

ЛИТЕРАТУРОВЕДЕНИЕ

РАЗДЕЛ IV. ЛИТЕРАТУРА НАРОДОВ СТРАН ЗАРУБЕЖЬЯ

УДК 811.221. 32

DOI: 10.18413/2313-8912-2017-3-2-47-52

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THE ERUPTION OF RUMI'S POETRY

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**Abstract.**

This article is a short description of Molana Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi's thoughts, a famous Iranian mystic and poet, and an attempt to present his ancient ideas, but with a new approach whom he desired to represent from the new window towards the poetry of life, the window which represents an overview to make beautiful waves of mysticism and literature. The article also tries to save the shipwrecks of turbulent waves of life by the perspective of the raging sea of Rumi's eloquent words.

**Key words:** Rumi; Mysticism; The *Divan Shams*; The *Mathnavi Manavi*; Love.

**Introduction**

The literature of Iran is sweet and pleasing, the literature which is fragrant, visual, and full of the blooming flowers in spring to soften the human soul. This literature has a strong connection with man, humanity, and his nature. It has the smell of the heart and acquaintance. It introduces us to ourselves; it has moral and educational aspects; our values are hidden in it, and it is the bridge of transmission of these values for future generations. Our literature is the mirror of our culture, the food of our soul, a part of our existence, our history of suffering and joy. Literature is an art itself, which is concerned with beauty and emotions that is why Iran has been called "the land of rose and nightingale" (Milani, 2011, P.193).

Iran has traditionally been the source of mystical thoughts and *Ishraqi* meditations. Hence, over the centuries numerous famous people have been brought out. One of these people is Molana Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi named as Rumi. If the day is known as Rumi in our calendar, it will be the day of celebration of culture, which manifests in its mirror love, mysticism, art, and our faith. But who is Rumi? A fabulous man who has emerged within the context of culture and language of Iran. A strange man who has been new in every moment, an endless sea, which is full of the jewel, pearl, and coral. Love can be known by him. A love which is linked life to eternity, love that every moment is lighting the fires. A man is confused how to begin the description of Rumi, the raging sea, and invisible shore. What should be said? From his great work the *Mathnavi* which has been created with his friendship by Hessam al-Din during

15 years and created storm or from the *Divan Shams* which has been written in Shams' love and his passion. He offered the whole book to his great master and didn't mention his name and a person wonders from this sacrifice, deliverance, and love.

**1. Rumi's meeting with Shams Tabrizi**

Jalal al-Din Mohammad Rumi, also known as Jalal al-Din Mohammad Balkhi, Mawlana, and more popularly simply as Rumi is a mystic, Sufi, and educated poet who was born in what is now Tajikistan (the country north of Afghanistan) in town of Wakhsh on September 30, 1207 to a native Persian speaking parents. But because the whole area at that time was Persia, in present-day Iran, Rumi is considered in Iran as one of the most famous poets of the country. Rumi was born in Balkh, which is located now in Afghanistan, died in Qunia which is located now in Turkey but how we Iranian are fortunate and lucky that Rumi wrote all his masterpieces in the Persian language. Jalal al-Din Rumi can be considered as "without doubt the most eminent Sufi Poet whom Persia has produced, while his mystical *Mathnavi* deserves to rank amongst the great poems of all time" (Iqbal, 1991, P.13).

Rumi was a leader, a teacher; he taught interpretation of the *Quran*, Jurisprudence, philosophy, wisdom, and mysticism, but the thirty-eight-year-old Rumi in extreme greatness, fame, popularity, and the perfection of mind met accidentally or with God's willing an old white hair anonymous named Shams Tabrizi. Nobody knows what Shams told to the great jurist who changed him. Shams was not an illiterate person. He was born in Tabriz, a city in the northwest of Iran, some six

decades before coming to Qunia, who had studied with many masters and the book of his discourses, the *Maqalat Shams Tabrizi*, indeed proves him to be a very knowledgeable person.

