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## THE SYMBOLIC MEANING OF TURQUOISE IN IRANIAN CULTURE

This article is intended to determine the symbolic meaning of turquoise in Iranian culture with the help of extralinguistic materials. Today, gemstones are not just ordinary useful minerals, because they can become the main object of complex research as a living element of a particular culture. The lack of research on this topic in the field of Iranian studies, in turn, determines the relevance of the study. The research is interdisciplinary in nature, based on the linguocultural and etymological analysis, method of interpretation. The results of the study can be used by orientologists, specialists in Iranian studies and linguists in conducting linguocultural analysis. In the article, the authors reveal that the turquoise stone has a special place in Iranian culture, as well as the fact that this precious stone is valuable as a natural mineral, and its color is associated with Iranian archetypal beliefs. In addition, the role of turquoise stone in religious discourse and its widespread usage as medicine has enhanced the status of this stone. And the analysis of the appearance of the turquoise stone, which is used as a metaphor and simile in the literary texts of Persian poets, allows a deeper understanding of the Eastern poetry.

**Key words:** Iran, culture, symbol, turquoise, blue, gemstones.

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### Иран мәдениетіндегі *фирузе* тасының символдық мәні

Осы мақала Иран мәдениетіндегі *фирузе* тасының символикалық мәнін экстралингвистикалық материалдардың көмегімен анықтауға арналған. Бүгінде асыл тастар қарапайым қазба байлығы ғана емес, себебі, олар белгілі бір мәдениеттің жанды элементі ретінде кешенді зерттеу жұмысының басты нысаны бола алады. Ал, бұл тақырыптың ирантану саласында аз зерттелуі өз кезегінде зерттеу жұмысының өзектілігін айқындайды. Зерттеу жұмысы пәнаралық сипатымен ерекшеленеді және лингвомәдени, этимологиялық талдау мен интерпретациялау әдісіне сүйене отырып жүргізілді. Зерттеу нәтижелерін шығыстанушылар, ирантанушылар мен лингвистер лингвомәдени талдау жүргізу барысында қолдана алады. Мақалада авторлар *фирузе* тасының Иран мәдениетінде ерекше орынға ие болуы осы бағалы тастың табиғи минерал ретінде құнды болуымен қатар, оның түсі ирандықтардың архетиптік наным-сенімдеріне сәйкес қастерлі саналуымен байланысты екендігін ашады. Сонымен қатар, *фирузе* тасының діни дискурста ерекше құрметке ие болуы және емдік шараларда халық арасында кеңінен қолданысқа ие болуы бұл тастың мәртебесін арттыра түскендігі айқындалады. Ал, парсы ақындарының әдеби мәтіндерінде *фирузе* тасымен берілген теңеу мен метафоралардың мән-мағынасын талдау шығыс ақындарының поэзиясын тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

**Түйін сөздер:** Иран, мәдениет, символ, *фирузе*, көгілдір түс, асыл тастар.

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### Символическое значение бирюзы в иранской культуре

В данной статье рассматривается вопрос определения символического значения камня бирюзы в иранской культуре с помощью экстралингвистических материалов. На сегодняшний день драгоценные камни – это не просто обычные минералы, они как живой элемент определенной культуры могут стать главным объектом комплексных исследований. Отсутствие исследований по данной теме в области иранистики, в свою очередь, определяет актуальность изложенной работы. Исследование носит междисциплинарный характер, в основе которого

лежит лингвокультурологический и этимологический анализы и метод интерпретации. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы востоковедами, иранистами и лингвистами при проведении лингвокультурологического анализа. В статье авторы раскрывают, что бирюзовый камень занимает особое место в иранской культуре, являясь ценным природным минералом, а его цвет связан с архетипическими верованиями самих иранцев. Кроме того, место бирюзового камня в религиозном дискурсе и его широкое использование в медицинской деятельности повысили статус этого камня. Анализ воспроизведения бирюзового камня в качестве метафоры и аллегии в литературных текстах персидских поэтов позволяет глубже понять поэзию Востока.

