

**THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF STATECRAFT PRACTICED BY ALISHER
NAVOI: A SCHOLARLY ANALYSIS BASED ON THE “WAQFIYA”**

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Abstract: This article examines the statesmanship of Alisher Navoiy based on his work “Vaqfiya.” It analyzes seven key principles of governance articulated by the author: devotion to public service, self-discipline, sincerity of intention, justice, opposition to oppression, selflessness, and financial integrity. These principles are explored within their historical and political context, and their relevance to modern public administration and administrative ethics is substantiated. The study concludes that Navoi’s concept of governance represents a coherent moral and political framework.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Vaqfiya, public administration, political thought, justice.

Alisher Navoi is most frequently recognized as a great poet and thinker. However, limiting the evaluation of his legacy solely to his literary achievements presents a one-sided perspective and fails to reveal the full extent of his role in the political life of the Timurid state. In reality, Navoi emerged as one of the leading statesmen of fifteenth-century Central Asia, serving as a high-ranking political adviser and an active advocate of justice, social responsibility, and ethical governance.

Holding several important positions at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, Navoi participated directly in the administration of the Timurid state. His contribution to government extended far beyond the performance of administrative duties; he also played a decisive role in shaping the moral and ethical foundations of political decision-making. In this respect, Navoi should be regarded not merely as a government official but as a strategic political thinker whose ideas profoundly influenced the intellectual and ethical orientation of state governance.

Navoi's views on public administration are articulated in several of his works, most explicitly in the *Waqfiya*. This work should not be regarded merely as a legal endowment deed or testamentary document. Rather, it represents a programmatic treatise that encapsulates the author's practical experience in public service together with his ethical principles and political philosophy. By reflecting on his own career in government, Navoi formulates a coherent conception of the qualities that characterize an ideal statesman.

The ideas expressed in the *Waqfiya* clearly demonstrate that Navoi viewed public service not as a source of personal prestige or political power but as a profound moral responsibility. In his understanding, the effectiveness of government depends primarily upon the ethical integrity of rulers and officials, their commitment to justice, and their ability to place the public interest above personal ambition. Consequently, Navoi's political thought is deeply rooted in the broader intellectual tradition of the Islamic East, particularly in the concepts of the "just ruler" (*odil hukmdor*) and the "perfect human being" (*komil inson*).

Furthermore, Navoi places justice at the very center of his theory of governance. Within his political philosophy, justice constitutes the fundamental principle upon which the stability of the state, the legitimacy of political authority, and the prosperity of society ultimately depend.

Furthermore, Navoi regarded justice as the central principle of state governance. In his political philosophy, justice constitutes the primary condition for the stability of the state, the principal criterion of social development, and the essential foundation of the moral legitimacy of political authority. These ideas are theoretically elaborated in such works as *Hayrat ul-abror* and *Mahbub ul-qulub*, while the *Waqfiya* demonstrates their practical implementation through the author's own experience in public administration.

In the *Waqfiya*, Navoi formulates seven fundamental principles that guided his service to the state. These principles are significant not only for understanding the political thought of the fifteenth century but also remain highly relevant to contemporary theories of public administration, administrative ethics, and good governance.

The first principle is absolute devotion to public service. Navoi writes: "*Having removed from my heart every thought except that of the Sultan, I devoted all my attention to the service of the sovereign.*" This statement demonstrates that Navoi regarded public office not as a source of status or privilege but as a profound moral responsibility. Personal interests were consciously subordinated to the interests of the state and the ruler. From the perspective of modern public administration, this principle corresponds to the ethical priority of public interest over personal gain.

The second principle concerns self-restraint and ethical discipline in public service. Navoi states: "*I did not look at what ought not to be seen, I did not listen to what ought not to be heard, I did not go where I ought not to go, and I did not say what ought not to be said*[1;67]." These words emphasize the importance of self-control, moral discipline, and ethical responsibility in the conduct of a statesman. Throughout his career, Navoi deliberately avoided unnecessary interference, gossip, idle conversation, and inappropriate actions. In contemporary administrative ethics, this principle corresponds to professional integrity, responsible information management, confidentiality, and respect for institutional boundaries.

The third principle concerns sincerity and purity of intention in public service. Reflecting on his official career, Navoi states: "*Whatever I accomplished in my service was done for the sake of God and for the benefit of Sultan Husayn and the Muslim community*[1;65]." This statement demonstrates that he regarded public service not as a

means of material gain or personal advancement but as both a divine obligation and a social responsibility. In contemporary terms, this principle corresponds to ethical integrity, an internal commitment to combating corruption, and unwavering devotion to the public good.

The fourth principle relates to the responsibility of upholding justice and advising the ruler. In the *Waqfiya*, Navoi notes that whenever he witnessed actions contrary to the principles of justice within the state, he considered it his duty to inform the Sultan. He did not remain a silent court official but fulfilled the role of a responsible adviser committed to protecting the interests of the state. This reflects the importance of institutional consultation and the ethical obligation to provide honest counsel in public administration. For Navoi, justice constituted the indispensable foundation of political stability and legitimate governance.

The fifth principle is the struggle against oppression. Navoi writes: *"As far as I was able, I broke the sword of oppression and applied the balm of justice to the wounds of the oppressed; whatever lay beyond my power, I reported to the Sultan[1;43]."* This passage clearly defines the primary duty of a statesman as the protection of the people. Justice, in Navoi's understanding, was not merely an abstract philosophical concept but the fundamental criterion of practical political action. Within the framework of the modern rule-of-law state, this principle closely corresponds to the protection of human rights and the defense of vulnerable members of society.

The sixth principle concerns selfless public service. Navoi emphasizes: *"For serving the people I sought no reward from anyone, nor did I accept gifts offered as acts of obligation or gratitude[1;54]."* This declaration establishes honesty, impartiality, and freedom from material self-interest as essential ethical standards of public office. In contemporary systems of public administration, this principle reflects a policy of absolute intolerance toward corruption and conflicts of interest.

The seventh principle is financial integrity combined with social responsibility. Navoi writes: *"By the Sultan's command I engaged in agriculture. Part of the income from the harvest I devoted to the service of the ruler, and another part I distributed among the pious and those who prayed for others. For myself, I was content with a single garment and only the provisions necessary for daily life[1;65]."* These lines illustrate Navoi's personal modesty, financial transparency, and generosity. Rather than using wealth for personal luxury, he directed his resources toward charitable and socially beneficial activities. In doing so, he demonstrated that a true statesman bears responsibility not only for governing the state but also for promoting the welfare of society.

Taken together, these seven principles articulated in the *Waqfiya* constitute the ethical and political foundation of Navoi's conception of statesmanship. He regarded public office not as a privilege but as a responsibility; wealth not as an end in itself but as a moral test; and political authority not as an instrument of domination but as a means of establishing justice. For this reason, Navoi occupies a unique place in the intellectual history of Central Asia not only as a literary genius but also as an enduring political and ethical ideal.

The seven principles presented in the *Waqfiya* reveal Navoi's coherent philosophy of public administration. They should not be understood as isolated moral exhortations but as a systematic political-ethical program grounded in practical experience. Based on loyalty, self-discipline, purity of intention, justice, resistance to oppression, selfless service, financial integrity, and social responsibility, these principles form an integrated framework that defines the moral foundations of effective governance. Even today, they retain remarkable relevance as universal standards of ethical leadership and responsible public administration.

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