THE IMPACT OF MOWLANA JALALUDDIN RUMI ON ISLAMIC CULTURE

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By the same author:-

1 THE CULTURE OF ISLAM
2 DIPLOMACY IN ISLAM
3 LIFE AND WORK OF RUMI
4 SELECTED WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF MAULANA MUHAMED ALI
5 MY LIFE : A FRAGMENT, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF MAULANA MUHAMED ALI
6 THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MUHAMED ALI
7 THE CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR
8 THE PROPHET'S DIPLOMACY
To

Rubina
In order to commemorate the 700th anniversary of Mowlana Jalaluddin Rumi, the great poet and thinker of the 13th century, the Governing Body of the RCD Cultural Institute decided to publish a book reflecting the influence of the Mowlana on the culture of the RCD region.

Under a programme prepared by the Institute, it was suggested that the following five chapters for the proposed book be contributed by scholars of the three RCD countries:—

Chapter I The Cultural and Social Status of the Islamic World during the life and time of the Mowlana.

Chapter II The message of the Mowlana.

Chapter III The influence of the Mowlana on the culture of Iran.

Chapter IV The influence of the Mowlana on the culture of Turkey.

Chapter V The influence of the Mowlana on the culture of Pakistan.

Each country agreed to nominate a scholar to contribute the respective chapters.

Dr Afzal Iqbal, a prominent Pakistani scholar was nominated by the Government of Pakistan to write Chapters II and V. These two chapters were finalised a few months ago and the Institute was waiting to receive chapters from the other co-authors so that a single volume of the book could be published. Since the other chapters have not yet been received, the Institute has decided not to further delay the publication of the available text and bring out the two chapters written by Dr. Afzal Iqbal.

The remaining chapters will be published later in a separate volume.
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Chapter I

THE MESSAGE OF THE MATHNAWI
I

A GENERAL SUMMARY

The Mathnavi was hailed as a unique revelation of esoteric truth long before Jāmi called it "the Qur'ān in Persian", and said of the poet, "Though he is not a Prophet, he has a Book".

Rumi entitled his collection of odes Diwān-i Shams-i Tabriz, the Mathnawi he calls Husāmi Nāma (the Book of Husām). Shams was the hero of the Diwān, Husāmuddin is invoked as the inspiring genius of the Mathnawi. Rumi took nearly twelve years to dictate 25,700 verses to Husāmuddin.¹ The modern reader demands a summary which he can dispose of in an hour. This is not possible. Even the best of summaries would do serious damage to the work. We could only attempt an outline, often using the words and employing the idiom of the author.

In his own day Rumi recorded the contemporary critic as saying that the Mathnawi,

is the story of the Prophets and consists of imitations; that there is no mention of theosophical investigation and the sublime mysteries towards which the saints make their steeds

¹ The Encyclopaedia Britannica mentions 30,000 to 40,000 couplets. Vol. 19 (1952 Ed.) p. 658.
gallop; that from the stations of asceticism to the passing away, step by step, to union with God it contains not the explanation and definition of every station and stage, so that by means of the wings thereof a man of heart (a mystic) could soar.

He dismisses the criticism by saying:

> When the Qur'an came down the unbelievers railed likewise at it too, saying, "It is mere legends and paltry tales; there is no profound inquiry and lofty speculation." (III: 237)

Rumi is aware of the massive contribution he is making. In the prose introduction of Book IV, without being unduly immodest he says, “It is the grandest of gifts and the most precious of prizes; it is a light to our friends and a treasure for our (spiritual) descendants”. He is now a poet with a purpose. He asks,

Does any painter paint a beautiful picture for the sake of the picture itself?

Does any potter make a pot in haste for the sake of the pot itself and not in the hope of the water?

Does any bowl-maker make a finished bowl for the sake of the bowl itself and not for the sake of the food?

Does any calligrapher write artistically for the sake of writing itself and not for the sake of the reading? (IV: 2881, 86)

In the last volume of the Mathnawi, referring to his critics, Rumi complains that the “sour people are making us distressed” (VI: 33), but what is to be Done? The message must be delivered. Does a caravan ever turn back from a journey on account of the noise and clamour of the dogs? (VI: 12)

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2. All references in this chapter are from Professor R.A. Nicholson’s translation of the Mathnawi, e.g. (III, 237) means that verse 237 from Book III has been referred to.
“If you are thirsty for the spiritual ocean”, says Rumi, “make a breach that every moment you will see the Mathnawi to be only spiritual.” (VI: 67,68)

The Mathnawi begins dramatically with a metaphorical song in which the reed, parted from the reed-bed, complains of separation:

مرکسی کو دور ماند از اصل خویش باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش

Every one who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it. (I: 4)

The source of all existence is God and to Him shall we all return. As the Qur’an puts it: 

اثالله وانانا الیه راجعون

In other words the basis of all existence is spiritual. The entity called man is the most beautiful creation of God who has created him in His own image and has breathed in him part of His own spirit. The spirit, the soul, is something which is not veiled from the body, the link between the two is intimate and the integrated personality, the ego, which emerges out of the Cosmic Ego, has no difficulty in recognising it.

تن زجان و جان زن مسنور نیست

Body is not veiled from soul, nor soul from body, yet none is permitted to see the soul. (I: 8)

The consciousness of the soul, the spirit, is animated by Love, not logic.

آتش عشق است کنند نی فتاد جوشش عشق است کنند می فتاد

’Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed,
’Tis the fervour of Love that is in the wine. (I: 10)

The creation of the world is an act of God. God decreed ‘Be’, and it is (کن نیکون). We are since floating about in space and non-space. Pure Unity expressed itself in the creation of the phenomenal world and we are trying to recapture our original purity, our original Unity. In the process a myriad of contradictions have come into play. Oil
has been formed from water and now it has become an opposite entity. The two do not mix together. The rose sprang from the thorn and both of them are at war today. Who is imploring help against whom? The existent from the non-existent? What is the conflict between good and evil or are these categories illusory and baseless?

این محجب کین رنگ ک از یی رنگ خاست رنگ ک با یی رنگ ک چون در چنگ خاست

Colour arose from that which is colourless. How did, then colour come into conflict with the colourless? (I: 2470)

God, having created the universe, did not contain himself in spatial dimensions.

I am not contained in earth or heaven or even in the empyrean-know this for certain, O noble one; (But) I am contained in the true believer's heart:

Oh, how wonderful! If thou seekest Me, search in those hearts. Enter among My servants, thou wilt meet me with a Paradise!

Man is the microcosm who has enchanted the macrocosm, (the universe) in his small frame. There are a hundred unseen worlds within him.

امت وحیدی یکی و مس هزار

Thou alone art the (whole) community, thou art one and a hundred thousand.

This mystery is not unravelled, however, by intellect. The saints who are the "intellect of intellect" (1,2498) reveal this mystery to the seeker. The foolish say about the Prophet, "He is a man, nothing more". But they fail to see the spark in him that illuminates. It is in the company of saints and seers that our perception of reality is sharpened. Our desires yield to an act of faith and a unique consciousness dawns on the soul of man:

چشم احمد بر ابوبکری زده و زیک تصدیق صدق آمد

The eye of Ahmad was cast upon an Abu Bakr: he by a
single act of faith became a Siddiq! (1:2688)

I came to this court in quest of wealth: as soon as I entered the portico I became a (spiritual) chief! (I: 2791)

The limitation of intellect is beautifully brought out in the story of the grammarian who represents discursive knowledge and the boatman who is a simple child of God. The man of knowledge, full of self-conceit, turns to the boatman and asks him if he ever studied grammar. "No", replies the boatman, and the proud grammarian pronounces the verdict: "You have wasted half your life." The poor boatman took the chiding with silent grief. A little later the boat was caught in a storm. The boatman asked the man of knowledge: "Do you know how to swim?" "No", replied the grammarian. The boatman said: "Now you have lost all your life!"

Rumi drives home the point that the most learned scholar could be the most ignorant in a discipline which he has not learnt. The discipline of the spirit is another field:

If in the world thou art the most learned scholar of the time, Behold the passing-away of this world and this time!

We have stitched in (inserted) the (story of the) grammarian, That it might teach you the grammar of self-effacement.

In humility you will find the jurisprudence of jurisprudence, the grammar of grammar, and the accidence of accidence, (i.e., the cream and essence of these sciences). (I: 2845-48)

Intellect, which is a key to the physical sciences, cannot lead to the lofty heights of the Spirit.
The opinion of your thought has become mud-stained and heavy because you are a clay-eater: clay has become to you as bread.

Bread and meat are (originally) clay: eat little thereof, that you may not remain in the earth, like clay.

When you become hungry, you become a dog: you become fierce and ill-tempered and ill-natured.

When you have eaten your fill, you have become a carcase: you have become devoid of understanding and without feet (inert) like a wall.

So at one time you are a carcase and at another time a dog: how will you run well in the road of the lions?

Know that your only means of hunting is a dog (the animal soul): throw bones to the dog but seldom.

Because when the dog has eaten its fill, it becomes rebellious: how should it run to the goodly chase and hunt?

Want of food was leading the Arab to that (exalted) court, and (there) he found his fortune! (I: 2870-80)

And it is to this Arab, the Prophet of Islam, that Rumi looks for inspiration. Choose a guide, he suggests, for without one the journey is fraught with danger. (I: 2944)

It is necessary to have a guide, a leader, a companion who will
help one to tread this delicate path and discover the true nature of existence. In seeking such a guide Rumi warns:

Since there is many a devil who hath the face of Adam, it is not well to give your hand to every hand.

The vile man will steal the language of dervishes, that he may thereby chant a spell over one who is simple.

The work of the (holy) men is (as) light and heat; the work of vile men is trickery and shamelessness. (I: 316-320)

Having chosen a guide, surrender to his higher enlightened judgment. If he scuttles a boat, do not speak a word; if he kills a boy, do not tear your hair. Be patient. Be not faint-hearted. The hand of the guide is the hand of God. But there are dangers and pitfalls. The story is told of a scribe who wrote down the Revelation that the Prophet had dictated to him and then said, “So I too am one upon whom Revelation has descended!” The meddling fool was led astray by this presumption.

As a means of preventing these dangers, “Guide us” comes in every (ritual) prayer, That is to say, “O God, do not mingle my prayer with the prayer of the erring and the hypocrites.

Especially, O Master, (you must avoid) the analogy drawn by the low senses in regard to the Revelation which is illimitable.
If your sensuous ear is fit for (understanding) the letter (of the Revelation) know that your ear that receives the occult (meaning) is deaf. (I: 3391-95)

There is no contradiction, no conflict between the earthly and the heavenly life. One leads to the other. Neither is to be shunned. Neither is more holy or more desirable. Both are part of a unity. Both are inseparable. You do not say no to this world and wait in quiet contemplation for the next. You cannot run away from life and conquer it. Rumi calls time a cutting sword. (I: 132)

The Sufi, he says, is the son of the (present) time. O Comrade, he exhorts, it is not the rule of the Way to say “Tomorrow!” (I: 33)

Life is the most fatal gift of man and he cannot reduce it to naught by postponing the acceptance, the responsibilities, the dangers and the difficulties that go with it. It is now and here that he has to wrestle with them. He has to wade through a river of blood. It is out of this turmoil, tribulation and trial that he will emerge steeled and fortified in his resolve to arrive at the higher reaches of his ego:

The purpose of this (severe) discipline and this rough treatment is that the furnace may extract the dross from the silver.

The testing of good and bad is in order that the gold may boil and bring the scum to the top.

Good and evil, pain and pleasure are words employed by man who is gravely limited by his intellect, and who is arrogant in presuming knowledge of Reality. But the man who treads the path of the spirit soon realises the danger involved in judging life from the analogy of his own limited experience. The light to recognise these limitations comes like a flash and the limitations are wiped out; and vistas of
thought open up and a vision of Reality dawns on man who is unable to communicate its intensity, depth and beauty to others who are governed by the limitations of human language, values, and emotions. Words take on a unique significance, a completely original meaning in the minds of those that receive their answers from a source of inspiration. To Moses it appeared that Khadir was stained by lust, covetousness and passion. He could not see the good that wore the aspect of evil — the scuttling of the boat, the killing of a young boy. The man intoxicated with Divine Reason appeared mad to him; his imagination screened from him the inner meaning of acts. Logic and Intellect are limited. It is only inspiration, revelation, an act of grace from God, which illuminates the mind of man who then begins to see the world in an entirely different perspective. In the history of mankind men of learning who “sharpened the intelligence and wits”, as Rumi puts it, did not inspire humanity to any great endeavour. Neither did kings nor men of power. It was the prophets and seers, men who made no claims to formal knowledge and authority who captured the hearts of men and raised them to heights of effort and achievement:

The myriads of Pharaoh’s lances were shattered by (the hand) of Moses (armed) with a single staff.

Myriads were the therapeutic arts of Galen: before Jesus and his (life-giving) breath they were a laughing stock.

Myriads were the books of (pre-Islamic) poems: at the word of an illiterate (Prophet) they were put to shame!

The man who is a slave to words and depends on his senses alone will soon discover there are other categories of understanding.

Our speech and action is the exterior journey: the interior journey is above the sky.

The (physical) sense saw (only) dryness, because it was born of dryness (earth): the Jesus of the spirit set foot on the sea.
The journey of the dry body befell on dry land, (but) the journey of the spirit set foot in the heart of the sea.

The waves of earth are our imagination, understanding and thought; the waves of water are (mystical) self-effacement and intoxication and death... (I: 540-550)

It is Reason which distinguishes man from the lower animals. Reason and understanding must be used, and it is painful to use them. But to avoid pain one cannot sink to the level of an unthinking animal. But Reason alone will not lead to an understanding of Reality – on the voyage of discovery the role of Reason changes. Man’s understanding is his teacher, his guide, up to a stage. After the stage is reached it becomes his pupil, his tool.

The understanding says, like Gabriel, ‘O Ahmad! if I take one (more) step, it will burn me.

Do thou leave me, henceforth advance (above). This is my limit, O Sultan of the soul. (I: 1065-67)

A stage arrives when identification between the will of the ego and the will of the Cosmic Ego becomes so complete that all the dialectical debate about free will and pre-determination becomes totally irrelevant and superfluous. There is no compulsion left in the Law because it becomes one’s own command, freely imposed on oneself; not a set of rules framed by some one else and inflicted on us to discipline our wayward vagaries:

The prophets are necessitarians in regard to the works of this world, (while) the infidels are necessitarians in regard to the works of the next world.

To the prophets the works of the next world are (a matter of) free will; to the foolish the works of this world are (a matter of) free will; (I: 637-38)
The man of God, while not frowning upon this world, is able to see it in a perspective which creates in him a sense of detachment; he is able to live on earth without sullying himself with mud, he is able to swim in the middle of the ocean without wetting his garments! Pain becomes joy and bondage becomes freedom. Air and earth and water and fire become his slaves. (I: 836-37)

This is by no means a state of annihilation of the self, as the mystics have it, it is a state of illumination, of the discovery of one’s own higher potential, and in such a state quietism and withdrawal do not replace reflection and exertion. Trust in God is the basic quality of a believer but he cannot abandon the need of exertion and acquisition:

The Prophet said with a loud voice, ‘While trusting in God bind the knee of thy camel.’ (I: 913)

God is not idle and inactive for a moment: How can man be? (I: 4080)

If you are putting trust in God, put trust in work: sow (thy seed), then rely upon the Almighty. (I: 947)

To struggle vainly is better than to lie still!

Life is constant activity and cessation of activity means death. (I: 1819-24)

Rumi is a creative evolutionist. He denies the metamorphosis of the body in any shape. Evolution to him is the metamorphosis of the spirit. When man’s spirit becomes the ape-spirit, his body is debased. (V: 2594-95)
The spirit existed when there were neither names nor things that were named. Love is the evolutionary principle of all existence. Adam was given knowledge of all the names and yet he fell from grace. He tried to interpret for himself the meaning of the command. And in doing so he exposed the hollowness of intellect. Interpretation amounts to intellectual arrogance. When the Prophet said, “I pass the night with my Lord, He gives me food and He gives me drink,” he was referring metaphorically to the spiritual food. We should accept this saying without any perverse interpretation because interpretation amounts to an alteration of the meaning and is a rejection of the gift. The interpreter regards the real or original meaning as faulty or inadequate and begins to use his reason to add and to explain. The view that it is faulty arises from the weakness of his own understanding. He fails to realise that the Universal Reason is higher than his own. He should abuse his dull brain and not the Reality which he fails to comprehend. (I:3740-45)

The priorities of a man of God become crystal clear. The confusion, the chaos created by contradictions, the bewildering bedlam of opposites, the strains and stresses of conflicting loyalties merge into a smooth symphony of consciousness, which creates a unity, an integrated whole, a totality of ego which takes a myriad of seeming contradictions in a sweep.

What is this world? To be forgetful of God? It is not merchandise and silver and weighing-scales and women.

How good is righteous wealth? The wealth that you carry for religion’s sake (for the righteous man), recited the Prophet.
Water in the boat is the ruin of the boat, (but) water underneath the boat is a support. (I: 980-85)

Personal experience of a personal God Who is the cause of all creation, fortifies, sublimates, and transforms the personality of man, the vice-regent of God who until this moment was receiving commands from the king; henceforth he delivers commands to the world. Until now the stars were influencing him; henceforth he is the ruler of the stars:

Before this experience his wish was father to the thought. All his thinking, his logic, his arguments were directed at weaving a rationale for his lazy life. But with the dawn of faith, desire for easy living disappears and so does the need for a wilful corruption of the Divine message which has been altered and interpreted through the ages to suit the imagined convenience of man.

Generation after generation has tampered with the meaning of the Message and the motive has all along been to find a way, a justification for rejecting what is considered inconvenient and troublesome for a class of people. Man's own selfish desire for comfort, power, and luxury has always locked the gate of Truth. The sublime meaning has been degraded and perverted to serve desire. Reason is hidden by the world of phenomena; vanity and the pursuit of one's basic desires appear as progress from a lower to a higher plane; one's own limited intellect seems to be the arbiter of all truth but once this veil is removed the scale of values changes and we perceive with little difficulty that all we were pursuing as the paragon of progress was mere will o' the wisp, an illusion, a mirage. We begin to see that the treasures of Qārūn (Korah) did not last; we begin to understand that the mighty empires of kings did not endure for they were based on vanity and exploitation but we see also that the message of the prophets has lasted and still proclaims the Truth which man, in his vanity, continues to ignore. And yet this is human.
We who are descendants of Adam are legitimately proud of the fact that knowledge was vouchsafed to him. He was taught all the names of things, even those that did not yet exist. In his exuberance to interpret for himself the meaning of the one prohibition that was imposed on him, he invited the consequences of the fall but he averted the wrath by recognising that he made a mistake and he asked for forgiveness. It was the consciousness of having committed a mistake that redeemed his soul. To err is human but the moment we become conscious of erring the corrective process comes immediately into play.

Adam, (cast out) from Paradise and from above the Seven (Heavens), went to the shoe-row for the purpose of excusing himself.

If thou art from the back of Adam and from his loins, be constant in seeking (forgiveness) amongst his company.

Prepare a dessert of heart-fire (burning grief) and eye-water (tears); the garden is made open (blooming) by cloud and sun.

What dost thou know of the taste of the water of the eye? Thou art a lover of bread, like the blind (beggars).

If thou make this wallet empty of bread, thou wilt make it full of glorious jewels. (I: 1635-40)

We can receive the Light either from Adam or like him direct from the source. In this process of transmission a hundred lamps are lit and the quality of light has not suffered in the least.

ディクラン ラダーム アッサン ミシュド
خواه انکھم غیر می خواه انکدو
هرکھ دید آندا یقین آنشم دید
دیدن آخر لقب اصل شد

آدمی دا او به خویش اسما نمود
خواه دا آدم کہر نورش خواه ازدو
جوں چراگی نور شمعی راکید
همجنین ناصد چراگ ارتق شد

To an Adam he is in his own person showed the (Divine) Names; to the rest He was revealing the Names by means of Adam.
Do thou receive His light either from Adam or from Himself: take the wine either from the jar or from the gourd (cup).

