



**THE GREAT WISDOM AND LESSON OF USING THE VERSES OF THE SURAH
"AN-NAHL" FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN AS A CONCEPTUAL BASIS IN THE
DECORATION OF THE SHERDAR MADRASAH**

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Annotation: In this article, the translation and classification of the epigraphic inscriptions of the Sherdar madrasa, one of the monuments in the Registan complex in Samarkand, is described as an important place in the logical study of our great cultural heritage and its promotion.

Keywords: nahl, sura, Sherdar madrasa, hattolik, epigraphy, types of letters, peshtoq, Arabic script, suls, Kufic, toqi, bouquet, architecture, idea, rabat, symbol, emblem, pattern, room, divine, blue color, logic, geometric, decoration.

The beauty and charm of the Samarkand Sogdian are so famous that there is no need to argue about it.

Hafiz Abru¹

For centuries, Samarkand has been famous for its unique historical monuments and beautiful architectural monuments. It is natural that tourists visiting this ancient city, along with the magnificent and colorful patterns of the monuments, are also interested in the inscriptions on their facades. It is extremely interesting for both our compatriots and tourists to know what these inscriptions mean.

The famous Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote: "I was especially fascinated by the Registan. This architectural ensemble is more beautiful than all the monuments I have seen in the entire Muslim East. It testifies to the high culture of the peoples of Central Asia"².

Each of the dynasties that ruled Uzbekistan contributed to shaping its architectural style in its time. Most of the historical monuments have not been preserved or have been completely

¹ Samarkand. Foreword by V.A. Bulatova, G.V. Shishkina. – T., G.Ghulam Literature and Art Publishing House, 1986. 19 – p.

² Neruda. Yellowed pages. 52-6. Uzbekistan offenses: Samarkand. Registon // Toshkent: "Uzbekistan Today" AA, 2015. - 368 p.

rebuilt.³ For example, one of the first researchers of the architectural monuments of Samarkand and Bukhara (including the unique inscriptions in them), the young reformer Muso Saidjanov, wrote as early as 1929: "The inscriptions on the monuments of Samarkand and Bukhara are an unread book, they contain a lot of historical information from different eras, and such unique rules cannot be found in other sources, including manuscripts"⁴.

In Uzbekistan, the architectural decorations of the Middle Ages are another opportunity to understand our identity, roots, past, and spiritual history of our ancestors, which is clearly reflected not only in architectural monuments, but also in masterpieces of art, especially in amazing examples of calligraphy called epigraphy⁵.

The use of "epigraphy" (Greek - writing) in architecture was carried out based on the religious beliefs and views of the respective region or nation. Epigraphy (Greek - writing) is the inscriptions (inscriptions) on solid objects - stone, metal, ceramic, etc. Epigraphic inscriptions were made by calligraphers (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Inscription at the entrance to the tomb of Qusam ibn Abbas. The Prophet, peace be upon him, who was from the Hashemite dynasty, the Quraysh tribe, and a native of Mecca and Medina, said: "Among people, Qusam ibn Abbas is the most similar to me in appearance and character".

Calligraphy is the art of writing (calligraphy) in Arabic, the profession of copying books and creating inscriptions for architectural structures and artistic works. The emergence of writing has resulted in⁶.

Three famous rulers in history - Amir Temur, Ulugbek Mirzo, and Amir Yalangtosh Bahadur - transformed Samarkand into the "Gem of the Earth" with the architectural monuments they built. Amir Temur turned Samarkand into the capital and began the construction of a series of magnificent buildings, while Registan Square, considered the heart of the city, was created during the reign of Ulugbek Mirzo. (At that time, this square was called "Sardavonak", which roughly means "Sari joyi davonak" - "Head of a fast-flowing stream"). Ulugbek created a unique bouquet of monuments on this square, consisting of three buildings: a madrasah, a khanaqoh, and a caravanserai⁷.

³ Monuments of Uzbekistan: Inscriptions. Bukhara. Part 1. T.: "Uzbekistoh today" 2016, p. 17.

⁴ Saidjanov M. Historical monuments of Bukhara. "Registan" - Education and Teacher. 1929. No. 1-2. Page 3.

