

Rumi and the Confluence of Indian and Islamic Spiritualism

Dr. Balram Shukla
Department of Sanskrit
Delhi University

Spiritualism is a lofty platform where all the apparent differences become invisible. Varieties and differences are posited only on the surface level of existence, while in the depth of the being exists only one Supreme Being. The apparent variety in the world is inevitable in order to necessitate and cater to the various demands of the world or creation. All these differences finally dissolve into a single unity, which is the final and ultimate goal of all kinds of spiritual quests. It is an empirical realization stated by the great spiritual masters of all the ages and has also been reiterated in ancient texts among all the cultures¹. Thus, spiritualism erases conflicts among religions, cultures and dares to tread beyond geography, language and ethnicity. Maulana Jalāluddīn Rūmī (Rūmī hitherto), one of the great and legendary spiritual masters of all time, has put forth transcendental experiences which show concordance with the Indian spiritual systems and have the potential of bringing global peace and reconciliation.

Rūmī (1202 to 1272 AD) is the greatest Sufī of the Persian world born in Balkh, Afghanistan in the 13th century. Owing to adverse circumstances of that age his father Bahāuddīn Walad, a renowned philosopher, migrated to Konya in Turkey along with his family and disciples. Konya had been a part of the Roman Empire and because of this it was called Rome or Rūm and this gave Maulana Jalal-ul-Din's second name – Rūmī (i.e. He who is related to Rūm-Konya). After his father's death, Rūmī formally attained spiritual instruction under the guardianship of his father's arch disciple Burhan-ul-Din and also went to Aleppo where he composed a matchless theological account of his time which garnered a huge number² of followers, making him very famous in that region. When he was 37, Rūmī met a mystique named Shams-ul-Din Tabrizi who metamorphosed his personality to such an extent that he quit the discourses and began

¹ *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* 3.2.8

² Rūmī's son Sultan Walad claims this number to be 10,000.

dancing and singing. He abandoned all his intellectualism and began striding on the path of love. Owing to the undue pressure of Rūmī's disciples, Shams had to disappear. As an outburst of this bitter separation from his master and beloved, Rūmī composed almost 4000 overwhelming and energetic Ghazals that are compiled in “*Divan e Shams*”. After this, Rūmī also composed the “*Mathnavi*” of world fame. He founded the Maulavian school of Sufism which is famous for introducing music and dance as essential spiritual instruments.

In order to bring the whole humanity on a single plane, Rūmī differentiated spiritualism (*Tarīqat*) from ritualistic paraphernalia (*Śārīyat*). In spite of apparent differences based on geography and language, there is an underlying affinity between all the religions. The factor which flows like an undercurrent in all religions can be called ‘Spirituality’. The spiritual perspective which can unify all the religions, according to Lord Krishna is the purest kind of intelligence:

“Through which one sees a single, undecaying, undivided Entity in all the diversified things, is the purest kind of knowledge.”³

According to Rūmī even bitter enemies cannot harm each other in the said spiritual state of mind because it is the state where all individualities vanish away. He proclaims in his *Mathnavi-e-Manavi*-

“Since colourlessness (pure Unity) became the captive of colour (manifestation in the phenomenal world), a Moses came into conflict with a Moses. When you attain your colourlessness which you (originally) possessed, Moses and Pharaoh are at peace (with each other)”⁴.

³ *Sarvabhūteṣu yenaikam bhāvamavyayamīkṣate /*

Avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu tajjnānaṃ viddhi sātṭvikam // (Bhagavadgītā 18.20)

⁴ *Chūn ke bīrangī asīr e rang shud*

Mūsī-ī bā Mūsī-ī dar jang shud

Chūn be bīrangī rasī k'ān dāstī

Mūsī o firaun dārand āstī (Mathnavī-e-Mānavī ۲۴۶۸-۲۴۶۷ -) Trans. R.A. Nicholson, (Masnavi.net)

Thus, the most important thing is to concentrate on the affinity and similarities present in mankind and not on their discords⁵. For this purpose, Sufism intends to glean the grains of spirituality from the husk of religion. Rūmī has dared to enunciate that he has taken out the marrow (essence) from the *Quran* and thrown the remaining bones away to the dogs⁶. And when we see that in its real essence no tradition is depleted of the spiritual spark, none of them can be unacceptable to us. Rūmī aspires to attain that higher consciousness where all the apparent dissimilarities and incongruities merge into one, and the cacophony of the world seems to pass into an enchanting harmony. He says:

“*When the individuality of unities gets dissolved the Lord emerges there*”⁷.

