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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**THE ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF RELIGIOUS AND THEOLOGICAL  
STRUGGLES IN LUKMON BURIKHON'S NOVEL "IMAM MOTURIDIY"***San'at Shomurodov**Researcher**Jizzakh State Pedagogical University**Jizzakh, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

**Key words:** Muslim world, Mutazilites, Qadariyya, Sacred Conspiracy, Imam Moturidiy, Qur'an, Hadith, theology and kalam, Idris Shomiy, Abu Rizo Tusiy, Vosiq La'liy.

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**Abstract:** This article explores the ideological and theological struggles that occurred in the Islamic world and their artistic depiction in Lukmon Burikhon's novel "Imam Moturidiy". The study analyses the activities of misguided sects—such as the Mu'tazilites, Qadariyya, the Khawarij, and groups involved in the "Sacred Conspiracy"—who attempted to undermine the doctrinal foundations of Islam. The article also examines the author's literary skill in portraying these conflicts and the ways these movements sought to weaken the Muslim community.

**Introduction.** When examining the gradual development of works created in Uzbek literature, we find a significant number of works nourished by the spiritual roots of Islam. Although these works are examples of literary artistry, their ideological and artistic characteristics, as well as the motives of their plots, are largely built upon religious, mystical, and philosophical (irfoniy) themes. This process is especially evident in Sufi literature. For instance, Ahmad Yassawi's Hikmat provides a clear example of this. In the quatrains of Alloma, views on Islamic teachings, as reflected in the Qur'an and Hadith, are expressed through artistic style. Similarly, in Alisher Navoi's works dedicated to education, upbringing, and ethical-moral issues, one can observe that they are nourished by the divine injunctions presented in our

sacred Islamic religion. For example, the epic Hayrat ul-abror is devoted to the interpretation of advice, moral guidance, and mystical (irfoniy) issues.

In contemporary Uzbek literature, Lukmon Burikhon, in his novel *Imom Moturidiy*, portrays the figure of the theologian Imam Moturidiy, who lived in the distant past on the soil of Samarkand. At the same time, the novel reflects the complex and conflict-laden period of the 9th–10th centuries in the Muslim world, when deviant sects such as the Mu'tazilites, Qadariyya, and Kharijites actively propagated their misguided ideas among the Muslim community. These sects established secret societies and carried out activities aimed at sowing discord among true believers and diverting them from the correct faith, a historical context that is vividly depicted in the novel.

**Literature review and methods.** To date, several studies have been conducted on the novel *Imom Moturidiy*. These include hermeneutical analyses of the work, interpretations of the spirit of the era and the individual in Lukmon Burikhon's novel, the expression of artistic language in Burikhon's novels, the enduring traditions and brilliance of talent in his creativity, and the portrayal of religious scholars in historical novels [2,3,4,5,6]. While the novel has been analysed from various perspectives, the issue of interpreting and depicting religious, doctrinal, and ideological struggles in the Islamic lands—particularly in ancient Samarkand—remains insufficiently explored.

**Results and discussion.** The renowned writer Lukmon Burikhon's novel "Imam Moturidi" is dedicated to the portrayal of the eminent theologian Imam Moturidi, who lived in medieval Samarkand and left a profound impact on the entire Muslim world. Although the central figure of the novel is the great scholar, according to the requirements of the genre, the composition of the work is built on several plot lines. From this perspective, the novel also provides a detailed depiction of the religious and educational life of ancient Samarkand, as well as the conflicts that arose as a result of heretical sects attempting to mislead the Muslim community from pure and true faith.

The author comments on this process as follows:

"It is known that during the period in which Imam Moturidi lived, various ideological disorder and doctrinal disagreements prevailed in the Islamic world. The community needed a force capable of responding appropriately, based on the Qur'an and Hadith, to the false ideas advanced by misguided currents such as the Mu'tazilites, Qadariyyah, Jabariyyah, and Kharijites" [6;347].

Indeed, in the novel, the attempts of the Mu'tazilite heretical sects to create discord among the Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, and to mislead the community regarding Islamic creed

and Sharia rulings, are interpreted through realistic examples and reliable evidence. For instance:

“When we entered the Parvanda mosque in the afternoon, a person resembling a mudarris spoke a strange word to me,” said a short, flat-nosed student.

His compactly wrapped turban and joined black eyebrows drew the curiosity of his companion.

– “What did he say?”

– “I create my own deeds; thus my will is fully in my own bones,” he said.