**Ключевые слова:** Иран, культура, символ, бирюза, голубой, драгоценные камни.

## Introduction

The connection between the concepts of culture and symbol begins with the theory of the American anthropologist Leslie Alvin White. He was one of the first scientists who introduced the term “culturology” into scientific discourse as a science about culture by describing the role of symbols in culture as follows: “All culture (civilization) depends upon the symbol. It was the exercise of the symbolic faculty that brought culture into existence, and it is the use of symbols that makes the perpetuation of culture possible. Without the symbol there would be no culture, and man would be merely an animal, not a human being” (White, 1949:36). Therefore, the recognition and understanding of a particular culture begins with the perception of its system of symbols. Based on this statement, in this article we will try to identify the symbolic function of turquoise stone as one of the ways to recognize Iranian culture.

### Justification of the choice of the article and the goal

From ancient times, gemstones have been associated with magical powers. Undoubtedly, there is a connection between gems and people's beliefs. That's why gems should not be considered only as minerals, which are inanimate objects of nature, so it is time to investigate them in a different light as objects of living nature (they move, give a birth, mature, die, etc.), elements of culture (artifacts, architectural objects), part of the archetypal model (religious rituals, mythology), as well as a multifunctional metaphor (language, poetic text, art) using complex approach. Here, it will be relevant to mention the efforts of the Institute of World Culture at Moscow State University on a project called "Living Stone: from a mineral to mythopoetics" as one of the attempts in this direction (Zajonc, 2015). Hence, the purpose of this study is to determine the correlation between the physical properties,

structure, functional capabilities of turquoise stone as a natural mineral and its cultural value for Iranians or in other words to reveal the essence of turquoise as a cultural phenomenon via extralinguistic materials.

### Previous works

In general, it should be noted that in cultural studies there are enough research papers on the role of precious stones in human life, their place in the formation of culture and history of the nation. According to Cassandra Auble (2011:10) the ancient beliefs that "stones received power from the stars" were so strong that people made amulets to protect themselves from evil and “believed that putting several stones together in a ring, pendant or brooch provided greater safety to an individual”. In Christianity, the names of the twelve apostles inscribed with precious stones on the outside of the temple in paradise show that the precious stones also had an esoteric meaning (Luchickaya, 2015:56). Luca Patrizi was one of the first scientists who made an attempt to define the symbolic meaning of gemstones in Islam scientifically. He exemplified a number of texts from Quran and other religious texts, works of Arabic-speaking scholars and poets in order to show the role of gems as symbols. According to the author, this topic is studied in detail on the basis of texts related to Christianity and Judaism, but warns of the need for a relevant and comprehensive study of mentioned issue in Islamic texts (Patrizi, 2018). Arash Khazeni meticulously researched account of the turquoise trade in early modern Eurasia and provided valuable information about the role of turquoise in the Islamic culture. According to him, the sky blue color of turquoise, which is one of the seven colors of paradise, was predominant in the architecture of large cities and Islamic countries in ancient times. In the third chapter of the book, the author notes that the color of turquoise became the color of Islam in Central Asia and Iran during the Timurid period, but when

it reached Europe, the turquoise stone lost its cultural connotation (Khazeni, 2014:56). These studies show that gemstones have a special place in the formation of beliefs as an element of a particular culture.

Annemarie Schimmel's "A two-colored brocade: The imaginary of Persian poetry" is one of the works written on the peculiarities of the phenomenon of imagery in Persian literature. In this study, Schimmel focuses on various images used in Persian poetics. For example, she tries to explain in a detail the images and motives from the Qur'an and the images illustrated by flowers, birds, nature and stones. The scholar refers to emeralds, agates, and rubies as the most used gemstones in Persian poetics, and says that the turquoise stone is often mentioned in the literature to describe the sky (Schimmel, 1992:160). Another research paper written on the subject of imagery in Persian poetics is "Metaphor and imagery in Persian poetry", which includes studies on the translation of metaphors, tropes and similes in literature by focusing on rhetorical figures and images in Persian poetry (Seyed-Gohrab, 2012).

