

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE
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Return to Galatepa / Galatepaga qaytish (1983)

Murod Muhammad Do'st (1948–)

OVERVIEW

Author Murod Muhammad Do'st belongs to the generation of Uzbek writers who emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s and whose works anticipated ideas that would later gain significance after the end of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan. He was born in 1948 in the village of Jom, Samarkand Region, Uzbekistan. He graduated from the Faculty of History and Philosophy at Tashkent State University in 1971 and later studied at the Maxim Gorky Literary Institute in Moscow from 1974 to 1979. He began his literary career in the 1970s. His first collection of short stories, *Qayerdasan, quvonch sadosi?* (*Where Are You, the Sound of Joy?*), was published in 1976. It was followed by several notable works, including *Mustafa* (1977), *Bir toychoqning xuni* (*The Price of a Foal*, 1979), *Galatepaga qaytish* (*Return to Galatepa*, 1983), *Dasht-u dalalarda* (*In the Steppes*, 1987), and the novel *Lolazor* (*Tulip Grove*, 1988). In recognition of his literary achievements, Murod Muhammad Do'st was awarded the Hamza State Prize in 1990. Alongside his writing career, he held several prominent public positions. He served as General Director of the Uzbek Information Agency and as Chairman of the Uzbekkino State Film Production Company. He later served as an advisor to the Presidential Administration of Uzbekistan.

Novella *Galatepaga qaytish* (*Return to Galatepa*) was first published in 1982 in the literary magazine *Yoshlik* and attracted widespread attention within the literary community. It was subsequently published in book form in 1983. The work portrays the moral and psychological climate that prevailed during the final years of the Soviet period. It received critical acclaim and has remained the subject of literary analysis both at the time of its publication and in subsequent years. Critics have praised Murod Muhammad Dost for enriching the literary language through the incorporation of elements of folk speech and for breaking away from the rigid conventions of socialist realism. The novella also reflects the influence of Western literary movements, particularly the stream-of-consciousness technique, in which the narrative unfolds primarily through the protagonist's memories and inner consciousness rather than through a strictly chronological sequence of events.

Background The village of Galatepa is fictional and does not exist in reality. However, the author borrowed its name from an ancient archaeological site and reimagined it as a contemporary, ordinary Uzbek village. Literary critics have noted that the real-life prototype for the fictional village of Galatepa is the village of Jom in the Samarkand Region, where Murod Muhammad Do'st was born and raised. The characters, their personalities, and the depiction of village life closely resemble those of the author's native community. Many of the characters were inspired by real villagers, particularly the author's father, while others reflect individuals from his literary and social circle. Nevertheless, the characters are fictional creations shaped by the author's imagination rather than direct portrayals of specific individuals. Galatepa serves as a symbol of the protagonist's inner world, representing a space in which he preserves his purity, sincerity, and moral integrity despite the pressures of the outside world.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Toshpo'lat	G'aybarov	A young historian specializing in Islamic history
Samad		G'aybarov's friend, former classmate, and current colleague
Raim	Oqsoqol	G'aybarov's father and former village chairman
Zamira		An archaeologist and G'aybarov's love interest
Qobil		A former mountaineer who is now blind and a member of G'aybarov's circle of friends
Mazluma		Qobil's wife
Shoir	(Poet)	A poet, nicknamed Shoir by his friends
Soqol	(Beard)	A painter, nicknamed Soqol by his friends

SYNOPSIS

The events take place in the late 1970s. Historian and scholar Toshpo'lat G'aybarov returns to his native village to bury his father, Raim Oqsoqol. After performing the funeral rites, the narrative shifts to the events preceding the burial. The novella unfolds through G'aybarov's recollections of both the distant and the recent past. Although he is the eldest son in his family, with an older sister and three younger

brothers, years of living and working in the city have distanced him from his siblings, preventing him from assuming the traditional responsibilities expected of the eldest son. In his youth, his father was imprisoned on false charges. Although he was soon released, the incident left a profound mark on both G'aybarov's memory and his father's later life. After leaving for the city to pursue his studies, G'aybarov became friends with Samad, and their friendship gradually grew stronger. During his student years, he fell in love with a young woman of a different nationality, but the relationship ended unsuccessfully. G'aybarov later earned a PhD and established himself as a talented scholar. Despite his independent character and outspoken nature, the director of the research institute recognizes and values his abilities. Meanwhile, Samad, although less gifted, achieves professional success with greater ease and is preparing to defend his dissertation for the higher Doctor of Science degree. G'aybarov belongs to a circle of talented creative friends, including Qobil, a former mountaineer, the poet Shoir, and the painter Soqol. Following a mountaineering accident, Qobil loses his eyesight. Nevertheless, his friends continue to support him, and he remains an integral part of their circle. At the same time, G'aybarov collaborates with archaeologists on excavation projects in the hope of discovering materials relevant to his historical research. There, he meets Zamira and falls in love with her. Qobil often visits them and spends time in their company. One day, G'aybarov unexpectedly discovers that Samad is having an affair with Qobil's wife. Enraged by his friend's betrayal, G'aybarov beats Samad. Subsequently, Shoir leaves their circle, disillusioned by the others' hypocrisy and insincerity. Later, he comes into conflict with Soqol, during which G'aybarov exposes the artist's selfish nature. The novella ends where it began – with G'aybarov's return to Galatepa, where he reflects on and reassesses his life.

SCENES

Funeral In late spring, G'aybarov's father dies, and he barely reaches the funeral. Everyone, including his brothers, cries, but G'aybarov cannot. As his father's body is lowered into the grave, he becomes dizzy and his vision blurs. After the burial, someone says, "Close the coffin tightly and tell him not to come back". G'aybarov shudders. Who said those words? Was it he himself? He turns and sees Turdiquil.

The Shadow of Violence: Raim Oqsoqol and Turdiquil's Loss Turdiquil believes that Raim Oqsoqol (a respected village elder) kills his father, the thief Panji. Raim, however, claims that he does not kill Panji himself. According to his account, he and his assistant, Ochil Kuch, see Panji climbing over the wall of a private yard. Raim aims his rifle at him, but Ochil Kuch fires the shot. In reality, however, Panji is already captured, his hands bound, when Raim orders Ochil Kuch to shoot him. As a result, Turdiquil and his siblings become orphans, and Turdiquil harbors resentment toward Raim throughout his life.

