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**CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE LYRICS OF ASHYK UMER**

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**Abstract**

The article analyzes the concept of love in the lyrics of the outstanding representative of the Crimean Tatar Ashik poetry of the 17th century, Ashyk Umer. The poet's love lyrics are analyzed with an emphasis on identifying the specifics of the author's interpretation of love and determining its varieties. The basic concepts with which Ashyk Umer associates the feeling of love are investigated for the first time. It is noted that love in the poet's lyrics is conveyed by the main lexemes ashk (strong, passionate love), muhabbet (love), mihr (love) and sevda (love). In addition to them, double lexemes are also highlighted that characterize the feeling of love: shevk u muhabbet (infatuation and love), ashk u muhabbet (passion and love), ashk u sevda (passion and love), mihr u vef (love and fidelity, devotion), mihr u muhabbet (love), meil u muhabbet (inclination and love). The main metaphors and allegories, through which the poet describes the feeling of love, are determined: suffering, torment, path, fire, wine (water of love, cup), sea. It is proved that the concept of love in the lyrics of Ashyk Umer was conditioned by the traditional canon that existed in the medieval period and included all types of love feelings: earthly love, spiritual love and Divine Love. At the same time, the dominant type of love feeling in the lyrics of Ashyk Umer was spiritual love, i.e. love for ideal beauty, which can also be interpreted as an individual spiritual search.

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## **1. Introduction**

Love is one of the most developed topics in philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, literature, and a variety of other disciplines. Love lyrics occupy one of the most capacious layers in world literature. Love in the medieval period was considered "as a philosophical category, which was considered a prerequisite for social life" (Javelidze, 1985, p. 18). This became the reason for the emergence of "the social institution of love, which legalized the definition of this concept, and also established strict, gradual rules and etiquette of the relationship between ashyk and mashuk" (Javelidze, 1985, p. 24). The same aspect is noted by Filshtinsky and Shidfar (1971) when analyzing the poetry of Arab-Muslim mystics and which is applicable to the Turkic-speaking poetry: "knowledge of the poetic tradition was considered a necessary element of education and was part of the adaba complex" (p. 13). Medieval poets did not work in the direction that they themselves chose, but relied on the canon and traditions corresponding to the aesthetic thinking of that time.

Despite the normative nature of artistic thinking, stereotyped ideas and images, the love lyrics of the medieval period in general, and of ashyk lyrics in particular, attract with their perfection, sophistication and penetration. A wide range of feelings, richness and brightness of images, emotional elevation of tone – all this is the immense world of love poetry of that time. In their works, poets glorify love as a great feeling, as the creator of everything, as the basis of everything, but along with this, love is pain, yearn and ordeal. Love is the basis on which everything is based, speaking about it, the verbal series never ends, every turn of speech and image is saturated with it. Ashyks seemed to be looking at the world and everything that happened through the prism of love. Love is what everything begins with and thanks to which everything continues to live, it is the source of all that exists.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Formulate the author's concept of love and define its varieties in the lyrics of Ashyk Umer.

## **3. Research Questions**

To describe the concept of love in the lyrics of Ashyk Umer.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to identify the specifics of the concept of love in the lyrics of Ashyk Umer.

## **5. Research Methods**

Research methods: The purpose and objectives of the research determined the use of a complex of literary methods, the main of which are the comparative, descriptive and hermeneutics methods.

Love lyrics occupy a special place in the work of Ashyk Umer. Love is a feeling that permeates all his works, a concept that is reflected in each of his poems. The poet's love lyrics expresses the feelings

and experiences of the lyric hero, in the image of which the author himself appears. Appeals to a beloved, a description of the suffering state of a lover, sincerity of feelings, boundless patience and stubborn pursuit of the main goal are the cornerstones of the poet's lyrics.

In the lyrics of Ashyk Umer, love is conveyed by the lexemes *ashk*, *muhabbet*, *mihr* and *sevda*. Along with them, there are also double lexemes: *shevk u muhabbet* (infatuation and love), *ashk u muhabbet* (passion and love), *ashk u sevda* (passion and love), *mihr u vefa* (love and fidelity, devotion), *mihr u muhabbet* (love), *meil u muhabbet* (inclination and love). Without dwelling on the analysis of each term in detail, I would like to reveal a little the meaning of the basic concepts – *ashk* and *muhabbet*.

