THE TRAVEL MOTIF IN THE EPIC "ALPOMISH"

Nabiyeva Nodira Saidovna
Teacher of the Department of Uzbek Language and Literature
Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy
UDC: 821.512.133
Email: saidovnanodira9@gmail.com
Xudoyorova Mehriniso
4th-year Student, Faculty of Philology
Denov Institute of Entrepreneurship and Pedagogy

Abstract: The epic "Alpomish" is one of the most significant and artistically mature examples of Uzbek oral folk literature. It occupies a special place not only in Uzbek folklore, but also in the broader cultural heritage of Turkic peoples. The epic reflects such universal values as heroism, patriotism, loyalty, love, justice, family unity, and devotion to the homeland. One of the central structural and semantic elements of the epic is the travel motif, which plays an important role in the development of the plot and in revealing the inner world of the protagonist.

Keywords: "Alpomish" epic, travel motif, Uzbek folklore, heroic epic, motif analysis, plot, symbolic meaning, trial motif, heroic transformation, Turkic oral tradition.

Introduction. The epic "Alpomish" is one of the brightest examples of the oral poetic creativity of Turkic peoples. It has been transmitted from generation to generation by bakhshis and storytellers for centuries and has become an integral part of the spiritual and cultural memory of the Uzbek people. The epic is distinguished by its rich artistic structure, deep ideological content, vivid characters, and poetic expression of national values. In "Alpomish", such ideas as courage, patriotism, loyalty, love, justice, family honor, and devotion to one's people are presented through a system of heroic events and symbolic images.

One of the most important elements forming the central plot of the epic is the travel motif. In heroic epics, travel is not limited to a simple movement in geographical space. It usually represents a complex process of the hero's testing, maturation, spiritual awakening, and social recognition. Through travel, the hero leaves the familiar environment, enters an unfamiliar and dangerous world, overcomes obstacles, proves his heroic qualities, and returns with a new level of moral and social maturity.

In the epic "Alpomish", the travel motif is one of the fundamental elements that determines the turning points in the life of Hakimbek, later known as Alpomish. His journey to rescue Barchin, his departure to free Boysari from captivity, his long suffering in prison, and his eventual return to his homeland are all connected with the structure of travel. These journeys reveal the hero's bravery, endurance, wisdom, loyalty, and commitment to justice. Therefore, the travel motif serves as an important artistic means of deepening the image of Alpomish and strengthening the ideological content of the epic.

The relevance of studying the travel motif in "Alpomish" lies in the fact that this motif reflects not only the movement of the plot, but also the spiritual and moral transformation of the protagonist. The journey becomes a symbolic path through which Alpomish passes from youth to maturity, from personal love to social duty, and from individual courage to national heroism. Thus, the travel motif is closely connected with the epic's broader system of meanings.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the travel motif in the epic "Alpomish" in a comprehensive manner. Particular attention is paid to the reasons for the hero's departure, the trials encountered during the journey, the role of travel in shaping the hero's character, the symbolic

meaning of the return journey, and the function of this motif in ensuring the artistic and ideological unity of the epic.

The epic "Alpomish" has long been the subject of scholarly attention in Uzbek literary studies, folklore studies, and Turkic studies. Researchers have examined its genesis, variants, versions, artistic structure, system of characters, ideological content, and mythopoetic foundations. The epic has been recognized as one of the most important monuments of Uzbek oral literature and one of the most valuable heroic epics of the Turkic world.

Among the existing versions of the epic, the variant recorded from Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li is considered one of the most complete and artistically perfect. In addition to this version, more than forty variants collected from over thirty epic performers testify to the wide dissemination of "Alpomish" among the people. This richness of variants makes it possible to study the epic from comparative, typological, and structural perspectives.

In literary scholarship, the travel motif in "Alpomish" has been studied in connection with the general structure of the heroic epic. Scholars emphasize that travel is one of the key artistic devices that organizes the plot and reveals the hero's personality. It is through travel that Alpomish faces external and internal trials, demonstrates his heroic qualities, and reaches a higher level of moral maturity.

