowledge, supplication, and inner human states. The results of the study show that in the ghazals of "Foni" theonyms go beyond their direct referential meaning and function as active elements of the poetic structure, contributing to the deepening of the philosophical, mystical, and aesthetic content of the text.

Keywords: theonym, onomastics, proper name, ghazal, Foni, Alisher Navoi, symbolism, meaning formation, Sufism, mystical knowledge

Introduction

The study of proper names in literary texts is one of the important directions of modern onomastics, since onyms in literature perform not only a nominative function but also actively participate in the formation of meaning, symbolism, and the author's worldview. In particular, in classical Persian-Tajik ghazal poetry, proper names often transcend their referential role and become elements of meaning-making, symbolic representation, and expression of mystical, ethical, and philosophical ideas.

In this regard, the ghazals of Alisher Navoi's *Divan "Foni"* provide valuable material for the analysis of onomastic units. Alongside anthroponyms, theonyms occupy a significant place in the text. As names of the divine, theonyms in the ghazals are associated with concepts such as absolute truth, divine will, destiny, consent, submission, annihilation (*fanā*), spiritual knowledge, supplication, and inner human states. Based on the textual evidence, theonyms such as *Khudo*, *Rab*, *Ezid*, *Olloh*, *Khudovand*, *Kirdigor*, and *Samad* are attested, among which *Khudo* and *Rab* are the most frequent.

The importance of studying this group of names lies in their key role in understanding the semantic structure of Navoi's ghazals and the mystical-ethical

nature of his worldview. Navoi does not use theonyms merely to refer to the divine; rather, in different contexts they express meanings related to truth, power, creation, destiny, supplication, submission, and spiritual perfection. For example, *Khudo* may function as the inner witness of love, *Rab* as an expression of prayer and need, *Kirdigor* as a symbol of submission to divine will, *Ezid* as an indicator of creation and destiny, *Olloh* as a marker of emotional exclamation, and *Samad* as a symbol of the true divine essence.

Despite their significance, theonyms in the ghazals of *Foni* have mostly been examined within general thematic and mystical analyses and have rarely been treated as an independent object of onomastic study. Therefore, a focused analysis of these units allows for a clearer understanding of the role of divine names in the semantic, symbolic, and stylistic structure of the ghazals.

The aim of this article is to analyze the semantic and symbolic features of theonyms in the ghazals of Alisher Navoi's *Divan "Foni"*. To achieve this goal, the study identifies the main theonyms in the text, examines their meanings within the context of individual couplets, explores their connection with mystical and ethical concepts, and determines their function as meaning-making and symbolic elements in poetic discourse.

The material of the study consists of selected ghazal couplets from *Devoni Foni* in which the theonyms *Khudo* occur 26 times, *Khudovand* once, *Rab* 26 times, *Kirdigor* once, *Ezid* 7 times, *Olloh* 4 times, and *Samad* once. The research employs textual-contextual, lexical-semantic, onomastic, and intertextual methods. These methods make it possible to analyze each theonym within its semantic environment and to reveal its lexical, symbolic, mystical, and stylistic nuances.

Thus, the study of theonyms in the ghazals of *Foni* is essential for a deeper understanding of the poet's system of meaning-making. These names function not only as referential units but also as key philosophical, mystical, ethical, and aesthetic elements. Their analysis demonstrates that Navoi uses divine names as a means of expressing ideas about truth, destiny, love, submission, and spiritual perfection in a symbolic and artistic manner.

Methods

In this study, several methods were employed to analyze theonyms in the ghazals of Alisher Navoi's *Divan "Foni"*. These include selection and classification, textual-contextual analysis, lexical-semantic analysis, onomastic analysis, symbolic interpretation, and intertextual analysis.

These methods made it possible to identify and systematize theonyms such as *Khudo*, *Khudovand*, *Rab*, *Kirdigor*, *Ezid*, *Olloh*, and *Samad* within the poetic context, and to examine them in terms of their semantic, symbolic, and stylistic functions.

Furthermore, the applied methods enabled the study to determine the relationship between theonyms and key concepts such as absolute truth, divine will, destiny, consent, submission, annihilation (*fanā*), as well as their connection with the mystical and literary traditions of Persian-Tajik culture.

Discussion and Research Results

The analysis of the theonyms in *Devoni Foni* shows that divine names in the text of the ghazals do not perform only a referential function; rather, they appear as active elements of meaning formation and the construction of a mystical worldview. Theonyms such as *Khudo*, *Khudovand*, *Rab*, *Kirdigor*, *Ezid*, *Olloh*, and *Samad* acquire different semantic functions depending on the semantic context of the couplet and play a central role in expressing key concepts of Sufism, including truth, divine will, destiny, submission, contentment, and spiritual knowledge.