When a lamp has derived (its) light from a candle, every one that sees it (the lamp) certainly sees the candle.

If transmission (of the light) occurs in this way till a hundred lamps (are lighted), the seeing of the last (lamp) becomes a meeting with the original (light). (I: 1943-50)

Discursive reason arrogates to itself functions which do not belong to it. Its function is only partial and unless it learns to recognise its limitations it is likely to lead astray. Intellect, though useful, has to be supplemented with intuition.

When the lover is fed from (within) himself with pure wine, there reason will remain lost and companionless.

Partial reason is a denier of Love, though it may give out that it is a confidant. (I: 1981-82)

To realise the highest in one's self one has to make a beginning by waging war on all that hinders our growth - greed, cupidity, avarice and hatred. The parable of the Rumis and Chinese Painters in Book 1 of the Mathnawi beautifully describes the situation.

The Chinese said: We are better artists. The Rumis claimed: Power and excellence belong to us. The Chinese and the Rumis began to debate. The Rumis retired from the debate. The Chinese demanded a room to create their work of art. There were two rooms with door facing door. The Chinese took one, the Rumis the other. The Chinese demanded a hundred colours for their painting. The Rumis said no colour was needed for theirs; they would merely remove the rust. They shut the door and went on burnishing. When the Chinese had finished their work, the king entered the room and saw the pictures there. The beauty of the creation was incredible. After that he came towards the
Rumis. They simply removed the intervening curtain. The reflection of the Chinese pictures fell upon the walls which had become clear and pure like the sky. The king was wonder-struck. All that he had seen in the Chinese room seemed infinitely more beautiful in the other room and yet the Rumis had not used a colour, not a brush; they had merely removed the rust from the stained walls.

The moral of the parable is then driven home:

The Rumis are the Sufis without study, books and erudition. But they have burnished their breasts and made them pure from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatred. The purity of the mirror is, beyond doubt, the heart which receives images innumerable...

(The Sufis) have relinquished the form and husk of knowledge, they have raised the banner of the eye of certainty. Thought is gone, and they have gained light. Death, of which all others are sore afraid, these people (the Sufis) are holding in derision. None gains the victory over their hearts: the heart falls on the oyster-shell, not on the pearl. (I: 3483 to 2496)
II

NATURE OF EXISTENCE

The world is one thought emanating from the Universal Intellect. The Intellect is like a king, the ideas are his envoys. The first world is the world of probation, the second world is the world of recompense. If a man commits a sin that accident becomes a substance, namely chains and prison. If a man performs a good act that accident becomes a role of honour. This accident with the substance is like egg and bird: this is produced by that, and that by this, in succession. Why, then, these accidents of ours have not produced any substance? The answer is that Divine Wisdom has kept it concealed in order that this world of good and evil may be a mystery, for if the substantial forms of thought were to become manifest, then this world of ours would be like the Resurrection. And who commits sin and wrong at the Resurrection? But God has veiled the retribution of evil only from the vulgar, not from his own elect.

God, then has shown to me the retribution of work and myriads of the (substantial) forms of action. (II: 970-991)

Life is constant activity. One cannot be inactive for a moment. The craving for action is there in order that our inward consciousness should come clearly into view; to be inactive is like death-agony. This world and that world are forever giving birth. Every cause is a mother, the effect is born from it as a child. When the effect is born, that too becomes a cause, so that it might give birth to wondrous effects. The causes are generation on generation, but it needs a very illumined eye to see all the links in the chain.
The universe is a series of causes. Every cause on account of its being both an essence and a form (the two are inseparable), is both cause and an effect, an agent and a patient; and every effect (so called), on account of its being an essence and a form, is also both a cause and an effect. And since Reality is One, now regarded as Essence, now as Form, it follows that it is both a cause and effect at the same time, and that everything that is called a cause on entering into a casual relation with anything else which is called an effect is at the same time an effect of its own effect, on account of that effect being in virtue of its essence a cause.

What it all amounts to is that God, Who is the only Cause, is immanent in both causes and effects. It is immaterial whether we call a particular cause a cause of a certain effect or an effect of this effect (itself being regarded as a cause). This notion of causation has an important bearing on all acts of 'becoming', for all creation is striving at nothing but 'becoming'. Every particle of the universe is desiring to express itself.

Heaven says to the earth, "Welcome! To thee I am (in the same relation) as the iron and the magnet."

In (the view of) the intellect, heaven is man and the earth woman. Whatever that (heaven) casts forth this (earth) fosters.

Therefore regard earth and heaven as endowed with intelligence, since they do the work of intelligent beings.

Unless these two sweethearts are tasting (delight) from one another, then why are they creeping together like mates?

Without the earth how should roses and arghavān flowers grow? What, then would be born of the water and heat of heaven?

The desire (implanted) in the female for the male is to the end that they may perfect each other’s work.

God put desire in man and woman in order that the world should be preserved by this union.
He also implants the desire of every part for another part: from the union of both an act of generation results.
Likewise night and day are in mutual embrace, they are different in appearance but (are really) in agreement. (III: 4402-4420)

Many Sufis have conceived the universe in Neoplatonic fashion as a series of emanations from God, the One Real Being, each successive stage reflecting the one immediately above it and gradually becoming more and more remote from Reality. Most interpreters have sought to expound the *Mathnawi* in terms of the system associated with Ibn-al-Arabi but this is doing grave injustice to Rumi. He is essentially a poet and a mystic, not a philosopher and logician. He has no philosophic system; he simply creates an aesthetic atmosphere which defies scientific analysis.

Rumi believes everything is striving to reach its original source. The desire of the body for green herbs and running water is because its origin is from those; the desire of the soul is for life and for the Living One, because its origin is the Infinite Soul. The desire of the soul is for wisdom and the sciences; the desire of the body is for orchards and meadows and vines. The desire of the soul is for ascent and exaltedness; the desire of the body is for grain and means of procuring fodder. Whenever any-one seeks, the soul of the object sought by him is desiring him. Whether it be man, animal, plant or mineral, every object of desire is in love with everything that has not attained to the object of desire.

But the desire of the lovers makes them lean, the desire of the loved ones makes them fair and beauteous. The love of the loved ones illumines the cheeks; the love of the lover consumes his soul. (III: 4435-45)

While everything strives to return to its origin, no origin resembles its product. Semen is the product of bread but how should it be like bread? Man is the product of semen, but how should he be like it? The Jinn is created from fire but how should he resemble fire? The cloud is produced from vapour, but it is not like vapour. Jesus was produced
There is a terrible conflict amongst the parts of the Universe. Consider the four elements. Each is a destroyer of the other. Water is destroyer of fire. Hence the edifice of creation is based on contraries. This conflict is reflected in the mind of man. The states of mind and body are mutually opposed. Man is incessantly struggling with himself. There is a grievous war being waged in himself. Reciprocal destruction is inflicted by every contrary on its contrary. When there is no contrary, there is naught but peace and harmony. God who has no like banished all contraries from Paradise, saying,

"Neither sun, nor its contrary, intense cold, shall be there."
(VI: 45-48)

The orthodox hold that God is beyond comparison, that in His absolute unity He is remote and different from all created things, and that the qualities ascribed to Him in the Qur'an are not to be understood in the sense in which they are applicable to any of His creatures. Pantheistic Sufis, while accepting the doctrine of Divine transcendence (tanzih), regard it as only half of the truth; the whole truth, they say, consists in combining tanzih with tashbih, the doctrine of Divine immanence.

The former doctrine, by itself, leads to the duality of God and the World; the latter, by itself, is polytheism. Rumi contrasts the "bat-like" eye of the sense with the "eye of the heart", (II,61) and declares that those who are blind to spiritual things virtually occupy the position of the Mu'tazilites, the philosophers, who denied that it is possible for the Faithful to see God either in this world or the next. But Rumi believes that the Faithful see God both in this world and in Paradise. Even in this world Paradise and Hell and the Resurrection are shown by immediate vision.

A saying is attributed to Ali:
I saw my Lord;
I do not worship a Lord whom I have not seen!

Rumi says: So long as you are under the dominion of your senses and discursive reason, it makes no difference whether you regard God as transcendent or immanent, since you cannot possibly attain to true knowledge of either aspect of His nature. (II:68-69) The appearance of plurality arises from the animal soul, the vehicle of sense-perception. (IV:411,15) The human spirit is the spirit which God breathed into Adam, (Qur. XV,29) and that is the spirit of the Perfect Man. Essentially it is single and indivisible, hence the prophets and saints, having been entirely purged of sensual affections, are one in spirit, though they may be distinguished from each other by particular characteristics. (I:325. II,188);

The world of creation is endowed with quarters and directions, the world of Divine command and attributes is beyond and without directions. No created being is unconnected with the Creator: the connection is indescribable because in the spirit there is no separating and uniting, while thought cannot think except in terms of uniting and separating. Intellect is unable completely to comprehend this reality for it is in bondage to its own limitation of thinking in categories it has coined for itself. That is why the Prophet enjoined:

"Do not seek to investigate the Essence of God."
(IV: 3685-3700)

In the poem of Book V, Rumi says to God:

Thy dignity has transcended intellectual apprehension. In describing Thee the intellect has become an idle fool.

(yet) although this intellect is too weak to declare (what Thou art) one must weakly make a movement (attempt) (in the direction).

Know that when the whole of a thing is unattainable the whole of it is not (therefore to be) relinquished.
If you cannot drink (all) the flood-rain of the clouds, (yet) how can you give up water-drinking?

If Thou wilt not communicate the mystery, (at least) refresh (our) apprehensions with the husk thereof. (V: 15-20)

The man who has seen the vision is alone unique and original; and he cannot give expression to his vision for there are no words to describe the experience which is impossible to communicate. When the Prophet left Gabriel behind and ascended the highest summit open to man, the Qur'an only says that,

"Then He revealed to His servant that which He revealed." (Qur. 53,11)

What he saw is not explained; it cannot be explained and it cannot be described. A stage arrives when silence becomes the height of eloquence! And yet we cannot remain content with knowledge borrowed from others. We must strive to experience for ourselves that unique indescribable vision. Our bane is that we see with borrowed light and colour and we think it is our own. Rumi asks God what fault did that orchard commit that it has been stripped of its beautiful robes and has been plunged into the dreary destruction of autumn.

The reply comes:

The crime is that he put on a borrowed adornment and pretended that these robes were his own property. We take them back, in order that he may know for sure that the stack is Ours and the fair ones are (only) gleaners.

That he may know that those robes were a loan: 'twas a ray from the Sun of Being.

Thou art content with knowledge learned (from others): thou hast lit thine eye at another lamp.

He takes away his lamp, that thou mayst know thou art a borrower, not a giver. (V: 979-994)
The question arises: what is the purpose of making an image and casting in it the seed of corruption? Is destruction, then, a prelude to construction? Rumi answers.

The ignorant child first washes the table, then he writes letters upon it.

(So) God turns the heart into blood and abject tears, then He writes the (spiritual) mysteries upon it.

When they lay the foundation of a house (to rebuild), they dig up the first foundation.

Except at night there is no unveiling of the moon: except through heartache do not seek your heart's desire.

This eternal conflict seeks expression in the creation of man. God endowed man with infinite purity and then set up against him a contrary. He made two banners, white and black: one was Adam, the other was Iblis. In the second period Abel arose, and Cain became the antagonist of pure light. Then the period of Nimrod arrived. He became the antagonist and adversary of Abraham. Thus it came down to Pharaoh and Moses. So it went on till the period of Mustapha and Abu Jahl. The conflict continues.

Every created thing is in the act of becoming, growing, and developing. There is constant movement and activity. Every herb that has a propensity for moving upwards is in the state of increase and growth. When the propensity of one's spirit is upwards, one is in the state of increase; when it has turned its head towards the earth it is in the state of decrease and dryness and failure and disappointment for "God loves not those that sink." (II: 1812-15)

Man has already passed through a series of deaths to attain his present stage. Death has always resulted in a higher stage. Why should he now be afraid of it?
I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and (then) I died to (vegetable) growth and attained to animal.

I died from animality and became Adam: Why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?

At the next remove I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst the angels;

And I must escape even from (the state of) the angel: everything is perishing except His face.

Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which enters not into the imagination.

Then I shall become non-existent: non-existence saith to me, as an organ, Verily unto Him shall we return. (III:3901-06)

It is this conviction that stamps out the fear of death from the mind of man. He then lives dangerously. He becomes a reckless vagabond, a seeker of death.

Not the vagabond who gets small money into his palm, (but) the nimble vagabond who would cross this bridge (to the next world).

Not the one who cleaves to every shop; nay, but (the one who) springs away from (phenomenal) existence and strikes upon a mine (of reality).

Death and migration from this (earthly) abode have become as sweet to me as leaving the cage and flying (is sweet) to the (captive) bird. (III: 3947-52)
In form man is the microcosm; in fact he is the macrocosm. Externally the branch is the origin of the fruit but intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit. If there had not been desire and hope of the fruit, the gardener would not have planted the root of the tree. Therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit though in appearance the fruit was born of the tree. The thought that is idea which is first, comes last into actuality, in particular the thought that is eternal. (IV: 520-30)

Rumi divides existence into three classes. God created angels and set reason in them. He created beasts and set lust in them. He created the sons of Adam and set both reason and lust in them. The first class is entirely reason and knowledge and munificence. The angel is absolute light and lives through the love of God, he is therefore immune from any conflict. The second class is devoid of knowledge. They are also free, therefore, from the strains and stresses experienced by man. Half of man is of the angel and half of him is ass. Angel and beast are at rest from war and combat while man is engaged in torment, a painful struggle with adversaries.

Again there are three communities of man. One has become absolutely submerged and, like Jesus, has attained unto the nature of angel. Their form is Adam but the reality is Gabriël - they have been delivered from anger and sensual passion and vain disputation. The prophets rank higher than angels.

The second sort have attained unto the nature of asses: they have become pure anger and absolute lust. The third kind are half animal, half spiritually alive and endowed with guidance. Day and night in strife and struggle, their last state battles with the first. (IV: 1498-1532)

We are thus half-men in search of a whole man. We must therefore seek an entirely intelligent person and clutch him as the blind man clutches the guide. The half-intelligent one becomes wholly dead in devotion to the man of perfect intelligence, that he may ascend from his own low place to the lofty heights. (IV: 2188-98)
And the whole man is a Saint. His form has passed away and he has become a shining mirror. If you spit at it, you spit at your face; and if you strike at the mirror you strike at yourself. If you see an ugly face, it is you; and if you see Jesus and Mary, it is you. The saint is simple and pure — he places your image before you. (IV: 2140-45)

Man is like the water of the river. When it becomes turbid, you can’t see its bottom. The bottom of the river is full of jewels and full of pearls. Take heed, warns Rumi, do not make the water turbid, for it is originally pure and free. The spirit of man resembles air; when it is mixed with dust, it veils the sky, and prevents the eye from seeing the sun. When its dust is gone, it becomes pure and undefiled.

Moses asks God:
“Thou didst create the form: how didst thou destroy it again?”

God asks Moses to sow some seeds in the earth. When Moses had sown and the seed-corn was complete and its ears had gained beauty and symmetry, he took the sickle and was cutting the crop when a voice from the unseen cried out:

“Why dost thou sow and tend some seed-corn and now art cutting it when it has attained to perfection?”

Moses replied that he was doing so in order to separate the grain from the straw. The moral of the story is that amongst the created beings are pure spirits and there are also spirits that are dark and muddy. All shells are not in one grade: in one is the pearl and in another the bead. The object of creation is manifestation.

God said: “I was a hidden treasure, hearken! Do not let thy substance be lost: become manifest!” (IV: 3001-29)

The story of man’s spiritual ascent is indeed fascinating. First he came into the clime of inorganic things passing into the vegetable state. Many years he lived in the vegetable state, and forgot the inorganic state because of the opposition between the two states.
when he passed from the vegetable into the animal state, the vegetable
state was not remembered by him at all. From the animal state he came
towards humanity. Thus he advanced from clime to clime till he has
now become intelligent and wise and mighty. He has no remembrance
of his former intelligences. From this human intelligence he has to
make a migration that he may escape from this intelligence full of greed
and self-seeking and may behold a hundred thousand intelligences most
marvellous. Though he has fallen asleep and become oblivious of the
past, he cannot for ever remain in this state of self-forgetfulness. In this
world, which is the sleeper’s dream, the sleeper panics that it is really
enduring till on a sudden there shall rise the Dawn and Death and he
shall be delivered from the darkness of opinion and falsehood.

Rumi calls Dawn the “little resurrection.”

(IV: 3637-

Our sleep and waking are two witnesses which attest to us
the significance of death and resurrection.
The lesser resurrection has shown forth the greater resur­
rection; the lesser death has illumined the greater death.”
(V: 1787-1788)

In the Mathnawi Rumi sets forth clearly the doctrine of the
Divine origin of the soul, its descent to the material world, its life on
earth, and its ultimate return to its true home. This doctrine may
have its source in the Neoplatonic theory of emanation and the
psychology of Aristotle and Plotinus but Rumi invests his ideas about
creative evolution of man with a power and feeling all his own. The
world was created in order that the Perfect Man – the soul of the
world – might be evolved. It is in selfless and humble service to man­
kind that man discovers his highest potential. Contrive in the way of
God, he urges, that you may gain the position of a prophet; contrive
that you may be delivered from your own contrivance; contrive that
you may become detached from the body; contrive that you may
become the meanest slave of God. Never practise foxiness and perform
service with the purpose of gaining lordship; renounce power and adopt
humble supplication for the Divine mercy is attracted towards piteous supplication. (V: 469-74)

Rumi believes that in every age after Muhammad, the last of the Prophets, there arises a supreme saint (Qutb) who, together with the hierarchy subordinate to him, acts as the touchstone whereby truth and falsehood are discriminated. So long as the world endures, this process of testing will go on. Rumi makes a sharp distinction between the 12 Shi‘ite Imāms, descendants of Ali, of whom the last vanished mysteriously but is expected to re-appear as the Mahdi at the end of the world, and the uninterrupted succession of great Sufi Saints, who have no common ancestry except their purely spiritual descent from the Prophet. The relation of the saint submerged in mystical union with the Light of God to Reason, whether universal or particular, is the same as that of Muhammad to Gabriel, who was unable to partake with the Prophet in the ultimate realisation of Unity.

The Prophet said to Gabriel:
“Hark, fly after me.”

Gabriel said, “Go, Go, I am not thy companion (any further).”

He the Prophet answered: “Come, O destroyer of veils: I have not yet advanced to my zenith.” Gabriel replies:
“O my illustrious friend, if I take one flight beyond this limit, my wings will be consumed.”

Our ceaseless activity arises from the duty laid upon us of manifesting the Divine consciousness which is the ground of human nature. Since God is always working in the heart, the body cannot be idle. God says “Albeit I know thy secret, nevertheless declare it forthwith in their outward act.” Rumi addressing Husamuddin, the hero of the Mathnawi asks: “Inasmuch as thou art seeing, why dost thou seek speech from me?” and in reply to his own question quotes Abu Nuwās: “Give me wine to drink and tell me it is wine!”
When the 'self' has 'passed away' (funā) it persists (baqā), not as an individual, but as the Universal Spirit, the Perfect Man, bearing the mark of God's feet on his dust. There are numerous eloquent passages in the *Mathnawi* describing the Perfect Man. We will quote only a few to conclude this section.

From every quarter they hear the cry of the oppressed and run in that direction, like the Mercy of God.

Those buttresses for the breaches of the world, those physicians of hidden maladies.

Are pure love and justice and mercy; even as God, they are flawless and unbribed....

Medicine seeks naught in the world but pain (to cure).

Wherever a pain is, the remedy goes there:
Wherever a lowland is, the water runs there....

