

THE MYSTICAL LIFE AND BEAUTIFUL WORDS OF RUMI

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Rumi Dancing in the Presence of Three Disciples, *an illustration from Tarjuma-i Thawāqib al-Manāqib (Stars of the Legend), ca. 1590.*

The mystical life and beautiful words of Rumi (1207-1273) just barely touched the surface of what this wonderful mystic individual gave to us. He was a mystic who had found a beautiful place inside of himself that gave him a wisdom to see life from that inner light, and not only did he see it, but he brought it out into the world and shared it with others.

When we are in school, our study of great figures in history often centers around academic achievement. Rarely, do we touch upon philosophical, mystical, or inspirational aspects. Pythagoras was recognized for his contributions to mathematics, Francis Bacon as a statesperson, Albert Einstein as a revolutionary physicist, and so forth. We

study their objective accomplishments from a very narrow angle and lend little credence to how they have helped human consciousness to better understand itself. These studies were outwardly rather than inwardly focused.

In our Rosicrucian work, both the outward and inward contributions of these mystics are studied. We practice using that wordless voice, listening for the divine direction in their works that reveals how their contributions have assisted human consciousness to greater itself. Rumi is another of these great individuals of history. Just a few of his words evoke introspection. He is also studied in different ways: some see his poetry, some see a religious figure, and some see a visionary. As Rosicrucians,

we see all the above, as well as his life as a mystic and how he has helped humanity uncover the illusions we build that veil the love of our Creator and the love we should have for one another.

To set the tone for this article, and to honor the inner work that he conveyed, let's dwell for a few moments on one his poems:

A moment of happiness,
you and I sitting on the veranda.
apparently two, but one in soul,
you and I.
We feel the flowing water of life
here,
you and I, with the garden's beauty
and the birds singing.
The stars will be watching us,
and we will show them
how it is to be the thinnest crescent
moon.
You and I, unselfed, will be
together,
indifferent to idle speculation, you
and I.
The parrots of heaven will be
cracking sugar
as we laugh together, you and I
In one form upon this earth,
and in another form in a timeless
sweet land.

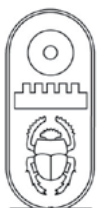
Rumi lived a full and rich life. There are many stories about his mystical experiences—how he touched and taught others during his days on Earth. He had many followers; he loved and was loved by many. He also experienced a deep love for creation and that grand privilege of life. He touched the depths of the indwelling soul and gave what he found to our world. We're unable to grasp that magnitude in a short article like this. It is hoped that this review will guide you to examine Rumi and find that same love that exists in you, that you might fall in love and stay there.



Statue of Rumi in Konya, Türkiye.

In some parts of the Persian-speaking Muslim world, Rumi's texts are studied second only to the Qur'an. He is credited with starting the practice of whirling to commune with the Divine and the rhythms of the universe, the practitioners of which we commonly call Whirling Dervishes. Today we see his excerpts everywhere, invoking inspiration with just a few words. Throughout our monographs, we review his contributions to help restore the greater light to the world. We embrace his expressions of beauty that reside deep within our conscience.

Like us, he struggled at times with the seeming futility of attempting to establish a communion with a higher consciousness. Yet his persistence to find a way inward—to calm the outer noise and amplify the inner song—is a great lesson for everyone who desires and struggles to reconnect to a welcoming and comforting inner world. His life and works remind us of what we intuitively know: there is a conscious connection to a universal consciousness that illuminates human awareness.



Rumi was born on September 30, 1207, in the east of the Persian Empire, in what is today Afghanistan. His father was a well-known jurist, theologian, and Sufi, and Rumi followed in all of these steps. When Rumi was still very young, his father led them more than two-thousand miles west to avoid the invasion of Genghis Khan's armies. It's probably hard for us to appreciate the hardship of such a journey, even if it was a very fancy caravan in that region at that time. Yet the family thrived and settled in present-day Türkiye, where Rumi lived and wrote most of his life.

The tight bonds of the family and their bonds through their faith and mystical work certainly contributed to molding the character within Rumi. Spiritual work was part of everyday life, giving strength during their arduous journey and developing a balance of physical hardships guided by an inner wisdom. He later wrote: "You were born with wings. Why prefer to crawl through life?"

