

**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF CHARACTERS IN FARIDIDDIN  
ATTAR'S "BULBULNOMA"**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article analyzes, on a scientific and theoretical basis, the system of characters in the work "*Bulbulnoma*" by Farididdin Attar, one of the prominent representatives of Sufi literature. In the course of the research, the artistic-aesthetic and mystical (Sufi) essence of the characters such as the Nightingale (Bulbul), the Rose (Gul), and the Breeze (Sabo) is deeply revealed, and their symbolic meanings in classical Eastern literature are widely explained.

In the article, the image of the Nightingale is interpreted as a symbol of a spiritual seeker (salik) who burns with divine love and strives for perfection through patience and ascetic discipline. It is substantiated that through this image, the processes of inner suffering, aspiration, and spiritual purification of the human soul are artistically expressed.

The image of the Rose, in turn, is interpreted as a symbol of beauty, perfection, and divine manifestation, and it is scientifically analyzed that it serves as the main goal and destination in the Nightingale's journey of love.

**Keywords:** Nightingale, Rose, *Bulbulnoma*, Breeze, Solomon, Sufism, lover, beloved, divine love, symbolic image, poetics, fana, visal.

**Introduction.** In classical Eastern literature, Sufi ideas are primarily distinguished by their expression through symbolic images. This represents a unique form of artistic thinking, in which the inner spiritual experiences and moral quests of a person take precedence over external reality. Since the main purpose of Sufi literature is to guide a person toward divine truth, complex philosophical concepts are often expressed not directly, but through figurative and symbolic representations. In this regard, the system of images serves not only an aesthetic function but also acts as an important means of conveying deep spiritual and philosophical meanings.

In Sufi literature, the aspiration of the human soul toward divine perfection is considered one of the central issues. This process is usually interpreted through symbolic images such as the lover and the beloved, the path and the destination, the search and the union. Through such symbols, the inner struggle of a person, patience, stages of spiritual purification, and the sufferings experienced on the path to attaining divine love are artistically expressed. As a result, the reader not only perceives the work with aesthetic pleasure but also gains a deeper understanding of its Sufi-philosophical content.

**Literature Review.** Farididdin Attar's "*Bulbulnoma*" is a vivid example of symbolic-Sufi poetics. In the work, important Sufi concepts such as divine love, spiritual purification, fana, and baqa are often expressed through images of nature. This demonstrates that the artistic layer of the work embodies deep figurative meaning.

In particular, by elevating elements of nature to the level of symbolic images, the author succeeds in conveying complex philosophical ideas in a simple yet impactful manner. These aspects highlight the necessity of studying the work from a scientific and analytical perspective. This is because behind each image lies a specific Sufi meaning, and its proper interpretation helps to reveal the ideological essence of the work.

Therefore, Attar's works are regarded as a priceless literary heritage with not only artistic and aesthetic value but also profound philosophical and spiritual significance.

**Research Methodology.** This article is mainly based on the principles of historicity, objectivity, and scientific rigor, employing various approaches and methods, including observation, comparison, description, historical-comparative analysis, biographical method, statistical analysis, contextual analysis, and comprehensive analysis.

**Results and Discussion.** In Sufi literature, the image of birds holds a special symbolic significance. They are often interpreted as an artistic means of representing the spiritual journey of seekers (saliks), that is, the process of a human striving toward divine truth. The image of a bird symbolizes freedom, elevation, and spiritual perfection, conveying the idea of a person detaching from the material world and ascending toward the spiritual realm. This tradition has been established as a stable poetic system within Sufi literature.

This tradition finds a particularly vivid expression in the works of Farididdin Attar. In his famous work *Mantiq ut-tayr*, birds are depicted as seekers setting out in search of the Truth (Haq). Each bird represents a specific human trait, weakness, or spiritual state, which reveals the deep Sufi meaning of the work. This tradition was later continued by Alisher Navoiy, who further enriched it by creating the epic *Lison ut-tayr* [2; 362]. This clearly demonstrates that the image of birds has been widely and consistently used as a Sufi symbol in classical Eastern literature.

In "*Bulbulnoma*," the image of the Nightingale (Bulbul) appears as the central artistic symbol. According to the traditions of classical literature, the Nightingale usually represents the lover, while the Rose (Gul) is interpreted as the beloved or a symbol of divine beauty. In Attar's interpretation, the Nightingale is not merely an ordinary bird but a lover who suffers on the path of true love yet does not renounce it. Even though he understands the impossibility of attaining the Rose, he does not abandon his love; on the contrary, he remains steadfast on this path.

In Sufi interpretation, this reflects the perseverance of the seeker on the path of Truth through patience and ascetic discipline. According to Sufi teachings, the path of divine love is filled with trials, hardships, and spiritual suffering, and a true lover must remain steadfast with patience along this path [6; 8]. The image of the Nightingale embodies precisely this spiritual state, expressing determination, devotion, and boundless love in humanity's pursuit of divine truth.

Thus, the system of bird imagery in the work is not merely decorative but serves as a profound symbolic structure expressing Sufi-philosophical ideas. This once again confirms the richness of Attar's works and his unparalleled place in Eastern literature.

