

Life & Teachings of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Moḥammad Rūmī

Myths and Facts Regarding Sūfism's Greatest Mystical Poet

Compiled in 2006 by Timothy Conway, Ph.D., based largely upon Franklin Lewis' *Rumi: Past & Present, East & West*, Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications, 2000.

Franklin Lewis, Ph.D., of the Dept. of Middle Eastern Studies at Atlanta's Emory University, an expert on medieval Persian poet-saints Rūmī, Sanā'ī, et al., has performed yeoman service by pulling together the best scholarly work, including his own, to clarify facts and dispel myths about the illustrious 13th century Muslim Sūfī poet-preacher of Anatolia, **Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī** (1207-73).¹ Revered as **Mawlānā** (Turkish: Mevlānā), "Our Master," Rūmī is now the most widely-read poet in America and Europe as well as much of the Muslim world.

Lewis has read all the primary Persian materials on Rūmī, including the sometimes converging but oft-conflicting hagiographies (the mythologized quasi-"biographies"): 1) the *Ebtedā Nāme* or *Masnavī-ye Valadī* by Rumi's son **Sultan Valad** (composed in verse in 1291, 18 years after Rumi's passing); 2) the *Resāle-ye Sepahsālār* by Rumi's longtime disciple **Sepahsālār** (its last section on the Mawlawi/ Mevlevi Order perhaps completed by another scribe, if not by the author himself, between 1312-1320); and 3) the *Manāqeb al-'Arefīn* by **Aflākī**, a disciple of a later Mawlawi shaykh (begun in 1318, completed by 1354, based on various sources but generally less "sober," more credulous, and hence in many places less accurate than Sepahsālār's treatise. Aflākī's work was by far the most widely read over the centuries; Sepahsālār's shorter book, by contrast, was only read by a relative few Mawlawis and modern scholars, even in the 20th century, when printed versions of it began to appear. Sultan Valad's poem and Aflākī's work both strongly conform to the pious genre of saintly Sūfī hagiography; Sepahsālār's biography, by contrast, seems more independent and historical, though also containing a few errors.)

More importantly, Lewis has presented key parts of 1) the *Ma'ārif*, "Intimations," a journal of spirituality, etc., by Rūmī's father, **Bahā'al-Dīn**;² 2) the *Ma'ārif* collection of teachings from Rūmī's next guide in Sūfī disciplines, **Borhān al-Dīn**; and 3) the *Maqālāt* collection of observations by the renowned charismatic awakener of Rūmī, **Shams al-Dīn Tabrizī**.³ These three works help clear up many myths perpetrated by the hagiographers on crucial aspects of the lives of Rūmī and his three key mentors. Further, these sources show us that Rūmī's genius did *not* spring up *sui generis*, but grew out of a rich soil carefully prepared by his mentors. Realize, too, that Rūmī had also been influenced tremendously by prior Muslim Sūfī luminaries like the first great Persian spiritual poet, **Ḥakīm Sanā'ī** (d.1131) of Khorāsān (Iran), another Persian poet, **Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār** (d. c.1220), and earlier nondual, ecstatic ("God-intoxicated") "ego-extinguished" (*fanā*) Sūfī mystics like **Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī** (800-74) of Khorāsān and the publicly executed **Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj** of Baghdād (d.922).

Lewis analyzes later Sūfī writers who wrote of Rūmī, like Jāmī (1414-92), and over 100 years of modern scholarship on Rūmī. From Lewis' painstaking research emerges the following picture of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī:

Named Moḥammad at birth, after his father and after the Prophet of Islām, as a boy Rūmī was called *Jalāl al-Dīn* ("Splendor of Faith") by his elderly father, **Bahā'al-Dīn Valad** (1152-1231). Bahā'al-Dīn was a deeply mystical Muslim preacher (*vā'ez*) and jurisconsult or legal scholar (*faqih*) descended from a line of pious preacher-scholars of Balkh, a flourishing center of Muslim culture in the Central Asian region of Khorāsān (Eastern Iran). Bahā'al-Dīn, utterly devoted to God, experienced many visions, some quite psychedelic; he could often be observed standing for long periods chanting "Allāh, Allāh." The *Ma'ārif* collection of his wisdom and musings on various topics, is a rich work of poetic Persian prose, stressing remembrance of God and acquisition of Divine qualities. He was not affiliated with any particular Sūfī school. Like his father (Rūmī's grandfather), Bahā'al-Dīn espoused the rather more liberal Ḥanafī school of interpretation of the Muslim *sharī'a* legal code. He may have had as many as four wives, by whom his three sons and daughter were born. Rūmī was the youngest of his three boys.

Jalāl al-Dīn was born on September 30, 1207 in what is now Tajikistān, just beyond northeast Iran, yet part of the vast Persian cultural sphere. In contrast to what is usually stated, his birthplace was not the same town of his father's birth, Balkh, but the much smaller Vakhsh, 150 miles to the northeast, beyond the great Oxus River. When the boy was 4 or 5, Bahā'al-Dīn moved the family northwest for several years to Samarqand, a major Islamic city. Bahā'al-Dīn, contrary to later legends, was *not* a famous preacher or scholar; he wasn't a *khatib*, the one who gives the official sermon (*khotbe*) at the Friday communal prayer in the mosques. Yet he gave spiritual talks at mosques and Sūfī lodges and oversaw the spiritual practices of a small circle of disciples. Difficulties occurred for him over his use of the title *Sultan al-'ulamā*, "King of clerics," when signing his *fatwās*, and also because he tended to be critical of and shun the region's royalty and a rival theologian, Fakhr-e Rāzi. It would appear that Bahā'al-Dīn moved about in search of a special patron appreciative of his views and to escape religious rivalries and political instabilities.

Thus, Bahā'al-Dīn, his two younger sons (including 8-year-old Jalāl al-Dīn), and some other family members left Khorāsān for the West around 1216. Against what is commonly stated, he left for reasons other than "fleeing the Mongols": the Mongols, who destroyed Samarqand in 1219 and Balkh in 1221, were not yet an imminent threat when the Valad family entourage had begun the several-month journey westward. (Otherwise, why would Bahā'al-Dīn leave behind his married daughter and other family members?)

The Valad family visited the Muslim political capital, Baghdād, longtime western center of the Sūfī world, then they made the holy pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca in Arabia. After a brief sojourn in Damascus and Aleppo (in modern day Syria), Bahā'al-Dīn moved his family to the Persian-speaking Asia Minor region of Anatolia, what the Muslims called *Rūm* (now Turkey). Hence the origin of Jalāl al-Dīn's nickname, "Rūmī," "the one from Rūm." However, his disciples and most Muslims today have always generally referred to Jalāl al-Dīn by a generic title of endearment that Bahā'al-Dīn and others were also called: *Mawlānā* (Arabic) and *Mevlānā* (Turkish), "Our Master," or *Mowlavi* (Persian) "My Master." Later in life, Jalāl al-Dīn would also be called by the Persian honorific, *Khodāvandgar*, "Lord."

Legends that a young Jalāl al-Dīn met the famed Persian pharmacist poet-saint Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. c.1220) or the much earlier pioneer Sūfī poet Ḥakīm Sanā'ī (d. 1131), as alleged by Jāmī, are unfounded, though Rūmī was surely *quite influenced* by their works. Neither did he meet Sūfī sage Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (1158-1221) of eastern Iran, nor get shaped by Kubravī Sūfī order ideas or practices.

The first Anatolian town in which the Valad family settled was Āqshahr, where Bahā'al-Dīn taught general religious classes for four years (until 1221) at a *madrasa* (college) or *khāneqāh* (Sūfī lodge) built by a new patron, the Manguchak princess 'Esmati Khātun. For unknown reasons, the Valad family and some disciples shifted to the recently Islamicized hilltop town Lārenda. Here Bahā'al-Dīn taught for 7 years at a college built for him by the local Seljuk governor.

During this time, Jalāl al-Dīn came of age, and his life changed: his mother died and, in 1224, his 17th year, he married **Gowhar Khātun**. Within the next year, she gave birth to their son, '**Alā al-Dīn** (named for Rūmī's older brother, recently deceased), followed the next year by another son, **Sultan Valad**, destined to become the major organizer of the famous Mevlevi Sūfī order in his father's honor.

In 1228, Bahā'al-Dīn, now in his late 70s, was invited by Seljuk sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Kay Qubād to live at the palace lodge in Konya, thriving capital of the Rūm Seljuks. Bahā'al-Dīn, as was his custom, graciously but firmly refused the offer, and took up residence at the nearby Altunpā *madrasa*—likely well-endowed by the sultan's riches. Here, until his death in 1231, Bahā'al-Dīn taught once again his mix of Sūfī mysticism, ethics and Muslim law. (Lewis: "With the wealth ... from the sale of luxury items to Europe, the Seljuks were able to build impressive cities and to patronize Persian and Turkish poets, architects and religious and mystical teachers.... The Seljuks of Anatolia founded a great many *madrasas*, mosques and funerary monuments, proving their piety by supporting the *ulamā* [Muslim community leaders] and providing them the opportunity to preach to and convert the subject populations of Greek and Armenian Christians, as well as the incompletely Islamized Turkmen [of Anatolia]" [p. 80])

It is commonly thought that 24-year-old Jalāl al-Dīn immediately inherited the headship of this *madrasa* upon his father's passing. But evidence indicates otherwise, suggesting that Rūmī, though he'd sat at his father's side before the assemblies of disciples and had kept close company with Bahā'al-Dīn, now left his wife and boys for a few years to deepen his education among the finest instructors of Muslim

law and lore in Syria. He likely was directed to embark on such study by a saintly, ascetic disciple of his father, **Burhān al-Dīn Moḥaqiq**, who arrived in Konya in 1232 after a 15-year sojourn away from the Valad family to lead Bahā'al-Dīn's disciples as their *shaykh* and to guide young Rūmī further along the road his father would have wanted. While Burhān al-Dīn cared for Rūmī's family, Jalāl sojourned at Aleppo and later Damascus, studying conventional Arabic Islām under famous scholar **Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Adīm**. Rūmī's Syrian period of study evidently lasted from 1233-37, and may have unfolded in a few different trips of a year or more, not all at once.