In his works we astonishingly find an immense resemblance of thoughts with those in Indian spiritual (*Ādhyātmik*) traditions. In his *Mathnavi* and *Odes* we find several tenets which are alien even to the traditional orthodox Islam and native to the Indian psyche. By a subtle study of his works, we come to know that Rūmī was intricately informed about Indian culture and its literature. He has adopted numerous Indian stories, fables and anecdotes to substantiate his spiritual findings, though with considerable alterations. In Rūmī’s *Mathnavi*, we find a totally new avatar of *Pancatantra* tales. Borrowing at least five tales from the *Panchatantra*⁸, he has wonderfully changed both the form and the message of these stories in order to convey the Sufistic ideas and precepts.

Many of Rūmī’s poems seem to be natural translations of vibrant Upanishadic Mantras. A close and critical reading of the two texts shows that this similarity is not random. We have enough historical and geographical testimonies to prove vital presence of the *sanskaras* or impressions of Indian spirituality in Rūmī’s psyche. It is proposed by some scholars that because of having ancestral roots in Balkh, once a stronghold of Buddhism

⁵ In *Quran* too in the chapter ‘*Āl-e-Imrān*’, the mankind has been invoked to concentrate on the points they agree with- “*qul ya ahl-al-kitabi, t’āla’ū ilā kalimatīn savāin bainanā va bainakum*” (3.64) “O People of the Book, come to a word common between us and you.”

⁶ *Man ze Qur’ān bar guzīdam maghz rā*

Ustukhān rā pīs e sag andākhtam

⁷ *Mard-o-zan chūn yek šavad ān yek tu-ī*

Chūn yekī-hā mahva shud ānak tu-ī (*Mathnavī-e-mānavī-1786*) Trans. R.A. Nicholson, (*Masnavi.net*)

⁸ For more informations see- *Rūmī and the Creative Rendering of Panchatantra Tales- Balram Shukla, Iranian Historical Quarterly (Tehran). No.22, Pp-11-17.*

and Hinduism, the Indic ideas of re-incarnation, importance of Karmic laws, the utmost submission to the Guru and making music central to spiritual practices etc. must have been naturally engrained in his thought processes⁹. Moreover, his master Shams-ul-din Tabrizi is said to be a progeny of supposedly a *Vaiṣṇava* who was newly converted to Islam¹⁰. Apart from these evidences what profoundly informs both the traditions of Rūmī's spiritualism and Indian spirituality is the key element of *Ātma Jnāna* or self-realization. This very element of self-realization is basically the contact zone where the two entirely different cultures with their peculiarities meet and mark a sonorous fusion. In the pages to come, we will see several important points in Rūmī's Sufi philosophy which implicate resonance with Indian spiritual thoughts.

It is a general view held among scholars that Indo-Iranian Sufism, which is the soul of Persian poetry, seems to be different from Arab mysticism and orthodox Islam because it is seen as “*the reaction of Aryan mind against a Semitic religion imposed upon it by force*”¹¹. It is said to be the confluence of Islam and Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, and Vedanta and Neo-Platonism¹². We find the synthesis of all these views in Rūmī's poetry. His *Mathnavi* has “all the pantheistic beauty of the Psalms...”. Rūmī cannot see anything but God in each and every being of the universe. Nothing is to be discarded in this world-view because nothing is absolute evil– “*Pas bad-e muḥlaq nabāśad dar jahān*”¹³ And by doing so he fulfills the injunction of the *Upaniṣad* for the realization of God-

*bhūteṣu bhūteṣu vicitya dhīrāḥ pretyāsmāllokādamṛtā bhavanti.*¹⁴

(*The men with wisdom can single out **That** in all kinds of becomings and pass forward from this world and become immortal*)

⁹ “The Nav-Vihar at Balkh was a great Buddhist temple where pilgrims used to go from distance places. Barmak or Bermevide is the Sanskrit Word Pramukha (Chief). The well-known Bermevids originally belonged to Kashir and were the chief priests of the Nav-Vihar. Later their successors went to Baghdad and became famous ministers of Abbasid Caliphs. They were largely instrumental in establishing the Academy and getting Indian and Greek works translated into Arabic.” *Abidi*, page 215

