

Conference Proceedings

National Seminar

“The Rumi Inside”

Discovering the Rumi inside and meeting Modern Day Rumis

21 April 2007



INDIALOGUE FOUNDATION



Indialogue Foundation

In Collaboration with

Centre for International Programs, Osmania University



Mr. Sadi Sen
Trustee
Indialogue Foundation
Hyderabad

Welcome Speech

Respected chief guest of the program Sri P. Shiv Shankar former Union Minister for External Affairs and Human Resource Development.

Respected Guest of Honorable of the Program Sri k. Jana Reddy Honorable Minister for Home, Jails Fire Service, Sainik welfare and Housing, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Respected Madam Prof. Dr. Giuli Alsani, Chairperson, Executive Committee, Black Sea University of Georgia.

Other esteemed dignitaries on the dais.

Distinguished Scholars of the Program.

Dear guests: Ladies and Gentlemen!

On behalf of Indialogue Foundation I would like to welcome you all to our national seminar, "The Rumi Inside".

This advanced technology and telecommunications era makes our world smaller and it is supposed to bring humankind much closer to each other. But strangely and unfortunately the more

technology and communication advance the more gap between humankind increases. In this hectic age humanity needs to understand each other more than ever.

It is our nature that we are enemy of unknown. When any of us hear a strange noise while walking in a dark street, our first reaction will be defense and worry, but after going and seeing that the noise is caused by a small kitten our defensive and worried reaction will turn into love, care and sympathy.

Key factor in each and every conflict in our world today is not to know and understand one another properly. Therefore understanding each other is the first step in the direction of conflict solutions and getting a peaceful world. To understand each other accurately we need to come closer. As Rumi said we should say to one and call "Come, Come, whoever you are!/ Wandered, Worshiper, lover of leaving, it doesn't matter/Ours is not a caravan of despair/ Come, Come even if you have a broken your vows a thousand times/ Come, Yet again , Come, Come!". We should be so tolerance that our hearts become wide like the ocean and we should be inspired with faith and love for others.

This is the primary goal of our foundation, Indialogue. Indialogue is an action-oriented dialogue and peace foundation, founded in 2005 with the imagination and the fortune of a group of Turkish and Indian people to promote and to encourage local, national, international, inter-civilizational, intercultural, interfaith, inter-communal and interethnic dialogue, love, tolerance, understanding, reconciliation, harmony, co-existence, tranquility and peace. As adherents and devotees of love, tolerance, dialogue and peace we believe that coming closer of individuals, societies,

faiths, cultures and civilizations will result in a culture of dialogue and tolerance among all humankind. Therefore peace and harmony will be achieved all over the world.

2007 is the 800th birth anniversary of eminent philosopher, mystical poet, the great spiritual and literary figure of all times, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. That is why this year has been designated as “Rumi Year” by UNESCO. Mawlana Rumi is famous for his message and call for love, humanity, peace and unity. “You have been sent to the earth to unite people/you have not been sent to the divide people” says Rumi and continuous to impress all humanity from an eight hundred years distance.

Today in this seminar, we will have a chance to voice Rumi’s message and call for love, humanity, peace and unity once again. Distinguished spiritual leaders, scholars and professors will enrich wisdom and remind one and all about the importance of dialogue, harmony, love, peace and unity, I hope those essential values will be inculcated in each and every individual and this seminar will be a humble contribute in this regard.

Thank you to one and all for gracing our program with their presence.

Thank you very much!



Prof. Siddiq Ali

Director

Centre for International Programs

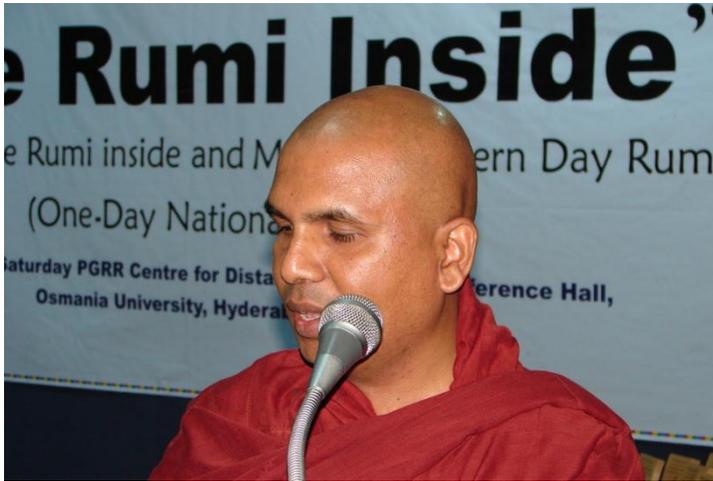
Osmania University

Opening Speech

I welcome and thank all. In today's world filled with tensions and conflicts on one hand we talk of a global world and on other. We speak of clash of civilizations. The message of peace, love and harmony given by great poet and Sufi Saint the poetry is regarded as the finest specimen. What is interesting to know is that this 13th century poet and writer are widely read in Western world. Indeed a genius like Rumi cannot be confined to any boundaries. This life and work makes us realize how to know inner peace and curb tendencies of hostility and hatred. This teaching inspired people from all background. I once again thank all.

In my school days, I have heard the name of Rumi. It is fortunate enough that at this stage where terrorism is at the peak, things like these also happen. A person whose message was based on Islam and Quran and spoke of equality, brotherhood, etc. He migrated along with his father to Konya, Turkey where he has done all this Masnavih as we understand is artificial word but he said it is completely different. The two great words are firstly Masnavih a poetic expression consist of Islam and Quran. He was a great Sufi.

The amount of love, equality taught by him is just good. He loved all. That is the greatness of Islam. His two followers called Abu Hashim, the gentlemen who was 1st Sufi died in 797.



Ven. Bikkhu Vinayrakkhita

Trustee

Ananda Buddha Vihara Trust

Secunderabad

The Rumi Inside

Discovering the Rumi Inside and Meeting Modern Day Rumis

Dear friends and seekers of Peace,

As you all know that UNESCO has designated 2007 as “Year of Rumi” to mark the 800th birth of eminent spiritual poet (not ritual poet) Jalaluddin Rumi.

Jelaluddin Rumi was born in the region today known as Afghanistan in 1207. His family fled the Mogul invasion to Konya, Turkey where he spent most of his life. Rumi following in his father’s ancestral line became a scholar until his meeting with the wandering dervish, Shams of Tabriz. Of this meeting Rumi said, "What I had thought of before as God, I met today in a person."

Thus we too should search God not somewhere there up in the sky but in persons here on earth and Rumi may be one of them.

Among the modern day Rumis His Holiness Dalai Lama can be considered as one who like Jelaluddin Rumi fled the Chinese invasion of 1959 .His Holiness escaped to India where he was given

political asylum. Since 1960, he has resided in Dharamsala, India, known as "Little Lhasa," the seat of the Tibetan Government-in-exile.

Since then he has traveled all around the world. He met with leaders of the Roman Catholic and Jewish communities and spoke at an interfaith service held in his honor by the World Congress of Faiths: Where he said : "I always believe that it is much better to have a variety of religions, a variety of philosophies, rather than one single religion or philosophy. This is necessary because of the different mental dispositions of each human being. Each religion has certain unique ideas or techniques, and learning about them can only enrich one's own faith."

The 1989 Nobel Peace Prize

The Norwegian Nobel Committee's decision to award the 1989 Peace Prize to His Holiness the Dalai Lama won worldwide praise and applause. The Committee's citation read, "The Committee wants to emphasize the fact that the Dalai Lama in his struggle for the liberation of Tibet consistently has opposed the use of violence. He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."

On 10 December 1989, His Holiness accepted the prize on the behalf of oppressed everywhere and all those who struggle for freedom and work for world peace and the people of Tibet. In his remarks he said, "The prize reaffirms our conviction that with truth, courage and determination as our weapons, Tibet will be liberated. Our struggle must remain nonviolent and free of hatred."

The wisdom of Dalai Lama really shows that hatred can never be ceased by hatred and it is his divine reasoning ability made him a man of distinct and hence can be called as a modern day Rumi. For Rumi is man of reason for peace and Love.

Reason as a valuable treasure and divine gift

Jelaluddin Rumi considered reason, which is the faculty for thought, cognition, and comprehension as a valuable treasure and divine gift that distinguishes man from animals and lets him attain humanity. Man defeats his lower self with reason and becomes superior being by escaping from his blind desires. He says that reason is holy light in the heart, truth and falsehood can be distinguished with it. Explaining the Prophetic Tradition, Jelaluddin Rumi says:

The Prophet said, "Whosoever is foolish, he is our enemy and ghouls who way lay the travelers. Whosoever is intelligent he is our soul, his breeze and wind is our sweet basil."