There are various versions of how this meeting took place. According to Ernst's idea, the most reliable one is the thing which Shams recorded in his book (*Maqalat*): "The first thing I spoke with him was this: "How is it that Bayazid did not need to follow (the example of the Prophet), and did not say "Glory be to Thee", or "we worship Thee?" (Ernst, 2012, P.286). Franklin Lewis has analyzed this message and stated:

Both Shams and Rumi followed the Prophet, unlike Bayazid Bistami ... Shams returns again and again to this question of following the Prophet, and the case of Bayazid apparently provided the touchstone by which Shams could gauge the inner orientation of others and test whether a fancy for mystical speculation or indulgence in antinomian behavior outweighed a person's love and respect for the spiritual attainment of the Prophet. (Ernst, 2012, P.286)

The place where these two oceans met each other for the first time has been known as "Marc'al Bahreyn" (Aydin, 2004, p.7). Looking at the ups and downs of Rumi's life, it seems what suddenly awakened his idea of seeking truth and gave to the future his mystical attractions in the format of exalting poetic poems is friendship and then his separateness from a mystic named Shams. After meeting Shams, he abandoned teaching and spent his time in *khilvat* (seclusion) with Shams. Meeting Shams created in the spirit of Rumi the second puberty, and rebirth. This meeting, like a rebellious and controversial storm created a deep transformation. The result of this storm is unique, literally and in terms of quantity and quality in the history of world literature. The impact of Shams was so great on Rumi, which changed the life of poet and mystic of Qunia.

Shams stayed with him for less than two years when upset by the jealousy of Rumi's disciples, one day he left unannounced. For fifteen months, Rumi didn't know anything about Shams. This separation was very difficult for Rumi. He was heartbroken, and started to sing his passion and his pain in the verses, "What place for patience? / For if patience were the world-encircling Mount/ Qaf, It would become annihilated like snow by the sun of separation!" (Schimmel, 1993). Rumi was greatly upset by the separation. Finally, he was told, Sham was seen in Damascus. He sent his son, Sultan Valad, with a letter to beg him to return. For him, Damascus was the center of this world. "We are enamored and

bewildered and enraptured of Damascus, / we have given our soul and bound our heart to the passion of Damascus" (Schimmel, 1993, p.22).

Shams returned Qunia and was received with great respect. The mystical meeting started. The jealousy and anger, however, increased soon among Rumi's disciples. Shams left one day suddenly without leaving a trace behind (1247). The cause of Shams' disappearance is not clear. The stories about the final departure of Shams from Qunia vary according to different sources, as Schimmel put it, "Aflaki boldly states that he was murdered in connivance with Rumi's son `Aliaoddin, 'the pride of professors'" (Schimmel, 1993, P.23).

At first, Shams created a spark in Rumi's heart, then ignited a flame which later changed to a burning fire. However, there was an obstacle, Rumi's reliance on Shams. When Shams disappeared, the pain of separation burned Rumi that nothing remained of him. He was turning like a planet in the sky around the sun which had been shining within him. Shams' impact on Rumi was decisive. From the external view, Rumi has changed from a sober jurist to an intoxicated man full of infinite secrets of God's love. It can be said, there was no Rumi without Shams. When Rumi was an educated trained man, Shams came to his life. It seems, Shams' impact created the emergence of deep thinking and internal states of Rumi in the form of poetry enigmatically and spiritually. Shams moved the ocean of Rumi's existence, as a result its wide waves have changed the history of Persian literature.