¹⁰ S.A.H. Abidi, p. 213, in Quasemi 1997

¹¹ E.G. Brown, vol.1, p.419

¹² S.A.H. Abidi, p. 214, in Quasemi 1997

¹³ *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī-65*

¹⁴ *Kaṭhapaniṣad*– 2.1.5

A realized soul who can witness God everywhere, according to the *Srimadbhagavadgita*, God never disappears for him-

*yō mām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṅ ca mayi paśyati.
tasyāhaṅ na praṇaśyāmi sa ca mē na praṇaśyati..*¹⁵

By witnessing oneness everywhere, they could transgress fear. The Upaniṣads have unleashed the secret that fear is apprehended only from the other – *dviṭīyād vai bhayam bhavati*¹⁶, Rūmī reverberating with it states that there is no ‘other’ and hence there is no need to be scared of anyone-

*Guftam ai Íśq man az cīz-e-digar mī tarsam
Guft- Ān cīz-e-digar nīst digar hīc ma-gū*¹⁷.

(I complained to Love that I am scared of other things. Love consoled me-“Don’t be scared, there is nothing other than you in this existence.”)

In the Upaniṣads and following monistic literature we find numerous statements endorsing the non-duality of Being, e.g. *Ekamevādviṭīyam Brahma, neha nānāsti kiṃcana*¹⁸ (*Bṛha.Upa. 4.4.19*), *Mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyuṃ gacchati ya iha nāneva paśyati*¹⁹ (*Kaṭh. Upa. 2.1.12*), *et c.*

Realizing the oneness of the existence, they naturally do not delimit themselves to any constructed framework by the society like that of caste, creed or geography. It is from this very point of view that the Vedantic procedure of *Udvāpa* (Exclusion) begins by proclaiming *Neti – Neti* (*The Reality is not this*). In one of his famous Ghazals, Rūmī finds it difficult to identify himself with any religion, race or geography. The Ghazal starts with the following couplet-

*Ce tadbīr ei musalmānān ke man khud rā nemi dānam
Na tarsā nei yehūdān man na gabram nei musalmānam.*

¹⁵ *Bhagavadgītā* 6.30, “ He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him”. (Sw. Śivānanda’s Trans.)

¹⁶ *Bṛhadārṇyaka Upaniṣad* - १, १, ५

¹⁷ *Dīvān-e-Sams* : Ghazal-2219. She’r - 4

¹⁸ There is no diversity here whatsoever. (Sw. Śivānanda’s Trans.)

¹⁹ He who sees as though there is difference here, goes from death to death. (Sw. Śivānanda’s Trans.)

In his *Nirvāṇa-ṣaṭkam*, the greatest monist (Advait Vedantik) preceptor of 9th century Śaṅkarācārya also refuses his connection with false constructed identities in following words-

*manobuddhyahaṅkāra cittāni nāham na ca śrotrajihve na ca ghrāṇanetre.
na ca vyoma bhūmirna tejo na vāyuh cidānandarūpaḥ śivo'ham śivo'ham.*²⁰

Keeping in mind the philosophical similarities, we shall now present the salient points of affinities between Rumi and Indian monistic thought under six headings that relate to Sufi monism, prominence of love, cause of the world and way of liberation from it, the path to God realization, highest regard for the Guru, and the various ways of worshipping.

A. The Sufi Monism

The monism advocated by the Sufis, it must be kept in mind, differs largely from orthodox Islam. In orthodox Islam, monism does not mean the oneness of existence by simply oneness of God- لا اله الا الله (lā ilāha illa'llāha). Sufis extend this theory by opining that there is nothing in this existence but God²¹. In order to understand the status of God and the Creation, there are three theories in Islamic philosophy²²-1. *Ījādiyah*, 2. *Śahūdiyah* and 3. *Wajūdiyah*. The following three Persian expressions are used for understanding the differences clearly:

1. Hameh az Ū'st = *All beings have emanated from the God*. The Creator and created have outright different existence. It seems that this very theory has been generally accepted by the *Quran*. This view is called *Ījādiyah*. For instance, we find the following verse in the *Quran* that endorses it – “al-hamdu li'llāha allaḏī khalaq assamāvāti wa'l arda” (6.1) = Praise be to Allah Who created the heavens and the Earth.