Panji's Death Later, the police investigate the incident and determine that Panji is standing right next to them when he is shot in the back of the head with a rifle. Raim and Ochil barely manage to placate the police by offering them generous hospitality. Raim justifies his actions by claiming that Panji was a dangerous criminal who had already killed four people and would likely have killed at least two more, particularly Raim himself. Therefore, he believes there was no alternative but to have him shot. Panji is betrayed by his sister Oyparcha, who hides his stolen gold instead of helping him escape, valuing wealth over her brother's safety.

Anzirat's Grief and the Shadow of Suspicion The men return home, and the women begin to weep. Anzirat cries bitterly for Raim, asking why he leaves her and to whom he abandons her. She was Raim Oqsoqol's first wife. They had two daughters, who were still young when Raim and Anzirat divorced; the girls are now married. Raim subsequently married twice more, and in one of his later marriages, he had a son. Anzirat's daughter visits them and plays with the boy. That evening, the child suddenly becomes ill. The doctor says he has suffered brain damage, but there are no visible signs or explanation for what has happened. The boy dies that night. Shortly after his death, his mother dies of grief. G'aybarov's mother, Raim's next wife, accuses the girl of stabbing him in the head with a needle. G'aybarov does not believe the accusation, but he always fears his half-sister.

Raim's Old Friends and the Mullahs' Dispute Raim's old friends receive those who come to offer condolences. Among them are Mullah Chori and Mullah Soat, who discuss religious parables. Mullah Chori is wise and shrewd, while Mullah Soat frequently makes mistakes that Chori quickly corrects. Irritated, Soat retaliates by recalling Chori's past: during the war, Chori is taken prisoner by the Germans and later serves as a mullah in a Muslim battalion under German command.

A Forgotten Act of Mercy: Mullah Chori and Mikhail's Story Later, an event changes people's perception of Mullah Chori. A Jewish man named Mikhail visits him. Imprisoned in a German

concentration camp, Mikhail escapes death thanks to Chori, who serves under the Germans. Responsible for distinguishing Muslims from Jews, Chori saves Mikhail by identifying him as Muslim. Mikhail remains in Galatepe, opens a small shoe-repair shop, and often tells others how Mullah Chori saved his life.

A Son's Resentment: Raim's Friends and the Burden of the Past After this, Mullah Chori becomes close to G'aybarov's father. Raim Oqsoqol feels awkward around Chori and Mikhail because, like him, they do not fight in the war. His government service and position as village headman keep him from the front. Chori, intelligent and perceptive, understands Raim's anxiety. Remembering this, G'aybarov becomes hostile toward his father's two mullah friends and asks them to leave. His relatives disapprove and try to calm him.

The Fear of Loss: G'aybarov's Struggle with Grief G'aybarov and his younger brother, Zokir, have a conversation. Zokir recalls their father's final days and tells G'aybarov how their father often asks about him before his death. He reproaches G'aybarov for not shedding tears or showing grief. Unable to explain his feelings, G'aybarov recalls his aunt's death. As a child, he is overwhelmed by the fear of losing loved ones. Hearing his parents calmly discuss her death, he runs into the street, wishing to die before everyone else because he cannot bear the thought of suffering over someone's death. Zokir does not know how to respond; it is the first time G'aybarov speaks so openly about his deepest feelings.

Wounds of Family Estrangement: A Sister's Reproach G'aybarov is awakened by his older sister, who has arrived late for the funeral. She accuses her brothers of informing her too late. Toshpo'lat tries to console her, but she suddenly notices Anzirat sleeping nearby. Frowning, she asks her brother whether he called her. G'aybarov denies it, explaining that Anzirat came on her own after learning what had happened. However, he secretly admits to himself that he would have called her if he had thought of it. His sister then begins to reproach him for not visiting her even once in the past five years. She believes that he disregards her and her family and considers himself distant from them.

The Hidden Source of Resentment: A Brother's Unintended Betrayal The reason for his sister's resentment lies in an earlier event. In her youth, she dreams of studying in the city, but their father refuses to allow it. At the time, G'aybarov studies at university, and his father asks whether it is wise to send his daughter away. G'aybarov replies that it is probably not a good idea, especially for a young woman, and questions whether she can be trusted. His father is pleased because this is exactly what he expects to hear. Soon afterward, G'aybarov's sister is married off and resents him ever since. In reality, G'aybarov understands that his father will never permit her to study in the city and gives the answer the situation demands.

Shared Grief: A Moment of Reconciliation Anzirat wakes up and recognizes G'aybarov's sister. She asks her to bring water and a basin so that she can wash her face. G'aybarov's sister obediently follows her request, helping her stepmother wash herself. Afterward, the two women begin to cry together, following the traditional mourning customs. Their shared grief brings them closer and temporarily bridges the distance between them.

An Encounter with the Forgotten: G'aybarov and Murod Amaki G'aybarov goes into the yard, where preparations for the wake are underway, and quietly smokes beneath a tree. Suddenly, a pile of carpets near him moves, and Murod *amaki* (Uncle Murod), a mentally ill man, emerges. He asks G'aybarov for money, which he gives him, then offers him a cigarette. Uncle Murod happily accepts it. As he lights it, G'aybarov notices his gray hair and realizes how old he has become.

A Memory of Kindness: Murod Amaki and the Secret of Childhood During Raim's lifetime, Murod visits him often. Raim sets out a special bowl for him and makes sure he is well fed. Murod especially likes the bowl. After eating, he usually sleeps for two days before quietly leaving. G'aybarov recalls that, twenty years earlier, he tries to imitate Murod walking barefoot in the snow. He becomes gravely ill and keeps his foolish attempt secret.

Murod's Tragic Past: Fear, Confinement, and Freedom It is widely believed that Murod's mental illness results from the trauma of war. However, his life story is more complex. He fights in World War II, and after returning home, his uncle notices that he has changed. Murod walks strangely and rarely speaks. Ashamed of his nephew's condition, his uncle confines him in a pit in the house. One day, Raim Oqsoqol rides past, stops at the house, and discovers Murod trapped there. When Raim asks what happened, Murod looks fearfully at his uncle but remains silent. Enraged, Raim strikes the uncle with his riding whip and pulls Murod from the pit. From then on, Murod is free to wander wherever he wishes.

