

The Image Of The Hoopoe – A Symbol Of The Perfect Human Being

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Abstract: This article analyzes the image of the Hoopoe (Hudhud) in Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr," Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr," and Rizoi Payvandi's "Qush Tili" from a Sufi-philosophical perspective. The study interprets the image of the Hoopoe as a symbol of the Perfect Human Being and highlights its principal characteristics, such as spiritual guidance, enlightenment, freedom from the ego, and spiritual leadership. In all three works, the Hoopoe's leading of the birds toward the Simurgh is interpreted through symbolic images representing the murshid-disciple relationship in Sufism, the stages of spiritual perfection, and the idea of self-realization. The research employs literary-analytical and Sufi-hermeneutic methods, and its findings contribute to illuminating the artistic interpretation of the concept of the Perfect Human Being in classical Eastern literature.

Keywords: Image of the Hoopoe, Perfect Human Being, Sufism, Mantiq ut-Tayr, Lison ut-Tayr, Qush Tili, Fariduddin Attar, Alisher Navoi, Rizoi Payvandi, murshid and disciple, spiritual perfection, Simurgh, symbolic image.

Introduction:

In Sufi-philosophical thought, the idea of the Perfect Human Being represents the highest stage of human spiritual development. The concept of the Perfect Human Being signifies that an individual does not remain limited to outward actions, but reaches the level of inner purification, spiritual maturity, and comprehension of divine truth. Such a person is distinguished not only by personal perfection, but also by the ability to influence the spiritual growth of others.

In Sufi sources, the Perfect Human Being is characterized by the following principal qualities: profound spiritual knowledge, devotion to divine love, liberation from carnal desires, a sense of responsibility, and the capacity for spiritual guidance. These qualities are often expressed through symbolic images in literary works. In Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr," the Hoopoe emerges as one of such symbolic figures.

The distinctive feature of the Hoopoe is that it is portrayed as a spiritually mature figure who serves as a guide leading the community of birds toward the Truth.

In this respect, it may be interpreted as an artistic expression of the image of the Perfect Human Being in Sufi literature.

Aim and objectives. Our aim is to analyze the image of the Hoopoe in Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr," Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr," and Rizoi Payvandi's "Qush Tili" from a Sufi-philosophical perspective and to illuminate the principal characteristics of the Hoopoe as a symbol of the Perfect Human Being, including spiritual guidance, enlightenment, freedom from the ego, and spiritual leadership. We identified the following objectives: interpreting the Hoopoe as a symbol of the Perfect Human Being in the Sufi concept of the Perfect Human Being; identifying elements of knowledge and enlightenment reflected in the image of the Hoopoe; examining the functions of the Hoopoe as a murshid; and analyzing freedom from the ego and self-sacrifice in the image of the Hoopoe.

Findings. Fariduddin Attar presented the foundations of Sufi teaching allegorically, basing his work on a new interpretation of the allegorical plot found in al-

Ghazali's "Risalat al-Tayr." For the first time, the poet transformed the generalized interpretation of birds into allegorical representations of human beings. Unlike al-Ghazali, Attar introduced the image of the Hoopoe into the plot of "Mantiq ut-Tayr," where it is uniquely presented as the main character of the work. One of the distinctive features of Attar's poem is the introduction of the image of the Simurgh (the Anqa in al-Ghazali), which gives particular emphasis to the ideological and artistic dimensions of the poem. The compositional structure of Fariduddin Attar's poem is constructed as a story within a story, and these embedded narratives serve to express the principal content of the framing story more vividly.

It is well known that Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr" consists of 3,538 couplets and has a complex compositional structure. The main part of the poem is written using the story-within-a-story technique. The framing narrative is devoted to the birds' journey toward the Simurgh, while the stories, parables, and anecdotes incorporated into it form a distinctive composition. The framing narrative, as well as the stories presented in individual episodes, possesses its own plot, idea, and composition. In this sense, each of them is directed toward the main narrative and, considered separately, may be regarded as an independent work in its own right. These features fundamentally distinguish the poem from those of other authors.

In terms of its essence and style, Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr" is not only an outstanding example of the allegorical poem genre with profound philosophical content, but also an original creative work in which Navoi's social and ethical views are summarized. It was written under the influence of Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr."

The plot and composition of "Lison ut-Tayr" are directed toward illuminating the image of the Perfect Human Being and the poet's humanism; its principal idea is distinguished by being expressed clearly in the form of integrated conclusions.

In Rizoi Payvandi's "Qush Tili," we also witness the effective use of the rich experience accumulated by his predecessors, as well as the application of distinctive techniques in the traditional plot and compositional structure of the epic, generalized in a manner

characteristic of the author himself.