2. Hameh bā Ū'st = *All beings exist in God*. The creation is just the reflection of God and hence there is monism in the existence. This theory is called *Śahūdiyah* or

²⁰ Neither am I the Mind, nor the Intelligence or Ego, Neither am I the organs of Hearing (Ears), nor that of Tasting (Tongue), Smelling (Nose) or Seeing (Eyes),
Neither am I the Sky, nor the Earth, Neither the Fire nor the Air,
I am the Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness; I am Shiva, I am Shiva,
The Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness.

²¹ “Dar Ísq mast bās ki ísq ast, har ce hast” *Dīvān-e-Śams* : Ghazal-455. She'r - 2

²² Batrā, Śrīnivāsa , p.149

Wahdat'usśuhūd. This theory has close consonance with the theory of qualified monism of Rāmānujācharya.

3. Hamēh Ū'st = *All existence is nothing but God*. This tenet is called *Wajūdiyyah* or *Wahdat'ul wujūd*. It holds the view that it is God only who transforms himself into different beings. This theory propounded by Ibn e Arabi in 12th – 13th century, is intrinsically similarity to the Upanishadic theories of monism.

Though Sufis repeat all the three theories to show their solidarity with the *Quran*, it is the third one which is most congenial to their opinion. Except for one or two contexts²³ the *Quran* doesn't seem to endorse the third theory of absolute monism. Rūmī, in one of his Ghazals goes a step further and proclaims that in the whole world there is only one being and That is YOU- "*Kīst kasī begū digar kīst kasī be jā-e-tū*"²⁴. In the same Ghazal, Rūmī has enunciated that whatever has been created in this world is only God's shadow- "*sāye-e-tū'st ei pisar, har che be rust ei pisar*". This statement takes the position that everything in this universe has been created out of Ātman (soul) and are like unreal and illusory shadows. Several maxims of Vedānta have the same intent, e.g. in Śankarācārya's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* -

mayyakhaṇḍasukhāmbhodhau bahudhā viśvavīcayaḥ |
utpadyante vilīyante māyāmārutavibhramāt ||

(In me, the Ocean of uninterrupted Bliss, endless waves of the universe arise and disappear by the play of the wind of Maya.)

And in *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra*-

“Viśvaṃ darpaṇadrśyamānanagarītulyaṃ nijāntargatam, paśyannātmani...”

(The entire world is like a city seen in the mirror, the seeing happening in one's own being. It is witnessing happening in the soul...)

Rūmī with astonishing accordance with the Indian monists, says that you have been born out of yourself and thus you yourself are both the father and the progeny- *ham pidarī wa ham pisar ham tu neī wa ham śakar*²⁵. In the Vedānta philosophy it is believed that the

²³ e.g. “fa ainamā tavallū fa samma wajh'ullāh” (*Quran* 1.)

²⁴ *Dīvān-e-Śams* : Ghazal-2148. She'r - 5

²⁵ *Dīvān-e-Śams* : Ghazal-2148. She'r - 5

Soul (Ātman) creates variety out of itself- *Srjasātmānmātmanā*²⁶. In the *Yajurveda* also there is a renowned Mantra corroborating the same line of thought: *Prajāpatiścarati garbhe antarajāyamāno bahudhā vi jāyate* (*Yajur* ° 31.16).

As there is oneness in existence, the knowing God is synonymous with being God- *Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati* (One who realizes God he himself becomes God.- *Munḍakopaniṣad* 3.2.9). Rūmī enunciates the same thing through the following expression *Nazzāre-e-jamāl-e-khudā juz khudā na kard*.²⁷ (*No one has witnessed the grandure of God without being God*). A Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad also corroborates the same idea: “*man araf nafsahu faqad araf rabbahu*” (*He who realizes his own self also realizes the God*). The Upanishads use the famous metaphor of clay to explain the monism²⁸. Rūmī also uses the same metaphor while adding some extra dimensions to it -

“*Khud kūzā o khud kūzāgar o khud gil-e-kūzā*
Khud rind-e-subūkaś
Khud bar sar-e-ān kūzā kharīdār barāmad
*Biśkast o ravān śud*²⁹”

(*He himself is the clay, the potter and the pot. He is himself the man who buys the pot and uses it for drinking and verily he himself destroys it and disappears finally.*)

Unlike the orthodox Islam, Vedānta and Rūmī both concentrate their discourse on the inner soul (the *Pratyag-Ātman*) instead of God. This *Pratyagatman* being self-proved, always given, is reality of every being and hence no other category can supersede it. For Sufis too, other than this self-illuminating soul, there is no God. There is a popular saying in Sufism - “*Sūfī khudā nadārad k’ū nīst āfarīdeh*” (*Sufi has no God because he has not been created*). In orthodox Islam, Allah is the master and rest of the existence is subservient to Him. That is why it is blasphemous to state the oneness of God and creation. Mansūr and Sarmad are some blatant examples who were persecuted and finally executed for having the same opinion of “*Ana’l-Haq*” or “*Ahaṃ Brahmāsmi*”.

