

benefit from the *Kīmīā-ye sa'ādat* and the *Eḥyā'olum al-dīn*. Nonetheless, because they were Persian, it was useless to them. He then translated it into Persian and named it *Zād-e ākerat*.<sup>1</sup>

It addresses aspects of daily life such as waking up, dressing, going to the mosque, praying, fasting, and so on, as well as various forms of supplicatory prayer and ways to avoid sin. The treatise concludes with a section on “the proper social conduct toward people.” At the end, Ghazali advises anyone interested in learning more about such topics to read the *Kīmīā-ye sa'ādat* and, for a more in-depth study, the *Eḥyā'olum al-dīn*.


The treatise was published twice in India in the nineteenth century and once in Iran in the twentieth century. However, none of these versions was reliable. Because the manuscripts they used were invalid, and their editing methodology was unscientific. Sāket and Gāzi decided to create a new edition based on the oldest known manuscripts of the treatise.

After introducing the writer, Ghazali, and the treatise, the editors go on to describe in detail the manuscripts they have access to and their method for editing the text. Following that, the text of the treatise and its variants are presented; the reader can see that this treatise had at least two versions, one short and one longer. The editors have chosen the oldest manuscript, which is a shorter version of the treatise, as the main text. They then provide a detailed commentary on the text, with translations of Arabic citations into Persian and references to Ghazali's other works, particularly the *Kīmīā-ye sa'ādat* and the *Eḥyā'olum al-dīn*. Appendices contain names, terms, and Qur'anic verses. The book ends with a bibliography.

This scholarly edition offers a reliable version of one of Ghazali's works in Persian for the first time, which can serve as a foundation for further study and translation into other languages.

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## **Centuries beyond Time (Qarn-hā-ye bi-Zamān): Epistemological Analysis of 'Attār's Manteq al-Tayr. Mehdi Mohabbati (Tehran: Hermes, 2020). Pp. 951. ISBN 9786004562317**

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*Qarn-hā-ye bi-zamān* is primarily an analysis of 'Attār's poem *Conference of the Birds* (*Manteq al-tayr*), through which the author, Mehdi Mohabbati, seeks to provide a coherent overview of 'Attār's epistemology, mysticism, and personality more broadly. According to him, a precise understanding of 'Attār's narration style is key to any analysis of the *Conference of the Birds*. He argues that the *Conference of the Birds*—and Attār's oeuvre more generally—follows a spiral path. Just like a funnel, it is wide at the top, gradually becomes narrower and deeper, and reaches the central end point. This narrative narrowing is visible in a few ways: first, in the reduction of the characters from thousands of inexperienced birds to thirty of the select; a second lessening is the gradual contraction of the ethical subject matter of the poem, which becomes more specific until a single point remains—the Simorgh and the mystical unity it represents. At the same time, the birds had always participated in the Simorgh,

<sup>1</sup> For Ġazālī's works see <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gazali>.

even at the very beginning, but their participation was not clearly seen. Mohabbati claims that this circular motion is the main feature of Eastern art and culture, especially Iranian and Islamic culture and civilization, from Ibn ‘Arabi to ‘Attār and Sohravardi. Again drawing on the metaphor of the circle, he argues that ‘Attār’s mysticism cannot be understood based on a reading of only one of his works, but only by placing all of his works in a nonhierarchical dialogue with each other: he conceptualizes them as overlapping circles that take meaning from and give meaning to each other.

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## **Ali Gholipour, Parvaresh-e zogh-e āmme dar asr-e pahlavi: tarbiyat-e zibashenakhti-ye mellat dar siyasatgozari-ye farhangi-ye dolat [Cultivating the Public Taste in the Pahlavi Era: Aesthetic Upbringing of the Nation in the State’s Cultural Policy] (Tehran, Iran, Nazar Publishing, 2019)**

Reviewed by Ali Papolizadi 

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In *Cultivating the Public Taste in the Pahlavi Era: Aesthetic Upbringing of the Nation in the State’s Cultural Policy*, Ali Gholipour presents a comprehensive analysis of the intellectuals and state institutions of the first and second Pahlavi era tasked with promoting an “elite cultural taste” among the general public. Gholipour’s meticulous six-chapter book delves deeply into the elitist policies surrounding Iranian popular theater and cinema. The book adopts a chronological organization, placing significant emphasis on pivotal moments within the Iranian cultural and political landscape. A crucial juncture in Gholipour’s narrative is the year 1969, when “the Cultural Policy of Iran” was approved by the king. The document included a fundamental clause called “Culture for Everyone,” which aimed to guide ordinary individuals away from “vulgar art.” Gholipour deftly demonstrates that it was not just the state that endorsed elitist art; intellectuals, who commonly held ideologies opposing the absolute power of the monarchy, were also supporters of this elitist cultural policy. Employing a genealogical approach to this document, Gholipour examines the historical processes that led to its formation. Contributing to Iranian studies literature, Gholipour’s analysis scrutinizes both the document’s structural underpinnings and its agential origins. For instance, the establishment of the modern state during Reza Shah’s reign was accompanied by the concept of “cultivating the nation.” The dominance of a socialist discourse between 1941 and 1953 was another key structural element. Gholipour illustrates that this period, characterized by a lack of state apparatus, played a substantial role in fostering a group of elitist critics whose ideas greatly influenced the development of a non-state elitist approach to art. As for the agential factor, Gholipour explores the role of Mohammad-Ali Foroughi’s cultural policy during the first Pahlavi era. This is only a brief sample of what the book offers. *Cultivating the Public Taste in the Pahlavi Era* is an invaluable resource not only for art historians of Iran, but also those studying the cultural ramifications of nation-building.

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