



## Eureka Journal of Language, Culture & Social Change (EJLCSC)

ISSN 2760-4926 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2026



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<https://eurekaoa.com/index.php/3>

# ALISHER NAVOI'S CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE KHORASAN IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Muazzamkhon Makhmudova

Senior Lecturer at the Department of World History, Fergana State University,  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Historical Sciences  
makhmudovamuazzam1982@gmail.com

### Abstract:

This article discusses the constructive activities of Alisher Navoi, a vizier, statesman, great thinker, and poet, in the irrigation system of Khorasan. It provides information about the irrigation facilities built under his patronage and initiative.

**Keywords:** Khorasan, Herat, Tus, Mashhad, Khondamir's work "Makorim ul-akhlaq", Davlatshah Samarkandi, Chashmai Gilos, Turuq dam.

### Introduction

The contribution of Alisher Navoi, a friend of Husayn Bayqara, poet, and vizier, to the irrigation system of the Khorasan province is immeasurable. During his tenure as vizier in Khorasan, Alisher Navoi implemented extensive public improvement projects. Alisher Navoi utilized his position in Khorasan not for personal gain, but for the benefit of the people. Under his patronage and attention, various public structures were erected in the country: mosques, schools, madrasas, khanqahs, caravanserais, bathhouses, rabats, pools, bridges, and dams. His activities in the field of irrigation are particularly noteworthy.

For example, in Navoi's epic "Farhod and Shirin", we can see that digging a canal and bringing water during that era was considered an act of great valor. Even in



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Herat itself, where Alisher Navoi lived, there was a problem of water scarcity. The information about the construction of canals and reservoirs in the work “Vaqfiya” serves as evidence of this [1:73]. In Khondamir's work “Makorim ul-Akhlaq” the pools commissioned by Alisher Navoi are enumerated [2:74].

Ghiyasuddin Khondamir wrote the work “Makarim ul-akhlaq” dedicated to the activities of Alisher Navoi. The work was published in its entirety in Kabul in 1981 by the Afghan literary scholar Abdul Ghaffar Bayani, on the basis of which Komiljon Rakhimov translated it from Persian into Uzbek[3]. The work provides information about the pools, bridges, and the Turukband Dam built in the Herat region under the patronage of Alisher Navoi.

M. Baratova's scientific research explores Alisher Navoi's economic views [4:74]. The author discusses Alisher Navoi's focus on artificial irrigation and highlights the significance of qanat (underground canal) construction during the reign of Husayn Bayqara.

Alisher Navoi carried out extensive improvement works in Iran, particularly in the Khorasan region and its holy city of Mashhad. After the destruction of the Tus region, the population settled in the village of Sahnabad, where the tomb of Imam Ali Reza is located and where the city of Mashhad was later founded. As the village of Sahnabad expanded and its population grew, the demand for water increased. To improve Mashhad's water supply, Alisher Navoi had a canal dug from Tus to Mashhad. Lisa Golombek describes the construction of this canal as follows: Alisher Navoi had a canal dug to bring water to the shrine of Imam Reza from the Chashmai Gilos spring, which supplied water to the city of Tus. This canal still flows through the center of Bala Khiyaban, Sahni Atiq, and Lower Khiyaban. Sources indicate that the canal's length was nearly 75 km, while the distance between Mashhad and Tus was 24 km[5:332]. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to our country, Hamid Nayrobodi, noted that the veranda and main entrance on the south side of the ancient courtyard of Ali bin Musa ar-Reza's pure harem (mausoleum), the Khiyaban canal, which was drawn from the



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Gilos Spring to the ancient courtyard of this mausoleum and supplied water to sacred pilgrimage sites, and the Turuq dam in Khorasan province were all built through Alisher Navoi's efforts [6:5]. Davlatshah Samarkandi also writes in "Davlatshah's Tazkira" about how, at Alisher Navoi's initiative, spring water was brought from the Tus region to Mashhad, saving the inhabitants of Mashhad from the torment of thirst[7:80]. From Ambassador H. Nayrobodi's information, it became clear that this canal is indeed the Khiyaban canal.

Vazir Sardoba - This sardoba is located 200 m south of Chorsu, on the eastern outskirts of the Hokistor quarter, opposite the Kandahar market. There are different opinions about the period in which the Sardoba was built. According to the inscription in Sardoba, it was built during the Safavid period. Kharavi emphasizes that it was built by the vizier Alisher Navoi during the Timurid period. Restored in 2008, currently in good condition.

The Turuq Dam, one of the dams built during the Timurid era, is located 5 km from the village of Turuq near Mashhad. Bernard O'Cain writes that the dam was built by Alisher Navoi, based on the information provided by Mavlavi, Clevenjer, and Khwandamir[8:259]. In Ghiyasuddin Khwandamir's work "Makarim ul-Akhlaq" a list of structures built by Alisher Navoi is given, including the Turuq Bridge and the Turuq Dam[2:74]. Iranian researchers also write that the construction of the Turuq Dam dates back to the reign of Sultan Husayn Bayqara[9:68-69]. The irrigation works carried out at the initiative of Alisher Navoi in the vicinity of the cities of Herat and Mashhad during this period are noteworthy. Navoi built the Turukband Reservoir in the Chashmagul area, located in the upper part of the Tus region. A special canal, ten farsakhs (60-70 km) long, was dug, and the water stored in the Turukband reservoir was brought to Mashhad. As a result, the water supply in Mashhad city has improved, and water has been supplied and lands around the city have been improved, says academician A. Muhammadjonov[10:89]. The Turuq Dam reservoir is still used for irrigation[11:907-908]. The New Turuq Dam was built in 1967 on the upper

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part of the Old Turuq Dam built on the Turuq River. The height of the new dam is 81 meters. The dam provides the population of Mashhad with clean drinking water. The volume of the dam is about 13 million cubic meters.

Alisher Navoi paid great attention to the development of the irrigation system of Khorasan, especially Herat. Under his patronage and initiative, canals and ditches were dug in the country, and reservoirs and cisterns were built. This contributed to the growth of agriculture, an increase in the volume of crops, and the well-being of the people.

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