

Subject: Spiritual Human

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Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi

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Mevlana was born on 30 September 1207 in Belh in what is today Afghanistan. At an early age his family left Belh because of the danger of the invading Mongols and settled in Konya, Turkey, which was then the capital of the Turkish **Seljuk Empire**. His father Muhammed Bahauddin was a great religious teacher who received a position at the University of Konya.

Mevlana's early spiritual education was under the tutelage of his father Bahauddin and later under his father's close friend Sayyid Burhaneddin of Belh. Sayyid came to Konya when Mevlana was twenty-four years old, and for nine years instructed him in the science of Islam.

As the years passed Sayyid Burhaneddin felt that he had fulfilled his responsibility toward Jelaluddin, and wanted to live the rest of his life in seclusion. At the age of thirty seven Mevlana met the Sufi Shams Tebrizi. Prior to this encounter, Mevlana had been an eminent professor of religion in Konya. After meeting Shams Mevlana transformed into an inspired Sufi and a great lover of humanity. Before the arrival of Shams, Sayyid Burhaneddin told Mevlana:

One day a great friend will come to you, and you will be each other's mirror. He will lead you to the innermost parts of the spiritual world, just as you will lead him. Each of you will complete each other, and you will be the greatest friends in the entire world.

So, Sayyid Burhaneddin intimated the coming of Shams of Tebriz, the central event of Rumi's life. Shams did not stay very long in Konya. He disappeared, not once but twice. The first time, Mevlana's son Sultan Veled searched for and discovered him in Damascus. The second disappearance, however, proved to be final. After the disappearance of Shams, Mevlana spontaneously composed odes and poems called "ghazel", which were collected in a large volume called the **Divan-I Kebir** (The great collection of poems).

In his early fifties Mevlana began the dictation of his monumental work, the **Mesnevi**. The Mesnevi is a masterpiece of wisdom and poetry. Its content includes the full spectrum of life on earth, every kind of human activity, every kind of human character; as well as specific details of the natural world, history and geography. It is also a book of cosmic awareness, talking about the most sublime levels of metaphysics, the human love for God. The Mesnevi contains **25,632** couplets. In Mevlana's own words:

The Mesnevi is the cure of hearts, the purge of sorrows, the interpreter of the Kur'an and cleansing of character.

Mevlana was not only a wise person and a great poet, but also a complete Sufi -a person living spirituality at all times and not only talking about it. Here are some sayings of Mevlana:

My friend, the sufi is the son of the present moment: to say "tomorrow" is not our way.

The lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself.

The intellectual quest though fine as pearl or coral, is not the spiritual search. That spiritual search is on another level.

Since in order to speak, one must first listen, learn to speak by listening. Know that a word suddenly shot from the tongue is like an arrow shot from a bow.

It suits the generous person to give money, but truly the generosity of the lover is to surrender the soul.

The Sufi's book is not of ink and letters; it is nothing but a heart white as snow.

The heart eats a particular food from every companion. The heart receives a particular nourishment from every single piece of knowledge.

Discernment flies from one who is drunken with desire. He who puts down that cup lightens the inner eye, and the secret is revealed.

If sunlight falls upon filth, still it is the same light: no contamination comes to it.

Dervishhood is not for the sake of avoiding entanglement with the world; no, it is because nothing exists but God.

The garden of love is green without limit and yields many fruits other than sorrow or joy. Love is beyond either condition: without spring, without autumn, it is always fresh.

Reference: **RUMĪ Daylight**, C. and K. Helminski, Threshold Books, USA.

The heart of Rumi's message is that love is the motive force of the universe. Properly understood, the universe is a harmonious whole in which every part is related to all others in a love which finds its common focus in God. Drawing near to the **One** is for Mevlana, as for all Sufis, the way to true fulfillment in life. In this approach art forms such as music and dance are of capital importance. The whirling dervishes of the **Mevlevi Order** are well known all over the world. Art is both a tool for reaching higher awareness, as well as a conduit for the expression of the global will. The artist is a mediator, a postman carrying and distributing the message of unity. If the Sufi artist tries to improve in his art, it is not for the purpose of becoming famous; but rather in order to convey the message of unity in a cleaner, less distorted manner. A Sufi art not well known in the world is the art of marbling, the **Ebru**. This is done by spraying and mixing colors on the surface of a tray of viscous water and transposing the pattern on a white piece of paper by laying carefully the paper on the surface of the water. Below we see some examples of Ebru.