The travel motif is often analyzed together with the trial motif. This is because the hero's journey is inseparable from tests of courage, loyalty, strength, patience, and wisdom. In this sense, travel functions as a narrative space in which the hero's character is tested and transformed. The journey to the land of the Kalmyks, the separation from Barchin, the seven-year imprisonment, and the return to the homeland are all stages of heroic trial and spiritual growth.

Karimova Z.A., in the study "Poetic Functions of the Travel Motif in the Epic 'Alpomish'", emphasizes that the travel motif performs several important functions in the epic structure. It initiates the movement of the plot, creates dramatic tension, connects different narrative episodes, and reveals the symbolic meaning of the hero's transformation. According to this approach, Alpomish's journey is not merely an external action, but a poetic model of inner development.

Other studies also note that the travel motif in "Alpomish" is connected with ancient mythological and ritual ideas. The hero's departure from his native land, his entry into a foreign and hostile space, his imprisonment, suffering, and return may be interpreted as a form of initiation. In such a structure, the hero symbolically "dies" in the old status and is "reborn" as a mature, recognized, and socially significant figure.

The analysis of existing literature shows that the travel motif in "Alpomish" has been studied from various perspectives. However, its functional role in the formation of Alpomish's image, the psychological influence of trials encountered during the journey, and the symbolic meaning of the return journey still require deeper investigation. This article attempts to contribute to this field by examining the travel motif as a complex artistic, semantic, and symbolic phenomenon.

The methodological basis of this study is formed by a complex literary and folkloristic approach. The main object of the research is the epic "Alpomish", particularly the version recorded from Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li. Other variants of the epic are also taken into account for comparative observations where necessary. The subject of the study is the travel motif, its structural features, semantic layers, symbolic functions, and its role in ensuring the ideological and artistic integrity of the epic.

The descriptive-analytical method is used to identify and classify the main manifestations of the travel motif in the epic. Through this method, the journeys connected with Barchin, Boysari, the Kalmyk land, imprisonment, and return are described as separate but interconnected narrative units. Each journey is examined in terms of its beginning, development, conflict, culmination, and resolution.

The structural-semantic method is applied to reveal the place of the travel motif in the general composition of the epic. This approach makes it possible to understand how travel organizes the plot, connects different episodes, intensifies dramatic conflict, and contributes to the symbolic meaning of the text. The relationship between the travel motif and the trial motif is also analyzed within this framework.

The comparative-typological method is used to examine the travel motif within the broader context of Turkic heroic epics. Since "Alpomish" has many variants and belongs to a wider epic tradition, this method helps to identify both universal and specific features of the motif. The travel of the hero, his departure from home, his trials in foreign lands, and his triumphant return are common elements in many heroic narratives, but in "Alpomish" they acquire a distinct national and poetic character.

The psychological approach is used to analyze the influence of travel and trial on the inner world of the hero. Alpomish's suffering, endurance, loyalty, and moral strength are examined as psychological signs of his transformation. Special attention is paid to the seven-year imprisonment episode, which represents one of the most difficult stages of the hero's spiritual test.

The hermeneutic approach is employed to interpret the symbolic and philosophical meanings of the travel motif. Through this method, travel is understood as a metaphor for human maturation, self-realization, devotion to duty, and restoration of justice. The return journey is interpreted as the restoration of social order, family unity, and moral truth.

In the epic "Alpomish", the travel motif performs one of the main plot-forming functions. The movement of the hero from one space to another creates the dynamic structure of the narrative. Without travel, the central conflicts of the epic would not develop, and the heroic nature of Alpomish would not be fully revealed.

The first important journey of Alpomish is connected with Barchin. His departure to bring Barchin back is motivated by love, honor, and social duty. This journey demonstrates not only his personal devotion, but also his readiness to protect family dignity and tribal unity. In this episode, travel becomes a means of testing the hero's physical strength, courage, intelligence, and loyalty.

The second major journey is connected with the rescue of Boysari. This journey has a broader social and moral meaning. Alpomish does not act only for personal happiness; he acts to restore justice and defend the honor of his people. His movement toward the foreign land becomes a struggle against oppression and injustice.