Compassion, Superstition, and the First Mention of the Will G'aybarov and Murod approach the square where neighbors and relatives are gathering to chop carrots for the *palov* (pilaf, a traditional Uzbek rice dish) to be served at the traditional memorial meal the following day. They invite them to join them. Makhan, one of G'aybarov's friends, offers Murod some carrots, but someone points out that he has no teeth. Another man promises to find him dentures. Makhan chides him for being embarrassed to go with Murod, yet doing nothing more than promising to find him dentures instead of taking him to a dentist. He also points out that superstition prevents villagers from naming their children Murod. Despite this superstition, Makhan declares that he will name his son Murod. During the conversation, someone mentions Raim's will, surprising G'aybarov.

The Question of the Will: Suspicion After Death G'aybarov sits alone in the courtyard when a tearful Anzirat approaches him. She accuses his aunt of always being his enemy and claims that she tells everyone Raim suffers terribly before his death, implying that only a sinful person dies in such agony. G'aybarov does not believe her. He explains that Zokir tells him their father simply falls asleep and never awakens. Anzirat asks about Raim's will. G'aybarov says he knows nothing, but then wonders how everyone else knows about it.

The Scent of Memory: G'aybarov's Affection for His Aunt G'aybarov reflects on his aunt, his father's sister. Although Anzirat speaks ill of her, he cannot believe her accusations. Instead, he recalls his childhood memories of his aunt's kindness. He remembers how she used perfume to soothe his aching teeth and how gently she cared for him. His mother always spoke highly of her, while his father, in contrast, dismissed her as frivolous. Despite his father's opinion and Anzirat's accusations, G'aybarov's affection for his aunt has never faded. Even now, the lingering scent of her perfume remains one of his most vivid childhood memories.

Three Days Earlier G'aybarov goes to the excavation site to continue his work with the archaeologists and buys them grapes at the market. When he pays, however, the vendor accuses him of not paying. Confused and offended, G'aybarov angrily returns the grapes and calls the seller dishonest. A heated argument begins, attracting a crowd. An old man approaches and listens to both sides before resolving the dispute. He orders the seller to return the grapes, explaining that if he is dishonest, misfortune will eventually follow, but if he has simply made a mistake, his action can be considered charity. Satisfied, G'aybarov leaves, reminding the seller to count his money. The seller winces.

G'aybarov's Arrival at the Excavation Site When G'aybarov arrives at the excavation site, Zamira carefully cleans dirt from pottery fragments uncovered by the archaeologists. Nearby sits Qobil, a former mountaineer who has lost his sight. G'aybarov playfully teases them, pretending he has caught them declaring their love for each other. Zamira laughs and says he is late. Qobil feels awkward and apologizes, explaining that he is only getting in their way. He says Samad brings him to the site because he wants to visit. G'aybarov jokingly reassures him that he is not jealous.

G'aybarov and Zamira: Admiration Behind the Jokes G'aybarov treats them to the grapes he brings from the market. When Zamira stands up, he is captivated by her slender figure and openly admires her. She playfully chides him for his frankness but takes no offense. Smiling, G'aybarov jokes, "Goodbye, free thinking!" Zamira remarks that he is only pretending to be cheerful and carefree. In reality, she says, he is a very different person. With those words, she climbs out of the excavation pit.

A Song of Sorrow: G'aybarov and Qobil's Quiet Conversation When they are alone, Qobil asks G'aybarov whether Zamira is beautiful. G'aybarov replies that there are more beautiful women, but Qobil insists that she is beautiful and admits that he says this because he is jealous. G'aybarov suggests that Qobil is tired and leads him into the tent. He helps him sit on the bed and advises him to sleep. Qobil asks G'aybarov to stay for a while and then asks whether he feels sorry for him. G'aybarov lies and says no. To comfort him, he asks Qobil to sing a folk song. Qobil sings sadly, while G'aybarov struggles to hold back tears and quietly leaves.

Farewell at the excavation site: G'aybarov's concern for Qobil G'aybarov returns to the excavation site, where Zamira continues her work. A car arrives and stops near the tent. His friend Samad gets out and explains that he has come to take Qobil home. Qobil wants to stay, but Samad says his wife asks him to bring him back. Samad also tells G'aybarov that his supervisor orders him to return to the institute and give a lecture. G'aybarov is displeased because he considers himself on a field expedition and does not want to leave. Samad drives away with Qobil. Seeing Qobil sitting motionless in the backseat, G'aybarov feels deep sympathy for him.

Among the Remains of the Past: G'aybarov and Zamira at an Excavation Site Zamira and G'aybarov visit an excavation site that once serves as a cemetery. She tells him that a friend finds it unusual for a philosopher to work with archaeologists. G'aybarov explains that the director sends him there because he is working on his doctoral dissertation. Although he initially expects to dislike the work, he gradually appreciates it. Zamira photographs and collects the best-preserved skulls, places them in a bag, and asks G'aybarov to carry it. Surprised, he hesitates, but Zamira explains that she should not carry it herself. Reluctantly, G'aybarov agrees to help.

A Memory of Betrayal: Samad's Jealous Performance G'aybarov recalls an event from eight years earlier. One day, Samad hands him his keys and says, "Go to my place and put the kettle on; I'll be right back. When G'aybarov arrives, he meets Samad's young girlfriend. They sit together and have a pleasant conversation. At that moment, Samad suddenly appears and, seeing his girlfriend talking comfortably with another man, begins to say cruel and insulting things. G'aybarov feels uncomfortable, but when he looks at the girl sitting there, he realizes that the entire scene is an act. The girl quietly picks up her inexpensive bag and leaves.

The Silence of a Broken Relationship After she leaves, Samad begins to blame himself, admitting that he knows he is a jerk, but he no longer loves her. He cannot bring himself to say the words outright: "I don't love you anymore". G'aybarov stands up and walks away, promising himself that he will never return.

Samad's Marriage to Masuma The following day, Samad approaches G'aybarov, overwhelmed with remorse and seeking his help. G'aybarov advises him to find the young woman and apologize, but she refuses to forgive him. G'aybarov then tries to speak with her personally, but he also fails. Heartbroken and distressed, Samad again asks G'aybarov for guidance. This time, G'aybarov advises him to marry. Through their close circle of talented friends, Shoir, meaning "poet", and his wife introduce Samad to Masuma, a suitable young woman from a respected family. Samad marries Masuma, and they build a happy family. They have a daughter and live peacefully together.