Rumi compares a man with reason to a spiritual guide carrying the torch that shows the true path and guides those who have remained in darkness and lost their way. He continues to praise reason saying "If intelligence displays its face in visible form, day will appear dark beside its light. And if the shape of foolishness became visible, beside it the darkness of night will be radiant."

Therefore Religion and Reason should go hand in hand. Because Religion without Reason is Blind and Reason without Religion is Lame. A person without reason is considered fool.

The Mesnevi contains an interesting parable about Jesus running away from the fool:

Jesus was running towards the mountain as if he were running from a lion and wanted to shed his blood. Somebody ran behind him and asked:

What is wrong? There is no one behind you. Why are you running as fast as a bird flies?

Jesus was running so fast that he even did not turn around to answer the man because of his hurry. The man ran a little bit more after Jesus, and he called out again:

For God's sake, stop for one moment. Why and from whom are you running away? I want to know."

Jesus said: "I am running away from a stupid person. Don't stop me, let me get away."

The man said: "Aren't you the Messiah who opens the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf?"

Jesus: "Yes, I am."

The man asked again: "Aren't you the one who makes a dead man jump like a lion that has just found its prey?"

Jesus: "Yes, I am."

Upon this, the man said: "O pure and clean spirit! Who are you afraid of when you possess so many miracles?"

Jesus said: "I read the greatest Name that God has granted me to a blind person, and his eyes opened. I read it to a deaf man, and his ears started to hear. I read it over a rock like a mountain, and it split and fell into pieces. I read it over a dead person, and he came back to life and arose. And I read it to a stupid man a hundred thousand times, but it did not help.

(Mesnevi vol-3 no.2570-2588)

Rumi explained from many different perspectives that reason is a great gift for man. Giving reason to love and care for each other Rumi says "Come, Come let us appreciate each other, beware of the value of each other. Because you never know, we suddenly might be separated." Such is his wisdom.

It is said that one day during the whirling ceremony while Rumi was whirling in ecstasy a drunkard entered among the whirling dervishes. He could not control himself. During whirling he would lurch and from time to time hit Rumi. Rumi's friends scolded him. Upon seeing this Rumi said, "O friends he is the one to drink the wine, but you are the ones to get drunk. Why are you scolding him?" Everyone was amazed at Rumi's patience, tolerance, and tenderness. It is these very tolerant views, good manners and gentle ways helped him to bring people around him to right views.

He used to say that there are many tongues and dialects in this world, but the meaning of all of them is the same. Hands and feet are aware of the state of the heart. Let us give up conversation made with our tongues and vibrate our hearts.

So whatever reason Rumi gave and whatever his teaching was, one thing is sure that he was lover of humanity and to him to serve

humanity was to serve God. He was lover of peace and patience which in turn gave him happiness in serving others.

Thus we can say that full form of RUMI stands for

R-easonable

U-nderstanding of

M-an

I-nside.

Those who understand the man inside or himself cannot stop from loving and caring others. The law of nature is such that he begins to feel a sense of responsibility towards all.

Universal Responsibility

Now the time has come that we cannot confine our responsibility just to a particular caste or class, particular region or religion or to particular notion or nation. It is high time that we take up the Universal Responsibility to impart love, compassion and kindness to all on the earth. H.H. Dalai Lama at one of the interfaith meet has rightly said: *"The need for simple human-to-human relationships is becoming increasingly urgent . . . Today the world is smaller and more interdependent. One nation's problems can no longer be solved by itself completely. Thus, without a sense of universal responsibility, our very survival becomes threatened. Basically, universal responsibility is feeling for other people's suffering*

just as we feel our own. It is the realization that even our enemy is entirely motivated by the quest for happiness. We must recognize that all beings want the same thing that we want. This is the way to achieve a true understanding, unfettered by artificial consideration."

Due to modern transportation systems the distant lands and nations have come very closer and now is the time to bring our hearts even closer.

So today we all have gathered here to bring our hearts closer and give that message of peace of Rumi with love to the whole of humanity. Finally I would like to say:

Voice is to have Peace

Choice is to make Peace

Nice is to think of Peace

Wise is to live in Peace

May we all live in Peace.



Rev. Fr. Dana Raju
Archdiocese of Hyderabad
Secunderabad

Addressing Mevlana's Age and Focussing his Relevance to our own, as a light to Illumine our Paths

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi was born eight hundred years ago, in 1207, in Balkh province of the present day Afghanistan and immigrated to Konya, in Anatolia, at the age of seven with his parents. The family on its way stayed in Persia, for a while and then went on a pilgrimage to the Holy places in Arabia and Palestine, and, from there, to Damascus in Syria; finally they reached Konya, then under the rule of Seljuk Turks, and settled down there for good. But that was a time when all Central Asia was suffering from social, political and military problems due to Crusades and the Mongol invasions and the consequent unsettled conditions. It was a time of much anxiety, fear and worry. Our Mevlana lived in Konya for about sixty years. This city was already known as a Centre for learning with its many philosophical and theological schools to teach Islam.

His own father was a great scholar. From his childhood he imbibed the spirit of learning and piety in his children. He grew up to become a great philosopher, and a Muslim theologian of repute, with many commentaries and talks on Islamic topics; more than a

scholar, he was known to be a sufi saint, ascetical and exemplary in general conduct. He organized the Mevlevi order of Sufi whirling Dervishes who danced and sang in ecstatic prayer. Even the rulers supported them with money and monastery buildings for their common life. The fame of these Sufis spread too many lands. At the time of his death in 1273, Konya was known as holy city, attracting a large number of pilgrims and scholars, all due to the attraction of Rumi by his personal holiness, and by his fidelity to teaching authentic Islam and because of the number of educational institutions that grew up with his efforts and with the help of the rulers. In particular, his order of whirling Dervishes was appreciated by all concerned and a large number came to benefit from their piety. In course of time Konya came to be associated with his work and presently, it is known as “Mevlana City”, to all pilgrims and scholars. His power over the city was so great. There are many sacred monuments dedicated to great scholars and Sufi saints, besides universities, gardens and museums. There are specialist schools to teach Rumi’s distinctive philosophy of life: the path of illumined love, compassion and service in ascetic simplicity. Love of God should compulsively lead sincere believers to love all men and include, further, all God’s creation. Mutual and universal heartfelt love for God and his works, without any distinction of religion, realm or nationality: Truth and love have their own nationality to unite all races. His personally lived teaching is: love all men; live in peace and harmony with all; forgive and be compassionate to the weak, because we are all children of a compassionate, loving and forgiving God.

This is, in short the lasting legacy of Rumi as gathered from his personal life, teaching, talks and literacy creations, valid for all, valid

for ever in pursuing Truth and love of God. It is this teaching that has made him a man destiny, a historic figure, a saint, a beacon light of humanity, to be recognized and honored by the UNESCO, this year, in a special way. He is a multifaceted character and continues to shed his light on all those who would open their eyes to him, as a beacon light, set on a hill, His example, his charming literacy works, - Mesnavi and Divan-i-Kabir, and his collected letters, in poetry, in parable, or in story form, teach all men love, compassion and forgiveness!

Different people may give different titles: a philosopher, a great Islamic theologian, an artist with words, an effective teacher, an ascetic, a happy Sufi saint, an affectionate friend: but, above all these, he is a loving servant of God and man. Everything, he said or did, has reference to God who is love and who has destined us all for love, to be always happy, twirling dervishes, singing and dancing! no long faced saint; no embittered saint; liberated in mind and heart let us love all men – violence, hatred, sectarian illogical fundamentalism or terrorism should find no place in a true believer in God. Liberality and forgiveness are the highlights of all his poetry and oratory.

What made him to become all that? His times and circumstances. Those days every nation and society was subject to threats of invasions, pillage and war: the crusade the Mongol multipronged brutal invasions: barbarian tribal incursions – hatred in every form. But his own ambiance was one of love, trust, liberal instruction and high ideals. All the circumstances and influences that surrounded him from childhood until his death were liberative: a learned and affectionate father, who was a spiritual guide, an example of knowledge and virtue, a friend, and a perfect man; then the influence of Sayyid Burhan al-Din, who was his father's deputy

earlier, and also peerless in knowledge and a superior and outstanding individual; his professor of Islamic Law in Aleppo, Kamal al-Din; Muhy al-Din, the most distinguished sufi of all time of Damascus; Rumi was raised in the hands of such spiritual guides and teachers: perfect men, knowledge, Gnostic and lovers of God and the beloved of God. Shams al-Din of Tabriz, a well educated man, familiar with all the Sciences of his day, “the perfect one of Tabriz”. He lived a hidden life but became an “Alter Ego” – or soul friend of Rumi, a lover of God, till he disappeared one day without a trace. After shams, Rumi’s friend of heart and mirror of spirit was Salah-al-Din of Konya, the Zarqubi or goldsmith. He was not educated in our sense; he was however, full of God’s grace and light – “there were springs of light in me, and I was not aware of that. You discovered them and brought them flowing fiercely”, he told Rumi.