⁵ Masterpieces of Inscriptions in the Monuments of Uzbekistan. "Forum of Culture and Art of Uzbekistan", Tashkent, 2011. p. 9

⁶ Saipova M.S. Symbolism. (Textbook), "Fan and technological publishing house" 2021. 84 pages.

⁷ Bulatov S.S., Pulatova M. The Philosophy of the Universe in Beauty. (Monograph). T.: "Economy-Finance". 2013. p. 39.

The famous Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote: "I was especially fascinated by the Registan. This architectural complex is more beautiful than all the monuments I have seen in the entire Muslim East. It testifies to the high culture of the peoples of Central Asia"⁸.

During his time, Yalangtosh Bahadur also built the Sherdor and Tillakori madrasas on the site of the ruined khanaqoh and caravanserai, without destroying the structure of this architectural complex built by Ulugbek. It is worth mentioning that the gold used to build the mosque of the Tillokor Madrasah could have been used to build a large monument (that is why the madrasah was called Tillakori, meaning "made of gold")⁹.

Yalangtoshbiy Bahadur, who built the Sherdor and Tillakori madrasas, could afford to build even more magnificent monuments. We mention this word because, according to some foreign and local monument experts, the masters of his time were not capable of creating monuments that were merely copies of the monuments of Ulugbek Mirzo, supposedly in a different style. However, the Sherdor and Tillakori madrasas are among the most beautiful monuments adorning the city of Samarkand. Yalangtoshbiy Bahadur, who considered his "Olchin" clan no less than the "Barlos" clan of the Temurids, humbly copied the layout of the Ulugbek madrasa for his monuments out of respect for the Temurids (Figs. 2, 3).

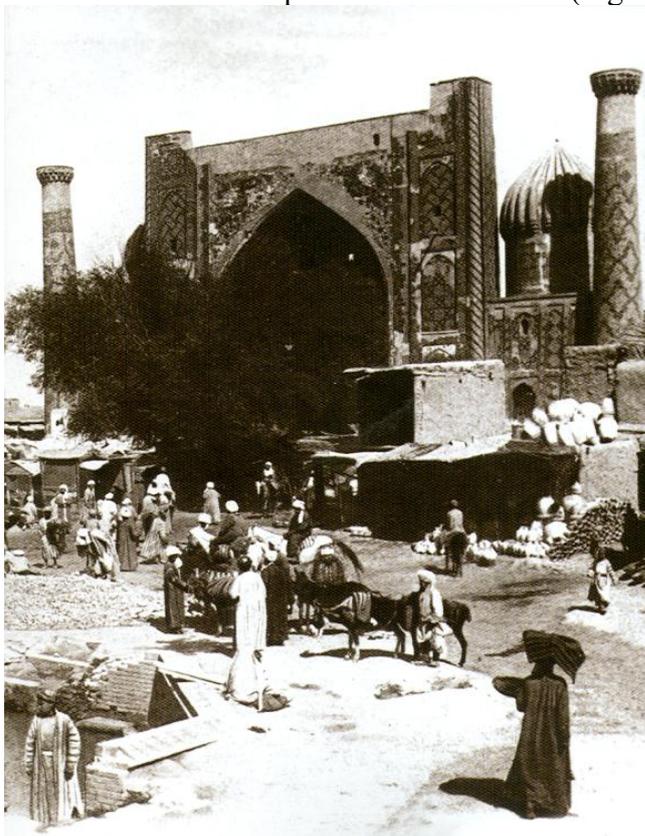


Figure 2. Sherdar madrasa. Early 20th century.

⁸ Neruda. *Pojeltevshie stranitsy*. 52-6. *Inscriptions in the monuments of Uzbekistan: Samarkand. Registan* // Tashkent: "Uzbekistan Today" AA, 2015. - 368 p.

⁹Bulatov S.S., Pulatova M. *The Philosophy of the Universe in Beauty*. (Monograph). T.: "Economy-Finance". 2013. p. 39.



Figure 3.
Naming
of parts
of

Sherdar Madrasa. 1. Peshtok 2. Kitaba 3. Ravok 4. Bouquet 5. Kanos

In other words, he wanted to build a bouquet of various monuments in Registan Square ¹⁰.

