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The Hopefuls in Love: Reading Attar's *Manteq at-Tair* (*The Conference of the Birds)*

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Abstract

Attar, the Sufi, is not widely known today in quite the same manner as Rumi. Attar, however, was a teacher who not only preceded, and probably blessed Rumi, but also set the benchmark for Sufi verse and thought. Having written close to 45,000 lines in his lifetime, *Manteq at-Tair*, in the popular masnavi form, remains his enduring legacy even after a thousand years. His life itself is known to us only in brief intermittent sketches, however – in the truest Sufi tradition.

This piece seeks to (re)introduce Attar as one of the leading lights of Sufi thought. It discusses the probable life he led, and his seminal work *Manteq at-Tair*, available to us in the English translation *The Conference of the Birds* by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis. It also seeks to question if this allegorical poem, a product anchored in the 12th century, may still find relevance in the 21st century with its multifarious challenges.

***Keywords**: sufi, mysticism, truth, narrative*

Introduction

Attar's 12th century classical Sufi treatise *Manteq at-Tair* is a seminal work that remains the subject of poetic adulation among scholars, poets and general readers even after a thousand years. Even today, this Sufi allegory continues to attract scholarly deliberation across the world. Earnest students of the Sufi Way drink deep from its cup, and seek in its verses, the hidden truth of life and the reality of love, God and the universe. Attar himself could not have imagined such a long life for this work widely acknowledged as one in which the Sufi teacher and poet touched his acme.

Does indeed *The Conference of the Birds*, with its luminous imagery, highly skilled weaving of allusions and myths into the masnavi form, and gems of Sufi teachings have a place in our present

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world? Could Attar have enfolded within its rich texture, more than just the prevalent Sufi thought, secretly revealing it even as he concealed the same?

Can its message be a lamp that lights up a niche of our world, a world at odds with itself, with all its contradictions: of war and peace, the significance of groups and individual agency, and most importantly, externalized religion and personalized faith?

I'm not fortunate enough to have studied Persian, the language in which Attar originally wrote this, a language that lends itself almost magically to the ideal of poetry aesthetics. Even so, I believe I have been left richer by reading it in the splendid English translation by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis and published by Penguin, London.The translators have elaborated on the rich wordplays and metaphors in the Introduction and go to great lengths to explain their choice of the heroic couplet form in English to render the innate beauty of the masnavi, as well as the rhyming scheme they have put in place. Perfect! And most of all, its perfection lies in its ability to reach out to a modern-day English reader.

Sketching Attar

French novelist André Malraux observed: "The 21st century will either be spiritual or will not be." He might well be right!

"*The saints in paradise teach that the start / Of drawing near is to renounce the heart."*

As I read these lines from this brilliant translation, I wonder if it's a trick of the language, or a playful puzzle. "… renounce the heart…" : whose heart is being renounced here? Is the lover renouncing his own heart? Or, is he renouncing his beloved's heart?

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I'm convinced it means both of these. Unless the lover renounces his beloved's heart which is in his possession, and distance himself, how can he start to draw near? Also too, how can he begin to draw close to his beloved, unless the lover renounces his own heart, an unnecessary encumbrance in love?

The words throw light, and beneath the light, they create shadows, and within these shadows, there are more meanings to be found. In this elliptical eloquence, this sensory word-play, lies the essence of this magnificent work.

In keeping with his Sufi lineage, one can only sketch the outlines of 'Attar the Chemist', so little is known about him and the life he lived. Of certainty, however, is the fact that Farid ud-Din Attar was born in the birthplace of the most beloved of Sufis of all time, Omar Khayyam. This was Nishapur in medieval Khorasan, in present Northeast Iran. A shadow clouds his exact date of birth, but sources indicate it to be between 1120 and 1157, and modern scholars incline towards the earlier date.

His real name was Mohammad-Ebn Abi Bakr Ebrahim Ben Isac but he became famous as Attar. He was educated at a theological school attached to the shrine of Imam Reza at Masshad, a major place of pilgrimage in Northeastern Iran, and received first-rate training in medicine and Arabic Studies. Later he travelled to Rey (ancient Raghes, near modern Tehran), Egypt, Damascus, Mecca, Turkistan and India. Such travel itineraries were common among Persian poets, as well as the Sufis, much like their European counterparts, the wandering bards and troubadours. The Sufis often travelled from place to place seeking knowledge and patronage; Attar seemed to favor knowledge as his objective for travel.

