

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF MYSTICAL VISION OF RUMI

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ABSTRACT

Rumi is considered as one of the pillars of Iran's culture. Understanding the importance of the place of Rumi is directly related to the understanding his views. Rumi is a different man whose worldview is distinguished from philosophy, logic and science, because he is after neither ratiocination nor rational argument or sensory experiences. Then, his difference with others causes Rumi's infinite majesty to be revealed and this infinity can be just contained in Rumi's mysticism which understands the mysteries of universe beyond philosophy and science. Rumi struggles to decode these mysteries not with reason rather with love. Then, no one can understand Rumi's perspective of life based on logic, philosophy and science. In other words, Rumi can only be known based on mystical enthusiasm and mood. Rumi has founded his own theology based on an ontological system whose very foundation is existence. Ontological understanding of Rumi, in turn, paves the ground for understanding his reflections on self-knowledge. What surges in the works of Rumi is the freshness of his words. You never get bored of reading the works of Rumi and this is due to the hidden vision in his works. This vision includes his intuitive vision of existence which is managed to influence the world and attract people with different cultures.

Keywords: *Rumi, Self-knowledge, Ontology, Anthropology, Intuition.*

INTRODUCTION

Mysticism and Sufism are the story of enthusiasm of the wayfarer's soul. Rumi's mysticism is full of messages and concepts that are consistent with modernism and they seem to have been suggested in the present era. Rumi is one of those mystics who have managed to liberate himself from the bondages of time and space. Rumi's mystical musings have created a work of mystical literature. This work enjoys literary and mystical features as its title suggests. Since literature is a sublime and superior word which is recorded and respected by people and literature plays an effective and tendering role, thus, literary framework can tender mystical affairs for the wayfarers and maximize its influence.

Rumi is a different man whose worldview differs from philosophy, logic and science because he is neither after argumentation nor rational discussion nor sensory experiences. Within the framework of mysticism away from philosophy and science, Rumi seeks to know the mysteries of universe with love.

Unlike Ghazali's ascetic mysticism, in Rumi's esoteric and amorous mysticism, there is no place for "grief". In his works, Ghazali represents a man of God filled with the fear of God. Rumi has reached the station of love above the station where Ghazali stands and if there is any grief in love, its nature is totally different from ordinary grief.

Before visiting Shams Tabrizi, Rumi was a conservative religious cleric and was respected by people and one of his interests was studying. Shams ordered him to stop studying; he forbade Rumi from his previous interests.

Rumi believes that there is neither any similar nor any opposite for God by which we would be able to know him rather he is beyond all imagination and those who think that they have known the Divine Essence are stuck in hallucination. Rumi believed that in the hierarchy of existence, man has emerged as the last step in the hierarchy but he is the main and final cause of creation. It should be stated about Rumi that his Masnavi presents the opposition between body and soul and the corporeal and incorporeal aspects of human existence.

Of course, Rumi is mindful of the fact that man is finally a man and God is a God and on the other hand, the potency of human individuals varies from one person to the other. This is why he believes in the hierarchical nature of knowledge of God. It is interesting to note that his idea in this regard can be compared with the thoughts of such contemporary thinkers as Paul Tillich the German theologian of twentieth century.

Research Background

Mystical internationalism is the basis of Rumi's anthropological perspective, according to Mohammad Reza Abedi¹. This author has sought to explain internationalism based on Rumi's trans-national and incorporeal notion of man.

The essay Perfect Man in Rumi's Mysticism and Its Comparison with Ibn Arabi² studies the ideas of Rumi and Ibn Arabi concerning man in a comparative context. Also the article entitled Mystical Theology of Rumi³ explains the transcendent and immanent views of Rumi.

Rumi's Perspective and Iranian Society and World

Rumi is one of the main pillars of Iranian culture. His thoughts have actualized part of the cultural potentiality of Iran in global scale and have penetrated into the minds and hearts of the world's people, particularly Americans who are thought to be exporters of cultural elements to the world. Today, Rumi is not only an essential part of scientific and literary discourse in the world rather he has also managed to obtain a great space for himself among the mystics across the world and even he has a considerable place in American popular culture. One may feasibly claim that no other Iranian poet can be compared with Rumi in view of his influence in literature and other sciences. The influence of this Persian speaking poet not only can be seen among the eastern and western religions rather many works of philosophers and psychologists in scientific circles have been inspired by him. It is this popularity of the doctrines of Rumi along with his pure thoughts that impress humans with various tastes so that many have started to appreciate him as a great poet (Mehrabi, 2009).