Separation of Shams was the sign of appearance, and the separation of God was an inner boiling heart, which was shown by such an apparent garment. Shams Tabrizi in Rumi's perspective is a human-stained with the flavor of God which his breath smells heaven. In fact, Shams is a human that Rumi saw God's light in him. Lack of light was intolerable for Rumi. Shams' absence in the literature can be considered the symbol of the absence of the sun of truth. Shams invited Rumi to a gambling with no guarantee to win. Rumi engaged in romantic gambling and won the jewel of love. The most valuable and the only gift which has been given by Shams to Rumi was love. Rumi after meeting Shams got rebirth. Shams rose from inside Rumi. Shams with all his greatness was an excuse for the great change in Rumi, expressing the story of love from his sweet words to all the world. Rumi was the cheerfulness, not from sorrow. He was not looking Shams outside himself because thousands of Shams spawned the light within him to out.

Rumi was fading away in the autumnal days of 1273, and the physicians were unable to cure his illness. When he was feeling weak and exhausted, he declared: “the earth is hungry. Soon, it will get a fat morsel and then give rest” (Schimmel, 1993). When his illness increased, he would compose for his friends: “The lovers, who die well-informed, / Die before the Beloved like sugar . . . /Melting away in the eternal sweetness of God” (Schimmel, 1993, P.15). He passed away on 17 December 1273, at sunset. Over the centuries, Rumi's disciples and amorists celebrate this night, which has been called “*Shab-e Arus* (literally Wedding Night or Rumi's Night of Union with God)” (Aydin, 2004, P.3). Rumi's disciples and lovers celebrate the Night of Rumi's spiritual ascension to the glorious kingdom of God because they believe that their Sheikh is not dead, but he has joined the eternal Beloved. Rumi knew that God is waiting to embrace him enthusiastically.

## 2. Rumi's outpouring of poetry:

Rumi, who had been taught by his father valuable lessons in love and Sufi mysticism and since in his essence had been spiritual sources full of theology, and supernatural knowledge, left behind blazing and valuable works such as the *Divan Shams* and the *Mathnavi Manavi*.

### 2.1. The *Divan Shams Tabrizi*

One of Rumi's major works is the *Divan Kabir* (great work) or *Divan Shams* (The Works of Shams of Tabriz); because Rumi dedicated it to his enigmatic friend Shams, which consists of over forty thousand couplets. The *Divan* includes all poems of Rumi except the *Mathnavi*. The poetry of the *Divan* is almost the period of thirty years since the arrival of Shams in Qunia to the end of Rumi's life. It can be said that most individual poems of the *Divan Shams* is representative of mental states or experiences like Unity of Being. The general sense of the *Divan Shams* is the spiritual intoxication and the rapture of love. The *Divan Shams Tabriz* represents a unique combination of lyricism and mysticism. It contains human love, divine love, Shams, and God. As Chittick puts it:

It is well known that most of the ghazals (or “lyric poems of love”) of the *Diwan* were composed spontaneously by Mawlana during the *sama'* or “mystical dance. “This dance, which later came to be known as the “dance of the whirling dervishes,” is an auxiliary means of spiritual concentration employed by the Mevlevi order, a means which, it is said, was originated by Rumi himself. (Chittick, 2005, P.5)

The *Divan Shams Tabrizi* is overflowing of life, love, fascination, mobility, wave, storm, fire, thirst,

madness, and restlessness of impatient soul of the most loved man in the soil. Rumi has written these Ghazals in the separation of his enigmatic master, Shams. The pain, burning, and separation of Shams are found in these Ghazals. The *Divan Shams* is the mirror of love, which is fiery and strange that cannot be found anywhere in our literature. The real beloved of Rumi was not Shams because he knew Shams is limited and the Creator of Shams should be searched. His imagination, love, and storm pass from the beginning to the end of the world. He has expressed this love and fire in the language of poetry.

