

**CONCEPTIONS OF HISTORY, REALITY, AND JUSTICE IN THE WORK OF  
ALISHER NAVOI**

**A.Abduraxmonov**

Fergana Regional Centre of Pedagogical Mastery

**Abstract:** This article examines the philosophical and socio-political conceptions of history, reality, and, centrally, justice (*adolat*) in the works of Alisher Navoi, with a particular focus on his historical text "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" ("The History of the Kings of Ajam"). Utilizing textual analysis and historical-contextual methods, the study explores how Navoi utilizes historical narratives, lyrical digressions, and poetic epigrams to formulate a coherent doctrine of just governance. The analysis reveals that the idea of justice serves as the primary criterion for Navoi's evaluation of historical rulers, linking their legacy directly to their adherence to this principle. Furthermore, the study traces the connection between Navoi's historical didacticism and his practical political counsel to contemporary rulers, notably Sultan Husayn Boyqaro. The article concludes that Navoi's discourse on justice, rooted in historical analysis and ethical philosophy, transcends its medieval context, offering insights relevant to contemporary discussions on building a just, legal, and civil society.

**Keywords:** Alisher Navoi, justice (*adolat*), history, governance, "Tarihi Muluki Ajam", political philosophy, didactic literature, statecraft, historical consciousness.

### **Introduction**

Since the dawn of civilization, humanity has cherished the ideal of justice as both a reflection of its aspirations for a prosperous life and as the most pressing issue of any given era. This ideal has found expression in oral folk art—tales, songs, epics—and in written literature, evolving with the spirit of the times. In contemporary Uzbekistan, which is progressing along the path of building a civil society, justice has regained paramount importance. As the national leader I.A. Karimov emphasized, *"The ultimate goal of all our reforms is to establish a just society"* (Karimov, 1996, p. 15).

Alisher Navoi, the great poet and thinker, dedicated his life and creative legacy to the relentless pursuit and advocacy of this ideal. In his works, justice is not an abstract concept but a practical principle for evaluating power, historical legacy, and individual conduct. This study posits that Navoi's historical work "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" serves as a primary platform for developing and illustrating his philosophy of justice, where historical narrative becomes a didactic tool for moral and political instruction. The research aims to analyze the interconnection of historical understanding, the perception of reality, and the doctrine of justice in Navoi's work, arguing that these elements form an integral ideological system aimed at guiding both rulers and the ruled.

### **Methods**

This research employs a comprehensive textual and contextual analysis. The primary sources are the works of Alisher Navoi, chiefly "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" (Navoiy, 1991), his *Khamsa* epic, and his lyrical *devans* (e.g., "Badoye' ul-Vasat"). The methodological approach includes:

1. Close reading of historical narratives and poetic interpolations to identify key concepts and evaluative judgments related to justice, tyranny, and governance.
2. Examining the treatment of identical historical figures (e.g., Bahrom Gur, Khisrav Parviz) across different genres (historical prose, epic poem, lyric poetry) to reveal Navoi's shifting emphases and artistic strategies.



3. Situating Navoi's ideas within the political reality of the Timurid era, particularly his relationship with Sultan Husayn Boyqaro, using sources such as Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's "Baburnama" (**Babur, 1992**).

4. Tracing the development and application of the core concept of *adolat* (justice) as an ethical, political, and aesthetic category in Navoi's oeuvre. The study builds upon the foundational research of scholars such as **E.E. Bertels (1965)**, **A. Kayumov (1965)**, and **A. Hayitmetov (1991)**.

### Results

The analysis of Navoi's works, particularly "Tarihi Muluki Ajam," yields the following key findings:

1. Navoi systematically assesses rulers through the prism of justice. Virtuous kings like Anushirvon (Nushiravon) are praised for their fairness, exemplified in anecdotes such as his insistence on paying for salt to set an example for his officials: "*If I, as a king, take salt for free, those under me will not hesitate to seize people's valuables*" (**Navoiy, 1991, p. 78**). Conversely, tyrants like Zahhok or arrogant rulers like Jamshid are condemned for their injustice, leading to their downfall.

2. For Navoi, history is a repository of lessons (*ibrat*). "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" is structured to extract moral and political conclusions (*hissa*) from historical narratives (*kissa*). The fate of kings serves as a warning for contemporary rulers. He explicitly states the purpose of studying the past: to understand the causes of state prosperity and ruin.

3. Navoi's views on justice permeate all genres. In his ghazals, the motifs of a just beloved or the contrast between the oppressed lover (*gado*) and the tyrannical king (*shoh*) often carry socio-political connotations. For instance: "*Do good to the wretched sometimes, O Shah, out of gratitude that / Fate called you 'Shah' and us 'wretched' out of its kindness*" (**Navoiy, Badoye' ul-Vasat, 1963, p. 89**).

4. Navoi links justice directly to political stability and popular welfare. He argues that a king is nothing without his people (*el*), and oppression leads to rebellion and the ruin of the country. The story of Bahram bin Bahram illustrates how arrogance and neglect of state affairs lead to the dispersion of the people and the desolation of the land.

5. While serving Sultan Husayn Boyqaro, Navoi used his position to advocate for justice. Historical accounts note his right to protest the ruler's decisions up to nine times if they harmed the people. His praise for Boyqaro often contained hidden exhortations to justice, and his criticism of historical rulers served as indirect advice to his contemporary.

