



## HISTORY OF THE LETTER GENRE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

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**Annotation.** This article analyzes the origin, formation and place of the letter genre in Uzbek literature based on historical sources. In particular, the work *Latofatnama* by Khojandi, which is a vivid example of the letter genre, is studied. The content, artistic features and moral and didactic significance of the work are highlighted, and the path of development of the genre is revealed.

**Keywords:** Letter genre, *Latofatnama*, epistolary style, Khojandi, moral and didactic, Uzbek literature, artistic letter.

Literature is a spiritual mirror of society, and its development is directly related to national consciousness and thinking. Various genres have been formed and developed in Uzbek literature. Among them, the *noma* genre, that is, works in the form of artistic letters, has a special place. This genre is mainly written in an epistolary style and embodies personal, moral, social and artistic content. As a vivid example of the *noma* genre, the work *Latofatnoma* by Khojandiy is noteworthy.

At the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, the genres of *noma* and debate were widely developed in Uzbek classical literature. As we know, the *noma* genre in classical literature was initially formed in Persian literature. Its initial forms were formed in the 10th-12th centuries. As an example of them, we can cite religious-historical works such as *Khudoynoma* and *Shahnoma*. After that, the *noma* genre began to be widely used in Uzbek classical literature. Initially, Ishak Khorezm's work "*Muhabbatnoma*" was written, which glorified secular lyrics. Later, works such as Khojandi's "*Latofatnoma*", Said Ahmad's "*Taashhuqnoma*", Yusuf Amiri's "*Dahnoma*", Said Qasimi's "*Haqiqatnoma*" and "*Sadoqatnoma*" appeared one after another.

Works in the genre of odes created in the late 14th and first half of the 15th centuries reflected the life of that time, the hopes and dreams of people. These works glorify lofty ideas such as patriotism, justice and equality, love and loyalty. The work "*Muhabbatnoma*" by Khorezmii consists of ten love letters written by a lover to his beloved. Later, under the influence of this work, Khojandi created the works "*Latofatnoma*", Said Ahmad "*Taashhuqnoma*", and Yusuf Amiri created the works "*Dahnoma*". These works remained faithful to the odes traditions, and all of them were written in the mahzuf meter of hijai musaddasi and in the form of masnavi. Except for "*Muhabbatnoma*", all of them consist of ten poems. In "*Muhabbatnoma*", "*Latofatnoma*" and "*Taashshuqnoma*" the poems are written from the lover's



perspective and are presented in the form of a request to be delivered to the beloved. In "Dahnama" the poems are written not only from the lover's perspective but also from the lover's perspective.

The introduction to Khorezm's "Muhabbatnama" includes a hamd, Avval korishgonin aytur, Bayoni waqiyi aytur, Muhammad Khojabek sifoti, Wasful-hol aytur, 4 ghazals and 2 masnavis. Then 11 poems are given their turn. After each poem, three-verse masnavis addressed to the poet are presented, after the third and tenth poems, a ghazal, and after the eleventh poem, a qut'a, munajat, qeshorat, Khotimat ul-kitab, Ilmakasin aytur parts and fard. The poet says in the masnavi that comes after the tenth chapter that he originally intended to complete "Muhabbatnama" in 10 chapters, but added another chapter:

Bu yerga yetti so'z, toxir bo'ldi,  
Burun o'n dedim, o'n bir bo'ldi.

The poet explains that when he reached this point in the verse, he had finished, and that he had first planned to make ten letters, and then made them eleven. Of the eleven letters, letters 4, 8, and 11 were written in Persian-Tajik, and the remaining 8 letters were written in Turkic (Uzbek) language. From this it can be seen that "Muhabbatnama" consists of various genres: letter, masnavi, ghazal, qut'a, fard, and stories.

Also, a letter is a genre that means a letter or letter, and its roots go back to the distant past. The first forms of a letter were expressed through objects in the history of Central Asia, in times when writing had not yet appeared. For example, a symbolic "letter" consisting of a bow and arrow, a frog, a mouse, and a bird sent by the Scythian ruler Idanfris to the Iranian king Darius can serve as an example. Such letters have a very ancient history. The initial forms of the letter can also be seen in folk oral literature. For example, in the epic poem "Alpomish", a hero named Barchin, having fallen into a difficult situation in the land of the Kalmyks, writes a letter to Hakimbek asking for help and sends it through ten servants.

The letter (Arabic letter, Persian letter) has existed since ancient times and was used in the early days as a simple letter. Later, this form was elevated to the level of an artistic medium. In the Islamic world, in particular, in Persian-Tajik and Turkic literature, the letter genre developed.

In the old Uzbek language, the word letter is also expressed by the term bildirguluk. In the epic poem "Oguznama", Oguz Khagan sends a letter to all the rulers of the country, demanding obedience and tribute from them. So, it can be seen that the forms of conveying information that emerged based on need laid the foundation for the formation of the noma genre.



During the Timurid and Baburid periods, special attention was paid to this genre. Thinkers such as Navoi, Babur, and Khoja Ahrar Vali addressed their contemporaries through letters.

Khojandiy lived and worked in the 15th century and is one of the influential representatives of Uzbek literature. His work *Latofatnoma* was written in a moral-didactic direction and is considered one of the brightest examples of the *noma* genre.