Bring the sky under the feet, O brave one,
Hear from above the firmament the noise of the (celestial) music. (II: 1934-42)

The wind becomes a bearer for Solomon,
The sea becomes capable of understanding words in regard to Moses.
The Moon becomes able to see the sign in obedience to Ahmad.
The fire becomes wild-roses for Abraham.
The earth swallows Qārun (Korah) like a snake;
The Moaning Pillar comes into (the way of) righteousness.
The mountain salaams to Ahmad (Mohammad);
The mountain sends a message to Yahyā (John the Baptist).
(They all say), “We have hearing and sight and are happy with you,
But with the uninitiated we are mute.”

(III: 1015-25)

The man transcending space, in whom is the Light of God-
whence (what concern of his) is the past, the future or the present?

His being past or future is (only) in relation to thee: both are one thing and thou thinkest they are two.

One individual is to him father and to us son: the roof is below Zayd and above ‘Amr.

The relation of ‘below’ and ‘above’ arises from those two persons: as regards itself, the roof is one thing only.

The expressions are not (exactly) similar to that (doctrine of spiritual timelessness): they are a comparison: the old words fall short of new meaning.” (III: 1150-55)
Man is the substance and the celestial sphere is his accident; all things are (like) a branch or the step of a ladder: he is the object.

Thou art the sea of knowledge hidden in a dew drop; thou art the Universe hidden in a body three ells long.

Since every atom of that world is living and able to understand discourse and eloquent, they (the prophets) have no rest in the dead world, for this (worldly) fodder is only fit for the cattle. (The bodily part) is within Time, while that (spiritual part) is beyond Time.

This which is in Time endures till death, while the other is everlasting and alive. (V: 3575-79, 3591-92, 3606-07).
NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

Rumi calls sense-perception the way of asses. He dubs those in thrall to sense-perception as Mu'tazilites or philosophers. There is no point in describing God as formless or formed. Whether he transcends forms or is immanent in forms is mere intellectual exercise- the point is that you must liberate yourself from Form before you begin to have some idea of Reality. Unless you are freed from sense-perception, you can perceive little.

The Sufi’s book is not ink and letters. The scholar’s provision is pen-marks. The Sufi’s provision is foot-marks. (II: 159-60)

The heart of the scholar is a wall, an impediment, for the gnostic it is a door, an opening. Every human expression is a symbol of a particular state and there is nothing absolute where the description of Reality is concerned.

“I am Truth” on the lips of Mansur was the light (of Truth); “I am God” on the lips of Pharaoh was a lie: In the hand of Moses the rod became a witness (to the truth); in the hand of the magician the rod became (worthless as) notes in the air. (II: 302-306)

One cannot, therefore, rest content with the form, one must seek the inner meaning of forms. The outward form passes away, the inner reality remains for ever. These shells of bodies we see in the world
are not all living; there is not a pearl in every shell. We have to open our eyes and look into the heart of each shell before we can find a pearl.

How can the philosopher, the believer in sense-perception, deny the power of thought, something which is intangible and is yet so potent? Is it not true that by one thought that comes into the mind, a hundred worlds are overturned in a single moment? Then why in your foolishness, asks Rumi, does the body seem to you a Solomon, and thought only as an ant? The material world in your eyes is awful and sublime: you tremble and are frightened at the clouds and the thunder and the sky, while in regard to the world of thought you are indifferent as a witless stone. The reason for this indifference is that you are a mere shape and have no portion of intelligence. From ignorance you deem the shadow to be the substance, hence the substance to you has become a plaything.

Sense-perception is merely the beginning. It is not to be deprecated as a source of knowledge. But one has to move on and not rely entirely on this fragile tool. The light of sense draws towards earth; the Light of God bears aloft. Since sensible things are a lower world, the Light of God is compared to the sea, and the light of sense to a dew drop. The light of sense is hidden, notwithstanding its grossness. How then should not that radiance be hidden which is so pure and subtle? (II: 1293-99)

Intellect, by its proper nature, is a seeker of the end. The intellect that is vanquished by flesh becomes the flesh. Because of the diverse difference in appearance and reality intellect is always at war with the senses. This is an eternal struggle. The infidels regarded the Prophet as only a man since they failed to see the Prophetic nature in him. The sensuous eye is blind in that it sees the foam and not the sea, it sees the present and no tomorrow.

The danger of taking appearance as reality without striving to discover the deeper truth is brought out beautifully in the story of Moses and the shepherd. Moses hears a simple shepherd pour out his heart to God in his own imperfect way. "Where are you, O God?" he says,
"that I may become your servant and sew your shoes, comb your hair, wash your clothes, kill your lice and bring milk for you - that I may kiss your little hand and rub your little foot when bed-time comes."

'What babble is this?' demands Moses who is simply infuriated at the shepherd's description of God. "You have become an infidel, Moses charges, the stench of your blasphemy has made the world stinking. Why do you indulge in doting talk and familiarity?" For this stern rebuke Moses is taken to task by God:

Do I Ames Soi Mosi az Xada
To Bari Wael Kardan Amdi
Horke da Amstalahi Dada Eim
Az Gara Ageenei Jo Chalaki Heh
Sindian da Amstalai Saz Medh
Pak Ham Aifanan Shoend wr Dafaan
Ma Douna da Bngrem wr Haal Daha

Thou hast parted My servant from Me. Didst thou come to unite, or didst thou come to sever?
I have bestowed on every-one a way of acting:
I have given to every-one a form of expression.
I am independent of all purity and impurity, of all slothfulness and alacrity,
In the Hindoos the idiom of Hind is praiseworthy.
In the Sindians the idiom of Sind is praiseworthy.
I am not sanctified by their glorification; 'tis they that become sanctified...
I look not at the tongue and the speech,
I look at the inward (spirit) and the state (of feeling)
(II: 1750-70)

Conventional knowledge is a borrowed thing. We rest at ease in the belief that it is ours but this is apparently a deception which we perpetrate on ourselves.

I have tried far-thinking intellect," says Rumi "henceforth I will make myself mad... Often have I tried (sound)
intelligence; henceforth I will seek a nursery for insanity...
In our city there is nobody of intelligence except Yonder man who appears to be mad! (II: 2327-39)

Since conventional knowledge is learnt as a bait for popularity, not for the sake of spiritual enlightenment, the seeker of religious knowledge is just as bad as the seeker of worldly knowledge. Dialectic knowledge is good for debate, it is used to impress people, to indulge in disputation and argument. It is robust at the time of disputation but it is dead and gone when it has no customer!

Expression in words always fails to convey the meaning; hence the Prophet said: "Whosoever knows God his tongue falters!"

Speech is (like) an astrolabe in (its) reckoning, how much does it know of the sky and the sun? (II: 3013-14)

Satan has knowledge, intelligence, wit and argumentative ability. Even Adam who learnt the names from God could not prevail in argument with Iblis but does that make Satan the man of God?

How, then, does one arrive at Truth? There is such discord and perplexity amidst doctrines. How is one to know? The philosopher gives an explanation, the scholastic theologian invalidates his statement. And some-one else jeers at both of them. Rumi believes the truth to be this:

All these are not in the right nor are this herd entirely astray, Because nothing false is shown without the True: the fool bought spurious coin in the hope of (its being) gold. If there were no current coin in the world, how would it be possible to issue false coins? Unless there be truth, how should there be falsehood? Do not say, then, that all these utterances are false: Do not say, then, that all is phantasy and error: Without truth phantasy exists not in the world.
Truth is the Night of Power (which is) hidden among the other nights....
Not all nights are the (Night) of Power.” (II: 2923-38)

In as much as truth and falsehood have been mingled one needs a picked touchstone to test the good coin from the bad.

There are some assertions whose truth is attested by their very nature. If at midnight for example a kinsman says, “I am near you, come now, be not afraid of the night,” you do not ask for a proof. The two assertions you accept because you recognise the voice of your own relative. But an uninspired fool who in his ignorance does not know a stranger’s voice from his own kinsman’s, will hesitate to accept the statement. To him the words of his relative are mere assertions; his ignorance has become the source of his disbelief. Or for example one whose mother-tongue is Arabic says in Arabic, “I know the language of the Arabs.” The very fact of his speaking in Arabic is evidence of the reality, although his claim is only an assertion. When you say to a thirsty man, here is water, will he ask you to produce some testimony and proof that it is drinkable? When a mother cries to her suckling babe, does he ask for proof of her being his mother before he takes comfort in her milk? Similarly when a prophet utters a cry will the soul’s ear have heard from any-one else a cry of the same kind as his. That stranger, the soul, by immediate perception of the strange voice, has heard from God’s tongue the words “Verily I am near” and has responded without seeking proofs. (II: 3572-3600)

From sense-perception one must progress to soul-perception. The five senses are linked with one another because all of them have grown from one root. The strength of one becomes the strength of the rest. Seeing with the eye increases speech; speech increases penetration in the eye. When one sense has perceived things that are not objects of sense-perception, that which is of the invisible world becomes apparent to all the other senses. It is, as it were, one sheep of the flock jumping over a stream and the rest following on each other’s heels.

The body is manifest, the spirit is not. Intellect is more concealed
than the spirit. If you see a movement, you know that the one who moves is alive; but you don’t know that he is full of intellect until regulated movements appear. The spirit of Divine inspiration is more concealed than the intellect. The intellect of the Prophet was not hidden from anyone but his spirit of prophethood was not apprehended by everyone. The intellect of Moses was troubled by seeing the reasonable actions of Khadhir. His actions seemed unreasonable to Moses, since he did not have his state of inspiration. (II: 3236-80)

Man is superior to animals because he has the faculty of reason. The more knowledge one has, the more life one has. The spirit of the angels is higher than the spirit of man because it is exempt from the common sense. And the spirit of mystical adepts is more than that of the angels. For that reason Adam is their object of worship; his spirit is greater than their being. Since the spirit of the perfect saint has become superior and has passed the utmost limit reached by man and angel, the soul of all things has become obedient to it. (II: 3326-34)

There is only one Reality. It is recognised in different ways by different people who call it by different names. A Persian, an Arab, a Turk and a Greek are shown fighting in a story over the purchase of grapes. They all want to buy grapes but they refer to them by different names. The Persian wants angur, the Arab is looking for ‘inab, the Turk seeks uzum, and the Greek insists on ista’fil. They begin fighting because they are unaware of the hidden meaning of names. In their folly they smote each other with their fists: they were full of ignorance and empty knowledge. (II: 3685-90)

The intellectual man likes to tie himself in knots. We are addicted to subtle discussion; we are exceedingly fond of solving problems. We tie knots and try to undo them. We create our own snare and make rules to undo the fastenings of a snare in order that our intelligence may become sharp and perfect in skill. Our life is spent in dealing with knots:

It is no wonder were the flying bird not to see the snare and fall into it. The wonder is that it should see both the snare
and the net-pin and yet fall into it — with eye open and the snare in the front, it’s flying towards it with its own wings! (III: 1647-49)

Do not struggle with knots, advises Rumi, lest wings and feathers be snapped asunder one by one through this vain display on your part. The difficulty over angur and inab was not solved by the contest between the Turk, the Greek and the Arab. Until the spiritual Solomon skilled in tongues, intervenes, this plurality will not disappear. (II:3733-42)

Sense-perception is extremely limited. The world-view of an embryo in the mother’s womb is not the same as that of a thinking adult. If any-one were to say to the embryo in the womb that outside is a world exceedingly well-ordered, a pleasant earth, broad and long, mountains and seas and plains, a sky very lofty and full of light, sun and moonbeams and a hundred stars; the embryo by virtue of his own state would be incredulous. Its perception has not seen anything of the kind and he would not believe the news of a world bigger and better than the one he knows. The moment, however, the child is born he begins to be less sceptical and as his perception increases he begins to believe what once appeared absolutely incredible to him. You come across the same story of disbelief when a man of God speaks to the common folk and gives them tidings of a much bigger, better and an eternal world. Even as in the case of the embryo, his own limited perception, debar man from conceding the existence of anything which he cannot conceive. (III: 50-70)

If a child does not see the various aspects of reason, will a rational person, asks Rumi, ever abandon reason? And if a rational person does not see the various aspects of Love, the moon of Love does not wane:

Joseph’s beauty was not seen by the eye of his brethren, the eye of Moses regarded the staff as wood.

The eye of the head has always been in conflict with the eye of the heart but the latter has always prevailed. (V:3931-35)
Rumi compares Reality to an elephant in the dark. A man feels it with the palm of his hand. The hand falls on the trunk. He thinks the elephant is like a water-pipe. The hand of another touches its ear; to him it appears to be like a fan. Another handles its leg and comes to the conclusion that the elephant is like a pillar. Yet another lays his hand on its back and says that it is like a throne! If there had been a candle in each one’s hand, says Rumi, the difference would have gone out of their words. The eye of sense-perception, he argues, is like the palm of the hand: the palm has no power to reach the whole of the elephant. (III: 71-73)

The futility of dialectical approach — hair splitting — is brought out beautifully in a parable. An old man who has chosen a new bride goes to a top hair-dresser and asks him to pick out his white hairs. That “pick them out” is dialectics. The barber cut off his beard and laid the whole of it before him for he had no time for splitting hairs! (III: 1376-80)

Rumi gives another example. A certain man slapped Zaid on the neck. Zaid at once rushed at him. The assailant said, “Answer a question before you strike me back. I struck the nape of your neck and there was the sound of a slap: was this sound caused by my hand or by the nape of your neck? Zaid had no leisure to indulge in this reflection because he was suffering from pain — he that feels the pain has not such thought, he that is without pain can afford to indulge in the luxury of hair splitting. (III: 1380-85)

The Mu’tazilites hold that all intellects were originally equal and that experience or education makes them more or less, so that it makes one person more knowing than the other. Rumi considers this a false doctrine. He believes that people’s intellects differ in their original nature and that the superiority that stems from any-one’s nature is even better than the superiority that is the result of endeavour and reflection. (III: 1540-45)

Sense-perception is captive to the Intellect, and Intellect is captive to the spirit. (III: 1824) The Spirit sets free the chained hand of the
intellect and brings its embarrassed affairs into harmony. That which one look perceives it is impossible to show it forth by tongue. That which intellectual apprehension sees in one moment, it is impossible during years to hear it by the ear. (III: 1994-95) The philosopher is in bondage to things perceived by the intellect but the pure Saint rides as a prince on the Intellect of Intellect. (III: 2527-28)

The intelligent man begins to distinguish between form and reality. The serpent's egg resembles the sparrow's egg, the seed of the quince resembles the seed of the apple but the intelligent man recognises the difference. Here again there is a difference between the Saint and the scholar. The latter has learned things by rote, while the source of the former's knowledge is the Spirit. One is like David, the other is a mere echo.

Between the true knower and the blind imitator there are (great) differences, for the former is like David, while the other is (but) an echo.

The source of the former's words is a glow (of feeling), whereas the imitator is one who learns things (by rote). (II: 493-94)

There is a difference between knowing a thing by comparison and convention, and knowing the quiddity of the thing. The scholastic theologian says,

This is far from reasonable and deeply involved in error: do not listen to an absurdity without some explanation.

The Sufi replies:

To you, O inferior one, that which is above your spiritual state seems absurd. The visions which are now revealed to you, is it not the case that at first they seemed absurd to you? (III: 3635-55)
Speaking philosophically both affirmation and negation are possible at the same time. It is possible to deny and affirm the same thing. The flame of a candle is non-existent in the presence of the sun though in formal calculation it exists. The essence is existent; if you put cotton on it, it will burn but it is really non-existent for it gives no light. When you throw an ounce of vinegar in two hundred maunds of sugar the flavour is non-existent though the ounce exists as a surplus when you weigh. (III: 3671-75)

Galen, the Greek philosopher, is quoted by Rumi as having stated, “I am content that only half of my vital spirit should remain, so that I may see the world through the arse of a mule.” He has obviously, like his class, deemed all except this sensible world of ours to be non-existent and has not perceived in non-existence a hidden resurrection. That embryo, too, is unaware of a world outside the womb of the mother; like Galen it is also unfamiliar with the world he cannot perceive. It does not know that the humours which exist in the womb are supplied to it from the external world even as the four elements in this world obtain a hundred supplies from the City beyond space. (III: 3961-70)

Rumi talks of opinion, knowledge and certainty. Knowledge is inferior to certainty but above opinion. Knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision. Knowledge leads to vision which is immediately born of certainty, just as fancy is born of opinion. (III: 4120-25)

Whilst nothing is better than life, life is precious: when a better appears, the name of life becomes a slippery (futile) thing.

The lifeless doll is as (dear as) life to the child until he has grown up to manhood. This imagination and fancy are (like) the doll: So long as you are (spiritually) a child, you have need of them;

(But) when the Spirit has escaped from childishness, it is union (with God):
it is done with sense-perception and imagination and fancy. There is no confidant (familiar with this mystery) that I should speak without insincerity (reserve). I will keep silence! (III: 4110-15)

When knowledge strikes on the heart (is acquired through mystical experience), it becomes a helper; when knowledge strikes on the body (is acquired through the senses), it becomes a burden.

But when you carry this burden well, the burden will be removed and you will be given (spiritual) joy.

Beware! Do not carry this burden of knowledge for the sake of selfish desire but mortify yourself, so that you may ride on the smooth paced steed of knowledge.

Thou hast pronounced the name; go, seek the thing named!

Make thyself pure from the attributes of self, that thou mayst behold thine own pure untarnished essence. (1: 3448-61)

There are three stages of certain knowledge – the knowledge of certainty ( علم الاقیِم ), the vision of certainty ( عین الاقیِم ), and the intuitive actuality of certainty ( حق الاقیِم ). The last is the highest. In such a state:

In the ear’s hearing there is transformation of quality, in the eye’s seeing there is transformation of essence. If your
knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself) and do not abide in the certainty (of knowledge derived from others).

There is no intuitive actual certainty until you burn; (if) you desire that certainty, sit down in the fire! (II:859-61)

The way to certainty is not the way of reason. One seeks no proof in the presence of that which stands proved in front of one’s eyes.

(Suppose that) a sun has come to speech (and says) “Arise! for the day has risen; jump up, do not dispute!”

(And suppose that) you say, “O Sun; where is the evidence?” it will say to you “O blind one, beg of God (that He give you) an eye.”

If any one seek a lamp in bright daylight, the very fact of seeking it announces his blindness.

To say in the midst of day “Where is the day?” is to expose yourself. (III: 2719-24)

This, at any rate is not the mark of true lovers. They do not read love letters when the Beloved sits by them in person. (III: 1409)

There is a difference, and a fundamental one, between the philosopher and the mystic. The philosopher is content with a syllogism. He multiplies links consisting of logical proofs. The mystic, on the contrary, flees from the proof. If to the philosopher the smoke is a proof of the fire, to the mystic it is sweet to be in the fire without
smoke, especially the Fire of God, which is nearer to him than the smoke. To him every proof that is without a spiritual result is vain for he is considering the final result of man. (II: 568-72)

Intelligence is of two kinds — acquisitive and intuitive. The former is acquired from book, teacher, reflection, memory, and from concepts and the sciences and your intelligence becomes superior to others who have not taken the trouble to study. The other intelligence is the gift of God: its fountain is in the midst of the soul.

The acquired intelligence is like the conduits which run into a house from the street. If the water-way is blocked it is left without any supply of water. The other flows like a fountain from within yourself! (IV: 1960-67)

Without a touchstone, imagination and reason are not clearly distinguished. The Qur'an and the spiritual state of the Prophets are this touchstone. Imagination belongs to Pharaoh, the world-incendiary; Reason to Moses, the Spirit enkindler. (IV: 2301-04)

Rumi deprecates borrowed knowledge and exhorts independent thinking:

(If) you have an eye, look with your own eye: do not look through the eye of an ignorant fool.
(If) you have an ear, hearken with your own ear, why be dependent on the ears of blockheads?
Make a practice of seeing without blindly following any authority: think in accordance with the view of your own reason: (VI: 3342-44)

In the beginning of vol. I of the Mathnawi there is the story of a sick girl who is pining away and her disease cannot be diagnosed through the conventional methods until an inspired physician divines that the cause of her suffering is love.
The king in this allegory is the Spirit (ruh) which loves the soul (nafs) and desires to purify her. But though she has a certain affinity with him, she is not disposed to exchange her own world for a better. This indisposition is symbolised by the illness that overtakes her and separates her from the king. Thereupon the intellect ('aql), which is the vizier of the Spirit, intervenes in the guise of a physician but only succeeds in aggravating the soul's malady. The Spirit, perceiving that intellectual remedies are of no avail, turn humbly to God, confesses its helplessness, and prays for help. God sends Beauty (jamal), which appears to the spirit in the likeness of a Saint, (wāli') and the king says to him, “Thou art my beloved in reality; not the heart (dīl) that claimed to be able to heal itself.” Then the heart, in agreement with the spirit, gives the soul (nafs) in marriage to her beloved, namely, sensual desire (hawa‘), but after a time the heart gradually administers to Desire the potion of gnosis (‘irfān), so that it wastes away and becomes hateful in the eyes of the soul and finally dies. Thus does the soul that commands to evil (nafs-i ammārah) attain to the blessedness of the soul at peace (nafs-i mutma‘innah). To such a soul comes this beautiful invitation from God.