### 2.2. The *Mathnavi Manavi*

Rumi's other major work is the *Mathnavi Manavi* (spiritual couplets), which consists of twenty-seven thousand verses. It was written in couplets and collected into six large volumes. Rumi's disciples and lovers who had celebrated the birth of his new character came to him and ask him to compose a poetry book to be a good lesson for the spiritual circle of Sufis. They knew his poetic talent and had examined his boiling conscience. As Mojaddedi said:

The process of producing the *Masnavi* was started probably around 1262, although tradition relates that Rumi had already composed the first eighteen couplets by the time Hosamoddin made his request; we are told that he responded by pulling a sheet of paper out of his turban with the first part of the prologue, often called ‘The Song of the Reed’. (Mojaddedi, 2004, Introduction)

Once Hessam al-Din proposed Rumi to write an educational book in Sanai and Attar's style and so complete his other poems. The *Mathnavi* like other earlier educational, poetic works of Rumi includes a collection of a variety of anecdotes and stories of different sources from the *Quran* to the popular folklores. Rumi's *Mathnavi* was addressed by Hessam al-Din Chalabi. Rumi has clearly stated:

Even so, in (composing) this Mathnawí thou,  
O Ziyá'u 'l- Haqq (Radiance of God)  
Husámu'ddín, art my object.

The whole Mathnawí in its branches and roots is thine:

Thou hast accepted (it).

Kings accept (both) good and bad: when they accept (anything),

It is reprobate no more.

Since thou hast planted the sapling, give it water.

Since thou hast given it freedom (to grow), untie the knots.

In (all) its expressions my object is (to reveal) thy mystery;

In composing it my object is (to hear) thy voice.  
(Nicholson, 2011, *Mathnavi* IV: 754-8)

The *Mathnavi* has different stories, but the main story is unity:

Every shop has a different (kind of) merchandise:

The *Mathnavi* is the shop for (spiritual) poverty, O son.

In the shoemaker's shop there is fine leather:

If you see wood (there), it is (only) the mould for the shoe.

The drapers have (in their shops) silk and dun-coloured cloth:

If iron be (there), it is (only to serve) for a yard-measure.

Our *Mathnavi* is the shop for Unity:

Anything that you see (there) except the One (God) is (only) an idol. (Nicholson, 2011, *Mathnavi* VI: 1525-6)

The *Mathnavi* surely is the most productive period of Rumi's life, because he had more than 50 years that has commenced writing the *Mathnavi*. The importance of the *Mathnavi* is not only the ancient work of Persian literature but also for today mankind has the message of salvation and deliverance. The *Mathnavi* is a complete book of theoretical and practical mysticism. Hence, Rumi's mysticism is the mysticism of interpretation and change.

Rumi, the creator of the *Mathnavi*, was an earthy man who thought and lived heavenly. Rumi was a man who knew the secrets of Being and truth beyond this world. The *Mathnavi* does not have an end, like the *Quran*. If all the forests and marshes become pen, and the sea becomes ink, there will be no hope to over the education of the *Mathnavi*, because the *Mathnavi* is the inspiration of God, no formal education, and reserved appearance. Rumi said, "Afterwards, maybe, permission will come (from God): / the secrets that ought to be told will be told" (Nicholson, 2011, *Mathnavi* VI: 6).

The *Mathnavi*, during history, has been called "the *Quran* in the Persian language" (Chittick, 2005, P.2). It doesn't imply the *Mathnavi* is an interpretation of the *Quran* in the Persian language, rather it has become a huge source of knowledge, a source of mystical wisdom and spiritual guidance, and finally a masterpiece of world literature. "The *Mathnavi* contains tales with references to the *Quran*, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), Muslim history, famous saints and sinners, poetic allusions, and tales of animals and fantastic events" (Emerick, 2008, P.53).

The *Mathnavi* has six books, which was closed by the end of Rumi's life. The stories of the *Mathnavi*

are the measure of human cognition. The beginning of the *Mathnavi* is a unique *Ney Nama* and Rumi's view of the *Ney* (reed) is a perfect man and the holy soul which has been entrusted by God to man. The spirit which is impatient in the strange land moans from separation and knocks every door to search *Neyestan* (God). In the whole *Mathnavi*, he is searching the initial connection of the *Ney* (man) to the *Neyestan* (God). He considers himself a *Ney* which is connected to God.