During his early life, Rumi was influenced by the poet Attar of Nishapur, who saw in Rumi a high spiritual presence, as well as by the Persian poet Sanai. The

family established ties with Konya, Türkiye, developing and leading a madrasa—a community of spiritual learning. Rumi was married twice; first in 1225 at the age of 18. He and his wife had two sons. After his first wife died, he remarried, and this second marriage produced one son and one daughter. When his father died in 1231, Rumi became head of the madrasa at the very young age of 24.

Rumi's oldest son, Sultan Walad, managed to save some of Rumi's intimate letters from this period of his life. They revealed that Rumi was often involved in the community—solving disputes, facilitating agreements, and assisting wherever he could. The letters had poetry scattered throughout them, revealing a life filled with material work that was sprinkled by his divine inspirations; he used these divine inspirations to help him in his material efforts.

In 1244, Rumi met the wandering dervish Shams of Tabriz. Shams was also a teacher, writer, and poet, and by all accounts, this was a turning point in Rumi's life. He was 37 years old at the time and Shams was around 60. They saw



Rumi Meeting Shams-i Tabrizi, *from the Cāmi'ü's-siyer of Muhammed Tahir, ca. 1600.*



Mystical Scene with Shams Al-Din Tabrizi and the Reflection of Sun in a Pool, *from Stars of the Legend, ca. 1590.*

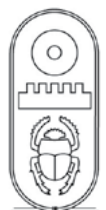
in each other a reflection of the Beloved and spent hours together in study and reflection. Rumi said Shams opened his eyes to a greater beauty that exists within human awareness and that his real poetry began at this time.

Shams led Rumi to work with music, poetry, and dance as a mystical way of connecting with the Divine. This was when he most likely developed his method of whirling to commune with the Divine and the universe—spinning to the rhythms of music, the cosmos, and the God of his Heart, what Rumi called the Beloved. It is these artistic expressions that are characteristic features of the Whirling Dervishes even to this day.

Regarding this whirling method, the author Melody Moezzi wrote in her book, *The Rumi Prescription*: “In Persian, the word for poem, *she’er*, means song as well. By no coincidence, Rumi’s classical Persian verse isn’t meant to be read while sitting, but rather sung while spinning. For this is how Rumi composed his mystical poetry: whirling and rhyming.”

So we know that Rumi set forth much of his work using scribes; perhaps his method involved using them to capture his words during his whirling experiences. Shams of Tabriz himself was a devoted mystic poet, and Rumi and Shams shared their closeness for about four years. Shams was a great inspiration for Rumi, but perhaps because of this close relationship, Shams was disliked by Rumi’s disciples. Shams was a wandering dervish, an eccentric fellow who renounced materialism and was unkempt, and yet somehow had pulled this great, popular mystic’s attention from all those who loved him and followed him. Those closest to Rumi probably felt Shams was not only a bad influence but also that he had taken away their time from Rumi. When you think about it, we might have the same reaction today about an unruly friend taking the time and attention of someone we love.

In December of 1248, Shams disappeared, rumored to have been driven away or possibly even killed by Rumi’s followers, his youngest son Ala al-Din