According to Rizoi, God Almighty is present in every human being, and the path to attaining union with Him can be accomplished by restraining the commanding self (nafs al-ammara) and directing it toward the path of spiritual perfection. For this purpose, a person must first fulfill ten requirements, namely internalizing such spiritual nourishment as repentance (tawba), asceticism (zuhd), reliance upon God (tawakkul), contentment (qana'at), seclusion (uzlat), remembrance (zikr), spiritual attention (tawajjuh), patience (sabr), contemplation (muraqaba), and satisfaction with God's decree (rizo). Thereafter, on the path of perfection, one must attain the stages of quest, love, spiritual knowledge, self-sufficiency, divine unity, wonder, poverty, and annihilation (fana). Only then can a person attain union with God Almighty. Thus, in his work, Rizoi demonstrates through the allegorical journey of the birds that only the love of the spiritual traveler (salik) who has mastered these stages of spiritual perfection can manifest by the will of God Almighty; this is represented by crossing the aforementioned ten dreams, followed by traversing the seven climes.

The plot and compositional structure of Rizoi's epic fundamentally differ from those of Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr." Nevertheless, the similarity between the two epics is explained by their common orientation toward the perfection of the human moral and spiritual world. Both poets highly valued the mastery of Fariduddin Attar. In the epics of both artists, the issue of presenting the concept of the human being and the unity of being (wahdat al-wujud) in an allegorical manner is central. However, each author resolves this issue on the basis of his own philosophical views and artistic-aesthetic principles.

In Rizoi's "Qush Tili," the religious-philosophical direction predominates. Rizoi's words, "He who brings faith in the unseen, this is his guide, without doubt or uncertainty," provide further evidence for our view that the epic was created to serve as a guide and manual for the salik. In realizing his purpose, Rizoi frequently cites the Holy Qur'an and hadiths and pays great attention to their interpretation. The fact that most of the narratives are also written in a religious-philosophical spirit indicates that the epic is directed toward resolving religious-philosophical questions. This is perhaps why it differs fundamentally from the

narratives in Alisher Navoi's epic. The difference between Navoi's narratives and those of Attar, as well as the principal factor that caused it, is reflected in the following conclusion reached by E. E. Bertels as a result of a highly insightful comparative analysis of "Lison ut-Tayr" and "Mantiq ut-Tayr":

"...the narrative (in Navoi – Sh.H.) lost the abstract, timeless and spaceless character that it possessed in Attar and, so to speak, acquired flesh, becoming more real and human." [3: 114]

Mavlon Rizoi's "Qush Tili," like Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr," is rich in its ideological and thematic direction, with primary emphasis placed on human spiritual perfection. This objective is particularly evident in those aspects of the work that possess a distinctive artistic content and form. Therefore, a comparative-typological study of Rizoi's epic is also important for determining the sphere of influence of literary traditions.

Alisher Navoi portrays the Hoopoe in "Lison ut-Tayr" not as an ordinary bird, but as a symbol of the Perfect Human Being, a murshid, and a guide. At the gathering of the birds, it appears as the wisest bird, one who has experienced life and knows the path of truth. The Hoopoe introduces itself as follows:

Men erdim ul qushkim, Sulaymon ayvonig'a
Eltib erdim sabo payg'omini.

(translation: I was that bird who, to Solomon's palace,
Carried the message of the breeze.)

He presents himself as the bird that delivered a message to the palace of Solomon (peace be upon him) through the breeze. This points to his familiarity with divine mysteries. In Navoi's view, the Hoopoe is a pir who knows divine secrets, has overcome the ego, possesses patience and endurance, and has Sufi experience; he is a murshid who guides the birds (that is, human beings) toward the path of Truth. The Hoopoe says of himself:

Ko'p yo'l yurdum, ko'p diyorni kezdum,
Ko'p balolarni boshimdan sezdam.

(translation: I have traveled many roads and visited
many lands,

I have experienced many afflictions.)

Through these words, he indicates that he is an

experienced pir who has undergone trials and knows the hardships of the path. Concerning his role as a guide, the Hoopoe says:

Yo'ini bilmak menga bo'ldi muyassar,
Yo'lda qolg'anlarga mendur rahbar.

(translation: It was granted to me to know the path,
I am the guide for those left upon the road.)

Here the Hoopoe openly presents himself as a guide (murshid).