Iranian researchers have also focused on identifying the symbolic meaning of jewelry and ornaments that are still preserved in Iran's gemstones fund (Tehrani, 2018). In this study, we try to show the symbolic meaning of the turquoise stone, which belongs to the group of gemstones, through evidence such as literary texts and beliefs. It should be noted that the results of the work of Iranian scholars Bahram Gerami and Vahid Rooyani, who studied the role of gemstones in Persian literature and their usage as metaphors, helped us in the research. However, the fact that this topic is a new issue in the field of Iranian studies outside of Iran determines the urgency of the research.

### Scientific research methodology

The research was conducted at the interface of several sciences such as mineralogy, mythology, cultural studies, folklore, linguistics, religion, Sufism, literature, art and was based on the linguocultural, etymological analysis and method of interpretation.

### Discussion and results

Historical evidence shows that jewelry was developed among the Iranian people in pre-Islamic

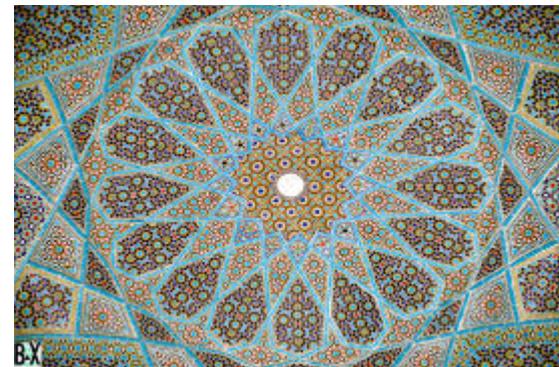
times. Belts, necklaces and rings covered with precious stones from the time of the Mad and Achaemenid dynasties show a special interest of Iranians in precious stones (Mehrabi, 2020). Among them, the position and significance of turquoise stone in Iranian culture is exceptional by being used almost everywhere, significantly in architecture and arts: the predominance of sky blue color on the domes of mosques and decorated handicrafts with turquoise stone made by Iranian people via *khatemkari* and *kashikari* (Pic.1-Appearance of turquoise stone and blue color in Iranian culture). Moreover, the ruling kings sought to show their greatness and puissance by plenshing their treasures with jewels adorned with the most precious stones. It was believed that precious stones, such as sapphires, agates, diamonds, topaz, amber, corals, turquoise and rubies, which were beyond the reach of ordinary people, brought prestige and power to their owners.

“Generally in all European langue supposed that the name of turquoise is derived from the name of Turkey” (Manutchehr-Danai, 2005:786). Because the stones that arrived in the markets of Europe came overland from Iran through the Ottoman Empire—and were thus known as “Turkish,” *turchese* in Italian and *turquoise* in French (Khazeni, 2014:71). There is no precise information about when exactly this stone was revealed. However, according to the available data, "thousands of years ago, the Egyptian pharaohs first discovered this stone and began to use it as a decoration" (Ruska, 1999:972). Today, despite the abundance of turquoise mines around the world, the “Persian turquoise has the finest quality and famous for its intense blue, light blue color (Manutchehr-Danai, 2005:588). This stone was called "pirozak" or "pirocak" in the Pahlavi language (Faravashi, 2001:387). The etymology of the word turquoise in modern Persian is associated with the Persian word "piruz" – victory (Khazeni, 2014:27). Originally, this lexical unit in the form of *pirozak* or *pirocak* in modern Persian literary works is used as *piruze* or *firuze*. Here, the change of the letter "p" to the letter "f" can be explained by the influence of Arabic on Persian.