– “These are words typical of the Mu‘tazila community,” another student commented, “they would tell such slogans to any scholar they first met. If the scholar nodded in approval, they would feel satisfied that they belonged to their group; if opposed, they would shrug and walk away, and if angered, they would attempt to bring him under their sway” [1;10–11].

From these descriptions, it is clear that the Mu‘tazilite heretical sects had widely spread among Muslims, possessing distinct speech styles and organized groups. Notably, they performed prayers like believers of correct faith and attended congregational prayers in mosques. Through this method, they sought to attract young students and others with limited religious knowledge to their side.

Islam and its victorious and invincible armies in the 9th–10th centuries conquered vast geographical territories and spread to non-Muslim lands. During this period, the opposing armies, having been defeated in direct combat, secretly sought to undermine the Muslim community by sowing seeds of discord and thereby disrupt the sacred Islam from within. The artistic interpretation and depiction of these processes in the novel are presented using historical evidence. The “sacred sedition” propagated by the hidden leader of a heretical sect is described as follows:

“Since we cannot openly raise arms against all of Islam, we must find a secretive, resourceful path. We must consume Islam from within! We need to sow seeds of discord among Muslims, divide them into groups, and ignite the fire of enmity among them, so that these groups destroy each other!” [1;101].

History shows that great empires, sultanates, or communities united around an ideological idea often fell into disunity due to internal conflicts and seditions. Those opposing the development and flourishing of sacred Islam were mostly dhimmis, i.e., residents of Islamic lands adhering to other faiths, who carefully implemented long-term plans. They had sound knowledge of Islamic teachings and even studied in madrasas, which allowed them to infiltrate Muslim communities. Subsequently, in pursuit of their malicious objectives, they acted covertly,

deliberately misinterpreting the essence of Sharia rulings from the Qur'an and Hadith, which resulted in various disputes within Muslim communities.

In other words, Idris Ibn Vaysal Shomiy, who would later be known as the chief judge of Samarkand, is depicted as a member of the secret organization called the "Sacred Sedition," created against Muslims, though he actually belonged to the dhimmi community. His father, during the famine years of Caliph Mutawakkil's reign, engaged in grain trade, seeking to profit from the hardships of the people. Government officials, aware of this, condemned Idris Shomiy's father to death according to the ruling of the city's chief judge. Taking advantage of this situation, the enemies of Islam approached the ten-year-old Aron (the name later given to Idris Ibn Vaysal Shomiy by the "Sacred Sedition" members) and sought to recruit him. The intense emotions of the young boy, determined to avenge his father, worked in their favor.

Idris Shomiy quickly mastered all knowledge of Islamic teachings with his sharp intellect and diligence, becoming a sincere devotee of the Qur'an. However, having been ensnared in the Sacred Sedition from a young age, his mentors occasionally reminded him of his assigned duties, leaving him in a state of spiritual torment. Members of the Sacred Sedition, prepared to inflict human tragedies for their goals, sacrificed Idris Shomiy's wife and young child—his family members—to instill in him an enduring hatred and enmity toward Islam and its community, falsely claiming that the Muslim community had done it. This left an indelible wound in his heart.

A victim of a carefully planned malevolent scheme, Idris Shomiy eventually arrived in Samarkand, where, through his knowledge and resourcefulness, he rose to become the city's chief judge, using every opportunity to harm Islam and its followers. He misinterpreted a letter sent by the great scholar Imam Moturidi to the Samarkand governor Khalid Khalaj Ibn Boronbi and, in doing so, sought to manipulate the city governor against the renowned theologian of his era. The novel portrays Idris Shomiy's thoughts as follows:

"Yes, this ancient corner welcomed him like a mother's embrace. The member of the 'Sacred Sedition' soon realized he was not alone in the city... Inciting sedition and corruption was not very difficult for Idris Shomiy. Representatives of the Mu'tazila, Qadariyyah, and other heretical sects, exiled from Baghdad or trained in their schools, could be easily found in Samarkand. Idris Shomiy covertly mingled with them. He supported some with words, others with money. Their ranks steadily grew. This was a time of joy and satisfaction for the member of the 'Sacred Sedition'" [1;107–108].

Looking at the history of movements such as the Mu'tazila, Qadariyyah, and Sacred Sedition, it is clear that their activities were directly influenced by the caliphal administration.