Rizoi describes the Hoopoe's outward appearance, portraying him as capable, active, outwardly attractive, enlightened, one who has mastered the mysteries of divine unity, and a figure possessing qualities worthy of the crown and ascension of spiritual poverty (faqr). Importantly, the poet compares the Hoopoe's attainment of the state of poverty and annihilation (faqr and fana) with the patience and endurance of the Turkic peoples in the state of faqr and fana. He expresses the Hoopoe's spiritual maturity with the words "the crown of faqr on the head of the Turkic people," and the result of his level of enlightenment with "finally attaining the state of ascension of faqr." Thus, the Hoopoe is a wise figure who has conquered the valley of poverty on the path to Truth and accomplished the journey of ascension. The mention of the Hoopoe in the story of the Prophet Solomon in the Qur'an, in the surah "An-Naml," also indicates that he has reached the summit of perfection and attained the rank of a murshid. The Hoopoe is also an eloquent guide capable of convincing others of his faith.

These qualities of the Hoopoe are especially vividly expressed in his debates and discussions with the birds.

In Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr," the reason why the birds seek a king worthy of them is resolved in the following lines:

Tushti qushlar ichra g'avg'o har taraf,
Mojarro birla muhoko har taraf.

Bir-biridin o'tmadi ul mojarro,
Har dam oshti mojarro ul xayl aro.

Bo'ldilar muhtoj oxir ul guruh,
Kim agar bo'lsa shahi sohib shukh.

Hokimi insoflig' dono dile,
Xush oyin shahriyori odile.[7: 15]

(translation: A commotion arose among the birds on every side,

Debate and discussion arose on every side.

They could not overcome their dispute with one another,

At every moment the dispute increased among that group.

At last that group became in need of one

Who might be a sovereign of majesty,

A ruler with a just mind and wisdom,

A gracious and just king.)

It should be emphasized that the image of the Hoopoe in Rizoī's epic is very close to the image of the Hoopoe in Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr."

One of the important signs of the Perfect Human Being is possession of knowledge and enlightenment. In the work, the Hoopoe appears as the only bird that understands the existence of the Simurgh and the difficulty of the path leading to it. This shows that his knowledge is not merely ordinary information, but spiritual knowledge formed through experience and understanding.

The Hoopoe's erudition is not limited to providing information. When responding to the questions and objections of the birds, he takes their inner condition into account, reveals their spiritual weaknesses, and provides explanations appropriate to each of their problems. This expresses the Sufi understanding of true ma'rifat—the unity of knowledge and wisdom.

The image of the Hoopoe also alludes to the stories connected with Solomon (peace be upon him) in the Holy Qur'an. In this religious source, the Hoopoe is interpreted as a symbol of awareness and understanding. Continuing this tradition, Attar portrays the Hoopoe as a Perfect Human Being capable of comprehending divine mysteries while communicating this knowledge to others without arrogance.

In Sufism, the Perfect Human Being often appears in the image of a murshid. A murshid is the guide of the salik on the path of spiritual perfection; his task is to show the path, but not to force the traveler to reach the destination. In "Mantiq ut-Tayr," the Hoopoe acts precisely according to this principle.

The birds' refusal to set out toward the Simurgh reveals their attachments to the ego. Each bird attempts to justify its own condition, while the Hoopoe interprets these excuses from a Sufi perspective and shows that their true essence is connected with the ego. His approach is based not on coercion, but on understanding and awareness.

This aspect elevates the Hoopoe beyond the status of an ordinary leader to that of a mature murshid. In Sufi teaching, the conscious choice and inner readiness of the salik are of primary importance.

Another important characteristic of the Perfect Human Being is freedom from egoistic desires. Throughout the work, the Hoopoe does not place himself above the other birds and does not regard leadership as a source of personal benefit or fame. He understands his task as a means of guiding others toward Truth.

The Hoopoe's self-sacrifice is manifested in the fact that he does not conceal the difficulties of the path. On the contrary, he openly describes the seven valleys leading toward the Simurgh and emphasizes that this path requires a person to renounce the sense of "I." This demonstrates his sincerity and responsibility before the Truth.

According to Sufi views, a murshid should not make the salik dependent upon himself. The Hoopoe likewise does not make the birds dependent upon him, but guides them toward understanding their own essence. In this respect, the image of the Hoopoe appears as a Perfect Human Being free from ego.

Conclusion

Through the creation of the image of the Hoopoe, Fariduddin Attar, Alisher Navoi, and Rizoī Payvandi expressed the idea of the Perfect Human Being not merely as a theoretical concept, but as an artistic-philosophical symbol. The Hoopoe is not an ideally perfect hero detached from real life; rather, he is portrayed with qualities characteristic of a real murshid.

At the end of the works, the birds' discovery of the Simurgh within themselves signifies that the Hoopoe has successfully fulfilled his principal task. For the highest purpose of the Perfect Human Being is not to make others follow him, but to bring them to the level of self-realization.

Thus, the image of the Hoopoe occupies an important place in Sufi literature as an artistic model of the Perfect Human Being, a symbolic expression of the murshid–salik relationship, and a philosophical interpretation of the path of spiritual perfection.

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