Turquoise can be described as a natural mineral in the following way: “The turquoise, a well-known precious stone of a bright green or ‘mountain green to sky-blue color with a gloss like wax; in composition it is a hydrated clay phosphate with a small but essential proportion of copper and iron. The color is not permanent in all stones, and is said to be particularly affected by perspiration. It is almost

always cut as an ornament *en cabochon*, i.e., with a convex upper surface; only stones with an inscription are given a flat upper surface” (Ruska, 1999) (Pic.2- Extracted and polished turquoise stone). Large types of this stone were used to make dishes, vessels, bracelets. Some dishes weigh up to 400 grams. “During the reign of the Timurids and Safavids, and even before the Qajar dynasty (XIX-XX centuries), the blue color of turquoise was a common color in the decoration of architectural objects. This color became the main color in the lining of buildings with glazed bricks” (Schimmel, 2003:46). Bahram Gerami

(2015:63), based on the book "Jauharname Nezami" (XII century) written by Iranian jeweler Mohammed bin Abul-Barakat Jauhari Nishapuri, says that turquoise was mined in four regions of the world (Khorasan, Khorezm, Maurenahr and Turkestan, where the Turkic tribes lived). Jewelers and carpenters immediately recognized the origin of the turquoise stone, because they differed in quality and color. According to European jewelers, the highest quality turquoise is made in Iran. The most valuable types of this stone called ‘Abu Ishaq’ or ‘Soleimani’ were mined in Nishapur.



Picture 1 – Appearance of turquoise stone and blue color in Iranian culture



Picture 2 – Extracted and polished turquoise stone.

Studying the symbolic significance of the turquoise stone in Iranian culture, we have achieved the following results:

- **Turquoise is a symbol of greatness and luxury.**

Persian poets paid special attention to various objects and products made of turquoise. This interest seems to have stemmed from the need to convey the splendor of the royal palaces.

راستی خاتم فیروزه بواسحاقی خوش درخشید ولی دولت مستعجل بود  
Truly a ring made of 'Abu Ishaq' turquoise  
It shines brightly, but his state was unstable

Here Hafez says that Abu Ishaq was the most beautiful of the turquoise stones, whereas expresses own regret that the ruling period of Abu Ishaq as a ruler did not last long. Via turquoise stone, the poet demonstrates the splendor of the king's palace, contrasting the weakness and powerlessness of the royal power.

- **Turquoise is a symbol of victory.**

Taking into consideration that turquoise is a victory stone, it is not uncommon for it to be used in the decoration of royal palaces. In this regard, Ferdowsi says:

به دستوری شاه پیروزه تخت بتازم پس ترک شوریده بخت  
With the command of the king on turquoise throne,  
I will attack the Turks ...

Here Ferdowsi uses the throne of the king, covered with turquoise, as a symbol of power and prestige, and hence of victory. The *Shah* in Ferdowsi's poem shows that he is not just a ruler, but a ruler sitting on a turquoise throne, that is, a ruler with a mighty, steadfast, unbreakable power, and turquoise throne is represented as a symbol of unconditional victory.

Moreover, Vahid Rooyani (2011:119) quotes that Abu Raihan Biruni in his book 'Al-Jamaheer fil jawahir' wrote that the turquoise stone is "a symbol of victory, strength and protection from maleficence". Therefore, kings believed that adding this stone to their drinks would increase the number of future victories. According to popular legend, none of the soldiers who died on the battlefield had not got a turquoise ring on their finger, which means that turquoise always leads to victory, and those who do not wear a turquoise ring will die.

- **Turquoise is a symbol of generosity, a symbol of blessing.**

Through belts, crowns and rings decorated with turquoise stones, kings tried to show the wealth and generosity of kings by presenting their luxury and

bestowing these valuable items and jewelry to their esteemed guests (Anvari, 2002:5422) and they drunk a wine from turquoise cups as it was believed this is the beginning of happiness, blessing. In this regard, Vahid Rooyani (2011:125) quotes from the works of Ferdowsi, Nizami, Suzani, Farrohani in his research.