Unlike the *Divan*, the *Mathnavi* is almost serious and representative of a deliberate attempt to explain the various aspects of the spiritual life. From one perspective, it can be said the *Divan* includes most of the lights of the spiritual life and inner dimensions of Rumi, but the *Mathnavi* is an interpretation of spiritual states.

### 3. Ethics and thoughts of Rumi

Ethics, belief, and thoughts of Rumi are a great and wide sea, which cannot be given in this article more than one drop; a person must be immersed in mysticism for years to capture the success of realizing the great works of Rumi and can write explanations about his thoughts.

Here we speak of a pious attracted, burned lover of Balkh who was captive for so many years, and for the sake of love decided to leave. The world was heard the burning soul, not by words, but by the song of the reed. He invited people to the attractive and aromatic world of love. Rumi is a died interested man who took the World Cup of love from the beloved named Shams recklessly and drank until the last drop intensively, heated, his soul flew, and sat on the vast wings of pleasing sounds of music and wrote poetry. He opened his wings in the realm of inspiration and illumination and justified the concept of love in theoretical and practical ways for people.

Rumi was floating in the vast sea of mysticism and lived with spiritual motivations, paying less attention to material things, love for people, and creative expression. The spiritual capacity of his father was so enough which he perceived his son will be valuable in the future to attract people and teach them the secrets of happiness in the world and beyond that. Even, Attar Nishabouri, a famous Iranian poet, discovered in Rumi and said to his father, "Your son will soon be kindling fire in all the world's lovers of God" (Chittick, 1983, P.2).

"Mysticism, a doctrine or discipline, maintaining that one can gain knowledge of reality that is not accessible to sense perception or to rational, conceptual thought" (Audi, 1999, P.593). Mysticism is an endless sea full of cantankerous fishes so a person must be a patient fisherman. Have

you ever been fishing? When you drop the hook in the water (conduct the necessary conditions, pray, and note Him), you should wait. Fishes occasionally tip out to your hook, which is a sweet and good sign (like those mystical fleeting feelings). However, suddenly, your hook gets caught, and a big fish falls in your hook. That time your facial expression is interesting, a mixture of awe and joy, perplexed from the chance that you have got, and happy to get a fish. Mysticism is the same; the difference is that the fishes of mystical sea are much more abundant; the largest fish is illumination, and the smallest one is the heart's blood. In this sea, there are predatory sharks as well (the feeling of bigotry, obsession, depression, pessimism, and deviated Schools of mysticism), hence, fisherman should be careful with these cannibal sharks. In one sentence, "Mysticism can be defined as love of the Absolute" (Schimmel, 1975, P.4).

Love and fascination are Rumi's way of life. According to him, love has plundered his everything. The mystic Rumi believes that love is a divine attribute, and nobody can actually understand it; its taste can be found just by love, but can never be described. The true source of mysticism is love, which is a divine deposit to the mystic's heart to reach the main Destination, hence mysticism and Sufism are meaningless without love: love of God and His creatures.

Rumi, panegyrist of purity, faith, and humanity, has a new delicate justification of love that has not been said and justified until now, in any encyclopedia of love in the world. Rumi's unrest was the result of virulence, intensity, ardor and sincerity in love to Shams. He saw all the universe in the Beloved and knew himself crazy of love. Shams was like a storm in Rumi's life which fled in the sky of his heart and suddenly heated his whole body.

Rumi has its own language in the expression of love. He has warm words to reduce mystical topics to be understandable, attract the warmth of people's speech, and give certain passion. Rumi was well aware that all manifestations are signs towards God. But if dust didn't rise or the leaves of a garden didn't dance, how the hidden movement of air that keeps the world alive was visible? Nothing is out of the dance. According to Rumi, Love is the result of rotation of particles around the sun. When the light of love appears, nothing will remain even earth, sky, and the sun except Almighty. He said:

'Wherever I put my head that is my place of worship.

