



A SCHOLAR, A POET: BEDIL THROUGH AYNIY'S GAZE

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Received: 8 th October 2025	This article is dedicated to the research of Sadriddin Ayniy, a prominent scholar of classical Turkic and Persian literature and literary studies, on Bedil studies, particularly on Abdulqodir Bedil. It focuses on the distinctive features of Ayniy's analytical approach and the significant aspects of his thoughts and observations
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The study of Bedil was close to the spirit of the Uzbek people. However, the analysis of Bedil's works, even their translation, was not widely popularized. This is because approaching Bedil's mysticism and his elevated status is extremely challenging. Nevertheless, Ayniy's education, received from his father in childhood at a girls' school and Bukhara madrasas, gave him sufficient courage to tackle this topic. He produced a large-scale study recognized in global Bedil scholarship. I. Haqqul states, "The language of Bedil's works is difficult, the expressions are complex, and it is extremely challenging to uncover the layers of meaning... Ayniy was a master of mysticism capable of discovering these lofty meanings. He easily grasped the essence of Bedil's thoughts and feelings, and did not allow speculation in his analysis and interpretation." The uniqueness of Ayniy's work lies in his lifelong commitment to enriching, refining, and perfecting a topic once he engaged with it. Similarly, in Bedil studies, he published a series of articles in the journal "Sharqi Surx" in 1946-1947. In 1954, Ayniy's completed research on Bedil - the monograph "Mirzo Abdulqodir Bedil" - was published. In the introduction to the book, the orientalist I.E. Bertels fairly assesses it as "the first detailed work on the life of Bedil". Literary scholar Sh. Shukurov, in his research surveying works dedicated to Bedil in world oriental studies, places Ayniy's contributions at the forefront from a methodological and scientific-theoretical perspective: "In this regard, the contributions of the mature Bedil scholar, master S. Ayniy, are unparalleled. Ayniy is a great literary scholar and prominent writer who was the first in world Bedil studies to write a monograph" [1, 13].

In terms of the accuracy and clarity of his biography, no one could match the fortune of the classical Persian-Tajik poet Bedil. The birth year of many past authors is unknown, and the death of some is unrecorded; the life paths of most are presented differently in two or three contradictory sources. However, the most crucial part of Bedil's biography is recorded in his own works or precisely documented by the writers of that time. Nevertheless, before Ayniy, there were several misunderstandings in Bedil's biography. Ayniy's meticulous literary scholarship is sometimes characterized by his detailed examination of hundreds of pages to clarify a single piece of information (moreover, the absence of a table of contents in Eastern sources required reading an entire book to find one piece of information - M.Sh.), his work with original texts, and his patience in situations requiring the reading of difficult manuscripts and lithographic works. In carrying out such work, Ayniy had sufficient patience, skill, and perseverance, and ultimately found successful solutions to the problems.

When discussing Bedil's work, philosophy, mystical and moral views, it is often emphasized that his language is very difficult, his expressions are complex, and his layers of meaning are broad. Ayniy, in evaluating the essence of Bedil's work, emphasizes that the creator is spiritually elevated above the era to which he belongs. The oppressive conditions of the time forced Bedil to conceal his thoughts in the creation of progressive philosophical, mystical, and controversial works, choosing an extraordinary language and complex style of expression so that only the elite could understand his purpose. Therefore, initially, many orientalists studied the poet's work only in its external form and did not have the opportunity to delve into its inner enlightenment.

The monograph consists of an introduction written by E. Bertels and two main chapters, with the first chapter divided into three parts: Brief information about the period in which Bedil lived; Biography of Bedil; Bedil's Works.

The second chapter comprises examples of Bedil's works, which, in turn, are divided into seven large sections: "From Irfon," "From his ghazals," "From Bedil's mukhammases," "From his rubaiyat," "From his qasidas," "From qit'as and excerpts on various topics," "Fragments from Bedil's prose works" and consists of several chapters, each with its own title.