Masnavi contains numerous classic words, parables and anecdotes of Iran as well as traditional rituals of Iranians and the themes of previous literary works. Each of the latter works includes a certain elements of our culture and is alive still among the people. Rumi has used a great number of old parables and stories in his work and in many cases, an excerpt of Masnavi has become popular among people as a maxim or proverb.

The recognition of quiddity and identification of self has been always among the key concerns of thinkers in the past. In Rumi's point of view, recognition of the real and original self is not

¹ Journal of Religious Anthropology, Vol. 11, no. 26, Summer and Fall 1983, pp. 11-96.

² Soheila Mazeni, Journal of Literature and Mysticism, Vol. 3, Spring 1982, no. 11, pp. 121-131.

³ Asadi, Ali Ausat, Journal of Islamic Mysticism, Winter 1938, vol. 1, no. 23, pp. 111-121.



possible via ordinary ways rather it is possible via breaking the ordinary conceptual framework and based on a mystic experience. Self-knowledge requires to be coupled with ontological perspective which is Rumi's point of view.

This vision, in turn, paves the ground for understanding Rumi's contemplations of self. The mystic in the course of his own initiation, gradually passes through stages and in each stage his knowledge becomes intensified. This gradual and hierarchical nature of mystical journey is completely in line with the universe grades. In mystical worldview, perfect man is the main axis of the world. In fact, without knowing human being, one cannot know his potencies and needs and thus, one cannot explain the basic norms and rules for him.

Rumi has noted this point in his poetic and prose works before others. Rumi speaks of human being from the very beginning to the end of the Masnavi. He begins with a discussion of human soul and then, he delineates about the course of human evolution and finally, he pays attention to the final destination of human being. Rumi states that Perfect Man is the mirror of Divine Presence:

I told: my heart! Search after a Universal Mirror/ Go to the sea nothing could be done by the brook (Masnavi, Second Book).

Mystics consider human being as a manifestation of the totality of Divine Names and Rumi believes that man is the mirror of all attributes of Divine Presence. The thought and picture of God among Muslims have been slightly theological and philosophical. Since the native cultural context has not been suitable for critical thinking in the course of history, the approach to philosophical vision has been developed. Contrary to Jurisconsults, Rumi does not describe God as a Lord:

There is no place for fear before love/ everything is a sacrifice in the path of love (Masnavi, Fifth Book).

Rumi believes that it is not the human's mind which depicts a picture of God as the mind is the place of belief while we need a God who can fill us with belief. The God of philosophers and religious scholars enhance the understanding but Rumi's God is a deity who appropriates human heart and permeates through the whole universe. In this course, as Rumi suggests, man should purify his existence of all selves and kill the hellish ego inside and discipline his own tongue and overcome the anger. Understanding Rumi's perspectives will lead to the recognition of Rumi's influence as a great poet of this land and recognition of the effective factors of his perspective on Iran and the world's societies.

Influential Factors on Rumi's Mysticism

1. Psychological Type of Rumi:

one might say that a number of psychological types, characters and personalities have higher potentiality as compared to other types for acquisition of religious experiences. For example, those who belong to the passive-introverted type are able to acquire religious experiences (Mlekian, 2000). And since Rumi had such a psychological type it is totally natural to expect these experiences from him.

2. Family background:

Rumi was born in a family which was thoroughly informed of divine light. Then, it is completely natural to expect Rumi to have been inspired by this atmosphere and prepared his own mind and tongue for saying mystical truths.



3. Acquaintance with Shams of Tabriz:

Rumi was a conservative cleric before his acquaintance with Shams but after meeting Shams, everything changed:

I was a pious servant of God you made me a song writer/ I was blaming the drinkers you made me a wine worshiper/ I was a decent man of God/ You turned me to a plaything of the children outside (Divan-e Shams, Quartet 1119).

