

Venerable Bhikkhu Vinayarakkhita  
Ananda Buddha Vihara  
Mahendra Hills  
Secunderabad  
Andhra Pradesh

### **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 800<sup>th</sup> birth of eminent spiritual poet (not ritual poet) Jalaluddin Rumi.

Jalaluddin 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 Jalaluddin 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 ghoul who way lays 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 nation 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.