در آن جام فیروزه ریزند می به فیروزی آرنند نزدیک وی  
The wine is poured into a turquoise cup,  
This brings him closer to victory

It is known that in many cultures in ancient times there was a tradition of giving wine to encourage warriors on expeditions and fights with the enemy. According to this tradition, drinking wine from a cup made or decorated with turquoise was associated with the belief that it is a symbol of defeating the enemy and returning with victory.

- **Turquoise is a symbol of a temporal world.**

Bahram Gerami (2015), the author of a large-scale work on the usage of precious stones as metaphors in Hafez's works, writes that the words *piruze* or *firuze* was used 70 times by Ferdowsi, 60 times by Nizami Ganjavi, and 50 times by Jami, and as metaphors and allegories instead of dome, world, earth, destiny and sky. It is found in hundreds of couplets where the mentioned concepts were conveyed.

میوه شیرین اگر پیدا شود در سرو و بید عاقبت پیدا در این فروزه گلشن می شود  
If only the willow bear sweet fruits,  
Happiness would be found in this turquoise flower garden...

Here Saib Tabrizi likens flower garden decorated with turquoise and life by using them instead of each other. In other words, the denotata of turquoise-covered flower garden was given by Saib to express the abstract concept of "life". Saib uses this symbol to convey the idea that "there is no need to expect happiness in this life, just as willow do not bear sweet fruit".

- **Turquoise is a symbol of beauty.**

Persian poets likened a person's face, eyes and eyebrows to turquoise. In the following couplets, Saadi tries to show the girl's natural beauty by comparing it with a turquoise stone, which is recognized as a symbol of beauty:

انگشت خوبروی و بناگوش دلفریب بی گوشوار و خاتم فیروزه شاهد است  
Beautiful fingers and delicate lobe of ear  
Can be a witness (of beauty) without turquoise earrings and rings ...

Nizami Ganjavi describes the King Alexander in the following couplets:

همه سرخ رویند و پیروزه چشم ز شیران نترسند هنگام خشم  
Red face and turquoise eyes  
He is not afraid of lions when he is angry ...

Undoubtedly, there is a particular reason of why Nizami compared the King Alexander's eyes to turquoise. This is because in describing Alexander, who aspired to power and victory, the poet tries to show artistically not only his mentioned qualities, but also the fact that his eyes are blue too.

• **Turquoise is a symbol of the soul.**

Annemarie Schimmel (2003:56), studying the symbolism of color in Iranian art and literature, writes that in *qadiriyya tariqa* the blue color is depicted in the image of the soul. In other words, the blue color of the turquoise stone was a special symbol for the Sufis. Sufis believed that wearing blue, the color of the sky, which is the abode of angels, was a sign of goodness. This idea can be seen in the following verses of Attar:

الا ای صوفی پیروزه خرقة به گردش خوش همی گردی به حلقه  
Hey, Sufi in turquoise 'hirka',  
Dance by circling beautifully...

At the same time, depending on the level of spiritual growth of the Sufis and their *tariqa* the color of their 'hirkas' or clothes, seems to have changed and become symbolic, but currently we are looking for evidence of this.

• **Turquoise is a symbol of natural beauty.**

Persian poets compared the scapes, leaves, and cups of plants and flowers to turquoise, the petals to rubies and sapphires, and the stamen to gold (Gerami, 2007: 309). The poet Kawami Razi skillfully uses this simile in the following couplets:

گل همچو شه نشسته بر تخت  
نرگس چو غلامی ایستاده  
آن جامه پیروزه دریده  
این گرزن کهربا نهاده  
The flower is on the throne like a shah  
Narcissus is standing next to him like a slave  
Inside of that turquoise cup flower is blooming  
Wearing a gold crown on its head ...

In the next couplets, Saadi tries to emphasize the value and beauty of gems and flowers by comparing them:

نهد لعل و فیروزه در صلب سنگ  
گل لعل در شاخ پیروزه رنگ  
Ruby and turquoise are found in the middle of the stone  
Like ruby flower is getting out of turquoise scape

Through these couplets, Saadi says that gems such as rubies and turquoise are hidden inside of

simple stone by uncovering own preciousness similar to a turquoise scape which holds a ruby flower firmly.