4. Harmony with nature and the beyond in practical life:

Rumi is one of the mystical poets who has acted more than talking and as he has suggested, doctrine requires taking steps not reading the path and describing it and staying there.

Rumi's companion with the incorporeal beings took him to unimaginable points and he has himself referred to this fact in Masnavi:

What shall I say? For he has sealed my lips: his furnace has consumed the place of my breath/ verily there is no evidence for sun except the lovely light of sun/ the majesty in evidence declares the truth/ all conceptions are behind him and he has outstripped them all/ all perceptions are mounted on lame asses/ he is mounted on a wind that flies like an arrow (Masnavi, 3: 3119).

Self-Knowledge based of Rumi's Perspective

Self-knowledge is the most important approach that human needs to obtain by vision. Self-knowledge paves the ground for one's knowledge and nearness to Divine Presence:

He knows hundred thousands of ideas of various branches of knowledge/ He does not know anything of his own soul/ He knows the features of every substance/ He is like an ass in description of his own substance/ You know the price of everything/ It is lame not to know one's own price (Masnavi, 3). Self is a complicated concept and despite numerous efforts that have been made for explaining it, no consensus was obtained regarding this concept's factors, elements and central features. Thus, this concept is continuously causing problems in human sciences and one can consider it to be a conceptual problem (Khatami, 2007).

This is known among Muslim philosophers as rational soul and is an existential reality that constitutes human truth and reaches its actuality along with its various forces like vegetative soul and animal soul all of which are various aspects of soul, which get in to action via an evolution in their nature.

Rumi's Ontology

As we mentioned, an ontological understanding of Rumi can pave the ground for understanding his reflections on self-knowledge because the mystic in the course of his journey, gradually passes through stages which enhance his knowledge. These stages are indeed the degrees of human existence and identity and are compatible with the degrees of the whole universe (Zarinkoob, 2007).

Thus, the degrees of existence and knowledge are closely intertwined. Then, Rumi, like other thinkers, struggle to ground his own worldview following the knowledge of universe and existence. Rumi can be declared as a pantheist though he has not used the term pantheism. However, Rumi is one of the key sources of this term indeed.

By pantheism, the mystic refers to the idea that existence is exclusively for Divine Essence and one needs to deny existence from other entities to obtain pantheism. Such a notion of universe requires to be grounded in a type of monism because there is no actually two independent entities that could be logically united. This is the case with both objective and subjective



unities. After reaching this stage of existence, the mystic sees only one true Being and in his eyes, other creatures are annihilated in the nothingness.

In this point, the debate of nothingness and nought plays a key role in the ontology of Rumi. The epistemological distinction between being and appearance, i.e. the distinction between Being and Nothingness, as the key attributes of respectively the Absolute Being and contingent beings is considered to be among the main constituents of the ontological vision of Rumi. This allows Rumi to describe the world as the seemingly-existing-nothing and the Absolute Being as the seemingly-nothing-Being (Sabzewari, n.: 33).

He hath caused the non-existent to appear existent and magnificent; he hath caused the existent to appear in the form of non-existence (Masnavi)

We are non-existents who appear to be existent/ You are the Absolute Being and appear to be non-existent (Masnavi).

But what does Rumi means by "Nothingness":

Before answering this question, one should say that nothingness or non-existence has been used in Masnavi in different senses; according to Professor Humaei, nothingness is sometimes used in the sense of annihilation and some other times, it is used in sense of wayfarer's union with God and disappearance of his personal existence. Moreover, nothingness has also been used in the sense of self-humiliation. The fourth application of nothingness is related to the sphere of incorporeal entities and purely spiritual creatures (Humaei, 1997).

Meanwhile, one meaning is more underlined as compared to other meanings according to which, nothingness refers to the Invisible World in the eyes of Rumi.

The Invisible World in Masnavi, in its extensive sense, represents the sphere of all affairs which are not known to human senses. Thus, he sometimes refers to it as non-existence and nothingness. In Rumi's thought, nothingness refers to both relational non-existence and absolute nothingness (Zarinkoob, 2007).

