

# THE MYSTICAL MASTER - MAULANA JALAL-UD-DIN RUMI.

**Let us loose ourselves in the intoxicating ocean  
of God's love.**

**- Katie Sahiar**

[This is a very informative and instructive article on the Sufi Mystic and Saint known throughout the world as Rumi. The author, Katie Sahiar has natural inclination towards mysticism coupled with a keen intellect, a research aptitude and artistic taste and talent. She is a lover of IIm-e-Khshnoom, the mystical science and art of the Zarthoshti Din.

There are different views as to what Sufism is and means. Idris shah writes: "The Sufis are an ancient spiritual freemasonry whose origins have never been traced or dated". ("The Sufis"-Anchor Double day 1964-1971-, p. vii). William Stoddart, on the other hand calls Sufism as "the spirituality or mysticism of the religion of Islam". ("Sufism"-Acquarim Press-1976, p.19). Some trace sufism to Vedanta. All these views seem to be correct. May be the fountain source was Vedanta later on transmuted towards Islam. Idris Shah points out (ibid): "According to Ali el-Hujwiri an early authoritative Sufi writer, the Prophet Mohammed Himself said: 'He who hears the voice of Sufi people and does not say 'aamin' (Amen) is recorded in God's presence as one of the heedless". Any branch of mysticism, be it the Kaballah of the Jews or Brahma Vidya of the Hindus or the Rosicrucians amongst the Christians or Sufism of Islam or Khshnoom of our Din, is founded on Truth, and Truth has many splended colours and pictures; flowing from and ultimately merging in the one and supreme. So enjoy all pictures without worrying about their history and geography. Many mystical Truths revealed by Khshnoom find their echo in Sufism, some times in a more artistic and poetic forms. Psalms, 42:12 in the Holy Bible says:

"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you; O God! My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?"

A Sufi's God is his Beloved. Sufis' anchor is LOVE- love to God and everything, He has created. They are always in a state of a lover's intoxication and their beauty is that they express their intoxication ("masti") in poetry, which often become staota - divine vibrations. Rumi was one such poet, a unique dancing, singing and whirling poet. His life itself was a grand poem and an ecstatic dance.

Katie first depicts Rum's life and then glimpses from his poetry. Mind! Intoxication is infectious. You may get a divine tremor of love while reading Katie's excellent presentation. The Din calls this Ushtaa.

Welcome, Katie, to our columns of Ishq-e-Hakiki - Editor]

"Listen to presences inside poems,  
Let them take you where they will.  
Follow those private hints,  
And never leave the premises."

**- Rumi**

The world is a tavern, a tantalising place. Many wines flow in here-the wine of colour form and taste, the heady wine of intellect and ego, the smooth wine of intuition, the fiery brew of desires, the fine port of stories and the cabemet of the singing soul. Every human must enter this place where entrancing varieties of wants are fulfilled. But, only when the grape skin of the ego bursts, the juice flows. When grapes combine their juice and are confined to a closed dark space for a time the result is spectacular. Fermentation is one of the oldest symbols for human transformation, for the awakening of the soul.

The Tavern is a kind of glorious hell that human beings enjoy, suffer and long for. Then, tiring of it, push

off from, in their search for truth. The tavern is a dangerous region where sometimes disguises are necessary, but never close your heart, says Rumi. Keep open there at all times. A coming apart, a crying out, begins in the tavern and the human soul turns to find its way Home.

Maulana- quite literally 'our master'- Jelal-ud-Din Mohammad Ibn Mohammad Husain al-Rumi, is considered by both east and west as one of the greatest mystical poets- a master of Love- the world has ever seen.

Born in Afghanistan in the province of Balkh, on the 30th of September, 1207 A. D. he was of royal descent. His mother belonged to a princely house whose roots could be traced to the immediate family of the prophet Mohammad, and his father, Baha-ud-Din Velad was descendent of the Caliph Abu Bekr. He was born a 'Self-realised' soul.

His father adhered strongly to orthodox Islamic values, even when they conflicted with those at court. Perhaps on account of this, or on account of the advancing Mongol hordes, Baha-ud-Din was obliged to flee to Balkh in 1219, which was until then, the capital of the Khawarzem Shahi dyanasty, and renowned for its cultural and intellectual enrichment. Rumi spent his early childhood as a fugitive moving along with the family from city to city. He was at the time five years of age.

He was a strange child, who, at five saw visions, and went into ecstasies, often, becoming restless and uneasy. His father consoled him, saying these were angelic presences come to greet him, from the invisible world. Word of these visitations spread and people looked upon the boy as 'Khudavendgar'- God absorbed.