After the goldsmith, another person, Husam al-Din Chelebi became Rumi’s companion and deputy: he is described as “the place where divine light is manifested, teacher of secrets of truth and knowing God, a personality of whom saints of the Muhammadi way are proud” He was a great scholar, hailing from scholarly ancestors. All these influenced Rumi from close quarters, personally and consciously.

These scholars helped Rumi to write or to take down the dictation of his great master piece of Persian literature: Mesnavi. In this work, love is the main them in all its forms, but always reflecting and strengthening love of God, in an allegorical form.

During his life time, in the East, as well as in the West, “Bhakthi literature and movements”, were created and became wide spread”. In Europe, the mendicant orders and societies were started

contemporaneous to Rumi: The Franciscans, started by St. Francis of Assisi (1182 – 1226); the Dominicans started by St. Dominic Guzman (1170-1221); St. Clare started the 2nd order of St. Francis for ladies; St. Peter Celestine started his order of monks who went to lonely places to grow up in holiness (1215 – 1296). These were all itinerant preachers too, depending on alms of the faithful for their life. So many other saints lived as contemporaries of Rumi. St. Bernard (1197 – 1253); St. Anthony of Padua (1195 – 1231); St. Bonaventure (1218 – 1274); St. Louis, the King of France (1214 – 1270); St. Albert the Great (1206 – 1280); St. Elizabeth of Hungary, a queen who cared for lepers (1207 – 1231). There were a host of other saints in that Century and their fame spread far and wide. It was an age of Saints and great scholars like St. Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventure, Albert the great, St. Dominic, Thomas-a-Kempis, the mystic per excellence, who wrote The “Imitation of Christ”, a hand book to grow up in love of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas was a great philosopher and Theologian many volumes of written treatises on Theology and philosophy to his credit. Even today he is being studied in all of the West. In our own land, the ferment of philosophy produced Shankara, Ramanuja and Madwa, to reinterpret Vedic thought. The Bhakthi literature of the Narayanmars, Thiruppavai of Andal, Thiruvacakam of Manickavasagar, Devaram, Thirumurai were more or less of that period. There was, no doubt, ferment of rethinking, of devotion and service was widespread. Love of God and of man were evident in public life everywhere. This general influence could have reached Rumi too through travelers, merchants or even invaders. These could be counted as external influences on his belief, behavior and philosophy of life.

The mendicant saints, the Sufis, the Bakhti Saints of India have a lot of commonalities, no doubt. But love of God is the one strong force that moved them all to produce beautiful poetry, sublime thinking and universal outlook on humanity and also the motivation for service. Saints and scholars always have had their source of strength in God, the eternal giver and lover.

Focusing these lights on our times what do we discover in our contemporary society? There is much that is base, evidently. But there is also much that is noble, inspiring and urging us to follow the path of love and righteous conduct in the foot steps of the present day saints and guiding lights. We have our own Rumi's and St. Francis and St. Elizabeths. Let us not miss the good because of the publicity of the evil by our modern media.

There are terrorists, rapists, naxals, unjust dealers, child molesters and murderers; there are corrupt politicians and administrators, no doubt. But why are we not observing so much that is beautiful, admirable, lovable and worth emulating? Please visit the Homes for lepers, destitute, disabled and Aged; go and see the houses for the street children, street girls, orphans and the abandoned babies.

There we will find the nobler side humanity: caring, sharing and getting concerned about the loveless, powerless the hungry and thirsty: visit the heritage hospitals, charitable clinics, and houses for the released prisoners or their children whose well-being and education is ensured, at a great cost of personal convenience and comfort. Learn of them; follow them in their loving foot-steps. Then we can discover the way of love that could make us sing and dance with joy like St. Francis, Mother Theresa or Rumi. The joy of living

comes from the sacrifice of giving, giving to God in the poor and the weak, in the sick and the lonely.

Rumi ignored those who were jealous of his close and tried to get rid of them. He forgave them, converted them and made them into whirling dervishes, committed to prayer and joyful service. There are many now who pay attention to possibilities of making a happy world where God's presence can be felt and enjoyed; where the Canticle of the Sun and Prayer for Peace by St. Francis can be sung with a dance. Let us come out of the grave, or at least the cocoon!

Open our eyes to the beauty around us!

See our humanity residing in others!

See God in that image. Then you can happily serve the God, made visible. Whatever you do to the least of my brothers that you do unto me!

Austerity, sacrifice, renunciation make the foundation of love for others. Prayer will reveal if you are able to sacrifice for others, your own well being.

Mother Theresa:

The fruit of Silence is Prayer!

The fruit of Prayer is Faith!

The fruit of Faith is Love!

The fruit of Love is Service!

The fruit of Service is Peace!

That peace is the need of every heart. Let us all try to bring peace to all, each in his own way, in his own measure according to what we are and what we have!



Swami Srikantananda

Director

Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence

Ramakrishna Math

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Rumi's Message of Universal Harmony

Though Truth is one, and all religions are but different paths to reach that, people quarrel and fight in the name of religion, because of their limited understanding.

Clarity of thinking varies from person to person according to one's inborn nature and attitude, which in Sanskrit is called Prakriti (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas emotions). Sattva leads to clear understanding of objects, whereas Tamas and Rajas always lead to confusion and chaos. Sri Ramakrishna has beautifully explained this idea through many parables.

Four blind people went to see and elephant. They could touch only a part of the elephant. Taking that part to be the whole of the elephant, and out of sheer ignorance born of blindness, they started

quarrelling among themselves asserting that the elephant was like what they touched

In another parable, three people saw a chameleon on a branch of a tree in different times. Then, each one argued that the chameleon was of the color the one had seen. This led to a quarrel among them till, another person who was sitting under the tree interfered and said, “Dear friends, I live under this tree and I know the nature of animal. It is capable of changing its colors often. You all have seen same animal, but at different times in different colors, and therefore you are confused.”

In one of his addresses at the parliament of Religions in Chicago, Swami Vivekananda observed that such fanaticism has its harmful effects on the society. He compared such people to “the frog in the well “. The frog which never came out its small well could not understand the vastness of ocean even when another frog that came from the ocean tried to explain it. We, people of limited understanding are unaware of the Reality and are like that “frog in the well”. The attitude that, “My religion alone is true and other religions are false” is fanatic and leads to disharmony and fight among people of different faiths. Only those with right understanding can see the fundamental unity of all religions behind the apparent differences and promote a spirit of tolerance and acceptance.

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi is a Sufi saint with such lofty and noble ideals. His life and teachings are universal and they appeal to the entire humankind. Realizing the universal applicability of Rumi’s message, the UNESCO has declared this year as Rumi’s year. Indialogue Foundation an organization dedicated for establishing

peace and harmony among different religions is doing a commendable service to humankind by organizing Inter-faith dialogue for bringing better understanding among different religious groups.

The Rig Veda declared: *'Ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti'*- Truth is one; sages call it by various names.

Sri Ramakrishna asserted this truth in a remarkable way. He actually practiced various religious disciplines and attained an ultimate God-consciousness through all of them. Sri Ramakrishna later told his disciples: "I have practiced all religions – Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity – and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects. I have found that it is a same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though through different pathways. You should try to experience the paths of all faiths in different ways once. Wherever I look, I see men – Hindus, Muslims, Brahmos, Vaishnavas, and the rest quarreling among themselves in the name of religion. But they never realize that He who is called Krishna is called Siva; Jesus and Allah as well, and bears the name of the same Primal Energy with thousand names. A lake has several ghats. At one, the Hindus take water in pinchers and call it "Jal"; at another the Muslims take the water in leather bags and call it "pani" or "water". How ridiculous if one feels that the water is different because the names are different. The essence of this reference is that everyone is seeking the same substance under different names. It is only the climate, temperature or name that creates differences. Let each man follow his own path. If he sincerely and ardently wishes to know God, peace be unto him! He will surely realize him." (The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna)

The same idea is beautifully expressed in one of the verses of Shiva Mahimna Stotra which Swami Vivekananda quoted in his 'replay to the welcome' speech on 11th September, 1893 at the World Parliament of Religions held at Chicago: "As different streams having their sources in different places mingle their waters in one sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

Swamiji has beautifully summarized the message of his Master Sri Ramakrishna on this subject in his lecture on 'My Master': "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches, or temples; they count for little compared with essence of existence in each man, which is spiritually; and the more this is developed in man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticize no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it means spirituality realization. Only those can understand who have felt the experience. Only those who attained spirituality can communicate it to others. They alone can be great teachers of mankind. They are the powers of lights."

