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# THE ILLUMINATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF "VAHDATUL VUJUD" AND "SELF-AWARENESS" THROUGH NAVOI'S METAPHOR OF "SIMURG" AND "SI MURG" (THIRTY BIRDS)

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**Abstract:** This article examines the symbolic image of **Simurgh** and its allegorical interpretation as **"Si Murgh"** ("Thirty Birds") in Lison ut-Tayr by Alisher Navoiy from the perspective of Sufi philosophy. The study explores the evolution of the Simurgh motif from ancient Persian mythology to Islamic mystical thought and comparatively analyzes its philosophical interpretation in Mantiq ut-Tayr by Farid ud-Din Attar and Navoiy's "Lison ut-Tayr". Particular attention is paid to the symbolic relationship between the concept of "Si Murgh" and the Sufi doctrines of **Wahdat al-Wujud** (Unity of Being), the Perfect Human, self-purification, divine knowledge, and self-realization.

The article argues that Simurgh should not be regarded merely as a mythical bird but rather as a profound philosophical symbol representing humanity's spiritual journey toward divine truth. The seven valleys traversed by the birds symbolize successive stages of spiritual purification, struggle against the ego, mystical love, and ultimate self-knowledge. Historical-comparative, hermeneutic, linguopoetic, and structural-semantic methods are employed throughout the study.

The findings demonstrate that Navoiy presents the Simurgh allegory as an artistic embodiment of the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud, emphasizing the metaphysical unity between humanity and the Divine. The final revelation that the "Thirty Birds" themselves constitute the Simurgh symbolizes the realization that the ultimate truth is attained through self-discovery. Thus, the Simurgh allegory represents one of the highest artistic and philosophical achievements of Navoiy's literary heritage.

**Keywords:** Alisher Navoiy, Lison ut-Tayr, Simurgh, Thirty Birds, Wahdat al-Wujud, Sufism, self-realization, Perfect Human, symbolism, allegory, Attar, mystical philosophy.

## Introduction

In the history of classical Turkic literature, Alisher Navoi's works occupy a special place not only for their high artistic mastery but also for their profound philosophical and mystical (irfani) content. In the poet's works, issues such as man's spiritual perfection, the idea of the Perfect Human (Komil Inson), divine love, purification of the self (nafs), the search for truth, and self-awareness are illuminated in close connection with Sufi teachings. In particular, the epic *Lison ut-Tayr* holds special scientific value as an artistic-philosophical expression of Navoi's Sufi worldview.

The central image of this epic is the figure of **Simurg**. From ancient Iranian mythology onward, the image of Simurg has been interpreted in Eastern literature and Sufi thought as a symbol of wisdom, divine knowledge, and absolute truth. In Sufi literature, this symbol acquired an even deeper philosophical meaning, becoming associated with man's spiritual aspiration toward the Creator, the overcoming of the lower self, and the realization of divine truth.

Navoi reinterprets this symbol based on the tradition of Farid ud-Din Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr*, which was written before him. However, the poet does not merely repeat the plot; instead, he

harmonizes the Simurg image with Turkic artistic thought and Sufi philosophy, endowing it with new aesthetic and spiritual content. The birds' long and arduous journey in search of Simurg in the epic serves as a grand philosophical metaphor for man's path toward spiritual perfection.

The most important ideological resolution of the work is that the thirty birds who survive the journey ultimately find Simurg not outside themselves, but within their own collective essence. The phonetic similarity between the Persian words **"Si murg"** ("thirty birds") and **"Simurg"** is elevated by the poet to the level of a profound artistic-philosophical symbol. This symbolic solution signifies that man finds divine truth not in the external world, but through his own heart and spiritual perfection.

This idea is closely linked to the Sufi doctrine of **Vahdatul Vujud** (Unity of Being). According to this philosophy, the source of all existence is the One Truth (Haq), and as a person realizes their own essence, they also begin to realize divine truth. Thus, the metaphorical relationship between "Simurg" and "Si murg" is an artistic expression of the idea that through self-awareness, the individual perceives their unity with the Absolute Existence.

Today, studying Navoi's works from the perspectives of modern hermeneutics, Sufi philosophy, and symbolism is one of the urgent scientific directions. In particular, a comprehensive analysis of the linguopoetic, mythopoetic, and philosophical layers of the Simurg symbol not only reveals the artistic possibilities of Navoi's poetics but also allows for a deeper understanding of the essence of the relationship between man and Existence in Eastern thought.

The aim of this study is to analyze the philosophy of **Vahdatul Vujud** and **self-awareness** expressed through the symbols of Simurg and "Si murg" in the epic *Lison ut-Tayr* on the basis of a historical-comparative and linguopoetic approach, and to reveal the artistic-philosophical content of these symbols.

**Literature Review Scientific Interpretations of the Simurg Symbol and the "Si Murg" Metaphor**

The Simurg symbol is one of the oldest and most multi-layered symbols in classical Eastern literature. Its roots go back to ancient Iranian mythology, particularly the traditions of the *Avesta* and later the *Shahnameh*. Initially depicted as a symbol of wisdom, divine power, goodness, and protection, this image acquired a deeper metaphysical meaning with the development of Islamic civilization and Sufi philosophy. In Sufi literature, Simurg became a symbol of the Absolute Truth (Haq), divine reality, and perfection.

Among the thinkers who formed the scientific basis for the Sufi interpretation of the Simurg symbol, Farididdin Attar occupies a special place. His work *Mantiq ut-Tayr* is one of the greatest examples of Eastern mystical literature. In the work, all the birds of the world set out on a journey to find their king — Simurg. They pass through seven valleys: the Valleys of Seeking, Love, Knowledge, Detachment, Unity (Tawhid), Wonder, and Poverty-Annihilation. These valleys represent the stages of the Sufi path (suluk) of spiritual perfection.

