

Historical and Socio-Religious Factors in The Genesis of The Arba'in Genre

Malokhat Rikhsibaevna Pulatova

Associate Professor, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

Abstrak: This article examines the historical and socio-religious factors that contributed to the emergence of the Arba'in genre in Islamic literary tradition. The study analyzes the role of Islam as a major spiritual, cultural, and intellectual force in shaping new literary forms aimed at explaining religious teachings to the wider public. Special attention is paid to the development of the tradition of compiling and interpreting forty hadiths, its connection with the propagation of Islamic ethics and values, and its gradual transformation into an independent poetic and didactic genre in Persian and Turkic literatures. The article also explores the interaction of religious, educational, ideological, and artistic factors in the formation of the Arba'in genre. It argues that the genre emerged not only as a result of religious devotion, but also as a response to the social and cultural needs of Muslim societies. On this basis, the paper highlights the significance of the Arba'in genre as a unique phenomenon of classical Eastern literature.

Keyword: Arba'in genre, forty hadiths, Islamic literature, socio-religious factors, historical development, hadith tradition, Persian literature, Turkic literature, classical Eastern literature, religious and didactic poetry

Introduction: The interaction between religion and literature has historically played a decisive role in the formation of many literary genres, particularly within the Islamic intellectual and cultural tradition. As Islam expanded across diverse regions and cultures, it not only established a comprehensive religious system but also stimulated the development of new forms of knowledge dissemination, including literary expression. Among such forms, the Arba'in genre—collections and interpretations of forty hadiths—emerged as a distinctive phenomenon that reflects the synthesis of religious teaching, ethical instruction, and artistic representation.

The genesis of the Arba'in genre is closely linked to the socio-religious needs of Muslim societies. In the early centuries of Islam, the preservation, transmission, and interpretation of the Prophet Muhammad's sayings (hadiths) became a central intellectual activity. Alongside scholarly compilations, there arose a need to present essential religious teachings in a more accessible and pedagogically effective manner for the broader public. This demand led to the development of the Arba'in tradition, which involved selecting forty hadiths and providing their interpretation, often in simplified or artistic forms.

The choice of the number forty is not incidental but rooted in Islamic spiritual and cultural symbolism. Various Qur'anic references and prophetic traditions emphasize the significance of this number, contributing to its widespread acceptance in religious and literary practices. Furthermore, a widely cited hadith encouraging the memorization and transmission of forty hadiths played a crucial role in legitimizing and popularizing this tradition among scholars and writers.

While the Arba'in initially appeared in Arabic scholarly contexts as collections of hadith with theological commentary, it gradually evolved into a more complex literary genre within Persian and Turkic literatures. In these cultural spheres, the genre acquired poetic form, artistic structure, and broader



Kielce 2026

didactic functions. Prominent scholars and poets such as al-Nawawi, Abd al-Rahman Jami, and Alisher Navoi contributed significantly to its development, transforming it into a bridge between religious knowledge and literary creativity.

This article aims to investigate the historical and socio-religious factors that led to the emergence and evolution of the Arba'in genre. It examines how religious, educational, ideological, and cultural dynamics shaped the genre and facilitated its transition from a purely theological practice to an established literary tradition. By analyzing these factors, the study seeks to highlight the Arba'in genre as a product of both spiritual motivation and social necessity within the broader context of Islamic civilization.

Literature Review: The Arba'in genre has attracted scholarly attention in the fields of Islamic studies, literary history, and philology. Classical Islamic scholarship primarily approached the Arba'in tradition within the framework of hadith studies. One of the most authoritative works in this regard is the collection of Imam al-Nawawi, *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya*, which systematized forty hadiths and became a foundational text for later interpretations. Similarly, the works of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, particularly *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* and his hadith-based writings, contributed to the ethical and didactic understanding of such compilations.

In the Persian literary tradition, the Arba'in genre developed further as a poetic and artistic form. Abd al-Rahman Jami in his work *Chihil Hadith* (1481) played a key role in transforming the genre into a literary phenomenon by presenting hadiths in poetic form. This tradition was later continued and enriched in Turkic literature by Alisher Navoi, whose Arba'in represents a synthesis of religious knowledge and artistic expression. The Azerbaijani poet Fuzuli also contributed to the dissemination of the genre through poetic adaptation.

Modern scholarship has expanded the study of the Arba'in genre by incorporating historical and socio-cultural perspectives. Researchers such as Yevgeny Bertels examined the influence of Islamic sources on Eastern literature, while Carl Brockelmann in his *History of Arabic Literature* analyzed the development of Arabic literary traditions, including hadith-related texts. In Central Asian scholarship, H. Karamatov in "Qur'on va o'zbek adabiyoti" highlighted the integration of Qur'anic themes into Uzbek literature. Additionally, F. Kamolov in his study on the tradition of "Chihil Hadith" provided valuable insights into the evolution of the Arba'in genre in Persian literature.