Thou, O soul at peace! Return to thy Lord well pleased (with Him and) He well pleased (with thee). So enter thou among My chosen servants, And enter thou My Garden. (Qur'an 30: 28-31)

Rumi describes the thrill and bliss of responding to such a call:

For a long while I was seeking the image of my soul, (but) my image was not displayed (reflected) by any-one.
The soul's mirror is naught but the face of the friend, who is of yonder country...
I saw my own image in thine eyes!
I said, 'At last I have found myself: in his eyes I have found the shining Way.'

My image cried out from your eye,
I am you, you are Me — in complete Union!

Most of those destined for Paradise are simple God-fearing men. The clever ones are caught in the mischief of philosophy, the simple ones perform their duties and save themselves and the society from discord. They do not know the philosophy of the poor-tax but they pay it; they do not split hairs about the motives and meanings of prayers, they simply say their ritual prayer. The philosopher kills himself with thinking; the more he thinks the less he finds. (VI: 2356-57)

Knowledge did not profit Samiri who made the golden calf; Qārun gained little by his alchemy; Bu'l-Hakam (the Father of Wisdom) became Abu Jahl (the father of ignorance) from his knowledge. He went to hell on account of his unbelief.

Knowledge consists in seeing fire plainly, not in prating that smoke is evidence of fire. (VI: 2502-05)

Rumi defines justice as putting a thing in its right place, and injustice as putting it in its wrong place. Nothing is vain that God created. Nothing is absolutely good nor is anything evil. The usefulness and harm of each thing depends on where you place it. That is why knowledge is necessary and useful. (VI: 2596-99)

Moses and Pharaoh have the same arms, the same head, the same figure yet one is celestial, the other contemptible. Knowledge is necessary to distinguish one from the other. (VI: 3006-07)

The highest Reality is not an external object, it lies deep within man himself. Knowledge is necessary to perceive it — not discursive knowledge which clouds the vision but esoteric knowledge which illuminates.
I am not contained in the heavens or in the void or in the exalted intelligence and souls;

I am contained, as a guest, in the true believer's heart, without qualification of definition or description,

From this mirror (appear) at every moment fifty (spiritual) wedding-feasts: hearken to the mirror, but do not ask (Me) to describe it! (VI: 2013-216)

The man whose search culminates in such a consummation, the seeker whose heart responds to such a call, the traveller on the Path who gains this goal—such a man indeed is a gnostic, the soul of religion and the essence of piety. In him knowledge attains its highest illumination for he is both the revealer of mysteries and that which is revealed:

He is our king today and tomorrow: the husk is forever a slave to his goodly kernel...

For lawlāka (but for thee) is (inscribed) on his (imperial) sign-manual:

all are (included) in his bounty and distribution.

If he did not exist, Heaven would not have gained circling motion and light and (the dignity of) being the abode of the angels.

If he did not exist, the seas would not have gained the awe (which they inspire) and fish and regal pearls;

If he did not exist, the earth would not have gained treasure within and Jasmine (flowers and verdure) without.
FREE WILL AND DETERMINATION

The one quality which marks out Rumi from conventional Sufis is his repudiation of the sack cloth – his utter opposition to quietism, withdrawal and escape. His emphasis on effort and constant activity is overwhelming. God is not idle and inactive for a moment. How can man? Even vain struggle is better than idleness. Life is nothing but constant activity; and cessation of activity is synonymous with death.

(I: 1819-24)

Rumi states the argument for and against quietism in a dialogue between the lion and the beast in the Mathnawi. His own view is that faith in Divine providence implies active exertion for spiritual ends.

(I: 975-91)

He goes to the extent of suggesting that in one’s iconoclastic pursuit of dynamic living, one should not stop short of the image of God Himself!

Break God’s image also by God’s command,
Cast at the Beloved glass the Beloved’s stone! (I: 3979)

To struggle against Destiny is the destiny of man. To fight nature is the nature of man. Rumi finds it difficult to extol the virtues of passivity and poverty. The great Sufis, it is true, were destitutes and poor but for most men poverty, in the words of the Prophet, almost comprises an infidelity that brings the soul to perdition.
O thou rich man who art full-fed, beware of laughing at the unrighteousness of the suffering poor. (I: 517-18)

He exhorts the poor to work and not rely on a miracle happening on their behalf to bring them riches for none ever reaped until he sowed something. Do not say to yourself:

So-and-so suddenly found a treasure;
I would like the same:
One must earn a living so long as the body is able...
Do not retire from work that (treasure),
indeed, is following behind (the work). (I: 731-35)

They only live who dare. One must take life by the fore-lock and not seek to run away from it. Life has its dangers and risks as it has its rewards. Unless you jump in the fire you cannot hope to convert it into a garden. It is the quality of reason to pause and ponder. Love takes a plunge. Safety is the slogan of cowards.

O blamer (of lovers), safety be thine!
O seeker of safety, thou art infirm.
My soul is a furnace: it is happy with the fire...
'tis enough for the furnace that it is in the fire's house. (I: 1375)

One must seek and search for how else does one find? This seeking Rumi calls a blessed motion:

This search is a killer of obstacles on the way of God,
This search is the key to the things sought by thee;
This search is thy army and the victory of the banners.
This search is like chanticleer crowing and proclaiming that the dawn is at hand. (III: 1442-45)

And this search cannot be postponed until tomorrow for who ever knew he would see another dawn? Only this moment belongs to us.
We must therefore struggle now and here. The Sufi, he calls “the son of time”, who clasps time.

And what has a poor man to lose that he should not plunge into life? Why should he hesitate? But this destitute man is simply terrified. He possesses nothing yet he has dread of thieves. Bare he came and naked he goes and all the while his heart is bleeding on account of the thief! (III: 2631-3)

He exhorts this hesitant, halting man to rid himself of fear and realise his potential which knows no limits. He challenges him to “make a circuit of heaven without wing and pinion, like the sun and like the full moon and like the new moon.” (IV: 1105)

He instils faith, courage and confidence in this creature who falters and fumbles and is afraid to face himself:

You are your own bird, your own prey and your own snare; You are your own seat of honour, your own floor, and your own roof. The substance is that which subsists in itself; the accident is that which has become a derivation of it (the substance). (IV: 807-80)

In Rumi’s view the Divine call to prophecy signifies struggle. It means coming out into the open to accept the challenge. Mohammad was called upon to abandon the quiet solitude of the cave and emerge into the open (IV: 1463)

He was asked to wage war against the forces of tyranny; to destroy the order that was based on injustice and exploitation and create a new world; to “make a resurrection ’ere the Resurrection.”
Since thou art the upright — rising Israfil of the time, make a resurrection 'ere the Resurrection.

O beloved, if any one say, "where is the Resurrection?" Show thyself, saying "Behold! I am the Resurrection" (IV: 1479-80)

Rumi comes down with a heavy hand on the fake Sufis who had misled the people, over centuries, into the belief that quietism and withdrawal were virtues which led to inner bliss and happiness. "With these base scoundrels", charges Rumi, "Sufism has become patching (of the garment of wool) and sodomy, and that is all." (V: 363-4)

The degenerate Sufi, Rumi dubs as "that vain hypocritical imposter, a trap for the fools and noose for error." He calls him "a braggart, a lick platter and a parasite." The licence practised by such people, he warns, has become notorious: it is an indulgence enjoyed by every scoundrel evil-doer. (VI: 2057-66)

He repudiates their teaching by asserting emphatically:

In our religion the right thing is war and majesty; in the religion of Jesus the right thing is retirement to the cave and mountain. (VI: 494)

There is no monkery in Islam. If you have no lust you cannot claim credit for self-restraint. If there is no desire, there is no adversary, how then do you cultivate the strength to control your carnal self? You do not have to castrate yourself for chastity is in pawn to lust! (V: 575-78)

There is nothing wrong with wealth and property. What is wrong is that you should earn it through unlawful means and use it for unlawful purposes. Bread without endeavour is not in accordance with
God’s law.

Effort is ordained. Our movement, exertion and our acquisition is a key to the lock. Without the key there is no way to open the door: (V: 2385-87)

The way of the Sunna is to work and earn: (V: 2424)

While pleading passionately for struggle and strife, and espousing eloquently the virtues of incessant activity, Rumi concedes that the gnostics appear lazy to the common man who is deceived by appearances and fails to perceive that:

They have made laziness their prop since God is working for them.
The vulgar do not see God’s working. (VI: 4886-88)

The parasites, the pretenders, the hypocrites seek to copy this aspect alone without essaying to scale the spiritual heights that such saints attained after wading through rivers of blood.

Rumi views the world of Reason and Reality as an ocean in which the forms of phenomenal existence are waves that rise in rapid and continuous succession, only to fall back the next moment and disappear for ever or bowls floating on the surface of the deep that are submerged as soon as the water fills them. Such is the relation of individuals to the Divine ground of being. Haunted by forms and unconscious of the Spirit in ourselves, we vainly seek rest. The few who find it are Perfect Men. (I: 1109-48)

All changes arise from time and he that is freed from time is freed from change. (III: 2074)
Much confusion was caused in the public mind by the advocates of that decadent, fatalist philosophy which sought to place a premium on quietism, withdrawal and retirement from life on the plea that man is but a small inconsequential creature in the scheme of universe and that his destiny is determined even before he is born. There is nothing he can do to frustrate the stars and that his struggle and endeavour to improve his lot is doomed to failure. Resignation emerges as the supreme virtue. Waiting rather than striving becomes that rule of life. Rumi cannot possibly accept such a situation which reduces the viceregent of God to a state of complete impotence.

Rumi rejects the concept of a static world, a finished product which is incapable of change and development. On the contrary he believes that the world has only the semblance of duration; in truth all phenomena are annihilated and re-created at every moment by the eternal manifestation of Divine energy. The Prophet said, “the world is but a moment” i.e. a flash of Divine illumination. But in our minds this immediately produces the illusion of Time and we deem the world enduring. The truth cannot be learnt except through the highest mystical experience, that of the Saint in timeless union with God. (I: 1142-49)

Time is an arbitrary category of understanding. The Sufi surpasses this limitation. He is not of Time for “with God is neither morn nor eve” – there the past and the future and time without beginning and time without end do not exist. Adam is not prior nor is Anti-Christ posterior. All these terms belong to the domain of discursive reason, they are not applicable in the non-spatial and non-temporal world. Therefore the Sufi being the son of the moment is to be understood only as a denial of the division of time into several categories just as the statement “God is one” is to be understood as a denial of duality, not as expressing the real nature of Unity. (VI: 1408)

It is in this context that Rumi asserts that such riddles as free-will and determinism are not to be solved by intellect. Only perfect love harmonises every discord. Unity and Love replace the vulgar notions of freedom and necessity which represent Man either as the
rival of the Almighty or as his involuntary scapegoat. (I: 1446)

Adam loved God; Iblis did not. Both acknowledged their sin but while Adam took the blame on himself, Iblis held God responsible. The infidel takes refuge in the Necessitarian plea that if he commits evil, it is because the Almighty did not create him good; but the believer imputes his sins to himself and thanks God for washing them away. (II: 2549-50)

There are laws of nature which are immutable and there are others which are subject to change. There are qualities which are fundamental, there are others which are accidental.

If you bid a stone become gold, 'tis futile;
If you bid copper become gold, the way exists;
If you bid sand become clay, it is incapable;
If you bid earth become clay, that is possible. (III: 2909-12)

The man of God shirks neither work nor effort. He freely submits himself to the will of God. His entire life is dedicated to the purpose of God which is essentially to help man evolve his own personality until he reaches a stage which is marked by complete and total identity between the will of man and the will of God. This is the explanation of the Quranic verse: (Quran VIII: 18)

\[
\text{مادميت اذزميت ولكن الله رمي}
\]

revealed at the battle of Badr when the Prophet threw a handful of gravel in the faces of the Quraysh who immediately fled before the Muslim onslaught. (I: 615)

Such a man in whom God has supreme confidence cannot be cynical. On the contrary,

\[
\text{We are ever fresh and young and gracious, unfaded and sweet and laughing and debonair. To us a hundred years are the same as a single hour, for long and short (time) is a thing disjoined from us ...}
\]
When there is no day and night and month and year, how should there be satiety and old age and weariness? (III:2936-41)

Happy indeed is the understanding that is undimmed: (III: 3263)

Rumi is a believer in free-will, the capacity of man to choose his actions for himself. Choice he calls “the salt of devotion”, otherwise there would be no merit in prayer and piety. The celestial sphere revolves involuntarily, hence its revolution has neither reward nor punishment. We have honoured Man, says the Qur’ân. (XVII: 72) The honour lies in the fatal gift of free-will. The reins of free-will are in the hands of man. (III: 3287-89)

Human action is both a cause and an effect. Man, in so far as he acts freely, incurs retribution hereafter; but this though from one point of view of direct consequence of the action with which it corresponds in quality, may also be regarded as the final cause and eternal form of the action, pre-existent in God’s knowledge, like the idea of a house in the mind of the architect. Looked at in this way, retribution is a Divine manifestation of the form immanent in all that appears under the form of human action or, in other words, a transformation of the appearance into its underlying reality. Hence there can be no true similarity between them; they differ as accident and substance. (III: 3445-63)

A man of God is not compelled. He freely chooses to submit to God.

In sooth the end of free-will is that his free-will should be lost here. The free agent would feel no savour if at last he did not become entirely purged of egoism. (IV: 399-405)

God’s assignment of a particular lot to any-one does not, in Rumi’s view, hinder consent, will and choice. In battle the pusillanimous
choose means of flight from fear for their lives; the courageous, also from fear for the lives charge the ranks of the enemy. Heroes are borne forward by their fear and pain; from fear, too, the man of infirm spirit dies within himself. (IV: 2912-20)

Beyond doubt we possess a certain power of choice. If we did not, command and prohibition would loose all meaning. Reward and rebuke would be pointless. The power of choice and the instinct to choose are latent in the soul. The power to choose good or evil is increased manifold by inspiration and suggestion. The Devil will say on the Day of Reckoning: "I was merely presenting objects of desire to you. I did not force them on you." And the angels will say: "I told you that sorrow would be increased in consequence of this indulgence in sensual joy." Both the Devil and the Spirit who present objects of desire to us exist for the purpose of actualising the power of choice. There is an invisible power of choice within us when it sees two alternative objects of desire it waxes strong. Our sense of guilt is evidence of freewill. If there were not freewill, what is this shame? And what is this sorrow and guilty confusion and abashment? Addressing those who believe in Jahr, compulsion, Rumi asks:

How should one make merry who is bound in chains?
When does the captive in prison behave like the man who is free?
And if you consider that your foot is shackled...
Then do not act like an officer (tyrannously) towards the helpless, inasmuch as that is not the nature and habit of a helpless man. (I: 630-633)

The plain fact, Rumi tells the votaries of predeterminism is that:

In every act for which you have inclination, you are clearly conscious of your power (to perform it)
(But) in every act for which you have no inclination and desire, in regard to that (act) you have become a necessitarian, saying, "This is from God". (I: 635-636)
To Rumi Necessitarianism is more shameful than the doctrine of absolute Free will, because the Necessitarian is denying his own inward sense. The believer in absolute free-will says, "There is smoke, but no fire, there is candle-light but no candle". The Necessitarian plainly sees the fire but for the sake of denial he says it does not exist. It burns his clothes, yet he says: there is no fire; thread stitches his raiment yet he says there is no thread. Rumi dubs the doctrine of Necessity as Sophisticism or Scepticism. He regards the Necessitarian as worse than the believer in absolute Free-Will whom he calls as infidel. The infidel says, the world exists but there is not Lord. The Necessitarian says, the world is really naught. Both are in a tangle of error. (V: 2967-3015)

Rumi argues that the entire Qur'an consists of commands and prohibitions and threats of punishment. Whoever saw commands given to a marble rock. Does any wise man, does any reasonable man do this? Does he show anger and enmity to brickbats and stones? If none but God had the power of choice, he asks why do you become angry with a man who has committed an offence against you? Why do you gnash your teeth at a foe? Why do you regard the offence as proceeding from him? In the case of a man who steals your property you say: Arrest him, make him a captive, punish him. And in the case of a man who visits your wife, you seek to wreak awful vengeance. On the contrary if a flood comes and sweeps your household goods, your reason does not bear any enmity towards the flood. And if the wind came and took off your turban you express no anger against the wind.

The anger within you is a clear demonstration of the existence of a power of choice in Man. Even animals have this sense. If a camel-driver goes on striking a camel, the camel does not attack the stick for he has some notion of the power of choice in man. Similarly a dog, if you throw a stone at him, will rush at you, not the stone.

Since the animal intelligence is conscious of the power of choice in man, it is strange, to say the least, that man should seek to deny it. In fact inward consciousness of man is more evident than his senses. One can bind the senses and prevent them from functioning but it is impossible to bar the way to the experiences of inward consciousness.
Do or don’t, command and prohibition, discussion and debate are all proofs of the power of choice. The thought, “Tomorrow I will do this or that,” is a proof of the power of choice. (V: 3020)

Pre-ordination and pre-destination do not annul the power of choice. A thief pleaded to the magistrate, “that which I have done was decreed by God.” (V: 3058-52) The magistrate retorted: “That which I am doing is also decreed by God!”

God’s universal power of choice brought our individual power of choice into existence. His power of choice makes our power of choice. Every created being has it in his power to exercise authority over a piece of wood, the artist has authority over a portrait, the ironsmith is a superintendent of iron, a builder has control over his tools. The power forcibly exercised by man over inanimate objects does not deprive them of their inanimate nature. Similarly the power exercised by God over acts of free-will does not deprive any act of free-will of that quality. Without man’s will his unbelief does not exist at all, for involuntary unbelief is a contradiction in terms. (V: 3086-3124)

Accountability can follow only from choice. Every action has the effect and consequence appropriate to it. Determinism would make nonsense of God, it would dismiss him from office. There would be no mercy, no pardon for any sinner, there would be no grace, no hope through piety. God would be rendered absolutely powerless. All that He would be able to say in response to our prayers and insistent entreaties is: “Sorry. The affair has gone out of My hands: do not approach Me so often, do not entreat Me so much!” (V: 3132-53)

Rumi ends his lucid exposition by a characteristic qualification:

This difficulty and controversial matter cannot be decided except by real love and that is God’s grace. This is a dispute which will continue till mankind are raised from the dead. Love ends all argument! (V: 3213-14)
V
NATURE OF LOVE

"Then what is love?" asks Rumi and he answers his own question:

پس چه باشد عشق دریای عدم
بندگی و سلطنت مسلم شد
زنین دو پرده عاشقی مکنون شد
تا زهستان بردها برداشتی

The sea of Not-being:
there the foot of intellect is shattered.
Servitude and sovereignty are known:
loverhood is concealed by these two veils.
Would that Being had a tongue, that it might
remove the veils from existent beings! (III: 4723-25)

Again Rumi poses the question:

عقل حیران که چه عشق است و چه حال
تا فراق و عجب تر یا وصال

“What is love and what is exctasy?”
The intellect is simply bewildered.
Who knows whether in love separation is
more marvellous than union? (III: 4714)

Love truly expresses itself in service. Service is a means of gaining,
growing, and developing. The Servant of God desires to be freed from
Fortune; the lover never more desires to be free. The servant is always
seeking reward, a robe of honour and a stipend; all the lover's role of
honour is his vision of the Beloved.