The journey also creates the conditions for the hero's encounter with enemies, obstacles, and unexpected situations. These conflicts intensify the epic action and strengthen the dramatic structure of the narrative. Thus, the travel motif is not an additional element, but a central mechanism that moves the entire plot forward.

The travel motif in "Alpomish" is inseparable from the motif of trial. Every significant journey of the hero is accompanied by difficult tests. These tests may be physical, moral, psychological, or social. Through them, the hero proves his worth and gains a higher heroic status.

Alpomish's journey to the Kalmyk land requires courage and determination. He enters a foreign and hostile space where he must face danger and uncertainty. His success depends not only on physical strength, but also on wisdom, patience, and moral firmness. This shows that the epic ideal of heroism is not limited to bodily power; it includes loyalty, justice, endurance, and spiritual strength.

The seven-year imprisonment of Alpomish is one of the most important trial episodes in the epic. This period symbolizes the deepest stage of the hero's suffering and inner transformation. In prison, Alpomish is physically limited, but spiritually he remains free. His patience, hope, loyalty to Barchin, and faith in justice demonstrate the moral greatness of his character.

From this perspective, travel becomes an initiation process. Alpomish leaves his homeland as a brave young man, but through suffering and trial he becomes a fully mature epic hero. His journey is therefore a symbolic passage from youth to maturity, from personal courage to social responsibility, and from physical strength to spiritual perfection.

The travel motif in "Alpomish" has deep symbolic meanings. On the surface, it represents the hero's movement from one geographical space to another. However, at a deeper level, it reflects the hero's internal development, moral purification, and spiritual growth.

The departure from the homeland may be interpreted as the beginning of the hero's test. The foreign land represents danger, uncertainty, and chaos. In this space, the hero encounters forces that threaten love, family unity, justice, and social order. By overcoming these forces, Alpomish restores moral balance.

The road itself symbolizes the path of life. The difficulties faced along the way represent the trials that a person must overcome in order to achieve maturity. In this sense, Alpomish's journey has universal meaning. It reflects the human struggle for truth, loyalty, justice, and self-realization.

The return journey has special symbolic significance. It is not merely the hero's return to his native land. It represents the restoration of justice, the reunion of family, the renewal of social harmony, and the triumph of truth over betrayal. When Alpomish returns, he brings with him not only victory, but also moral order.

In heroic epics, the journey of the hero is often connected with preparation, blessing, and the selection of a heroic horse. In "Alpomish", Boychibor occupies a special place in the structure of the travel motif. The horse is not merely a means of transportation; it is a loyal companion, a symbolic helper, and an inseparable part of the hero's identity.

Before departure, the hero's preparation has ritual significance. Choosing the horse, taking weapons, receiving blessings from elders or parents, and setting out on the road indicate that the journey is not an ordinary event, but a sacred heroic mission. These elements show that the hero's travel is supported by moral, spiritual, and traditional authority.

Boychibor helps Alpomish overcome distance, danger, and separation. The relationship between the hero and the horse strengthens the epic image of Alpomish. Their reunion after suffering also has symbolic meaning: it marks the renewal of heroic power and the beginning of the return to justice.

The travel motif in "Alpomish" is closely connected with national and universal values. Through the hero's journeys, the epic glorifies loyalty to the homeland, devotion to family, respect for elders, courage in the face of danger, and the struggle for justice. Alpomish's travel is never meaningless or selfish. It is always connected with moral duty.

His journey to Barchin expresses loyalty and love. His journey to rescue Boysari expresses family honor and social responsibility. His return to his homeland expresses the restoration of justice and the protection of national unity. Thus, the travel motif becomes a poetic form through which the ideals of the people are expressed.

The epic suggests that a true hero is one who is ready to leave personal comfort for the sake of higher values. Alpomish's journeys show that heroism requires sacrifice, patience, responsibility, and faithfulness. These qualities make the epic relevant not only as a monument of the past, but also as a source of moral education for later generations.