Friendship Circle and Samad's Criticism of G'aybarov Masuma is happy with Samad, and they have a small circle of friends that includes poets, an artist, several scientists, and two government officials. They gather once a month to spend time together. G'aybarov often visits their home, and Samad and Masuma's young daughter is especially fond of him. Masuma observes the conversations between Samad and G'aybarov. During one of their discussions, Samad criticizes G'aybarov for being too slow, for not making progress on his doctoral dissertation, for lacking initiative, and for failing to write articles for his supervisor. Masuma feels embarrassed by G'aybarov's quiet acceptance of Samad's criticism.

Samad's Uncomfortable Joke and the Memory of Inara Samad's niece enters the room with his young daughter. After they leave for another room, Samad jokingly suggests that he might marry his niece, making G'aybarov uncomfortable. Samad then asks about G'aybarov's former girlfriend, Inara, and whether she still writes to him. G'aybarov does not want to recall the past and reluctantly says, "No". When Masuma asks about Inara, Samad lies, claiming she is only a cleaning lady who once asks G'aybarov to send her wool for knitting socks. Masuma realizes that Samad is lying and becomes angry. She leaves, and soon her daughter tells her that G'aybarov has left.

G'aybarov's First Love and the Purity of Childhood Feelings G'aybarov recalls his past and his first love. He was only a first-grader when he fell in love with his classmate Inara. Their feelings were sincere and pure, untouched by the complexities of adult life. He loved telling her about his wonderful fantasies of their future wedding, and she enjoyed listening to his stories. The only thing that troubled him was that Inara belonged to a different religion. However, he believed that this difference did not matter. "Our religion is love", he tells her, expressing the innocence and sincerity of his feelings.

Love, Illness, and Uncertainty: G'aybarov's Confusion Inara falls ill and is admitted to the hospital. After classes, student G'aybarov works as a hired laborer to earn money so that he can buy expensive fruit and sweets for her. However, Inara treats him coldly and does not even look at the gifts he brings. Confused and hurt, G'aybarov cannot understand her reaction. The doctor calls him aside and tells him that he should marry Inara as soon as possible. G'aybarov is bewildered by this unexpected suggestion. Unable to make sense of the situation, he tells Samad about the conversation.

The Pain of Unspoken Love: Inara's Rejection Inara stood up, covering her face with her fingers as tears streamed down her cheeks. G'aybarov asked why she had not told him about it sooner, but she replied that he should not have said anything. When he asked when it had happened, she refused

to answer. G'aybarov then asked who the man was and whether he knew him. Inara again refused to reveal his identity. She asked him to leave her alone, saying that all he could do was tell tales. She admitted that she was tired of his tales and told him that he could not love her anymore because he would hate her. It is a long memory, but G'aybarov does not forget.

The Unfinished Dream of Counting Literary Characters Shoir, the poet, often invites unusual people to his gatherings. One day, he brings a cyberneticist and enthusiastically shares an idea: to count all the fictional characters in Uzbek literature. Inspired by the project, they begin working eagerly. Shoir gathers stacks of books, while the cyberneticist systematically counts and catalogues the characters in each work. Their unusual undertaking puzzles everyone around them. Eventually, the artist nicknamed "Soqol" ("Beard") mocks the project and points out its absurdity. His sarcastic criticism deeply disappoints Shoir. Discouraged, he and his cyberneticist friend abandon the project after spending considerable money purchasing books for their ambitious experiment.

A Breath of Fresh Air: Shoir's New Passion One day, Shoir introduces a new guest to the gathering – a young, handsome mountaineer named Qobil Murodov. Everyone warmly welcomes him. Qobil brings fresh energy to the circle of self-proclaimed "gifted" individuals, whose meetings have become somewhat routine and monotonous. Inspired by his new friend, Shoir becomes fascinated with the mountains and the world of mountaineering. Before long, he begins training, dreaming of one day becoming a mountaineer himself.

The Tragic Return of Qobil Suddenly, Qobil disappeared. A month later, he returned accompanied by a nurse. He was pale, limping on one leg, and blind. When the others asked what had happened, he briefly explained: "I was in the mountains. I fell into a ravine and lay there for two days. I didn't have my glasses, and the sun damaged my eyes". Later, Masuma, Samad's wife, explained what had happened to Qobil. In the high mountains, where the air is thinner and ultraviolet rays are much stronger, the harsh conditions had severely affected his health. He also developed a kidney infection. As a result of these injuries and complications, Qobil lost his eyesight.

Mazluma's Loyalty and Compassion Qobil does not leave the house for more than a year. During this time, he learns the Braille alphabet for the visually impaired. Feeling that he has become a burden, he tells his wife that she is still young and free to leave him and marry someone else. However, she refuses and tells him that she will never abandon him. Later, Qobil returns to his home province. Mazluma goes there with Samad, and they bring him back home. Samad deeply admires Mazluma's loyalty and devotion and praises her for her faithfulness.

G'aybarov's Search for His Own Truth G'aybarov approaches the director of the institute, his superior. The director asks him to deliver a lecture to professors in the social sciences department. He explains that Samad recommends him because he is busy working on his doctoral dissertation. Although initially reluctant, G'aybarov agrees. The director then asks about his age and tells him it is time to devote himself to something more serious. With a hint of envy, he mentions an academic from another institute, G'aybarov's rival, who has already trained many PhD students. He questions why G'aybarov spends so much time searching, reminding him that he is a scholar of religion. G'aybarov replies that he wants to discover the truth on his own.

G'aybarov's Unconventional Lecture on Religion and Folklore G'aybarov delivers a lecture to the faculty, beginning with the history of religion. He discusses *jinn*s and *devs* (giants), using myths and legends to illustrate his ideas. Rather than following conventional academic discourse, he allows his imagination to shape the lecture. He views *jinn*s as gentler and more docile than *devs*. He explains that *devs* are products of folklore, while *jinn*s originate in Arabic and Islamic tradition. His unconventional approach captures the audience's attention, and his humor keeps them engaged. However, the institute's director becomes uneasy whenever G'aybarov speaks too boldly and repeatedly tries to restrain him during the lecture.

The Mysterious Grape Seller Suddenly, G'aybarov recognizes the man who sells him grapes at the market. However, he looks slightly different: he wears a suit and tie, and his hair is neatly styled. G'aybarov interrupts his lecture and asks him to leave. The man is confused, so G'aybarov reminds him of what happens at the market the previous day. The seller denies it, claiming that he arrives from the provinces that morning. The young woman sitting beside him confirms his story. G'aybarov remains confused but insists that he leave. A commotion erupts in the hall, and the director steps in and calms everyone down.