For example, during the reign of Caliph al-Muqtadir, the Ash'aris were fully empowered, which led to the expulsion of the Mu'tazilite sects from the capital, forcing them to settle in Samarkand and other religious centres, where they continued their activities, sometimes covertly and sometimes openly. These groups did not limit themselves to undermining the spiritual foundations of Islam; they also sought to instigate territorial disputes and foster competition and enmity among different nations and ethnic groups historically residing in the same region. In the ancient land of Turan, where Turks and Persians lived together, such ideological and territorial divisions were relatively easy to provoke. This is evident in the views of the member of the Sacred Sedition portrayed in the novel:

“In those areas, Persians and Turks live together. We can incite national conflict among them. Among the Persians, the legacy of the great empires of the Achaemenids and Sassanids still dominates. They do not tolerate others easily. Their sense of greatness must be frequently stirred and inflamed.”

“And the Turks? What do you say about the Turks?”

The supreme commander's face twisted in mockery.

“The Turks are unmatched in courage and loyalty. Yet they are extremely simple and trusting. They are easily deceived. If you can manage to present yourself as a friend, that is enough” [1;106].

Lukmon Burikhon, through such depictions, strives to reveal historical conflicts, intrigues, and mutual antagonisms accurately and in their proper context.

Indeed, Abu Rizo Tusiy, a representative of the Mu'tazila who settled in the sacred land of Samarkand, succeeded in ensnaring Vosiq La'liy, a childhood friend and fellow student of Imam Moturidi. Both figures—Imam Moturidi and Vosiq La'liy—had become renowned scholars in the intellectual and scientific world of Samarkand, having mastered all doctrinal and jurisprudential knowledge of Islam. However, Imam Moturidi was distinguished among the people for the depth of his intellectual and transmitted knowledge. Vosiq La'liy, born into a wealthy merchant family, had secretly admired his childhood companion Muhammad Ibn Muhammad, i.e., Imam Moturidi, and gradually began to view him with envy. In this climate of psychological conflict, Vosiq La'liy became a victim of his own emotions, which Abu Rizo Tusiy exploited:

“O son of my late brother, I am extremely displeased with you,” he said as he confronted him.

The scolding left Vosiq flustered.

“What is my fault, my sin?”

“Are you following Muhammad ibn Muhammad blindly? Are you sticking to his path?”

“I... I am not on his path. We have merely been friends since childhood.”

Abu Rizo, his hands folded over his round belly, sneered venomously.

“Even, you do not have the courage to acknowledge the truth. Do you know why? No, not at all! The reason is this: your education is so superficial, your courage is low, and you have studied under delicate, timid teachers” [1;84]. If we pay attention, Abu Rizo Tusi had served as a teacher at Madrasah-i Surkh, one of the most prestigious higher educational institutions in Samarkand, and later rose to governmental positions, eventually serving as the supervisor of endowments (waqf). From this, it is evident that representatives of the Mu‘tazila faction had influence and activities that enabled them to occupy positions capable of directly or indirectly affecting state governance. They aimed to attract supporters in the same way, by drawing respected figures among the public to their side, thereby extending their influence over the broader populace. In this endeavor, individuals like Vosiq La‘li, who had received madrasa education, were particularly valuable to them. The Mu‘tazilites were already recognized among the public for their eloquence and strong preaching skills. They were accustomed to approaching any issue—whether Islamic or juridical—through the principles of logic and philosophy to find solutions, and they gained fame among ordinary people through their compelling speech.

Abu Rizo Tusi, being aware of Vosiq La‘li’s background and ancestry, directly influenced his intellectual and spiritual mindset, urging him toward a leadership position. In order to enlist his service, he promised him a teaching position at Madrasah-i Surkh, which ultimately persuaded Vosiq La‘li to oppose Muhammad ibn Muhammad. As noted above, Abu Rizo Tusi’s eloquence and his thorough understanding of his rival, Vosiq La‘li’s psyche, proved extremely effective in this process. He subtly indicated that he was a representative of the Mu‘tazila faction, which is skilfully depicted in the text:

“They called us Mu‘tazila, and with a whole bunch of other inappropriate names, they misled those who were confused...

‘Aha-ha-a, this person is indeed from the Mu‘tazilites,’ thought Vosiq, ‘it wouldn’t be surprising if he were one of the guides...’

‘Yes, I have heard of the Mu‘tazilites.’

‘Of course, you have heard, my son. But you have also seen, you have witnessed, that I am human, a person like any other, not a one-eyed, sharp-toothed creature. Except that your teachers described us thus, portraying us as beings never seen by eyes or heard by ears. They would frighten students and warn, henceforth, beware, do not approach” [1;86-87].

From these depictions, it is evident that the Mu'tazilites treated those they wished to win over with politeness and courtesy, while their primary goal was to divert them from the beliefs they had trusted. They sought to discredit the teachers from whom these individuals had received education, thereby planting doubt in the hearts of believers about the authenticity of the Mu'tazilites' faith. In this way, without any bloody confrontations or casualties, they gradually increased their followers among the public, who eventually became a significant force, capable of influencing the ideological and doctrinal foundations of society's Islamic consciousness.