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His father bequeathed him a pharmacy, and this gave him his name, 'Attar'. His ascent into Sufism, by one account, was nothing short of a miracle. It has been described by Daulat-Shah in the Sufi classic, *Memoirs of the Poets*. We have to remember it is an allegorical narration, a myth with traces of history. One day as Attar worked in his pharmacy, a wandering Sufi appeared at his door and stood silently gazing within. Attar told him to be on his way. The Sufi quietly answered, "It is easy for me to be on my way. I have nothing but this cloak. But how will you find your way with the entrapment of all this expensive merchandise?"

This affected Attar deeply. He gave up his pharmacy and his practice, and withdrew into a religious retreat for a period of time under the Sufi master Sheikh Ruknuddin. That was his initiation into a spiritual life.

Attar had high aesthetic taste and maintained that the physical upkeep of the body was just as important as nurturing the soul. According to some literary historians, Attar's Sufi initiation in the above mentioned incident involved a poor theosophist who went to Attar's shop one day and asked for some money. Attar was so busy that he didn't pay any attention to him, so the man asked him, "How will you die, master?"
Attar answered, "My death will be same as your death."
The man asked, "Can you die like me?"
Attar answered, "Sure."
The man put his wooden bowl under his head and whispered "God", and died. After this soul wrecking incident, Attar became a different man (Khoshbakht et al., 2013).

Attar's works mirror the evolution of the Sufi movement. In total, he wrote close to 45,000 rhymed couplets, of which *Manteq at-Tair,* also entitled *Maqamat-e ṭoyur,* is seen as his greatest work (Khoshbakht et al., 2013). This epic poem is famously inspired by Moḥammad Gazali's *Resalat*

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al-ṭayr. Aṭṭar embellished and expanded the allegory of Gazali and gave it a deeper meaning, while retaining the frame: an assembly of birds choose a leader, and then journey to the distant seat of the bird-king.

Attar is also remembered for his historical biography of Sufis who preceded him on the Way. It is his only work in prose: the *Memoirs of the Friends* (or *Recital / Memorials of the Saints*) or *Tadhkirat-al-Auliya.* This has proved to be an important source for hagiographers.

At the end of his wanderings, he settled in his hometown, Nishapur. In his old age, Attar blessed a boy who came to meet him and spiritualized him with Sufi *baraka*. He also presented the boy with one of his books, *The Book of Secrets*, written in verse. This boy was Jalaluddin Rumi. Rumi would take to great heights, Attar's steps in Sufic lore.

Rumi is said to have referred to Attar as his soul. "Attar traversed the seven cities of love; and we have reached only a single street" (Shah, 1964).

Later in his life, Attar was charged for heresy. It was not an uncommon fate for Sufi mystics then, and from his work, *Manteq at-Tair,* it is easy to see why he was thus accused, although the charge was made on account of another of his works. Not unexpectedly, the charge was upheld and Attar was banished from Nishapur. This turn of events could not have come as a surprise for Attar. *Manteq at-Tair* is full of instances in which Sufis paid the price for their spiritual beliefs.

Historians believe that he met with a violent end in the place of his birth. Again, the date of his death remains debated, but scholars tend to believe it must have been 1220 or perhaps, 1229, around the time Mongols invaded Nishapur during their great westward sweep. By this time Attar would have been a frail aged poet of more than hundred years vintage.

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A story is told about how he met his end at the hands of the marauding Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan. When he was captured by a Mongol, another Mongol told his captor: "Don't kill this man. I will give you a thousand pieces of silver for him." Attar told his captor to hold out, that he might get a better price from someone else. His captor agreed. Later another man offered a quantity of straw for Attar. Attar said: "Sell me for the straw… that is all I am worth." This infuriated his captor and he promptly killed the frail, but feisty Sufi (Shah, 1964).

A tomb was erected over his grave in the late fifteenth century and is still maintained as a minor shrine. This shrine was restored in the 1930s and now includes a garden.