Jalāl al-Dīn rejoined Burhān al-Dīn back at the Anatolian town of Kayseri, where his spiritual deepening continued in far greater earnest. Burhān al-Dīn, a prestigious spiritual teacher supported by local government patronage but not affiliated with any Sufi order, inspired by Bahā'al-Dīn's way of Sūfism, encouraged Rūmī to undergo arduous fasting on long, isolated retreats (*khalvat*)—it is said that Rūmī opted for even longer retreats of 40 days at a time. Burhān al-Dīn helped him attain natural humility, self-transcendence via self-awareness, and, key to everything, nondual love of God—realizing that God is not separate, and that awakening to God is but the beginning of one's spiritual life: “The path itself comes to an end but the stations along the way are without end, for *the journey is twofold: one to God and one in God*. The one to God has an end because it passes beyond being, the world and self, all of which come to an end... but when you reach Truth, after that the journey continues in knowledge and the mysteries of knowing God, all of which is without end.” (Burhān al-Dīn's *Ma'ārif*, quoted in Lewis, p. 105.) Burhān al-Dīn made Rūmī diligently read (“a thousand times”) his father Bahā'al-Dīn's spiritual journal, and also drew the young man to a love of mystical poetry, especially the Persian verses of Rūmī's older contemporary, 'Aṭṭār, and Ḥakīm Sanā'ī, who pioneered the art-form over a century earlier.

Rūmī apprenticed to Burhān al-Dīn for some nine years until the latter's death in 1240, whereupon, say some accounts, Rūmī endured more time of fasting and self-mortification before reaching the level of spiritual mastery. Then he was back in Konya, a *shaykh* ministering to pupils and a large number of disciples at the big *madrasa*, a preacher-scholar-mystic of growing repute. Sultan Valad wrote that his father “performed miracles left and right” before young and old, nobles and commoners. As an orator, he could put people into tears with his Grace-charged spirit of goodness and warmth. Pretty soon Mawlānā Rūmī held professorships at four separate *madrasas*. Gorji Khātun, wife of the ruling sultan, and her son, 'Ezz al-Dīn Kay Kāus II, who ruled the region from 1246-1260, both became devout disciples; Rūmī was like a loving father to the young sultan, not afraid of correcting him on occasion. Meanwhile, Rūmī's wife Gowhar having died c1242, he married **Kerrā Khātun** (d.1292), a woman who'd likewise lost her first spouse. The two of them found love once again with each other, and a son and daughter came from their marriage.

But a new love relationship—platonic and profound—was about to shatter Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī's life and set him completely aflame... In late 1244, there arrived in Konya **Shams al-Dīn** (“Sun of Faith”) of Tabrīz, a 60-year-old roaming dervish and formidable mystic who made his living as part-time children's tutor. He was not affiliated with any religious establishment. Long had Shams been looking for a saintly spiritual friend. “I wanted someone of my own type to turn to as my *qibla* [the direction one faces in Muslim prayer], for I'd grown tired of myself.”⁴ One day as Rūmī slowly rode by on his horse with some disciples, Shams came up to him and posed a question he'd asked others, a touchstone to see if people knew the true Sūfī path of properly worshipping God, not just finding God in themselves. So Shams asked Rūmī: “Who's greater, Prophet Muḥammad or Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī? (Bāyazīd had occasionally spoken in prophetic trance states from the nondual standpoint of God—to be fair, he usually spoke humbly of his own nothingness and God's utter transcendence; but by this time he was a symbol for a certain kind of antinomian, wild Sūfism.)

Rūmī later said, “Due to the tremendousness of the question... a great conflagration arose from within me and set fire to my brain, whence I saw a column of smoke rising to the pillars of God's Throne.” An exchange ensued between the two men, with Rūmī finally saying that, whereas “Bāyazīd's thirst was slaked with one gulp—he spoke of being full... [note: we actually have a teaching from Bāyazīd saying just the opposite] the Prophet, on the other hand, sought to be given much to drink and thirsted after thirst.... aspiring to be drawn closer [to God].” Hearing this insightful comment, Shams “uttered a cry and fell unconscious. Mawlana got down from his horse and told his pupils to take Shamsuddin to the school. When he came to himself again, he placed his blessed head on Mawlana's knees. Afterward Mawlana

took him by the hand and departed. For three months they were in isolation, day and night in the feast of union, and never once did they emerge. No one cared to interrupt their privacy.”⁵

For 15 months, Rūmī and Shams were inseparable, spending most of their time together in mystic conversation (*sohbet*), more often simply gazing into each other’s faces, heart to heart, mutually extinguished (*fanā*) in the infinity of pure Spirit, the boundless Love of Allāh. Shams taught Rūmī *samā’*, the mystic practice of whirling, “a method of ecstatic and therefore socially destabilizing worship ... considered morally suspect or even forbidden in many circles.” (Lewis) This became the inspiration for the Mevlevi Order’s well-known *samā’* ceremony of whirling dervishes.

Accounts tell that some of Rūmī’s disciples were “scandalized” by the strange turn of events. Jealous enmity from Rūmī’s older son ‘Alā al-Dīn toward Shams as a “usurper,” and caviling from other immature disciples led Shams to suddenly leave. Rūmī was disconsolate. Upon hearing news of Shams being in Damascus, Rūmī dispatched Sultan Valad to bring him back. Shams was thereupon joyously installed in Rūmī’s home and married to a young woman who’d grown up there. But ongoing enmity from some disciples, and Shams’ intention to wean Rūmī from binding attachment to his own form, compelled Shams to depart again, in late 1247 or early 1248—this time for good. Rūmī took a group of disciples to Damascus in search of his “mirror of the Divine,” but, unsuccessful in their quest, after a while they returned. Rūmī once again resumed his roles as *shaykh*, professor, author, and family man, showering love on all—and such would be the form of his life over the next 25 years.

Lewis persuasively debunks some myths about Shams: 1) He wasn’t untutored or illiterate, but highly educated, a fact obvious from Shams’ neglected book of teachings, which prodigious Iranian Rūmī scholar Badī’ al-Zamān Foruzānfar (1900-70) calls one of the true treasures of Persian literature. 2) Despite Rūmī’s ample use of homoerotic themes in his poetic expression of love for Shams, very common to medieval Persian literature, exalting the androgynous “Beloved”—and it is also common in Persian poetry to blur any distinction between the Divine Beloved and human beloved—Rūmī’s relationship with Shams could not have been homosexual. Sodomy, condemned by Muslim law, was obviously *not* one of the customs of Prophet Muḥammad, whom both Shams and Rūmī strictly followed, strongly eschewing and criticizing any libertinism. Moreover, like his father, Rūmī was quite attracted to each of his wives, Gowhar and Kerrā, though his long fasting did sometimes undermine a fairly normal sexual drive, according to Kerrā. 3) There is no evidence for the much later rumor—and much evidence against it—that Shams was murdered by a cabal of Rūmī’s disciples. He simply re-located elsewhere and, already being an older man, died some time afterward.⁶

After Shams left, Mawlānā Rūmī’s heart gushed forth a flood of poems, most of them poignantly expressing the old Persian sensibility of “ecstatic melancholy” over the love games between the Beloved and the lover, the aim of which was the complete “ruin” and “destruction” of the lover. Sūfīs took such histrionics as an allegory for *fanā*, the extinction or annihilation of the ego-soul so that only Allāh remains—*La ilāha illā ‘Llāh*, “there’s no god but God” (no beings but Being). Rūmī, while often emphasizing the Persian poetic theme of separation from the Beloved, in fact became completely identified with Shams, that is to say, with the Beloved Divine Friend. Therefore, and most unusual in the history of poetry, Rūmī used not his own pen name but the name of Shams in his literary signature closing many verses. (Many other verses he closed with a call for silence—*Khāmush!*)

Not too long after Shams al-Dīn’s departure, Rūmī developed a deep platonic connection with another profound mystic: the modest goldsmith, **Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Zarkūb**, a disciple of Borhān al-Dīn who’d also become a fan of Rūmī’s discourses and his close friend in the early 1240s. His daughter Fāṭima, regarded by Rūmī as a great saint, married Rūmī’s son, Sultan Valad. A story tells that Rūmī, hearing the rhythmic tapping of Ṣalāḥ’s goldsmith hammer one day while walking nearby, began to dance ecstatically to the rhythm, reinforcing his practice of *samā’*, mystic turning. As Ṣalāḥ began to receive the singular attention from Mevlana that Shams had enjoyed (though the relationship seems more formal, far less ecstatic), Rūmī’s disciples were again disturbed by their Master’s devoting so much time to one person—even more so since Ṣalāḥ, unlike Shams, was a relatively unlearned Turk and not yet a respected teacher. (There appears to have been a mutual rivalry between Ṣalāḥ and his son-in-law Sultan Valad; the latter eventually submitted to the former in spiritual obedience).