Sotiboldiyev's Interest in Gaibarov After the lecture, the director asks G'aybarov to go with him. On the way, he tells him that Professor Sotiboldiyev has expressed interest in him and offered him a position. G'aybarov declines. Although the director disapproves of his freethinking, he is pleased with his decision. He advises G'aybarov to be more careful and to take his research seriously. He then complains that an ideological error in his youth has blocked his path to a career. G'aybarov involuntarily tells him not to play the victim, but inwardly he begins to pity him. The director abruptly asks him to get out of the car, calling him a "snot-nosed brat". As the car drives away, G'aybarov notices a smile on his lips.

Shoir's Desire to Escape G'aybarov meets Shoir and Soqol. They are drinking wine. Shoir is deeply sad and says that he wants to go somewhere. He feels as though life is passing him by and that he is somehow outside of it. Soqol chuckles sarcastically, which irritates G'aybarov. Shoir says goodbye and tells G'aybarov, "You won't believe it, but I'm really leaving – not going home, but going far, far away".

A Year Earlier G'aybarov recalls a conflict with his father. When he comes to visit him, he finds his father talking with Mullah Chori. His father tells Chori about his past and how he once helped a friend who was a *Basmachi*, a member of the anti-Soviet national liberation movement of the 1920s. He recalls how he threatened the investigator who had come to arrest his friend, forcing him to abandon the arrest. Mullah Chori, who had become disillusioned with the Soviet regime, ironically expresses sympathy for Raim, a staunch opponent of Soviet rule who had also resisted it.

A Painful Conflict Between Father and Son When Mullah Chori leaves, G'aybarov asks his father not to speak with him. Raim becomes angry and insists that he will speak to whomever he chooses. G'aybarov explains that he is afraid of what he might become himself, which is why he has been talking to Mullah Chori. Raim grows furious and tells him that if he is ashamed of him and thinks he is a bore, then he should kill him. G'aybarov responds that his father has lost his mind with old age, but he later regrets saying those words.

Raim's Visit to the City Five months later, Raim visits his son in the city. He has lost weight and looks noticeably older. His father suggests that G'aybarov should marry. Feeling sorry for him, G'aybarov suggests returning to the village, but Raim refuses, explaining that he is now a stranger there. G'aybarov asks whether he needs money. Raim looks at him reproachfully, offended by the question. Had he really come to see his son only for money? He spends the night and then returns to the village.

Memory G'aybarov recalls his childhood and his father's arrest. Raim Oqsoqol was imprisoned after disgruntled fellow villagers accused him of slander. Despite having served his village honorably, he was arrested, leaving young G'aybarov and his family to endure humiliation and shame. Two years later, Raim was released with the help of an official who knew him as a strong and respected leader. When he returned to the village, he was offered a position as assistant to the new chairman, but he refused. The pain and humiliation of those years remain deeply etched in G'aybarov's soul.

The Day Before G'aybarov is working at an excavation site when he suddenly comes across a small statue of a god. Delighted to have found what he has been searching for, he rushes to Zamira, who is dozing in a chair. He embraces her and kisses her. At first, Zamira pulls away from him, but when she learns about his discovery, she happily embraces him in return. She recognizes the statue as the goddess Diana – a rare and significant find for the religious scholar G'aybarov. Excited by the discovery, he suggests that they celebrate the occasion and invites her to a café.

An Unexpected Encounter Zamira and G'aybarov are sitting in a café. A waitress serves them, and G'aybarov jokingly shows her the gold bracelets he found during the excavation. Seeing the gold, she doubts that they were actually found at the site. At that moment, a car pulls up, and Samad and Qobil approach them. G'aybarov tells them the news. Samad congratulates them and says that he will leave Qobil with them. He has to go because his wife is feeling ill, and then he leaves.

A Bottle from Paris The police arrive, and Zamira realizes that the waitress must have called them. She approaches the officers and explains where the gold came from – it was an archaeological find. The police decide to help her, and she leaves with them. Qobil and G'aybarov remain behind. G'aybarov wants to order another bottle of wine, but Qobil stops him and asks him to bring the French liquor he brought back from Paris. Qobil's house is nearby, so he gives G'aybarov the key and asks him to go get it. G'aybarov leaves.

The Blind Husband Will Never Find Him G'aybarov enters Qobil's house. He is about to head to the kitchen, where the alcohol is kept, when he suddenly sees Mazluma, Qobil's wife. She looks distracted, her hair disheveled and her clothes in disarray. G'aybarov apologizes and explains that he will simply take the alcohol and leave, as Qobil asked him to bring it. He hurries back to the citadel, where he is stunned by what he sees: Samad, stripped to the waist, is pinned against the wall. Mazluma's blind husband will never find him.

Do You Remember Inara? G'aybarov attacks and beats Samad. In response, Samad reminds him of Inara and brazenly admits to seducing her. Shaken by the revelation of his friend's betrayal and overwhelmed by memories of Inara and years of suppressed resentment, G'aybarov wants to expose and publicly shame his former friend and Mazluma, but ultimately restrains himself and walks away.

Soqol G'aybarov is at home, in a bad mood. Soqol arrives and immediately starts scolding him for letting Shoir leave. He has two children, his wife is pregnant, and she has been complaining nonstop. G'aybarov tries to calm him down, assuring him that Shoir will go away for a while and eventually come back on his own. They call Shoir's wife and reassure her, telling her that he is at the excavation site with the archaeologists. G'aybarov offers Soqol a drink.

Soqol's Past G'aybarov recalls Soqol's past. When Soqol's first painting is rejected, he becomes deeply upset and leaves for his village. His friends send G'aybarov to bring him back. When G'aybarov arrives, he finds Soqol lying on a dirty rug beneath a tree. Following his friends' advice, G'aybarov tells him a few lies to persuade him to return to the city, but Soqol refuses. Instead, he leaves home and seeks out a dark-skinned village girl. He tells her he is married and promises that they will open a factory for producing babies together.

Soqol Returns to the City G'aybarov gives up and spends the night in the village with his friends. The next morning, as he prepares to return to the city, Soqol suddenly appears at the train station and begs to go with him. Soqol arrives in Tashkent with his wife and becomes a successful artist. However, his first wife cannot adapt to city life and eventually flees back to the village. Soqol now has a second wife.