Aged six, strolling one evening with friends on the terrace he was reciting verses from the Koran. Bored, the children suggested that, they should have fun and jump onto the neighbour's terrace. Jelal-ud-Din smiled at this and said, "My friends, to jump from terrace to terrace is an act well adapted to cats and dogs and the like to perform; but is it not degrading to man whose station is so superior? Come, if you feel so disposed, let us spring up to the firmament and visit the regions of God's realm" so saying, he vanished from sight. His friends screamed in fright, whereupon, he reappeared, as mysteriously, but with altered countenance, flaming eyes and pale cheeks, relating how a company of celestial forms had appeared, clad in green, while he spoke and guided him away to tour the firmament. They took him through a tour of the zodiac. It was their cries that had brought him back. His friends fell at his feet and henceforward were his disciples.

Travelling extensive through the East, at Nishapur, in Iran, they met the Sufi saint Attar, an aged and revered figure. Attar divined Jelal's spirituality and presented him with a copy of his "Asrar-namah-the book of mysteries" telling Baha-ud-Din that 'soon his son would set on fire the consumed ones of the world'.

They moved to Larenda and here Jelal was married, at 21, and fathered two sons. Later, a widower, he re-married and had two more children. Subsequently, visiting Samarcand and Constantinople, the family finally came to rest in Konia, a province of Rome, and Jelal became Rumi, or, 'of Rome'. In Konia his father, an eminent scholar himself, founded a college, and undertook Rumi's early education. Two years later, he died and Rumi stepped into his shoes preaching and teaching.

His association with various groups, Turks, Greeks, Persians, Arabs and Indians gave him insight into the source of man's weakness and strength. He also realised that knowledge alone does not change man, nor does instruction develop him. He changes in relation to his attitude. Though people's beliefs vary they are basically similar. Fully conscious of Unity he was concerned about the conflicts between Muslims, Jews, Christians Zorastrians and others.

Soon after his father's death, Burhan-ud-Din Muhaqiq of Tirmidh, his father's old friend arrived in Konia and found Rumi established in his father's place as a teacher and preacher. He initiated the young enthusiast into the inner mysteries of Sufi discipline and doctrine. Two years later, on Burhan-ud-Din's instructions, Rumi went to Aleppo for further study and then to Damascus for almost four years before returning to Konia to serve his master during his last days.

At the college in Aleppo, Rumi was a favourite of the teachers on account of his own brilliance and the eminence of his late father. This excited the jealousy of his fellow students who complained to the governor that Rumi was a man of dubious character, who left his room every night and wandered the streets.

The governor decided to verify this, and hid himself in the porter's quarters awaiting the night hour. Later, when darkness had fallen, Rumi emerged and headed towards the gate of the college, with the governor following. The gate swung open of its own volition and the two walked out. Coming next to city gates, the same phenomenon occurred and the two walked out into the sandy expanse of the outskirts of the city. After walking for some distance, the governor spied a building of immense proportions, towards which Rumi continued to walk, and from which a whole assembly of figures clad in green emerged and escorted him in. On witnessing this the governor fainted.

Waking up at dawn next day he found himself lost in the desert, with no habitation in sight, and wandered about for two days hungry and thirsty. He was rescued only upon Rumi's intervention when those who were aware of the governor's plan questioned him. Rumi then gave precise instructions where to look and they were able to rescue the governor, who henceforth became a staunch disciple and remained so for the rest of his life.

The most significant person to enter his life, was Shams-ud-Din of Tabriz. Rumi saw him for the first time in Damascus, wearing a peculiar cap and a black felt robe. Shams was a wandering dervish, a highly evolved soul, who travelled throughout the Middle East, and was well known as the 'parinda' or bird, searching and praying for someone, who could "endure my company". A voice asked "What will you give in return?" "My head" he answered. "The one you seek is Jelal-ud-Din of Konia." came the reply.

Shams-ud-Din proceeded to Konia. On arriving, he engaged a room at a lodging in which there was nothing but a broken water pot, an old mat and a bolster of unbaked clay. Shams retreated within and fasted, breaking his fast once in every ten days with a damper soaked in the broth of sheep trotters, *paaya*.