²⁶ *Kumārasambhavam* 2.10

²⁷ *Dīvān-e-Šams* : Ghazal-٨٩١. She’r - ٩

²⁸ *Vācārambhaṇam vikāro nāmadheyam... mṛttiketyeva satyam* (*Chāndogyopaniṣad* 6.1.4)

²⁹ This couplet appears in an ode of Rūmī which some critics think doesn’t really belong to him.

B. Prominence of Love

When a *spiritual seeker* realizes his own presence everywhere, he simultaneously falls in love with the whole of existence. According to him the real cause of loving someone is to feel identity with the other. The Upaniṣads proclaim that we only love ourselves. The idea of otherness makes us scared: *Ātmanstu kāmāya sarvaḥ priyo bhavati (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad 4.5.6)*

Fear is impossible because there is nothing that can be called the “other”. Love is inevitable because all the existence is identical with us:

Tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śoka ekatvamanuṣyataḥ (Īśopaniṣad)”

(They who can see ‘One’ Being everywhere how can they come across bewilderment or grief ever?)

The pantheistic approach of the Sufis is the sole cause of the abundance of love in their school. They, like the *Vedantins*, can feel the presence of the Self everywhere. Love in Sufism is not just centered on an object or a being but like *Atman* or God, it is omnipresent. Love in Sufism has the same philosophical status as of Knowledge in the school of non-dualistic *Vedanta*. It is omnipresent, eternal and blissful. In itself it is instrument as well as goal. Orthodox Islam considers worship or service to God as instrumental to liberation, while Sufism believes that only love can lead us to the *summum bonum* of life. Equality is the pre-requisite of love while for worship or service hierarchy is a must. It is only love through which one can acquire the real knowledge of the Supreme being. Rūmī, in his *Masnavi*, calls love as the astrolabe for knowing all secrets of the Lord. In the *Bhagawad Gita*, Lord Krishna also says that his real nature can be understood only through *bhakti* (Divine Love) –

“Bhaktyā māmabhijānāti yāvān yaścāsmi tattvataḥ”³⁰.

In Sufism, *Aql* (reasoning and intellect) is a counterpart of *iśq* (Love). Our reasoning, according to Rūmī, is a bunch of our misconceptions. He suggestion to the spiritual seeker is to sell his scholarship and buy the bewilderment of love. This Love alone is the third eye which will lead to the Supreme:

*zīrakī be-farūs o hairānī be-khar
zīrakī zann ast o hairānī nazar³¹*

³⁰ *Bhagawadgītā 18.55*

It should be borne in mind that in bhakti tradition of the Vedānta, divine love is said to be the prominent instrument for God realization. *Bhakti* is the main proposition of the *Narada* and *Śāṅḍilya Bhaktisūtras* and *Pāncarātra* texts. In all the Vedānta schools, other than that of Śankara, *bhakti* or divine love enjoys a pivotal status. The Sufi perspective on the status of love differs from that of orthodox Islam. The latter opines that Allah has created the universe in order to examine his votaries. A votary is passed if he, despite being thrown into odd or even circumstances, remains loyal to Allah. On the other hand, Sufis hold the view that the Universe has been created out of love. In the *Nāsadīya* hymn of the *Ṛgveda* too it has been stated that even before the genesis, love or desire for creation (*Kāma*) did exist: “*kāmastadagre Samavartatādhi*”³². In *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (2.6.4) too we find the reverberation of the same fact - “*So’kāmayata bahu syām prajāyeyeti*”.