Rumi regarded all religions, sects, and nations, as waves of the ocean of Unity as God sees all prophets as one, as stated in the Qur'an: "...We make no distinction between one and another of His messages". In the same chapter, He states that He sees some of the prophets as superior to others. This way, while all religions and sects are one; they have differed in the practices they brought. Rumi touches this aspect in another part of the Mesnevi when he says: "In this world, there are stairs that stretch to the heavens step by step. For every group there is a separate stair. For every walk (of life)

there is a different sky to which they ascend. Each of them is unaware of the others. The destination is an infinite land. It has neither a beginning nor an end. These couplets illustrate this beautiful Prophetic Tradition:” The paths that lead to God are as many as souls of the creatures. The way to see everyone and everything as one (*wahdat al-wujud*) and leniency were at their peak in Rumi’s life and teachings.

It is said that one day during a whirling ceremony, while Rumi was whirling in ecstasy, a drunk entered among the whirling dervishes. He could not control himself. During whirling he would lurch and from time to time hit Rumi. Rumi’s friends observed this and scolded him. Upon seeing this, Rumi said, “Friends, he is the one to drink the wine, but you are the ones to get drunk of the divine. Why are you scolding him?” Everyone was amazed at Rumi’s patience, tolerance, and tenderness. He never replied negatively to the slanders and gossip produced by his adversaries, whose spiritual eyes were blind. His manners, gentle ways, and tolerant views helped him to bring the people around him to the right views.

It also is related that one day Rumi said: “I am with seventy two different sects and creeds.” Siraj al-Din of Konya was a man of grudge. To hurt Rumi and to discredit him in the eyes of the public, he sent one of his religions friends to ask Rumi in public whether or not he had actually said that he was with seventy two sects and creeds. He advises him to insult, curse, and swear at him if Rumi admitted having said those words. The person came and asked Rumi: “It has been claimed that you said: ‘I am with seventy two sects, and creeds.’ Is that true?” Rumi did not deny what he has said. He replied: “Yes, that is what I said. That man immediately started to

swear and curse at Rumi. Rumi just smiled at him and said: “In spite of all that you are saying, I am also with you.”

Besides being a great scholar and a great saint, Rumi was very modest. He treated everyone – young or old, of high position or of common folk – with modesty. One never found traces of arrogance, pride or haughtiness in Rumi’s life. He did not feel or show any difference between old and young, believer and unbeliever.

As Rumi states, the Muslim who prays in a mosque with open hands, and a Christian who makes the sign of a cross in the church and a Jew who prays in a synagogue – all turn to the same God. If we get stuck in the formalities and are overtaken by appearances, we categorize them as Muslim, Christian and Jew based on their beliefs and the houses of worship they attend. However in the sight of God, no matter to what religion or creed they belong, they all are His servants. Therefore Ziya Pasha says, “In the sight of God, the Muslim and the fire-worshipper are one.” That is to say, both are His servants. “Infidelity too, is wisdom in relation to the Creator, (but) when you impute it to us, infidelity is a noxious thing.”

“Do you not see that the moth flies into the flame of candle whether in a mosque, church or synagogue, without making any distinctions in them, God has opened up His table not only to the Muslims, but also to non – Muslims and even to those who deny Him, and He feeds them all generously. He does not distinguish between them as believer or unbeliever, in terms of keeping them alive.” In one poem, Rumi says, “Know well that belief and unbelief are like the white and yellow of an egg. There is a membrane that separates them. Therefore, they do not mix with each other. With God’s grace and favor, when the mother hen takes her wings, both

belief and unbelief vanish and the chick cracks the egg and emerges.”

According to Rumi there are two great enemies that prevent mankind from attaining true humanity. One of them is lust, the other one is anger. “Anger and lust make a man squint-eyed; they change the spirit (so that it departs) from rectitude.” Humankind has been created in the middle level of the three levels. Above them are the angels and below them are the animals. Human beings are close to the angels with their mind and knowledge. They are close to the animals with their anger and lust. Rumi explains that the person who becomes a slave to this selfish desires and lust stays far away from the true path. “If you are taken by lust and desires of the self, let me tell you that you will go empty handed and without any gains in life. If you give up lust, you will see clearly why you came to this world and where you are going.”

One may belong to any religion, what is more important in life is to try and live the religion to which one belongs with authentic religious and to respect the religious beliefs of others whatever they may be. Equally important is to seek the ideal and pursue the religious ideals to rise towards perfection through purification of heart and maturity of the soul. Human life has a higher and nobler purpose and the destiny of a human being is to move higher up in the cosmic order to reach perfection to realize the Supreme Bliss and to have a Meta-physical experience of cosmic vision in knowing and seeing God in His transcendental form. In the context of pluralism of religions, the goals of harmony in world religions, at the esoteric as well as popular level, renders mandatory the imperativeness of interfaith dialogue. There can be no religious peace without religious dialogue. In the face of global terrorism in

the name of religion and the risk of a possible use of nuclear weapons which exposes the human race to a probable annihilation, the post-secular western world is now witnessing religion's return, especially in America.

In this context, should not the great world religions come closer and walk together in the service of global human society with the goal of bringing religious differences and eliminating antagonisms?

Interfaith dialogue should move beyond sharing spiritual experience and discussing theology towards commitment, but should endeavor for promotion of common human and spiritual values, coping with the challenges of our times at the level of popular religion. It should highlight the true essence of religion which is meant to teach man how to walk on this earth like a true human being. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, what is needed is, "To lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Qur'an, yet this has to be done by harmonizing the Vedas, the Bible and the Qur'an."



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Mevlana Rumi: Who made Rumi, Rumi?

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi was born sometime in early 13th century of the Christian era in the city of the Balkh, now in Modern Afghanistan. Before its destruction by the Mongols, the city of the Balkh was well known for its mosques, seminaries and palaces besides being a centre of learning and trade. Rumi's name was Muhammad, so also was the name of his father better known as Sultanul Ulama Bahauddin Valad. A great scholar, an eloquent speaker, a profound Gnostic and a bold Sufi, jealousies, controversies and differences with Khwarazm Shah compelled Bahauddin to migrate from Balkh when Rumi was about 14 years of age. During the course of the journey, they met Fariduddin Attar at Nishapur (who gave Rumi his book *Asrarnama*), Shaykh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi at Baghdad (who made them his guests) and several other mystics and scholars. In the meantime Rumi was married to Gevhar Khatun in 1225. The journey finally concluded

with Bahauddin giving his consent to settle at Qonya at the invitation of the Seljuq Sultan Alauddin Kayqubad. A separate madrasah and a small residence were soon constructed and Bahauddin resumed the work of teaching, preaching, writing and guiding. But just after two years, Sultanul Ulama Bahauddin Sultan Valad, now about eighty-five years of age, got severely ill and breathed his last in 1231/628.

Being a loving father, a learned scholar and a spiritual guide, Bahauddin took every care that his son Rumi should learn and master all the necessary religious, auxiliary and spiritual sciences, but when a year later Sayyid Burhanuddin Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi, who happened to be a spiritual vicegerent of Bahauddin Valad, arrived at Qonya to pay his condolences to Rumi and console him, and became Rumi's guide he found Rumi's education is incomplete. After a few months Burhanuddin advised Rumi to go to Aleppo and Damascus, meet Scholars and Sufis there and improve both his exoteric and esoteric knowledge. Rumi there by moved over first to Aleppo, studying rigorously for two years, and then to Damascus where he stayed for more than four years experiencing a remarkable increase in almost all branches of knowledge benefiting greatly from the scholars and the Sufis, developing a deeper insight and a broader outlook.

Rumi then went to Qayseri and returned to Qonya along with his Shaykh Sayyid Burhanuddin. Burhanuddin was pleased with Rumi's progress in knowledge and maturity, particularly in Islamic law. He now turned toward spiritual progress of Rumi insisting upon him to follow a rigorous course of austerities, teaching him simultaneously the book *Maarif*, written by Bahauddin Valad, over and over again for months and years. He himself was one of the

most knowledgeable scholars of his time besides being a Sufi, a Gnostic, and a lover of God who had had great command on simplifying the most advanced and highly intricate issues of Sufism. He had successfully completed his job by making Rumi his own replica. So he took leave and went back to Qayseri, but before he left Qonya he foretold the coming of one “Sayyid-i-Sirran” (Master of Secrets) of Qonya, referring by way of allusion perhaps to Shams of Tabriz. Rumi, however, continued to visit Burhanuddin frequently although he had confined himself to complete seclusion at Qayseri. He also passed away in 1241 leaving Rumi again lonely, sad and broken-hearted.

By that time Rumi had made a name as a leading official *Mufti* devoted to rituals, abstinence, modesty and humanitarianism and committed to the Muhammadan (SAW) Path just like his father and his preceptor.