در نکننده عشق درگفت و شنید
عشق درباغی ست قمرش نابدید

61
Love is not contained in speech and hearing.
Love is an ocean whereof the depth is invisible.

Love makes the sea boil like a kettle;
Love crumbles the mountain like sand.
Love cleaves the sky with a hundred clefts;
Love unconsciously makes the earth to tremble.

Love is not lust nor is it phantasy and imagination. The bane of this gate is sensuality and lust; else draught on draught of spiritual knowledge is to be found here. Adam took one step in sensual pleasure; he fell from his high place. The creative power of love is determined by the greatness of the object desired. A mother distraught with grief beside the grave of a child newly dead, utters heart-felt words earnestly and intensely. The inanimate corpse seems to her to be alive. She regards that dust as living, as having an eye and an ear. To her at the moment every atom of the earth in the grave seems to have hearing and intelligence. This is the magic worked by love! Fondly and with tears she lays her face, time and again, on the fresh earth of the grave. But when some days pass in mourning, the fire of her love sinks to rest. Rumi drives home the point:

Love for the dead is not lasting:
keep your love fixed on the Living One
who increases spiritual life! (V: 3260-70)

Love is the motive force of all creation. It transforms the quality of life:

By love bitter things become sweet;
By love pieces of copper become gold;
By love dregs become clear;
By love pains become healing;
By love the dead is made living;
By love the king is made a slave.
This love, moreover, is the result of knowledge: who (ever) sat in foolishness on such a throne? On what occasion did deficient knowledge give birth to this love? (II: 1529-34)

Rumi makes no distinction between the gnostic (ārif) and the lover (āshiq). For him love and knowledge are inseparable and co-equal aspects of the same reality.

Love, whether its immediate object be Divine or human, real or phenomenal, leads ultimately to the knowledge of God. All earthly beauty is but the reflection of Heavenly Beauty, and as the reflection fades away we turn our eyes towards the height whence it came. (I: 111)

Woman is the highest type of earthly beauty, but earthly beauty is nothing except in so far as it is a manifestation and reflection of Divine attributes. (III: 554-559)

That which is the object of love is not form. 'tis the draught of Divine beauty, mingled in the lovely earth, that thou art kissing with a hundred hearts day and night. (V: 374)

When Iblis desired God to give him a means of temptation that should be irresistible, he was shown the beauty of woman and was amazed by the revelation of Divine glory: 'twas as though God shone forth through a thin veil. (V: 959-99)

Sweeping aside the veil of form, Rumi beholds in woman the eternal Beauty which is the inspirer and object of all love, and regards her, in her essential nature as the medium par excellence through which that uncreated Beauty reveals itself. From this point of view she is the focus for the Divine tajalli and may be identified with the life-giving power of its ray. From another point of view woman is the cause of Adam's fall. Rumi recalls wistfully,
Both my first and my last fall were caused by woman, since I was Spirit — and since I became body? (VI: 2799)

This is not a happy thought about woman. This is why perhaps he never fell in love with one. His devotion and dedication to Shams-i-Tabriz is well-known. After him came Salāh-ud-din Zarkob who was followed by Husām-ud-din Chelapi. These three men were the centre of Rumi’s adoration and attention. It is through them that he strives to discover the Perfect Man - the central theme of the Diwān and the Mathnawi. These men are only milestones on the Way. They lead to the Prophet Mohammad who, as the Logos, is the archetype and final cause of creation. In him the supreme idea of humanity is realised. (I: 2060)

The World-idea, the Divine Consciousness, is realized in Mohammad, the last of the prophets, who therefore is the final cause of creation, according to the Hadith-i-qudsi:

\[
\text{lawlāka lamā khalaqtu 'l-asfāk}
\]

But for thee, I would not have created the heavens.

Hence the description of the Prophet as khāwjā-i-lawlak. Were it not for Mohammad, (the Perfect Man), the object of creation would not have been realised, since God would not have been known to Himself in and through the Perfect Man by whom all His attributes are made manifest.

The Prophet attained perfection through love, not reason, not through a studied pursuit of knowledge. Adam won signal honour through love and Iblis was rejected though he had all the intelligence.

He that is blessed and familiar (with spiritual mysteries) knows that intelligence is of Iblis, while love is of Adam.

Intelligence is (like) swimming in the seas: he (the swimmer)
is not saved: he is drowned at the end of the business.

Love is as a ship for the elect; seldom is calamity (the result), for the most part it is deliverance. (IV: 1402-04)

It is Love which makes the world go round. The wheeling heavens are turned by waves of love. If there had not been Love, there would be no existence. Love, says Rumi, is an infinite ocean, on which the heavens are but a flake of foam. Were it not for love the world would remain inanimated, a mass of frozen dead matter. It is Love alone which breathes the warmth and glow of life, which makes an inorganic thing into a plant, which produces the Breath that makes Mary deliver the miracle of Christ.

Love indeed is that radiance and warmth which animates, quickens and sublimates everything it touches. It imparts a glow of feeling, a faith which transforms the quality and character of life. In fact life is not possible without love.

If there had not been Love, how should there have been existence?
How should bread have reached itself to you and become (assimilated) to you?
The bread became you; through what? Through (your) love and appetite; otherwise how should the bread have had any access to the (vital) spirit?
Love makes the dead bread into spirit; it makes the spirit that was perishable everlasting. (V: 2012-14)

Love solves all the mysteries of the world; it is at once an ailment and a matchless cure. The lover's ailment is different from all other ailments and Love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God.
Rumi hails love with a fervour and beauty which is impossible to communicate:

Hail, O love that bringest us good gain — thou art the physician of all our ills.

The remedy of our pride and vainglory, our Plato and our Galen!

Through Love the earthly body seared to the skies; the mountain began to dance and became nimble. (I: 23-25)

The final and the supreme objective is indeed God. Corporealists and anthropomorphists cannot form a spiritual conception of God. They invest him with bodily attributes. But real love transcends all duality. When Mansur Hallaj declares his mystical union with God he says:

Thy spirit is mingled in my spirit even as wine is mingled with pure water.
When anything touches thee, it touches me.
Lo, in every case Thou art I! (Tawasin 134)

The good Muslims executed him in A.H. 309. Rumi says in a similar state:

Sometimes I say to thee, 'tis thou, sometimes, 'tis I.
Whatever I say, I am the Sun illuminating (all). (I: 1940)

Humility is the hall-mark of lovers. Respect and reverence is called for. Rumi warns those who tend to be familiar:
Since you got accustomed to praise and prayer, through making prayer your heart became vain-glorying.
You regarded yourself as speaking with God.
There is many a one that became separated from (God) by this misconception.
Although the king seat you on the ground, know yourself and sit better (with more decorum and reverence). (II:339-41)

Loyalty in love is the first requisite. Rumi picks the falcon as a symbol of loyalty for every time he soars he comes back to the king:

باژ آن باشده‌که بازآید به شاه

I fly as a moon and sun, I rend the curtain of the sky.
The light of intellects is from my thoughts; the bursting forth of heaven is from my original nature.
I am a falcon, and (yet) the human becomes lost in amazement at me.
Who is an owl that it should know my secrets?
I am the owner of the (spiritual) kingdom,
I am not a lick-spittle: the King is beating the falcon-drum for me from the shore. (II: 1160-70)

The falcon Rumi compares to the spirit for it soars high, and bodily properties he calls crows and owls:

دوح باز است و طبایع زاغها

It is a foot bound broken-winged creature but when its self-consciousness is gone and its foot untied, the falcon flies towards the king. (V: 2280-81)

بای بسته، پر شکسته بند دمی جانچو باز و تن مراوراکندمی
میبرد آن باز سوی کیقباد چونکه هوش رفت‌بایش پر گشاد

In love pain and suffering is a must. Love is like a law suit, to suffer harsh treatment is like the evidence: when you have no evidence the law suit is lost! (III: 4009)

عشق چون دعوی جفا دیدن گواد چون کواهت نیست شد دعوی نیاهم

67
Suffering in love is its own reward. In love life is completely transformed. Concepts change, values change and words take on another meaning. Mansur sought to annihilate himself and he became immortal; Pharaoh sought to perpetuate his rule and he was drowned. Gallows become a throne and the imperial court becomes a prison-house. A Pharaoh said, "I am God" and he was laid low; A Mansur said, "I am God", and he was saved. The former 'I' was followed by God's curse and the latter 'I' by God’s mercy. The former was provoked by opposition to God, the latter was inspired by submission to God. What appeared supreme defiance on the part of Mansur to people who only knew the ordinary meaning of words, became in the eyes of God an act of supreme submission. (V: 2035-36)

All this flows from the infinite mercy of God for man indeed is weak and limited:

We will set fire to the tenement of Man and make the thorns (in it) a spiritual garden of roses.

We have sent from the Ninth Sphere (the highest Heaven) the elixir "He will rectify for your actions."

What in sooth is Adam's sovereignty and power of choice beside the Light of the Everlasting Abode?

The seat of his vision is a piece of fat;

The seat of his learning consists of two pieces of bone; the seat of his (intellectual) perception is two drops of blood, that is to say, the heart. (V: 1850-55)
Love alone cuts disputation short, for it alone comes to the rescue when you cry for help against arguments. Eloquence is dumbfounded by Love: it dare not engage in altercation! (V: 3240-41)

In expounding Love intellect is helpless like an ass in the mire; it is Love alone that can offer the explanation of love. Love is the motive force of all creation and love defies all definition, all description. The price of love is life itself; the lover values love above everything else for he has not come by it so cheaply that he should consent to throw it away. This power of love has freed him from the bondage of life and he has come by a treasure which cannot be evaluated in terms of gold, power or possessions. (I: 1468) To others it may appear something imperceptible, intangible but to him it is the very essence of life for it has bestowed upon him the consciousness of a world which is hidden from the capricious eyes of those that look only at the exterior, the obvious, the superficial and have not learnt to penetrate to the inner meaning of words. As for Rumi,

What care I though ruin be (wrought)?
Under the ruin there is a royal treasure. (I: 1744)
VI

NATURE OF REALITY

And now we enter territory where angels fear to tread. The universe is indeed marked by such power, beauty, order and harmony that man is in danger of worshipping them. In the perishable and the mutable, therefore, man’s reason must grasp the evidence for the necessary and transcendent existence of the Creator. The universe is created and is dependent for its continuance upon something else but the Creator is not dependent upon any other being. The whole creation has proceeded from Him and reverts to Him. He is the First and the Last. He is Self-Existent and Uncreated. He is neither begotten nor begets nor has He a partner or associate who shares with Him His powers. He is unique in all His powers and attributes. All the beautiful names belong to Him but they are all inadequate in conjuring up the Reality of God. He is Omnipotent, Omniscient. He is the Lord of Unity, absolutely One and Unique, absolutely Self-Sufficient. He is Wise and knows all about everything. There is nothing that is outside His ken. He is Kind, Most Merciful, the Lord of Majesty, the Possessor of Power and Authority. He is Most Forgiving, the Most Appreciating. He answers the prayers of His servants. He is not aloof, remote and distant. He is close to man. In fact He is closer to him than his jugular vein.

He is at once Manifest and Hidden. He is the Equitable and the Just and His retribution is swift. There is no contradiction in those attributes. Pain and penalty are not inconsistent with Mercy and Forgiveness. The erring servants must revert to the Path by penitence and pain. And death is no destroyer — it is neither a disaster, nor an end to life. It is merely a milestone on the way, it only indicates transition from
one world to another. Man passes through a series of deaths before he is able to achieve immortality.

If murder of man by man is the act of God, why does He command retribution? (qisas). The question leads to an exposition of the essential unity of the Divine nature under all the diverse modes of its manifestation in the world. In reality the avenging God, says Rumi, is the merciful God; He is Love and from that infinite source flows every chastisement that He inflicts. (I: 3854)

All attributes are merely a feeble attempt at describing the divine nature but God in Himself must remain the unexpressed mystery. All things are recognised by their opposites and God alone has no opposite. Human imagination is simply not able to comprehend the subtle nature of Godhood. Whatever idea you may form of God in your mind, He is different from that. Like the shepherd in the Mathnawi you may use anthropomorphic terms in His praise but remember that none applies. The highest stage of praise is indeed with the heart, not with the tongue. God is independent of all praise, of all purity and impurity, of all slothfulness and alacrity. He is worshipped by believers and infidels alike. But He is not sanctified by their glorification; it is they that become sanctified. God is absolutely Self-Sufficient:

I am not the four temperaments or the first cause,  
I am ever remaining in (absolute) control.  
My action is uncaused and upright (independent).  
I have (the power of) pre-determination,  
(I have) no cause. I alter My custom at the time (I choose).  
(II: 1625-26)

God is “with” us only in respect of His attributes. His Essence is absolutely One, transcending all “otherness”. Hence it may be symbolised by the letter alif which is a bare perpendicular line devoid of any diacritical mark. (I: 1514)

Diverse created beings are spiritually different. They pass through various stages of experience in their perception of Reality:
One man is beholding a moon plainly,
While another sees the world dark,
And another beholds three moons together.
These three persons are seated in one place.
The eyes of all three are open,
And the ears of all three are sharp;
They are fastened on thee and in flight from me.
Is this an enchantment of the eye?
Or is it a marvellous hidden grace?
On thee is the form of the wolf,
And on me is the quality (beauty) of Joseph.
If the worlds are eighteen thousand and more,
These eighteen (thousand) are not subject to every eye.
(I: 3752-56)

The varying states of consciousness that make up the inner life of the mystic swing him to and fro between various ways of contemplating Reality. The experience is essentially incommunicable in its subtle and profound effects. All the theories woven round this theme are at best half-truths. The truth must remain a Mystery. Those who assert the transcendence of God and those who assert His immanence are both bewildered by Him. But one thing is certain. Sense-perception, on which philosophers rely for the knowledge of Reality, cannot lead to the vision of God. Unless you are freed from bondage to sense-perception you cannot behold images which are not of the material world.

To sharpen the intelligence and wits is not the way:
None but the broken (in spirit) wins the favour of the king.
(I: 532)

Though God is the only real Agent, normally He acts by means of secondary causes (aslāb). This “custom”, however, is not invariable; God can at any time make such causes ineffective or decree that they shall produce effects contrary to their nature.

Rumi believes that God is absolutely self-sufficient (ghāni). He does not need the “slaves” (ībād) whom His mercy brings into existence.
The Quranic text: "I created the Jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me," (Qur: L 156) signifies that they were created in order that by worshipping God they might make themselves perfect. (II: 1755)

It behoves the seeker of God, therefore, not to rely entirely on his own strength, but to regard all Sufis as friends and brethren without whose aid he cannot overcome the dangers and temptations that assail travellers on the way. (II: 2150)

If anybody goes on the way without a leader, every two days' journey becomes one of a hundred years.

Whoever speeds towards the Ka'ba without a guide becomes contemptible. (III: 588-89)

Seek the friend of God and God is your friend. (II: 23)

One must seclude oneself from strangers, not from friends. Since the true believer is a mirror for the true believer, his face is safe from defilement. The friend is a mirror for the soul. (II: 30-33)

When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will behold both the image and the image Maker.

The phantom (seen in mystical vision) of my friend seemed to me like Khalil (Abraham), its form an idol, its reality a breaker of idols.

The Spirit debarred from everlasting life is exceedingly tormented; the spirit united with God in everlasting life is free and blissful. (IV: 446)

And yet the terms "union", and "separation" implying the existence of subject and object, are incompatible with absolute unity. (III: 1340)

Rumi is uncompromising in his belief in Divine Unity. He postulates a universal Being which may be regarded as the Essence of phenomena.
This Being is all that exists, there is nothing else. (I: 606-10) The multitudinous forms of phenomena produced by the manifestation of various attributes of the One Real Being are compared to shadows which owe their existence to sunlight falling on a wall. Demolish the wall of illusion and all phantoms disappear; and you see nothing but the Sun of Unity. (I: 658-59) The many are nothing but modes and aspects of the one whence all numbers originate. Even dualists and polytheists admit the existence of the One God. What they are not agreed upon is the number of gods. If their spiritual obliquity were removed, they would perceive the truth and confess the Divine Unity which they now deny. (II: 311-12)

Rumi is an uncompromising theist. The pantheists contend that part is connected with the whole. Rumi retorts: if this is so, eat thorns for the thorn is connected with the rose! The part, he asserts emphatically, is not connected with the whole. Were this so, the mission of the prophets would be meaningless. The prophets are sent in order to connect the part with the whole; how, then, should they connect them when they are already one body? (I: 2810-12) In clarifying God's relation to created things Rumi says:

The parts of the whole are not parts in relation to the whole — they are not like the scent of the rose, which is a part of the rose.

The beauty of green herbs is a part of the Rose's beauty, the coo of the turtle-dove is a part of that Nightingale. (I: 2905-6)

Rumi rejects the idea of emanation and confirms that man remains himself despite his lofty flights to heaven. The Prophet remained a man, a perfect man, despite his ascent to the highest heaven and his personal vision of God. He did not assume divinity on that score. The colour of iron changes in the heat of fire but it remains iron. If iron, in the heat of its new experience, calls itself fire, it is gravely mistaken:
The colour of iron is lost in the colour of the fire; the iron has assumed the colour of the fire but is iron.

When it becomes red like gold, then its appearance boasts without words: “I am fire.”

Glorified by the colour and nature of fire it says I am fire, I am fire.

I am fire, if you doubt it, then come and experience by putting your hand on me. (III: 3670-73)

In the Mathnawi God is described as a dyer, (I: 766, 3954) as a magician (I: 1447) as a hidden treasure, as a rider hidden by the dust which he raised (III: 383-84), as a painter or calligrapher (II: 2537-39) as a butcher (III: 3743), as the hunter of the soul (IV: 1054), as a camel driver (IV: 1102), as a mother (V: 698), as a dice-player (V: 4190), as a shepherd (VI: 1835), as a vine (VI: 4739). God is the ultimate source of good and evil and all opposites. (I: 298, IV: 2517-27) The seeming contradictions disappear, the differences dissolve altogether and a man of God perceives nothing but total harmony and utter Unity.

The speaker of the word and the hearer of the word and the words (themselves) — all three become spirit in the end.

The bread-giver and the bread-receiver and the wholesome bread become single (denuded) of their forms and are turned, into earth.

But their reality, in the three categories, is both differentiated in (these) grades and permanent.

In appearance they have become earth, in reality they have not;

In the spiritual world all three are waiting (for the Divine Command), sometimes fleeing from form and sometimes
This is the case with mystics. They pass through various states of consciousness. At one stage by denying his self-existence the mystic affirms his oneness with God. (I: 1759) In the phenomenal world the Divine attributes of Majesty (Jalāl) and Beauty (Jamāl) appear under the form of externality. Only by transcending all the aspects in which the One essence presents itself to our perception can the mystic’s experience of Unity be realised. (I: 498)

The Necessitarian view implies separation between the creature and the Creator, the opposition of two wills, and the subjugation of the weaker. But mystics who know God to be Love and themselves one with Him, are not “compelled”; on the contrary they enjoy the unconstrained rapture of self-abandonment and the perfect freedom of feeling and acting in harmony with the will of God. (I: 1463) By dying to self (fanā) the mystic returns, as it were, to his original state of potential existence as an idea in God’s consciousness, and realises the Unity of the Divine Essence, Attributes, and Action. (I: 762)

Inasmuch as those united (with God) are absorbed in the Essence,
O Son, how should they look upon His attributes?
When your head is at the bottom of the river, how will your eye fall on the colour of the water? (II: 2813-14)

The states of consciousness vary with the degree of one’s spiritual progress. The piety of the vulgar is sin in the elect; the unitive state of the vulgar is a veil in the elect.