Says Lewis: “Rūmī himself felt disinclined to play the role of *shaykh* and therefore needed someone to play that role in his stead, and also to act as his successor [*khalīfa*], a position which Rūmī confirms

both he and Borhān al-Dīn had designated for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn... Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn interacted directly with the disciples in order to afford Rūmī a measure of tranquility... controlling access to Rūmī and helping him to manage his relationship with his [many] disciples.... Rūmī could relate to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and he found peace in their companionship such that he excluded most others from his presence.” After the troubles with certain disciples was smoothed over, “for a period of about ten years Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn and Rūmī lived happily amongst the disciples, imparting wisdom to them.” In 1258, Ṣalāḥ fell ill and died, with blissful detachment. So now Rūmī needed to find yet another figure as a “mirror of the Divine” and authorized successor: he picked a close disciple, **Ḥusām al-Dīn Chelebī**, who invited Rūmī to begin his greatly venerated, *Masnavī* poem of rhyming couplets—often called “the *Qur’ān* of Persia.” This occurred sometime between the years 1258 and 1261. Ḥusām drew more and more poetic verses out of Mawlānā until the *opus* comprised fully six books—quite impressive for one who, unlike Sanā’ī, was not a professional poet. Ḥusām wrote down the verses bursting from Rūmī’s frequent states of rapture, wherever these might occur—sitting in his bath, walking along the street, or wherever he might be. The spiritual power of Mawlānā’s verses often put Ḥusām into Divine trance states.

Over the next 15 years the two men lovingly guided the large spiritual family of kin, disciples, pupils and warmly-received visitors, who came from all faiths and all stations of society. When asked what was Rūmī’s greatest miracle, one Sūfī declared it was the fact that, in a contentiously fractious time, people from all faiths and nations revered him and his teachings. Not everyone loved him, especially certain jealous religious officials. But it is surprising just how many did love and revere Rūmī.

At last, it was time for Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī to experience the *Urs*, the great “Wedding Night” with the Beloved, the dropping of this body and physical world for the ecstasy of the purely spiritual One Divine. On Sunday, December 17, 1273, family and friends gathered round Mawlānā. Minstrels came and sang one of his quatrains as people wept. Rūmī composed one last ten-couplet poem for Sultan Valad.⁷ Sometime during the night after composing this poem, Mawlānā left this world. Many thousands of Muslims, Christians and Jews, religious leaders, officials, commoners and beggars all mourned his passing.

After Rūmī’s death, Ḥusām “remained at the helm of the Mevlevi community for the next twelve years until the end of his life [1284/5; succeeded by Sultan Valad]... During this time he focused and purified the minds of the disciples and observed all the customs established by Rūmī... Every Friday following the prayers and recitation of the *Qur’ān*, Ḥusām al-Dīn would hold readings of the *Masnavī* and a session of *samā’*, attended by several hundred disciples, mystics, authors and so on. He also attended to the financial needs of Rūmī’s wife, Kerrā Khātun; his daughter, Maleke Khātun; and his son, Sultan Valad [the other two sons having died]... Sultan Valad tells us that during his [own] tenure [as Mevlevi head] the wisdom and knowledge of the disciples increased, as did the number of both male and female initiates [his two saintly daughters, Motahhare and Sharaf, trained by Rūmī, were the women’s spiritual leaders]. In response to the growth and spread of the Mevlevi following... Sultan Valad appointed a leader or successor... in every city where a sizeable number of disciples were living... Cells of the order were set up throughout Anatolia and elsewhere, each with its own *shaykh*... If Rūmī spent his life in words, expounding a set of teachings, Sultan Valad spent his life in deeds [he also gave discourses and wrote a body of poems and biographical works on his father], assisting his father, helping strengthen the unity of the order and spreading it far and wide.”⁸

Rūmī’s Teachings and Poetry:

Rūmī, as we’ve seen, had much high-quality mentoring from older or earlier Sūfīs, via oral tradition and books. Thus, his works must be seen as heavily infused by a rich lore of insights, themes, stories and jokes (spiritual and secular) going back to the Prophets. Nevertheless, as eminent Rūmī scholar R.A. Nicholson pointed out, “he borrows much but owes little; he makes his own everything that comes to hand.” Rūmī brilliantly underscores or gives unique twists on older stories and teachings, and brings his inspired genius to the expression of Persian mystical love poetry.

Rūmī’s three main works are 1) His 25,577-line *Masnavī-i masnavī* poem, filled with tales and teachings; 2) the *Fīhi mā fīh* (“What’s in it is in it”) lectures, conversations and teaching sessions, formal and informal, recorded by disciples in the mid- to late-1260s; and 3) his *Dīvān*, an enormous, 44,292-line body of poems in different genres: 3,229 *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas* (34,662 lines); 1,983 *rubā’iyāt* (quatrains);

7,932 lines); and 44 *tarji-bands* (1,698 lines). Most of these were probably composed between 1244 to c.1260, when he began the *Masnavi*. These are now all in English translations, of varying quality and faithfulness.⁹ Note that all Persian poetry was in rhyming verse (there was no “blank” or “free” verse)—and Rūmī’s were exceptionally *rhythmic*, too, confirming the idea that he composed much of his poetry while whirling or dancing to a rhythm. Sometimes he purposely uses off-rhymes or metrical oddities, too.

In addition to these three main works—totaling some 120,000 lines of verse in English, and over 200 pages of discourses—are: 4) 144 extant letters from Rūmī (the *Maktūbāt* collection), most written from the 1240s onward to various officials on behalf of persons in need, showing that Rūmī was very involved in the everyday world of people, not a recluse; and 5) a small booklet, the *Majālis-i Sab‘a*, with seven of Rūmī’s public, formal sermons, whether from his pre- or post-Shams days isn’t clear. Lewis (pp. 130-3) translates one of these sermons, giving “an idea of the public use to which Rūmī put his formal education.” (See following pages for excerpts from Rūmī’s three main works.)

Rūmī’s works are in Persian, with frequent lines from the *Qur’ān* and the Prophet’s *Ḥadīth* in Arabic, and some scattered phrases in Turkish or Greek. Because his works are in Persian, his influence has been greatest among Muslims in those lands conditioned by the Persian cultural sphere—in what is now Turkey, Iran, eastern Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. But translations of Rūmī into an array of languages have made him ever more widely read and beloved. Through Mawlānā’s poetic spirit, many have found and been awakened to the One through self-annihilating love of the Divine Beloved.

POETIC VERSES OF RUMI:



Teachings from Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Masnavi*

The Beloved is all in all, the lover only veils Him. The Beloved is all that lives, the lover a dead thing. (Book I)

Do you know why your mirror reflects not? Because the rust hasn’t been scoured from its face. If it were purified from all rust and defilement, it would reflect the shining Sun of God. (I)

Verily, my singing His praise would be dispraise, for it would prove me existent [as praiser] and existence [of anything other than God, e.g., a distinct “me”] is error. (I)

Every night You free our spirits from the body and its snare, making them pure as razed tablets. Every night spirits are released from this cage and are set free.... The state of the “Knower” [Gnostic] is such as this, even when awake. (I)

Form is born of That which is without form, and goes again, for “Verily, to Him do we return.” (*Qur’ān*, 2:151) Hence, to you every moment come death and “return.”... Every moment the world and we are renewed. Yet we are ignorant of this renewing... Life, like a stream of water, is renewed and renewed, though it wears the appearance of continuity in form. That seeming continuity arises from its swift renewal, as when a single spark of fire is whirled round swiftly.... It seems to the eye a continuous line of fire. This apparent extension, owing to the quick motion, demonstrates the rapidity with which it is moved. (I)

If the saint handles earth, it becomes gold; if a sinner handles gold, it turns to dust. (I)

You have made these “us” and “me” for this purpose: to play chess with them by Yourself.... When these “We” and “You” have all become one Soul, then they will be lost and absorbed in the Beloved. (I)

Past and future are what veil God from our sight. Burn up both of them with fire. (I)

In that earthly shell thee is naught but foam of foam of foam of foam. God is that foam; God is also that pure sea.... Arab, water-pot and angels are all ourselves! (I)

A hundred thousand years and a moment are all one. (I)

Be patient, God knows what is best. (I)

Until man destroys “self” he is no true friend of God. A certain man knocked at his friend’s door: his friend asked, “Who is there?” He answered “I.” “Begone,” said his friend, “‘tis too soon! At my table there is no place for the raw. How shall the raw be cooked but in the fire of absence? What else will deliver him from hypocrisy?” He turned sadly away, and for a whole year the flames of separation consumed him. Then he came back and again paced to and fro beside the house of his friend. He knocked at the door with trepidation... “Who is there?” cried the friend. He answered, “‘Tis Thou, O Beloved.” “Now,” said the friend, “since thou art I, come in, there is no room for two I’s in one house.” (I)

Renounce these affections for outward forms, love depends not on outward form or face.... Whatever be the form you have fallen in love with—why do you forsake it the moment life leaves it? The form is still there; whence this disgust at it? Ah! Lover, consider well what is really your beloved.... The real Workman is hidden in his workshop.... Come, then, into His workshop which is Not-being, that you may see the Creator and creation at once. (II)

Through love, bitter things seem sweet... reverse of fortune seems good fortune... grief is as joy... ghouls turn into angels... the Devil becomes a heavenly *Houri*... sickness is health.... When the outward senses are replaced by the true inner reason, man sees that the body is only foam, the heart the limitless ocean.... The sect of lovers is distinct from all others, lovers have a religion and faith all their own. (II)

While I seem on earth, abiding with you in the house, I ascend like Saturn to the seventh heaven.... I have transcended thought.... I am lord of thought, not overlorded by it. (II)

Whoever beholds the Causer face to face, how can he set his heart on things caused on earth? (II)

The nearness of saints to God involves the power to do mighty works and signs. (III)

Keep silence, that you may hear Him speaking words unutterable by tongue in speech... things inexpressible in books and discourses. Keep silence, that the Spirit may speak to you.... A lover was once admitted to the presence of his mistress, but, instead of embracing her, he pulled out a paper of sonnets and read them to her, describing her perfections and charms and his own love towards her at length. His mistress said to him, “You are now in my presence, and these lover’s sighs and invocations are a waste of time.... It shows that I am not the real object of your affection, but that what you really love is your own effusions and ecstatic raptures.... You are wrapped up in your own amorous raptures, depending on the varying states of your own feelings, instead of being wrapped up in me.” (III)