All formalities had been completed but the connection to the powerhouse of restless love of God had yet to be made. It was then that Shams of Tabriz appeared on the scene, himself wandering here and there and searching ardently for a man like Rumi. There are different accounts given with regard to the meeting of these two saints. Leaving the details what we wish to emphasize here is that the connection to the powerhouse was made not overnight but that it took about six months. A flash occurred and both Shams and Rumi started seeing through each other the divine disclosures.

I became you and you became I,

I became the body and you became the soul.

Lest nobody dare say,

I am separate and you are separate.

With love commenced the period of trials, jealousies and humiliations compelled Shams to disappear again and again, the final disappearance reported to be in December 1247.

Then came Salahuddin Zarkub, followed by Husamuddin Cheledi, Rumi was in need of a companion who could also serve as a mirror. First he found this mirror in Shams, then after his disappearance in Salahuddin Zarkub, and after Zarkub's demise in Husamuddin Chelebi who motivated Rumi to give his ecstatic, yet full of knowledge and wisdom, outpourings the shape of *Mesnevi*, the masterpiece of Rumi, which Rumi himself called *Husamname*. The *Mesnevi* reflects, unveils or expounds, in one way or the other, the teachings of the Quran, the precept of the Prophet and the sayings of the mystics. Whether it is the *Mesnevi*, the *Divan-i-Kabir*, the *Majalis-i-Sabah*, the *Maktubat* or the collection of his discourses *Fihi ma Fihi* it all shows the perceptive insight of Rumi unfolding itself on a vast variety of subjects, Rumi himself hidden from the reader's sight.

It could, however, be due to Rumi's own annihilation in God and in the Messenger of God, the Prophet Muhammad Mustafa (May Allah (C.C.) shower him always with His blessings and peace).

Rumi stood for certain ideals: oneness of God, oneness of mankind, oneness of the series of Prophets and Messengers of God finality of the Prophet Muhammad (May Allah (C.C.) shower him always with His blessings and peace) being its continuation and culmination, love of God, love of the Prophet, love and respect of the divinely declared law, love of man, love of all living beings. (animals, plants, matter, all creation being alive Rumi's perception), love, concern and kindness of all and enmity, acrimony and hatred for

none, enduring all sufferings as blessings in disguise, serving the poor, the needy and the destitute, including the hungry and the thirsty animals, indifference toward the riches, comforts and splendors of the world, modesty, humility, forgiveness, self-respect, cleanliness, faith, divinely prescribed rituals , veracity of word and character, God-consciousness , patience, gratefulness, absolute trust in God, submission to divine decrees, burning desire for spiritual union and antipathy toward fame, crowds, arrogance, cruelty , harshness, pseudo-rationalism, pseudo-mysticism, ultra-legalism, blind following, heedlessness, jealousies, greed and vanity.

Rumi continued to stand by these ideals till he breathed his last, teaching, preaching, versifying, practicing and realizing these to as high a degree as possible.

But the question remains: Who made Rumi, Rumi?

We find Rumi learning under various scholars, undergoing courses of spiritual training under various preceptors, meeting a variety of people (including Sufis, saints, sultans, vizirs, emirs, traders, farmers, laborers, weavers, hair cutter etc.), visiting different cities, towns and villages, registering all his experiences to his mind, heart and soul. These, however, remained dry, lifeless, passive and static till he encountered Shams who stimulated the experiences inscribed to life. Thereafter, Rumi became a restless soul burning with the desire to return to its origin and achieve spiritual union with his beloved, God. Seeds that were sown long before now burst out to become trees with fruits of wisdom and shades of joy. All that was registered was annihilated only to be revived with love of God and His Messenger with the inherent meaning of the Quran and the Sunnah being expressed through

words and actualized through character by Rumi. Bahauddin , Burhanuddin, Kamaluddin, Shams, Salahuddin, Husamuddin just played the roles assigned to them. It was God and His Messenger who in fact made Rumi, Rumi.



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Moulana Rumi & Sikhism

Je pahunche te kah gaye tin ki ekai bath.

Sabai siyane ek math un ki ekai jath.

A Rajasthan saint Sant Dadu Dayal in this beautiful couplet has said, “Whoever attained spirituality has said the same thing. All wise persons think alike, and their caste and religion is one”.

I will try to focus a few similarities of basic ideology between Moulana Rumi and Sikhism, though there was a difference of thousands of miles and hundreds of years among them. But this couplet proves to be true in letter and spirit and shows the togetherness between them.

Moula is an Arabic word for God. And Moulana is a Persianised form that means a person who dispels ignorance about God. Guru is

a Sanskrit word for God. And also means, who dispels ignorance about God. Thus Moulana and Guru are the same words for the person who educates spirituality and dispels ignorance about God. Both are the theologian traditions for propagation of spirituality in true sense in different languages.

Moulana Jalal Uddin Rumi a Sufi Saint belonged to *Wahadtul Wajood Stream* of Islam was born in the year 1207 at Balkh, and left for heavenly abode in the year 1273. In his famous couplet:-

Too braye wasal kardan aamadi.

Naa braye fasal kardan aamadi.

He says “The purpose of your coming into the world is to unite the people and not to separate the people”. In his view, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were all the same. Therefore, he reminded people that it was essential not to look down on non-Muslims and respect others’ religions and beliefs. He regarded all religions, sects and nations as waves of the ocean of Unity of God. His thoughts were completely Islamic and should not be misunderstood.

196 years after Moulana’s departure, Shri Guru Nanak Sahib a saint of self designed independent ideology in no way affiliated with Hinduism or Islam, was born in the year 1469 in Punjab of present Pakistan, and left for heavenly abode in the year 1539. He started a movement which is popularly known as Sikhism and was continued by his 9 successor Gurus for 239 years. The movement still continues by the Scripture, the present 11th Guru Shri Guru Granth Sahib as his 10th successor. This Holy Scripture should not be presumed to be of the Sikhs only, on the assumption that they are its

custodians. The Gurus had demolished the barriers of caste, creed, religion and gender and propagated for the oneness of God and oneness of humanity. That is how, along with the 6 Sikh Gurus, 7 Muslims and remaining from different denominations of Hindus along with 2 deemed to be untouchables are seated together in this Scripture, to which Sikhs bow their heads in reverence and follow. The basic teaching of Sikhism is that “All the religions and their Scriptures are equally true”.

Though Moulana Rumi lived in an age and area where slaves were bought and sold as animals and employed. He said, “I have faith in a God, that has not created any slaves”. Once his daughter was scolding her female slave, Moulana entered the room. He said to her, “Why are you hitting this slave? Where do you get the right to hurt her? Nobody except God has slaves. In fact all the slaves are our brothers and sisters”. She apologised the slave.

Shri Guru Nanak Sahib said, “Nanak is found among the lowest of the low caste. What he has to do with the high and mighty? Where the lowest are looked after, there shower the grace of God”. He travelled for forty years and covered about forty thousand miles within and beyond the boundaries of the country in the east, west, north and south. He always preferred to stay and dine with the low caste poor people alone, though he was born in high caste Khatri family of Hindus. He refused to put on *Janevu* the sacred thread, saying that he cannot accept any difference between man and man. He gave a new slogan that, “Naa ko Hindu – Naa Musalman”, means nobody is Hindu and nobody is Musalman, everybody is a human being. He was always accompanied in his travels by one Bhai Bala a Hindu and another Bhai Mardana a Muslim of low caste Mirasi musician.

Once, a Christian craftsman was working in Moulana's house. Moulana's friends teased the craftsman saying, "Why don't you become Muslim? Islam is the best of all religions". He replied, "For 50 years I have been in Jesus' religion. If I abandon my religion now, I am fearful I would be ashamed in front of him". Upon hearing this Moulana said, "The essence of faith is fear. Whoever fears God, even if that person is a Christian, he is a man of God". Shri Guru Nanak Sahib and Sikhism were also against converting the people's religion. They stood for religious freedom and against conversions by practising, preaching, sacrificing their lives and properties and even by struggling and using the force.

One day praising the God, a *rebab* (a musical instrument) was being played in Moulana's presence. Moulana was listening with great pleasure. Suddenly a respected man came in and said, "Stop this, as the *Azaan* (call to the prayer) is being heard. Moulana said, "No, no, that voice is calling to God, this voice is also calling to God. The *Azaan* is inviting the outer aspect of human beings to duty while the voice of *rebab* is inviting the human spirit, his inner face and his invisible aspect to God's love and awareness".

Shri Guru Nanak Sahib also praised God singing, while his companion Bhai Mardana played *rebab*. For prayers, singing the praises of God with musical instruments is called performing Kirtan. This has become a custom in Sikh tradition for the same reason as Moulana has described.