No matter where I am, that is where God is.

Vineyards, roses nightingales, the sema and loving...

They are all symbols, the reason is always Him'. (Aydin, 2004, P.8)

He said: "The way of God's Messenger is the way of Love. / We are the children of Love. / Love is our mother" (Aydin, 2004). All real lovers should pay the price of process of loving God which is burning: "I was raw, / I am now cooked and burnt" (Aydin, 2004, P.8).

Rumi considers life an endless movement towards perfection, a spiritual ladder which takes a man to the sky, guides the man of travel towards a higher reality to open the doors of God. Sema also is a ladder to the sky. Health-esteem, purity, inhaling intimacy of life, and spirit of joy and hope are Rumi's obvious virtues. Rumi's words are simple, without any premises, eloquent, coherent, firm, and far from ambiguity. Rumi has special skills in using parables, and traditional stories. He is amazing in the breadth of information not only among the various religious topics but also in all literary issues, the spiritual problem, and Islamic culture.

Rumi was intoxicated and has been replaced by an almost fifty- year- old man who composed poetry enthusiastically and played with children everywhere. Rumi loved people due to God's love in everybody's heart. However, for him, there was nothing other than God. During his life, he never established any doctrine and never introduced any rule for today Sema. He just turned around and danced without any rule along with the feeling that he had during his intoxication in his heart. The spiritual sun of Shams 'love shined brilliant blares in the fascinated Rumi which created works, which wondered people and mystics. Rumi is the hunter of facts from the sea of human's heart. He had the role of an artist in the passion and fascination of people and human development. From the beginning of his life, he is one of the poets and thinkers who created the spiritual value system in the Islamic world, Iran, and the world. Obviously, before Rumi, Sanai and Attar have been in the way of mysticism and masnavi, but Rumi brought their works to perfection. Rumi considers the indefinite honor and noble value in the universe for humans. He infuses to humans *Tawhid* and mysticism. He guides humans towards love, faith, and honesty.

#### 4. Conclusion

Rumi was a mature man, a comprehensive mystic, at the same frenzy had expertise in literature, Arabic, and Farsi, surrounded by poets' *Divans*, proficiency in the *Quran*, *Hadith*, and theology, education of spirituality and Sufism deeply, and in addition to all the virtues had an astonishing talent. Rumi was a perfect Sufi who faced suddenly Shams

Tabrizi, and his natural talent was ready for a spark to burn the harvest of his existence and change to a bright flame.

Rumi is the poet of love and mysticism. Rumi's mysticism is full of a special treasure which a person should be drowned to get it. Having read the book of Rumi's mysticism, it is possible to understand a little and get it. Totally, mysticism is a wonderful elixir from different philosophical Schools of the world. But Rumi's mysticism has a different School of thought. Rumi himself is a comprehensive definition of mysticism. He puts love his natural way. So that it can be said Rumi is a love therapist. In the two immortal works, the *Divan Shams* and the *Mathnavi*, numerous subtle points about love can be seen and the claim can be true in the case of these two works. Rumi's mysticism is rich. Wisdom in the words of Ferdowsi, ethics in Sadi's works, indifference toward the world in the poems of Hafiz, and simplicity in the words of Baba Tahir, no one gets higher levels of Rumi's mysticism. In fact, Rumi is the literary honor of Iran.

Rumi's poetry represents the colorful image of God, human, world, and internal relations of these three facts. However, unlike the complexity of misleading pictures, which have been painted by Rumi, all his thoughts and explanations provide certain harmony and fragrance. Although the teachings of Rumi can never be summed up in one sentence, but they all express the same truth, the noble truth of Rumi's experience and Islam itself: "there is no god but God." At the end, it should be noted that the world has been impressed by the great Rumi's views.

*Информация о конфликте интересов: авторы не имеют конфликта интересов для декларации.*

*Information of conflict of interests: authors have no conflicts of interests to declare.*

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