The motif of the Rose and the Nightingale is considered one of the most stable and widespread poetic traditions of classical Eastern literature. Based on this motif, numerous epics, ghazals, and other poetic works have been created, and it has become a symbol of love, devotion, and suffering in artistic thought. According to researchers, more than twenty independent works have been created within Turkic literature alone based on the Rose and Nightingale motif [3; 3]. This indicates not only the widespread use of this system of images but also its elevation to the level of a well-established poetic tradition.

This interpretation reveals the dual nature of love—namely, the harmony of pleasure and suffering. In classical literature, true love always reaches perfection through trials and hardships. Therefore, the sufferings of the Nightingale are interpreted as a factor that strengthens its devotion in love. This fully corresponds to Sufi views, since in Sufism the path of love is always realized through patience, ascetic discipline, and spiritual purification.

In Farididdin Attar's "*Bulbulnoma*," the image of the Rose (Gul) also carries a profound symbolic meaning, being interpreted not as a simple artistic figure but as an expression of divine beauty. According to Sufi theory, absolute and true beauty belongs only to God. Therefore, in

classical literature, the image of the beloved is often compared to divine جمال (beauty), through which the manifestation (tajalli) of the Truth (Haq) is artistically expressed.

As emphasized by Sufi scholars, the true source of love is divine reality, and it is precisely through this love that the human soul is purified and attains perfection [6; 11]. Thus, the image of the Rose represents not only the beloved but also the ultimate goal toward which the seeker aspires—the symbol of divine union (visal). From this perspective, the relationship between the Rose and the Nightingale reflects, in Sufi terms, the spiritual connection between the human being and the Truth. The system of Rose and Nightingale images in Attar's work serves to reveal not only the emotional but also the profound philosophical and mystical essence of love. This enhances the artistic value of the work and establishes it as an important example of classical Eastern literature.

Another significant image in the work is that of the Breeze (Sabo). In classical literature, Sabo is depicted as the morning breeze and is often interpreted as a mediator between the lover and the beloved. Within the artistic system, this image functions as a symbolic means of conveying messages, maintaining spiritual connection, and expressing the longing in the lover's heart. Sabo is portrayed as a subtle and spiritual force that brings the fragrance of the beloved to the lover or delivers news about her state.

In this regard, it is not merely an element of nature but also an important poetic symbol expressing emotional experiences of love. In classical poetry, the image of Sabo is widely used and is considered an integral element of lyrical poetry. In particular, through Sabo, the distance between the lover and the beloved is spiritually reduced, meaning that their inner closeness is expressed. Therefore, in Sufi interpretation, the image of Sabo is also regarded as a symbolic force that conveys messages from divine truth and brings inspiration and enlightenment to the seeker's heart [4, 102-bet].

Another important symbolic image in "*Bulbulnoma*" is the figure of Sulaymon. In classical Eastern literature, the Prophet Sulaymon is interpreted as a symbol of wisdom, justice, and divine power. According to traditional narratives, he possessed knowledge of the language of birds and animals and held authority over them. Therefore, in literary works, the appeal of birds to Sulaymon is often expressed as a symbol of seeking justice and striving to attain truth.

In Sufi interpretation, however, the image of Sulaymon represents the embodiment of ultimate truth, as well as the possessor of divine knowledge and wisdom. The birds' обращение to him signifies the orientation of seekers (saliks) toward a spiritual guide (murshid) or a divine source. Through this, the work artistically conveys the ideas of striving for spiritual perfection, comprehending truth, and attaining justice [7; 74].

In general, the images of Sabo and Sulaymon function as important poetic elements that deepen the Sufi ideas within the work, enriching its emotional, spiritual, and philosophical content. This once again confirms that the system of symbolic images in "*Bulbulnoma*" is highly sophisticated and multilayered.

Farididdin Attar skillfully employs the image of Sulaymon in this symbolic sense. Through the birds' обращения to Sulaymon, the author artistically expresses the ideas of justice, truth, and divine order. In Sufi interpretation, this reflects the seekers' aspiration toward ultimate truth, that is, their turning toward a divine source. Through the figure of Sulaymon, the primacy of wisdom, justice, and divine knowledge is particularly emphasized in the work.

Within this process, the image of the Nightingale (Bulbul) once again occupies a central position. It is portrayed as the most sensitive-hearted among the birds, a devoted lover who suffers deeply in love. These qualities elevate the Nightingale from a simple literary figure to a profound Sufi symbol. Through it, the sufferings of the human soul on the path of divine love, along with its patience and devotion, are expressed with deep artistic intensity.

**Conclusion.** *“Bulbulnoma”* is recognized as a highly artistic work enriched with Sufi symbolism. Through the system of images such as the Nightingale (Bulbul), the Rose (Gul), the Breeze (Sabo), and Sulaymon, the ideas of divine love, patience, ascetic discipline, and spiritual perfection are consistently and comprehensively revealed. These images, functioning in harmony with one another, uncover the Sufi-philosophical content and ensure the multilayered artistic structure of the work.

Moreover, this system of images appears as a vivid expression of the symbolic poetic traditions characteristic of classical Eastern literature. This demonstrates that the work possesses not only aesthetic value but also profound philosophical and spiritual significance. From this perspective, *“Bulbulnoma”* is not only an important literary monument of its time but also holds great scholarly value as a perfect expression of Sufi thought. The works of Farididdin Attar represent a high achievement of Eastern literary thinking and have exerted a significant influence on later literature. His Sufi poetics constitute one of the important stages in the development of classical literature, further enriching the tradition of understanding divine truth through symbolic imagery.

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