In the following couplets, the poet Qatran Tabrizi likens the green lawn to a carpet covered with turquoise:

لاله و سبزه به هم در شده از باد بهار  
همچو آمیخته پیروزه و بیجاده به هم  
Tulips and green grass are mixed with the spring wind  
Like turquoise and garnet are mixed with each other

In describing the objects and phenomena of nature, the Persian poets compare them with precious stones to emphasize their beauty: the tulip is compared to a garnet, and the green grass is compared to a turquoise stone. Among the many properties of turquoise and garnet, their colors are used here. Of course, there is a reason for this. Hassan Anwari's (2002:5412) dictionary gives the following definition of turquoise: "فیروزه نوعی کانی قیمتی حاوی مس و فسفر، دارای رنگ آبی یا سبز که در جواهرسازی به کار می رود" Turquoise is a precious mineral composed of phosphorus and copper, blue or green in color and used in jewelry. Also Annemarie Schimmel (2003:45) writes that the color of turquoise varies from light blue to olive green, and sometimes from green to yellow. This, in turn, may depend on where the turquoise is produced. In addition, the usage of turquoise stone instead of green color by Persian poets can be explained by the usage of the blue color in the Kazakh language towards green grass.

• **Turquoise is a symbol of physical health.**

"The Turquoise," taught De Boot, "strengthened the eyes, and cheered the soul of the wearer; it grew pale as the wearer sickened, lost its color entirely on his death, but recovered it when placed on the finger of a new, and healthy possessor" (Fermie, 1907:266). This belief was shared by Iranian people too. It was believed that the gradual change of color of turquoise, i.e. darkening or turning green, is a sign of the incantation effect or the disappearance of negative energy in the human body. Such changed stone was called *dead turquoise* - فیروزه مرده. In fact, it has been proven that this phenomenon is related to the chemical composition of the stone. Discoloration is observed due to the increase in temperature and humidity of the ambient air or due to premature extraction of turquoise from the bowels of the earth (Manutchehr-Danai, 2005:785). Undoubtedly, the metaphorization of the stone is directly related to its physical properties: turquoise stone gives a birth, matures, develops and dies.

• **The image of turquoise in the people's beliefs as universal tool to meet human's needs.**

Information about the turquoise stone can also be found in religious discourses. The following narrations can be cited from the collections of Shia hadiths relating to turquoise stone (Shia Online Library, 2010):

1. According to the Imams, looking at the turquoise stone gives a person pleasure and enhances his eyesight; and holding it solves the problem and increases a person's ability to cope with various problems; it will make things easier, and whoever holds this stone in his hand will be free from poverty and will never be without money.

2. Imam Musa Kazem said that turquoise was Gabriel's gift to the Prophet (PBUH) in the cave of Hira. It was later bestowed by the Prophet (PBUH) to Imam Ali (RA).

3. Imam Reza was visited by a man who told him that he wanted to have a baby. Then the Imam took a ring made of turquoise and ordered him to write in Arabic the prayer "رب لا تنرني فردا وانت خير الوارثين" "Lord, do not leave me alone while you are the best of inheritors".

4. According to the narrations from Imam Reza, the mountains of turquoise, agate and ruby testify the patronage of Ali (RA), the ruler of the believers.

5. According to one narration, Hazrat Ali (RA) used to wear four rings on his hands. One of them is made of turquoise. He wore it to win towards hardships.