One day, while sitting at the gate of the inn, he saw Jelal come by riding a mule amidst a crowd of students on foot. Shams approached and halted the mule speaking thus: "Exchanger of the current coins of recondite significations, who knowest the names of the Lord! Tell me: Was Muhammad the greater servant of God or Bayezid of Bestami? "Muhammad was incomparably the greater", replied Jelal. "Then" said Shams-ud-Din, "How is it that Muhammad said: 'We have not known Thee O God, as Thou rightly shouldst be known,' where as Bayezid said: 'Glory unto me! How very great is my glory?'" On hearing this, the learned professor fainted away. When recovered, he took Shams home and they remained closeted together for months.

"Suddenly the sun of love and truth cast its rays on the pure soul and so fired and inflamed him that his eyes were dazzled by its light" writes Rumi's biographer.

Rumi says of Shams: "When he stimulated my thought from the depth of my physis sea, the phantom of light arose. Shams was the light of the eye, the clarity of reason, the brightness of the soul and the enlightenment of the heart. Shams was a universal man." Godlike, he is the creative truth united with all and one who solved the subject-object relations. To Rumi, Shams was one who knew unity behind plurality and how the unity turned to plurality. Tearing aside the veils of attributes and qualities he had finally found how they were formed in the evolution of the phenomenal world. He had passed from existence to non-existence and beyond. He was peerless.

While Rumi and Shams spent their days absorbed with each other, knowing no human need, Rumi's disciples grew jealous. Sensing trouble, Shams disappeared. Rumi was greatly perturbed. Then word came that Shams was in Damascus, and Rumi sent his son Sultan Velad to fetch him. Re-united, they fell at each other's feet and 'no one knew who was the lover and who the beloved'. Shams stayed with Rumi and married a girl of the family. The long mystical conversations commenced and jealousies returned.

On the night of December 5th 1248, as the mystics sat in conversation, Shams was called to the back door through which he never returned - probably murdered. In the scuffle Rumi's son Alla-ud-Din was also killed. Shams paid the ultimate price for mystical friendship. Disbelieving Sham's death Rumi journeyed to Damascus in search and there realised,

"Why should I seek? I am the same as he. His essence speaks through me. I have been looking for myself!"

Union was complete. There was full *fana*, annihilation of the self in the friend. Rumi discarded his scholar's turban and wide-sleeved gown for a blue robe and a smoke coloured turban that he wore to the end of his days and commenced to write mystical poetry. **In his house was a pillar, and when in rapture, he would take hold of the pillar and twirl himself around it pouring forth verses spontaneously while his disciples wrote.** The outpouring resulted in the Divan-i-Shams-i Tabriz, written as Shams, containing 50,000 couplets.

Later, Rumi's affection was engaged by another companion, Saladin Zarkub, a goldsmith, and Rumi composed more tender and quieter verses for him. When Saladin died in 1261, Husam Celebi took his place. Husam was responsible for urging Rumi to write the Mathnavi. Rumi immediately poured forth a portion, saying 'God had forewarned him of the wishes of his brethren'.

Intent on gaining the cosmic Self through the path of rebirth in totality, he stopped preaching, and created the sam'a, the whirling dance, singing to the music of the reed flute, sacred to their order. **While participating in these rapturous dances Rumi spontaneously composed the Mathnavi.**

The Mathnavi-i-masnavi, forty-three years in the writing is a mystical epic, way beyond all formal religion. Rumi himself has termed it the root of the root of the Root of all religion. The singing of the Mathnavi comprises a composition of patterns, illustrating the Sufi's progressive path. It explains why the intellect and conceptualisation fail to give an answer to the meaning of life and suggests the removal of the conventional self in order to gain a fuller personality.

Rumi has said that great Love is silent. It is in Silence that we shall come to understand the supreme Mystery of Love that has no comparison. The first of the six books of the Masnavi contains the seed.

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# GLIMPSES FROM RUMI'S IMMORTAL POETRY

## I Searched for Him At Every Sacred Place, He Was All Along in My Heart.

- Katie Sahiar

[In the last Issue, Katie gave us a glimpse of Rumi's life. Here are now a few sparkling gems of his poetry.

Poetry can never be translated from the poet's own language to another. The rhyme and rhythm which reflect the poet's throbbing heart can flow only in his original words. Yet sometimes the translation can at least depict a faint image of the original. Even such image can stunn the reader, as it happened to Yeats while reading Tagore's Gitanjali. The following translated verse of Rumi may do the same to you.]

'From the reed-flute hear what tale it tells;

What plaint it makes of absence' ills:  
"From jungle-bed since me they tore,  
Men's, women's eyes have wept right sore.  
My breast I tear and rend in twain,  
To give, through sighs, vent to my pain.  
Who's from his home snatched far away,  
Longs to return some future day.  
I sob and sigh in each retreat,  
Be't joy or grief for which men meet.  
They fancy they can read my heart;  
Grief's secrets I to none impart.  
My throes and moans form but one chain,  
Men's eyes and ears catch not their train.  
Though soul and body be as one,  
Sight of his soul hath no man won.'