'Attar': Internal Meanings

Farid ud-din Attar is known to present generations as 'Attar the Chemist' or 'Perfumer'. Most assume the name is descriptive of the perfumery his father had. There is more in the shadows.
In Sufi lore, 'Attar' signifies a hidden meaning. By the Abjad system, a standard decoding system used in the Persian and Arabic languages, letters in a name can be substituted by numbers like this: A = 70; Ta = 9; Ta = 9; Alif = 1; Ra = 200.

The *Hisab-el-Jamal* is the standard rearrangement of letters and numbers in the Abjad system and is often used for poetic names. The rearrangement begins with totaling of the values of the letters (in this case: 70 + 9 + 9 + 200 = 289). To get to a new (and hidden) three-letter root, this number, again by standard process, is re-split into hundreds, tens and units: 200, 80, 9.
The numbers are recoded back to letters: 200= R; 80 = F; 9 = T.
The three letters can be regrouped in the following ways: RFT, RTF, FRT, FTR and TFR.

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Of the possible combinations here, the only trilateral root concerned with religion and internal or initiatory meaning is the FTR root.

'Attar' is an encipherment of the concept of FTR, which was the essential message Attar taught. The FTR root encapsulates many ideas that are the bedrock of Sufi thought and a Sufi way of life: humility (dervishism), the connection between Christianity and Islam, the grape or the Sufi poetic analogy for religious affiliations.

Sufi saints always took on such names: that when broken down by the Abjad system 'translated' to esoteric Sufi meanings and significance.

The Translation by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis

To the Sufi philosophy-uninitiated, this Penguin translation provides a grandiloquent introduction – the exotic Sufi ethos and its philosophical principles in a deeply historical time, a mystic way of life we can only imagine today, and Attar's sparkling turn of phrase.

In the introduction, Attar is lovingly framed within the history and the myth. Also, woven into the story is a discussion of the Sufi life, its fundamentals, and a quick tutorial on how to read Attar's poem in order to interpret the Sufi doctrine and what it stands for. "*The Conference of the Bird*s is a Sufi poem and its subject matter is the mysticism of Islam."

While Attar seeks to glorify and preach the Sufi principles, a few Sufi beliefs seem to preoccupy his attention almost constantly. Two beliefs are built up throughout the poem – the imperative to extinguish the Self, and the significance of passionate love. The two are connected – when passionate love overwhelms a person to the extent that he breaches the bounds of social mores,

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'self-hood' is demolished. It is in this state that a person comes to realize the 'nature' of God, and the power of total and unconditional surrender. Of course, the reader needs to understand the context of breaching social boundaries – it is not frivolous or fanciful, or a rebellious bout of self-centred, and perhaps, imagined ardor. What Attar alludes to is a higher order of belief, an almost divine compulsion to not just indulge the initial throb of emotion, but walk the thorny, often socially-contrary road from the initiation of a passionate love to acceptance and surrender, and further on, a deep transformation of the soul.

Continental Drift: Intersections with Chaucer and Borges

Attar's long narrative poem stands alone, and stands among equals. Its brilliance, of form and structure, its allusions and artful inlays of rhetoric in a seemingly straightforward narration, all display a striking similarity to *The Canterbury Tales,* Geoffrey Chaucer's Middle-English masterpiece. Both poets used the narrative of a physical journey to symbolize the evolutionary journey of an individual to ultimate self-knowledge.

The personal lives of both poets are only sparsely documented, even as both are acclaimed as master storytellers and innovators of poetic form.

In both masterpieces, characters drawn from diverse social groups and replete with human flaws and idiosyncrasies, are brought together for a physical and spiritual journey, depending on how these are read: as colorful stories of pilgrims or as allegories leading to deeper interpretations. The poets convey their message through the medium of tales, fables, and vivid conversations.

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It is highly doubtful Chaucer got a chance to read Attar's masterpiece. The fact that thirty pilgrims journeyed to Canterbury in much the same manner as thirty birds traversed the Sufi Way in Attar's poem, is perhaps best viewed as a fateful convergence of two great poets' thoughts.

The Canterbury Tales can be read as a critique of some aspects of the Catholic Church in England in Chaucer's time. The 14th century plague had claimed many million lives across Europe, and as a result, preponderant religious values witnessed a crisis of sorts. Religious morality needed an internal redesign in order to better serve people's changed lives. Chaucer crafted his immortal tales around this theme.