Another Friend Lost G'aybarov remembers Soqol's village wife and jokingly asks whether she would marry him again. Soqol dislikes the idea. G'aybarov explains that he once imagines himself as an ant and watches ants lay eggs. Like an ant, he says, he leaves one egg behind. "Just one?" Soqol asks. "For people like you, everything is better when it doubles", G'aybarov replies. He adds that he sees Soqol there, watching from above. Soqol grows bored and questions G'aybarov's incomprehensible thoughts. G'aybarov admits that Samad is a liar, and so is he. Suddenly, he asks Soqol to leave. Furious, Soqol walks out, leaving G'aybarov hurt.

Father's Death G'aybarov learns of his father's death. He arrives in Galatea and attends the funeral. He is greeted by his three brothers and is especially sympathetic toward the youngest. He thinks, "I was unhappy with my father, and now I regret it. He was my father". Suddenly, his life takes on new meaning. He is now in mourning.

Samad's Mother G'aybarov can't help thinking of Samad's mother. When they are students, Samad often takes him to visit her. She is always delighted to see them and tries to treat them to all sorts of delicacies. A simple village girl, their neighbor, secretly dreams of marrying Samad and helps the elderly woman. Samad feels awkward in front of G'aybarov because the girl clearly makes it known that she wants to marry him. Whenever she approaches, Samad loudly begins talking about scientific topics. G'aybarov understands what Samad is doing and smiles. He likes everything about this place.

The Age of His Mother When Samad's mother dies, G'aybarov goes to express his condolences. When he arrives, he finds Samad drinking wine with a beautiful young woman. G'aybarov is confused. Samad begins to cry, complaining that he has lost the only woman he loved and is now lonely and suffering. He says his mother could have lived longer – she would have turned 80 this year. G'aybarov sympathizes with him. But as he walks away, he feels a sense of unease. Samad's mother wasn't even 80; she hadn't even turned 70.

Murod Amaki After the funeral, the mourners sit down to dinner. G'aybarov joins the elderly Ibodullah Maksim. Murod *amaki* (Uncle Murod), a mentally ill man, appears, and Ibodullah Maksim invites him to join them. They eat from the same plate while everyone watches. G'aybarov feels no awkwardness about eating with Murod. Ibodullah tells him how Murod served in World War II and how

a German soldier hit him with the butt of a rifle. The effects of the war left Murod mentally ill. Like a child, Murod complains about the people who hurt him, calling them by name.

A Bitter Childhood Memory G'aybarov recalls his childhood. Murod is a frequent target because the children love to bully him. They grab the hem of his old coat and pelt him with stones as he runs. One day, little G'aybarov throws a stone at Murod's forehead. At first, he feels happy, but later, when he finds himself alone with Murod, he sees blood running from his forehead. Murod complains like a child that everyone is beating him. Little G'aybarov begins to cry bitterly, overcome with pity and regret.

The Road to Cho'nqaymish Murod walks on, and G'aybarov follows him. Murod wants to reach another village, Cho'nqaymish, where he has a friend who is like him. Murod approaches a thorny grove and begins trampling it with his bare feet. G'aybarov closes his eyes. When he opens them, Murod has stepped onto an ordinary dusty road. G'aybarov catches up with him and stops him. "I love you, Uncle Murod", he says. "Chairman is a good man", Murod replies. "No, he died", G'aybarov says.

Murod Knows "Raim isn't dead. You're his son, after all". G'aybarov is shocked. For a moment, Murod speaks like a perfectly healthy man. "Say that again", G'aybarov asks. Murod repeats that he is Toshpo'lat, Raim's son. G'aybarov begins to cry. He wants to take the will his father gave him from his pocket, but he stops himself. It is as if Murod has just repeated exactly what is written in the will. Soon, Murod returns to his confused state and leaves for Cho'nqaymish. G'aybarov watches the mentally ill old man walk away beneath the blazing sun. Behind him stands a young man with hope shining in his eyes, watching Murod sadly – G'aybarov himself. The scene is imprinted on his memory. Along with the pain, he feels a purified love.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

G 'AYBAROV

G'aybarov embodies a generation of free-thinking intellectuals from the late Soviet "era of stagnation" (the 1970s–early 1980s), a generation deeply shaken by a moral and spiritual crisis. He avidly seeks the truth, striving for spiritual purity and honesty.

Compassionate G'aybarov is naturally sensitive to the suffering of others. He cannot remain indifferent when people judge others based solely on their own perceptions or interests; he instinctively strives for a more balanced and humane understanding. Even as a child, he deeply sympathized with the feeble-minded Murod. He also recognizes the suffering of his stepmother, Raim's first wife, who was left alone with her two daughters, and is deeply troubled by Samad's cruel behavior toward his girlfriend. Even when confronted with his father's troubled and contradictory past, G'aybarov neither defends nor condemns him blindly. He acknowledges his father's mistakes without excusing his sins. Thus, his pursuit of justice is not simply a matter of defining good and evil; it is an attempt to understand people fairly, compassionately, and without prejudice.

Romantic G'aybarov strives for an ideal, pure, and harmonious world shaped by his imagination. He remains faithful to this ideal in his actions and expects the same purity and sincerity from others. Yet this idealism often leads to disappointment. For example, the selfish, pragmatic, and successful Samad lies to him for a long time, and G'aybarov believes him. He cannot accept the pragmatic nature of Soqol, an artist who achieves success despite his mediocre talent but coldly and calmly abandons his village wife and turns his back on his roots. Even in science, G'aybarov refuses to take the easy path; instead, he chooses something unusual, challenging, and difficult to achieve. His romantic nature compels him to pursue what he considers meaningful and ideal, even when a more practical path would be easier.

Trusting Despite his intelligence, abilities, and wit, G'aybarov can sometimes be overly trusting. He believes Samad's lies and, to his shame, neither understands nor even suspects that his beloved Inara is betraying him and is pregnant with Samad's child. His friends often take advantage of his trust for their own purposes. Samad slyly offers to lecture G'aybarov, while Soqol, true to his name, promises Shoir's wife that he will bring Shoir home.

SAMAD

Samad represents the generation shaped by the late Soviet stagnation era, embodying its spiritual crisis, moral ambiguity, and culture of deception and pretense. Yet his character transcends his historical context: his deep-seated selfishness and opportunism reveal a timeless capacity for manipulation and moral compromise.

