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“The Rumi Inside”

A Response of Hodjaefendi Fethullah Gulen to Rumi in Modern Times .

In the entire history of human culture and civilization, there is one unfailing test of genius and it is this as ‘Times Wings Chariot’ inevitably rolls by, covering a great deal of human creation and achievement with the dust of oblivion, and decay and destruction becomes the fate of much of what human beings achieved with great pain and endeavor to embellish their lives – the work of genius follows a contrary process . It not only retains its glamour and glory with the passing of time, its illumination penetrates deeper and deeper into the minds and hearts of man, giving them ever new and fresh joy and happiness, and becoming increasingly a subtle force and vehicle elevating individuals as well as societies to higher, nobler, more refined and more humane levels. Few poets in the world have achieved this great distinction. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi undoubtedly is one of them. He lived in one of the most turbulent times of human history. Rumi lived in thirteenth century. The most troubled and restless period. Shortly after having been devastated, massacred and looted by the crusaders, the entire edifice of Islamic civilization had been subjected to cruel destruction by the restless savages of the Mongols led by Chengiz Khan, Halaku and their successors from the east.

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These three stages of imperfection, perfection and burning can be interpreted into ----- and ----- Late Jalaluddin Humai a great scholar of Persian has discussed this in his voluminous book entitled Maulvinameh or ----- spreaded over 600 pages. Mystical verse is regarded by most Persian litterateur as their chief contribution to world literature and this genre in which the great poets have excelled. Rumi was born at Balkh in 1207 S/o Bahauddin Valad; a great grandson of Sultan Mohammed Khawarzam Shah through his grandmother and a descendent of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique the first Caliph. Rumi died in 1273 A.D. his father was a noted preacher and sufi. Either his popularity among the people or the onset Mongol invasion, he found himself obliged to flee from there. On his way to wanderings through Persia, Iraq, Arabia & Syria, he met Khwaja Fariduddin Attar at Nishapur. Attar made a prediction about child Rumi and presented him a copy of his book Israrnama telling Bhauddin Valad that ‘soon his son would set on fire the consumed ones of the world.’ They refused themselves in Qonia in Turkey.

Bahauddin Valad died in 1230, and there with certain enterals Rumi resided to the end of his life. He had married and begotten a son named Sultan Valad.

Rumi received his early education from his father, a scholar in Islamic theology and meditations and recorded his teachings in a book entitled *maarif*; after his death, his old friend Burhanuddin Mohaqeq of Trimid arrived in Qonia and found Rumi established in the favour of the Seljuq Sultan Alauddin Kai Qubad. He succeeded to his father and after the death of Maulana became Shaykh. During the discipleship of Burhanuddin Mohaqeq, on his advice, Rumi went to study further in Aleppo, whence he proceeded to damascus for perhaps for four years to learn from Ibn-al-Arabi who died in A.D. 1240.

In 1244 a sixty year old wandering Dervesh shamsuddin of Tabriz came to Qonia and met Jalaluddin ‘suddenly the sun of love and truth cast its rays on that pure soul, and so fired and inflamed him that his eyes were dazzled by its light’ with these words Rumi’s biographer and interpreter professor Bdi Uz Zaman Farozanfar introduces the most remarkable and influential episode in the poets life, his encounter with the wild mystic Jalaluddin Rumi found in the stranger that perfect image of the Divine beloved which he had long been seeking, writes R. A. Nicholson. ‘He took him away to his house, and for a year or two they remained inseparable. ‘What past between the two mystics during their close association is not recorded but all ancient sources agree that thenceforward Rumi was a changed man “Meanwhile, continues Nicholson , The Mualavi disciples of Rumi , entirely cut off from their master’s teaching and conversation and bitterly resenting his continued devotion to Shamsuddin alone, assailed the intruder with abuse and threats of violence. At last Shamsuddin fled to Damascus. He sent his son Sultan Valad to fetch him back because Maulana was agitated on the missing of his bosom friend. On another occasion, Sultan Valad intervned and brought him back to Qonia because again the disciples were jealous and caused him to flee to Damascus. In 1247, the man of mystery vanished without leaving a trace behind. It was rumored in Qonia that he was killed by one of the disciples of Maulana. The poet exclaimed on such reports:

Who was he that said  
The immortal spirit id dead  
Or how dared he say  
Hope’s sun hath passed away?  
An enemy of the sun,  
Standing his roof upon  
Bound up both his eyes  
And cried: ‘Lo, the sun dies’

Shams a compelling figure of mysterious power put Rumi through many rigorous, and occasionally cruel, tests from which Rumi emerged obedient, selfless, deepened and enlightened, Shams seemed to answer Jalaluddin’s prayers:

I yearn for a love who wreaks havoc by rampages,  
Whose heart burns, who drinks and spills blood,  
Defies the stars, wages

War against Heaven, whose fire-even when  
It takes a plunge  
Into the bottom of the vast sea-still flames  
and rages.