Gaze on your Love... not on the sight of your own frailty or evil. (III)

An old man noted for sanctity... lost all his sons, but showed no grief or regret. So his wife rebuked him for his want of feeling; he replied to her: “Though they be dead or though they be living, are they not equally visible to the eyes of the heart? ... The cause of lamentation is separation or parting, but I am still with my dear ones and embrace them. Ordinary people may see them in dreams, but I see them clearly, though wide awake.” (III)

When the decree of God becomes the pleasure of man, then man desires the fulfillment of God’s decrees.... He desires not even his own life for himself, nor is he relying on the hope of sweets of after-life. Whatever path is taken by the eternal decree, whether it be life or death, ‘tis all one to him. He lives for the sake of God, not for wealth; he dies for the sake of God, not in fear or grief. His faith is based on his desire to do God’s will, not on hope to gain paradise.... God’s decrees are to him as sweets... Why then should such a one make prayers and petitions, saying “O God, change such-and-such decree?” His own death and his children’s deaths for God’s sake seem to him as sweets in the mouth.... What is Sufism? To find joy in the heart whenever distress and care assail it. (III)

I died as an inanimate matter and arose a plant. I died as a plant and arose again an animal. I died as an animal and arose a man. Why then should I fear to become less by dying? Again, when I suffer dissolution as an angel, I shall become what passes the conception of man! Let me then become non-

existent, for non-existence sings to me in organ tones, “To Him shall we return” (*Qur’ān* 2:153: “Verily we are God’s and to Him shall we return.”) ... Eternal life is gained by utter abandonment of one’s own life.... When God appears, seekers vanish. Though that union is life eternal, yet at first that life is annihilation [*fanā*]. (III) [And see this related passage from Book V:] On the day that you entered upon existence, you were first fire, or earth, or air. If you had continued in that, your original state, how could you have arrived at this dignity of humanity? But through change your first existence remained not; in lieu thereof God gave you a better existence. In like manner He will give you thousands of existences, one after another, the succeeding ones better than the former.... You have obtained these existences after annihilations; wherefore, then, do you shrink from annihilation? What harm have these annihilations done you that you cling so to present existence, O simpleton? Since the latter of your states were better than the former, seek annihilation and adore change of states. You have already seen hundreds of resurrections... Again you will rise from this world of sense and form.

The more men grasp at the transitory wealth of this world, the less they will obtain of the stable wealth of the world to come.... Your real self is your treasure and your kingdom. (IV)

[On Sūfi Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī, who’d said “blasphemous” things in trance:] He that is beside himself is annihilated and safe; Yea, he dwells in security forever. His form is vanished, he is a mere mirror; nothing is seen in him but the reflection of another [i.e., God]. If you spit at it, you spit at your own face... If you see an ugly face in it, ‘tis your own, and if you see a Jesus there, you are its mother Mary. He is neither this nor that—he is void of form; ‘tis your own form which is reflected back to you. (IV)

Though man fell asleep and forgot his previous states [as minerals, plants, animals], yet God will not leave him in this self-forgetfulness, and then he will laugh at his own former state, saying, “What mattered my experiences when asleep, when I’d forgotten my prosperous condition and knew not that the grief and ills I experienced were the effect of sleep, illusion, and fancy?” In like manner, this world, which is only a dream, seems to the sleeper as a thing enduring forever. But when the morn of the last day dawns, the sleeper will escape from the cloud of illusion; laughter will overpower him at his own fancied griefs when he beholds his abiding home and place.... (IV)

[O God,] You are hidden from us, though the heavens are filled with Your Light, which is brighter than sun and moon! ... You are the source that causes our rivers to flow. You are hidden in Your essence, but seen by Your bounties. (V)

What! Does a follower of God indulge in wine? Followers of God should have nothing to do with drinking, for wine is a very Satan, and steals men’s wits. Your wits aren’t too bright already, so you have no need to render them still duller by drink. (V)

What is “ascension to heaven”? Annihilation of self. Self-abandonment is the creed and religion of lovers. (VI)

O take my life, You who are the source of life! For apart from You I am wearied of my life! (VI)

Day and night you are asking for news while every member of your body is telling you news... Every member of your body tells you tales of God’s bounty to your body. (VI)

Strip yourself bare of overweening intellect, that grace may ever be shed upon you from above. Cleverness is the opposite of humility and submission. Quit cleverness and consort with simple-mindedness! (VI)

Say not two, know not two, call not on two! [One must be] lost and dead and buried in his Creator! (VI)

Verily, the Absolute Agent is without form, form is only a tool in His hands. Sometimes that Formless One of His Mercy shows His face to His forms from behind the veil of Not-being, that every form may derive aid therefrom—from His perfect beauty and power. (VI)

The Truth [*al-Ḥaqq*] is yourself, but not your mere bodily [or mental] self; your real self is higher than “you” and “me.” This visible “you” that you fancy to be yourself is limited in place, the real “you” [*ruh*]

is not limited. This outward “you” [*nafs*] is foreign to your real “you”; hold to your real self, quit this dual self. Your last self [false self] attains to your first [real] self only through your attending earnestly to that union. Your real self lies hid beneath your outward self. (VI)¹⁰

Were no base copper in the crucible, / How could the alchemist his craft display? / ... “He is the source of evil,” as you say, / Yet evil hurts Him not. To make that evil / Denotes in Him perfection. / ... Could He not evil make, He would lack skill. (I)

We were, once, one substance, like the Sun: / flawless we were and pure as water is pure. / Purify yourself, therefore, from the qualities of self, / so that you may see your essence, perfect and pure. (I)

[Rumi quotes a Divine *ḥadīth*:] My servant draws near unto Me, and I love him; / and when I love him, I am his ear, so that he hears by Me, / and his eye, so that he sees by Me, / and his tongue, so that he speaks by Me, / and his hand, so that he takes by Me. (V)¹¹

Counterfeiters exist because there is such a thing as real gold.¹²

Only when man becomes deprived of outward being like winter, / there is hope for a new spring to develop in him. (V)

With God is the best bargain: he buys from you your dirty fortune and gives in exchange light of the soul. He buys the ice of the perishable body and gives you a kingdom beyond imagination. (VI)¹³

Excerpts from Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Fīhi mā fīh* Discourses:¹⁴

I am loved by those who come to see me, and so I compose poetry to entertain them lest they grow weary. Otherwise, why on earth would I be spouting poetry? I am vexed by poetry. I don’t think there is anything worse. It is like having to put one’s hands into tripe to wash it for one’s guests because they have an appetite for it. That is why I must do it. A man has to look at a town to see what goods the people need and for what goods there are buyers. People will buy those goods even if they are the most inferior merchandise around. I have studied the various branches of learning and taken pains in order that the learned, the mystics, the clever and the profound thinkers, may come to me for an elaboration of something precious, strange, and precise. God too wanted this, for He gathered all this learning here and put me through all that agony that I should occupy myself with this labor. What am I to do? In our country [Afghanistan, his family’s original homeland] and among our people there is nothing more dishonorable than being a poet. Had we remained in our native land, we would have lived in harmony with their tastes and would have done what they wanted, such as teaching, writing books, preaching, practicing asceticism, and doing pious deeds. (chapter 16)

Since a world exists where there is no duality but only pure accord, when one reaches that world one will shed amity and hostility because they do not belong there.... One is parted from duality.... When Maṣṣūr [al-Ḥallāj]’s friendship with God reached its logical end, he became an enemy of himself and annihilated himself. He said, “I am the Real”—that is, I have passed away; only God remains. To say this, that only He exists, is extreme humility and servitude. It is pretentious and prideful to say, “You are the Lord, and I am a servant,” for by so saying you will have affirmed your own existence, and duality necessarily follows. When you say, “He is God,” there is also duality because the use of the third-person “he” is not possible unless there is a first-person “I.” Therefore, since there is no existent ... other than God, only He can say “I am God.” Maṣṣūr had passed away, so his words were God’s. (52) People think that to say “I am God” [as al-Ḥallāj and Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī exclaimed] is a claim of greatness, but it is actually extreme humility. Anyone who says “I am God’s servant” predicates two existences, his own and God’s, while the one who says “I am God” nullifies himself—that is, he gives up his own existence as naught. It is said that “I am God” means: “I do not exist; everything is He. Existence is God’s alone; I am utter, pure nonexistence; I am nothing.” There is more humility in this than any claim to greatness, but people do not comprehend. When a man acknowledges his servitude to God, he is aware of his act of being a servant... he still sees himself and his own act along with seeing God. He is not “drowned.” Drowned is he in whom there is no motion or action but whose movement is the movement of the water. (11)

With God there is no room for two egos. You say “I,” and He says “I.” In order for this duality to disappear, either you must die for Him or He for you. It is not possible, however, for Him to die... “He is the Ever-living who dieth not.” He is so gracious, however, that if it were possible He would die for you in order that the duality might disappear. Since it is not possible for Him to die, you must die that He may be manifested to you, thus eliminating the duality. (6)

Do not despair of Him even if He has cast you down from a state of obedience into disobedience. Because you thought your obedience was in and of yourself, you have fallen into disobedience.... Despair not but turn humbly to God, for He is almighty. If He turned that obedience into disobedience, He can turn this disobedience into obedience.... God works in mysterious ways. (1)

Prayer [enjoined upon Muslims five times daily] does not exist only in outward form; that is just the “shell” of prayer because it has a beginning and an end. Anything that has a beginning and an end is a “shell.” ... The “soul” of prayer is not only its external form but also a state of total absorption and unconsciousness during which all these external forms [standing, bowing, saying prayers, etc.], for which there is no room, remain outside. In that state there is not room even for [Angel] Gabriel, who is purely conceptual. (3)