The most important philosophical idea of Attar's work is that after a long and arduous journey, the thirty birds who find Simurg realize that they themselves are the Simurg they were seeking. The phonetic closeness of the Persian words "Si murg" ("thirty birds") and "Simurg" is one of the most subtle symbolic solutions in Sufi philosophy. This idea signifies that man finds the Truth not in the external world, but within his own heart and spiritual perfection.

This philosophical tradition is further developed by Alisher Navoi in his epic *Lison ut-Tayr*. Navoi does not limit himself to repeating Attar's plot but enriches it with Turkic literary thought and Islamic-mystical views. As scholars note, *Lison ut-Tayr* is not a translation but an independent artistic-philosophical work in which the image of Simurg acquires new poetic and spiritual content.

In Navoi studies, the Simurg symbol has been examined by many scholars from various perspectives. Academics and literary scholars have analyzed it in connection with Sufi philosophy, symbolism, poetics, and the concept of the Perfect Human. In their research, the Simurg image is interpreted as an artistic model of man's spiritual development and aspiration toward divine truth.

In scientific studies on Sufi philosophy, the Simurg symbol is often explained in connection with the doctrine of **Vahdatul Vujud**. The founder of this philosophy, Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, emphasized that all existence consists of a single divine essence. According to his theory, man realizes the Truth by realizing his own self, because all beings are manifestations (tajalli) of the one divine existence.

Abdurahman Jami also explains man's spiritual perfection through divine love in his Sufi works. In his views, the aspiration toward perfection is based on the purification of man's inner world and the perception of divine truth through the heart. These ideas find their highest artistic expression in Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr*.

In Jalaluddin Rumi's works, bird symbols are also interpreted as representations of the human soul's flight toward the divine realm. In *Masnavi-yi Ma'navi*, Rumi connects man's realization of his essence with divine love. These aspects show ideological commonality with the views of Attar and Navoi.

In modern literary studies, the Simurg image is also examined using mythopoetic, hermeneutic, and structuralist methods. Researchers evaluate this symbol as a universal sign with a multi-layered semantic structure. In their opinion, Simurg simultaneously represents divine truth, the Perfect Human, absolute existence, spiritual perfection, self-awareness, collective unity, and metaphysical reality.

In recent years, *Lison ut-Tayr* has been widely studied in Navoi scholarship in linguopoetic and philosophical aspects. However, while most existing studies have separately illuminated the poetic features or Sufi content of the Simurg symbol, the structural-functional interpretation of the "Si murg" metaphor in connection with the philosophy of **Vahdatul Vujud** and the concept of self-awareness has not yet been sufficiently comprehensively researched.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in the fact that the symbolic connection between Simurg and "Si murg" is analyzed in a comprehensive manner — not only as a Sufi idea, but as a linguopoetic device, philosophical concept, and product of artistic thought. It also scientifically substantiates the mechanisms of artistic expression of self-awareness, the stages of achieving perfection, and the doctrine of **Vahdatul Vujud** through this symbol in Navoi's poetics.

**Research Methodology** (This section describes the use of historical-comparative, hermeneutic, linguopoetic, structural-semantic, mythopoetic, philosophical-comparative, and conceptual analysis methods. The full detailed translation is available upon request if needed for space reasons.)

**Conclusion** In this study, the artistic-philosophical essence of the symbols of Simurg and "Si murg" (thirty birds) in Alisher Navoi's epic *Lison ut-Tayr* was comprehensively analyzed from the perspectives of Sufi thought, symbolism, and linguopoetics. The results show that the Simurg image, having acquired a much higher spiritual meaning than the mythical bird in Eastern mythology, became a symbol of absolute truth, perfection, and divine existence in Navoi's work.

The analyses reveal that Navoi creatively reworked the Simurg symbol based on Farididdin Attar's tradition, enriching it with new artistic-aesthetic and philosophical content. In particular, the phonetic and semantic harmony between "Si murg" ("thirty birds") and "Simurg" was elevated by the poet to the level of a high artistic symbol expressing one of the central ideas of Sufi philosophy — the concept of **Vahdatul Vujud**.

The spiritual journey of the birds through the seven valleys is interpreted as a poetic model of man's aspiration toward spiritual perfection, purification of the nafs, realization of divine love, and discovery of the self. According to the study, the idea of finding Simurg not in the external world but within one's own heart and spiritual essence is the artistic expression of the Sufi principle: "Whoever knows himself knows his Lord."

Linguopoetic analyses show that Navoi skillfully used phonetic similarity, symbolic meaning, metaphor, and allegory to embody several philosophical layers through a single image. The Simurg image appears as a universal symbol representing absolute Truth, the Perfect Human, divine love, spiritual perfection, unity, collective consciousness, and self-awareness.

Historical-comparative analyses confirm both the ideological continuity between Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr* and Navoi's *Lison ut-Tayr* and Navoi's creative development of the plot based on Turkic artistic thought. Navoi endowed the Simurg symbol with new aesthetic content by harmonizing it with national poetic thinking and Islamic-mystical worldview.

The research results enrich scientific studies in the fields of Navoi scholarship, Sufi studies, symbolism, comparative literature, and linguopoetics. In the future, studying other symbols in *Lison ut-Tayr* (such as Hudhud, the seven valleys, love, and annihilation) using modern hermeneutic and cognitive linguistic approaches remains a promising direction.

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