

specialized instruments can distinguish synthetic from natural. To identify counterfeit jewels from authentic ones, we have established, within the union, a diagnostic commission in collaboration with two laboratories in Mashhad, thereby preventing abuse. Within this commission, the union's stone identification experts distinguish, idiomatically speaking, the American, Neyshaburi, Damghani, and Kermani types. Subsequently, regarding whether they have been dyed or remain undyed, we send these specimens to a laboratory, where they are diagnosed, and for each natural turquoise, we issue a certificate.

Can a counterfeit turquoise be distinguished from an authentic one by visual inspection alone, without instruments?

Yes. Certain criteria exist for recognizing stones, their mineral types, and the intrinsic nature of stones. For instance, 100% of the turquoises currently produced in Neyshabur are entirely distinguishable in terms of shape, color, texture, and material. However, some turquoises possess an intrinsic nature similar to other turquoises; this category constitutes approximately 10% of turquoises, and within this segment, our turquoise may resemble American turquoise. For those turquoises whose provenance is indeterminate, we perform a diagnosis regarding authenticity or counterfeitness, but no certificate is issued for them, lest, for

example, an American turquoise be traded under the name of Persian turquoise in the market.

What recommendations do you offer for the advancement of this industry and the augmentation of its revenue generation?

Precious stones, and specifically turquoise, possess a very favorable market. We have submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts to permit exports through airport departure points and allow travelers to carry up to 10 kilograms. Currently, a traveler is not permitted to export more than five or six rings. A portion of this prohibition arises from restrictions concerning the export of metals such as gold and silver.

Typically, turquoise is set in silver as a gemstone, resulting in products such as rings or pendants; however, due to restrictions on the export of silver and gold metals, the export of large quantities is not permitted. Therefore, we have proposed that they allow up to 10 kilograms to be exported via travelers and air freight because the foreign currency earning capacity of stones materializes when they are exported, idiomatically speaking, mounted upon silver and other metals. Precious metals, in combination with gemstones, generate added value. Metals further accentuate the beauty of gemstones. They increase the added value of a gemstone by a minimum of 25%. For



A rough turquoise stone found in Neyshabur (Neyshabur), northeastern Iran. [amitisart.net](https://www.amitisart.net)

example, a stone priced at 5 million tomans (\$28), when mounted on silver, experiences at minimum a 25% increase in its price. We possess a highly favorable market for these rings and gemstones in Turkey and Iraq because Iran's manual ring-making industry is unparalleled globally, and we hold the foremost rank in this domain. Within Mashhad alone, there exist upward of 2,000 individual workshops engaged in ring production, each employing at least 4 or 5 individuals, and we enjoy a very robust

market in this field in Iraq, the Persian Gulf states, Turkey, and other parts of the world. Our manual ring-making faces no rival globally.

A portion of the effort related to our proposal has progressed thus far, and it is scheduled for approval by the cabinet. Should it be finalized, substantial foreign currency earnings will accrue to the country. Currently, countries such as Turkey, Thailand, China, Hong Kong, and others impose no restrictions on the export of finished silverware because that

foreign currency and revenue return to their countries and to the income of their citizens.

So, what is the impediment regarding Iran's export of products manufactured with turquoise?

Unfortunately, the regulations pertaining to silver and gold are identical within the Central Bank. Gold is a strategic metal for the entire world; therefore, the regulations for gold, its importation, and its exportation must remain under governmental control.

Silver, however, is not such. Currently, one gram of silver is valued at approximately 450,000 tomans (\$2.5), whereas one gram of 18-karat gold is valued at 18 million tomans (\$102) — that is, roughly over 400 times higher. Nevertheless, stringent regulations concerning the entry and exit of gold in our country are applied also to silver.

Hence, the regulations on silver must be revised, and their entry and exit from the country must be facilitated. Throughout the entire world, the entry and exit of silver metal are free; its entry and exit resemble that of copper or zinc metal. Therefore, silver is not a strategic commodity toward which governments need to be sensitive. On the other hand, in a single silver ring, for example, 10 grams of silver are utilized, the value of that silver amounting to 4.5 million tomans (\$25).

Yet the artistry of Iran's silver engravers generates an added value of 5 to 6 times that amount upon this ring, dramatically elevating the price of the silver employed therein. We possess reputable brands in the domain of ring production and manufacturing in Iran. By facilitating exports through passengers, we can contribute both to employment and to the country's revenue generation.

Symbolic meaning of turquoise in Iranian culture

SUMMARY

What follows is an edited AI-generated summary of an interdisciplinary article, written by Kaluash Zhetpisbayeva of the Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty and Bayan Jubatova and published in the Journal of Oriental Studies in June 2021.