In similar fashion, Attar composed *Manteq at-Tair* in a time when the ancient way lived and taught by the Prophet was militating against the material imperatives of a politically active Islam. His work reinforced the Sufi precept that the way to self-knowledge and God was through simple, sober ways of spiritualism.

The structure of both works is a frame narrative in which the main story serves as a frame for several smaller tales, some of which were already part of the popular culture of the time.

Of significance is that both Attar and Chaucer told their stories to the common man. Chaucer used English at a time when writers mostly wrote in the language of the nobility, that was French or Italian.

Both Attar and Chaucer believed that the road to salvation is an internal personal journey but equally, it involves the community. Upon examining the people assembled for the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket in *The Canterbury Tales*, and the thirty birds that finally reach

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Simorgh in *The Conference of the Birds*, the reader gets a sense of the significance of collective effort over individual struggle (Khoshbakht et al., 2013).

In an unrelated but equally magical way, Attar's *The Conference of the Birds* found resonance halfway around the world, with the celebrated *avant garde* poet Jorge Luis Borges.
Classical Arabic works were an essential nutrient during Borges's Argentinian childhood. When asked about seminal events in his life, Borges often spoke of his father's library, how it was unusually partial to Persian and Sufi literature, and how it had a profound effect on the writer through his youth. The elder Borges was also the first translator to render Edward Fitzgerald's translation of *The Rubaiyyat* into Spanish.

In his writings, Borges makes multiple references to Farid ud-Din Attar. One of his stories, "Elacercamiento a Almotásim", written in 1935, explicitly acknowledges its debt to Persian literature, and more directly, to Attar's *Manteq at-Tair*. This story is so emblematic of his fiction that, in his "Autobiographical Essay", Borges stated: "[El acercamiento a Almotásim] now seems to me to foreshadow and even to set the pattern for those tales that were somehow awaiting me, and upon which my reputation as a storyteller was to be based".

Another explicit mention of Attar's poem can be found in Borges's 1982 essay, "El Simurg y el águila" in *Nueve Ensayos Dantescos*. Comparing the symbol of the Simorgh with the eagle composed of pagan kings in Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, Borges juxtaposes one of the most famous works in the Western canon with a gold standard of Persian literature.

To Simorgh with Attar's Birds

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Now, let us read the poem for the story it tells. The birds of the world gather to seek out a king. After all, animals have a king in the lion, and human beings too have their kings, so why should the birds be without a lord? They are told by the hoopoe (the avian equivalent of a Sufi Sheikh or teacher) that they do have a king -- the Simorgh – but this Simorgh lives at the other end of the world, in the mountains of Kaf. To reach him, the birds have to undertake a long and difficult journey that might take years, why, even a lifetime, and what's worse, they might lose their lives in the course of their journey. At first, the birds are excited and ready to do whatever it takes, but when they realize the magnitude of the task, and what all they have to give up for it, they are beset with fear – for the life they are familiar with, for their life itself.

Suddenly, the undertaking loses its lofty appeal and they grasp at straws; their present life is perfect, thank you, and that they don't want to jeopardize it for the uncertainty and peril of the interminable journey to an elusive king.

The anxious birds make a variety of excuses. The songful nightingale cannot leave the side of his beloved, the rose; the hawk remains satisfied with his powerful position at the king's court; the timid little finch is afraid to even take the first step, and the peacock, haughty and somewhat contemptuous, believes that paradise is what he wants to focus his energies on, not some Simorgh.

The wise hoopoe (having learnt his wisdom at King Solomon's court) answers each bird with stories and anecdotes which show how their desires are false just as their fears are misplaced. The birds elect the hoopoe as their leader, and direct a volley of questions at him about the way, and its tribulations. The hoopoe responds with anecdotes – fables that were probably in social currency then, and that continue to weave a spell today. The last question is about the length of the journey, and in answer, the hoopoe describes the seven valleys they have to pass through, and those that are the seven valleys of the Sufi Way.

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These are valleys of Quest, Love, Insight into Mystery, Detachment and Serenity, Unity, Bewilderment or Awe, Poverty and Nothingness.

The journey itself is quickly dealt with, and the birds arrive at the court of the Simorgh. At first they are turned back; but they are finally admitted and find that the Simorgh they seek is none other than themselves. The final moment of revelation hinges on a shimmering play on words -- only thirty (*si*) birds (*morgh*) are left at the end of the Way, and so, the *simorgh* meet the Simorgh, the goal of their quest.