All desires, affections, loves, and fondnesses people have for all sorts of things... such things are all “veils.” When one passes beyond this world and sees that King without these “veils,” then one will realize that all those things were “veils” and “coverings” and that what they were seeking was in reality that one [Reality]. All problems will then be solved. All the heart’s questions and difficulties will be answered, and everything will become clear. (9)

To the saints God appears in a particular, sensible form that can be seen with the eye, like that of a lion, a tiger, or fire. It is apparent to the saint that the lion or tiger’s form ... is not of this world but rather an “ideal” form, one that has been given shapes; it is God revealing Himself in a form of exquisite beauty. Gardens, camels, *houris*, mansions, food and drink, robes of honor, cities, houses and various wonders are the same: the saint knows that none of these is of this world, but God has made them visible by garbing them in form. ... The concept of everything’s being from God is bestowed by God. The philosopher knows this, but he knows it through logical proof... When “lovers,” on the other hand, do servitude, know the Maker, see with the Eye of Certitude, break bread and mingle together, then the Maker is never absent from their imagination and sight. Such men have “passed away” [*fanā*] into God. (11) Although externally all forms appear different and various, from the point of view of intrinsic meaning they are all unified in that they are all doing one thing.... Everyone, sinner and saint, obedient and disobedient, demon and angel alike, is performing servitude to God.... *There is nothing that does not exalt in His praise* [17:44]. (11)

All people do God’s work, ignorant though they may be of God’s purpose and even if they have in mind another purpose entirely. (24)

Strive to acquire inner illumination in order to escape and be safe from the fires of confusion. (20)

[On “proofs” of God’s existence:] O little man, God is a given fact. His existence needs no logical proof. If you must do something, then prove that you yourself have some dignity and rank in His Presence. (21)

There is a world of bodies, another of imaginings, another of fantasies, and another of suppositions, but God is beyond all worlds, neither within nor without them.... Since His control of your thoughts is so subtle as to be without trace, then consider how subtle and traceless He must be who is the Creator of all this. Inasmuch as our bodies are gross objects in relation to ideas, so also subtle ... ideas are gross bodies and forms in relation to the subtlety of the Creator. (23) All the conditions of this world are dreams... “This world is like a sleeper’s dream” [a *ḥadīth* of Muḥammad]. (23) To desire worldly things is like asking for or being given something in a dream. When one awakes one will not have benefited from what one ate or drank while dreaming. (49) What is not needed is burdensome. God’s wisdom and grace remove burdens. (25)

Beware lest you say you understand. The more you think you have understood, the farther you are from understanding. To understand this means not to understand. All your troubles and problems arise from that understanding. That understanding is a fetter.... Reason is a good and desirable thing to bring you to the king's gate, but when you get there, you must divorce yourself from reason.... Reason does well to take a sick man to a doctor, but once in the doctor's presence reason has nothing further to do; one must submit oneself to the doctor. (26)

So long as you have an iota of self-love left within you, no beloved would pay any attention to you. Neither would you be worthy of union nor would any beloved grant you admittance. One must become totally indifferent to the self and inimical to the world in order for the beloved to show his face.... It is a cause for thanks that we are not in our own hands but in God's. (26)

Elaborating on the Prophet's *ḥadīth*:] "I am amazed by a people who have to be dragged to paradise in chains and fetters." *Take him and bind him* [69:30], then burn him in paradise, then burn him in union, then burn him in beauty, then burn him in perfection: burn him! (26)

That there is no god but God is the belief of the common folk. The belief of the elite is that there is no "he" but He. (26)

God asked Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī what he wanted. "I want not to want," replied Bāyazīd. Now a human being is limited to two states: either he wants something or he doesn't. Not ever to want is not a human characteristic, for it would mean that one has become void of self and ceased to be [as an ego].... When God wishes to perfect a man and turn him into a complete *shaykh*, He causes him to enter the state of perfect union and unity, where neither duality nor separation exists. All your agonies arise from wanting something that cannot be had. When you stop wanting, there is no more agony.... When a believer has real and perfect faith, he does just what God wants. [...] The prophets and saints, having totally abandoned their own desires, follow God's desire and do whatever He commands. (31, 44) It is possible for you to look at God's saints and for them to take control of you without saying a word. Your destination will be attained, and you will be transported to your goal, union. (31)

Faith is discernment to distinguish between the real and the false, and also between the true and the imitation. (39) If others say *all is from God* [4:78], we say that necessarily chastising one's soul and abandoning the world are also from God. (40)

Someone comes to the seashore. Seeing nothing but turbulent water, crocodiles, and fish, he says, "Where are the pearls? Perhaps there are no pearls." How is one to obtain a pearl merely by looking at the sea? ... One must be a diver in order to discover pearls; and not every diver will find them, only a fortunate, skilled one.... Many a person is adorned with every accomplishment and possessed of wealth and beauty but has nothing of this intrinsic meaning in him; and many a person is a wreck on the outside... but within is found the intrinsic meaning that abides forever. It is that which ennobles and distinguishes humanity.... If man will but find his way to the intrinsic meaning, he will attain his pre-eminence. (50)

Man has three states. The first is not to focus on God but to adore and serve anyone and anything—woman, man, wealth, children, stones, land. Next, when he acquires a certain knowledge and awareness, he does not serve other than God. Finally, when he progresses in this state, he falls silent: he says neither, "I do not serve God," nor "I do serve God"—that is, he leaves both states. (53)

The Mu'tazilites say that man is the creator of his own actions.... This cannot be so because every action that issues from man is ... by means of an instrument he possesses—such as intellect, spirit, strength or body.... Since the instrument is not subject to him, he is not the creator of his actions by means of an instrument.... Therefore, we realize absolutely that the creator of actions is God, not man.... Only God knows what total benefits will result from any given action. ... Man is like a bow in God's omnipotent grasp, and God uses him to do many things. In reality the agent is God, not the bow.... Oh, what a great bow it is that knows in Whose hand it lies! (54)

“One” (*aḥad*) is perfection; “the Prophet” (*aḥmad*) has still not reached the stage of perfection. When the letter *m* disappears from *aḥmad* it becomes total perfection (*aḥad*)—that is, God encompasses everything. Any addition you make to Him is a detraction. One is in all numbers. Without it no number is possible. (61)

Why do you have such regard for this body? What connection do you have with it? You subsist without it; you are continually without it. By night [in sleep] you have no care for it; by day you are occupied with other concerns.... Why now do you tremble over the body? ... What connection do you have with the body? It is a great sleight-of-hand.... [Yet] we all think we have a connection with our bodies or that we are being held up by our bodies. (66)

Oppose the self and, when it wants to complain about something, render thanks instead. (68)

Repel your enemy [or anyone with hostility] with something good.... Your enemy is not his flesh and bone but his evil thought. When that is repelled from you by means of much thanks, it will be repelled from him also. (68)

Selections of poems from Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Dīvān*:

Sudden resurrection! Endless mercy! / Blazing fire in the thickets of thought! / Today you came laughing, unlocking dungeons / came to the meek like God’s grace and bounty. / You are antechamber to the sun / you are hope’s prerequisite / you are sought, seeker, terminus, principia / You pulse in every chest / adorn every idea / excite desires then permit their realization.... / Spirit-spiring, irreplaceable / delight of action and cognition / (all the rest is pretext, fraud) / ... Drunk, now on angel eyes, now on plain bread and soup / Taste this intoxication, / drop your ratiocination / savor these delectables, / drop the debatables / a little bread and greens / should not entail so much trouble. / ... / You [Shams] concoct a wondrous work / that no one’s ever seen before! / Boxing spirit’s ear in secret / dodging all others with excuses / Shouting the depths of “Lord release me!” / By God, my monarch, what a joy! / Silence! I am so frenetic, / I embraced knowledge in a rush / put down the paper, / snap the pen, / the Sāqī [cupbearer, wine-bringer] enters: Cheers! (#1; Franklin Lewis, Tr.)

Oh, how colorless and formless I am! / When will I ever see the am that I am? / You said: The secrets that you know, bring forth, put out, talk up! / Where is up or forth within this middle that I am? / When will my soul be still? / It moves when motionless, the anima I am. / My sea has drowned within itself; / what a strange and shoreless sea I am! / Not in this world not in the next should you seek me out; / both this and that have vanished in the world I am. / Like non-existence nothing profits me and nothing harms; / what a wondrous useless-harmless thing I am! / I said, Friend, you are just like me! / He said, How can you speak of likeness to the obviousness I am? / I said, That’s it, that’s what you are! / Silence! No tongue has ever uttered what I am. / I said, Since no tongue has given voice to you, / Here I am! Your unutterable exposition. / In annihilation I became inconstant like the moon / Now here I am! Your sure-footed footless runner. / A call arose, Why do you run? / Look to see how manifestly hidden that I am / When I saw Shams-i Tabrīz, I became. / Now what a wondrous treasure-mine and sea of pearls I am! (#1759; Lewis, Tr.)

With each new breath the sound of love / surrounds us all from right and left / Now up we go, head heavenward / who wants to come and see the sights? / We’ve been in heaven’s realm, / The angels there our constant friends, / we’ll go again / for we were born / all in that town. / We are ourselves above the skies / a greater host than angels there; / why should we not exceed their rank / since our abode is Majesty? / The purest pearl / does not belong / in earthly dust. / What brought you down? What place is this? / Pack up! /... We are all pearls in that sea, / afloat on it, / or else why wave on wave would surge / all through our hearts? / Over our boat just like a wave / broke “Am I not” / Our ship’s ribs staved the boat will sink / our time has come for reunion, / to meet with God. (#463, Lewis, Tr.)