Moulana and most of the Sufis followed the ideas of *Wahadat-ul-Wajood* (Unitarianism). One has to understand its spiritual aspect. It is a monotheism philosophy based on *Tauheed* (oneness of God). According to this belief, existence is only one, and that is

God. There is no other existence other than the existence of God. All the beings in this universe, visible or invisible, have appeared in the knowledge of God. They came into existence with God's manifestation of His Divine Will. The real existence is only the existence of God, and the Creator is present in the creation itself. Hazrat Ibne Arabi has said: "If I break my pen into pieces, God will be present in every piece". This was also called *Hama Aust* (He is Everything). Thus taking birth in this world is coming from the Divine Light and leaving this world is reuniting with God. That is how the anniversary of the death of a Sufi saint is marked with celebration as if it is a wedding and is called "Urs" or union with God.

Sikhism staunchly believes that the all pervading Creator is One Alone, and contains himself in his own creations inclusive of everything living or lifeless everywhere and every time. There is no place or thing without God. A human being is like waves coming out from the ocean and again merging within the ocean of God, there is no duality between God and man, and both are one and the same. According to the deeds one has to be punished or rewarded and ultimately reunited with the God.

These are a few similarities and teachings contained in Moulana Jalal Uddin Rumi and Sikhism. If followed in true letter and spirit they can bring dignity for human beings. Let us celebrate the Moulana's centenary by resolving to make this planet a heaven to live in as God has created and made us the most honorable and the most superior of all creatures. This will help to bring peace, social justice, equality, religious harmony, human integration and a sense of honorable co-existence by the religions, nations and countries. Instead of finding disparities and faults in the customs and rituals,

let us find the similarities in the basic fundamentals of different faiths which can unite us.



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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 relentless savages of the Mongols led by Chengiz Khan, Halaku and their successors from the east.

Haseli omram say sokhan bish nist

Kham budam pukhta shodam, sukhtam

These three stages of imperfection, perfection and burning can be interpreted into

Ilmallyaqin, Aynallyaqin and Hakallyaqin Late Jalaluddin Humai a great scholar of Persian has discussed this in his voluminous book entitled *Maulvinameh* or *Maulavi chi migoyat* 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 Bahauddin 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 Damescus 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 Badi 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 intervened 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 is 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:

Din majo ander kutub ay bey khabar

Ilmu hikmat az kutub, Din az nazar

Subet az ilmi kitabi khushtar ast

Subet mardan hur adam garast

Mard hur daryayi zharfu bikaran

Aab ghir az bahru nay az naodan

Ay sarat gardam guriz az mah chu teer

Damani o ghiru bi tabana ghir

May naroyad tukhmi az Abu gul

Bi nagahi az khudawandan dil

Ironically very few surveys of humanism, of world literature, or of 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 Orientalist 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.

Masnaviou, Moulavaiou, Manaovi

Ast Quran dar zabani pahlavi

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:

Tu barai wasil kardan amady

Ne barai fasl kardan amady

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 revelations, 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.

Maroz marg chun tabut man rawan bashad

Guman sabri ki mara dard en jahan bashad

Barai man magiryaiu magu "darigh,darigh"

Badam dew dar afti darigh an bashad

*Jinazaham bebini magu faraq,faraq
Mara vosalu mulaqat an zaman bashad
Mara ba gur spari magu vuda vuda
Ki gur pardai jameati jahan bashad
Furushudan chu bedidi bar amadan bengar
Ghurubu shamu qamar ra chura zeyan bashad
Tura ghurub namayad wali shuruq buwad
Lahd chu habs namyad khalas jan bashad
Kudam dana furushad dar zamin ki narst
Chura badanahi allisanat en guman bashad
Kudam dalu furushad ki pur barun namad
Zi chah yusuf jan ra chura fighan bashad
Tura chinan ki binamayad ki man ba khak shudam
Ba zir payiman en haft asman bashad
Dahan chu basti azin suyi antaraf mikashahi
Ki hayi huyi dar jolayi makan bashad
Jamal mufakhir afaqi shams tabrizi
Ki nur dedayi aqlu dil ravan bashad*

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 experts 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.

Nahifi Suleman in 1738 A.D.

Farrukh Afendi in 1840

Abdullah Saleh in 1782

Kheri Beg in 1890 (It was a bad translation of the Mathnavi and known as Kutook)

Auni yeni Shehri in 1892

Faizullah Sajid Olkoo in 1945

Hafiz Mohd. Ameen, Shiekh Maulviya Toqat has translated the Seventh volume of Mathnavi presuming that belongs to Maulana. It was done in 1816.

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.



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Kolkata

Fethullah Gulen: A Modern Day Rumi

The world, at present, is passing through one of the most crucial phases of its history. Socially, politically, economically and ecologically, we are facing serious crises all the world over. On the one hand, the technologically advanced nations are piling up weapons of mass destruction and on the other, the frustrated youths are being exploited in the name of religion and war of liberation to jump into terrorist activities causing great hardship and horror for the common man living in that particular region of turmoil. In the backdrop of this scenario, the beloved earth of ours has become more prone to holocaust more severe and devastating in nature than the world has ever witnessed.

It is really a matter of great concern that in spite of wonderful scientific and technological advancement, the human race is languishing under the threat of heinous attacks devastating the whole universe at any moment. Clouds of distrust and hatred, terror and alarm, panic and apprehension have become a veil of our vision debarring us from realizing the truth. No doubt, we have made this world well connected through electronic gadgets but the wires of

our hearts, unfortunately, remain disjointed. We are still groping in darkness in a state of insecurity and uncertainty. We are still divided in small compartments of our own thoughts and ideals nursing malignant feeling against one another.

Under such circumstances, we will have to brood over what sort of civilization our next generation is going to inherit from us in the days to come. In order to save the humanity and our glorious cultural heritage we are to find out appropriate ways and means earnestly. We will have to assemble on one platform with the banner of Peace on the solid foundation of Love and Tolerance. And without question, such a platform can be erected under the canopy of the teaching of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, who has given the message of love and universal brotherhood through his magnum opus *Mathnavi* from the city of Konya about 800 years back.

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, a poet, a thinker, a mystic and a scholar of outstanding merit and distinction, who flourished in the 13th century under the threat of Mongol's horror, considers the whole mankind as one because they belong to One Creator, who has been called by different names in different climes or regions. Mutual respect and tolerance are the key words of his message. Differences of caste and creed, clime or region, language and custom, according to him, are no bar in the religion of love. A man's heart has more value than his dogmatic chantings and prayers. Perfect Man is he who is righteous and true to his faith. These are the ideals, which make Rumi so great and popular among the scholars and poets of the world.

Rumi knows no religions but the religions of love, which transcends all barriers of caste and creed, color and clime. He says:

Mazhabe ishq az har millat judast

Ashiqan ra mazhab o millat khudast

The religion of love is different from all the faiths,
For lovers, God is their religion.

To Rumi throbbing of the heart is a great factor to unite different people because unity of heart is better than unity of the languages.

Ai basa hindu or turke humzabant

Ai basa di turk chun bigangan

Pas zabane mahrami khud digar ast

Hamdili az ham zabani behtar ast

So many Hindus and Turks have the same language
but two Turks are stranger to each other.

The language of the unity of heart is different;
the unity of heart is better than unity of language.

Rumi's teaching cannot be restricted to one particular era nor can they be confined to geographical boundaries. His teachings, without question, have engulfed the whole world and left an indelible mark on mystical philosophy of Islam all over the globe. Even the West derived great benefits out of the Divine knowledge preached by him. Since Rumi (d.1207) was the product of a period

fraught with trials and tribulations coupled with horrors and frustrations, his teaching have a deep and long-lasting appeal for the entire human society even today. Though born at Balkh, he permanently settled at Konya, a town of Turkey; his teaching entered into the very ethos of Turkish people, who legitimately takes pride in him. We have a long list of scholars and thinkers who have been directly or indirectly influenced by Rumi's thoughts for centuries together all over the world and Turkey, in particular, where poets and scholars like Yunus Emre, Mawlana Khalid, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi and Fethullah Gulen have flourished and conveyed their messages of love and tolerance to the humanity.

In the 20th century, Turkey should be proud of producing a scholar like Fethullah Gulen, who appears to be a living legend with many attributes of Rumi. For his simple and austere life and dynamic contribution to the socio-cultural life of the people, he is affectionately called Hodja Efendi. He is a scholar of extraordinary significance in modern Turkey and all over the world. His unrivalled zeal for interfaith dialogue; a cause, which he keeps endeared to his heart, made him one of the most well-known personalities among the peace loving people of the world. Born in 1938 at Erzurum in eastern Turkey in the years 1941, he graduated from a private madrasah of his native town and took up teaching as a profession in 1958. At the outset, he gave his sermons at Izmir and won the hearts of like-minded scholars and students of the town. He shot into fame as one of the most reputed and respected public figures in Turkey during the 1960s for his social and educational reforms in the masses. It is to be noted here that his forerunner and spiritual guide, Bediuzzamn Said Nursi breathed his last in the year 1960 only as if

it seems that the mantle of leadership fell on his shoulder by virtue of Divine Will.