Despite these contributions, many studies tend to focus either on theological or literary aspects separately. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that integrates historical, socio-religious, and cultural dimensions is required to fully understand the genesis of the Arba'in genre.

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodology combining several analytical approaches. The historical-comparative method is used to trace the development of the Arba'in genre across Arabic, Persian, and Turkic literary traditions. The textual analysis method allows for the examination of the structural and thematic features of key works, including those by al-Nawawi, Jami, and Navoi.

In addition, a socio-cultural approach is applied to analyze the broader context in which the genre emerged, particularly the role of Islamic teachings, educational needs, and the dissemination of religious knowledge among non-Arab populations. Hermeneutic analysis is also employed to interpret the meanings of hadith-based texts and their transformation into literary forms. By integrating these methods and scholarly perspectives, the study provides a comprehensive and academically grounded understanding of the historical and socio-religious factors that shaped the Arba'in genre as a unique phenomenon of Islamic and Eastern literary tradition.

Materials and Methods: The materials of this study consist of both primary and secondary sources related to the Arba'in genre and its historical development. The primary sources include classical Arba'in texts and hadith collections, particularly *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* by Imam al-Nawawi, *Chihil*



Kielce 2026

Hadith by Abd al-Rahman Jami, and Arba'in by Alisher Navoi. These works serve as representative examples of the genre in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic literary traditions.

In addition, secondary sources include scholarly studies on Islamic literature, hadith science, and classical Eastern poetics. Among them are works by Carl Brockelmann (History of Arabic Literature), Yevgeny Bertels (studies on Eastern literary traditions), H. Karamatov (Qur'on va o'zbek adabiyoti), and F. Kamolov (research on the "Chihil Hadith" tradition). These materials provide a theoretical and historical framework for understanding the evolution of the Arba'in genre.

The methodological framework of the study is based on an interdisciplinary approach. The historical method is used to trace the origin and development of the Arba'in tradition within the broader context of Islamic civilization. The comparative method enables the analysis of similarities and differences in the development of the genre across Arabic, Persian and Turkic literatures.

Textual analysis is applied to examine the structure, themes, and stylistic features of selected Arba'in works, focusing on how hadiths are interpreted and transformed into literary forms. In addition, the study employs a socio-cultural approach to investigate the influence of religious, educational, and ideological factors on the emergence of the genre.

Furthermore, elements of hermeneutic analysis are used to interpret the meanings of hadith-based texts within their literary and cultural contexts. This allows for a deeper understanding of the Arba'in genre as both a religious and artistic phenomenon. Through the integration of these materials and methods, the research provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the historical and socio-religious factors underlying the genesis of the Arba'in genre.

Results and Discussion: The analysis of historical, religious, and literary sources demonstrates that the emergence of the Arba'in genre was not accidental, but rather the result of a complex interaction of socio-religious, cultural, and intellectual factors within Islamic civilization. The findings indicate that the genre originated from the need to preserve, systematize, and disseminate the teachings of Islam, particularly the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, in a form accessible to a wide audience.

One of the key results of the study is the identification of the central role of hadith tradition in shaping the Arba'in genre. Early Islamic scholars, including Imam al-Nawawi, contributed significantly to the formalization of the practice of collecting forty hadiths. His work *Al-Arba'in al-Nawawiyya* established a model that combined theological accuracy with pedagogical clarity. This model later influenced subsequent developments of the genre across different regions.

The study also reveals that the symbolic and spiritual significance of the number forty played an important role in the consolidation of the Arba'in tradition. The widespread acceptance of the idea that memorizing and transmitting forty hadiths would bring spiritual merit encouraged scholars and writers to engage in this practice. As a result, the genre gained both religious legitimacy and cultural popularity.

Another important finding is the transformation of the Arba'in genre from a purely theological compilation into a literary form. In Arabic tradition, Arba'in texts were primarily didactic and scholarly. However, in Persian and Turkic literatures, the genre evolved into a poetic and artistic expression. The works of Abd al-Rahman Jami and Alisher Navoi illustrate this transformation clearly. Their Arba'in compositions demonstrate how religious teachings were adapted into aesthetically rich and culturally resonant literary forms.

The discussion further highlights the socio-cultural conditions that facilitated this transformation. In non-Arab Muslim societies, there was a strong need to interpret and explain Islamic teachings in local languages. This led to the integration of religious content into national literary traditions. Consequently, the Arba'in genre became an effective medium for moral education, spiritual guidance, and cultural transmission.