Furuzanfar has also referred to this point. In his commentary of the following verses of Spiritual Couplets,

When He recites spells over the non-existences which have no eye or ear, they begin to stir/ Because of His spells the non-existences at that very moment are dancing joyously into existence (Masnavi, First Book, 1451), he writes that: these verses of Rumi show the influence of power and dominance of Divine Presence over the whole gamut of beings from the very material entity whose reality is close to non-existence to the purely spiritual first manifestation of divinity that bears the epistemic forms of objects (Furuzanfar, 1989).

Rumi has frequently used non-existence in this non-relational sense. He refers to the nothingness that represents the mediatory world as eternal world:

Where are you going while you are dancing?/ I am going towards the openness of the domain of nothingness/ Which nothingness is this tell us/ The ear of step knows the word of step.

Or in other place he sings:

With such a God who from the nothingness/ Hundreds of this world can be created in a moment

Furuzanfar believes that nothingness in this verse refers to "epistemic forms in Divine Essence and archetypes" which are types of reality but they do not have any existence of their own as Ibn Arabi suggests (Furuzanfar, 1989: 227; Zarinkoob, 2007)



Nicholson has also considered nothingness in these verses as archetypes in his interpretation (Nicholson, 1999).

In this regard, Chittick writes: "This is the very point which has been noted in our narratives: "God created the world from nothingness". Sufis note that this is not true to say that the creatures were absolutely nothing before their creation; because God has had eternal knowledge of the universe. Then, creatures existed in Divine Knowledge before their creation (ibid: 200).

Up to this point, we were speaking of the nothingness which was referred to relational non-existence that has a kind of determination in Divine Knowledge; but nothingness is used in a wider sense in Masnavi. In this sense, non-existence is concerned with Divine Essence itself and represents the unknown absolute infinity of God. Contrary to archetypes which exist in the level of Divine Knowledge, the requirement of indeterminateness of Divine Essence is that it cannot be even conceived in mind because if it could be deemed in human mind it will lose its indeterminateness.

In this ontological notion of nothingness, the hierarchies of existence are formed; the first level is for the Absolute Infinite Existence which is more extensive than anything else and it is Nothingness; of course, not nothingness in the sense of deprivation or nullity as the blasphemers believe and Rumi reproaches them:

You we sowing the seed of conspiracy, you were lamenting/ You thought God is non-existent, now you have to face it loser (Rumi, 1990: 18736).

Rather by nothingness, Rumi refers to the "Invisible" or the "Inside" of reality and this nothingness is beyond existence not below it. It is the density of existence not its deprivation. Naturally, this nothingness is the source of existence in the viewpoint of Rumi and the requirement of this is "the lack of color and form" (Rumi, 1990, 6).

Indeterminateness is one of the features of Divine Essence. Rumi refers to this domain as the "domain of comprehensive nothingness":

O God, do Thou reveal to the soul that place where speech is growing without letters (Rumi, 1990, 1: 3092).

In his opinion, this pure being becomes revealed in nothingness and the latter is the source of all existents.

Since there is being in nothingness and no beingness in being/ A fire came to him and burnt his existence (Rumi, 2006).

Here, Rumi becomes drunken by nothingness and sees it as a vehicle through which one can go to the heavens and describes it as the religion of the wayfarer:

I am drunken with desire for non-existence, not for the existent, because the Beloved of (the world of) non-existence is more faithful (Rumi, 1990, 5: 315).

This nothingness is a vehicle that takes us towards the Absolute Being:

The steed of not-being (self-naughtedness) became a goodly Burâq: it brings you to (real) existence, if you are non-existent (self-naughted) (Rumi, 4: 555).

This "nothingness in the existence" and annihilation in Allah is the religion of Rumi and leads him to "existence in nothingness" and eternity in Allah (Kakaei, 2010).

Being lost in the lost is my religion/ nothingness in the being is my worldview (Rumi, 1990: 25).



All these mystical contradictions emerge in the course of explanation of this unity of being and nothingness and the nonsense that is voiced by the mystics has its origin in this.

Thus, speaking of the Divine Essence, in terms of nothingness, takes place more in the form of the paradox of being and nothingness:

Look at the wonders of the men of wonder/ Have you ever seen someone who exists while he is not? (Rumi, 480).

I do not know if I exist or not? But I know/ Because I am I do not exist though like a non-existent (Rumi, 1990: 15017).

