

An Analysis of Rumi's Mystical View of the Parrot Symbol in the *Ghazaliyat-e Shams*

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ABSTRACT

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A symbol and code is a type of expression that contains an intangible concept and truth and allows the speaker to get out of the limitations of sensory language. Rumi, who is a mystical poet, uses symbols to express his mystical ideas. This article examines the purpose of Rumi's parrot symbolism in Shams's sonnets and tries to show his fascinating and mysterious interpretations of this symbol. More than 80 verses are the frequency of use of parrot in Shams's sonnets. From their symbolism, important concepts such as the flight of the soul to the upper world, expansion and contraction, mystical zeal, silence, the association of angels, the messianic soul, happiness and its opposite relationship with the raven and the owl are extracted. This article tries to explain the poet's thought pattern regarding the parrot in Shams's sonnets with the descriptive-analytical method and by examining the mentioned concepts.

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Introduction

In Persian literature, symbols—particularly birds—serve as vital vehicles for articulating metaphysical truths that transcend the limitations of sensory language. Among the masters of this symbolic tradition is Jalal al-Din Rumi, whose *Ghazaliyat-e Shams* serves as a profound repository of spiritual experiences expressed through a rich, multi-layered vocabulary of signs. This research investigates Rumi's symbolic use of the “parrot” (*tuti*), a recurring motif appearing with high frequency (over 80 instances) in his sonnets. By analyzing this symbol, the study aims to decipher Rumi's complex mystical framework, exploring how he utilizes the parrot to represent the human soul, the longing for the Divine, the states of contraction and expansion (*qabz* and *bast*), and the spiritual struggle against materialist tendencies.

Method

This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology to interpret the symbolic functions of the parrot within Rumi's *Ghazaliyat-e Shams*. Utilizing the 10-volume critical edition of the *Kulliyat-e Shams* (Divan-e Kabir) edited by Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar, the research conducts a close reading of relevant verses. The analysis focuses on extracting Rumi's specific symbolic patterns, contextualizing them within his broader mystical philosophy, and comparing them with his treatment of the same symbol in his other major work, the *Masnavi*.

Results

The analysis reveals that Rumi employs the parrot as a multifaceted symbol deeply integrated into his mystical discourse. The primary findings are categorized as follows:

1. **The Soul and the Upper World:** The parrot is the preeminent symbol for the human soul (*jan*), which, like the bird separated from its original habitat, is trapped in the “cage” of the material body. Its flight represents the soul's relentless aspiration to return to its Divine origin.

۲. **States of *Qabz* and *Bast*:** The parrot's state is determined by its proximity to "sugar" (the spiritual nourishment of the Beloved). Absence of this "sugar" signifies *qabz* (spiritual contraction, grief, and separation), while its presence marks *bast* (expansion, joy, and the ecstatic moments of union).
۳. **Mystical Jealousy (*Ghayrat*):** Mirroring the intensity of the lover's commitment, the parrot is depicted as possessive of its "sugar." This represents the *ghayrat* of the mystic, who cannot tolerate the intrusion of any worldly or alien entity upon his exclusive relationship with the Divine.
۴. **Symbolic Contrast (Parrot vs. Crow/Owl):** Rumi creates a sharp dualism:
 - **Parrot:** Represents the mystic, the saint, and the seeker of truth.
 - **Crow/Owl:** Represents the materialistic person, the slave of worldly desires, and those blinded by the darkness of the senses.
۵. **Additional Symbolic Dimensions:**
 - **Silence (*Samt*):** While parrots are known for speech, Rumi uses them to explore the necessity of "sacred silence" as a veil for Divine secrets.
 - **Messianic Breath:** Associating the parrot with the "Messianic breath" (*dam-e Eisa*) signifies the spiritual power of the saint to revive dead hearts.
 - **Color (Green):** The parrot's green plumage links the symbol to the celestial realm, angels, and the eternal life associated with figures like Khidr.

Conclusion

Rumi utilizes the parrot symbol in the *Ghazaliyat-e Shams* not as a static image, but as a dynamic tool for navigating the mystical journey. The research concludes that the parrot functions as an ideal metaphor for the "complete human"—a being striving to transcend the material cage, seeking spiritual nourishment (the "sugar" of Truth), and maintaining a pure, jealous devotion to the Beloved. By contrasting the parrot with symbols of base materiality (crows and owls), Rumi provides a



sophisticated, symbolic roadmap for the soul's ascent from the terrestrial realm to the celestial, offering a more nuanced and ecstatic perspective than his didactic presentations in the *Masnavi*.