As we believe, that God sends his seers, messengers, reformers and leaders as per the need of the time. The twentieth century needed men like Rumi to lead the teeming millions. So there appeared a great soul in the garb of Fethullah Gulen, who delved deep into modern as well as Islamic science. He diagnosed the causes of the overall bankruptcy of the Muslim *Ummah* on the one hand and ventured to build bridges of understanding and goodwill among the different communities of the world for the cause humanity as a whole.

Fethullah Gulen has so many things common with Rumi that he can be designated as a modern day Rumi. His ideals of love and tolerance, equality of mankind, dissemination of education, respect for other religions, initiative for interfaith dialogue and above all the spiritual advancement are very common with the ideals of Rumi. Gulen echoes the great teacher Rumi in telling us not to ignore the doctrine of cause, not to sit around heedlessly waiting for God's favor, but rather to exert ourselves endlessly in order to transform this broken world into the world of peace and justices, Again, like Rumi, he points out that our true freedom lies in our willing submission to the will of God.

Fethullah Gulen enumerates Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi among those significant personalities who with the help of their voice and breath, their love and excitement, and their promise for humanity always remain fresh and alive over the course of centuries.

Following the teaching of Rumi Fethullah Gulen emphasizes strongly on the attributes of Love. In Gulen's thinking there is no

greater religious concept than love, there is no greater religious action than love. He writes, “Love is the most essential element of every being, and it is the most radiant light, and it is the greatest power, able to resist and overcome all else.” Like Rumi, he makes the love for humanity interlinked with the love for God. He says, “Loving and respecting humanity merely because they are human is an expression of respect for the Almighty.” Love according to him, opens the doors of forgiveness, tolerance and dialogue lead to the path of better understanding between man and man across the globe.

Hodja Efendi does not belong to any particular Sufi order but derives his intuitions from the Holy Quran, Hadith, the Naqshbandi Sufi traditions and the teachings of Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. “Most of the scholars are of the opinion that Gulen continues a long Sufi tradition of seeking to address the spiritual needs of people, to educate the masses and to provide some stability in time of turmoil.” He advocates for mystical values based on Quran and Sunnah and stresses upon good deeds and service to humanity (hizmet) more than spiritual exercise. Fethullah Gulen, however, frequently refers to Said Nursi as his Master in his writings as well as speeches. Thomas Michel has rightly remarked.

“Probably the most important formative influence on the development of Gulen’s thought, including the approach to Sufism, was Said Nursi”

Despite his staunch belief in the teaching of Sufis and their institutions, he appears to be a forward-looking leader with a farsighted vision. He is universal in his approach and thinks for the good of the humanity. In the opinion of Hodja Efendi, the real

enemies of mankind, are three; ignorance, poverty and disunity. To eradicate ignorance, he motivated the like-minded people to open schools; to confront poverty, he initiated community's development programs and to check disunity, he ventured an extensive network of dialogue platforms. Almost all his activities paid rich dividend in Turkey, nay all over the globe. In a very short span of time, like-minded people thronged around him and extended their dedicated services to redeem the plan and policy envisaged by the master. In the course of time, he emerged successful in mobilizing the resources for opening schools not only in Turkey but also in other parts of the world with a mission to disseminate education among the masses irrespective of caste and creed.

In the realm of education, Fethullah Gulen floats his own ideas, which bridges the past with the present and unfolds the future based on the present. He discards the modern philosophy of education advocated by the west as well as the concept of traditional madrasas offered by the traditional scholars of Islam. In his opinion, the blind imitation of the west in the realm of education will make the youngsters as functionaries of globalized market system but cut off from traditional values of life such as profundity of ideas, clarity of thought, depth of feeling, cultural appreciation or interest in spirituality.

Though simple in outward appearance, he is original in thought and action. He embraces all humanity. His belief and feeling are profound, and his ideas and approach to problems are both wise and rational. A living model of Rumi epitomizing love, tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, he is extraordinarily balanced in his thoughts and treatment of matter. That is why he is being acknowledged as one of the most serious and important thinkers

and writers of twentieth-century Turkey or even of the Muslim world.

Fundamentalism, extremism, fanaticism and terrorism have no room in Gulen's approach to religion. He stands for the principle of tolerance, respect, justice and understanding, which can be strengthened through inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, which he thinks, will bring peace and tranquility on this earth.

Furthermore, he considers atheism and fundamentalism on the same footing for both of them reject rationality of thought. To Gulen, atheism and religious fundamentalism, understood as fanaticism, are created by ignorance; atheism by the lack of religious education and fanaticism by the lack of scientific education.

To quote his historic message in the wake of terrorist attack of September 11, will not be out of place here. In clear terms, he denounced such a heinous crime in the following words:

“I would like to make it very clear that any terrorist activity, no matter by whom it is carried out or for what purpose, is the greatest blow to peace, democracy and humanity. For this reason, no one – and certainly no Muslim – approve of any terrorist activity. Terror has no place in a quest to achieve independence or salvation. It takes the lives of innocent people.”

To him “Jihad is an element which is primarily defined as the inner struggle of a believer, against all that stands between the believer and God.”

Gulen adheres to the Qur'anic injunction that the different tribes and nations, which were all made by God, should learn from

each other and hence does not reject all the technical, political and cultural aspects of Western modernity such as democracy, parliamentarianism and scientific education. His liberal attitude makes him conspicuous among the Islamic scholars who out rightly rejects western education and ideals like democracy and parliamentarianism.

In the opinion of Gulen, the goals of inter-religious dialogue are two-fold with respect to education and removing ignorance. Interfaith dialogue helps us to experience how we can learn about the religious beliefs and spiritual identity of the others while at the same time we learn more about the religious beliefs and spiritual identity of ourselves. With this point in view, he has made marvelous contribution to inter-religious dialogue setting aside the theory of “Clash of Civilization” floated by Huntington.



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Jalaluddin Rumi – Poet and mystic

Jalaluddin Rumi belonged to a distinguished family of scholars engaged on religious pursuits and teaching of religion in Balkh (Afghanistan). His father Bahauddin Mohammed Valed was widely acclaimed as a theologian and religious instructor in the north-eastern provinces of present day Afghanistan. The ruler of Khwarazm, Sultan Mohammed Khwarazm Shah had picked up a feud with Bahauddin Mohammed Valed and the same resulted in the migration of the family from East of Iran to Konya in AH 609 – AD 1212. The reason for this migration is also attributed to the Mongol depredations on the territory of Afghanistan. While going to Konya, the family passed through Neshapur, Baghdad, and Mecca, Syria, Malatiya and Larenda, leaving a stamp of religion and theology on the people who came in contact with Bahauddin Mohammed Valed.

The mantle to teaching and imparting of religious instructions fell on Jalaluddin Rumi on the death of his father. A disciple of Rumi's father, Burhanuddin Mohaqik Tirmazi also joined Rumi at Konya in his spiritual pursuits and inspired him to go to Aleppo and Damascus.

On his return from Aleppo after a long sojourn from 1232 - 1237 AD. Rumi resumed his theological and religious teaching. In 1244 AD Rumi came in contact with a Wandering Dervesh Shams-e-Din Muhammed Ibn Malik-dad Tabrez in AD 1244 – AH 642. Rumi's close contact with Shams Tabrez metamorphosed him into the vortex of spiritualism. He started Sama and composition of sufistic lyrics and got fully engrossed in the mystical path.

After Shams Tabrez's disappearance from Konya in A.H. 645, Rumi went to Damascus twice in his search. Having failed in his attempt to find Shams Tabrez, he was extremely disappointment and sought consolation in his association with Salahuddin Zarkub. After Zarkub's death in AD 1258 he chose Husamatuddin Chalapi. He composed the Masnawi in honor of Chalapi and dictated the same to him. Masnawi is the most important landmark of Rumi's composition and many scholars have called the Masnawi as the Bible of mysticism:

Masnavoui mavlaoui manavi

Hast quran dar zaban yalawi

Rumi composed Masnawi in his fifties. The writing of Masnawi began between 1258 and 1261. Many scholars including Abdulbaki Golpanarli believed that Rumi continued writing Masnawi till the very end of his life. But Dr. Zabihulla Safa holds the view that the last

part of Masnawi was written in 1268 AD. The seventh book of Masnawi is unauthentic. The number of verses varies from 27000 to 32000. The edition of Nicholson contain 25577 verses. In the written text of Masnawi the scribal emendation is not ruled out. The facsimile of the Konya manuscript published in Tehran in AH 1317 – AD 1992 is a marked improvement on the text published by Nicholson. Taufiq Subhani and Abdul Karim Soroush have based their text on this manuscript.