Vosiq La'li, who was meant to serve the Sunni creed (Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a), unwittingly became a tool of the Mu'tazilites, who sought to undermine the doctrinal roots of Islam. Like those who "kick the horse while lifting the horse's hoof," he acted against his childhood friend, the renowned scholar Imam al-Maturidi, not only in Samarkand but across the entire Samanid realm. In this path, he immersed himself in the study of Greek and Persian scholarly works on logic and philosophy, like a warrior preparing for battle. However, Imam al-Maturidi, with a firmly established intellect in theology and kalam, well-versed in the books favored by the Mu'tazilites of his time, not only corrected his misguided friend but also provided reasoned rebuttals, becoming a steadfast defender of the Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a doctrine. Abu Rizo Tusi also attempted to win over Imam al-Maturidi, but the scholar remained firm in his faith.

Although the Mu'tazilites were part of the Muslim community and adhered to many Islamic rituals, their incorrect views on Islamic doctrine and kalam posed a danger to the Muslim ummah. In their debates, they discussed matters of the soul and spirit, as well as the attributes of Allah and His abode. Since the Muslim community possessed limited knowledge in these matters, the Qur'an instructs believers to refrain from such speculative topics. Deviant sects like the Mu'tazilites sought to resolve issues prohibited by Sharia through logic and philosophy. The dangerous aspect of such views is that they not only created disputes within the Muslim community but also led to a departure from the primary sources of Islam—the Qur'an and authentic Hadith—and the formation of erroneous theological concepts.

In reality, all religious and doctrinal matters in Islam must be judged solely based on the sacred sources of Islam—the Qur'an and Hadith—and the Shariah guidance delivered by the Prophet Muhammad himself. For instance, when Ishaq Ibn Nuh, the governor of Samarkand, imposed a grape tax for winemaking, this action was forbidden by Sharia law, prompting a group of officials to protest, and the Samarkand Qadi, Abu Lays Pazdavi, resigned from his position. In this situation, Idris Shami, originally a member of the "Muqaddas Fitna," sided with

the ruler using erroneous Sharia fatwas. For this service, the ruler appointed him as the Qadi of Samarkand. Later, Idris Shami continued to leverage the volatile and tense situations among Muslims to increase his influence among the people. For example, the Samarkand Magi summoned Imam al-Maturidi to a religious debate, and the scholar, through profound observations, provided compelling rebuttals to the Magi leader. Idris Shami, using the sentiments of the Muslim community for his own goals, succeeded in killing the Magi leader, earning both public acclaim and the honor of being a defender of Islam.

Lukman Burikhon depicts the conflicts of the era and the ideological and doctrinal struggles in the Islamic world realistically and with a historical perspective. Although the issues he emphasizes may seem like distant historical events, upon closer examination, it is clear that the sources of current fragmentation in the Islamic world, the conflicts between sects and movements, and even hostilities between states, trace back to these historical ideological and doctrinal conflicts. Even today, ongoing wars in Islamic countries and the influence of extremist groups that wield the sacred Islamic religion as a weapon are not uncommon. Likewise, contemporary figures resembling Idris Shami and Abu Rizo Tusi exist, quietly serving the fragmentation of Islam and misleading Muslim communities away from their true faith. Individuals like Vosiq La'li, who inadvertently sabotage their own roots and become tools for adversaries of Islam, continue to appear throughout history. Yet, despite all conspiracies and disruptions, the Islamic world continues to thrive globally, and its spiritual and pure doctrinal principles bring peace and tranquility to the hearts of people living in various parts of the world.

**Conclusion.** In the novel *Imom Moturidiy*, Lukman Burikhon succeeds in artistically interpreting the ideological and doctrinal struggles that took place within the Islamic world. This achievement should be recognized as a distinctive creative innovation in contemporary Uzbek literature. The work convincingly reveals the efforts of misguided factions—such as the *Mu'tazila*, *Qadariya*, and the “*Muqaddas Fitna*”—to fragment the Muslim world and weaken the *Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jama'a* creed through various biased doctrinal rulings. The novel interprets real historical processes and mutual conflicts, using the example of ancient Samarkand.

The most important aspect is that the author illuminates the essence of these struggles in such a way that the reader understands that the contemporary conflicts among Islamic regions, the differences between schools of thought, and disputes among various movements are not solely modern phenomena. Rather, their roots extend far into the past, allowing for reflection and analysis from both historical and present-day perspectives.

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