Kielce 2026

Moreover, the study shows that the genre was shaped by multiple interconnected factors, including religious devotion, educational needs, ideological motivations, and artistic creativity. These factors collectively contributed to the establishment of the Arba'in as a stable and influential genre within classical Eastern literature.

In comparison with previous studies, which often focused on either theological or literary aspects, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding by integrating historical and socio-religious perspectives. It confirms that the Arba'in genre should be viewed not only as a religious practice but also as a literary and cultural phenomenon that reflects the broader dynamics of Islamic intellectual history. Overall, the results of this study underscore the significance of the Arba'in genre as a unique synthesis of religion and literature, shaped by both spiritual values and social necessities. This dual nature explains its enduring presence and influence in the literary traditions of the Muslim world.

Conclusion: This study has demonstrated that the emergence and development of the Arba'in genre is the result of a complex interaction between historical, socio-religious, and cultural factors within Islamic civilization. The analysis shows that the genre originated from the necessity to preserve and disseminate the teachings of Islam, particularly the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, in a concise, structured, and accessible form.

The findings confirm that the Arba'in tradition was initially shaped within the framework of hadith scholarship, where scholars such as Imam al-Nawawi played a crucial role in systematizing the practice of compiling forty hadiths. Over time, this practice acquired symbolic and spiritual significance, largely due to the religious value associated with the number forty in Islamic thought.

Furthermore, the study highlights that the Arba'in genre underwent a significant transformation as it spread beyond the Arab world. In Persian and Turkic literary traditions, it evolved into a distinct literary form, enriched with poetic structure and artistic expression. The contributions of Abd al-Rahman Jami and Alisher Navoi were particularly instrumental in this process, as they adapted the genre to local linguistic and cultural contexts.

It has also been established that the development of the Arba'in genre was driven by multiple factors, including religious devotion, educational needs, moral instruction, and the desire to make Islamic teachings accessible to broader audiences. These factors collectively contributed to the formation of the genre as both a didactic and artistic phenomenon.

In conclusion, the Arba'in genre should be understood not only as a product of religious tradition but also as a reflection of the intellectual, cultural, and literary dynamics of the Muslim world. Its enduring relevance lies in its ability to bridge the gap between sacred knowledge and literary expression, making it a unique and significant component of classical Eastern literature.

References

1. Навави, Я. ибн Шараф. Арбаъин ан-Нававийя. – Б.м.: б.н., б.й. – 120 с.
2. Жомий, А. Чихил хадис. – Б.м.: б.н., 1481. – 80 с.
3. Shakhnoza Akramovna Kuldasheva, Ikrom Yusupovich Bultakov, Buzakhro Marufjanovna Begmatova, Malokhat Rikhsibaevna Pulatova, Yulduz Turdaliyevna Berdiyeva, Muslimabonu Abdvositkizi Tursunalieva. (2025). Journal of Applied Bioanalysis, 11(S10), 06-12. <https://doi.org/10.53555/jab.v11si10.1332>
4. Навоий, А. Арбаъин. — Тошкент: Фафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти, 1991. — 64 б
5. Abdulaziz Mansur. Qur'oni Karim ma'nolari. –“ O'qituvchi ”. Toshkent –B.23.
6. Али – Зоде. Тафсир. // Исламский энциклопедический словарь. –М.:Ансар, 2007. – 400 с.



Kielce 2026

7. Yuldasheva X. THE ROLE OF ARAB EDUCATORS IN THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY //SHARQ MASH'ALI. – 2023. – Т. 2. – №. 04. – С. 120-128.
8. Yuldasheva K. A. The Impact Of Literature On The Spiritual Advancement Of Arab Society //Current Research Journal Of Philological Sciences. – 2024. – Т. 5. – №. 01. – С. 74-78.
9. Yuldasheva K. A. The ideological role of the Arabic language in forming national identity //Eur Int J Philol Sci. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 10. – С. 14-18.
10. Муталова Г. С. и др. СПЕЦИФИКА ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ И ФУНКЦИОНИРОВАНИЯ НЕКОТОРЫХ ОТГЛАГОЛЬНЫХ ИМЁН В АРАБСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ //World Scientific Research Journal. – 2025. – Т. 46. – №. 1. – С. 230-242.
11. Begmatova B. M., Mutalova G. S., Kasimova S. S. The direct object and its use in arabic language //Boletin de Literatura Oral-The Literary Journal. – 2023. – Т. 10. – №. 1. – С. 3601-3609.