Hypocritical Samad always tries to appear honest and willing to help others, and he manages to convince people of his sincerity. He understands the moral difference between good and evil but treats these principles as abstract rules that are easily broken when they conflict with his desires. For example, he lies to G'aybarov, pretending to sympathize with him over his breakup with Inara, when in fact he has vilely betrayed him by seducing his lover. He also poses as a loyal friend, helping the family of the blind man Qobil, while secretly having an affair with Qobil's wife. Similarly, he pretends to be deeply saddened by his mother's death, although her death did not particularly affect him. When G'aybarov comes to offer his condolences and introduces him to a young woman, Samad puts on a display of grief and tearfully explains that he is simply trying to escape the loneliness caused by his mother's death.

Pragmatic Samad knows where he can benefit and skillfully takes advantage of every opportunity. He marries Masuma, a woman from a respectable family with a good profession, not out of love but for practical reasons. He knows how to deal with the institute's director, making a favorable impression and quickly advancing his career. Without any particular scientific or creative talent of his own, he nevertheless manages to enter a circle of influential people where connections matter more than merit.

Persistent Samad knows exactly what he wants and pursues his goals relentlessly. He is not afraid to use any means necessary – lies, cunning, cruelty, or betrayal – to get what he wants. Whether in marriage, his professional career, or even the gratification of his desires, he pursues his objectives boldly and directly and almost always achieves them. His persistence is therefore inseparable from his willingness to disregard moral boundaries in pursuit of his goals.

RAIM OQSOQOL

Raim Oqsoqol does not play a direct role in the plot, appearing primarily in G'aybarov's memories. Nevertheless, he plays a significant role in revealing G'aybarov's character. Raim's contradictory nature was shaped by the contradictions of the ruling system itself, which was built upon and sustained by such inherent contradictions.

Pragmatic Raim, a man of lower-class origins, is pragmatic and has risen to become the village elder. He is devoted to the new Soviet system and faithfully carries out its orders. However, when necessary, he sometimes goes against its instructions when they conflict with his own interests. In such cases, he resorts to other methods, including lavish hospitality, threats, violence, and even killing. This is what happened with Panji, a thief, whom Raim killed with the help of a foolish servant because he believed that Panji, if left alive, would certainly have killed him. He also uses such methods when the authorities seek to arrest his friend, a *basmachi* (member of the Central Asian anti-Soviet resistance movement, c. 1916–1930s); Raim saves him by threatening the investigator.

Stubborn Raim is difficult to convince when it comes to his views on people and situations. He believes that a girl who studies in the city will inevitably “go bad”, and therefore refuses to let his daughter study there. Raim also harbors deep resentment toward his first wife and refuses to explain the true reason for their divorce. He considers his lonely sister frivolous simply because she longs for family happiness. His disapproval is also evident in his reaction to her fondness for perfume, which symbolizes her attempt to preserve her youth.

Compassionate Although outwardly heartless and stubborn, Raim can also be compassionate. He is especially kind to the mentally ill Murod and even punishes Murod's uncle for his cruel treatment of his ailing nephew. Raim constantly cares for Murod, always keeping his door open to him. He also saves a fellow villager who holds views opposed to the Soviet system and was previously a member of the National Liberation Movement from unjust punishment, remembering that they were childhood friends who grew up together.

THEMES

POLITCS

Conflict This novella reflects the mood of the intelligentsia in the 1980s, during the so-called period of stagnation. As is well known, this was a period of economic and spiritual crisis under the Soviet regime. Although its ideology presented the system as ideal and humane, its lies and imperfections became increasingly apparent. In the novella, G'aybarov's generation is dissatisfied with the deception and hypocrisy of the ruling system. Honest characters are overcome by boredom, disillusionment, and a yearning for something genuine and pure. At the same time, some characters feel quite comfortable in an atmosphere where lies and corruption are encouraged, such as Samad and Soqol.

Illustrative Moment: G'aybarov meets Shoir and Soqol, who are drinking, and they invite him to join them. G'aybarov reluctantly agrees. Shoir looks sad and dissatisfied, while Soqol, by contrast, is cheerful and constantly teases him. Shoir tells G'aybarov that he wants to leave and go somewhere else. He feels as happy as a sack of flour and dreams that someone will come and hit him. He reflects that when a person stops thinking about himself, he becomes good. Then he asks G'aybarov to look around. G'aybarov follows his gaze: people are walking and cars are moving. Shoir says, "This is life, and it goes on. I'm sitting here. We're just having pleasant conversations, praising and boasting. We're happy, but life goes on". He declares his intention to leave. Soqol mocks him, revealing his complacent attitude toward their situation. Shoir becomes angry and wants to beat him, but G'aybarov calms them down. Soqol offers G'aybarov another drink, but Shoir and G'aybarov refuse the offer and leave. As they part, Shoir says goodbye and insists that he will leave. This episode illustrates the conflict between Shoir's dissatisfaction with his stagnant existence and Soqol's comfortable acceptance of it. Their opposing attitudes reflect the tension between those who seek change and authenticity and those who adapt to conformity and empty social rituals.

RELATIONSHIPS

Love In the novel, love is portrayed as something pure and ideal, stronger than physical attraction. G'aybarov's first love for Inara is filled with beautiful dreams and fantasies that make him feel as though he is soaring. When harsh reality shatters these illusions, he initially cannot understand or accept what has happened, particularly Inara's seduction by his friend Samad. He suffers for a long time and continues to search for pure love. Even when he meets Zamira, his feelings remain conflicted: at times, she resembles the idealized lover of his imagination; at other times, she is completely different from the woman he has imagined.

Illustrative Moment: Young G'aybarov, who comes to the city to study, falls in love with a fellow student. During a visit to his uncle's home, after a few drinks, he tells his uncle's kind wife about his feelings. The story he invents sounds astonishing, but in reality, it was very simple: they watched a movie at the cinema; he remembered her hand and left knee, and then they shared an innocent kiss beside an artificial palm tree in the cinema. He wants to describe the details, thrilled by his courage and feeling like a hero, but he does not know how to express his feelings. Everything he says sounds dry and awkward. He wants to cry. This episode illustrates the mixed nature of love, which is at once pure and sincere yet not devoid of physical attraction.

Fatherhood In the novella, Raim, the father, plays a key role in revealing the protagonist's character. Raim is an archetypal traditional Eastern father whose calm, authoritative presence has always influenced G'aybarov. He is a product of a harsh, uncompromising rural reality in which survival requires a ruthless kind of strength. In contrast, G'aybarov, shaped by a softer intellectual and urban life, feels both inferior to his father's strength and morally superior to it. His father's contradictory personality becomes a source of G'aybarov's conflicting feelings. He recognizes his father's many strengths, but also his weaknesses and sins, which he cannot accept. He experiences ambivalent feelings toward his father: he loves him, yet at times he also hates him. He admires his father's courage and fearlessness in taking extreme measures to achieve his goals, but at times he cannot fully accept such actions.

