



## **THE REVELATION OF HUMAN CHARACTER THROUGH TRIALS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BEKJON AND GAVHAR IN O‘LMAS UMARBKOV'S CHO‘LI IROQ**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the artistic and ideological significance of the characters Bekjon and Gavhar in O‘lmas Umarbekov’s novella Cho‘li Iroq. It analyzes their personalities, relationships, and character development through various life challenges. Particular attention is paid to the similarities and differences between the two protagonists and their role in revealing the author's views on love, spiritual strength, responsibility, and the consequences of human choices. The study demonstrates that these characters serve as important artistic means for conveying the moral and philosophical ideas of the work.

**Keywords:** O‘lmas Umarbekov, Cho‘li Iroq, Bekjon, Gavhar, character analysis, comparative analysis, artistic image, spiritual resilience, moral values, human nature, symbolism, belated understanding.

### **Introduction**

Cho‘li Iroq is one of the remarkable works of Uzbek literature that explores a wide range of social and moral issues. At the center of the novella are themes of family, spirituality, love, and the values that shape human character. The title itself refers to the traditional melody “Cho‘li Iroq,” which symbolizes purity, beauty, and the noble qualities hidden within the human soul. Through contrasting characters and their destinies, the author encourages readers to reflect on the meaning of life and the responsibility individuals bear for their actions. In addition to these themes, the work places particular emphasis on willpower, faith, and courage. In my opinion, these are among the central ideas of the story. The relationship between Bekjon and Gavhar serves as a vivid illustration of how love and human character are tested by life's hardships. Although Bekjon falls into despair and gradually loses hope after being



separated from his beloved, Gavhar remains steadfast and refuses to surrender to hopelessness. Her perseverance and unwavering faith demonstrate that genuine love requires patience, resilience, and spiritual strength.

The novella further suggests that the durability of any relationship is inevitably tested by various challenges. Only those who possess strong determination, trust, and moral courage are capable of overcoming such trials. Through the images of Bekjon and Gavhar, the author reveals that human beings inevitably face difficulties throughout their lives, and it is through these ordeals that their true nature becomes apparent. Failure to withstand these tests may lead to regret and disappointment, a reality portrayed convincingly in the story. Moreover, Bekjon and Gavhar represent two contrasting personalities with different attitudes toward life. Their experiences demonstrate that life itself acts as a judge, revealing people's strengths and weaknesses through the trials they encounter. Another important aspect highlighted in the novella is homesickness and the emotional pain of living far from one's homeland. The work emphasizes that the blessings and spiritual comfort provided by one's native land cannot easily be replaced in foreign countries. Thus, Cho'li Iroq presents not only a story of love and separation but also a profound reflection on human endurance, loyalty, responsibility, and attachment to one's homeland.

### **Bekjon as a Character**

Bekjon is one of the central characters in Cho'li Iroq, and through his personality and life experiences the author reveals important ideas concerning human nature, spiritual endurance, and the consequences of one's choices. The writer skillfully portrays Bekjon's character by referring to his childhood and family background. Being the only and beloved son of his parents, Bekjon grows up in comfort and security, without experiencing serious hardships. Accustomed to a peaceful and prosperous life, he develops a rather sensitive nature and lacks the ability to endure severe difficulties. In this respect, his upbringing foreshadows the challenges he will later encounter and partly explains his vulnerability in times of crisis. Following the death of his parents, books become Bekjon's greatest source of consolation and spiritual support.

During this difficult period, Konstantin Stepanovich, a close friend of Bekjon's father, plays a crucial role in shaping the young man's future. He encourages Bekjon not to surrender to despair and motivates him to pursue a career in teaching. Furthermore, Konstantin Stepanovich inspires him, together with a group of young people, to



continue his education in Moscow. This guidance becomes a turning point in Bekjon's life and later serves as an important stage in the testing of his willpower and personal maturity. It is during this period that Bekjon reunites with his childhood friend, Gavhar. Their meeting marks the beginning of a relationship that significantly influences both characters' destinies. Through his interactions with Gavhar and other people around him, Bekjon's strengths and weaknesses gradually become evident. Although he possesses sincerity and noble feelings, his inability to withstand emotional suffering and his tendency to lose hope reveal the fragile side of his character.