Masnawi is the magnum opus of spiritual ascension, sufistic philosophy, intellectual edification and intense human delectation. The anecdotal insertions adopted by Rumi transcend the limits reached by Sanai and Attar:

Attar ruh buad sanayi du chashmi o

Ma az sanayi u amadayim

Rumi's mystic message:

Rumi has been heavily on Quran, Islamic literature and the works of Attar and Sanai. He has taken up the questions of belief, human behavior and spiritual ascension. He has dilated upon the virtues of piety in human life. His message is not confined to individual elevation or discipline of a monastic order. He addresses the broad concerns of human existence in all stages of life and stands out for his universalism.

Dilbaran bar bidilan fitna bajan

Jumla mashuqan shikari ashiqan

*Har ki ashiiq didish mashuq dan
Ku ba nisbat ast ham en rahm an
Tashnagan gar aab junid az jahan
Aab ham juyad ba alami tashnagan
Chunki ashiiq hust tu khamush bash
Hu chu gush medihat tu gush bash
Ay hayat ashiiqan dar murdagi
Dil nayabi juz ki dar dil bardagi
Man dilash hubsta ba sad nazu dalal
Hu bahana karda ba man az mallal
Manash hubsta ba niyazu bi mallal
Hu bahana karda az nazu dallal
Guftam akhir gharqat ast en aqlu jan
Guft rubaru bar man en afsun makhan
Man nadanam anchi andishidahi
Ay du dida dust ra chun dedayi
Ta ki dar har gunash nayad en sukhan
Yak hami guyam na sad bishtaran*

Although Rumi was conversant with the Islamic and Greek philosophical discourses on logic, reasoning and spiritualism, his chief interest remained confined to spiritual quest. He found

“reason” helpful in understanding the “cause” and “effect”. But according to him real enlightenment comes from spiritual edification. Thus “intellect” and “spirit” both are essential for man’s development. While he is not opposed to the principles of logic, he feels that real wisdom comes through spiritual insight. In dismissing legal formalism he insists that knowledge should not be sought for worldly acquisitions. He is also acutely conscious of the limitations of human intellect and talks of the concept of universal intellect (*Aqli kul*) which is a creation of God or it can be called positive force of the spiritual world. According to Rumi man’s misfortune consists of his partial and limited reasoning. When guided by the universal intellect the man can reach perfection. Prophets, Saints and perfect men have attained spiritual intelligence. Reason on its own cannot lead to the discovery of truth. Rumi believes in spiritual enlightenment and supremacy of knowledge.

In the manner of Sufis, Rumi strongly believes that the purpose of man’s existence on earth is to find spiritual orientation. This can be attained through the medium of life and devotion to God under the guidance of spiritual masters. Love transcends the legalities of religion. A true lover of truth manages to find a way out notwithstanding the limitations to which he is subjected:

Bisnav az nay chun hikayat mikunad

Vaz judaiha shikayat mikunad

Ta marakuz nistan bibridang

Az nafiram mard u zan nalidaan

Sina khaham sharh sharh az firaq

Ta bu buguyam sharh dard ishtiyaaq

Rumi has adopted a very positive attitude various faiths. He also stands for peaceful co-existence. According to Rumi, through self-discipline and purity a seeker of truth can master the meaning of the entire human phenomena around him. Superficial mundane knowledge cannot help very much. He also cautions his followers and seekers of truth against blind conformity to the spiritual master.

Rumi propounds the Islamic concept of oneness of God. He also subscribes to the concept of predestination (*Jabir*) in contrast with the notion of freewill (*Ikhtiyar*). He strikes a balance between the two. Man enjoys freewill to some extent. But at the same times, he has to submit to the will of God. Man will earn immense rewards for good deeds. While God has ordained many things, yet man is responsible for his actions. While this sounds paradoxical, it must be said to Rumi's credit that he resolves this intricate problem admirably well.

Rumi has a firm belief in the unity of God. The Multitude in the universe is reflective of His oneness. His treatment of the questions of singleness and multiplicities present a coherent view of God and man relationship. From oneness, multiplicity of divine light radiates. Both the physical and metaphysical worlds are the key to achieving spiritual development. The seeker of the truth by surrendering his ego should surrender himself of God's will. His soul should reflect the attributes of God. His soul shines through the divine light and one should always pray and seek God's aid and blessing's and in this way a window is created for the soul.

Rumi's message is all – embracing, cutting across the barriers of dogma, country, sovereignty and ethnic affinity. His ideal of

spiritual training and development has a resonance of the love of God and love of humanity. This concept has a special relevance to the present day materialistic world. His plea for respect and recognition of faiths and beliefs has a momentous significance in our pluralistic world. The world needs to be reminded of the tolerance and catholicity of mind propounded by Rumi. The present day of consumerism has no place in the philosophy of Rumi. Rumi's message is remarkable for its spirituality, for its universality, for its life-giving force and for its life enriching content. The more we imbibe the message of Rumi the greater would be its empowerment for the entire mankind. It is, therefore, no surprise that Rumi is acclaimed as an outstanding poet and philosopher in the orient as well as occident. R. A. Nicholson, A. J. Arbery and Annemarie Schimmel have paid glowing tributes to the genius of Rumi.

Franklin D. Lewis of the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Emory University in Atlanta has accepted the relevance of Rumi in Eastern as well as Western world. Rumi's *Diwan-e-Shams*, consisting of 35,000 verses, according to Badiuzzaman Farozanfar, is an encyclopedia of the philosophy of Sufi's love. From the beginning to the end the reader feels that he is catapulted into the higher realms far above the temporal world of primordial instincts. Besides *Masnawi* and *Diwan*, Rumi has also left works in prose for the posterity. These works includes *Fih Mafih*, *Majales-e-Sabe* and *Maktubat*. *Fih Mafih* (what is in it is in it) is a record of seventy-one talks and lectures given by Rumi on various occasions. In fact these are annotations written by many disciples of Rumi including his son Sultan Valed. Badiuzzam Farozanfar's critical edition (1951) has almost stolen a march over all other publications of Rumi. *Majles-e-Sabe* (the seven sermons) consisting of seven sermons are also a

good source of Rumi's view on ethics. After Ahmed Remzi Akyurek's edition, Tofiq Sobhani's work, Majles-e-Sabe is remarkable. Tofiq Sobhani has also edited letters of Rumi under the title of Maktubat. These letters reveal that Rumi did not live a withdrawn life of recluse. He was very enthusiastic in making recommendations for his disciples and family members to men of influence.

Some essential facts emerging out of research:

It is accepted on all hands that Maulana Jalaluddin was born in AD 1207 in Balkh, Mazar-i-Sharif (Afghanistan). In Turkey and ancient "Rome", he was described as Maulana Jalaluddin "Rumi" meaning that he hailed from "Rome". His family had moved to Konya (Anatolia - Turkey) in the wake of Mongolian depredations. It is also a fact that northern part of Afghanistan where Maulana Jalaluddin was born was also known as Turkistan.

Jalaluddin's first teacher was his father, through he was greatly influenced by Shams Tabrez, whose mausoleum is very close to the shrine of Jalaluddin. He remained at Konya in Turkey till his death on 17th December 1273 where his Mausoleum was built by the Ottomon Prince Salem. After the revolution in Turkey in 1923 the mausoleum of Jalaluddin remained closed for four years and thereafter it was again opened to the public in 1927. A large number of votaries and adherents of Sufism as propounded by Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi throng to this rendezvous.

The mausoleum of Maulana Jalaluddin has a large museum, which exhibits silver keys, robes and lamps used by Jalaluddin

Balkhi, copies of the Holy Quran, his portraits and wax statues. He is also depicted in his traditional dress doing the Sufi dance.

Dancing Dervishes:

The followers of Jalaluddin come to visit his mausoleum in December and May every year to perform the whirling dance, circling from right to left to commemorate the dance performed by Jalaluddin. 17th December is known as the “Marriage Night’ in memory of the night when the Maulana reached his apotheosis or got integrated with eternity.

The Dancing Dervishes wear black and white cloaks and conical caps. The circling around the grave is called “Sama ceremony”. The Dancing Dervishes believe that the three circles represent Knowledge of God, Seeing of God and Being in the presence of God.

Universal Brotherhood:

Following the teachings of Maulana Jalaluddin Balkhi, the Dancing Dervishes believe in universal brotherhood as opposed to selfish ends or individual pursuits. The Sufi believes in universal brotherhood. He can certainly pursue worldly hopes, but should not consider temporal acquisitions as the ultimate aim of life. They believe that Love can bind the humanity and religion reinforces this Love. There is a striking similarity between what Maulana Jalaluddin stood for and the traditional belief of many Sufi Saints including Omar Khaiyyam:

“The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes – or it prospers; and anon,
Like snow upon the Deserts’ dusty face
Lighting a little hour or two – is gone.”
(Fitzgerald)