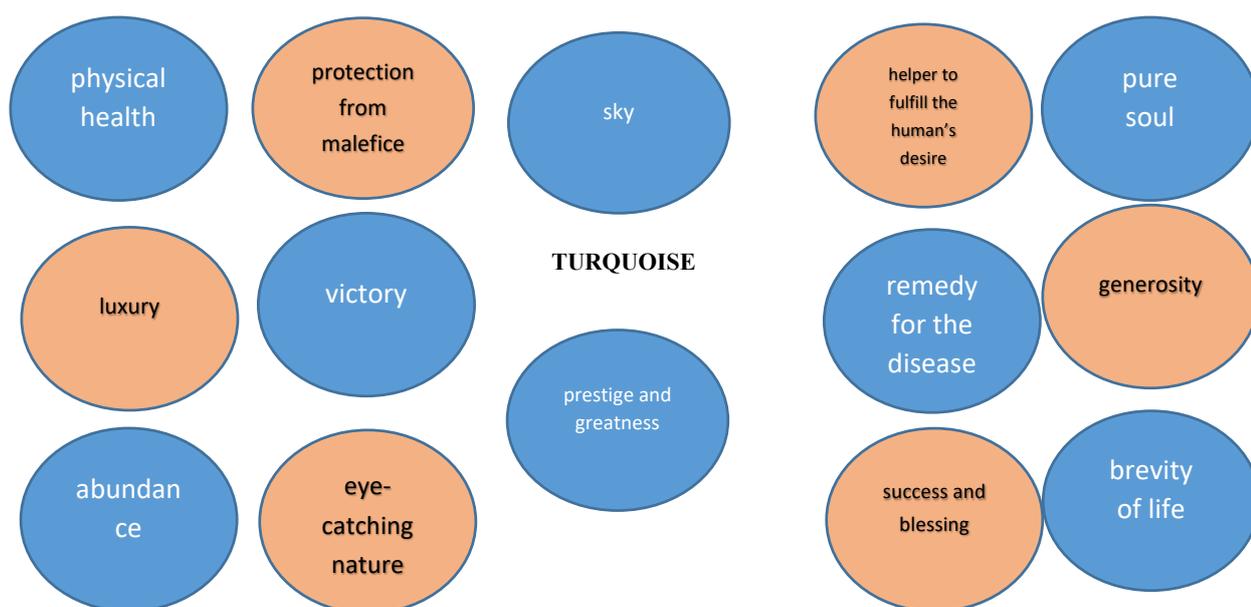
6. The religion promotes the wearing of turquoise rings, especially for men. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "Allah will not turn away the prayer of a person who has a turquoise ring, that is, his prayer will not go unanswered".

7. Imam Sadiq said: "A person who has a turquoise ring in his hand will be free from poverty".

From these examples, we can see the place of turquoise in the system of Iranian cultural values and how much it is revered. Religious discourse added a special status to this stone and increased its importance. For example, according to such advice, a person who has an eye disease or wants to improve his eyesight should put a turquoise stone over his eyes, or look at it more or make a powder and apply it. It is also useful in order to relieve the sore throat, regulate blood pressure and disinfect venomous scorpion bite (Khazeni, 2014:80).

It was believed that "carrying it with you during the reading fortune, it is sign of goodness" (Rooyani, 2011:119) or "looking at the turquoise stone at the birth of young moon is a sign of blessing" (Hedayat, 1933:80). Turquoise, which has such mystical powers, was widely used among the ordinary people. However, this precious gem was not available to everyone, so people began to use artificial forms to make amulets. The color of the precious turquoise stone, which is also considered sacred, was used by people to protect themselves from malefice. Vahid Rooyani (2011:129) concludes that turquoise is revered by people, first of all, because of its sacred sky blue color. The researcher connects his conclusion with the Zoroastrian mythic creature called Tishtar. In Pahlavi Dictionary the following definition is given to this mythological creature: Tishtar is the 'first star', more beautiful and glorious than other stars, prosperity and abundance depend on it, its essence is water and he serves to 'multiply' water. Tishtar is one of the defenders of the sky, he is the commander of the East. In the fight against Aposh who is demon of drought Tishtar won the water, the Tishtar poured water on the ground, and the plants flourished" (Chunakova, 2004:217). In a study on the symbolism of the gods in ancient Iranian beliefs, Iranian scientists say that the Tishtar is a protector of rain and abundance. The fourth month of the Iranian calendar, Tir, is associated with the name of this mythic creature. "In the first ten days of the month, he flies in the sky as a fifteen-year-old, tall young man, and it rains from the clouds to the ground. Fifteen years is accepted as the best age for Iranians. In the second decade it flies in the sky in the form of a golden-horned bull, and in the last ten days in the form of a white and beautiful stallion" (Hatam, 2012:22). Considering that one of the words for blue color in Persian is آبی – *blue*, which is derived from آب – *water* + ی – *adjective suffix* to make a noun, it seems reasonable to agree with the opinion of the Iranian scholar. This means that Iranians making water as the source of life, and even promoting it to the level of a god, may idolize the blue color.