And now it’s time / for love’s union / for God’s vision / for resurrection, everlasting life / Time for grace, for blessing / for surging pure oceans of purity / the sea foams white, casts its treasures: / Fortunate dawn,

morn of the light of God! / Whose face? What image? King or prince? / What ancient sage is this! / All these are only veils / fervid ardor burns these veils away / ... You are all of two minds / an earthly head of clay and one celestial, pure / All these celestial heads / lay scattered in the dust / to show you that another mind's afoot / At root, essential mind is hidden / and only branches dangle to our eyes. / Know that beyond this universe / another endless world awaits / Seal up the [wine-]skin, my host, / no vintage can convey us there / The jug of apprehension's bottlenecked in those straits. / The Sun of Truth shone from Tabrīz / and I told him: / Your light touches all / and yet remains apart. (#464, Lewis, Tr.)

[The Divine says:] Didn't I tell you: / "Don't go over there, for I am the one who knows you; / In this mirage of annihilation, / I am your source of life; / and if in anger for a million years / you run from me, in the end you will return to me / for I am your destination." / Didn't I tell you: "Don't be content with the outer scheme and semblance of the world, / for I am the architect of your pavilion of contentment." / ... Didn't I tell you: "Don't step into a trap just like a bird. / Come to me, for I am your wings and feathers / and your power of flight." / ... Didn't I tell you: "Don't say how or from which quarter / your affairs will be arranged; / I create you out of nowhere and of nothing. / ... And if you have the qualities of a lord, / know that I am / your Overlord. (#1725 Lewis, Tr.)

Pilgrims on the way [to Mecca]! Where are you? / Here is the beloved, here! / Your beloved lives next door / ... why do you wander / round and round the desert? / If you look into the face of Love / and not just at its superficial form / You yourselves become the house of God / and are its lords. / Ten times you trod the trek unto that house [Mecca's Ka'aba, the "house of God"]; / For once come into this house / climb onto this roof / That sweet house of sanctity [the Ka'aba] / you have described its features in detail / But now give me some indication / of the features of its Lord / If you have seen the garden, / where is your bouquet of souvenirs? / If you are from God's sea, / where is your mother pearl of soul? / And yet, may all your troubles / bring you treasure / What pity that your treasures / lie buried in yourselves. (#648 Lewis, Tr.)

That moment (is) joyous and blessed when we are sitting in the veranda, you and I; with two forms and faces, (yet) with one soul, you and I. / ... / The stars of the (night) sky will come as our observers, we will reveal the moon itself to them, you and I. / You and I, devoid of "you" and "I" due to extreme joy and delight, will be united (in friendship); (we'll be) happy and without concern about absurd stories and distracting nonsense, you and I. / ... / This is (even) more astonishing: that you and I (are) in one corner here, (yet) in this moment we are both in Irāq and Khorāsān, you and I. / (We have) one form on this earth and another form on that (world) in everlasting Paradise and the (Home) Land of Sugar, You and I. (#2214 Gamard, Tr.)

For lovers, advice (from) anyone is never useful, (because) this [love of theirs] is not like a flood which someone can block up. / An intellectual can never know the savor (in) the mind of the (mystic) "drunkard," (and) a sensible person can never know the "senseless" state of (such a) heart. / If kings were to catch a scent of those "wines" which lovers drink during the meetings of hearts, they would become fed-up with kingship./... That life (is) frozen which has passed without that sweet spirit [of warm love]. That brain (is) rotten which is ignorant of these compliments (of love). / If the sky were not bewildered and a lover like us, it would become weary of revolving, it would say, "It's enough for me! How (much) longer?" / ... If you uproot the heart from God, tell (me) with whom will you place it? Anyone who is able to tear heart from Him for a moment is without a soul! / I'm stopping. Be nimble, and go up on top of the roof at night. Make a happy uproar in the city with a loud voice, O soul! (#532 Gamard, Tr.)

... Know that when you have bound yourself to selflessness, you will escape from (attachment to) self-ness. / And (then) you will leap away from the bonds of a thousand traps. / Come, at last, to the Source of the source of your own self! / ... / Since you have been born from the ray of the Majesty (of God) and you are (born) with a fortunate rising (sign) of good omen, / How much longer will you groan and wail about every non-existent (worldly thing)? Come, at last, to the Source of the source of your own self! / You are a ruby in the middle of a granite rock. How much longer will you deceive us? / (The truth) is apparent within your eyes, O friend. Come, at last, to the Source of the source of your own self! / Shams-i Tabrīz, the king and cupbearer, has been holding the cup of everlasting (life) before you. / Glory be to

God! What excellent pure (“wine”)! Come, at last, to the Source of the source of your own self! (#120 Gamard, Tr.)

For the lovers, there is no seeking (done) by themselves, there is no additional seeker in the world other than Him. / This world and the next are a single substance; in reality, there is no unbelief, religion or faith. / O you whose breath (is like [the healer]) Jesus! / Don’t breathe from a distance! I am the admirer of the one who is not far-thinking. / If you say, “I’ll go behind,” Don’t go! (There’s) no behind. / If you say, “[I’ll go] ahead,” No! There’s no way ahead. / ... Whoever has gone beyond “place,” his (only) place is the heart -- / such a heart for which there is no place in the world. (#425 Gamard, Tr.)

If wheat comes up from my grave (and) you bake bread from it, drunkenness will increase. / The dough and the baker will become crazy (and) his oven will sing verses like a drunkard. / If you come to visit my tomb, its shape will appear (to you as) dancing. / Brother, don't come without a tambourine to my tomb, since (being) full of sorrow is not suitable at the banquet of God. / ... God has created me from the wine of Love; even if death grinds me (down to nothing), I am that very same Love. / I am drunkenness, and my origin (is) the wine of Love. Tell (me), what comes from wine except love? / My spirit won't stand waiting for a moment: it will fly to the tower of the spirit of Shams-i Tabrīz. (#683 Gamard, Tr.)

On the day of death when my coffin is going (by), don't imagine that I have pain (over leaving) this world. / Don't weep for me, and don't say, “How terrible! What a pity!” / You will fall into the error of (being deceived by) the Devil, (and) that would (really) be a pity! / When you see my funeral, don't say, “Parting and separation!” / (Since) for me, that is the time for union and meeting (God). / (And when) you entrust me to the grave, don't say, “Good-bye! Farewell!” For the grave is (only) a curtain for (hiding) the gathering (of souls) in Paradise. / When you see the going down, notice the coming up. Why should there be loss because of the setting of the sun and moon? / It seems like setting to you, but it is rising. The tomb seems like a prison—it is the liberation of the soul. / What seed (ever) went down into the earth which didn't grow (back up)? (So), for you, why is there this doubt about the human “seed”? / ... When you have closed (your) mouth on this side, open (it) on that side, for your shouts of joy will be in the Sky beyond place (and time). (#911 Gamard, Tr.)

... It was night, but (only) for strangers. My night is (kept like) day because of the face of the beloved. / Even if the world is completely taken over by thorns, we are (kept) drowned in roses from the beloved. / Even if the world becomes ruined and (then) built up, my heart is (kept) “drunk and ruined” by the beloved. (#1051 Gamard, Tr.)

Enter among us, we are the lovers of God, so that we may pull (open) the gate to the Garden of Love for you. / ... Although we are invisible, like the soul in the world, (and) although we are signless like the love of lovers-- / Yet our indications are always (with) you, since we are hidden and we are evident, like the soul. / Any particular thing which you are saying (about us), such as, “You are that”--look higher, since we are higher than that. / You are a stream, but a whirlpool (going underground) and imprisoned. Enter among us, (since) we are a flowing flood [going to the Sea]. / Since we are gambling everything completely away in absolute poverty, we don't know (anything) except writings about not-knowing. (#1536 Gamard, Tr.)

A Moon (with) spiritual qualities became visible in the pathway of the heart. What a subtle and exquisite journey there is in the pathway of the heart! Don't say anything! / ... I said, “Is this the face of an angel, or is it human?” / (The heart) said, “This is other than an angel or man. Don’t say anything.” / I said, “Tell (me), what is this? (Otherwise) I will become topsy-turvy.” (Heart) said, “Be like this, topsy-turvy, (and) don't say anything. O you seated in this ‘house’ [the world] full of images and imaginary forms: get up out of this house, take your baggage, and go. Don't say anything.” (#2219 Gamard, Tr.)

... We are riding upon the wind, like a straw, moving from side to side because (of the magnetism) of a (piece of) amber. / In solitude with (ecstatic) outcries [*Allāh Hū!*], in the crowd with (coarse) shouts. / In appearance, we are menial slaves; in secret, the qualities of the One Divinity. / This, the gift of the great king, Shams-i Tabrīz: lacking pride, and yet [full of Divine] magnificence. (#2765 Gamard, Tr.)

I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one; / One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call. / I am intoxicated with Love's cup, the two worlds have passed out of my ken; / I have no business save carouse and revelry. (R.A. Nicholson, Tr.)

We are traveling on our way to heaven, who desires to look at anything on the way? At one time our home was in heaven, there we were in companionship with the angels. Let us go back to that abode, O Lord, for that is our dwelling place. We are above the heavens and greater than the angels; why do we not go beyond these two? (R.A. Nicholson, Tr.)

[Summing up his own life:] The result is not more than these three words: I burnt, and burnt, and burnt. (#1768 Annemarie Schimmel, Tr.)

Quatrains from Rūmī's *Dīvān* translated by Zara Houshmand (www.iranian.com):¹⁵

I am lost in God, and God is found in me. / Why look in all directions? Look inside. / I am the Lord, and I do you wrong to say / That anyone is Lord or God to me. (#422 in Foruzānfar's Persian edition)

It's love that holds all eastern alchemy, / A cloud that hides a thousand lightning bolts. / Its glory fills an ocean inside me, / A universe where all creation drowns. (#1576)

We speak another language, not this tongue. / There's another home that's not your heaven or hell. / Free spirits draw their life from another source; / That pure gem is mined from a different course. (#403)

If you walk with your eyes closed, for sure you're lost, / But count on sight and you invite damnation. Don't look within the monastery or mosque / To find a place that isn't a location. (#254)

I'm content with this way: nonexistence. / Why so much advice about existence? / The day I die by that blade, Not-To-Be, / I will laugh at whoever cries for me. (#1250)

The face she shows me is a little sour, / Though sugar has never tasted sweeter. / Sugar would be bored by its own sweetness / If it ever came to know that sour flavor. (#1795)

On truth's path, wise is mad, insane is wise. / In love's way, self and other are the same. / Having drunk the wine, my love, of being one with you, / I find the way to Mecca and Bodhgaya are the same. (#302) (Bodhgaya is the Buddha's awakening site.)

