

**Analysis and Comparison of Holism in ‘Attar’s Manteq
Al-Ṭair and Modern Physics**

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Introduction

Proposing a general model of the world has been considered by many physicists and philosophers since ancient Greece; since it seems that this idea forms the basis of ‘Attar’s ideas in Manteq Al-Ṭair (the Conference of the Birds), this study analyzes and compares holism in ‘Attar’s mystical ideas and modern physics.

In holism, which was formed in the twentieth century, living beings are considered an “integrated whole” in which the properties of the components lay in its totality. “Such approaches are observed both in

Chinese and ancient Iranian mysticism and also Ephesian, Platonic and Aristotelian thoughts.” (Golabi, 2017) Traces of holism can be observed in ancient Iranian or Khosravani Wisdom; he creation unity, which was interpreted as “existence unity” in Mola Sadra’s philosophy; the principle that has had a great influence on mystical thoughts. Although ‘Attar was impacted by the creation unity and humanism of the world in Khosravani Wisdom, unlike his predecessors, he achieved a new allegory, namely the scientific- philosophical allegory of the correspondence between the "particle of the world and the world of the particle". The abovementioned theory has a special status in the western wisdom and philosophy. (Zarrinkub, 1989)

Keywords:

Attar, Mantiq al-Tair, Holism, modern physics, Simorgh

Research Findings

Through studying ‘Attar’s works, it is inferred that he views the universe as a whole; That is, his view of the universe is based on "quantum communication"; since according to that, "there is only one constant whole." (Wolf, 2005)

After describing the creation of the world in Manteq Al-Ṭair, ‘Attar, describes the particle and its relation to creation; in this vast sea of existence, the microscopic and macroscopic worlds are integrated (‘Attar, 2010)

According to the modern physics “the beginning of the universe was in the form of an initial atom”. (Bryson, 2009)

The birds are willing to go back to the origins of the existence that had a perfect harmony. "At the beginning of time, the world must have had perfect symmetry. All forces existed in one uniform phase force, but the world today is terribly asymmetric; since the four existing forces are in no way similar to each other" (Caco and Thomson, 2009) ; as in *Manteq Al-Ṭair*, when disorder prevailed, the birds tried to find a single uniform phase force called "Simorgh". Scientists believe that if the theory of integrity is correct, there are "fundamental similarities" in the creation of the universe.

Physicists consider the origin of supersymmetry to be the beginning of creation. They see a way to reach symmetry through reconstructing it at the beginning of creation (the Big Bang), which can only be analyzed by its echoes in nature. According to 'Attar, "everything" "here" is an echo "there". "The world is full of hidden symmetries that come from breaking symmetry. In fact, if symmetry had never been broken, humans would not exist, because there was no atom." (ibid); Because stars and galaxies were made of atoms over millions of years due to the breaking of the original symmetry and the release of particles, and after billions of years, humans were made of atoms; as in *Manteq Al-Ṭair*, *Si-Morgh* (the thirty birds) emerged by the break of the early *Simorgh*. Also, *Si-Morgh* or the thirty birds (due to the lack of continuity) can show both the difference between the forces of existence and the breaking of the original symmetry (*Simorgh*).

According to Copra, mystical thoughts are proper philosophical and logical basis for the theories of the contemporary sciences. The universal perception is based on two subjects: on is the unity of the phenomena and the other is the movement of the great universe. (Copra,

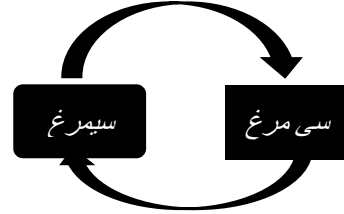
2006) And David Bohm calls it “all moving whole”. In *Manteq Al-Ṭair*, all birds of the world (all moving whole) try to fly towards Simorgh and it includes two main points: one is moving and the other is totality.

According to Bohm, “although particles seem to be separate, in the deeper level of reality, in fact they are different aspects of a deep cosmic unity” (talbot, 2010); as in *Manteq Al-Ṭair*, the separate thirty birds(=Si-Morgh) , in a deeper level of reality, are in fact a deep cosmic unity (Simorgh).

According to the modern physics, “when the core of the matter is reached, the nature seems to be manifested as a network of communication between the various components of a whole.” (Cupra, 2006) After describing the creation of the universe in *Manteq Al-Ṭair*, ‘Attar points this complex network of communication between the components and the whole (Ibid), with a fresh look; since like the contemporary physics world, the universe described by ‘Attar is an indivisible whole. Bohm, who has proposed the general relativity of Einstein in a more developed way, believes that: “One integrated thing, as opposed to the apparent separation of things at the level of the more unhidden order, is the broadly integrated whole of "everything else."” (Bohm, 1980) In the Conference of the Birds(*Manteq Al-Ṭair*) also, the apparent separation of things at the level of the more unhidden order is displayed by the thirty birds(Si-Morgh) that is Simorgh in a hidden level/ according to Bohm: “Eventually, even the hidden and unhidden orders are mixed together” (Ibid); like the mixture of the thirty birds (Si-Morgh) with Simorgh in the ending circular journey in *Manteq Al-Ṭair* that forms a symmetric pattern (like the yin and yang).



Yin and Yang



Circular Journey of the Thirty Birds and Simorgh

Conclusion

According to research findings, 'Attar and the modern physics are both searching for an integrated whole; 'Attar through the inner world and modern physics from the outer world. Reaching the integrated whole (Simorgh) has been the main motivation of the birds' journey, which is in harmony with the idea of the poet's existential unity. Both believe that the integrated whole has appeared once at the beginning of creation, which in Attar's thought is interpreted as the original relation or the ancient mysteries, and is called hidden symmetry or supersymmetry by modern physics, and its re-experience is impossible according to both of them, but it can only be analyzed with advanced knowledge; according to physicists, by receiving its echo in nature, and according to 'Attar, by reflecting it in the mirror of the heart.

Einstein tried to "read the mind of god" by proposing the theory of "integrity", but his efforts and those of all physicists have so far failed. According to 'Attar, the "ultimate truth" is unattainable.

The conscious choice of the word Si-Morgh (thirty birds) over the word Simorgh (with the help of mathematical numbers) can evoke the concept of unity, symmetry, order and connection of existence better than any other word.

‘Attar has used the symbolic allegory of the correspondence of Si-Morgh (the thirty birds) with Simorgh (equivalent to the particle of the world) to show the hidden and unhidden order. According to him, although Si-Morgh (the thirty birds) appear to be unrelated (due to discontinuity) (thirty different birds), in the deep layers of the universe and the hidden order are Simorgh, which Bohm calls "relatively independent semi-wholes".

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