Living in rigid times, Rumi first addressed his hearers on religion, maintaining that the ordinary emotional form in which religion is understood is incorrect. The Veil of Light, brought on by self-righteousness, is far more dangerous than the Veil of Darkness worn by the mind in vice. **Understanding comes through love, not through training.** Real religion is other than what people think it is.

Cross and Christians, from end to end  
I surveyed; He was not on the cross.  
I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient pagoda;  
No trace was visible there.  
I went to the mountains of Herat and Kandahar,  
I looked, He was not in that hill and dale.  
With set purpose I fared to the summit of Mount Qaf  
In that place was only Anqa's habitation.  
I bent the reins of search to the Ka'ba;  
He was not in that resort of Old and Young.  
I questioned Ibn Sina of His state;  
I fared towards the scene of two bow-lengths' distance,  
He was not in that exalted court  
**I gazed into my heart;  
There i saw Him; he was nowhere else.**

For Rumi the earliest teacher of religions were right. Their successors, apart from a few organised

matters in such a way as to exclude all enlightenment. Rumi has no patience with dogma. Real religion is other than what people think it is.

**'When in this heart the lightening spark of love arises,  
Be sure this Love is reciprocated in that heart,  
When the Love of God arises in thy heart,  
Without doubt God also feels love for thee'**

In a collection of sayings and teachings, called 'Fifi Ma Fifi,' Rumi takes us down the ultimate path. Mankind he says passes through three stages. In the first one he worships anything, man, woman, money, earth, elements or stones. When he progresses further he worships God; when he has progressed beyond, he does not say I worship or do not worship. He says I am God, for he, himself, does not exist, only God does.

Rumi was a mystic of extraordinary devotion and self-dedication. A lover of God, seeking by every means a union with the Divine and secondly a teacher striving by his words and his example to lead others towards the same goal. He was peaceful and tolerant towards men of all creeds and urged his disciples to behave likewise. Although his company was sought by kings and princes, he preferred to pass his time with the needy and poor.

On the 17th of December 1273 after a long bout of illness, Maulana passed away. Upon his death, he was laid on a bier and washed by the hands of beloved disciple, while other poured water for the ablution and yet others gathered it up. Not one drop was allowed to fall on earth. Every drop was drunk as the holiest of waters. As the washer folded Jelal's arms over his breast, unable to contain himself, he fell on the lifeless breast weeping, when he felt his ear pulled by the dead saint's hand. On this he fainted away and in his swoon he heard a voice say Ho there! Verily the saints of the Lord have nothing to fear, neither shall they sorrow. Believers die not; they merely depart from one habitation to another abode.

**If life be gone, fresh life to you God  
offereth,  
A life eternal to renew  
This life of death.  
The font of Immortality  
In Love is found;  
Then come and in this boundless sea  
Of Love be drowned**

Men of five faiths followed the funeral, in spite of protests by the Muslims. That night has been named Sebul Arus - the night of union, and the Mevlevi order of dervishes have celebrated it as a festival.

26 generations of the Maulana's family has kept his faith alive. His tomb in Kania, now in Turkey, is a pilgrimage point for Seekers from all over the world.

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## THE TAVERN OF LIFE

'Sufi's compare our world with a tavern, a house of drinks, which intoxicate. They say, get drunk if you like, with the drinks of the world. But remember, one day you have to leave this tavern and enter the divine one. Rumi says:

**"Whoever brought me here will have to take me home."**

But in the meantime, how do I live here? What should I do? Rume replies:

"Close both eyes to see with the other eye.

Open your hands if you want to be held.

Sit down in this circle.

Quit acting like a wolf and feel the shepherd's love filling you.

Be empty of worrying. Think who created thought."

Why do you stay in prison when the door is wide open?

Move outside the tangle of fear-thinking. Live in silence.

Flow down and down in always widening rings of being."

What a message from the great Sufi? Your eyes are seeing illusions; see with the other eye within you. Fill the love of the beloved in you. She is ready to embrace you but you first open your hands. Why worry? Think who taught you to think. Come out of this prison; don't you see that the door is wide open? Journey towards Her is through the rings which go on widening; but ultimately it reduces to a point which vanishes. Therefore Rumi asks:

**"Is the one I love everywhere?"**

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