The paper examines how turquoise functions as both a mineral and a cultural symbol in Iranian culture, using extralinguistic evidence from mythology, religion, folklore, linguistics, and Persian literature. The paper does not report an empirical sample or statistical analysis; instead, it synthesizes textual and cultural sources to argue that turquoise's physical properties, especially its blue color and perceived "living" qualities, underpin its symbolic associations with water, victory, protection, health, beauty, generosity, luxury, and the soul. The broader significance is that turquoise operates as a key cultural sign through which Iranian beliefs, aesthetics, and religious practices are expressed and transmitted.

Key findings

- Turquoise is repeatedly framed as a multi-symbolic cultural object in Iranian tradition, associated with victory, protection from maleficence, health, abundance, beauty, generosity, luxury, and the soul rather than as merely a decorative stone.
- The blue color of turquoise is central to its symbolism because it is linked to water, life, rain, and the mythic figure Tishtar. This association explains why blue became culturally sacred in Iranian thought.
- Religious discourse elevated turquoise's status: narrations attributed to the Prophet and



Rakhsh, the red chestnut stallion who is covered with an exceptionally ornate bright turquoise green and ultramarine blue saddle, gallops among the horses of Shah Afrasiyab after his rider, Rustam, fought the div [demon] Akvan in this 16th century folio from Book of Kings auctioned in London, the UK. [SOTHEBY'S](https://www.sothebys.com)

Imams describe turquoise rings as beneficial for prayer, poverty relief, fertility, and problem-solving, reinforcing its sacred reputation.

• Persian poets used turquoise extensively as a literary metaphor, with the stone appearing as a symbol of the sky, eyes, beauty, royal splendor, and the transience of life. The article states that variants of "piruze"/"firuze" (meaning turquoise in Persian) appear 70 times in works of Ferdowsi, 60 times in works of Nizami Ganjavi, and 50 times in works of Jami.

For example, Ferdowsi recounts Qaren's description of Nowzar, the ninth Shah of the Pishdadian dynasty of Persia, as such:

به دستوری شاه پیروزه تخت
بنازم پس ترک شوریده بخت

With the command of the king on turquoise throne / I will attack the unfortunate Turks ...

As yet another example, the great Persian poet 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 نلغریب
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 ...

- Turquoise's material properties support its cultural metaphors: its color variability, use in jewelry, and tendency to change color were interpreted as signs of life, death, and renewal, making it a particularly rich symbolic object.
- The stone retained high value in Iran due to quality and availability, with Neyshabur identified as a major source of highly valued varieties such as "Abu Ishaq" or "Soleimani," contributing to its prestige in both domestic and external trade.

Objectives

The study aimed to determine the symbolic meaning of turquoise in Iranian culture by correlating its physical properties, structure, and functional uses as a natural mineral with its cultur-

al value for Iranians. The authors explicitly address a gap in Iranian studies, arguing that turquoise has not been sufficiently studied as a cultural phenomenon through extralinguistic materials. The central research question is how turquoise acquired and maintains its symbolic significance across Iranian religious, literary, mythological, and everyday contexts.

Methods

The paper uses an interdisciplinary qualitative approach at the intersection of mineralogy, mythology, cultural studies, folklore, linguistics, religion, Sufism, literature, and art. The main analytical methods are linguo-cultural analysis, etymological analysis, and interpretation. The evidence base consists of extralinguistic materials, including historical references, religious narrations, Persian poetic texts, scholarly works, and cultural descriptions of turquoise in architecture, jewelry, and medicine. No original participant sample, experiment,

or numerical dataset is reported.

Results

The article argues that turquoise's symbolism emerged from the interaction of material properties and cultural interpretation. Its blue color became associated with water and life, especially through the mythological figure Tishtar, a protector of rain and abundance. The authors also show that turquoise was embedded in religious practices: narrations claim it helps eyesight, eases hardship, prevents poverty, and supports prayer, while one narration says it was a gift from Gabriel to the Prophet (PBUH) and then to Imam Ali (PBUH).

In literature, turquoise is used as a metaphor for the sky, eyes, beauty, natural landscapes, royal power, and the brevity of life; it also appears in descriptions of cups, thrones, crowns, rings, and palace decoration. The paper further notes that turquoise was historically prized in Iran and that Persian sources recognized Neyshabur turquoise as especially valuable. No null results or formal significance testing are presented.

Conclusions

The authors conclude that turquoise has a deeply rooted symbolic role in Iranian culture and that its value extends far beyond its mineral composition. They interpret the stone as a cultural phenomenon whose physical beauty, sacred associations, and literary representations have shaped Iranian beliefs about water, victory, protection, abundance, and nobility. The paper suggests that these meanings continue to influence modern Iranian cultural identity and that the stone's symbolism is reflected across culture, crafts, religion, and poetry.



The article argues that turquoise's symbolism emerged from the interaction of material properties and cultural interpretation. Its blue color became associated with water and life, especially through the mythological figure Tishtar, a protector of rain and abundance. The authors also show that turquoise was embedded in religious practices.