[The concept of the Simorgh (the Persian "phoenix") originates in ancient Persian myth, and has perhaps been made most familiar through the Shahnameh, by Firdausi.]

The hoopoe in Attar's poem is presented as the birds' guide and leader; he is therefore the equivalent of a sheikh leading a group along their road. His relation to the other birds is also Attar's relation to his audience: he expounds the doctrine they wish to hear and admonishes them to act on it. Attar very frequently gives the impression of merging his personality with that of the hoopoe; this is aided in Persian by the absence of punctuation, in particular, quotation marks.

Through a rich tapestry of fables harking back to ancient times, discussions of Biblical and Q'uranic stories, and with the help of poetic scaffolding of Sufi truths, the poet reveals while ostensibly concealing, the journey – both internal, as well as the physical tryst for the mountains of Kaf, and in it, the Simorgh.

The masnavi rhyme scheme and dexterous word-plays, even in English translation, imbue it with rare mystical allure. The reader is led in, ensnared by the words, and then beyond the word-cliffs,

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lie vast open spaces above an ocean of inner meanings, gems that gleam on in silence. In the starting verses of the translation, the puritanical duck proclaims her outward purity in accordance with "God's command"; her ritualistic cleaning and preening that she believes to be her faith.

"Among the birds I'm like an anchorite --
My soul and feathers are a spotless white.
I live in water and I cannot go
To places where no streams or rivers flow;
They wash away a world of discontent --
Why should I leave this perfect element?"

The hoopoe replies that outward appearance is by no means an indication of reality, and that the real essence lies within.

"You value water's purity, you say,
But is your life as pure as you declare?"

The peacock struts proudly in remembrance of his privileged position:

"*I was a dweller once in paradise… How could I seek the Simorgh out when I remember paradise?"*

To him, the hoopoe's reply is:

"You think your monarch's palace of more worth
Than Him who fashioned it and all the earth."

The hawk has delusions of grandeur, for he is wont to perch on the king's arm, and to him, that is the highest office and he sees no use in questing for the Simorgh.

"A seed from my great sovereign's hand is all I need;
The eminence I have suffices me."

The hoopoe retorts:

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"Dear hawk, you set great store
By superficial graces, and ignore
The all-important fact of purity.
A king with rivals in his dignity
Is no true king; the Simorgh rules alone
And entertains no rivals to his throne."

Attar's spiritual edification aspires to the highest moral and intellectual virtue that is not tampered by formal attainments of the material world. He believes that evolution of the human spirit is the purpose of human life, singly and collectively.

Rumi, the greatest of the Sufi teachers and one exerting significant influence on western thought, states that man passes through three evolutionary stages: first, when he worships everything – man, woman, earth, stones. The second stage is when he professes to worship God. The third and final stage is reached when man passes beyond the worship and claims neither to worship nor not worship God. That is man in his most refined form.

The journey through these stages is not easy by any means, or easily described in words, or easily taught to students. It is each person's singular experience and each one's unique journey. Yet, the evolution must happen as a collective, as society. '… a community, dedicated to perceiving reality, of which apparent reality is only a substitute. This cognition comes through contact with others, by being engaged in group activity, as well as in personal activity and thought…' (Shah, 1964).

The birds denote various personalities among men. The peacock is vain, the nightingale is the intoxicated lover who believes that his undistracted and undying feverish intensity in love is his salvation. (Here, Attar alludes to the ecstatic but incomplete lover who loves with all his heart, no doubt, but who does not lend himself to the deeper effects of love - the refinement or transformation into a qualitatively superior human being.)

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Going on, the hawk is the person with delusions of grandeur due to his proximity with power; the partridge, the crass materialist incapable of grasping a reality higher than material accoutrements; the heron, the unforgiving pessimist forever wallowing in the shallows of his own misery; the finch, perennially underwhelmed by her meekness.

Individualism is on open display here – there is no attempt to sheath it within uniformity, a comforting sameness of character traits, or ways of thought and life values. To interpret this as the celebration of individualism would probably be going overboard with zeal. It is more a candid recognition, and acceptance, of people as they are – flawed, full of misgivings, besieged by self-doubt and reluctant to exert their faculties to gain something they cannot measure by conventional methods – even if they accept the existence of this exalted goal.