*Ashk* (Arabic *işk* – strong, passionate love) is a lexeme that contains excess and indicates passionate love that does not recognize boundaries. It was this feature that became the reason for the assertion that the word *ashk* arose from the word *asheka* – ivy. This is a plant that twists around the tree and, sucking the sap, leads to its wilting and drying out. Also, love, in the degree of *ashk*, becomes the cause of the lover's indifference to everyone except the beloved (2017). Ghazali (2013) in the work “*Savanih al-ushshak* or *Savanih fi'l-ishk*” (“*Savanih. The ecstasis of lovers*”) notes that “the secrets of love are hidden in the letters of the word love (*işk*, *aşk*), where *ain* (ع) and *shin* (ش) is love, and *kaf* (ق) symbolizes the heart – *kalb*” (p. 62). This interpretation assumes that the heart and love are tightly connected to each other. According to the author, love begins with a vision, which is symbolized by the letter *ain* (ع) (in this context, *ain* means eye) at the beginning of the word *ashk*, the letter *shin* (ش) implies besotted from wine sipped with love – *sharab*, which is filled with ardent desire – *shevk* (yearn). In this process, the lover dies to himself and is born in love, as indicated by the letter *kaf* (ق) – *qiyam* (to be resurrected after death) (Gazali, 2013).

Turkish literary critic S. Uludag writes that the word *muhabbet* (*mahabbet*) comes from the root of the word *khub* (*khubb*) and is the opposite of “dislike, hostility and anger”, and the form of love, overflowing with enthusiasm and delight, is conveyed by the lexeme *ashk* (Uludağ, 1991). Chetindag (2010) notes that the word *muhabbet* “comes from the word *khabe*,” – seed, grain – “which suggests the the essence of something and is associated with a black point (“*kalp khabbesi*”) in the depths of everyone's heart. According to some scholars, love is the fruit of this seed of the heart” (p. 560).

In the lyrics of Ashyk Umer, most examples of figurative expressions associated with love are *belya*, *gam*, *derd* (suffering, torment); *atesh*, *nar*, *od*, *sus* (fire); *rekh/rakh*, *yol* (path); *mei*, *sharab* (wine), *dolu* (glass), *dzham* (bowl); *bakhr*, *derya* (sea); *fenn*, *funun* (science). In this context, it is necessary to take into account the Sufi symbolism of the concepts presented, which in the language of allegories have several meanings. Filshtinsky and Shidfar (1971) noted the two-plane nature of Sufi poetry, in which “the first plane was visible, “earthly one”, and the second was hidden, mystical” (p. 82). It should be noted here that the Ashik lyric poetry combines the features inherent in the aesthetics of the Divan literature and the Sufi monastery. For this reason, the duality is relevant for the lyrics of Ashyk Umer.

According to Ashyk Umer, love is *suffering*, *torment* (376, 394, 399, 400, 402, 580, 354), *pain*, *sorrow* (376, 399, 402), *trouble*, *calamity* (196, 412, 650, 389), *madness* (42, 92, 657, 202). Love “made him shed tears” (96), “made him dust” (28). The poet says that as he knew love, “sorrow and suffering became my friends” (49), “I didn’t even rejoice for a moment” (389) and, on the basis of his bitter experience, notes that “the one who knows love will not know peace” (22). All this pain becomes the

reason that Ashyk Umer appeals to the Almighty with a prayer: “Let the Almighty not give anyone the suffering of love” (368), “Let no one know the pain of love” (389). Suffering and pain of love bent him and “the body became a bow” (61) and even “became the cause of death” (120).

Despite all the pain and suffering, for the poet, love is the path, the meaning of life and its purpose. Even if this path is never illuminated with joy and fun, he will not leave it. The poet notes that “before the end of the world, the soul will not give up the path of love” (209) and even “if I lose my head on the path of love, this is not sadness, I am ready to sacrifice myself (literally, head and soul)” (325). Love for Ashyk Umer is the most valuable, important and special feeling. Proof of this is the lines where he says that he “traded the universe for love and is happy with his deal” (96). In his opinion, “an ashky who has no love in his heart is like an animal” (128). On the path of love, the ashky is not afraid of death, for the sake of it he is ready to sacrifice everything he has, nothing and no one will force him to renounce love and his beloved. And on this path he is not alone, there are many like him: “whoever has not put his soul and head on the path of love” (443). The next passage reveals the same aspect:

*Ashyklar olumden kachmaz  
Serin verir, syryn achmaz,  
Kishi sevdiginden gechmez,  
Mahabbet bashk'a khal anja (633)*  
[Ashyks do not run from death  
They will give up their heads, they will not reveal the secrets  
Man will not leave his beloved  
Love is a special state.]