The governor of Samarkand, Bahadir Yalangtoshbi, did not intend to surpass Ulugbek's madrasah in building this building. On the contrary, he continued the noble deeds of Sultan Ulugbek as a symbol of his boundless respect. The main facade of the Sherdor Madrasah contains divine words, verses and hadiths about the glorification of Allah and His Messenger Muhammad. They are so beautifully and charmingly crafted that it is difficult to separate the inscriptions from the beautiful patterns. The art of calligraphy has transformed these ornate inscriptions into unique works of art. It is understood from the inscriptions in the Sherdor Madrasah that this madrasah was built by Amir Yalangtoshbi Bahadir with the consent of Khovan Imamkuli Muhammadkhan. It was completed in 1042 AH (1619 AD). The verses of the Surah "An-Nahl" from the Holy Quran were taken as the basis for the construction of the madrasah¹¹.

For example, there is a dedication inscription on the Peshtak. When translated, it gives the following meaning: "This high school of knowledge was founded during the reign of the great Khagan, the great king of the Yalovbard dynasty. Allah Almighty says in His great Book: "Indeed, Allah commands justice, good deeds, and kindness to relatives" (Surah An-Nahl, verse 90 of the Holy Quran). Allah said it right. And he (Khagan) Imamquli Muhammadjan tried (to build this building) and the great emir Yalangtosh Bahadir, the builder of this building, took the initiative because he was interested in founding the abodes of goodness (that is, these dargahs of knowledge). The completion of the construction and decoration of the building corresponds to the date 1042 (1632)" (Fig. 4).

Inscriptions in the Ulugbek, Sherdor and Tillakori madrasas were written in Kufic, Suls, and Nastaq script, and the masters of that time demonstrated their skills and talents. Although the inscriptions mainly consist of verses of the Holy Qur'an and hadiths, the inscriptions related to

¹⁰ Kattaev K. Makhdumi Azam and Daxbed. - Samarkand: Sugdiyona. 1994, B. 49-53

¹¹ Bulatov S.S., Pulatova M. The Philosophy of the Universe in Beauty. (Monograph). T.: "Economy-Finance". 2013. p. 39.

the history of the madrasah are also preserved in their original state on the inner arched wall between the main facade¹².

In decorating the Sherdor Madrasah in Samarkand, the saint Khoji Hashimi Dahbedi, the mentor of Yalangtoshbiy Bakhodir, very correctly selected the logical solution and system of epigraphic patterns, choosing the main conceptual basis from the "Surah An-Nahl" of the Holy Quran.

The question arises: What is the great wisdom and lesson in taking the verses of Surah An-Nahl from the Holy Quran as a conceptual basis for decorating the Sherdor Madrasah? Until now, no answer has been found to this question. We will try to answer this question.