Accordingly, some scholars have preferred to translate "Hasti" in Persian as "Being" in order to show that Hasti refers to a place beyond existence and non-existence (Chittick, 2003: 201). Thus, explanation of Rumi's self-knowledge without explication of his ontology is not possible.

Rumi on Anthropology

This, this, is the soul of all the sciences—that thou shouldst know who thou shalt be on the Day of Judgment (Rumi, Masnavi, Book 3).

The essence of Rumi's anthropology is the study of Perfect Man; the term which without its application in his works particularly in Masnavi Rumi has said a lot of things of it.

Rumi's mystical anthropology should be also explained like his ontology in the light of the idea of transcendent oneness of existence; in other words, the truth of human existence is understood based on the type of relationship that it has with the Absolute Being. Thus, man does not have a clear determinate nature; rather it is a type of knowledge that is defined in the process of evolution and movement in relation with the Absolute Being. Accordingly, knowledge of human truth will be associated with a type of mystical experience in the light of which the knowledge of human reality and existential truth is reached.

Here Rumi makes use of his own theoretical and ontological reflections and invites us to "annihilation and nothingness". This invitation to "annihilation" is indeed the ontological nothingness and represents the vacuum felt by the mind or soul when it encounters the Absolute; this is a state of mind where human attention is merely focused on the Absolute and neglects every other thing. It is exactly where that the extensive debates of the arc of ascent and return to the origin and reunion with the Truth are raised and deep and exact debates of "annihilation" take place.

Following this experience of oneness of existence, man becomes mindful of his own truth through mystical self-knowledge. It is based on this knowledge that man becomes separated from other things and allows the Absolute Being to become revealed in the sphere of spirit. This is the station of "annihilation" and the man who reaches this station is known as "Perfect Man".

Rumi on Intuition

According to Rumi, mystical intuition is the noblest type of religious experience. In his Fih-e Ma Fih, Rumi states that all knowledge that is achieved in this world is the knowledge of saints of God and the knowledge that is acquired after the death is the knowledge of religions. Knowing the knowledge of "I am the Truth" is the knowledge of chosen saints, while turning to "I am the Truth" in reality is the knowledge of religions. Seeing the light of fire and lamp is the knowledge of saints while being burnt in the fire or light of lamp is the knowledge of religions (Rumi, 1990: 221).



A Pharaoh said “I am God” and was laid low; a Mansúr (Halláj) said “I am God” and was saved./ The former “I” is followed by God's curse and the latter “I” by God's mercy, O loving man (Rumi, Masnavi, Book Five).

According to Rumi's point of view, the essence of religion is the intuition of the mystical union. In one of the stories of the Masnavi, Rumi says that both Pharaoh and Hallaj had the claim of union and their difference lied in the fact that Hallaj intuited this union and became prosperous but Pharaoh did not have any intuition of it and became wretched. The reason is clear because Hallaj used to say "I am the Truth" because he had reached the station of annihilation and saw God flowing through everything but Pharaoh did not reach this station and he sought to express his own independence. Sadr al-Din Qunavi in Misbah al-Uns says: monotheism has four stages; the shell of the shell which is verbal confession associated with negligence of heart; the second stage is the shell: it is attestation in heart though with imitation or vision; the third is the kernel: by watching the one through discovering that all the beings are sent from the One Truth; the forth is the kernel of kernel: seeing in the existence of nothing but the One and it is annihilation in monotheism (Qunavi, 1995). Qunavi defines intuition as the revelation of the mysteries of the objects to the wayfarer and in a higher degree of intuition, the mystic is exposed to the manifestations and revelation of Divine Attributes. Also, he defines observation as seeing the Truth without any mediation and with utmost certainty that wipes off all doubts. This observation varies depending on the nearness of the wayfarer to the Lord. The more tarnished is the mirror of the heart, the more enlightened is it by the beams and radiations of the Absolute (ibid: 11). Hojviri in Kashf al-Mahjub states that the reality of observation is of two types: one is out of veracity of certainty while the other is due to the domination of love. When the love of beloved overwhelms, there remains no room for any other thing and this is why Shebli says "I don't see anything but Allah (Hojviri, 2002: 121-132).