C. Cause of the world and way of liberation from it

The root cause of Creation is one of the widely discussed themes in all religions and philosophies. According to a tradition in Islam, Allah was like a hidden repository and He created this world so that He is known- “*kuntu Kanzan Makhfiyyan*” etc. Another tradition in Islam says that this universe has been created to serve Allah. Without disregarding the aforesaid opinions, Rūmī puts forth an opinion alien to Islam and native to the Buddhist *Vijñānavāda*. It says that this world has been created from our thoughts. All the external objects are nothing but projection of the thoughts already stationed in our mind³³. Just like the dream that appears in our mind, our exterior world too is created out of our thoughts. If we can manage to be thoughtless the world would disappear for us³⁴. The world created out of our thoughts is actually unreal, but its identification with the self, projects it as real. We aspire to attain it and want to possess it. Our mind judges different objects as good or bad and due to this we lose our equanimity. Constant thinking

³¹ *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī -1407*

³² *Ṛgveda* 10.129.4

³³ Bāgh-hā vo mīve-ha andar dil ast

Aks-e-lutf-e-ān barīn āb o gil ast (*Mathnavī-e-mānavī -1365*)

(The (real) orchards and fruits are within the heart: the reflexion of their beauty is (falling) upon this water and earth (the

external world) Trans. R.A. Nicholson, (*Masnavi.net*)

³⁴ In his autocommentary of the *Vakyapadiyam* (1.4) Bhartṛhari names this kind of deliverance as *Vaikaraṇyam* (The state of thoughtlessness.)

about the world fastens our relationship with it. Greed for availing the worldly pleasures is the dirt due to which our own self does not get reflected in the mirror of our heart, and we forget our own illuminating self³⁵. Therefore, our first duty is to cleanse the dirt from the surface of our heart. As Rūmī reiterates - *Saiqalī kun Saiqalī kun Saiqalī*³⁶. Only after doing this the face of the supreme beloved would appear to us. The orthodox Islam certainly would not subscribe to all the thoughts stated above. These thoughts are very similar to Buddhist *Vijñānavāda* and the Vedānta.

D. The Path and Process of God Realization

According to the Sufis, worldly love is the only way to attain the divine and transcendental love. Love, even if it is physical, is not unwelcome because it serves as a bridge leading to divine love. They believe in following famous Arabic proverb *لمجاز قنطرة الحقيقة* (*Physical love is bridge to divine love*). They who haven't loved the servants of God cannot attain Allah. Rūmī expresses the belief that the strings of love with worldly people, finally³⁷ guide us to the divine one. This is why Sufis had chosen worldly love stories of Laila Majnoon, Khusraw-Shirin, Yusuf-Zulaikha etc. in order to explain spiritual intricacies of divine love. In medieval India too, we find rich literature of the same kind produced by Indian Sufis, where they chose love stories from folklores and used them for their spiritual explanation³⁸.

Moreover, the Sufis used fine arts such as music and dance in order to attain the Supreme Being. The fine arts arouse delicate thoughts in our mind. The mind captivated and

³⁵ Āine-t dānī cherā Ghammāz nīst

Z'ān ke zangār az rukh-ash mumtāz nīst (*Mathnavī-e-Mānavī* -34)

(Dost thou know why the mirror (of thy soul) reflects nothing? Because the rust is not cleared from its face) Trans. R.A.

Nicholson, (*Masnavi.net*)

³⁶ (*Mathnavī-e-mānavī* -34); on another place too, Rūmī puts it like the following -

خواهید ببینید رخ اندر رخ معشوق

زنگار ز آینه به سیقل بزدا بید

³⁷ Āsíquī gar z'īn sar o gar z'ān sar ast

Āqibat mā rā bedān sū rahbar ast (*Mathnavī-e-Mānavī* ' ' ' -)

(Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, in the end it leads us yonder.) Trans.

R.A. Nicholson, (*Masnavi.net*)

³⁸ pahile hindui katthā kahī. puni re kahu turuk lai kahi..

puni ham kholi arath sab kahā. Jog singār bīr ras ahā.. (Kutuban in his *Mṛgāvatī* , verse 427, ed. Mātā Prasād Gupta)

liquified by fine music and dance cannot be a ground for harsh thoughts and thus it becomes conducive to love of the universe, and subsequently of love to God. It is interesting to note that Rūmī was the first to introduce dance and music into Sufism which is technically called Samā. This dance of Sufis is very esoteric and suggests connection between the mundane and divine world. This dance simultaneously can suggest the pangs of separation as well the bliss of union with the Supreme Beloved. It should be borne in mind that in orthodox Islamic rituals there is no room for dance or singing. A servant of Allah must be civilized, cautious and God-fearing. On the contrary, Rūmī says that in the court of my beloved being afraid is of no use. Everyone, here, is emperor, and servants are not needed at all:

*bar dar-e-māsūq-e-mā tarsandegān rā kār nīst
Jumle śāhān and īnjā bandegān rā bār nīst
(Dīvān-e-Śams : Ghazal-396. She'r – 1)*

In *Shrimadbhāgawata Mahapurāna (11.14.24)* too, while defining his votaries, the Lord enunciates that the person full of my love sings loudly, dances shamelessly, laughs and cries intermittently. By doing so he purifies the whole world³⁹. We are reminded of one of the 8 verses of Lord Caitanya of the 15th century in this regard- “*While taking Your name, when will my eyes ooze with stream of tears, when will the mouth be with stuttering and obstructed speech, when will the body be covered with bristling of hairs⁴⁰?*”.

E. Highest regard for the Guru

Highest regard for the Guru (spiritual teacher) is another point of similarity between Hinduism and Rumi's Sufism. In the *Śwetāśwatara Upaniṣad (6.22)*, for the first time the reference to *Gurubhakti* we find:

*yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau.
tasyaite kathitā hyarthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ.*

(He who has the extreme devotion towards the God and is devoted to the Guru with same intensity will be able to discern the ideas laid down in this Upaniṣad).

³⁹ vāggadgadā dravate yasya cittam rudatyabhīkṣaṇam hasati kvacicca.

Vilajja udgāyati nṛtyate ca madbhaktiyukto bhuvanam punāti.

⁴⁰ Śikṣāṣṭakam 6.

In Sufism also there is a similar statement about the Peer:

*har ke zāt-e-pīr o haq rā yek na dīd
nei murīd o nei murīd o nei murīd*

(He who differentiates Guru from the God is no way a disciple).

In the odes of Rumi almost all ghazals show intense dedication and yearning towards his preceptor *Śams Tabrīzī*. In orthodox Islam we know that no one can be equated with Allah or the Prophet Muhammad. It is possible only in Indic or its cognate schools of thought which is visible also in the Sufis in general and in Rumi in particular.

F. Various ways of Worshipping

Spirituality gives room to all opinions and it believes that the ways of worship may differ according to the disposition of the individual. An Arab proverb is very famous among Sufis and it reads: “*attarīqu il’allāhi bi-ādadī nufūs ul khalāyaqi*” (*The ways towards Allah are as many as there are people in this creation.*) In Rūmī’s *Mathnavi* (2.35) we find a very nice story about Moses the prophet and a shepherd. The shepherd was invoking God by imposing various qualifications according to his own understanding which Moses overheard. He scolded him for superimposing various adjectives to the formless God and warns him of the flames of hell. Frightened and sad, the shepherd goes away. God Himself sends a message to Moses that you separated my dear devotee from me:

*“tū barāy e wasl kardan āmadī?
yā barāy e fasl kardan āmadī⁴¹??”*

(Are you here to separate people from me or bring them closer to me?)

In the Indian thought there always has been the freedom to choose the path of worship according to one’s own temperament. Lord Krishna declares in the *Gīta* (7.21)-

*“yo yo yāṃ yāṃ tanuṃ bhaktaḥ śraddhayārcitumicchati
tasya tasyācalāṃ śraddhāṃ tāmeva vidadhāmyaham.*

(Whatsoever form any devotee desires to worship with faith that (same) faith of his I make firm and unflinching.)

⁴¹ *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī-1751*

In *Bhagawadgita* (3.23) also the very thought has been reiterated by the Lord. He says “*Everyone among the human beings is treading on my path only*”. And therefore, there is no need to harass anyone or deviate from one’s chosen path. In the *Shivamahimnah Stotra* (7) it has been stated that according to their interest people choose apparently different paths but their ultimate goal is One - the Lord⁴²: This attitude is the only solution to end discord and bring peace and reconciliation in our modern world.

Thus, we see that Jalaluddin Rūmī, even being stationed in Islamic boundaries, has innovated a syncretic and tolerant model of *Maulaviya* that can accommodate all kinds of spiritual seekers in it. In his framework there is nothing but peace and reconciliation as he believes that the nationality of love is outrightly different from all other nationalities. Nationality and religion of Lovers is only the supreme Lord:

*“millat-e-īśq az hame millat judā-st
Āsiqān rā millat o mazhab khudā-st⁴³”*

In the realm of love there is only accord and love ispite of all superficial differences. In his Mathnvi Maulana has stated:

*“ei basā hindū o turk-e-hamzabān – ei basā do turk chūn bigānegān
pas zabān-e-hamdilī khud dīgar ast – hamdilī az hamzabānī behtar ast⁴⁴”*

(Oh, many are the Hindūs and Turks that speak the same tongue; oh, many the pair of Turks that are as strangers (to each other). Therefore, the tongue of mutual understanding is different indeed: to be one in heart is better than to be one in tongue.)