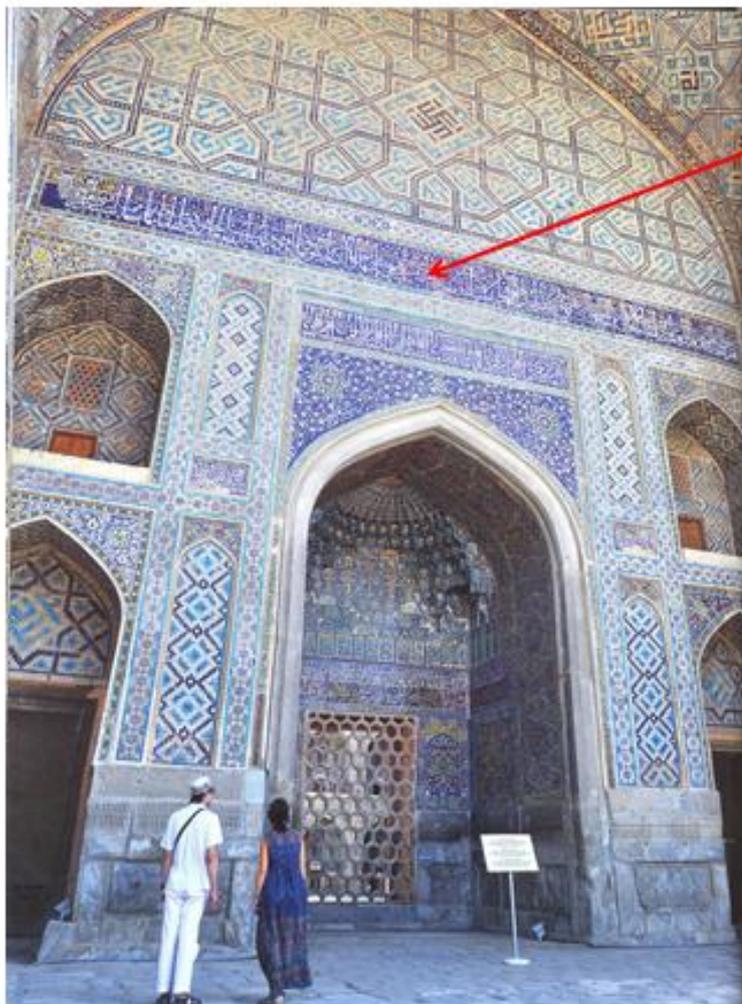


Figure 4. Sherdor Madrasah. Dedicatory inscription on the facade. Epigraphic depiction of the Surah "An-Nahl" from the Holy Quran.

In life, one is amazed that such wise people lived around us, logically understanding that the world became more beautiful through their efforts. Indeed, the universe and everything in it were created perfectly and were given tasks to perform by Allah. What would happen if there were no

¹² Hasanov K., Marufi B. The monuments of Registan or when inscriptions entered the language // Literature and Art of Uzbekistan. 2008. December 19.

mountains, flies, bees, and others on Earth? For example, world scientists have proven that if bees were not on the planet for 10 years, there would be no life. We found the answer to the above question in the verses of the Holy Quran, Surah An-Nahl. Surah An-Nahl of our Holy Quran consists of 128 verses, and in verses 68 and 69 it is said about bees:¹³

*“(O Muhammad!) Your Lord inspired the bees: ‘Make nests in the mountains and the trees and whatever they build’”*¹⁴.

*“Then eat of the fruits and follow the paths which your Lord has made easy for you. From their bellies comes forth a drink of various colors, which is a healing for mankind. Indeed, in that is a sign for a people who reflect”*¹⁵.

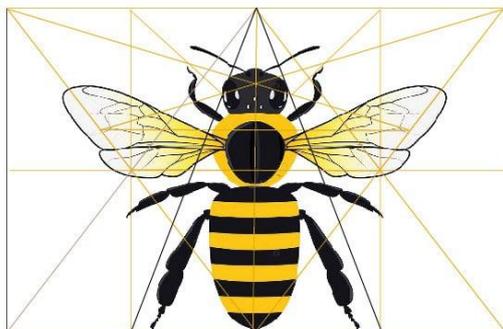


Figure 5. Analysis by Allok that bees were created based on the golden section.

If we analyze the bees from all sides. It is possible to see that Allah did not divide the bees in vain and that their forms were created based on the golden ratio and that they were assigned tasks by Allah (Fig. 5.). First of all, let us consider Surah An-Nahl, which means bees. “It was given this name because the Surah contains verses about the exemplary lifestyle of bees. The Surah repeatedly reminds us of the Day of Judgment and calls for thorough preparation for that Day. As in other Surahs, it condemns vices such as polytheism, disbelief, and ingratitude, and encourages faith, belief, gratitude, and righteous deeds”¹⁶.

Let us consider the metaphorical meanings of these two verses. “Allah Almighty’s revelation to animals, including bees, is an inspiration to them. When Allah Almighty created the bees, He endowed them with a sense of feeling and inspiration, so they perform the task assigned to them with a precision that many intelligent people cannot. For example, it makes its home in mountains, trees, and things like the trunks of trees that people have picked up”¹⁷.

As the bee is sent perfectly in the world, it gathers honey without ceasing, it sows the seeds of goodness. There are people in the world who, like bees, do not know what silence is, they study, learn and teach others what they have learned, and continue to search.

