

Article

The Spiritual and Moral Foundations in the Works of Alisher Navoi

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Article information:

Manuscript received: 20 Jan 2026; **Accepted:** 20 Feb 2026; **Published:** 26 Feb 2026

Abstract: The works of Alisher Navoi constitute a true encyclopedia of spirituality. When one contemplates Navoi's reflections in comparison with the scenes of life, a heartfelt wish inevitably arises: "If only the great thinker's works, with their profound and wise ideas, could always accompany each of us..." Especially the admonitions, moral advice, warnings, stories and parables in *Mahbub al-Qulub* serve as a complete healing remedy for the human spirit. In particular, such spiritual remedies are of great benefit in the conditions of a market economy.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, spiritual, greedy traders

1. Introduction

In chapters such as "On People of Trade," "On Urban Middlemen," "On Market Craftsmen," and "On Farmers," the essence of the true merchant, the cunning of greedy traders, the spiritual substance of productive farmers, as well as the inner nature of idlers and those consumed by greed and avarice, are described with deep sincerity. From Navoi's perspective, a genuine merchant travels the world and brings rare treasures to his homeland. People benefit not only from the goods he brings, but also from his merchant adventures, from his stories about the wonders of the seven climates and the marvels of the world.

The merchant's work is extremely difficult; at times, for the sake of wealth and possessions, he sacrifices comfort and rest, yet he ultimately attains his goals:

"In pursuit of one trade lie a hundred desires,

In pursuit of cloth a thousand yearnings fill the heart."

"Unless a man strives for his goal with complete devotion,

Unless he endures hardship for its attainment,

He will not steer a ship into the sea for pearls,

Nor step into the jaws of a whale for coral."

His occupation is blessed, yet it is also perilous. If he becomes consumed by the psychology of possession, if he succumbs to greed, he inevitably sacrifices his spirituality to his wealth. Such people who "cherish their wealth but degrade themselves" have always existed. Navoi describes them in verse:

"Such a man has no sign of reason or wisdom;

Know that he is a beggar, even if he is master of the world."

That is, despite his wealth and high status, he is spiritually akin to a pauper. This is

a powerful lesson for our contemporaries. A culture of proprietorship is forming in our society. Today, owners may be called the heroes of our time. The more property owners exist, the richer the state and society become. However, acquisitiveness is a different concept. As Navoi's verse illustrates, excessive attachment to wealth—so strong that it overshadows reason—turns an owner into a miser and leads him to moral decline.

Navoi vividly depicts selfish, greedy, unjust middlemen who artificially inflate prices in the marketplace, thus inflicting harm upon the people:

"His profit is the people's loss;
He buys cheaply and sells dearly.
When buying, he calls coarse cloth 'fine fabric';
When selling, he describes fine cloth as rare batiste.
If he sells rough linen as silk brocade—he feels no shame;
If he passes off burlap as gold-threaded cloth—he feels no guilt.
Everything is found in his shop except integrity."
About such merchants Navoi draws this conclusion:
"Such people are not truly human;
If you seek benefit, keep away from them."

Navoi says plainly that the unscrupulous are "not human." Thus, integrity is one of the central foundations of humanity. In our culture, there is a saying: "Do not be a chisel, be a saw," meaning: the unscrupulous are like a chisel that cuts only for itself, while the honest person is like a saw, which distributes its shavings both to itself and to others. Navoi expresses a similar idea: a true merchant, like a saw, should benefit not only himself, but also others.

Navoi also depicts the deceitful behavior of fraudulent craftsmen in the marketplace:

"A craftsman-trader is treacherous before God
And deceitful in his promises.
To sell what is worth one coin for a hundred gives him pride;
To buy what is worth a thousand for a hundred gives him no shame.
Truthfulness in trade brings him loss;
Keeping his word brings him disgrace."

Alisher Navoi loved, valued, and highly esteemed people of labor. With special affection, he describes industrious farmers who, driven by a passion for creation, enrich themselves and ensure the prosperity of their people:

"A farmer who scatters seed
Opens the path to sustenance by tilling the soil...
A farmer who sows with sincerity
Receives seven hundredfold reward from God.
Before the seed sprouts, before the harvest is gathered,
The beasts of the steppe and the birds of the sky share in its benefit.
The homes of ants are enlivened by him,
And even the spirits of the dead rejoice in his deeds..."

The act of sowing a single seed brings countless benefits; his gardening and other labors, Navoi says, are beyond description. In his view, agriculture is the primary source of national wealth, stability, and prosperity.

It is evident that Navoi's works hold immense educational and moral value in shaping a culture of proprietorship in society. The great thinker himself was a major landowner; therefore, he advocated for courageous, noble, generous, and enlightened proprietors like himself.

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