In the course of the analysis, it was determined that one of the main functions of theonyms is to express absolute truth and the ultimate spiritual criterion. In the couplet:

*Ба сидқи даъвии ишқам талаб макун ду гувоҳ,
Ки андарин суҳанам чуз Худо гувоҳе нест. [6]*

Content of the verse: Do not ask for two witnesses to prove the truth of my love, for in this matter I have no witness but God.

The theonym *Khudo* functions as an inner witness to truth. Through this expression, the poet suggests that the truth of love cannot be proven by external evidence; rather, it gains meaning only at the level of inner perception and divine testimony. Here, *Khudo* becomes the highest criterion of truth, taking the evaluation of love beyond social judgment and elevating it to the level of mystical knowledge. In another couplet:

*Зи чоми май, ки Худованд қисматам фармуд,
Агар ба ком расам, зоҳидам чӣ фармояд? [6]*

Content of the verse: If I attain joy from the wine that God has destined for me, what can the ascetic say against it?

The theonym *Khudovand* embodies the meaning of divine will and destiny. The poet presents his action drinking wine as something that takes place within the framework of divinely ordained fate. The phrase “allotted to me” indicates that human destiny is predetermined and is not independent of divine will. In contrast, the *zahid* is presented as a representative of an outward-looking worldview, unable to comprehend this mystical truth. Thus, in this couplet, the theonym becomes a means of contrasting two worldviews: the mystical and the outward.

*Зи ҳаҷр ё Рабу афғонам аз фалак бигзаит,
Туам халос намоӣ аз ин фиғон, ё Раб! [6]*

Content of the verse: From the pain of separation, my cries have risen beyond the heavens - O Lord, deliver me from this anguish, O Lord!

The theonym *Rab* is used in the vocative form *yo Rab* and expresses a state of supplication, need, and inner reliance on God. The repetition of this address intensifies the emotional tone and reveals the direct connection between the lyrical subject and God. In this case, the theonym becomes a means of expressing prayer and spiritual appeal, showing that in a state of suffering and separation, the human being relies only on divine power.

*Дар қилва қади чобукат афканд зи поям,
Оллоҳ-Оллоҳ, он чӣ равиш, в-он чӣ хиром аст?! [6]*

Content of the verse: Your graceful stature in motion has made me lose my footing - Allah, Allah, what elegance and charm there is in your gait!

The theonym *Olloh* performs the function of expressing astonishment and aesthetic admiration. The repetition *Olloh-Olloh* is used as an expressive device, conveying the poet's emotional intensity and aesthetic impression. Here, the theonym moves somewhat away from its direct religious meaning and becomes a powerful artistic means of emphasis and emotional expression.

*Зоҳид ба Самад саҷда накарду ба санам кард,
Дар дайр ба май хирқаи зӯҳдаи магар олуд?[6]*

Content of the verse: The ascetic, who should worship the true God (Samad), has instead turned to idols, revealing hypocrisy and superficial religiosity.

The theonym *Samad* functions as a symbol of the true object of worship and absolute truth. In contrast, *sanam* symbolizes a false object of worship and outward devotion. By opposing these two concepts, the poet exposes the hypocrisy of the ascetic: the ascetic, who should prostrate himself before the true God, has turned toward an idol instead. The phrase "the robe stained with wine" further strengthens the critical meaning of the couplet and shows the ascetic's departure from truth.

Conclusion

Thus, the study shows that theonyms in *Devoni Foni* are not merely referential units, but key elements of meaning formation that play an essential role in shaping the artistic structure of the text and the poet's mystical worldview. Theonyms such as *Khudo*, *Khudovand*, *Rab*, *Kirdigor*, *Ezid*, *Olloh*, and *Samad* acquire different meanings depending on the context and express the central concepts of Sufism, including absolute truth, divine will, submission, contentment, prayer, and the inner states of the human being. This multifunctionality demonstrates that theonyms form an integrated semantic system within the text.

From this perspective, theonyms in the poetics of *Devoni Foni* are not only lexical units, but also important means of conveying philosophical and mystical thought. Their analysis makes it possible to understand more deeply the close relationship between language, mystical knowledge, and the artistic structure of the ghazals. Therefore, further study of theonyms may provide an important theoretical basis for examining the symbolic and intertextual features of *Devoni Foni*.



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