The symbolic acts of Shams could be bewildering. According to legend, proclaiming that “The science of love cannot be mastered in a religious school” Shams decided to forbid Rumi to read books, One day, sitting by the pond, Shams dropped Rumi’s books one by one into the water while Rumi looked on without complaint, perhaps acquiescing in the belief that the true mystic must divest himself of all conventional learning. Iqbal has composed the following poem:

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Ironically very few surveys of humanism, of world literature, or histories of civilization so much as cite Rumi’s name. His poetry is included in very few anthologies of world poetry. Rumi is also a victim of the phenomenon. The scholars of the east suffer from an acute feeling of inferiority about their own culture or religion and very few have effectively interpreted the philosophy, the arts and the poetry.

Hegel praised him as one of the greatest poets and most important thinkers in world history. The eminent British Orient list Reynolds A. Nicholson paid tribute to him as “The greatest mystical poet of any age. Jami, one of the immortals of Persian classical poetry said of him, “He is not a prophet, but he has written a Holy Book” referring to his Mathnavi, which has also been called Quran

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Allama Iqbal the twentieth century thinker-poet has proclaimed, “Maulana turned the soil into nectar, I became drunk on his wine, now I live with his blessed breath. “Gandhiji used to quote his couplet:

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To unite – that is why you came  
To divide – that is not our aim.

Rumi’s poetry is a vast geography of many climates and seasonal changes. It embodies the aesthetics of ethics and metaphysics. His Mathnawi makes a monumental synthesis of mystic ideas ranging from Neoplatonism to Chinese thought embracing Indian, Persian and Greek mythology, stories from the holy books, Arab and Persian legends and folk stories, it provides a system of philosophy, insights into psychology and the laws of physics and logic. There is always an excitement, a revelation, passions raging or exquisitely controlled a symmetry of ecstasy, an order divine madness certainly no mystic poet has

surpassed him during these centuries since his death. The academy of Rumi whose mysticism was syncretic, combining Islamic Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Indian as well as Neoplatonic influences, It was a sanctuary for humanism where a whole spectrum of ideas was discussed freely, with tolerance, without malice.

Rumi has been claimed by several countries and cultures-Iran , Turkey, Afghanistan the Arabs, and the central Asian states – on grounds of genealogy, birth place, language cultural orientation, adopted country, burial place or territory of impact. He belongs to humanity and to transcend religious schisms and national allegiances.

Rumi is a living influence in the Islamic world especially in Sufism. His teachings have the greatest relevance to the situation of modern man faced with the insoluble problems created by his own ignorance.

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These are the couplets of Maulana on his own elegy. He is so excited to meet his death and so much rejoicing and celebrating the occasion.

The Maulwiya order is continuing not only in turkey but wherever the lovers and admirers of Maulana exist, they recite his poetry, they arrange the Majalis of Simaa and they dance to keep his tradition. Apart of that the philosophers, theologians and the religion exerts make a deep study of his Mathnawi and Diwan-e-Kabeer.

As in Iran and India, commentaries and translations of Mathnavi have been done, in Turkish language also, many scholars have attempted writing commentaries in that language.

Sarwari, Soodi, Shami, Rasukhi Ismail Dadeh Anqarvi, Abdul Majeed Seevasi, saari Abdullah, Ismail Haqqi Barusvi, Sheikh Murad Bukhari, Abedeen Pasha and Tahir Olghoon are some of them.

Some poets tried to translate and compose poetry in Turkish.

1. Nahifi Suleman in 1738 A.D.
2. Farrukh Afendi in 1840
3. Abdullah Saleh in 1782
4. Kheri Beg in 1890

(it was a bad translation of the Mathnavi and known as Kutook)

5. Auni yeni Shehri in 1892
6. Faizullah Sajid Olkoo in 1945
7. Hafiz Mohd. Ameen, Shiekh Maulviya Toqat has translated the seventh volume of Mathnavi presuming that belongs to Maulana. It was done in 1816.
8. Shakir Mohammed in 1836 but unfortunately he also presumed the VII volume ascribed to Maulana and translated that also.

The storm of the time has destroyed my house

No friend and acquaintance is there, heart is sinking and the stage river is there.

No hope is there, the cup of wine has been broken up:

No friend is there; to night even the wine is not attracting me.

No comrade and no colleague who could understand my tongue:

You will treat me stranger even with God

Sometimes my native becomes stranger, and sometimes strangeness becomes my native

Oh Baqi! The entire world has become stranger

Oh my beloved! I want to depart this world

But I am afraid where I go that is also a strange place.