That which is the very essence of grace to the vulgar becomes wrath to the noble favourites (of God).
Much tribulation and pain must the vulgar endure in order that they may be able to perceive the difference. (IV: 2982-83)
Rumi believes that a vision of God is possible both in this world and the next. And this vision is direct. And after the direct vision of God the intermediary is only an inconvenience.

For, O (my) Companion in the Cave, these intermediary words are in the sight of one united (with God), thorns, thorns, thorns. (IV: 2984)

Prayer is the path-way to God. And this prayer is no mere posture of the body; it shakes the entire spirit and transforms the whole being of man. But not every man who prostrates himself becomes the recipient of grace. The wages of Divine mercy are not the allotted portion of every hireling. (II: 1657)

At one stage it dawns on the mystic that:

This uttering of praise is the omission of praise on my part, for this praise is proof of my being, and being is a sin.

It behoves us to be not-being in the presence of His being: in his presence what is our being? Blind and blue! (I: 517)

(Confronted) with such an all-conquering Lord, how should anyone not die (to self) unless he be a vile wretch? (I: 530)

In such a mood of surrender Rumi discovered individuality in non-individuality. (I: 1735) But man must emerge from this ecstasy and rapture in order consciously to capture greater heights. From self-negation he must leap forward to self-affirmation: Says Rumi in such a state:

نتي بيه ثبت باشد در سخن
نيست اين و نیست آن هیچ و اگذار
این در آموذ ای پیدا در آن ترکمی
نتي بگذار و همان هستی پرست

Cease from negating and begin to affirm.

Come, leave off (saying) “This is not”, and “That is not”; Bring forward that one who is Real Being,

Leave negation and worship only that Real Being. (VI: 640-41)
In the ultimate reaches of life the subtle difference between existence and non-existence disappears. Both negation and affirmation are possible at the same time. Both are true. Both are valid.

Such a non-existent one who hath gone from himself is the best of beings, and the great (one). He hath passed away (fanā) in relation to the passing away of his attributes in the Divine attributes, (but) in passing away (from selfhood) he really hath the life everlasting (baqā).

All spirits are under his governance; all bodies too are in his control.

He that is overpowered in Our grace is not compelled; nay, he is one who freely chooses devotion (to Us);

In sooth the end of free-will is that his free-will should be lost here. (IV: 396-402)
Chapter II

THE INFLUENCE OF RUMI ON THE CULTURE OF

THE INDO-PAKISTAN SUB-CONTINENT
I

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD OF RUMI'S STUDIES
IN MUSLIM INDIA

During the seven hundred years since Rumi's death scores of books have been written about him. He was a legend in his own lifetime and nothing has since happened to diminish his significance. In fact his stature has risen with the years and today he is universally acknowledged as the greatest mystic poet of any age.

A year before Rumi's birth, Sultan Qutbuddin Aibak, a Turk, became the first Muslim sovereign to ascend the throne of Delhi. The eminent saints, Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariā and Khawja Qutbuddin Bakhtīār Kāki, who lived in the Turkish Empire in India, were contemporaries of Rumi. India indeed had a long tradition of *Tasawuf*. The author of *Kashf-al-Mahjub*, Syed Ali Hujwiri, had settled down in Lahore during the Ghaznavi period, and his successors had, for three centuries, carried aloft the torch of *Tasawuf* in Muslim India. By the late thirteenth century Rumi's message had become widespread and vastly influential in many parts of the new home-land of the Turks. Yunus Emre, the most significant literary figure of Turkish Anatolia was already writing simple poems in Turkish and was trying in his own inimitable way to carry Rumi's message of love to the Turks. The emigrants from Turkey who flocked for a whole century to the Court of Delhi Sultans could not have been unaware either of Rumi or of Yunus Emre. By the end of the thirteenth century the Chishtia and Suhrawardy orders of mystics had succeeded in attracting a large
number of Hindu converts to Islam. The Mowlavi Order, which was
founded after the death of Rumi, did not appear to command much
following in Muslim India. Nor is there evidence of the *Mathnawi*
being read extensively during the Turkish Empire in India. Persian
was still an alien tongue and the Turks were busy consolidating their
conquests. The Khaljis overthrew the Turks in 1290 A.D. and the
Government passed for the first time to the Indian Muslims. Alaud-
din Khalji learnt Persian after his accession. Eminent Saint-Scholars
like Amir Khusrau and Hasan flourished during his reign. Shaikh Niza-
muddin Aulia, one of the greatest saints of India lived during this
period. Poetry and music were inextricably mixed up with mysticism
and the *Mathnawi* which was in Persian began to be read seriously
for the first time in Muslim India. Both Persian and Turkish flourished
side by side. Babar, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, was a Cha-
ghatai Turk. He could write with ease both in Turkish and Persian.
But he wrote his Memoirs in Turkish. Babarnamah was translated
for the first time in Persian during the reign of Akbar by Abdur Rahim
Khān-i Khānān.

Akbar's reign (1556-1605) is indeed a golden age for Persian
literature in Muslim India. As a young boy Akbar had come into con-
tact with Sufis and Sufi doctrines in Persia. The impact on his juvenile
mind was so deep that he devoted the rest of his life to translating
into action what he considered to be the essence of Sufism. In his
zeal, however, to exploit the Sufi doctrine to consolidate his Empire
he forgot the fundamentals of the faith which the Sufis sought to
carry to the people. This was one of the most troubled periods of
Indian Islam. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi raised a banner of revolt against
the threatened heresy of Akbar. His contribution to Islamic thought
is considered to be the concept of *Wahdat-i Shuhud*. It was a challenge
to the popular mystical concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud* which had been
so widely popularised by Ibn-i Arabi. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi argued
that it is wrong to say that the world is a shadow of the Supreme
Reality. He emphasised that God is a separate entity and that He
exists as a distinct reality in His own right. In his opinion, if the world
is assumed to be unreal then the whole moral responsibility which has
been imposed by Islam upon man would cease to be meaningful.
The most powerful disciple of Ibn-i Arabi in Rumi's day was his own friend, Sadruddin Qonyavi, who exercised considerable influence on the contemporary thinkers. The inroad of Greek philosophy into the thought of Islam, which Rumi had set about consciously to combat like al-Ghazāli, two centuries before him, became more corrosive with the advocacy of Ibn-i Arabi's thought by Sadruddin Qownvi. Ibn-i Arabi maintains that there is nothing but God while the Quran declares, "There is but one God". Most interpreters have sought to expound the Mathnawi in terms of the system associated with Ibn-i Arabi. This was indeed a departure from the fundamental concept of God. Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi saw the danger. He was imprisoned by Jahangir because a dynamic affirmation of the unity of God offers a challenge to the many gods who rule the universe in their own despotic way. Akbar nearly set up himself as a god to be worshipped by the many sects and religions that inhabited India, on the plea that the essence of all religions was after all the same and that in the person of the king was symbolised all that was best in different religions. The authority of Rumi could not conceivably be used in support of such a doctrine. It is no wonder that Abul Fazal, one of the leading lights of the Court of Akbar, complains of the Mathnawi being rare in his day. It was with some difficulty that he could lay his hands on a copy while accompanying the king on a hunting expedition. The spirit of Sirhindi's revolt against Akbar's heresy was more in conformity with the message of the Mathnawi. Both were not in favour in the Court. Hāfiz, rather than Rumi, was the beau ideal of a hero. Ibn-i Arabi, rather than al-Ghazāli, was in vogue.

With Jahangir's marriage to Nur Jahān, a native of Iran, the links with Persia became stronger. Jahangir was the first Muslim sovereign of India to write his Memoirs in Persian. The Mathnawi by now was recognised as one of the leading works in Persian but it was not until the reign of Shāh Jahān that it found a place in the regular curriculum of studies. Abdul Lateef Abbāsi who lived during Shāh Jahān's reign (1628-1658) devoted a life-time to an elaborate study of the Mathnawi. He prepared an authentic text. He wrote a book, Latāif al-Ma'navi, in which he offers an explanation of the obscure verses in the Mathnawi. He also prepared a dictionary of difficult words in the
Mathnawi under the title of *Lātāf al-lughāt*. From now onwards the arrested interest in the Mathnawi finds full expression and a spate of commentaries, translations, and selections are published. The Mathnawi secured a place of prominence in the text books. During the reign of Aurangzeb (1660-1707) who reversed Akbar’s religious policy the Mathnawi gained unprecedented popularity. It was freely quoted from the pulpit and the platform and scores of books were written. Among the leading commentators of the period were Āqil Khān Rāzi, an outstanding scholar and poet, and his son-in-law, Syed Shukrullāh Khān Khāksār. The decline of the Mughal Empire marked the height of the Mathnawi’s popularity in Muslim India. It was written during a period of turmoil and it evoked much interest and response in somewhat similar conditions obtaining in Muslim India. A general sense of insecurity perhaps led Muslims to seek solace in the Quran and its beautiful interpretation by the author of the Qur’an in Pahlavi. But all the books written on or about the Mathnawi were fragmentary in that none of them truly succeeded in capturing Rumi’s perspective of Islam as a revolutionary force in history. Some books confined themselves to an explanation of difficult words and obscure verses, others concentrated on the mystical meaning with such meticulous care and detail that the essential purpose of the message was obscured. Some authors waxed eloquent about the beauty and artistic excellence of Rumi’s verse but they missed the point that he had not written poetry for poetry’s sake. Those who dealt with his philosophy did grave injustice to him in that almost all of them analysed his thought from a purely pantheistic point of view. Among eminent authors of this period the following deserve to be mentioned.

1. Muhammad Abid
2. Shāh Afzal Allāhābādi
3. Syed Shukrullāh Khan
4. Khawjā Ayub Pārsā Lahori
5. Wali Muhammad Akbarbādi
6. Bahlol Barki
7. Abdul Fattāh
8. Khalifa Kheishgi Kasuri
9. Maulavi Muhammad Ridā

One of the most colourful personalities of this period was Hāji
Imādullāh. His discourses in Urdu on the *Mathnawi* created unprecedented popular interest in Rumi. People thronged to Thana Bhawan to hear Hāji Imādullāh’s lectures. His exposition of the *Mathnawi* was simple, direct and effective. He sought to create a balance between those who emphasised the *shari‘a* to the detriment of the *tariqa*, and those who emphasised the *tariqa* at the expense of the *shari‘a*. Both, he suggested, were not mutually exclusive. Neither could be ignored with impunity. Both had to be cultivated and a synthesis of the two alone could help develop an integrated personality. His commentary on the *Mathnawi* in Persian, *Sharh-i Mathnawi Maulānā Rumi*, is perhaps the first attempt of its kind in Medieval Muslim India to present an activist interpretation of Rumi. Hāji Imādullāh, a leader of the freedom movement, often referred to as the Mutiny by the British historians, was eminently equipped to undertake this task. He had to flee the country to escape the wrath of the British. He settled down in Mecca where he continued to offer an exposition of the *Mathnawi*. His lectures in Arabic were no less provocative and interesting than his discourses in Urdu.

The Medieval period of Rumi’s studies in Muslim India comes to a close with the monumental commentary in Persian by Abdul Ali Muhammad Ibn Nizāmuddin of Lucknow whose learning gained him the honorific title *Bahrul Ulum* (The Ocean of Learning). He died in 1819 A.D.
II

RUMI'S STUDIES IN BRITISH INDIA

Persian which was the court language of the Mughals was abolished as a medium of instruction by the British in 1835. The Battle of Plassey in 1757 had sealed the fate of Muslim India but it was to take another century before the last of the Mughals, Bahādur Shāh Zafar, was banished to Burma in 1858. The Muslims who had lived in India for nearly a thousand years were now subjects of an alien power. They were a defeated, frustrated and a leaderless community. Syed Ahmad Khān, a subordinate judge, stepped into this void and started the M.A.O. College at Aligarh in 1875. Sir Syed’s ideas attracted distinguished supporters who came to be known collectively as the Aligarh School. One of these men was Shibli Numāni. Since he did not go to an English school, Shibli could not find any employment, and in spite of his brilliance he ended up as a copy writer in a Collector’s Court on a salary of 15 Rupees per month at the age of 25. In 1883 he joined the M.A.O. College, Aligarh as an Asst. Professor of Arabic. At 37, he received the much coveted title of Shamsul Ulema (the Sun of Scholars). In the early years of the twentieth century he wrote a biography of Rumi, the first significant study in modern Muslim India. It was significant, because it was written in simple and direct Urdu. The message of the Mathnawi was carried to an audience much larger than the Persian Commentaries of the earlier period could command. Not only that, Shibli realised that immense damage had been done to the spirit of the Mathnawi by the dominant influence of Ibn-i Arabi for almost every commentator had so far sought to interpret it in the Neoplatonic fashion of pantheism. Shibli rescued Rumi from Ibn-i Arabi and created a link with al-Ghazāli’s effort to rid Islam of the Greek influences which had become all the more corrosive.
through contact with the quietist aspects of Hindu and Buddhist thought in India. Ghazālī was born in Tus in Iran in the eleventh century of the Christian era. At the age of thirty-three he was a Professor in the University of Baghdad where he devoted himself to a study of the “Purpose of Philosophy”. The *Maqāsid il-Falāṣifah* (Aims of the Philosophers), a work by Ghazālī was followed by his famous book, the *Tahāfut ul-Falāṣifah*, (Incoherences of the Philosophers). Ghazālī failed to find an answer to the problems of life in philosophy. He gave up the professorship and for ten years led a life of seclusion, prayer and contemplation. He was forty-one years old when he wrote *Ihya 'Ulum ud-Din* (Revivification of Religious Sciences) and *al-Munqidh min al-Ḍalāl* (Deliverance from Error). Ghazālī’s contribution lies not only in the refutation of Greek philosophy but in finding for mysticism a place in Islam which has given it a niche and an existence of its own in Muslim polity. Ghazālī points out the impossibility of obtaining for mysticism the type of proof which is available in the problem of chemistry and mathematics. Proof on logic and mathematics is distinct from proof in mystical experience. The former deals with quantity, the latter with quality. Intuitive perception which is the core of religious experience is wholly foreign to logic. Knowing the symptoms of drunkenness is one thing, but to have the experience of being drunk is quite another. It is impossible to explain to a blind person the difference between various colours; no amount of similes and metaphors will dispel the darkness. Mysticism in India had become a plaything of monasteries. It had become an avenue of escape and withdrawal. Shibli realised the enormity of the damage which had already been done to the spirit of the *Mathnawi*. His efforts were backed up by the divine, Maulānā Ashraf Thanvi who had a commentary on the *Mathnawi* published in Urdu in six volumes.

There is a striking similarity between the essential contours of the thirteenth century of Rumi’s Persia and the twentieth century in Muslim India. The world of Islam was tottering in Rumi’s day. While on the one hand Christendom was engaged in waging a crusade against the forces of Islam, the Mongols on the other, were busy devastating the fabric of Muslim social order. So sudden was the effect of the Mongol uprising that the Muslim Empire crashed under its own weight. There
was a cry of horror throughout prostrate Islam. Baghdad, the Seat of the Caliphate, the symbol of Muslim unity resisted but for a week. The Caliphate which had existed for more than six centuries became extinct at one blow. Sa'idi’s elegy on the sack of Baghdad is a classic in Persian literature.

Rumi’s period was a period of political turmoil, economic insecurity and the general decline of Islam. The Sunnah in the thirteenth century had become for the Sufi an ideogram of mere Platonic importance; for the theologian and the legist, a mere system of laws which had no relevance to life; and for the Muslim masses nothing but a hollow shell without any meaningful value. The intellectuals had fallen for Scholasticism, a subtle poison which had eaten deep into the muscles and sinews of Muslim body-politic. It had sapped the courage of men; it had gnawed at the roots of faith and had weakened the fabric of Islam.

The Muslim society in the thirteenth century represented a decadent social order incapable of dynamic growth and divested of a capacity for resistance. And yet Islam was confronted with two formidable foes – one was the Crusader from the West, the other was the Mongol from the East. The third and perhaps the most formidable sprang from within the Muslim social order and that was the notorious tribe of Assassins headed by Hasan-bin-Sabbāh.

The plight of Islam was surprisingly similar in the twentieth century. The Caliphate of Islam was dismembered in Turkey which, instead of being the symbol of Muslim unity, became the sick man of Europe. New countries were carved out by the conquerors from the Muslim Empire in order to inflict a permanent injury on the semblance of Muslim unity which was represented by the outward structure of the Caliphate. Baghdad, which was once the seat of glory became the capital of a British colony. The sack of Delhi and Ghalib’s lament were reminiscent of Sa’idi’s elegy on the sack of Baghdad in the thirteenth century. The grand structure set up by the Mughals in India had disappeared before the onslaught of the British who had mercilessly trampled Muslims under foot. The Hindus in India and the Jews in the
Arab world combatted and demoralised the force of Islam. The edifice of Muslim social structure was hollow and weak. While it had to face formidable dangers from without, it was confronted with an equally formidable foe from within.

Both periods were marked by political turmoil, economic insecurity, religious disintegration and a decline in the forces which once made Islam a dynamic movement which rose to its full political maturity within the first century of the rise of the Prophet. The vigour and growth of Islam was equally invisible in both the periods. There was a sharp cleavage between religious thought and religious activity. Islam had been split into factions. Muslim society in India was groaning under the weight of slavery, superstition, ignorance, intellectual debauchery and moral cowardice. Escape had become piety and betrayal loyalty.

After the publication of Shibli’s biography of Rumi, the most significant work on Rumi in Modern Muslim India came out at the beginning of the First World War. It was a small Mathnawi in Persian by a poet who had until then not written anything in Persian and had in fact not learnt the language in the formal sense. It was called “The Secrets of the Self.” and the author was an Urdu poet who has since become a celebrity. Iqbal was certainly interested in music and mysticism but he had no notion of the meaning of the Mathnawi until he began to study in England (1905-1908) for his doctoral thesis, “The Development of Metaphysics in Persia”. But even then he did not fully grasp the implications of pantheism. During his stay in Cambridge, Iqbal believed in Wahdat ul-Wujud and it was much later that he understood the significance of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi’s revolt against the concept.

It was not until 1935 that Iqbal made this reference to Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi in Bál-i Jibreel:-

جس کے نفس کرم ے مس کرم احراز
کردن نہ جھکی جس کے جھنگیر کے آگی
d. وہ سے بِن سِرماہہ ملت کا نگہبان
اًلّہِ بن وقت کبابس کو خبردار

89
He that did not bow his head before Jahangir,  
He that fired the imagination of lovers of freedom.  
He was the custodian in India of the Wealth of the Millat.  
God warned him (of the danger) on time.

Meanwhile the man who fired Iqbal's imagination was Rumi. He read him for the first time during his studies in England and it took him nearly a decade to read and digest the Mathnawi.

Iqbal published Asrār-i Khudī, a small Mathnawi in Persian in 1915. He mounted a powerful attack on pantheism and denounced Hāfiz in such scathing terms that the pharisees were touched to the quick and screamed so loudly that an uproar was caused in the monasteries which considered themselves custodians of Islam. Asrār-i Khudī is by far the most significant commentary on the thought of Rumi which appeared in Modern Muslim India. It is marked by faith, vision, brevity of expression, and the conviction of a convert. The first page carries the following lines from Rumi.

Yesterday a Shaikh roamed round the city with a lamp  
(Saying) I am sick of the beasts, I am in search of a Man,  
My heart is weary of these weak-spirited companions;  
I desire the Lion of God and Rostam, Son of Zāl,  
I said, He is not to be found, we have sought Him long;  
He said, A thing which is not to be found - that is my desire.

Abandoning the alluring raptures of Hāfiz, Iqbal draws inspiration from the fervour of Rumi. To an Islam sunk in Platonic contemplation, he gives the vigorous message of monotheism which once inspired Muslims to heights of endeavour and achievement. He attacks pseudo-mystical poets, the authors of decay prevailing in Islam, and argues that only by self-affirmation, self-expression, and self-development can the Muslims become strong and free. Plato he dubs as an old hermit,
a part of the same old flock of sheep who run away from life. His thought, he characterises as poison, inebriating drink which deprives nations of the will to act and lulls them to sleep.