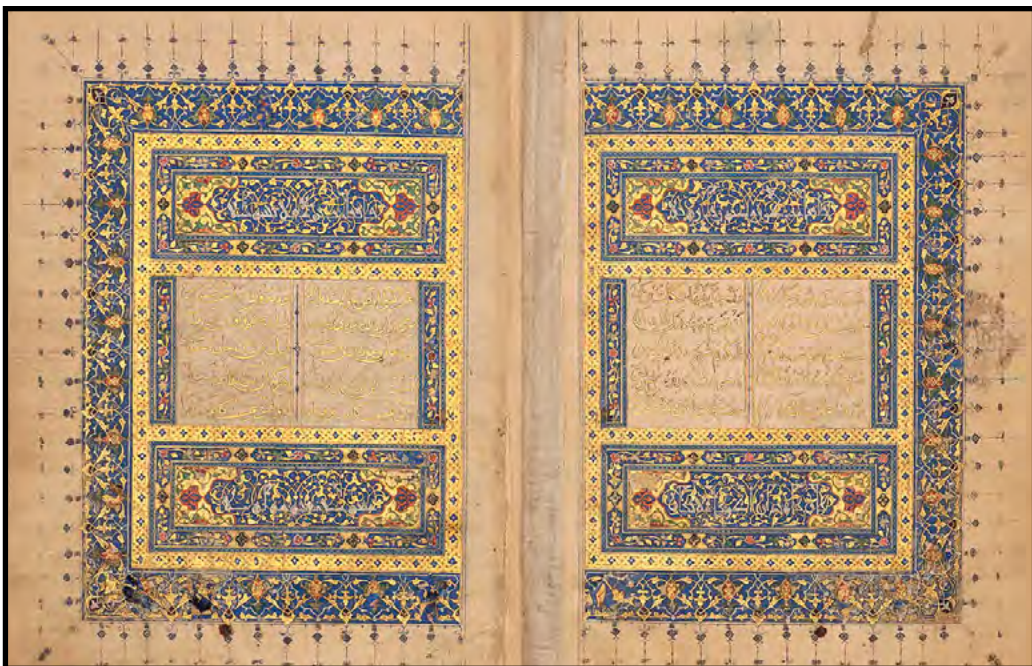
among them. This was a difficult time for Rumi. He spent time searching for Shams, and the loss of his dear mentor affected him deeply. Eventually, of course, he made peace with his loss and returned to his writing and other endeavors with a renewed fervor. He found inner strength and the strong pull of love from his inner Beloved.

For the last 12 years of his life, beginning in 1262, Rumi dictated a single six-volume poem to a scribe. The resulting masterwork, the *Masnavi*, consists of 64,000 lines and is considered Rumi's most personal work of spiritual teaching. Rumi himself described *Masnavi* as "the roots of the roots of the Islamic religion." He died on December 17, 1273, in Konya, Türkiye. His remains were interred adjacent to his father's, and the Green Tomb was erected above their final resting place—now the Mevlana Museum. The site includes a mosque, a hall for dervish dancing, and dervish living quarters.

Like Rumi, we all take care of our responsibilities in life. Also like Rumi, as

our life experiences unfold, there grows an urge that needles our consciousness to find a way inwards to a beauty we intuitively know resides there. That urge found expression through Rumi's works, and it has brought you here now to revel in his example. He recognized the duality of life and was driven to share his inner experiences to light the outer world. His words remind us that we too must learn this mission.

His desire to share included his devotion to his religion of Islam through the Sufi sect. In his writings, you will find his steadfast attachment to the Prophet Muhammad. As a Sufi, Rumi was often looked at as an outsider by those who pushed a more dogmatic and sometimes radical view of their faith. Still today, there are many Muslims who dismiss the Sufi sect. Rather than turning away from his religion, however, Rumi was led to shed light upon its core truths, to respond to that call that excited his spirit, and to preserve the esoteric elements that exist within Islam.



Pages from a 1462 edition from Iran of Rumi's *Masnavi*.



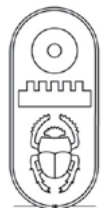
Rumi's tomb in the Mevlana Museum in Konya, Türkiye.

The Sufism that Rumi practiced was preceded by the Hanifs, which, according to recorded documents, shed mystical light upon the Prophet Muhammad and the origins of Islam. One of our monographs states it this way:

Muhammad developed especially close ties with his wife's cousin. Most are unaware that this cousin belonged to the order of the Hanifs. This mystical order constituted a mystery school whose traditional origins may be traced to Abraham himself. Its members possessed knowledge which incorporated Jewish and Christian esotericism. Their concept of the Divinity was monotheistic and they did not hesitate to oppose the polytheism then prevailing throughout Arabia. Observed from both a traditional and historical point of view, Islam as originally promulgated by Muhammad drew upon the philosophy of the Hanifs for its source. In the modern era, Sufism best perpetuates this philosophy.

AMORC is like a cordelier connecting us all, one to the other—to mystics of the past such as Rumi and to us, the mystics of the present. Rumi's works enshrine this progression of light and evoke your higher self to speak to you. In other words, he illuminates the Beloved that is always singing in your heart. Rumi would be pleased to see that AMORC exists today, knowing that the Beloved has a home in human consciousness and a route into this material world.

During his time on Earth, humanity was more prone to suffering and atrocities towards one another than we see today. He lived through those times, yet saw the flowering of the Beloved all around him and nurtured this inspiration into a form that continues to inspire a sometimes-unwelcoming world. And, in a sign of providence, his work was recognized, captured, and maintained within the mystery schools to live on. We owe much to Rumi and to all great mystics of the past for revealing, recognizing, and maintaining this mystic connection through time.