Rumi states that vision means reaching the station of intuition and revelation. Anyone who reaches the stage of revelation and tears the veils, he sees the Truth in all stages of existence: Everyone in whose breast the gate is opened, will behold from every city the sun (shining) (Rumi, Masnavi, Book One).

He continues that the main obstacle before the intuition is rooted in us and our ugly habits and hallucinations that blur the vision and understanding of subtle realities. The lack of consciousness does not imply non-existence. If we tear the veils of hallucination and carnal desires, we will be able to see the God:

God is manifest amongst others as the moon amidst the stars/ Lay two finger-ends on thy two eyes, and wilt thou see aught of the world? Deal justly (confess that thou wilt see nothing)/ If thou dost not see this world, (yet) it is not non-existent: the fault lies not save in the finger of thy evil self/ Come, lift the finger from thin eye, and then behold whatsoever you wish (Rumi, Masnavi, Book One).

At this part, by vision, revelation and intuition of Truth, Rumi refers to the union with divinity and God vision. Thus, those who are occupied with sensory objects deprive themselves from the divine light and become blind:

Man is eye, and (all) the rest is (worthless) skin: the sight of that (eye) is (consists in) seeing the Beloved/ When there is not sight of the Beloved, it (the eye) is better blind; the beloved who is not everlasting is better afar (away and out of sight)” (Rumi, Masnavi, Book One).



In Fih-e Ma Fih, Rumi criticizes the philosophers due to denial of vision of various manifestations of Divine Essence. "Philosophers deny the reality of God Vision because they say that in this vision, the servant would lose the interest in Him and this is not appropriate; Sunni Muslims say that this could happen when He is of one color while God reveals Himself in hundreds of colors. As Quran suggests, "He is always in action" (Surah al-Rahman, Verse 26). Divine Essence has hundreds of thousand manifestations and reveals itself through various actions. In the time of happiness, the manifestation is different and in the time of crying, the manifestation is different in the same way that in the times of fear and hope, the manifestation is different. By the same token, Divine Essence becomes revealed through various manifestations and you have to compare the manifestation with the actions" (Rumi, 2002: 69). Rumi says that beholding the attributes of God is equal to seeing God:

If I eat bread without the view of God's attributes, it will stick in my throat."/ How should a morsel digest without the sight of Him, without the view of His roses and rose-garden? (Rumi, Masnavi, Book Two).

Anyone who has seen the Divine Essence with his insight, he is indeed the man of Allah. In other words, those who behold the Divine Essence along with all its attributes and worldly manifestations, they are known as the men of Allah and saints (Anqaravi, n.: 311).

Whosoever has seen God is of God: whosoever has seen that Sea is that Fish (Rumi, Masnavi, Book Two).

Intuition and revelation are semantically close together. The difference between them is that revelation is more completed than intuition. It is said that revelation is the individuation of spirit. It refers to the study of the invisible in the state of being liberated from the bodily bondages (Mahmoud Kashani, 2003). Rumi explains the levels of human spirit in the form of a hierarchy the first stage of which is nature and human sensory body:

The body is the shadow of the shadow of the shadow of the heart: how is the body worthy of the (lofty) rank of the heart? / A man lies asleep: his spirit is shining in Heaven, like the sun, while his body is in bed.

The innermost nature of the soul is the locus of spirit; and reason is higher and more pure than the latter which is itself preceded by revelation spirit; after the world of nature and physical nature up to the revelation stage, there are four universal stages as follows: body-spirit-reason-revelation. Then, from the stage of revelation to the stage of annihilation in Allah, there are certain stages to which Rumi refers as the step to step to the meeting of God and the stage of angelhood. There are also alternative interpretations of these stages as depicted in Holy Quran, e.g. Surah Najm, verse 6 or Surah al-Takvir, verse 23, which refer to even higher stages than revelation and inspiration. Accordingly, Rumi describes the subtleties of human soul as follows: The body is manifest, the (vital) spirit is concealed: the body is as the sleeve, the spirit as the hand/ Again, the intellect flies (moves) in a more occult manner than the (vital) spirit: (your mental) perception makes its way to (apprehends) the (vital) spirit sooner (than it apprehends the intellect)/ The spirit (that partakes) of Divine inspiration is more concealed than the intellect, because it is of the Unseen: it belongs to that side./ The spirit of prophecy also has actions conformable (to reason), (but) the intellect does not apprehend (them), for that (spirit) is exalted (above intellectual apprehension) (Rumi, Masnavi, Book Two).