Taking into consideration the given information about the turquoise stone, its connotation as a symbol in Iranian culture can be illustrated according to the Picture 3 – The meaning of the turquoise stone as a symbol in Iranian culture.



Picture 3 – The meaning of the turquoise stone as a symbol in Iranian culture.

## Conclusion

The symbolic meaning of turquoise in Iranian culture is revealed by various examples. The widespread usage of turquoise stone as a natural mineral for remedial purposes (treatment of eye diseases, control of blood pressure, etc.) has increased its value. The common feature between the turquoise stone and water, which is the pledge of life for the Iranians, is their blue color. As a result, the blue color became a symbol of water, and for ancient Iranian people leading sedentary lifestyle was associated with an archetypic image called Tishtar. Tishtar was preserved in the minds of the people as a positive character who fights with demons, who "steal" water, to save people from drought. Nowadays the fourth month of the Iranian calendar called Tir (تیر) that is June-July according to the Gregorian Calendar, the reason for the need of the settled population for rain is determined. Therefore, one of the physical properties of turquoise stone that is its color was formed in the cognition of the people as a symbol of water for life and abundance – has increased the value of this stone. It should also be noted that in ancient Zoroastrianism, Iranian artisans and farmers were distinguished from church workers and warriors by their blue colored clothes (Schimmel, 2003:41).

In addition, the development of the belief that the turquoise stone, which derives from the word victory, gives to its owner victory and happiness, luck and success, made kings and rulers decorate

valuable items and jewelry, clothes and palace equipment (belts, thrones, crowns, helmets, cups, etc.) with turquoise. Ordinary people did not have access to the precious stone, so they used its artificial forms as amulets, and even anything blue (for example, fabric) was used as protection from malefice and negative energy. Sufi poets, on the other hand, wrote that wearing the sky blue colored thing, which is the abode of angels, is a symbol of goodness and the color of worthy person who tries to perceive the truth. In addition, Persian poets added turquoise to their couplets, primarily to show the value of palace handiworks, the splendor of the royal throne and illustrated this stone as a symbol of victory and protection from the malefice. Turquoise stone was used by poets as a metaphor to deliver the idea of the brevity of life and as the simile to describe a human's eyes and the beauty of nature.

Even after the advent of Islam, the status and value of turquoise did not decrease. According to the narrations of the above-mentioned imams, turquoise as a sacred stone is effective tool to prevent poverty, have children, answer prayers and solve problems.

In addition, the fact that turquoise is produced and exported in Iran, and is much more affordable than other gemstones, undoubtedly the interest to this stone was raised. These factors seem to increase the importance of turquoise among the Iranians, and its color, place of extraction have become a sacred concept.

In the Persian poetry, which is an integral part of the Iranians, the usage of turquoise by poets as a

symbol of greatness and luxury has had huge impact on promotion of this stone. Even in religious narrations, the status of the turquoise stone was estimated as a sacred one.

Therefore, we can say that the value of this turquoise stone as a natural mineral, and the fact that its color is revered to Iranian people, has left

a significant imprint on its culture. This connection is reflected in any sphere of Iran, including culture, crafts, and even religious and cultural beliefs. In other words, it is apparent that Iranian people are trying to transfer their beliefs, which have been going on for centuries, into the modern world.

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