Their actions reflect an unrelenting bravery and zeal to advance humanity towards the divine.

A study of Rumi must include a look at the Whirling Dervishes, whose traditions have roots with him. It was in the 1990s that a form of this dance was inscribed on UNESCO's list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Sema—the name for the entire ritual dance performance—is imbued with symbolism. The camel-hair hat of the whirler represents the tombstone of the ego, while the white skirt symbolizes the ego's shroud. When the whirler removes his black cloak, it is meant to signify his spiritual rebirth into truth.

When the whirler crosses his arms over his chest, he represents the number one and testifies to the Divine's unity. The dance begins with the singing of a eulogy to the Prophet Muhammad and all the prophets before him. This is followed by a drumbeat symbolizing the Divine's command for the creation of the universe. After this is an improvisation on the reed flute, meant to express the life-giving breath of the Divine, followed by a circular anti-clockwise procession. The whirlers greet each other three times, representing knowledge from others, knowledge through one's observations, and knowledge through direct experience.

After there are four musical movements, the whirler opens both arms to the sides and revolves from right to left, expressing an embrace of the entire universe. With an open palm, the right hand is then extended upwards, thus indicating a reception of the Divine's beneficence; the left hand is extended downwards to indicate the distribution of these divine gifts to all humanity. The whirlers do not aim to lose consciousness or fall into a state of ecstasy, but to submit and unite with the Beloved.



A stamp from Tajikistan depicting Rumi.

When the movements are completed, a verse from the Qur'an is recited, followed by a prayer for the repose of the souls of all the prophets and all believers. The dervishes then retire silently to their rooms for further meditation.

So we see this beautiful tradition of searching and going within to find the Beloved through dance. Dear friends, the legacy of Rumi beseeches us to listen to a harmony in all of nature, and that is the song of the Divine, our Inner Master, the Beloved. Rumi's life was both worldly, practical, and deeply spiritual. He followed his heart and found ways to express the rhythms of existence. He gifted us connections between humanity and nature. He lived and toiled in this world and recognized the balance we must find. "Life is a balance between holding on and letting go," he stated.

To conclude this article, we will review two of his verses. The first verse honors the Beloved and shows the longing Rumi felt to find It. The second verse honors the

feminine in all of us and the tenderness we, as human beings, should have toward one another and all of nature. Allow your consciousness to roam with the words and connect with that which it evokes within you.

My destiny do I strive to review day and night. I know not whence I come nor whither I go. I am the nightingale of paradise, only engaged a while. Joy one day will come when I shall fly to my Beloved, for my wings will beat in my Beloved's abode. But who is my Beloved that both listens and speaks with my breath? And who is my Beloved that looks at me with my eyes? And whose life is my own life? It is you, Lord, and my soul is you. You are there and I find you where I find myself. I will have no peace as long as I have not found you. My voice

will no longer be able to keep quiet. Guide me, show me the road to your house. I want to taste the exhilaration of union with thee. For you only, for your beauty, do I pray.

And now our second verse, honoring the feminine:

Woman is a ray of the Divine. Muhammad said woman prevails over the wise and intelligent, while the ignorant dominate over her. They lack tenderness and affection because their animality prevails. Love and gentleness are human qualities; aggressiveness and lust are bestial. Woman is a ray of the Divine; she is not that earthly beloved. You could say she is creative, not created.

It was Rumi's desire—and it is the desire of every aspiring mystic—to follow divine inspiration to a holy place inside and then to bring that inspiration out into this world. Rumi did this through his translations of his Beloved into his writings, his whirling, and through his teaching of others. In the spirit of Rumi, may we remember to pause our world and patiently listen for the Beloved to speak in the vibrations animate in matter and all around us.

As you capture your whispers from your own connection to the Beloved, perhaps you might compose what you experience into some outer form to inspire those around you. It can be your gem as a commemoration of your mystical heritage and part of your guidance upon the path of inner discovery. May the essence of Rumi ever inspire your search for the Beloved in you, which, as Rumi says, is also seeking you.



Rumi Addresses his Followers for the Last Time, from *Stars of the Legend*, ca. 1590.