CONCLUSION

Rumi is one of the fundamental pillars of Iran's authentic culture. The knowledge of his significance is directly intertwined with the knowledge of his views; e.g. self-knowledge, ontology, anthropology, and intuition.

Among the factors influencing the mysticism of Rumi, one can refer to the psychological type and passive-introversive character of Rumi; his family background which is full of divine light and has played a key role in the formation of his mystical personality; before getting acquainted with Shams, Rumi was a conservative cleric but after his acquaintance with Shams, a considerable transformation occurred. Rumi's pragmatism gives a specific color to his mysticism.

Self-knowledge is an important aspect of Rumi's thought that leads to the knowledge of Divine Essence. Self is a complicated concept that has triggered differences and disagreements between the scholars of human sciences. Muslim philosophers consider it to be rational soul and set it alongside various faculties of vegetative and animal souls which become actualized through an evolutionary evolution.

The understanding of Rumi's ontology paves the ground for understanding his reflections on self-knowledge. The mystic, in the course of his spiritual initiation, passes through certain stages and in each stage, he acquires new knowledge. Rumi seeks to know the overall grounding of the universe and world of existence in his ontology.

Rumi believes in the oneness of existence. This ontological idea is based on the exclusive attribution of existence to God and denial of existence from other creatures.

In this sphere of existence, only one Real Being is seen and other diverse entities are non-existent.

Non-existence (nothingness) is used sometimes in the sense of annihilation and nullity and some other time in the sense of disappearance of the wayfarer in the Divine Essence and also self-humiliation in Masnavi.

Another function of nothingness is referred to the sphere of incorporeal beings and the domain of spirituality. Nothingness in Rumi's thought is also discussed in the sense of the Invisible World and covers the scope of all invisible affairs.

As to the nothingness in the intellectual system of Rumi, there is always an indication of the relational nothingness while nothingness has wider and more comprehensive sense in Masnavi.

In this ontological notion of nothingness, the first stage is the infinite and absolute stage of existence which is wider than everything.

According to Rumi, pure existence becomes reflected in nothingness. Nothingness is the origin of all existents. Rumi is fascinated with nothingness and believes that it is a vehicle that takes us to the heavens. In the works of Rumi, nothingness refers to the Divine Essence in the form of a paradox of existence and non-existence.

The very essence of Rumi's anthropology is Perfect Man. This perspective of Rumi, like his other ideas, can be explained under the light of his belief in the transcendent oneness of existence.



Human existential truth becomes meaningful in the context of his particular relationship with Absolute Being. Rumi takes advantage of theoretical and ontological reflections and invites us to nothingness.

This is indeed a description of the vacuum experienced by mind or soul in their encounter with the experience of Absolute.

According to Rumi, the essence of religion is the intuition of mystical union. By a simple example, in Masnavi, Rumi says that both Pharaoh and Hallaj had the claim of mystical union but the latter had an intuition of this union and became prosperous and Pharaoh did not have that intuition and was destroyed.

Hallaj used to say that "I am Truth" because he had reached the station of annihilation and he saw God in everything. But Pharaoh's "I am the Truth" was indeed an expression of his independence.

Rumi sought to use intuition to meet Divine Essence. Rumi took the philosophers to task and insisted on the vision of God instead of diversified vision. Rumi believes that beholding the attributes of God is equal to vision of God. Intuition consists of the Soul's submersion in the study of incorporeal invisibles. Rumi depicts the spiritual hierarchy in a way that the first step of which is the sensory stage of nature and physical body of man.

The essence of soul is spirit and higher and more purified than it, is the reason which is itself preceded by spirit of revelation. After the world of nature and physical nature up to the revelation stage, there are four universal stages as follows: body-spirit-reason-revelation. And from the stage of revelation to the stage of annihilation in Allah, there are certain stages to which Rumi refers as the step to step to the meeting of God and the stage of angelhood.



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