6. Despite his efforts, Navoi sometimes expressed powerlessness and bitterness in the face of real-world injustice. In some verses, he cynically notes that injustice seems to be an intrinsic program of kingship: "*If I say, 'O Shah of the land of beauty, do not oppress,' / He says: 'This is my just rule—the path of kingship'*" (**Navoiy, Badoye' ul-Vasat, 1963, p. 312**).

### Discussion

The results demonstrate that Alisher Navoi developed a sophisticated and multi-layered conception of justice, deeply intertwined with his understanding of history and reality. His approach is not merely theoretical but is embedded in the practical realities of governance and the ethical responsibilities of the intellectual. Navoi's use of history as a moral mirror aligns with classical Persian-Islamic traditions of historiography and "mirrors for princes" (*naṣīhat al-mulūk*). However, his unique contribution lies in the fusion of this tradition with his powerful lyrical voice and his direct involvement in the political process. The tension observed in his works—between idealistic advocacy and realistic constraints—reflects the complex position of a thinker within an autocratic system.



The persistent motif contrasting the *shah* and the *gado* (wretched) serves as a powerful rhetorical device. It not only highlights social inequality but also, at times, elevates the moral standing of the oppressed. This device allows Navoi to critique power structures while navigating the limitations of censorship and courtly decorum.

Navoi's relevance today, as noted in the introduction, stems from his unwavering focus on justice as the cornerstone of a stable and prosperous society. His insights into the corrupting nature of unchecked power, the importance of accountability, and the direct link between the ruler's conduct and the nation's fate remain profoundly pertinent. The study of his works, particularly "Tarihi Muluki Ajam," enriches the understanding of Central Asian political thought and provides valuable historical context for modern state-building efforts, as highlighted by scholars like **S. A. Gafurov (1972)** in his studies of the region's cultural heritage.

### Conclusion

This study confirms that the ideas of history, reality, and justice form an interconnected triad in the worldview and creative legacy of Alisher Navoi. "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" stands as a central text where this philosophical system is articulated through the artistic and didactic interpretation of historical events. For Navoi, history is a school of justice; reality is a field for its application or violation; and justice itself is the supreme measure of human action, especially that of rulers. His doctrine advocates for a form of governance where power is tempered by mercy, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to fairness (*adl*). While rooted in the specific context of 15th-century Timurid statehood, Navoi's passionate defense of justice, his critique of tyranny and pride (*ghurur*), and his belief in the didactic power of history transcend their era. They form an integral part of the universal humanistic heritage and offer enduring wisdom for any society striving to build a more just and equitable order. Thus, Navoi's work continues to serve as both a monumental cultural treasure and a source of relevant philosophical and political insight.

### References

1. **Бобур, Захириддин Мухаммад (1992).** Бобурнома. Тошкент: Ғафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти. [Babur, Zahiriddin Muhammad (1992). *Baburnama*. Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti.]
2. **Бертельс, Е. Э. (1965).** Избранные труды: Навои и Джами. Москва: Наука. [Bertels, E. E. (1965). *Izbrannye trudy: Navoi i Dzhami*. Moscow: Nauka.]
3. **Гафуров, Б. Г. (1972).** Таджики: Древнейшая, древняя и средневековая история. Москва: Наука. [Gafurov, B. G. (1972). *Tadzhiki: Drevneyshaya, drevnyaya i srednevekovaya istoriya*. Moscow: Nauka.]
4. **Каримов, И. А. (1996).** Ўзбекистон: миллий истиқлол, иқтисод, сиёсат, мағкура. Тошкент: Ўзбекистон. [Karimov, I. A. (1996). *O'zbekiston: milliy istiqlol, iqtisod, siyosat, mafkura*. Tashkent: O'zbekiston.]
5. **Каюмов, А. (1965).** Алишер Навоий. Тошкент: Ғафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти. [Kayumov, A. (1965). *Alisher Navoiy*. Tashkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti.]
6. **Навои, А. (1960).** Ҳамса. Т. 1–5. Ташкент: Изд-во АН УзССР. [Navoiy, A. (1960). *Khamsa*. Vol. 1–5. Tashkent: Izd-vo AN UzSSR.]
7. **Навои, А. (1963).** Бадаиъ ал-васат. В кн.: Собрание сочинений в 10 томах. Т. 3 (Лирика). Ташкент: Фан. [Navoiy, A. (1963). *Badoye' ul-Vasat*. In *Sobranie sochineniy v 10 tomakh*. Vol. 3 (Lirika). Tashkent: Fan.]
8. **Навои, А. (1991).** Тарихи мулуки Ажам. Критический текст, предисловие и указатели А. Уринбоева. Ташкент: Фан. [Navoiy, A. (1991). *Tarihi Muluki Ajam*. Critical text, preface and indexes by A. Urinboev. Tashkent: Fan.]



9. **Хаётметов, А. (1991).** Навоийнинг “Тарихи мулуки Ажам” асари. Тошкент: Faafur G‘ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san’at nashriyoti. [Hayitmetov, A. (1991). *Navoiyning "Tarihi Muluki Ajam" asari*. Toshkent: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san’at nashriyoti.]
10. **Шарафиддинов, М. (1985).** Эпические традиции в творчестве Навои. Ташкент: Фан. [Sharafiddinov, M. (1985). *Epicheskie traditsii v tvorchestve Navoi*. Tashkent: Fan.]

