

THE LINGUOPOETICS OF ZAHIRIDDIN MUHAMMAD BABUR'S "DIVAN"

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Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur (1483–1530), a towering figure of Uzbek classical literature and a poet among kings, developed his craft in the literary milieu of Fergana. His father, Umarshaikh Mirzo, was a ruler who cherished literature and delighted in reciting poetry. However, unlike his father, Babur possessed innate poetic talent and composed verses himself.

As the historian Muhammad Haydar noted, *"After Amir Alisher Navoi (may God have mercy on him), no one in the Turkic language could compose poetry of such caliber."* Consequently, *"his odes, rubaiyat, and ghazals are extraordinary."* Indeed, in the words of literary scholar Vahob Rahmanov, *"Babur stands beside the genius Alisher Navoi as a master of classical wordcraft—a poet and writer. In terms of artistic skill, no other Uzbek ruler-poet can rival Babur."*

The essential qualities of great poetry—subtlety of expression (the ability to articulate novel ideas), the magic of deploying captivating literary devices with measured mastery, and the passionate rendering of vivid emotions—are all hallmarks of Babur's sincere verse. Moreover, the autobiographical dimension he boldly introduced into classical poetry further distinguishes his work. This latter feature breathes life into his patriotic sentiments. When expressing his longing for his homeland and native city in verse, the Emperor of India inadvertently draws the reader's attention to his nostalgia as an Andijani exile:

*Ne yerda bo'lsang, ey gul, andadur chun joni Boburning,
G'aribingg'a tarahhum aylagilkim, andijoniydur".¹*

Thus, *"Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, whose fame is envied by many nations, packed so many adventures and achieved such monumental feats in poetry and scholarship during his brief 47 years that the world still struggles to fathom the depths of his accomplishments. Founding a vast empire (which endured in India for nearly four centuries), creating a new alphabet and even transcribing the Holy Quran in it, pioneering unmatched military reforms, introducing fruitful trees to new lands—these are but one side of his legacy. The other is his creation of a royal masterpiece like the 'Baburnama.' Scholars still know of no other figure so profoundly capable and sincere in his memoirs."*

¹ <https://ziyouz.uz/ilm-va-fan/adabiyot/boburshoh-shoir-va-adib/>

As literary critic Begali Qosimov observed, *"Our people know Babur as both a king and a poet. At first glance, these two roles seem incompatible—like sovereignty and lovelorn verse. Yet history shows many of our sultans harmonized poetry and statecraft in one heart. Amir Temur appreciated poetry and recited it well (Navoi's remarks in 'Majalis un-Nafais' suffice as evidence). The 'Wise King' Ulugbek left behind poetic lines. Husayn Bayqara, Shaybani Khan, Ubaydullah Khan, Amir Umar Khan, and Muhammad Rahim Khan formally compiled divans as poets. Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, as both ruler and poet, naturally occupies an incomparable place in the classical tradition."*

For instance, *"when discussing his literary contributions, only one figure can be compared to him—Navoi. Not in volume or weight, but in power and essence. His poems are few: about a hundred ghazals and two hundred rubaiyat. Yet their ardor, intensity, and sincerity can move any heart. They breathed new spirit and fresh vitality into our poetic tradition."* The verses of this poet-king were celebrated in his time. Records indicate that Babur's poetry gained renown not only in Transoxiana but also in Persian Iraq, Khorasan, Kabul, and India.

Babur himself attested that his poetic activity began during his second capture of Samarkand: *"In those days, I would compose a couplet or two,"* he wrote. His early months in Samarkand saw the start of correspondence with Alisher Navoi, initiated by the latter. This period also marked the gathering of creative minds around Babur. As Muhabbat Sodiqova noted, *"The second major wave of Timurid creativity in the 16th century is linked to Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur. Noticed by Alisher Navoi himself, Babur matured into a colossal figure of our classical literature."*

***Iroqu Forsa gar yetsa sening bu she'ring, ey Bobur,
Oni hifz etkusi Hofiz, musallam tutqusi Salmon".²***

It is often emphasized that Babur compiled two divans—one in Kabul (1519) and another in India (1528–1529)—hence their names, the *"Kabul Divan"* and the *"Hind Divan."* However, literary scholar Shuhrat Hayitov argued that the poet created only one divan.

In summary, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's *"Divan"* stands out for its linguistic artistry and aesthetic richness, embodying the unique stylistic brilliance of a king-poet.

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