Asrār-i Khudi deals with the life of an individual while its complementary volume, Rumuz-i Bekhudi, the Secrets of Selflessness, published a year later, deals with the Life of a Nation. The first page of Rumuz-i Bekhudi bears the following verse of Rumi.

Strive in selflessness and discover your self.
God alone knows the Truth.

Both the Mathnawis of Iqbal, slender though they are, mark an epoch in the studies of Rumi in Modern Muslim India. Besides Iqbal, little of significance was written by any one else. Mention should however, be made of the work done by Maulānā Abdul Majīd Daryābādi—who edited Rumi’s discourses, Fihi-Mā-fīhi; Mir Walīullāh of Abbotabad and the doctoral thesis “The Metaphysics of Rumi”, by Khalīfa Abdul Hakim. The scene is, however, dominated almost entirely by Iqbal. In order to assess the influence of Rumi on Modern Muslim India one cannot do better than to attempt an assessment of his powerful impact on Iqbal.
III

IQBAL THE GREATEST COMMENTATOR OF RUMI
IN MODERN TIMES

In 1915, Asrâr-i Khudi took Muslim India by storm. The message of self-affirmation came as an agreeable surprise to those who had for centuries learnt to place a premium on self-negation. Life, Iqbal said, is a forward assimilative movement. And man is a self-contained centre, both physically and spiritually. He is an individual and the greater his distance from God the lesser his individuality. He must therefore create the attributes of God in himself and become a unique individual. In the background of India's stupor and slavery Iqbal highlights the fact that life is an endeavour for freedom. In this endeavour he makes Rumi his master and guide. He commends him to his readers in the following terms in Asrâr-i Khudi.

Create alchemy from a handful of dust,
Kiss the threshold of a perfect Man.
Light your candle like Rumi,
and burn Rumi with the fire of Tabriz.

Iqbal mentions it specifically in the introductory verses of Asrâr-i Khudi that he owes his maturity of thought and loftiness of vision to none else than Rumi. He compares himself in all humility to a wave which finds refuge in the ocean that is Rumi. It is he, Iqbal acknowledges, who has caused a consternation in his heart. It is he who has provided the healing balm to which Iqbal owes the unique peace of mind which he seems to have achieved after a period of restlessness that goes with the cravings of the heart, unaware both of its potential
bearings and its final destination. Rumi then is the guide who takes him firmly by the hand and leads him to summits of faith and revelation where the most complex of problems are resolved with the ringing clarity of conviction which springs from inner faith. The clarion call is sounded by Rumi and Iqbal responds with all his heart. It is the resplendent light of Rumi in which Iqbal basks with a singular ecstasy. It is the dawn of vision, a new world, an *elan vital*, the discovery of a new personality, the opening of unprecedented vistas of thought and activity.

The *Mathnawi* of Rumi comprises thousands of verses in which the poet has beautifully woven in numerous didactic stories from which a moral springs up suddenly as a complete surprise, an original experience. Iqbal’s *Mathnawi* is a slender one and does not depend for its effect on didactic stories. The difference between the two *Mathnawis* underlines the essential difference between the two ages. While the reader in Rumi’s day had ample leisure to delve into six volumes of poetry, the reader in Iqbal’s day was hard pressed for time and could not be expected to sift for himself the grain from the chaff. Iqbal is, therefore, more direct and perhaps less poetic than Rumi in the treatment of his subject.

Rumi is not a thinker in the strict sense of the word: He generally makes assertions and tries to invest them with power by means of analogies. Iqbal is a systematic thinker *par excellence*. His mind is trained for abstract thinking of a high order. But he invests the problems with such an intense beauty as makes the reader forget the difference between philosophy and poetry.

There is an enormous difference between giving expression to an experience and giving expression to an idea. One experience does not necessarily follow another like premises in syllogism. We can deduce one thought from another, but we cannot deduce one experience from another. While reading the *Mathnawi* of Rumi, and Iqbal’s *Aṣrār-i Khudī*, we find ourselves not only in the presence of a mind but in the presence of a highly individual and self-concentrated personality. Experience of a personality cannot possess a logical sequence since
logical sequence is a characteristic of thought. Therefore when thoughts are interwoven with experience and it is the expression of experience which is primarily intended, thoughts have to be scattered about as they are both in the works of Rumi and Iqbal. However it is comparatively easier to summarise Iqbal's thought without doing any damage to the spirit of his work than is possible in the case of Rumi.

We propose briefly to examine the works of Iqbal with a view to providing the reader with some idea of his interpretation of Rumi to whom indeed he owes an immense debt of gratitude. But this is certainly mutual in that Iqbal is the only thinker in the modern age who truly understood the significance of Rumi and rescued him from his admirers who had dragged him to the monasteries and had identified him with the decadent Sufism which Rumi had once set about to repudiate so forcefully. Iqbal's treatment of Rumi is inevitably selective for he has underlined aspects which in his view are significant in the context of the world in which Iqbal lived and struggled for the revival of Islam. Iqbal finds support in Rumi for his activist view of life and in doing so he relies much more on the Mathnawi than the Diwan. From both he selects verses which seem to suit his purpose and invests them with a new meaning.

Within eight years of the publication of his first work, the Asrār-i Khudi, Iqbal came out with the Message of the East, Payām-i Mashriq, in 1923. It is a telling reply to Goethe's Western Diwan. The influence of Hafiz had spread even to the West where the German poet Goethe was one of his great admirers. Iqbal's faith in Rumi had by now become so strong and contagious that he sincerely believed that the soothing balm provided by Hafiz was a mere escape from reality and that Rumi's call for confrontation and self-affirmation was the answer. By the time Payām-i Mashriq came out, the effects of the First World War had begun to be seen. The Western civilisation was visibly on the decline. The states based on the narrow concept of nationalism were crumbling. The civilisation which once seemed so completely to dazzle the East now stood discredited in the eye of its own people. The foundations of the old order had been shaken and a new order was coming into its own. There was a restlessness in the minds of men who were yearning
for something of which they were but dimly aware. The East was awakening from its centuries-old slumber and was pulsating with new hopes and aspirations. A revolution was in the offing.

There is no direct attack on Hafiz in Payam-i Mashriq but it is perfectly clear that the burden of the song is that it is Rumi who provides the answer to the ills of modern man and not the pseudo-mystic poets. The world needs not art for art's sake but a sincere and profound commitment to the cause of humanity. Iqbal proclaims proudly that he has learnt the secret of life and death—both of individuals and that of nations—from Rumi.

Saturated with the discovery of his own inner self Iqbal could no longer contain the ecstasy within himself. He sang rapturously of the song which had touched the inner-most chords of his being. Having drunk deep at the fountain of Rumi he proceeded to inspire others with the haunting music and magical cadence of his poetry. With Rumi Iqbal comes to the conclusion that intellect belongs to Satan and love to Adam.

Love, says Rumi, is the remedy of our pride and self-conceit, a physician of all our infirmities. Only he whose garment is rent by love becomes entirely unselfish. Love is a mighty spell, an enchantment. It puts reason to silence. Reason has its own place but it has its own limitations. Love takes a leap into the unknown while Reason pauses to ponder. Iqbal ends his poem on Jalal and Hegel—symbols of love and intellect—with a verse from Rumi:

With intellect you seek to traverse the path of love?
With a candle you have set out to search the sun?

Rumi's verse echoes the agony of a soul in love. The direct explosive force of expression, the ecstatic fervour and enthusiasm of Rumi's verse is not to be found elsewhere. Iqbal readily recognises this force
and invites the reader to share his own experience of the discovery of
the power and beauty of Rumi's verse:

Come, for I bring from the barrel of the master from Rum,
A wine of words which is far more potent than the wine
of grapes.

Bring a poem, a verse from the Master of Rum, demands Iqbal, so
that his soul can delve deep into the fire that sprang from Shams-i
Tabriz, the man who completely transformed the personality of Rumi:

It is the impact of such men of God that produces the subtle
vision which enables one to comprehend Reality. The philosophers
lead one nowhere. They only increase confusion, doubts and suspicions
and the fire of faith eludes them. In the history of man only the saints
and prophets have inspired humanity to heights of great endeavour
while philosophers, dabbling in abstract thought, have merely ended
up in crippling man's capacity for action. Iqbal chooses a man of God
in preference to a man of thought.

Avicenna got lost in the dust of the caravan while Rumi
laid his hand on the veil of the beloved on the camel.

He went aloft and found the jewel while the other was
captured in a whirlpool, like a straw.

Both Rumi and Iqbal recognise the importance of intellect in the
life of man but both place an over-whelming emphasis on intuition
and love as against intellect as a means of achieving higher knowledge.
In fact intellect and intuition are aspects of the same search for Reality.
One is limited, the other is not. The emphasis on intuition, rather than
intellect, is explained by the exaggerated importance their contemporaries attached to reason. Both argue that men of reason should, through
a process of reason, recognise the serious limitations of intellect to
comprehend the totality of Truth. In his “Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,” Iqbal has pointed out: “Experience shows that truth revealed through pure reason is incapable of bringing that fire of living conviction which personal revelation can bring. That is the reason why pure thought has so little influenced man, while religion has always revealed individuals and transformed the whole society”.

The apparent belittling of intellect, both in Rumi and Iqbal, is a protest against the gross exaggeration of its role in life. Like Rumi, Iqbal looks upon Satan as the perfect embodiment of knowledge which becomes an instrument of terrible destruction without the guiding hand of love.

“The modern man”, says Iqbal, “with his philosophies of criticism and scientific specialism finds himself in a strange predicament. His naturalism has given him an unprecedented control over the forces of Nature but has robbed him of faith in his own future. Wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, he has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought, he is living in open conflict with himself, and in the domain of economic and political life, he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless energy and infinite gold hunger which is gradually killing all higher striving in him and bringing him nothing but life-weariness”.

It is in such a situation that Iqbal finds Rumi relevant for he beckons man to higher goals. He stops at nothing short of God Himself.

This is an apparent reference to Rumi’s verse:

Rumi inspires man with faith, hope and courage. It is not the longevity of life that matters; to hanker after years of soulless barren living brings no fulfillment. It is the intensity of life which transforms the character of living. The search for security leads one to withdrawal, escape and quietude. One must take life by the forelock and live dange-
rously. There is peace and quiet on the coast but the pearl is only for those who delve deep into the turbulent sea. The aim of life is to create that self-concentrated individual, the Perfect Man, who resolves all conflicts, dissolves all paradoxes, absorbs all attributes of God in himself and remains intact and immortal.

قدم در جستجوی آدمی زن خدا هم در سه آدمی هست

Set out to seek the Perfect Man,
God too is in search of such a Man.

After the publication of Payām-i Mashriq in 1923, four years were to elapse before we see another work by Iqbal. These were years of turmoil and tribulation for Islam in India. In 1921 the Muslims had led the first mass movement in India against the tyranny of the British rule. There seemed for a while no limits which they might not surpass. For a while it seemed they had discovered their inner unity and strength. It proved to be a passing phase.

By 1923 the country was torn asunder by inner dissensions; fear and suspicion had gained an upper hand, unity was giving way to bitterness; accord and enthusiasm had yielded to disunity and depression. The Hindus who seemed earlier to make common cause with the Muslims to wrest freedom for India were now raising slogans of Shuddi and Sangathan, a challenge to Muslim India which was placed on notice that unless it surrendered its Islamic identity, it could not hope to find a place in the country. The Muslims were called upon to establish their credentials as Indians. The Hindus, it was said, were a nation, the Muslims merely a community. They must therefore adjust their responses to the mother-land in which they were but a minority.

The abolition of the Caliphate in Turkey in March, 1924, came as a stunning blow to Indian Muslims who had espoused the cause with such passion and conviction. The reaction was one of horror and deep dismay. Iqbal alone, among the contemporary Muslim leaders of India, was able to perceive the change in its proper perspective. For him the abolition of Khilafat was no disaster. On the contrary he hailed it as an act of Ijtihād, an evidence of vision and imagination on the part
of Muslim Turkey. The republican form of government, he said, was not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but had also become a necessity in view of the new forces that were set free in the world of Islam. He saw that among the Muslim nations of the day, Turkey alone had shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained the self-consciousness. She alone had passed from the ideal to the real. Iqbal heartily welcomed the development.

But the Muslim world in the twenties was clearly at bay. The holy land of Islam was in the custody of non-Muslim mandatories. Turkey had been dismembered. New Arab provinces were being created out of the Turkish Empire. Brother was being set against brother. In India Hinduism was becoming increasingly militant.

Iqbal watched the scene with growing concern. He was no mere observer. He was a committed man. There was little, however, he could do just yet to help resolve the dilemma. The solution was in the offing but a few more years were to elapse before it could take the shape which was later to change the destiny of Indian Islam. Meanwhile Iqbal’s interest in Rumi remained undiminished. By 1927, when Zubur-i Ajam was published, Iqbal was already proclaiming with a measure of pride:

مرآ بنگکر کچرندوستان دیگر نمی پینی

Look at me for you won’t find another in India.
The son of a Brahmin has mastered the secrets of Rum and Tabriz.

In December 1930, presiding at the annual session of the All India Muslim League at Allahabad, Iqbal said: “The political bondage of India has been and is a source of infinite misery to the whole of Asia. It has suppressed the spirit of the East and wholly deprived her of that joy of self-expression which once made her the creator of a great and glorious culture”. Iqbal bemoaned the fact that Indian Muslims were devoid of the right type of leaders. He elaborated, “By leaders I mean men who, by divine gift or experience, possess a keen perception of the trend of modern history. Such men are really the
driving force of a people, but they are God’s gift and cannot be made to order”. Little did he realise that God had destined that Iqbal should fill the void and provide the leadership which Indian Islam lacked so lamentably. It was in this address that Iqbal formulated the demand for a separate homeland for Muslims. Little did he know in 1930 that within seventeen years his dream was to come true. The decade of the thirties was the decade of Iqbal for he dominated not only the literary scene but his was by far the most potent influence on the political life of Muslims. He articulated their inner-most thoughts and gave a shape and direction to their vague and wayward yearnings. He provided them with a goal, an identity, a personality which was soon to blossom forth in the shape of the world’s largest Muslim state that was Pakistan in 1947.

Iqbal was at the summit of his political, philosophical and poetical prowess when Jāved Nāma, his magnum opus was published in 1932. Designed after the pattern of Dante’s Divine Comedy, the poem describes the poet’s journey to the celestial spheres in the company of Rumi, his philosopher, friend and guide who helps unravel the mysteries of life. Iqbal soars to the lofty heights of heavens. Jāved Nāma is indeed a book from another world.

Having realised the limitations of reason, Iqbal asks God for that grace, that flash of light which dawns on the soul of man and transforms’ his very being. He begs to be admitted into the mysteries that elude the grasp of intellect.

You have endowed me with reason, grant me that madness as well. Admit me into the inner frenzy (of the Soul)

For life without light is a misery, Intellect a force for separation, and religion a mere compulsion.

The soul of Rumi appears on the horizon and expounds for
Iqbal the mystery of the Prophet's ascension to the highest heaven for he is now about to embark on a similar voyage of discovery. Iqbal uses Rumi's own verse to invoke his help in this endeavour. The ghazal which he now quotes in full appears in Diwān-i Shams Tabriz and part of it Iqbal had already quoted on the first page of Asrār-i Khudi.

Show thy face, for I desire the orchard and rose-garden,
Open thy lips, for I desire sugar in plenty.
In one hand a wine-cup and in one hand a curl of the beloved,
Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire.

Before leading Iqbal to the celestial spheres Rumi lays down the law and spells out the purpose and the objective of the flight.

You are alive or dead or about to die,
Seek the testimony of three witnesses,
The first witness is the consciousness of your own self, i.e.,
Seeing yourself with your own light,
The second witness is the consciousness of others, i.e.,
Seeing yourself in the light of others.
The third witness is the consciousness of God's Being,
And seeing yourself in Divine light.
If you remain steadfast in the face of this light,
You become living and eternal like God Himself,
To see the Divine Being without any veil is the purpose of life.
A Believer does not stop short of the Divine Attributes,
For Mustapha was not content except with God Himself,
Ascension is nothing but the desire,
On the part of man to come face to face with the Beloved,
A confrontation with the Supreme Reality.

Iqbal completely surrenders himself to Rumi and accepts his leadership without any reserve.

Go wherever Rumi takes you,
Be oblivious for a while of all else besides him.

He refers to him in the most glowing terms which leave little doubt about the nature of his relationship with the spirit of Rumi.
He hails him as the Master and guide of the righteous; he pays a tribute to his insight and vision; he calls him the paragon of love and frenzy; he follows him like a faithful disciple in the sure conviction that Rumi has scaled heights which have been allowed to few mortals.

His speech created a consternation in my soul, and every atom of my being became restless like mercury.

Rumi, that argument for love and devotion,
his speech serves as the fountain of Salsabil (in paradise) for the thirsty.

...The Master from Rum who is every moment in the Divine Presence...

...The Master from Rum who is Absorption (in God) and suffering personified...
The Master from Rum - that guide of those that have vision.
The Master from Rum - that leader of the righteous,
The one who knows every station on the way to truth.
Rumi - that mirror of the beauty of culture.

These tributes are at once eloquent, genuine and sincere. They are not the conventional outpourings of a mere poet, an expression of exaggerated generosity but a recognition, in all humility, of the greatness granted to Rumi in the field of mystic knowledge. The very fact that Iqbal could recognise this greatness, even though he himself was by all known standards a great thinker and a poet, shows the affinity between the two kindred spirits. Iqbal addresses Rumi with great reverence as the knower of secrets and refers to himself as a companion who seeks insight and vision from the Master.

In the first stage of the celestial journey in which Rumi leads Iqbal to the Moon he offers him the following advice:

Rumi said, "rid yourself of doubts and get used to the ways and customs of lovers.
The Moon is far from us and is yet so familiar, This is only the first stage in our journey.

Rumi then stipulates the rule:
Life consists of seeing the Truth.  
To see oneself without any veil is life.  
When man gets deliverance from the bondage of life  
God Himself sends blessings on such a man.

The whole of Jāved Nāma is an eloquent testimony, if one were at all needed, of Iqbal's immense identity of thought with Rumi. His debt is no doubt enormous but Iqbal is no mere borrower. His interpretation of Rumi is entirely original and unique for no one before him presented Rumi in the light that his latest disciple in Muslim India has thrown on him.

Rumi's indeed is by far the most dominant influence on Iqbal who had by now fathered the idea of Pakistan - a homeland for the Indian Muslims. At the end of Jāved Nāma, Iqbal commends to the younger generation the leadership of Rumi, and he calls upon them to study him with care, sympathy and understanding.

Make Rumi your companion on the road you tread,  
So that God may bestow warmth and frenzy (of love) on you,  
For Rumi knows the kernel from the husk,  
He is steadfast and sure-footed in the way of the Friend.  
They wrote commentaries on him but the real man eluded their grasp.  
His meaning evaded us like the gazelle.  
From his words they learnt the dance of the body,  
And closed their eyes to the dance of the spirit.  
The dance of the body kicks up some dust,  
(But) the dance of the spirit shatters the heavens.
The whole of Jāved Nāma is replete with references to Rumi who unravels the mysteries of the world to our poet. He rids him of doubt and superstition. He rids him of fear and apprehension. He lifts him from the dreary darkness of the earth to the lofty height of the heavens. He leads him where the angels fear to tread. The mercurial spirit of Iqbal flees from heaven to heaven in the calm company of Rumi whose soul is illumined. A new traveller loyally follows in the foot-steps of the one who is familiar with the mysteries of this world. He wades through valleys, climbs the slippery peaks of mountains, and deftly manouevers dangerous bridges over stormy streams with a guide who has traversed these regions a hundred times over. The beauties of nature open up to Iqbal as never before, the mysteries are laid bare before his eyes and he sees Rumi as no one has ever seen him before. In this voyage of discovery, Rumi reveals to Iqbal what all the logicians and thinkers of the world had combined to conceal.