The development of Bekjon's image throughout the novella demonstrates that a person's true nature is disclosed through trials and hardships. His experiences suggest that love alone is not sufficient to overcome life's obstacles; perseverance, courage, and unwavering faith are equally necessary. Therefore, Bekjon embodies a person whose moral and emotional weaknesses are exposed through life's challenges, allowing the author to emphasize the importance of resilience, responsibility, and inner strength in human life. The period following Bekjon's admission to study in Moscow represents a crucial turning point in his life, marking a phase in which his previously held perceptions are systematically challenged. At this stage, the events unfolding around him, as well as the individuals he encounters, become a means of testing his psychological stability and moral judgment. Ideas and narratives that once seemed clear to him are now contradicted by new experiences, leading Bekjon into a state of doubt, confusion, and inner conflict. One of the most significant factors influencing this transformation is his growing awareness of the so-called "Basmachi" group. Previously, Bekjon's understanding of them had been shaped by external opinions and simplified interpretations. However, his perception begins to change when he learns that his uncle is associated with this group, and when Gavhar shares painful revelations about the Basmachis being indirectly responsible for the death of her parents. These conflicting accounts deeply disturb Bekjon's previously formed beliefs, forcing him to reconsider his moral and ideological position.

The situation becomes even more intense when Bekjon himself falls into the hands of the Basmachis. The direct experience of captivity exposes him to fear, uncertainty, and psychological trauma, leaving a lasting impact on his emotional state. Although he and Gavhar eventually manage to escape, it is during this journey that Bekjon's endurance reaches its breaking point. Facing extreme heat, water scarcity,



sandstorms, and a severe injury to his leg, he becomes increasingly exhausted both physically and mentally. Under these unbearable conditions, Bekjon eventually quarrels with Gavhar and abandons her in the desert. Although he briefly considers returning, he ultimately chooses not to do so. As he later admits himself, one wrongdoing leads to another: in the process of trying to save themselves, he resorts to deception when they are rescued, thereby presenting himself in a morally questionable light. This series of actions leads to his complete moral collapse and loss of dignity. Following these events, Bekjon leaves the area and becomes a wanderer in exile, separated from his homeland. A single wrong decision not only causes the loss of his beloved Gavhar but also results in his permanent separation from his native land. Ultimately, he spends the rest of his life in homesickness and emotional suffering, reflecting on the irreversible consequences of his actions.

### **Gavhar as a Character**

Although the story is narrated from Bekjon's perspective, Gavhar undoubtedly emerges as one of the most significant characters in Cho'li Iroq. In many respects, the author portrays her as a counterpart to Bekjon, emphasizing the contrast between their personalities and moral strengths. Her enthusiasm, determination, courage, and indomitable spirit distinguish her from Bekjon and contribute greatly to the development of the novella's central ideas. Significantly, these qualities are not revealed in ordinary circumstances but become fully apparent during moments of suffering and adversity, when a person's true character is put to the test. The foundations of Gavhar's character are already evident in episodes from her childhood. Her lively, energetic, and spirited nature in her younger years later transforms into resilience and strength of will in adulthood. Unlike Bekjon, who spent his youth in comfort and tranquility, Gavhar experiences hardship from an early age. Having lost her parents as a consequence of the actions of the Basmachis, she becomes acquainted with pain, deprivation, and responsibility much earlier than her beloved companion. Consequently, her life teaches her patience, endurance, and the ability to confront difficulties without losing hope. Another distinctive feature of Gavhar's personality is her optimistic outlook on life. Whenever Bekjon appears lost in uncertainty or absorbed in despair, Gavhar continues to think about the future with hope and aspiration. Even in moments when Bekjon has no particular dreams or expectations, Gavhar fills her mind with plans and visions of a better life. This tendency



demonstrates her unwavering belief in the future and her ability to preserve hope regardless of circumstances.

The true measure of Gavhar's strength becomes evident after Bekjon abandons her in the desert. According to what Bekjon later learns, Gavhar does not surrender to despair despite being left alone under extremely harsh conditions. Instead, she continues her journey with remarkable perseverance. Even after being captured by Bolshevik soldiers, she manages to regain her freedom through intelligence and resourcefulness. These events further confirm the extraordinary qualities that define her character. Bekjon himself later acknowledges Gavhar's exceptional nature through the words of an old man, who reproachfully asks him, "Did you really fail to understand Gavhar?" He goes on to describe her as "fire itself," admitting that he has never encountered, and perhaps never will encounter again, a person possessing such courage and unbreakable will. In his words, Gavhar deserves to be called a true human being without hesitation or regret. This statement serves as one of the strongest testimonies to Gavhar's moral greatness and highlights the author's admiration for her character. Therefore, Gavhar symbolizes perseverance, hope, and spiritual strength. Through her image, the author conveys the idea that genuine human dignity is manifested not in times of comfort and prosperity, but in moments of suffering, sacrifice, and struggle. In contrast to Bekjon, whose weaknesses are exposed by adversity, Gavhar demonstrates that unwavering faith, courage, and inner resilience enable an individual to overcome even the most severe trials of life.

