

**RESEARCH ARTICLE** OPEN ACCESS

# On the Title and Thematic Significance of Rizoiy's Qush Tili ('The Language of Birds')

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## ABSTRACT

In Uzbek literature, the study of epics of the type "Mantiq ut-tayr" is associated with the study of Alisher Navoi's epic "Lison ut-tayr" and has always been in the spotlight of experts. Mavlon Khoja Qozi Payvandi Rizoi (XVIII acp) was one of the authors who wrote in Turkish on the theme of "Mantiq ut-tayr". The only manuscript of the epic "Language of the Bird's" created by him is kept in the fund of the State Museum of Literature named after Alisher Navoi under inventory number 127.

The epics of the Mantik ut-tayr cycle and the works of Sanai, Ibn Sina, Shakhobiddin Suhrawardi, Ahmad Ghazali played a direct role in the creation of the Rizai epic "Language of the Bird's", while the history of Islam, the Holy Quran and the hadiths served as an important factor in ensuring the uniqueness plot and composition.

**Keywords:** Rizoi Payvandi, "Language of the Bird's", Holy Quran, hadith, epic, quote, content, form.

## INTRODUCTION

In the collection of rare manuscripts and lithographed books of the Alisher Navoi State Museum of Literature, there is preserved a manuscript copy of the work Qush Tili ("The Language of Birds") by Mavlon Khoja Qazi Payvandi Rizoi, a creator from Khorezm who lived in the 18th century. This work by Rizoi is evidence that the tradition of allegorical-philosophical epic poetry in the Turkic language, initiated by Gulshahri and Alisher Navoi, was successfully continued in later periods. This work holds a special place in the history of Uzbek literature as it reflects important socio-philosophical and mystical views through the images of birds, creatively developing the experiences of predecessors and presenting new examples of artistic creativity.

## METHODS

In the analysis of the topic of this article, descriptive, comparative-historical, and comparative-typological methods were widely used.

## RESULTS

Information about the author of this work, its creation history, and its title is provided in the concluding part of the poem. In the conclusion of the book, data related to the history of the creation of the work is presented. Although Rizoi refers to it as a translation, research provides sufficient grounds to consider this poem as a unique work due to its distinctive plot and composition, a sequence of characters, as well as its original ideological-philosophical content and artistic-poetic style peculiar to Rizoi himself. This is because the poem differs entirely from others. Rizoi chose a unique path in explaining the topic and presented it through an allegorical interpretation. He elucidates Sufi-philosophical issues through the images of birds. In particular, he states the following on this matter:

Ey Rizoiy, ne Sulaymonsən bu kun,

Kim qilursen qush tili birla suhun.

Qush tilin hech kimsa bilmas sen kabi,

Ulki bilsa sharh qilmas sen kabi.

Qush tilining tarjimonidur so'zung,

Go'yiyo holo Sulaymonsens o'zung.

Ulki bilgay qush tilin be shaku rayb,

Gar Sulaymonman, desa o'zin na ayb.

Qush tilidin tarjimondur bu kitob,

Ko'rguzur Anqo sori rohu savob.

Kimga kim Simurg'a qush yanglig' borur,

Hudhudi hodiy kabi yo'l boshqarur.

(Trans: O Rizoi, are you not like Solomon today,

That you speak the language of birds in your words?

No one knows the language of birds like you,

And even if they know, they cannot explain it like you.

Your words are the translator of the bird language,

As if you yourself are now Solomon.

Whoever truly knows the bird language without doubt,

If he says, "I am Solomon," what fault is there in that?

This book is a translator of the bird language,

Showing the right path toward the Simurgh (the mythical bird).

Whoever, like a bird, seeks the Simurgh,

This book will guide him like the hoopoe bird (Hudhud), who leads the way).

Rizoi studied in depth the works similar to "Mantiq ut-Tayr" (The Conference of the Birds). It is beyond doubt that he was well-acquainted with the Persian-Tajik and Turkic narrative poems on this subject, particularly with Alisher Navoi's "Lison ut-Tayr," even though it is not

explicitly mentioned in his work. The originality of the poet's work can also be recognized from the following lines:

Chashmayedur munda har bir durr harf,

Kim nihondur onda bir daryoyi tarf.

Nechakim ul chashmani axtarsalar,

Andin ul daryo suyi ko'proq chiqar.

Garchi o'z so'zin kishi o'zi demas,

So'z o'ze derman demak hojat emas...

Munda har birdurki ijloiy erur,

Barchasi man bandaning moli erur.

Yo'q manga tarse' uchun andog'ki toj,

O'zganing la'lu duriga ehtiyoj.

Bahr tojitaq manga o'z oltunum,

Basdururkim yohtudur andin kunum.

(Trans: Each word here is like a shining pearl,

In which a whole ocean is hidden, covered.

The more one explores its hidden beauty,

The more waves from that deep sea rise with duty.

Though one does not usually praise one's own word,

Yet, the word itself needs no advocate, nor sword.

Indeed, every pearl here is full of brilliance,

All belong to this humble servant's diligence.

I need no borrowed crown, nor foreign gem,

I have no desire for another's diadem.

For me, my own gold is enough to shine,

It is enough that my own sun will brightly align.)

