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Jalaluddin Rumi – Poet and mystic
AH 604/AD 1207 – AH 672/AD 1273

Jalaluddin Rumi belonged to a distinguished family of scholars engaged on religious pursuits and teaching of religion in Balkh (Afghanistan). His father Bahauddin Mohammed valad 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 Valad 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 Iarenda, leaving a stamp of religion and theology on the people who came in contact with Bahauddin Mohammed Valad.

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 A.D. 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 Slahuddin 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:

Rumi composed Masnawi in his fifties. The writing of Masnawi began between 1258 and 1261. many scholars including Abdalbaki Golpanarli believed that Rumi continued

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 vary from 27000 to 32000. The editio 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 on this manuscript.

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

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.

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 (-----) 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 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:

Rumi has adopted a very positive attitude towards 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 () in contrast with the notion of freewill (). He strikes a balance between the two. Man enjoys freewill to some extent. But at the same time, 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 it 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 to 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 Valad. 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 Tarbrez, whose mausoleum is very close to the shrine of Jalaluddin. He remind 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 portaits 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 intergrated with eternity.

The Dancing Dervishes wear black and white cloaks and conical caps. The circling around the grave is called “sams 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.”

Fitzgeraldss

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By his father's orders he walked back while Shamas-i-Tabrez rode on horseback. Who can describe Rumi's joy at seeing His Master's return? Once again His heart revolved around the beautiful form in which God was manifest in all Glory. Submerging Himself totally in the Master, He exclaimed: I am so much filled up with my Master that I have forgotten what is my name, whether He is in me or I am in Him; I cannot differentiate. However, Jalal-ud-din's students once again fell prey to their old malady. Like a cancer it swelled up in their hearts. How could they accept Shamas-i-Tabrez, Whose views co Jālā'uddīn Molā'nā' Rumi as he is called in the West, was a Persian poet-philosopher, and John Donne was a metaphysical poet-preacher from England. These two poets wrote much about their ideas with lucidity and wit. Love and death were both of supreme concern for these poets and a preoccupation of their hearts. A ranking disciple of his father, named Burhan-uddin Tirmizi, came to Konya in 629/1232 to work with Rumi on the paths of Sufism. The theoretical aspect of this path is Sufism, while the practical aspect is Dervishhood. As they had lost their master's presence and teachings. In his great book of Divan-e Shams (collected poems under the name of. Shams with about forty thousand couplets), which is the "spontaneous overflow" of emotion raised from his acquaintance. Rumi's importance is considered to transcend national and ethnic borders and he is today a truly international phenomena. His poems have been widely translated into many of the world's languages and transposed into various formats. Rumi's family hailed from Balkh in present day Afghanistan that eventually settled in present day Turkey. Rumi was initially a religious scholar and theologian (a Hanafi Mufti/jurist) who underwent a great spiritual transformation at the hands of a wandering Muslim saint named as Shaykh Shams Tabraizi who received a Divinely inspired spiritual intuiti