Very little information has come down to us about Khojandiy. Some thoughts about his life are found only in his work "*Latofatnoma*". Judging by his pseudonym, he may have been born in the city of Khojand. Khojandiy was inspired by the work "*Muhabbatnoma*" by the famous poet Khorezmii and created "*Latofatnoma*" in response to it. This work is dedicated to the ruler of that time, Mahmudkhan Sultan. Mahmudkhan was the son of Muhammad the Younger, and he is considered a descendant of Togay Timur. Togay Timur was the thirteenth child of the Khorezm Khan Joji. Mahmudkhan came to power twice: the first time in 1411, and the second time between 1422 and 1424. Therefore, it is assumed that Khojandi also lived and worked in Khorezm during these years. He was active in the late 14th century and the first half of the 15th century. Although "*Latofatnoma*" was written in response to "*Muhabbatnoma*", it is significantly different in content and form. The work is written entirely in the form of a *masnavi*, and genres such as *ghazal*, *qi'a* or *fard* are not found in it. Khojandi created in a very juicy, melodious style. His wordplay, especially the extensive use of puns, and his exploration of the possibilities of the Uzbek language in addition to Arabic and Persian words, further enhanced the artistic impact of his work.

*Latofatnoma* consists of 10 letters (letters), which are artistically rich, elegant in style, and profound in content.

Four copies of *Latofatnoma* have come down to us. Two of them are kept in the museum of the Kabul Library, one in Istanbul, and one in the British Museum. The manuscript was copied in 893 AH (1488 AD) and consists of a total of 313 verses. In this work, we do not encounter poems of other genres, as in Khorezm's "*Muhabbatnoma*".

It is no exaggeration to say that the work is written in the form of a lover's appeal to his beloved. Through each letter, the author promotes concepts such as morality, education, spirituality, purity, patience, love, and loyalty. The work is written in the form of a *masnavi* and rhymes. Khojandi notes that he wrote this work as a response to the "*Muhabbatnoma*":

Muhabbat jomidin ichsang sharobe,  
“Muhabbatnoma”ga aysang javobe.



Khojandi's "Latofatnoma" consists of ten chapters. The poet provides information about this in his work:

There was a word in my tongue, a rough draft in my hand,  
I also made "Latofatnoma" into ten chapters.

The poet emphasizes that he made "Latofatnoma" into ten chapters with words in his tongue and a pen in his hand. Khojandi says that he named the work "Latofatnoma" at the end of the work:

Latofatdin telim hangoma qaydim,  
A'nin atin "Latofatnoma" qaydim.

Features of the work:

- Written in epistolary form.
- Each chapter covers a separate topic.
- Although written in a poetic style, there are prose elements.
- The place of women in society and their moral qualities are glorified.
- There is simple folk language, imagery and sincerity.

Khojandiy's work, while artistically illuminating topics such as the pure relationship between a lover and a lover, family, and spiritual upbringing, teaches and admonishes the reader. This shows that the noma genre was formed not only as a means of exchanging letters, but also as an educational genre.

Also, "Latofatnoma" is a work of the didactic (advisory) genre, and its main theme is devoted to socio-spiritual issues such as morality, etiquette, knowledge, respect for teachers and parents. Through this work, the poet promotes the most important human qualities in society.

The main idea of the work is to instill the main values on the path to human perfection, to prioritize knowledge and etiquette. In educating young people, the poet:

- Considers obtaining knowledge a sacred duty;
- Warns against bad friends and bad behavior;
- Reminds of the transience of worldly affairs and blessings.

Khojandi wrote the work in the form of a masnavi, that is, every two lines rhyme with each other. This style gives the work fluidity and melody.

The artistic art of metaphor is beautifully found in various places in the work. As a clear example of this, we can see that good behavior is compared to a precious gem. In this artistic work, figurative expressions serve to convey the idea deeply and figuratively.

In works of the noma genre, the image of natural landscapes is skillfully used in connection with the inner experiences of the lover or mistress. Works in this genre are distinguished by the inclusion of genres such as ghazal, qasida, masnavi, qita, fard, saqi-nama, and stories, as well as the use of proverbs, sayings, and wise sayings



from folk oral art. These aspects allow us to fully understand and enjoy our classical literature, especially works in the noma genre. Due to the fact that classical writers knew the psychology and lifestyle of representatives of different social strata well when creating images, their creativity is distinguished by vitality and naturalness. The poet creates images based on existing reality, the worldview, spirituality, and interests of the people. Therefore, with the change of era, the content of poetic images is enriched, and some are replaced by new ones.

The images created by the poet reflect the social, political, and spiritual issues of his time. Therefore, the system of lyrical images is constantly expanding, and the tasks assigned to them are also increasing. At first glance, the creation of images in the ghazal and noma genres seems similar, but a deeper analysis reveals their specific differences. In the ghazal, the suffering of the lover, the beauty of the beloved, and complaints about unfaithfulness are expressed lyrically, but the ghazal has formal boundaries. In the noma, the relationship between the lover and the beloved is described in a broader context, in the form of a masnavi. The author may have used genre elements such as ghazal, masnavi, fard, and qi'a in this process. In conclusion, the noma genre has occupied a special place in Uzbek literature, and the role of such works in its development is incomparable. Khojandi's "Latofatnoma" is among the best examples of this genre. The work is of great importance not only for its time, but also for the present time as a moral and didactic heritage. The noma genre lives on today in modern forms through open letters, blog posts, and literary essays.

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