In many poems of Ashyk Umer, love is a *fire* that burns his heart, chest, liver, incinerates his body and soul. “Love is a burning fire, I did not know this before” (65), “my chest burns in the fire of love” (113) “the fire of love burns and smokes in my chest” (341), “from love for that peri, our chest became a kebab” (314), “alas, this fire of love made me a kebab” (352), “the whole body was burnt in the fire” (314), “the heat of love destroys” (84), “the fire of love burned Ashyk Umera, come and see on him” (1). When he mentions love as fire, the poet very often uses the paired image of a candle and a moth which is one of the most traditional in the poetry of the East: “like a moth I am ready to burn in the fire of your love” (115, 198, 298, 312), “this soul burns like a moth in the fire of love” (389).

Only the heart in which there is love can burn. The Turkish literary critic Pala (2016) interprets the metaphor of fire as follows: Fire is the mental suffering of a lover, this is the longing and longing that lovers feel in relation to their beloved, they burn a person from the inside. Fire ignites in the eyes and begins to flare up in the soul of the lover. To extinguish this fire, the lover always cries – “the ashky groans and cries, in the fire of love he breaks his liver” (88). The fire of love, which engulfs the poet, burns out his former and becomes the reason for his moral and spiritual improvement.

*Ashk'a dushen ashky kendin shashyryr  
Nar-s firak ile bagryn pishirir (128)*  
[Ashky, who knows love, will forget about himself  
With the fire of parting he will boil his chest.]

The main concept of love using the metaphor of fire is based on the fact that, burning in fire and improving, ashky destroys his ego, rises above everything worldly, becomes indifferent to the perishable

world and its temptations. Love burns and incinerates his I, destroys his individuality, it “boils” him spiritually, improves and elevates him to a higher level. By the concept of the highest level, we mean the True, Divine Love, the love of man for his Creator. According to Ashyk Umer, a person has love for the Creator even before his birth:

*Fehm ettin bu resme imla-yy ashky  
Hem dakhi anladyn mana-yy ashky  
Ta Elest nush ettin sahra-yy ashky  
Ol sebep ashk ile mestanesin sen (110)*  
[You realized in this picture a letter of love  
Besides, you understand the meaning of love  
Back in the afterlife, you drank the desert of love  
For this reason, you are besotted with love.]

Before a person comes to this world, even in the world of souls, the Creator asks them "I am your Creator, am I not?" and receives the answer: "Yes, our Creator." That is, a person, having come into this world and reflecting on its creation, will strive for his Creator and improve himself on this path. It is the realization of this that leads him into a state of being besotted, which is described by the poet.

For Ashyk Umer, love is wine that besots him – “besotted with the wine of love” (91), “having drunk the wine of love, I am stunned and surprised” (213). In the next passage, the poet again speaks of love for his Creator, that is, Divine Love:

*Ichmishim ashk"yn sujundan ta jezel' mestanejim  
Bag"lyjym zendzhir-i ashk"a zira bir divanejim  
Bezm-i sheminde demadem bir janar pervanejim  
Bais oldu atesh-i firik"at mekjan ag"lar bana (279)*  
Ja ispil vodu ljubvi [eshhe – U.K.] s jezel' , ja op'janen  
Privjazan cepjam ljubvi, slovno ja obezumevshij  
V sobranii svechi vseгда ja gorjashhij motylek  
Otkryt put' ognju razluki mesto plachet po mne

In this passage, as in the previous one, Ashyk Umer says that he was besotted with love even before the creation of the world (i.e. in ezeli). Man, being a valuable treasure of the Almighty, was created for love and sent into this world to experience one of the greatest separations. The Almighty for Muslims is the True Beloved and True Beauty, and a person who is separated from him fully experiences both love and separation. It is for this reason that love is separation. Speaking about the metaphor of wine, which the poet uses in the version of the water of love, I would like to note its mystical context. The 17th century Persian Sufi writer Mukhsin Faid-Kashani notes in his *Risala-yi mishvak* that sharab wine is ecstatic experiences due to the revelation of True Love, which destroys the foundations of the mind (Kashani, 2005).