Illustrative Moment: Several of those who had come to the funeral carried the large coffin to the grave. One of them climbed down into the grave and, together with Uncle Naim, lowered the coffin into it. They spread grass over the top, and Uncle Naim laid the coffin flat. "Lock him up so that he never gets out!.." G'aybarov trembled. He was ashamed and afraid that the others had heard it. But he could hardly believe what he had heard: "Did somebody really say that? No, it must have been said so quietly that no one could have heard it. But who said it?" Then he was suddenly startled: "Really? Did I actually say it? No, only a wicked person could say such a thing. Someone had spoken the words with excitement. This is bad". He turned around, saw Turdiquil, and understood. Turdiquil hated Raim because Raim had killed his father. This episode illustrates the son's contradictory attitude toward his father and his inner struggle between love and hostility.

Betrayal In the novel, betrayal occurs twice, on both occasions involving G'aybarov's close friend, Samad. In the first instance, it is G'aybarov's lover, Inara; in the second, it is Qobil's wife, Mazluma. In both cases, Samad is the traitor, and both women admit their guilt. Inara suffers from having destroyed their pure dreams, while Mazluma suffers from having treated her blind husband, whom she once loved, so cruelly. Both women are unable to overcome their physical attraction. The latent conflict between G'aybarov and Samad reaches its climax when G'aybarov witnesses Mazluma's betrayal together with

Samad. At this moment, Samad's true nature, hidden beneath a mask of nobility and humanity, is finally revealed.

Illustrative Moment: G'aybarov witnesses Mazluma's betrayal with Samad. He mutters, "This is bad". He grabs a ladle hanging on the kitchen wall and strikes Samad on the head. Blood begins to run down Samad's face. Samad tries to say something, but G'aybarov cuts him off. "Imagine coming home and finding me with your wife". Samad is furious, but fear holds him back. "You want me to take your wife and your daughter, too?" Then G'aybarov begins beating him – because of Qobil, because of Samad's wife, because of his daughter, and because of everything that has been festering inside him. Samad glares at him. "You envy me". But he knows G'aybarov does not. Then Samad says, "Do you remember your Inara?" G'aybarov freezes. He still remembers Inara. "Was that you?" The words cut deep. G'aybarov is overwhelmed with pain and rage. He strikes Samad again. He wants to expose and publicly shame the man who betrayed him and his beloved. He orders Samad to undress and tells him to make his mistress undress as well. Samad tearfully obeys but refuses to undress his mistress. G'aybarov then orders Mazluma to undress. Mazluma cries and begs him not to tell Qobil. G'aybarov turns away and repeats his order. Misinterpreting his intention, Mazluma undresses and angrily shouts, "Come on, you all want this". G'aybarov turns around, sees Mazluma naked, spits at her, and walks away. In this episode, the way one responds to betrayal becomes a measure of one's humanity and moral character.

SEXUALITY

Desire Desire is not explicitly expressed in the novella, yet it plays an important role in revealing the characters' personalities. Samad's attraction to women is portrayed as raw and instinctive, while G'aybarov's passion is conveyed indirectly through ambiguous and sensual details. At the same time, the novella explores the inexplicable and irrational nature of attraction. For G'aybarov, a woman's body – her hand, knee, slender figure, and the scent of her perfume – becomes a source of both romantic fascination and physical desire. The writer explores deeper psychological dimensions of desire, including physical attraction, unconscious associations, and nostalgia, highlighting the mysterious and irrational forces that shape human attraction.

Illustrative Moment G'aybarov recalls childhood memories of his aunt. Whenever he has a toothache, his mother takes him to his aunt, who is gentle and kind and even cries over his pain. He remembers how she soothes his toothache with perfume and caresses him in a charming voice. The pain gradually subsides, and afterward, his aunt gives him a red apple scented with perfume. As a teenager, he pretends to have a toothache so that his aunt will treat him with perfume again, filling his body with bliss. Even now, the lingering scent remains one of his most vivid childhood memories. He understands that the perfume represents his aunt's youth, which she longs to preserve.

PSYCHOLOGY

Guilt In the novel, the protagonist experiences guilt because of his hatred of his father. He constantly feels pressured by his overbearing and stubborn father and cannot accept the contradictory actions imposed upon him by the harsh constraints of the system. Although he was raised within the ideology of the existing system, he recognizes certain injustices that sometimes make his father's actions seem justified. For example, he despises and blames his father for his friendship with Mullah Chori because of Mullah Chori's service to the Germans during World War II, yet he cannot accept the fact that Mullah Chori also saved lives when he had the opportunity, as in the case of Mikhail, a Jew. His father's death awakens a deep sense of guilt in him, despite his rejection of his father's values and actions.

Illustrative Moment: G'aybarov is riding on a train that seems to be heading toward a strange and unfamiliar place. The streets are different, the houses are different, and even the people greeting him seem like strangers. The only person he recognizes is the deceased – his father, Raim, the village elder and chairman. G'aybarov prays to God: "Have mercy on him and forgive his sins, for we are all sinners. When the time comes to wash away our sins, our lives will not be long enough to cleanse them all. You are everywhere, wherever we go, East or West; You are everywhere, and only You know our secrets. Come to my father, forgive his sins, so that he will not be tormented by remorse for his past sins or regret them, but will find at least a little comfort and peace in the life he has lived". He holds his breath and says, "I was angry with him, and now I feel guilty. That was my father..." Then he adds, "I was a hypocrite. I didn't believe in You. Forgive me for that too. You are all-forgiving". This episode reveals G'aybarov's deep sense of guilt after his father's death. His prayer turns into a confession in which he not only asks for forgiveness for his father but also acknowledges his own anger and rejection.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the main cause of the conflict between the son and his father in the novella?
2. Why does G'aybarov become convinced of his friend Samad's dishonesty only at the very end of the novella, despite several earlier hints of his deceit?
3. How would you assess the spiritual atmosphere among intellectuals during the late Soviet period as portrayed in the novella?
4. What symbolic and narrative role does Murod **amaki**, a mentally ill character, play in the novella?
5. What character type can G'aybarov be classified as?