The analysis shows that the travel motif in "Alpomish" is a multidimensional artistic phenomenon. It performs compositional, semantic, psychological, symbolic, and ideological functions. As a compositional element, it organizes the plot and connects major episodes. As a semantic element, it expresses the hero's maturation and transformation. As a psychological element, it reveals Alpomish's inner strength and emotional endurance. As a symbolic element, it represents initiation,

self-realization, and restoration of order. As an ideological element, it glorifies national and universal values.

The close connection between travel and trial is especially important. Alpomish's heroic nature becomes visible only through the difficulties he faces on the road. The journey creates the conditions for testing and revealing the hero's personality. Therefore, travel is not external to the hero's character; it is the very process through which this character is formed.

The return journey completes the symbolic structure of the epic. The hero does not simply return to the place from which he departed. He returns transformed, strengthened, and morally elevated. His return restores justice and completes the heroic cycle. This gives the epic a sense of artistic wholeness and ideological completeness.

The travel motif in the epic "Alpomish" is one of the central elements that ensures the development of the plot and the deepening of the protagonist's image. It is not merely a representation of geographical movement, but a symbolic expression of the hero's physical endurance, spiritual growth, moral purification, and heroic maturation.

Alpomish's journeys reveal his courage, patience, intelligence, loyalty, and commitment to justice. The trials he faces on the road, especially his suffering in captivity, strengthen his heroic identity and transform him from an ordinary young man into a great epic hero. The return journey represents the restoration of justice, family unity, social harmony, and the triumph of moral truth.

Thus, the travel motif serves as an important artistic and ideological device in the epic. It enriches the poetic structure of the work, reveals the inner world of the hero, and expresses the values cherished by the people. The study of this motif allows for a deeper understanding of the artistic world of "Alpomish" and its significance in Uzbek and Turkic epic tradition.

References:

1. Karimova, Z.A. "Poetic Functions of the Travel Motif in the Epic 'Alpomish'." *Uzbek Language and Literature*, 2022, No. 3, pp. 45–52. https://uzjournals.edu.uz/uzbek_tili_adabiyoti/vol2022/iss3/7/
2. Rahmatov, B.I. "Interpretation of the Travel Motif in Heroic Epics: Based on the Epic 'Alpomish'." *Scientific Bulletin of Bukhara State University*, 2021, No. 4, pp. 112–118. https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/buxdu/article/view/1234
3. Sobirov, G.K. *The Concept of Travel and Heroism in Uzbek Folk Epics*. Tashkent: Fan Publishing House, 2023, 280 p. https://fan.uz/books/ozbek-xalq-dostonlarida-safar-va-qahramonlik-konsepsiyasi
4. Ergasheva, D.S. *Artistic and Aesthetic Features of the Travel Motif in the Epic "Alpomish"*. Abstract of the PhD Dissertation in Philology. Tashkent: National University of Uzbekistan, 2020, 24 p. https://repository.nuu.uz/handle/123456789/9876
5. Olimov, F.A. "Comparative-Typological Analysis of the Travel Motif in Turkic Epics: Based on 'Alpomish' and 'Manas'." *Oriental Studies*, 2022, No. 2, pp. 88–95. https://uzjournals.edu.uz/sharqshunoslik/vol2022/iss2/10/
6. Jo'rayeva, M.X. "Interpretive Possibilities of the Hero's Journey Motif in the Epic 'Alpomish'." *Language and Literature Education*, 2021, No. 5, pp. 67–73. https://uzjournals.edu.uz/til_adabiyot_talimi/vol2021/iss5/8/
7. Ismoilov, H.R. "Mythopoetic Foundations of the Travel Motif in the Epic 'Alpomish'." In: *Proceedings of the International Scientific-Practical Conference on Current Issues of Uzbek Philology*. Tashkent: Akademnashr, 2023, pp. 145–150. https://akademnashr.uz/konferensiya-materiallari/2023/
8. Ahmedov, N.R. "Archetypal Roots of the Travel Motif in the Epic 'Alpomish'." *Issues of Philology*, 2024, No. 1, pp. 78–85. https://uzjournals.edu.uz/filologiya_masalalari/vol2024/iss1/9/