Iqbal who had come into prominence as an Urdu poet of great promise at the turn of the twentieth century, wrote little in Urdu since his return from Cambridge in 1908. It was not until 1924 that his first collection of Urdu poems, Bāng-i Darā, was published. This is the only book which contains no reference to Rumi. His second collection of Urdu verse, Bāl-i Jibreel (The Flight of Gabriel) came out in 1935. In this book Iqbal surpasses himself as an Urdu poet. No other work comes anywhere near Bāl-i Jibreel in the simplicity and spontaneity of expression. The beauty of his verse captivated the readers who waited so long to hear an Urdu poem from Iqbal. For the first time the Urdu reader of Iqbal is introduced to Rumi who was by now a familiar figure to the limited readers of his Persian works. Iqbal sets about systematically, in a dialogue between the Master and the Disciple, to provide the reader with an outline of Rumi’s thought. The selection of questions is indeed significant. It throws some light on the problems which Iqbal considered important in the life of the modern Muslim; and it provides us with a key to an understanding of the essential message of Rumi as Iqbal understood it.

Iqbal complains to Rumi that modern knowledge has rendered religion irrelevant and useless. The answer is telling:
When knowledge strikes on the heart (is acquired through mystical experience), it becomes a helper;
When knowledge strikes on the body (is acquired through the senses), it becomes a burden.

There is nothing wrong with knowledge as such. It depends on how we use it. If we make it a means of material gain alone we will be caught in the cobweb of contradictions which make us a slave of our own instruments of power. But the knowledge used in the furtherance of spiritual ends will free us from this dilemma and bring us harmony, accord and peace which we so ardently desire in the midst of the raging and tearing conflicts in which man finds himself involved.

Iqbal draws Rumi's attention to the sheen, veneer and dazzle of Western civilization and says that music, instead of sublimating the spirit, drags it down to baser instincts. Rumi answers that music is not everyone's meat, not every bird feeds on figs. It needs much care and discrimination to use this medium for higher ends for it can easily degenerate into something base and sensual, as it has in the West.

Iqbal tells Rumi that he has drunk deep of the Eastern and Western lore and yet he remains unsatisfied for his soul still aches and yearns for peace. Rumi answers.

At the hands of incompetent people you will fall more ill,
Come towards the mother who will nurse you to health.

Iqbal demands an exposition of the theory of holy war in Islam. At the back of his mind is obviously the difficulty that shedding of human blood cannot be sanctioned in a polity where love and peace are the governing considerations. The answer of Rumi is as brief as it is convincing in the context of man’s submission to God:
Break God's image also by God's command,
Cast at the Beloved's glass the Beloved's stone.

Reverting to the dominant influence of the Western civilisation, Iqbal states that the East has simply been taken in and that the Western beauties, in the eyes of an Easterner, are much more bewitching than the *houri* of Paradise. Rumi retorts that the reaction is superficial. Anyone with a measure of insight would see that even though silver appears to be white, it blackens the hands as soon as you touch it. Appearances are deceptive and those who penetrate into the meaning of things learn to discriminate between the real and the superficial.

Iqbal advises the master that the modern system of education is producing a hot-blooded immature youth who has readily fallen a prey to the West. Rumi warns that if a bird which has yet to form its wings chooses to take to flight, it is merely inviting ferocious cats to tear him into pieces.

Iqbal enquires of the relationship between religion and nationalism and asks of the priority in the event of a conflict of loyalties between the two. Rumi answers:

Iqbal asks a question about the nature of man. What is his secret? What is his place in the scheme of the universe? The answer is beautiful and pregnant with meaning:

His exterior is easily disturbed by a mosquito,
But His interior spreads over the seven skies.

"What, then, is the purpose of man?" asks Iqbal, "Is it intellect or love?" Rumi replies without a moment's hesitation:

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Man is vision, the rest is superfluous,
And the vision is that which reveals the Friend;

Turning to the destiny of nations, Iqbal seeks the causes of the downfall and destruction of peoples. Rumi says that the one reason which leads to ruin is the adoption of wrong values. Every previous nation that perished, he points out, met its doom because it mistook stone to be scented wood:

بر هلاکت امس پیشین که بسود
زانکه بِر جندل گمان بردنده عود

Unless, therefore, one’s values are straight, the whole pursuit can go awry and end in smoke. On the nature of knowledge Rumi is emphatic that reason does not lead very far; one must abandon it, for the bewilderment born of love alone can produce the vision that comprehends Reality.

زبرکی نفروش و حیراتان بخر
زهرکی ظن است و حیراتان نظر

Barter your wisdom for bewilderment for intellect is mere conjecture and bewilderment brings about vision.

Iqbal complains that despite his attainments he is steeped in poverty while his less gifted friends have attained high and powerful positions. Rumi tells him not to worry on this score for it is better by far to serve a man of God than to hob-nob with the high and mighty.

Iqbal asks a question about that eternal problem of free will and pre-determinism, a complex issue which has baffled the mind of man since the creation of Adam. Rumi gives a simple spontaneous reply as if the matter had never raised a shadow of doubt in his mind. It all depends, he says, on the man who exercises the prerogative of free will. The falcon when he decides to take a flight soars in the direction of the king, while a crow’s flight takes him to the graveyard;

بال یا یان را سوی سلطان برده
بال زاغان را به گودستان برده

Asked about the objectives of Islam, Rumi repudiates the sackcloth and clearly affirms that monasticism and withdrawal is a Christian
institution and that Islam prefers the struggle and the glory that ensues from confrontation with life;

In our religion the right thing is war and majesty, in the religion of Jesus the right thing is retirement to the cave and mountain.

How, then could one revive the spiritual forces of the heart? Iqbal enquires. Rumi answers:

Be an humble slave of God and go freely on earth like a steed, and do not be a coffin which people have to carry on their shoulders.

How can one carry conviction, asks Iqbal, about Resurrection which is a cardinal principle of faith in Islam. Reason cannot comprehend that which is beyond sense-perception and the concept of Resurrection after death is something which defies the limited intellect of man. The answer of Rumi is characteristic: “Then be Resurrection, and you will see Resurrection. This indeed is the condition of seeing all things!”

One has to create a consternation and bring about a revolution before one can begin to see its implications. In the quiet of the cave, the terror and turmoil of Resurrection will no doubt appear remote and irrelevant.

“How is the life of nations fortified?” asks Iqbal. Rumi replies.

If you are a seed the birds will peck at you,
If you are a bud the boys will pluck you,
Conceal the seed and cast the net wide,
Conceal the bud and the grass on the roof.
The heart of man, rather than his head provides the key to his progress. We easily deceive ourselves into believing that we have a piece of flesh which is euphemistically called the heart. But the heart Rumi talks about is another matter; it consists not of flesh but of a determination to seek out the men of God and follow in their footsteps. This is what he tells Iqbal in Bāl-i Jibreel:

You also claim to possess a heart, (but) the heart takes one to the height of heaven and not to the depths (of degradation).

You take your own heart to be a heart, and you have given up the search for the people of the heart.

Asked about the source of knowledge and wisdom, Rumi says.

Knowledge and wisdom spring from earning a lawful livelihood; love and compassion spring from a lawful livelihood.

Neither the parasite nor the exploiter can have any notion of the sensation of earning one's bread with the sweat of one's brow and unless one passes through the mill one does not begin to have even the remotest idea of the purpose of life. With all his wealth Korah remained an ignorant man for he attributed his enormous acquisition to his own skill rather than to an act of grace on the part of God.

Iqbal poses scores of fundamental problems to Rumi and the answers he chooses from the Mathnawi provide a clue to Iqbal's activist interpretation of a poet whose works had been consigned for centuries to convents where they were used by hermits and pseudo-Sufis for purposes diametrically opposed to the spirit of Rumi. Iqbal rescues him from the pseudo-Sufis and revives his link with the reality of living Islam. People had doubts about the relevance of Rumi to the problems of today, and Iqbal refers to these doubts. In a poem entitled 'A Letter from Europe', the following lines occur in Bāl-i Jibreel.
We are used to sense-perception and the phenomenal world, we are the customers of the coast, while Rumi is a vast ocean, full of storms and mysteries.

Iqbal, you too are part of the caravan of love of which Rumi is verily the leader.

Has he vouchsafed any message to this age? For they say Rumi is a burning light on the path of Freedom?

Iqbal’s answer to this pertinent question is as follows in the words of Rumi:

Like asses, one must not eat straw and barley, Graze on Arqavan like the deer in the orchard.

Whoever subsists on straw and barley is sacrificed Whoever thrives on the light of Truth becomes the Qur'an.

He tells his readers that it is from Rumi that he has learnt the secret that the destinies of nations are made by men of action who are willing to sacrifice their all for the sake of the cause, and not by men of contemplation who weigh the pros and cons of every proposition:

Iqbal not only considers Rumi relevant to the problems of today but fervently believes that he alone can rescue the modern man from the paralysing clutches of intellect.

In the warmth of Rumi’s fire lies your remedy For you are obsessed with Western values.
I owe my insight to him, and
It is due to him that my cup can contain the Oxus.

It is a pity, laments Iqbal, that Iran has not produced another
Rumi, for the world sorely needs one.

A Rumi did not arise again from the tulip gardens of Iran,
Iran has still the same water, and the same soil, and Tabriz
is still the same.

It is with much pride that Rumi declares that in the conflict
between intellect and love, in the struggle between Rāzi the philoso­pher, and Rumi the mystic, it is Rumi who has won and it is Rāzi
who has lost.

Iqbal who had written so little in Urdu was now conscious of the
need to translate his message into the simple language of his own
people. Within a year of the publication of Bāl-i Jibreel, Zarb-i Kaleem
became available to the readers of Urdu. The very name of the book
was significant. The Pharaohs of the world had to be demolished and
destroyed by the rod of Moses. And Iqbal struck hard at the traders
in decadence wherever he found them. Love rather than intellect
was the choice he had made for himself. He chose to follow the lead
of Rumi rather than that of Avicenna.

To the pseudo-Sufis he made it clear that mysticism without a
living link with life was an exercise in futility. It is only through self­
affirmation that man can develop his personality and any system that
weakens or hampers his growth must be discarded. All prayers must
be related to life; withdrawal from life is an escape and an act of
cowardice rather than an act of piety. All one’s knowledge and power,
material and spiritual, must be pressed into the service of the commu­
nity for individual Muslims cannot be said to flourish if Islam lies
prostrate in decay and decadence.
This spiritual wisdom, this gnostic knowledge is of little value, 
If it fails to provide a remedy to the ills of the Harem. 
This nocturnal meditation, this ecstasy, these prostrations, 
Are all in vain if they fail to protect your selfhood.

He urged the Sufi to reorientate his outlook and reckon with the 
realities of life instead of seeking to run away from them on the pretext 
of meditation. There was little point in living in a fool’s paradise 
while hell was let loose around us. Confrontation with life is painful 
but it is pregnant with untold possibilities.

Your eyes are fixed on the world of miracles, 
My eyes are fixed on the world of accidents. 
The world of imagination is indeed fascinating but 
The world of life and death is much more fascinating. 
It will be no surprise if it changes your point of view, 
For the world of possibilities is beckoning you.

He called upon the Sufi to abandon the quiet of his convent and 
join him in the struggle that needed to be waged in order to rescue 
Islam from the decadence which was slowly destroying its soul.

O master of the harem; Give up the ways of the convent, 
Understand the purpose of my plaints of early morning.

Iqbal believes that if Muslims have not so far succeeded in 
their efforts to discover and fortify their souls it is because they are 
ignorant of the message of Rumi and have failed to act on it.
The string of your self is broken, for you remain oblivious of the melody of Rumi.

Iqbal was convinced that the need of the hour was to take the message of Rumi to every nook and corner. Having addressed the Indian Muslim in Urdu he reverts in 1936 to Persian to seek a larger audience. On his return from an extended visit to Afghanistan he wrote a small *Mathnawi* under the title of *Musafir*, “The Traveller”. Addressing the people of the North Western Frontier of India he gave them the following message from Rumi:

I burn you with the fire of men of God,
I commend to you a point from the Master of Rum.
Seek sustenance from God and not from Zaid or Amr,
Seek frenzy from God and not from hasheesh and intoxicants.

Do not be a customer of clay, do not be a clay-eater, do not seek clay,
For the clay-eater is constantly pale.

Seek the heart so that you gain perpetual youth,
And your face is bright like Arqavan.

Be a servant (of God) and walk proudly on earth like a steed,
Do not be a dead body which is carried over the shoulders.

At the end of the brief *Mathnawi* Iqbal reiterates that it is time he threw open the tavern of Rumi for he had seen the leaders of Islam lying drunk in the courtyard of the church, a powerful simile exposing the servility and subservience of the Muslim leadership to the
In another Mathnawi, “Pas che bāyad kard ey aqwām-i sharq”, “What then should be done, O nations of the East” published at the same time as “Musāfīr”, Iqbal acknowledges for the nth time his debt to Rumi:

In his words I burnt myself.

Paying a tribute to Rumi, Iqbal sums up the attainments of his Master.

The Master from Rum, a guide with an illumined soul,
The leader of the caravan of love and frenzy.

His station is higher than that of the moon and the sun,
The galaxy of stars form the ropes of his tent.

His breast is lit with the light of the Qur‘ān,
The world-revealing cup of Jamshid is ashamed of itself in
the presence of his mirror.

The music of that flute-player of pure disposition,
Has again stirred up a great storm in me.

Ever since Iqbal discovered Rumi in the first decade of the twentieth century, his devotion to him remained constant and complete. Towards the end of his life he could read little. He had lost an eye and the other could not stand much strain. But two books remained his constant companions — the Qur‘ān and the Mathnawi. In his last book, Armaghān-i Hejāz, which appeared posthumously in
November 1938, Iqbal devotes a whole section comprising ten quatrains to Rumi. In one of them he acknowledges with a measure of pride:

He untied many a knot of this worthless one,
He transformed the dust of the wayside into gold,
The flute of that flute-player, pure and pious
Revealed to me the mysteries of love and frenzy.

Iqbal exhorts his readers to delve deep into the thought of Rumi for he sincerely believes that it provides the panacea for the ills which afflict the Muslims of today.

Pour again that old wine down your throat,
For the kingdom of Parviz is not worth the price of a cup (of this wine)
Decorate the walls of your heart with the verses of Jalālud Din Rumi.

Learn the secret of poverty from Rumi, says Iqbal, for the rich are envious of his poverty which has rid him of his needs and has made him a self-sufficient, unique individual.

It is from the intoxicated eye of Rumi that I tasted the ecstasy of Divine nature.

Iqbal leaves little room for doubt about his debt to Rumi. He reiterates:
I took a share from his zest and warmth, 
From (the light of) his star my night became like a day.

The door of the heart was opened to me, 
From my dust they raised a new world.

It was by his grace that I came to command confidence (of the people), 
The moon and the stars reposed trust in me.

Both Rumi and Iqbal tried in their own way to rediscover and recapture the original purity of Islam in their day. Both worked and pleaded for bridging the gulf between religious thought and religious deed. Both attacked the quietist, corrosive tendencies inherent in the philosophy of the sack-cloth which increasingly came to be the cloak of Sufism. Both fought against tendencies which were reducing Islam to the status of a mere dogma. Both worked for winning for it the allegiance due to it as a complete programme of life inspired for all mankind by divine revelation. They wrote both in prose and in the animated language of sublime poetry. Both lived and worked in a period of intense gloom and deep depression. Both gave a stirring message of hope and faith that moved millions. Both faced the challenge of the times and met it with a singular success. What Rumi achieved in the thirteenth, Iqbal achieved in the twentieth century. It is no poetic boast that he claims to be the Rumi of his own day. And this claim aptly appears in his posthumous work, *Armaghān-i Hejāz*.

Like Rumi in the harem I called the people to prayers, 
From him I learnt the secrets of the soul.

He met the challenge of the medieval period, 
And I met the challenge of the Modern Age.
IV

RUMI'S STUDIES IN PAKISTAN

Rumi's influence on Pakistan is best determined by the measure of his impact on the man who conceived the idea of the Muslim State. And Iqbal not only conceived the idea but formulated it as the political demand of the Muslims of India from the platform of their leading political organization, the All-India Muslim League. He did so in his capacity as the President of the League in 1930. He died in 1938. Two years later the Muslim League passed at Lahore what is popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution. An idea which emanated from a thinker and which many dubbed a poet's dream was adopted by the whole nation. The sceptics were proved wrong. Iqbal was not there to see the emergence of Pakistan in August, 1947, but he had completed his work. Truly had he prophesied that:

بے آزادمن شرمن خواشند ودربانند و میکوئند
جھانی دا دگر کون کرد یکسرد خود آگاهی

After me they will read my poems, grasp their meaning and then they will say;
A man who knew his own self changed a whole world.

Since the creation of Pakistan, four editions comprising 11,000 copies of Asrūr-o Rumuz, the basic work of Iqbal have been published. This is certainly not a large number considering that Iqbal is the founding father of Pakistan, which has, during the last 26 years of its existence, recognised and honoured him as such. In a developing country the accent is understandably on technology. The knowledge of Persian is on the decline. One wonders how many students in the universities
of Pakistan today are familiar with the message of Iqbal as embodied in \textit{Asrār-o Rumuz}. The only Urdu work in which Rumi has been treated in some detail is \textit{Bāl-i Jabreel}. For sheer poetic beauty it is by far the best of Iqbal's collections in Urdu. Only one edition (in 1935) was published during his life-time. Since his death 16 more editions have appeared, and eleven of these came out after the establishment of Pakistan. As against this 14 editions of \textit{Bāng-i Darā} running into 76,000 copies have appeared since 1947. And this is the only work of Iqbal in which Rumi is not even mentioned because it comprises his early writings in Urdu.

This is some indication of the direction in which the wind is blowing in Pakistan. A translation of Rumi's \textit{Mathnawi} into Urdu was published in 1947 in Lahore by Moulvi Ferozuddin. Shibli's biography of Rumi which had gone out of print for some time was edited by Prof. Abid Ali Abid. The book is now available in Pakistan. In 1959 Dr. Khalifa Abdul Hakim published his "Tashbihāt-i-Rumi", in Urdu. A critical biography in English under the title "The Life and Work of Rumi" was published by the Institute of Islamic Culture at Lahore in 1956. The book has run into three editions. This is the only biography of Rumi in English. Little else of any consequence has appeared since 1947. A minor thesis at the level of a Master's Degree in Persian on some manuscripts of Rumi's works was prepared by a scholar of the Punjab University in 1966.

This is by no means an impressive performance. The regional languages of Pakistan have little to show by way of an effort at an original study or interpretation of Rumi. A well known Pushtu poet, Samundar Khan Samundar translated \textit{Rumuz-i Bekhudi} in the fifties, and one Dr. Lutfullah Badwi translated \textit{Asrār-i Khudi} and \textit{Rumuz-i Bekhudi} into Sindhi in the sixties. A complete translation of the \textit{Mathnawi} exists in Punjabi but this was not done during the Pakistan period.

Apart from influencing the thought content, one of the significant influences of Rumi was the acceptance of the \textit{Mathnawi} as a form of expression by the Urdu poets. The ghazal writer flits from idea to
idea. He thinks in brilliant flashes but to write a *Mathnawi* one has to make a sustained encounter with oneself, one has to pass through the agony of a myriad of contradictions. One has to enter into a dialogue both with oneself and with the social reality around one. The ghazals of Iqbal would not have yielded place to the *Mathnawi* if he had continued in the complacence of a conventional poet. *Mathnawi* as a form of poetic expression came to command an increasing acceptance because of the consciousness created by Rumi's adept handling of the form. While Iqbal employed it with effect, his successors in Pakistan, with some honourable exceptions, seem to have lapsed into forms which do not demand any sustained encounter with oneself. While Faiz Ahmad Faiz and N.M. Rashed show an inclination, on occasions, to enter into a dialogue with themselves and the social reality around them, the rest seem oblivious of the relevance and effect of the *Mathnawi* as a forceful form of poetic expression. After Iqbal the use of the *Mathnawi* is certainly on the decline in Pakistan.