In another passage, the poet addresses his beloved:

*Jam-i ashkyn ichen hey peri paker  
Neylesin Alemde Bad-i Engur  
Fur Jemalin Gören hey nazyperver  
Mest olup bir dakhi olmasyn makhmur (139)*

[To the one who drank the cup of your love, oh, peri-face  
Why would he need glasses of wine in the world [lit. grapes – U. R.]  
The one who saw your face, the moon oh flirtatious  
Besotted, let him not be unconscious again.]

Ashyk Umer focuses on the beauty of the beloved, uses the epithets *peri-face*, *flirtatious*, the *face* – *moon* metaphor, and notes that those who have drunk a glass of their beloved's love will not need glasses of wine. Kashani (2005) notes that *dzham* (cup) is the revelation of (divine) deeds.

The poet compares love to the *sea*:

*Dushup ben bakhr-i sevdaya gözyum sen yara kan ag'lar*  
*Melekler jumle ah eyler zemin u asman aglar (438)*  
I fell into the sea of love, my eyes cry blood for you, oh, beloved  
All the angels are moaning, the earth and the sky are crying.

In this bayt, the lover focuses on the large number of tears that he and the entire universe (earth and sky) shed due to the fact that he fell into the *sea of love*. The metaphor of the sea of love reflects the place of sadness in which the ashik is located, which has no boundaries, that is, endlessly. Thus, the endless sadness of the lover is opposed to the huge amount of tears of the ashik and the universe.

*Sen de kamil ashik issen bakhr-i ashk'a gire ger*  
*Akylane sozlerini ara yerden sureger (535)*  
If you are ashik kamil, enter the sea of love  
Look for the right words, get off the ground [die – U. K.].

The basis of this bayt is the philosophy of "wahdet-i wujut", aimed at knowing the Almighty through love. The first thing a perfect person (*insan-i kâmil*) must do to reunite with the Beloved (*visal-i Hak*) is to renounce everything except the Supreme. And this is possible only by curbing your ego, that is, by the death of the previous one. Kashani (2005) interprets the allegories of the *sea* and the *ocean* as follows: *Bahr*, *derya* (sea), *umman* (ocean) is a manifestation of the (Divine) Essence. The whole world, visible and invisible, is like a vault under which the wine of Being and the unborn love of God is kept; every particle of the world, depending on its own susceptibility and inclination, is a glass for the wine of His Love, a full glass.

I would like to note the position of the Turkish researcher of Ashyk literature Artun (2005), which, in our opinion, is extremely consistent with the concept of love of Ashyk Umer: Ashyks spend their entire lives in search of beauty and beauty on earth. They yearn and seek reunion with her. The concept of beauty and the elements of beauty that poets seek in their beloved change from poet to poet. Sometimes it is a camp, eyebrow eyes, a swaying gait; sometimes coquetry, glance, devotion, etc. Ashyk love is not just a relationship, it is an individual symbol of spiritual search (Artun, 2005).

## 6. Findings

The dominant type of love in the poet's lyrics was spiritual love, i.e. love for ideal beauty, which can also be interpreted as an individual spiritual search.

## 7. Conclusion

Summarizing all that has been said, we can conclude that Ashyk Umer sees the main function of love in changing a person, in his spiritual growth and improvement. That is why love is closely related to suffering, pain and destruction of your ego. Here I would like to note that within the framework of Ashyk Umer's concept of love, we see a description of love for a real human beloved (peri-face, flirtatious, face – the moon, love for that peri) and True love for the Almighty. In this context, it seems quite natural that a lover needs to love a person in order to abandon himself and as a result, leaving everything human, will rise to the Divine, True beloved. An analysis of the poet's love lyrics allows us to conclude that the presence of an earthly beauty or a True Beloved – God in poems is just adherence to the canon, a tribute to the tradition of the medieval period in which the poet worked. That is, Ashyk Umer used these images in his lyrics, as it was the norm at that time.

The concept of love by Ashyk Umer determined the thematic and figurative range of his work, the originality of semantics and poetics in accordance with the formulated model: Beauty – Path – Beloved.

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