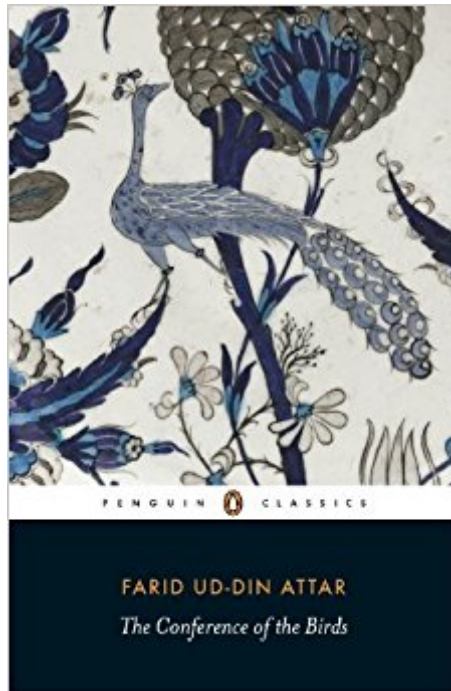




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The Conference Of The Birds (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Composed in the twelfth century in north-eastern Iran, Attar's great mystical poem is among the most significant of all works of Persian literature. A marvellous, allegorical rendering of the Islamic doctrine of Sufism - an esoteric system concerned with the search for truth through God - it describes the consequences of the conference of the birds of the world when they meet to begin the search for their ideal king, the Simorgh bird. On hearing that to find him they must undertake an arduous journey, the birds soon express their reservations to their leader, the hoopoe. With eloquence and insight, however, the hoopoe calms their fears, using a series of riddling parables to provide guidance in the search for spiritual truth. By turns witty and profound, *The Conference of the Birds* transforms deep belief into magnificent poetry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Like Rumi and Hafiz, the name Attar conjures up images of passionate attraction to the divine. Attar was a Persian Sufi of the 12th century and his masterpiece is *The Conference of the Birds*, an epic allegory of the seeker's journey to God. When all the birds of the world convene and determine that they lack a king, one bird steps forward and offers to lead them to a great and mighty monarch. Initially excited, each bird falters in turn, whereupon the leader admonishes them with well-targeted parables. These pithy tales are the delight of this 4,500-line poem, translated deftly into rhymed couplets. What is your excuse for not seeking God? Your life is fine already? You prefer material

pleasure? You are holy enough? You have pride, lack courage, or are burdened with responsibility? Attar has an answer to encourage you on the path to the promised land. And when you get there, the king may not be what you'd expect, but you must make the journey to see. --Brian Bruya

• This felicitous translation is a classic and reaches the widest possible audience. • " David Azzolina, Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania

Ask a well-educated Iranian for advice on reading the Persian classics and high on his/her list will likely be "The Conference of the Birds," a medieval poetic allegory written by Farid ud-Din Attar. Attar began his professional life as a well-educated pharmacist, and, after some years of listening to the cares and concerns of his patients, devoted himself instead to travel and the study of philosophy. These travels, which extended throughout the Middle East, Turkistan, and India, left him most profoundly impressed by the Sufi approach to Islam and culminated in the writing of "The Conference of the Birds." This lengthy verse poem tells of the search of the world's birds for a magical leader, symbolizing the quest of the human soul for unity with the Supreme Being. Precisely who among the Sufi philosophers and authors of his age most influenced Attar is not well documented, but there is no doubt of the the impact he in turn would have on the work of Rumi and Hafez, the Sufi poets today best known in the West. To further round out your appreciation of the impact that Attar's classic has had over the centuries, treat yourself to the recently published "The Canticle of the Birds: Illustrated Through Persian and Eastern Islamic Art." In this expensive but exquisitely illustrated volume, Dr. Michael Barry of Princeton University has brought to bear his deep knowledge of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian art and thought.

This book blew me away. I had to read it for an English Lit class I took in university and I ended up keeping it in my personal library to read for my spiritual development. My interpretation of this story is that the birds of all kinds (representing people of the world) all have to go on this journey (a metaphor for life) that will be difficult and if they make it through they will become one with the Simorg (not sure what that is but I took it to mean that they will be transferred to a better place; a higher level of spirituality and intellect). The hoopoe bird is very wise and gives the other birds words of leadership and wisdom. If you are a spiritual person, I would recommend this book.

Attar's Conference of the Birds is indeed a classic, and this translation is among the best available in English. Highly recommended for seekers of the heart.

For someone who likes learning about old classical Persian poetry, it is an invaluable book.

Farid ud-Din Attar, also known as Attar of Nishapur, a Persian poet, was born in Nishapur, Iran in 1145. In his early career as a pharmacist, he helped many people in his home town. Later he abandoned his pharmacy and traveling to different countries became his intense interest. After meeting some Sufi leaders in India, he started promoting Sufi ideas as he returned to Nishapur. Attar's master piece, "The Conference of the Birds", is a poetic moral story of a flock of birds in the journey of seeking truth, the God. With aimless life style, birds around the world gather in a garden try to find out if there is a meaning in life and if there is a God. An intelligent bird, called hoopoe, led these birds and started their long journey of searching for truth, the meaning of existence. By using riddles and answers, hoopoe advised and encouraged all birds to be brave, grateful and to be truthful. Life is not an easy game and we all live to be reborn and we are born to learn how to live a fulfilling life. Translated by Afkham Darbandi (Davis's wife) and Dr. Dick Davis, this exceptional book catches man's heart for almost one thousand years. If you like Rumi and Hafez, you will enjoy this book much more profoundly. As a poem, it is exquisite and spectacular; as an epic allegory of seeking God, it is majestic and noble; as a spiritual guidance, this book leads you to your intellectual self. I read this book many years ago and at that time I was mainly focusing on the spiritual part of the book. After becoming a serious birder, revisit of this book brought me to a higher level of realization. I consider myself a fast reader. However, this is not a book you will want to read without a thought or many thoughts. You need to read this book like tasting a good wine and, you will swallow its essence only when you understand life should be embraced with love not hate, with peace not war. Happy birding and happy reading! WingsSpirit.com

In good shape and will be used in a college class.

A book written in such a manner that its meanings instinctively flowed within my heart. Its message encouraging us to reflect within ourselves.

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