

GAFUR GULYAM AND THE THEME OF WAR IN HIS WORKS

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Abstract: Gafur Gulyam (1903–1966) is one of the outstanding Uzbek poets of the 20th century, whose work became a vivid embodiment of socialist realism in national literature. His lyrics, saturated with humanism, patriotism, and reflections on the fates of the people, gained particular acuteness during the years of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945). The theme of war in Gulyam's works does not reduce to a simple description of combat actions; it is revealed through the prism of emotional experience, international brotherhood, and faith in victory. The poet, who experienced the Civil War in childhood and became a street child, saw the Great Patriotic War as the culmination of the struggle for peace and justice. His war lyrics, collected in the anthology *I Am Coming from the East* (1943), became a bridge between Uzbek tradition and Soviet multinational culture, enhancing the civic resonance of poetry. In this philological article, we will examine the poet's biography, the evolution of his work, the key motifs of war in his lyrics, stylistic features, and legacy. The analysis is based on the texts of the works, historical context, and the comparative-historical method, which allows us to see how Gulyam integrates elements of folklore and classical Uzbek poetry into modern discourse.

Keywords: literature of the war years, internationalism, war, combat actions, home front, military lyrics, Civil War, theme of orphanage.

Gafur Gulyam (real name — Gafur Shermatovich Gulyamov) was born on April 27 (according to the new style — May 10) 1903 in Tashkent, in a family where poetry was an integral part of everyday life. His father, Shermat, was passionate about reading the verses of Uzbek and Persian poets — Mukimi, Furqat, Asiri, Khislat — and composed poetry himself, while also knowing Russian. The Gulyamov household became a salon for local literati, laying the foundation for the aesthetic upbringing of the future poet. Early childhood was overshadowed by tragedies: the death of his parents in 1916 turned the boy into a street child. During the years of the Civil War (1918–1920), he wandered, taking on dozens of professions — from dockworker to typesetter in a printing house. These experiences are reflected in his autobiographical novella *The Mischief-Maker* (1936–1962), where themes of orphanage and survival foreshadow his later war lyrics.

From 1919 onward, Gulyam studied at pedagogical courses, working as a teacher, school director, and organizer of children's boarding schools. In 1923, he made his debut with the poem "Felix's Children" in the magazine *Maorif va O'qituvchi*, dedicated to the memory of F. E. Dzerzhinsky. The influence of V. V. Mayakovsky is evident in the rhythmic dynamics and agitational pathos of his early works. By the 1930s, Gulyam had become one of the founders of modern Uzbek poetry, translating into Uzbek the works of A. S. Griboedov, M. Yu. Lermontov, Sh. Rustaveli, and N. Hikmet. In 1943, he was elected an academician of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR; in 1946, he became a member of the VKP(b) and received the Stalin

Prize of the Second Degree for the collection *I Am Coming from the East*. He died on July 10, 1966, in Tashkent and was buried at Chigatay Cemetery. His life was a journey from the margins to becoming a symbol of Uzbek culture, with war serving as a catalyst for his civic maturation.

Before the Great Patriotic War, Gulyam's work evolved from humorous sketches to profound social realism. Early collections — *Gulnoza* (1929), *Dynamo* (1931), *Living Songs* (1932) — celebrated collectivization, industrialization, and the role of women in the new society. The poem *Kukan-Batrak* (1930) and the novella *Netay* (1930) address themes of class struggle and the awakening of consciousness, reflecting the influence of Soviet ideology.

Philologically interesting is the synthesis of traditions: Gulyam relies on *aruz* (classical Uzbek verse), but introduces free verse close to Mayakovsky's "ladder." In the poem "Bread" (1931), the motif of labor as a weapon against hunger foreshadows the wartime theme of the home front: "Bread is strength, bread is light, / In it our will, in it our flight." Here, the semantics of unity is already traceable — *langue* (the language system as a symbol of the collective) and *parole* (individual expression of patriotism), according to Saussure. By 1941, with the start of the war, these motifs radicalize: the poet shifts from local themes to a global discourse of anti-fascism.

The Great Patriotic War radically transformed Gulyam's lyrics, turning it into a weapon of patriotic education. In Uzbekistan, as a rear area, the poet became the voice of unity: here, evacuees were accommodated — orphaned children, Jews, intellectuals. His poems, published in newspapers and collections, were read at the front and in the rear, aiding in the search for the missing through correspondence. Main motifs: hatred of fascism, humanism of the rear, longing for peace, international brotherhood. Let us consider the key works chronologically.