With the advice of Hazrat Hashimhojjai Dahbedi, the mentor of Yalangtoshbi Bahadir, a representative of the Naqshbandi order, it was determined that Yalangtoshbi Bahadir is symbolically compared to bees through the Surah "Nahl". By likening Yalangtoshbi Bahadir to bees, he teaches people that the transience of this world calls for each person to learn only good lessons and leave only good deeds behind. After verses 68 and 69 of Surah An-Nahl in the Holy Quran, verse 70 is not dedicated to humans in vain. Now, it is explained why Allah created humans and what tasks were assigned to them, and that they are not eternal in this mortal world, and that the servant will certainly be held accountable in the Hereafter, so he is called to

¹³ Nahl - bees. (The Holy Quran. Translation and commentary by Abdulaziz Mansur. Printing house of the "Sharq" publishing and printing joint-stock company. 2000. p. 267)

¹⁴ Holy Quran. Surah Nahl, verse 68.

¹⁵ Holy Quran. Surah Nahl, verse 69.

¹⁶ The Holy Quran. Translation and annotations by Abdulaziz Mansur. Printing house of the "Sharq" Publishing and Printing Joint Stock Company. 2000. 267 pages.

¹⁷ Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf. Tafsiri Hilal. 3rd part, Corrected and supplemented reprint. - T.: "Hilal-Nashr", 2018. Pages 345-346.

understand himself and walk on the path of goodness. In verse 70 of Surah An-Nahl in the Holy Quran, it is said:

"Allah created you, then He causes you to die. And among you are some who, after having acquired knowledge, are returned to the lowest stage of life, so that they know nothing. Indeed, Allah is Knowing, Able"¹⁸.

Now let's look at the description of verse 70 of Surah An-Nahl. The Creator of humans is Allah. That is why humans should be grateful, have faith, and worship their Creator. But most people do not do this. They become ungrateful, disbelievers, and disobedient. Everyone should know this. Of course, the One who caused death will also hold an account. One should be prepared for this before death. This should also be thought about. If things are according to man's will, it is clear that man does not want to die, to grow old, lose his mind, and become useless. But death and old age come without asking him. As people learn from death, they must learn from old age. He knows everything. He has power over everything¹⁹.

The inscriptions of the Sherdor Madrasah, along with guiding and enlightening the people, are considered rare examples of 17th-century calligraphic art.

The translations and classifications of the inscriptions of the monuments of the Registan complex - the Ulugbek Madrasah, the Sherdor and Tillakori Madrasahs - play an important role in the logical study of our great cultural heritage and its promotion. In recent years, as a result of research carried out at the initiative of our head of state, calligraphy has been restored on many monuments, architectural monuments, and examples of applied art. However, there are still many inscriptions in Uzbekistan whose meaning has not been revealed and whose style has not been studied. One of the important tasks facing our scientists is to study them in a comprehensive, logical, scientifically based manner.

Yalangtoshbiy Bohodirbek also travels through the gardens of knowledge in this transient world, collects "honey" from the nectar of yellow flowers and shares it with other people around him. The life and work of the commander should be an example for us. He learned knowledge from his guru and left us examples of exemplary behavior in this mortal world. He lived in the mortal world as a humble person who achieved high positions and ranks in two worlds by doing the deeds commanded by Allah. His footprints on earth created a garden of divine beauty in heaven. People are still enjoying the divinely beautiful gardens he created.

Yalangtoshbiy Bohodirbek, a true patriot and son of Samarkand, who played a huge positive role in the historical and cultural life of Uzbekistan, lies peacefully in his grave in Dahbed, waiting for the restoration of his history and values²⁰.

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¹⁸ Шайх Муҳаммад Содиқ Муҳаммад Юсуф. Тафсири Ҳилол. 3-жуз, Тузатилган ва тўлдирилган қайта нашр.- Т.: "Ҳилол-Нашр", 2018 йил. 347-бет.

¹⁹ Шайх Муҳаммад Содиқ Муҳаммад Юсуф. Тафсири Ҳилол. 3-жуз, Тузатилган ва тўлдирилган қайта нашр.- Т.: "Ҳилол-Нашр", 2018 йил. 347-бет.

²⁰ Каттаев К. Махдуми Аъзам ва Дахбед. -Самарқанд: Суғдиёна. 1994, 53-бет.

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