This almost-celebration of personal agency mirrors 21st century society with its particular brand of individualism. Of greater import is that despite the differences, the individuals join in a common quest for the Simorgh, and it is in the course of this uncommon quest that they cobble together a better and more enlightened society. Remember, the hoopoe had warned the journey might span an entire lifetime.

Can this edification, as preached by Attar, provide a benign, universal theme that transcends the shells of various religions in our world today? After all, Sufi thought is not proprietary material of the East or West.

How does Sufi philosophy heighten human culture?

The Sufis make a tangible and sustained effort to bridge the distance between everyday sensibility and the "Sufi experience" so that logic-attenuated minds can stretch and stream into a richer,

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grander perception, seek access to a higher wisdom. Second, 'it is maintained by Sufis that even in cultures where authoritarian and mechanical thinking have choked comprehensive understanding, human individuality will have to assert itself, somewhere, even if this be only through the primitive sense that life must have more meaning than the officially propagated one' (Shah, 1964).

Once this 'primitive sense' is awakened, calibrated action (focused upon self-improvement) propels the individual, and by extension, the society towards a shared ideal, shaping a collective identity in the process. This future society is made up of individuals with heightened self-awareness, sharing a common philosophic ideal, and that now has no need for the crutches of external religion.

A Tale for Our Times

Aside from the sheer magnificence of the poet's oeuvre, upon deeper scrutiny, Attar's poem aptly resonates with the present.

In the twenty-first century, religion is an awkward companion. In an age of sharpened perceptions of individual identity, and confused notions of what exactly constitutes this identity, religion remains a relic handed to us by the earlier generation. Of little practical use mostly, it still gives us our cultural headdress, and so, we are unwilling to totally give it up. Most of us, however, do not actively practice the religion we were born into - we do not know it very well. We don't give it too much attention, time or energy, unless faced with a life-changing event, and then, we tend to quickly jump all the way to the other end, blindly, fearfully. We often feel embarrassed by our

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religious predilections, and often, we cloak our convictions in others' beliefs and disbeliefs just to conform. This, then, remains the individual's stance towards religion.

Sociologist Émile Durkheim stated that, in the past, religion was the cement of society--the means by which people turned away from everyday banalities, in which they were variously enmeshed, to a common devotion to the sacred. By thus wrenching men from the utilitarian preoccupations of daily life, religion inspired communal devotion that transcended individual struggles and goals. Durkheim stresses that religious phenomena is a communal experience rather than individual exercise.

Since religious activity acted as the glue for society, what would take its place, once the reign of traditional religious orientations ended, Durkheim questioned.

Religion, he asserted, is not only a social creation, it is, in fact, society divinized. Religion is eminently social: it occurs in a social context; when men celebrate sacred things, they celebrate the power of their society. This power so transcends their own existence that they have to give it sacred significance in order to visualize it.

If religion in its essence is a transcendental representation of the powers of society, then, Durkheim said, the disappearance of traditional religion need not herald the dissolution of society. All that is required is for modern men now to realize directly, their dependence on society; that which they had earlier recognized only through the medium of religious representations.

Once religion ceases to be the moral and civil fountainhead of society, what is it that keeps societies from disintegrating? If religious identity is the boat men ride wherein they are 'each' sometimes, and sometimes, they are 'unity' in the face of a storm, what will happen when they wreck the

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religion boat? Once the collective identity runs aground, individual identity is naturally threatened: if there is no 'us', where is the 'I'?

I imagine Attar pondering these, or similar questions, through star-filled Persian nights. Suppose 12th century society was faced with similar disenchantments with traditional religion as does the 21st century? Suppose, the 'collective consciousness' that Durkheim posits society to be lay shattered as a result of various factors, and Attar agonized over it?

I imagine Attar sorrowing over men turning their backs on the social 'collective consciousness'. I imagine him composing this work in an attempt to address social conundrums of his age. I imagine him doing so in an effort to 'save' religion in its essence, and wishing to give people an internal and absorbing practice that could join them in spirit.

It's all in the shadowy realms of imagined realities in a world that rotated away a thousand years ago. What remains is the message – of the Simorgh, that divine essence within each one, and which seeks to be discovered, time and time again. Indeed, in that message, Attar lives on.

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