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## **Moments of Exaltation**

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As a physicist, I found many connections and similarities between the behavior of humans and the behavior of sub-atomic particles. For, example the electron revolves around a nucleus, which acts as an attracting center. Humans too are attracted to centers that are both physical as well as spiritual. Our family, neighborhood, the city and country we live in are, in a way, **Strange Attractors** (this concept is explained in article **11-Order and Disorder**, in the Science column). Strange attractors acting on humans do not exert real, tangible forces, but only feelings of connectedness and belonging. In the environment of strange attractors we feel safe and secure.

Similarly the electron revolving around the nucleus has a well defined, stable energy level. If it is energized by some reason, it will jump instantaneously to a higher energy level, but will not remain there. It will return to its original energy level by ejecting a photon (light) having the same energy it initially received. During this brief moment the electron (and the atom) is said to be "exited". The same happens to human beings. Under certain conditions they can feel emotional and lofty, but this exalted moment doesn't last long. As the external effect vanishes, so does the feeling of exaltation. The temporary state of exaltation is a feeling of being carried away, a short period of overwhelming emotion that can only be defined as "love".

Love is an attraction; it is a force that acts on the soul or the spirit rather than on the body. Love is a feeling of longing, a wish that cannot be fulfilled. Once this wish of unification is realized the feeling of love gradually vanishes. This is why the human love is temporary. Moments of exaltation are also temporary, just because their effect are like instantaneous energy overflow.

The Sufi (Gnostic) poet **Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi**, frequently felt such moments of exaltation. During such moments he would recite poems and whirl around himself in a state of exaltation. The images in his verses try to convey the extreme tension that is generated during such elevated moments. The following poem from Mevlana is a good example of such an exalted moment [1]:

**At dawn a moon appeared from the waves  
And ascended, gazing down at me. Then,  
Like a falcon snatching a bird in flight,  
It snatched me up and flew away.**

**When I looked up I no longer saw myself:  
Into that moon my body had eased, by grace  
Of the soul in which I travelled, moon driven  
Until the secret of God's revelation halted me.**

**Nine spheres of Heaven had merged in that moon  
And the sea washed over the ship of my being,  
Breaking against me in waves. Again Wisdom's  
Voice boomed; "As it happens so it occurs".**

**At every foam-fleck of the ocean a figure  
Emerged and slowly disappeared, just as  
My foam-flecked body, received a sea-sign,  
Melted within and slowly turned into spirit.**

This exalted feeling of being, is what Sufi mystics call the *hal*. Hal is a temporary moment of awe and a feeling of unification. But the main goal of the Sufi is to elevate his spirit or state of cognition to the highest possible level. Such a level should not be temporary but permanent. The Sufi knows that what is called "reality" in general, is a matter of awareness and that as one climbs the levels of awareness one will see new realities. The ultimate reality is the level of **Complete Awareness**, where the person exists in this world but is also above worldly matters. The Sufi in such a level is in a state of love and compassion that is all-engulfing and full of values. When such a state becomes a permanent level of existence, the person becomes a spiritual "Strange Attractor". This is why, after more than seven centuries the poetry of **Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi** is still a focal point of attraction for spiritually oriented people.

## **Reference**

[1] **Rumi's Divan of Shems of Tabriz**, James Cowan, Element Books, page 89, 1997, USA.