You [listeners] laugh at my tale? You may be educated / But you haven't learned to love till you're insane. (2nd half of #1901)

A dervish must know pain's reality / And from the depths of pain must rise, a man. / Yet again they build another monastery: / All earth's a monastery; it only needs true men. (#687)

I'm not me, you're not you, and you're not me; / And yet I'm me, you're you, and you are me. / Beauty of Khotan, I am this because of you: / Confused if I am you, or you are me. (#1976)

The lovely one whispers under her breath, / And you go mad, witless, no reason left... / O Lord, what is this chant, what magic art / That weaves its spell on even a stone heart? (#1873)

With a smile biting those two ruby lips, / How beautifully, idol, you've come to life! / Stealing my heart that day was not enough; / Today you're back, intent upon my life. (#1790)

If my head holds one thought wise and clear, it's you. / Poor as I am, what I hold dear is you. / No matter how I see myself, I'm nothing. / Anything I am entirely is you. (#1690)

Reason came forward to lecture the lovers; / Like a bandit in ambush he lay. / But he saw that their heads had no room for reason, / So bowed at their feet and went on his way. (#367)

Being alive is a trespass without you. / Without you, what life can this living be? / Light of my life, each lifetime that passes / Without you is death; that's living for me. (#1397)

You're the road of love, and at the end, my home, / One of the crowd, and yet I see you crowned; / I see you in stars, in the sun, in the moon / Here in the green leaves, and high on the throne. (#1369)

Today I'm going for a drunken stroll. / I'll search the town for a rational man, / Pour him a drink from the bowl of my skull, / And turn him into a crazy fool. (#1146)

I'm so close to you that I'm far apart, / So completely merged that I'm separate, / So vastly exposed that I'm concealed, / So whole and sound that I'll never be healed. (#1121)

Forgive: if you never know forgiveness, / You'll never know the blessings that God gives. (2nd half of #577)

Where kindness is, who cares for peace or war? / Where goodness acts, who hears prayer or quarrel? / When a man's accepted, who cares where he's from? / Surrender, yield; if not, your pride's a stone. (#1077)

If love makes you thirst, never fear: you have wine. / If your body's a ruin, don't worry: there's treasure inside. / You've run out of water? No, your water is near. / Wake up: this world that you dream holds nothing to fear. (#989)

The heart that holds God holds an ocean / Whose joyous waves make the earth turn. (2nd half of #773)

How could the soul that holds your image / Ever fade or decay? The crescent moon, / Though waning, thin and pale, begins its voyage / And grows to full perfection very soon. (#627)

The harvest of my pain was its own peace and remedy. / As low as I had sunk, I rose, faith restored from blasphemy. / Body, heart, and soul obscured the path, until / Body melted into heart, heart in soul, and soul in Love itself. (#262)

You're so coupled to life, which lasts but a day, / That you can't even hear talk of death. / Life looks for a home and that home is death, / But your donkey fell asleep on the way. (#223)

If you want victory, eternity, / Then burn in the fire of love, don't sleep. / You slept a hundred nights, what did you gain? / For God's sake, tonight don't sleep till dawn. (#109)

Seek the science that unties for you this knot. / Seek it as long as there's life in you still to be sought. / Leave that nothing that looks like it's something; / Seek that something that looks like it's nothing; it's not. (#106)

Since when do the laws of love allow / That I may see your world, but not see you? (2nd half of #25)

Until you made me sing, I was a monk. / You made me a rabble-rouser, a hopeless drunk. / I used to sit in prayer, so dignified; / Now I'm a toy that children toss aside. (#1483)

When I hear you sing, I become a joyful song, / Boundless, without limits, like the kindness of God. (#1118)

If my heart's not on fire, then why all this smoke? / If there's no incense burning, then what do I smell? / Why do I love? And why do I doubt? / Why is the moth so eager to burn in the candle's hell? (#370)

They ask me 'Why are you in so much pain? / Why do you sing and wail? Why is your face so pale?' / I say, 'Don't tell me what I do is wrong. / Look at the moon of her face; you'll understand my song.' (#401)

My hard friend, you ask me for my heart and my gold. / The truth is, I have neither one to give. / Gold? What gold does a poor man have? / Since when does a lover have a heart left to give? (#1087)

Love is the way and the path, our prophet. / Of love we are born, love is our mother. / Our mother, love, is hiding in our veil, / Hiding from our unbelieving nature. (#57)

Love is what gives joy to all creation. / Love is what gives joy to giving joy. / I was born of mother love in the beginning. / To that mother, joyous thanks and endless blessing. (#762)

Absolute joy has no room for sadness, / Nor has the heart that rests beyond the sky. / He whose mind dwells in the hanging stars / Will not sow seeds of sadness on this earth. (#805)

I wrote a poem that made my love angry / At me, or at the measure of my verse. / “Tell me then,” I said, “What should I write?” / “Tell me”, said she, “What poem could contain me?” (#795)

Drunk, I asked my teacher, “Please, I need to know / What it means to be, or not to be.” / He answered me, said, “Go! / Relieve the suffering of the world and you’ll be free.” (#1680)

Remembering your lips, I kiss the ruby on my ring; / One I cannot reach, I kiss the one I can. / My hand can’t touch your distant sky, / And so I bow full low and kiss the land. (#1181)

A heart that circles round the door of love / Will die, at last, by the dagger of love. / This point is written in the book of love: / He has no head at all whose head holds love. (#1071)

My love, there’s a path from your heart to mine, / And my heart is aware how to find it; / For my heart now is pool, sweet and clear, / And it serves the moon as her mirror. (#185)

My faith in God is this: her eyes, their cheer, / Their drunken joy, her wild, heathen hair. / They say true faith is anything but this. / Then, by this, true faith I do dismiss. (#1316)

The friend, to whom flower and thorn are one, / In whose faith, *Qur’ān* and Cross are the same --/ Why should we worry? To him it’s all one: / The swiftest horse or a donkey that’s lame. (#454)

“Don’t think you’re above them,” I told my heart./ Be a balm for their wounds, don’t be a barb. (first half of #1021)

My face was pale, my heart was overflowing / And traveled the same path that Majnūn trod. [Majnūn: the ancient Persian lover driven “mad” in his love for Layla] / That was how things stood until this moment--/ What’s happened now makes all that seem like nothing. (#543)

Time will soon silence the clamor of bleating cries, / And the wolf of doom devour the whole wooly herd. / Each of their heads is stuffed with bloated pride, / But death’s slap on the back of the neck will knock it out for good. (#65)

My beloved is not as lovers are: / Beyond body, undying, without end. / If some fool wants to mock this, let him talk. / No lover is more delicate, more kind. (#288)

We are drunk on the essence without even tasting the wine, / Filled with light in the morning, and joyful into the night. / They say our path leads nowhere--that’s alright: / There’s joy enough right here to fill all time. (#1319)

You fall in love, my heart, and then you fret about your health? / You steal and then you think of the police? / You claim to love, but it’s nonsense, mere play, / If you worry what people will say. (#1902)

She made my night more splendid than the day, / Made body into spirit melt away. / My lips sought hers, but found their honey’s bliss / Was far too sweet to make room for my kiss. (#1390)

Your homeland was the heavens, but you thought / That you belonged here, in the world of dust. / In the dust you sketched out your own face, / But left out just one thing--that first, true place. (#1771)

My heart wanted only a kiss from you; / The price you asked for that kiss was my soul. / Heart jumped in the deep and flowed alongside soul, / Advising, ‘Close the deal. The price is cheap.’ (#388)

Why so happy to laugh with your mouth shut? / You should laugh like a flower, without a care. / Love that leaps from the soul is not the same thing / As love you hang round your neck by a string. (#1781)

Today's the day for boldness, wounded heart. / In loving her, there's no room to be distant. / Whatever logic holds, put that aside. / Now's the time for madness, right this instant. (#432)

By nightfall, dawn's memory has vanished. / When love's sincere, disgrace's fear is banished. / You cry that you've been burnt by love - don't gripe. / You're not burnt! You're not yet even ripe. (#551)

Hide the faults of others deep in the earth / If shame is what their actions make you feel. / But if you mirror both their good and bad / Then you yourself must be like polished steel. (#378)

I'm a grape, I roll under trampling feet. / Wherever love pulls me, that's where I roll. / You ask me, 'Why do you roll around me?' / I don't. It's all around me that I roll. (#1155)

The simpler our hands and hearts, the more free / Of the world around, the happier we'll be. / Penniless pleasure, gone in a blink, / Is better than the pomp of a thousand kings. (#899)

There's another kind of calm in the congress of lovers, / A different oblivion in the wine of love. / The knowledge that the classroom yields is one thing, / And love... love is something else again. (#314)

I've never seen a greener tree than you. / I've never seen a brighter moon than you. / I've never seen the dawn rise from the night / Or sweetness filled with more delight than you. (#1893)

You think that I am at my own command? / Or that I breathe one breath, one half a breath, at will? / I'm merely a pen in my writer's hand, / A ball at the mercy of my player's skill. (#1359)

Even if the whole world were gripped by sadness / He would not be sad who holds love firm in hand. / And if love makes him dance, even a little, / There are worlds and worlds within that little land. (#374)

