Your Name

Instructor Name

Course Number

Date

Title: Conference of the Birds Forum 1- Essay

*Background of the writer*: Farid ud Din Attar was a Persian Muslim poet, who has worked to explain the relationship between humans and God. He has composed many such literary works, which stand much different to the Islamic literature. Farid ud Din is believed to born in the twelfth century in the northeastern part of the present day Iran. One more interesting thing about Farid Ud Din is that he is considered the contemporaries of Omar Khayyam, who is also one of the greatest Islamic writers known to the world. Farid is believed to die in the very same city, he was born into. The name Attar, which Farid uses to write in his literary work, means ‘the one who sells the essence of roses’. Davis and Darbandi have mentioned his name Attar, that Attar is more about how he wanted himself to be placed in front of the world(Davis and Darbandi). Just to be a little different to his contemporaries, he used the title Attar with his Surname. Farid has also mentioned in the biographical index that he used to work in his *darue khane* (like a chemist shop of the present day), where he used to compose the drugs and sell them. He has composed many great works of literature while working in his Darue Khane.

The interring thing about Farid- as a mystic poet is that unlike his contemporaries in the twelfth century, he has not written about the traditional love. As McKeon mentions that love, despair, romance and hope remained the topics of the poetry in the twelfth century(McKeon). In those times when love was the most written about topic, Farid opted to work in exploring the relation of God with the human beings. He explored this relationship in the most beautiful form, he could have done. The conference of the Bird is one such fine example of this, where he explored the seven stages of love between humans and God by presenting birds. Farid's work has always remained close to the exploration of the relation between humans and God. Why the earthly beings- the humans find the attraction in their relation with God? Farid has always made this as the subject of his scholastic search.

*Allegorical players in the poem*: The Conference of the Birds follow the following allegorical framework. When the birds of the world gather to seek their King, they have been told about an old bird hoopoe that they are inspired and soar like a king just like the Simorgh. They are also been told that the King lives at a very far place. This makes them excited to begin their search. But when they get to know that he lives beyond the seven valleys, they get depressed and start making excuses for not being part of that journey. Hoopoe which is the oldest among the birds, and is their leader in the journey starts telling them the reason why they should begin with their search. All this conversation between the hoopoe and the birds have been mentioned by anecdotes. When they finally reach the court of Simorgh, they are told to go back. This makes them more curious, but after a very little time, they are allowed to come into the court. At this point in the poem, they are told that Simorgh is every one of them. It is actually the quality of one's inner self to look deep inside.

*Significant players in the Parable:* In the introductory parts of the poem, some characters have been defined. The important of them is the Hoopoe which is appointed by heaven to lead the quest of the other birds. Hoopoes is the very first character introduced in the poem. Simorgh is the second character which is introduced as the King. Simorgh is the one who has been searched after. At the end of the quest of the birds, they are been told that Simorgh is every one of them. Then in the introductory parts, some other birds as earthly beings are introduced. First among them is the nightingale. The nightingale presents a reason that she cannot leave her loved one, therefore she cannot be a part of this journey. The next is the hawk, who has one job of waiting outside the court of the King. He presents the reason that he is satisfied with his job, therefore cannot leave for this journey, and the last bird is the Finch who is just afraid to start the journey.

*Controlling theme or Suggestions:* The controlling theme in the very first part of this poem is the search of the birds for guidance. It has been depicted in an allegorical manner that the humans who don't have a quest in their lives, live an aimless life. This has been depicted by the bird's search for their King- Simorgh. This theme also suggests that Farid has tried to get the attention of the readers towards their creator. He actually draws their attention towards the real aim, which is beyond the seven valleys. These seven valleys are actually the hard phases of one's life after which there is something meaningful. Heilpern suggests that as like the birds find themselves after this long quest, is literally true for the humans which will find themselves after the long quests(Heilpern).

*The soul’s journey towards the path of God:* The soul journey as suggested in the introductory part of the poem as always open towards God. As the Birds have gathered just to search for God, similarly the humans any time in their life can turn toward their creator, just to make their inner feelings calm and satisfied. The Birds journey toward their King is blocked by the fears every bird had about the lengthy and treacherous journey. In the real world, this is blocked by the human's feelings which are often flawed. Hoopoe then leads the search of their journey and finally, a stage comes when they dealt with those seven valleys, which appeared fearful to the birds. In any human's life, these valleys are also the kind of hard times which they find during their search of God. In other words, Farid has mentioned about the Human's quest for peace as treacherous and hefty just like that of the birds.

 *Hoopoe’s advice for the souls*: Hoopoe has been presented as a heavenly character in the poem. The birds come over to him to seek guidance about their King. The King in the human's life is not there. The King for the unguided souls as Heilpern argue is the God, who is the creator and ultimate factor which controls the life of these earthly beings(Heilpern). The king of humans- God is on the other side of the seven valleys presented by Farid. The soul's journey towards the path of its creator is treacherous. It’s impossible to find the search of one’s soul without going through any hard times. The birds have flown over from the seven valleys to find the king in themselves. Similarly, the humans need to go through these hardships if they have an urge to find themselves or to find what the meaning of their relationship with God is.

# Works Cited:

Davis, Dick, and Afkham Darbandi. *Introduction. The Conference of the Birds, by Farid Ud-Din Attar*. Penguin, 1984.

Heilpern, John. *Conference of the Birds: The Story of Peter Brook in Africa*. Routledge, 2013.

McKeon, Richard. “Poetry and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: The Renaissance of Rhetoric.” *Modern Philology*, vol. 43, no. 4, 1946, pp. 217–234.