### **Realization Through Loss and Suffering**

One of the most profound moments in Cho'li Iroq occurs when Bekjon finally realizes the true nature of the people who had surrounded him throughout his life. Reflecting on his past, he bitterly admits that Gavhar, Shomurod Oga, Konstantin Stepanovich, and Sultonposhsha Khola were all sincere and noble individuals who had wished nothing but goodness for him. Tragically, this realization comes only after irreversible mistakes have already been made. His confession, "Now it is too late, far too late," reveals not only his personal remorse but also the central tragedy of his life. This delayed recognition appears to be one of the recurring motifs in the works of O'lmas Umarbekov. A similar pattern can be observed in Sevgim Sevgilim, where O'ktam loses his beloved because of a single careless remark and spends the rest of his life burdened by regret, eventually leaving his village during difficult times. Such



examples suggest that the writer was deeply concerned with the consequences of human misjudgment and the painful realization that often arrives when opportunities have already been lost.

It is not an exaggeration to state that Umarbekov repeatedly portrays situations in which his characters fail to appreciate the true value of people and relationships until it is too late. This recurring theme may indicate the author's intention to warn readers against making hasty decisions and allowing momentary emotions to determine their fate. Through the trials and sufferings of his protagonists, he presents hypothetical yet highly realistic scenarios that encourage readers to reflect upon their own choices and thereby avoid similar regrets in life. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the author's purpose extends beyond merely narrating tragic stories. Rather, he appears to use such experiences as moral lessons, demonstrating that wisdom often lies in recognizing the sincerity of others before circumstances render such recognition meaningless. In this respect, Bekjon's tragedy serves not only as an individual story of loss but also as a universal reminder that delayed understanding may become one of the greatest sources of lifelong sorrow.

### **Comparative Analysis of Bekjon and Gavhar**

Although Bekjon and Gavhar occupy equally important positions in Cho'li Iroq, they represent two contrasting approaches to life and adversity. Despite sharing common experiences and emotional attachment, their personalities, responses to hardships, and ultimate destinies reveal significant differences. Through these two characters, O'lmas Umarbekov skillfully demonstrates that the true value of an individual is determined not by favorable circumstances but by one's ability to preserve moral integrity and hope in times of suffering. In terms of their similarities, both Bekjon and Gavhar experience loss, separation, and the harsh realities of life at an early age. Both characters are sincere in their feelings and deeply attached to one another. They also share dreams for the future and become victims of the turbulent social and historical circumstances surrounding them. Therefore, neither character can be regarded as inherently immoral or malicious.

However, the differences between them are much more striking. Bekjon grows up in comfort and security, which makes him emotionally vulnerable and less prepared to face severe hardships. Gavhar, by contrast, becomes acquainted with suffering from an early age and gradually develops patience, courage, and perseverance. While



Bekjon often falls into doubt and despair, Gavhar consistently maintains hope and confidence in the future. Their contrasting reactions to the same difficulties suggest that external circumstances alone do not determine a person's character; rather, it is one's inner strength that shapes destiny.

The desert episode represents the climax of this contrast. Faced with hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and despair, Bekjon loses faith and abandons Gavhar, whereas Gavhar continues her struggle with remarkable determination. Even after being left alone and later captured, she manages to survive through courage and intelligence. In this respect, Gavhar emerges as the morally stronger character, while Bekjon's weaknesses become fully exposed. It would not be an exaggeration to state that the author deliberately constructs these two images as opposites in order to highlight the distinction between physical suffering and spiritual endurance. Furthermore, their eventual fates reflect the consequences of their choices. Bekjon spends the remainder of his life burdened by regret and homesickness, painfully realizing the value of the people who had always wished him well.

Gavhar, on the other hand, symbolizes unwavering faith, dignity, and resilience. Her character demonstrates that genuine strength lies in remaining loyal to one's principles and preserving hope even in the darkest moments. Thus, Bekjon and Gavhar should not be viewed merely as individual characters but as complementary artistic images through which O'Imas Umarbekov conveys profound moral and philosophical ideas. If Bekjon embodies human vulnerability, hesitation, and the tragedy of belated understanding, Gavhar represents courage, endurance, and spiritual nobility. Their opposition serves as one of the principal means through which the author communicates the enduring message that life's greatest trials reveal the true essence of human character.

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