Last night, in private, I asked the wise old man / To reveal to me the secret of the world. / Softly he whispered Hush! in my ear: / It's something you learn, not words you can hear. (#1022)

From the outside, you see lifeless faces, / Strangers all, from Rome to Khorasan. / What's behind those faces? Look again. / To see the human ocean, look within. (#1810)

So far and high did my heart's bird fly / That worlds upon worlds opened secrets up. / So many ways she encompassed the sky / That world and beyond are a drop in her cup. (#817)

It's morning. With my cup of wine in hand / I fall and rise and, drunk, again I fall. / Beside her cypress tall, I am low, small, / Soon nothing. There's nothing but her at all. (#165)

This fire of love in which you burn away / Will be your garden paradise one day. (2nd half of #1399)

It is treasure buried in earth, concealed; / Both from the pious and faithless, concealed. / We saw that it surely was love, concealed: / This hidden thing left us naked, revealed. (#1640)

Tell the night that it cannot claim our day. / No religion claims love's holy faith. / Love's an ocean, vast and without shores. / When lovers drown, they don't cry out or pray. (#232)

No place holds a soul: Where should I go? / You've made me homeless; free as soul to flow. (2nd half of #1812)

The tides will take my poetry and song, / And carry off the clothes I did not own. / Good and bad, devotion, empty piety --/ Moonlight brings and moonlight takes away. (#593)

In their quest for God they have turned away / from all else but Him. Be dust at His door. / We are what we are because of Him, / Be we kings in His grace, or paupers pure. (#540)

Who could be brought down once you've raised him high? / The misery you bring he knows as bliss. / Each day the sky will hold its head up high / To bless those feet in your chains with its kiss. (#1945)

Go away, logic, there's no thinker here, / Nor room for even your finest split hair. / When the day comes, whatever lamp gives light / Is shamed by the face of the sun's bright glare. (#199)

Inside my heart and outside, all is her; / My body, blood and veins, my life is her. / There's no room here for blasphemy or faith; / My existence knows neither, only her. (#173)

When your love began to fill up my heart, / Whatever else I had was burnt away, / Logic and book-learning tossed on the fire. / Now I study song and poetry all day. (#606)

They say love means crying out her name. Lies. / They say love's hope will never ripen. Lies. / A universe of joy lives within us. / They say it lies beyond the sky. All lies. (#1058)

NOTES

¹ The crucial book on Rūmī: Franklin Lewis, *Rumi: Past & Present, East & West*, Oneworld, 2000/3, drawing on many sources, including work in Persian by prodigy Badī' al-Zamān Foruzānfar. Also see: Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi*, SUNY, 1993; and her more general *I am Wind, You are Fire: The Life & Work of Rumi*, Shambhala, 1992; William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*, SUNY, 1983; Sefik Can (present-day Mevlevi shaykh), *Fundamentals of Rumi's Thought: A Mevlevi Sufi Perspective*, Light, 2004; Amin Banani, et al. (Eds.), *Poetry & Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi*, Cambridge U., 1994; Afzal Iqbal, *The Life & Work of Muhammad Jalal-ud-Din Rumi*, 6th ed., Pakistan National Council, 1991; Ibrahim Gamard, *Rūmī & Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems & Discourses*, Skylight Paths, 2004; Abdolkarim Soroush's Fall 2002 Harvard lectures on Rūmī, www.dr.soroush.com/Lectures-English.htm.

² See *The Drowned Book: Ecstatic & Earthy Reflections of Bahauddin, the Father of Rumi* (Coleman Barks & John Moyne, Tr.), HarperSF, 2005. (A.J. Arberry had decades ago translated some of it.)

³ This, too, is finally available to English-speaking readers: *Me and Rumi: The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi* (William Chittick, Tr.), Fons Vitae, 2004. A score of varying manuscripts of this collection of teachings proves that the book was never formally published.

⁴ Lewis, 2000, p. 154, translated from the *Maqālāt* (99) of Shams.

⁵ Translated by W.M. Thackston, in his Introduction to *Signs of the Unseen: The Discourses of Rumi*, Shambala, 1999, pp. ix-x.

⁶ See Lewis on Rūmī's sexuality (pp. 320-4); Shams' "murder" (pp. 185-92).

⁷ This last poem and other material is well translated by Ibrahim Gamard at his must-see website www.dar-al-masnavi.org.

⁸ Lewis, 2000, pp. 228, 235. On the Mevlevi Order, see Shems Friedlander, *The Whirling Dervishes*, SUNY, 1992 / Parabola, 2003.

⁹ Respected Rūmī translators Ibrahim Gamard and Ravān Fahārdy have put much of the 6-book *Masnavī* into English prose (with extensive notes) at Gamard's website; Jawid Mojaddedi has put Book 1 into rhyming verse, *The Masnavi: Book One*, Oxford U., 2004; great British scholar R.A. Nicholson (1868-1945), who worked on a first critical edition, translated it in full along with medieval commentaries, *Masnavī-i Ma'navī* (8 vols.), Luzac, 1925-40, putting many verses into prose; Nicholson's *A Rumi Anthology*, Oneworld, 2000, combines his *Rumi: Poet & Mystic* (1950) and *Tales of Mystic Meaning* (1931), both mainly based on *Masnavī* selections. E.H. Whinfield (1836-1922) made an excellent 1-vol. abridgement in 1887, *Masnavi i Ma'navi*, selecting 3,500 of the *Masnavī*'s nearly 25,500 lines; reprinted as *Teachings of Rumi*, Dutton, 1975 and available at sacred-texts.com; this is still well worth reading. American Mevlevi teachers Kabir and Camille Helminsky use Nicholson for their more readable "daybook" versions of *Masnavī* extracts: *Rumi: Daylight*, 1990, and *Jewels of Remembrance*, 1996 (both publ. by Threshold).

For the *Fīhi mā fīh*, see W.M. Thackston, Jr. (Tr.), *Signs of the Unseen: The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Shambala, 1999; and A.J. Arberry (Tr.), *Discourses of Rūmī*, Samuel Weiser, 1972.

A complete English edition of Rūmī's *Dīvān* (variously known as *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabriz*, *Dīvān-i Kabīr*, etc.) is the massive 23-vol. project sponsored by the Turkish govt., with Nevit Ergin's translations into English from Abdalbāki Gölpinarlı's faithful Turkish transl. of the Persian. See also Nevit Ergin & Will Johnson (Tr.), *The Forbidden Rumi: The Suppressed Poems of Rumi on Love, Heresy, & Intoxication*, Inner Traditions, 2006 (on the "heretical" material banned by the Turkish govt. from publication). For Iranian-Americans' translations of Rūmī's poetry from Persian, see female poet Zara Houshmand's excellent rhyming collection of 360 Rūmī quatrains at www.iranian.com/Arts/rumi.html; Nader Khalili, *Rumi: Fountain of Fire*, Cal-Earth, 1996 (75 odes); Shahram

Shiva, *Rending the Veil: Literal & Poetic Translations of Rumi*, Hohm, 1995 (252 quatrains); *Rumi: Thief of Sleep: 180 Quatrains from the Persian*, Hohm, 2000; *Hush: Don't Say Anything to God: Passionate Poems of Rumi*, Jain, 1999 (24 odes, 60 quatrains); and, with Jonathan Star, *A Garden Beyond Paradise: The Mystical Poetry of Rumi*, Bantam, 1992 (their work tends to be error-prone and less faithful in accuracy); hear Shiva's musical CD of poetry recitals, *Rumi: Lovedrunk*, and see rumi.net on the Web; Maryam Mafi (Tr.), *Rumi: Gardens of the Beloved*, Element, 2004; *Rumi: Hidden Music*, Thorsons, 2002; *Rumi: Whispers of the Beloved*, Thorsons, 2000 (100 quatrains). Gamard has translated a few dozen *Dīvān* odes at dar-al-masnavi.org, where, among other things, he exposes the kind of mistakes made by modern "translators of translators" of Rūmī like Coleman Barks, Jonathan Star, et al., who know no Persian. Prose translations of 400 *Divan* poems, more faithful in meaning than the many "renderings" of Rūmī by Barks, Star, Andrew Harvey, et al., are available in A.J. Arberry, *Mystical Poems of Rūmī* (2 vols.), U. of Chicago, 1968; and Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz*, Cambridge U., 1898 (reprint: Rainbow Bridge, 1973) (Note: Barks, the most famous "presenter" of Rūmī poems, uses translations by Arberry, Nicholson, and non-scholarly translations by Iran-born John Moyne to create catchy American free-verse versions of Rūmī, which surely convey *some* of Rūmī's qualities, if missing all else.) Lewis provides candid analysis of all Rūmī translators (up to the late 1990s), pp. 564-615, and provides fine translations himself of 50 Rūmī poems, pp. 335-92. See a nice book of stories, poetry and pictures, Philip Dunn & Manuela Dunn Mascetti, *The Illustrated Rumi: A Treasury of Wisdom from the Poet of the Soul*, HarperSF, 2000.

¹⁰ To this point, all selections are from E.H. Whinfield, *Teachings of Rumi*, E.P. Dutton, 1975, pp. 3-317, with a few word changes.

¹¹ These *Masnavī* selections are from R.A. Nicholson's translation.

¹² Idries Shah's translation of a line translated by Nicholson as: "If in the world no genuine minted coin were current, how would forgers pass the false?" (*Mystics of Islam*, 1914, p. 100)

¹³ Tr. by A. Schimmel, in *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 1975.

¹⁴ Selections are from W.M Thackston, Jr. (Tr.), *Signs of the Unseen: The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi*, Shambala, 1999.

¹⁵ Zara Houshmand's lovely translations of these and many more Rūmī poems are all posted individually at www.iranian.com. This is an amazing free offering for all fans of Rūmī's work.