Rizo'iy, in composing this epic, primarily aimed to unveil the stages of spiritual perfection and the attainment of union with the Truth (Haqq) through the path of witnessing the unseen (ghayb) and manifest (shahodat). He set out to express this mystical journey by means of bird symbols. According to the poet, the reader should perceive human qualities and conditions symbolized through the images of birds, as he describes:

Ul kishikim kelturur iymon ba g'ayb,

Bu anga hodiy erur beshaku rayb.

Gar muning irshodig'a qilsang amal,

Bo'lg'ay ul g'aybi shahodatg'a badal.

Kim bu so'zga rost qilsa bu yo'lin,

Ul kishi beshak topibdur Haq yo'lin.

Var bu so'zdin qilsa mayl liy xurof,

Bor sulukida aning shaksiz xilof.

Bu sarosar barcha solik holidur,

Mubtado vu muntaho ahvolidur.

Bilgay ulkim aqldin behush emas,

Kim g'araz munda kishidur qush emas.

Ul suxandon bu hikoyatni bilur,

Kim base ramzu kinoyatni bilur.

(Trans: Whoever brings faith in the unseen,

For him, surely and without doubt, this (book) will be a guide.

If you act according to its guidance,

Then the unseen will turn into clear witnessing.

Whoever sincerely follows this path,

He will surely find the path to the Truth (Haqq).

But if someone considers this only as a fable,

Undoubtedly, his spiritual journey will go astray.

This is entirely the state of all wayfarers (sālik),

Both the beginner and the one who has reached the end.

He who is not intoxicated by reason will know,

That the intended meaning here is about humans, not birds.

Only the one who understands the art of speech,

Will comprehend that this story is full of symbols and allusions.)

Rizo'iy also speaks about the title of his poem in several places in the conclusion of the book. In these passages, he refers to the name "Qush Tili" (The Language of the Birds) in relation to Fariduddin Attar's "Mantiq ut-Tayr", saying, "This book is a translation from 'Qush Tili'", thereby using the title "Qush Tili". Rizo'iy himself refers to his work as "Qush Tili" in three separate places. In one instance, when speaking about the creation of the work and the sources he benefited from, he writes:

Garchi bu so'z xoli az da'vo emas,

Necha da'vo bo'lsa be ma'no emas.

Ulki bu "Qush tili"ni o'qib bilur,

Anda bu so'z chinligin bovar qilur.

Harfi harfayn ko'rsa andog'kim qalam,

El so'zidin munda ko'rmas bir raqam.

(Trans: Although these words are not without a claim,

Yet, whatever claim is made, it is not without meaning.

Whoever reads and understands this Qush Tili,

Will surely believe in the truthfulness of these words.

If he examines each and every letter carefully,

He will not find a single mark borrowed from others' words).

In the second instance, Rizo'iy, while explaining that this poem expressed in the language of birds represents the path of spiritual seekers (sāliks), once again emphasizes the title of the work:

Zohiro afsonag'a o'xshar so'zi,

Ma'nida bordur haqiqatg'a yuzi.

Sar basar ahli haqiqat so'zidur,

Ulki haq so'zini so'zlar o'zidur.

(His words may outwardly resemble a tale,

Yet, in their meaning, they face the Truth directly.

From beginning to end, they are the words of the people of Truth,

Who themselves speak the words of the True.)

And the third occasion is when the poet, by narrating Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr* in the Turkic language and composing it as a response, clearly states in the section about the history of the book's creation that he authored his own work entitled *Qush Tili* (The Language of Birds). From this historical note, it is revealed that Rizo'iy's poem, when calculated using the Abjad numerical system, was written in the year 1171 Hijri, corresponding to 1756–1757 CE.

Chun qush tilidin kinoyat erdi bu kitob,

Turkiy bila bo'ldi "Mantiq ut-tayr" xitob.

Tarixini jon bulbulidin so'rdum esa,

Qush tili bila navo chekib, qildi javob.

(Trans: Since this book was an allegory expressed in the language of birds,

In Turkic, it became entitled *Mantiq ut-Tayr*.

When I asked the bulbul (nightingale) of my soul for its date,

It responded with a melody in the language of birds and

gave the answer.)

Based on the excerpts from the poem analyzed above, it becomes evident that Rizo'iy deliberately named this work *Qush Tili* (The Language of Birds). This title not only reflects the thematic essence of the poem but also aligns with the allegorical and symbolic tradition of Eastern literature, particularly following the model of Fariduddin Attar's *Mantiq ut-Tayr*. However, Rizo'iy's work stands out as an independent literary achievement.

## CONCLUSION

Furthermore, the linguistic characteristics of the poem also support this conclusion. Unlike many works from the same period, which were heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian vocabulary, Rizo'iy consciously preferred Turkic equivalents whenever possible. His efforts to avoid excessive use of Arabic and Persian loanwords resulted in a language that is relatively more understandable and smooth for Turkic readers.

Therefore, it can be argued that Rizo'iy intentionally wished for his poem to bear a title that reflects not only its content but also its linguistic identity. The choice of a Turkic title like *Qush Tili* was likely a deliberate decision to present the work in a more accessible and native linguistic form, making it closer to the Turkic-speaking literary audience of his time.

This conclusion strengthens the notion that Rizo'iy not only followed literary tradition but also contributed to the development of Turkic-language didactic and philosophical poetry by adapting universal Sufi concepts to the Turkic cultural and linguistic context.

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