The poem "I Am a Jew" (1941), also known as "I Am a Jew (Response to Hitler)," is a manifesto of anti-fascism. Written at the outset of the war, it expresses solidarity with the victims of the Holocaust: the poet, at great risk, declares himself a Jew, condemning racism. Philological analysis reveals tropes: the anaphora ("I am a Jew, I am an Uzbek, I am Russian") underscores intertextuality with biblical psalms and Soviet hymns of unity. The semantics here are polysemic: "Jew" is not an ethnic marker but a symbol of the oppressed, resonating in postcolonial philology (cf. Said). This work has been immortalized in Israel: in 2005, a square in Kiryat Gat was named after Gulyam as a "Righteous Among the Nations."

"Winter" (1941) introduces the motif of harsh nature as a metaphor for war: snow symbolizes purification but also the cold of fascist aggression. The rhythm of the verse accelerates, imitating a marching step, thereby enhancing its pragmatics—a call to resilience.

The poem "You Are Not an Orphan" (1942) is a masterpiece dedicated to the evacuated children from besieged Leningrad and occupied territories. Uzbekistan accepted thousands of orphans, and Gulyam, drawing on his personal experience of homelessness, writes: "Are you an orphan?.. Calm down, dear! / Like a kind sun, / Bending over you, / Filled with maternal, profound love, / The great country cherishes your childhood." Analysis: the hyperbole "great country" (a metonymy for the USSR) contrasts with the lexicon of loss ("orphan"), creating catharsis. Intertextually, it refers to folklore—Uzbek tales of hospitality—but enriches it with socialist internationalism. The poem reflects reality: children traveled in cold freight cars, and Uzbeks shared their last scraps. This is not only lyrics but also an ethical manifesto: war destroys families, but brotherhood restores them.

"Woman" (1942) and "I'm Waiting for You, My Son!" (1942) celebrate the home front. In the first, woman as a pillar of support: labor in the fields, collecting funds for the front. Tropes: personification ("the earth groans like a mother"). In the second, paternal longing: "I'm waiting for you, my son, you will return from the front, / In a peaceful garden you will bloom like a flower." The motif of waiting is a leitmotif, semantically linked to the biblical "prophecy of victory."

"Unfortunately, Regrets Have Not Been Buried" (1945) and "Autumn Has Come" (1945) transition to triumph. The first ironizes the enemy: regrets as a metaphor for fascism's defeat. The second: autumn as a symbol of harvest and peace. The poem "There Will Be a Holiday on Our Street Too" (1943–1945) is a hymn of optimism: "There will be a holiday on our street too, / Where now dust and smoke, there flowers will bloom." Rhythmics—alliteration of "p" (holiday, dust)—creates sound harmony, foreshadowing postwar flourishing.

Others: "Farewells" (about parting with sons who are frontline soldiers), "Time" (about the transience of calamity), "Farewell" ("We swear by honor, soon over the enemy the last / Deadly thunder will strike"). These texts form a corpus in which war is not mere background but a catalyst for humanism.

Gulyam combines classical Uzbek metrics (bayt, ghazals) with modernist techniques: free verse, colloquial lexicon. In "You Are Not an Orphan," the pragmatics of address ("Calm down, dear!") creates dialogicity close to drama. Semantics: binary oppositions (war/peace, orphan/family) are resolved dialectically—through the synthesis of brotherhood. According to Shklovsky, defamiliarization is achieved through folk images (the sun as mother), defamiliarizing war as an abstraction.

Intertextuality is rich: from Nizami (love for children) to Mayakovsky (agitation). In a poststructuralist key (Derrida), Gulyam's language is "différance": the deferral of meaning in longing, but affirmation in hope. Translations into Russian amplified the influence, incorporating his lyrics into the Soviet canon.

Gulyam's war lyrics represent a contribution to world anti-war poetry, recognized in Uzbekistan, Russia, and Israel. In the post-Soviet era, they remain relevant for themes of migration and humanism. Digital projects (corpora of Uzbek literature) enable new analyses: Ngram analysis of the frequency of "victory" in his texts shows an increase toward 1945. Prospects lie in comparativistics with the lyrics of N. Hikmet or P. Neruda.

Conclusion. Through the theme of war, Gafur Gulyam elevated Uzbek poetry to the level of universal humanism. His lyrics are not a chronicle but an ethical reflection, where the word becomes a shield. In the era of new conflicts, these lines remind us: "Life will boil over, blood will no longer flow, / The country will become a blooming garden once again."

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