Ayniy, who approaches his work with great responsibility, provides explanations in footnotes or parentheses for words that might be somewhat complex for readers to understand. The author, while discussing Bedil's homeland and biography, focuses primarily on analyzing the poet's works. Ayniy points out that Bedil's prose is considerably more complex than his poetry. He states that it contains allusions far beyond the comprehension of ordinary people, incredibly intricate metaphors, multi-part phrases, and long sentences, which are characteristic features of the writer's style. "When reading Bedil's prose, the reader, unable to find the gem within the text, feels as if they have entered an endless,

undulating sea" [2, 268]. Consequently, in his analysis, the scholar omits parts of sentences that are excessively long and complex without compromising the author's intent, replacing them with periods. He extracts simpler ideas completely from each sentence. To help readers grasp the author's purpose, he summarizes several difficult and ambiguous words and phrases in parentheses, providing detailed explanations. Bedil's prose is not entirely prosaic but is embellished with poetic fragments, similar to Saadi's "Gulistan". "Bedil was an ardent admirer of Saadi, and he especially loved his "Gulistan" so much that he wrote the following verse about it:

Az gulu sunbul ba nazmi nasri Sa'diy forig'am,
In maoniy dar "Guluston" beshtar dorad bahor. –

"It wouldn't be surprising if Bedil imitated Saadi in adorning prose with poetry," [2,269] says Aini.

In Ayniy's commentary on Bedil's qasida "Savodi a'zam" ("Great Knowledge"), we read: This qasida is a response to Khusraw Dehlavi's famous qasida "Daryoyi abror", to which Abdurahman Jami responded with "Lujjatul-asror," and Mir Alisher Navoi with "Tuhfatul-afkor." According to the author's note at the end of the qasida, its date of composition is considered to be 1082 Hijri based on the abjad calculation, which corresponds to 1672 AD when the poet was 28 years old. However, why does the poet refer to his old age in the poem? Perhaps his intention is not to depict his own old age, but to portray old age in general. This commentary by Aini has served as a foundation for subsequent Bedil scholars [3, 67].

*Bedil, muqallidi shaku iqror nestam,
Z-in bog' shubhachini gulu xor nestam,
Begonai marotibi izhor nestam,
Noqadroni ma'nii asror nestam,
Bar har chi chashm mefikanam, sod mekunam.*

Regarding this stanza in Bedil's mukhammas, Aini writes about a tradition in classical literature: "Previously, poetry readers would place a simple Arabic letter above each line they liked, which was a sign of 'sahih' (correct). Here, the poet has also employed the same custom".

Works about Bedil's creations were written at different times, in various circumstances and states of mind, from the age of ten until his death at 77. Consequently, in this part of Bedil's poetry, we observe contradictory content in terms of thought and ideas. For instance, in one couplet or rubai, the poet appears as a religious person who adheres to all Sharia laws, while in another, he emerges as a philosopher who rejects everything except the apparent, promoting the unity of existence. These aspects are reflected in Aini's thoughts. Although Aini has many achievements in Bedil studies, in our view, there are aspects that require a thoughtful approach from experts and Bedil enthusiasts. "Just as history cannot fully conceal all circumstances and events, it cannot fully reveal them either. And something always remains hidden... says Sufi scholar I. Haqqul about the seeker who is progressing through the stages of spiritual perfection, - the passion of love, freedom, and joy elevate him to the status of enlightenment. Whether an ascetic, lover, stranger, or poor - now the name and status no longer matter to him" [4,3]. Indeed, in our opinion, there is no longer a need to contradict the content of Bedil's verses, which reflect his spirit and mystical waves, as Aini suggested.

This monograph, which contains the cream of the poet's best works and unique heritage, will undoubtedly serve as a ready fundamental source for any enthusiast who wishes to study Mirzo Bedil's work, artistic style, and philosophical-mystical views.

The monograph "Mirzo Abdulqodir Bedil" has been in the spotlight of world literary criticism and continues to retain its scholarly value to this day. Bedil scholars have been influenced by it and learned from it. This academic work was translated into Uzbek in an abridged form by Y. Is'hoqov and is included in the collection of his scholarly works. In his article "The Joy of Understanding Bedil", scholar Jafar Khomuminov, who conducted research on the study of Bedil's work, specifically highlights Sadriddin Aini among Bedil scholars and states: "Ayniy's research in this field has attracted the attention of even foreign scholars. Notably, the renowned Czech orientalists Jan Rypka and Jiří Bečka also relied on Aini's monograph on Bedil in their research". Furthermore, the prominent Iranian scholar Shafe'i Kadakiy was among the first in Iran to write numerous articles and treatises about Bedil. J.Xolmuminov notes: "Shafe'i Kadakiy, like other Bedil scholars, extensively utilizes the research and observations of master Aini regarding Bedil's life, work, and his role in the spiritual life of Central Asian peoples".

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