Finally, we end this paper with an invocation of Rūmī to mankind:

“biyā tā qadr-e-yekdīgar bedānīm – ke tā nāgeh ze hamdīgar namānīm⁴⁵”

(Come on, let us realize the value of each other, lest we should remain ignorant of the mutual importance.)

⁴² “Rucīnām vaicitryād ṛjukuṭīlanānāpathajuṣām
nṛṇāmeko gamyastvamasi payasāmarnava iva.

⁴³ *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī* - 1770

⁴⁴ *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī*- 1206-1207

⁴⁵ *Dīvān-e-Śams : Ghazal-1535. She’r – 1*

References

Persian

Zamānī, Karīm. *Šarh-e-jāme'-e-mathnavi*. Intiśārāt-e-Ittelā'āt. Tehran. 1390 Hijri

Jamālzādeh. Muhammad Ali. *Bāng-e-Nay*. Intiśārāt-e-Anjuman-e-kitāb, Tehran. 1325 Hijri

Zarrīnkūb. Abdul Huassain. *Pille pille tā mulāqāt-e-khudā*. Intiśārāt-e-Ilmī. (30th ed.) 1389 Hijri

Zarrīnkūb. Abdul Huassain. *Dumbāl-e-just o jū dar taswwuf-e-Irān*. Intiśārāt-e-Amīr Kabīr, Tehran 1389 Hijri

Farūzān Far, Badīuzzamān. *Šarh-e-hāl-e-Maulavī*. Kitābfurūs-e-Javār. Mašhad. 1315 Hijri

Maulānā, Jalāluddīn (ed.) Nicholson, R.A. *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī-with verse index*. Moscow edition. Intiśārāt-e-Hirmis (4th ed.) 1386 Hijri

Maulānā, Jalāluddīn (ed.) Kadkani, Muhammad Rezā Šafī'ī. *Dīvān- Šams Tabrīzī*. Intiśārāt-e-Sukhan-Tehran 1388 Hijri

English

Arberry, A.J. – *Tales from Masnavi* , George Allen and Unwin LTD, Ruskin House Museum Street , London – 1961

Whinfield, E.H. (Tr.)- *Masnavi I Ma'navi (translation and Abridgement)*. The Ocatagon Press. London -1979

Syeda Saiyidain Hameed (ed.). *Contemporary Relevance of Sufism*. Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Delhi-1993

(Editors) Banani,Amin ; Hovannisian, Rechar; Sabagh, Georges – *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam : The Heritage of Rūmī* , Cambridge University Press – 1994

(Editor) Quasemi, Sharif Husein ; Maulavi Flute, New age International (P) Limited. Publishers, New Delhi et.c.-1997

Rizvi, Syed Athar Abbas. *A History of Sufism in India* (Vol.1). Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi. (IVth reprint)2012

Hindi

Tiwārī, Rāmpūjan. *Sūfīmat : Sādhanā aur Sāhitya*. Jñānamṇḍala Limited. Vārāṇasī, Sam. 2025

Pāṇḍeya, Śyām Manohar. *Madhyayugīna Premākhyāna*. Lokabhāratī, Allahabad. 1982

(Trans.) Rizvi, Syed Athar Abbas. *Haqāyaq-e-Hindī of Mīr Abdul Wāhid Bilgiramī*. Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā, Kāśī. Sam. 2014

Shukla, Balram. *Niḥśabda Nūpur (100 Ghazals of Rūmī with Hindi trans.)*. Rajkamal Prakāśan. Delhi-2018

Urdu

Maulavi, Jalāluddin Rūmī (Trans. & notes) Hussain, Qāzī Sajjād. *Mathnavī-e-Mānavī (6 volumes)*, Sabrang Kitābghar, Delhi 1974

Internet links

ganjoor.net/moulavi/shams/ghazalsh/

<http://www.masnavi.net/2/25/eng/>

<https://www.vajehyab.com/>

(Visited till 12.06.2020)