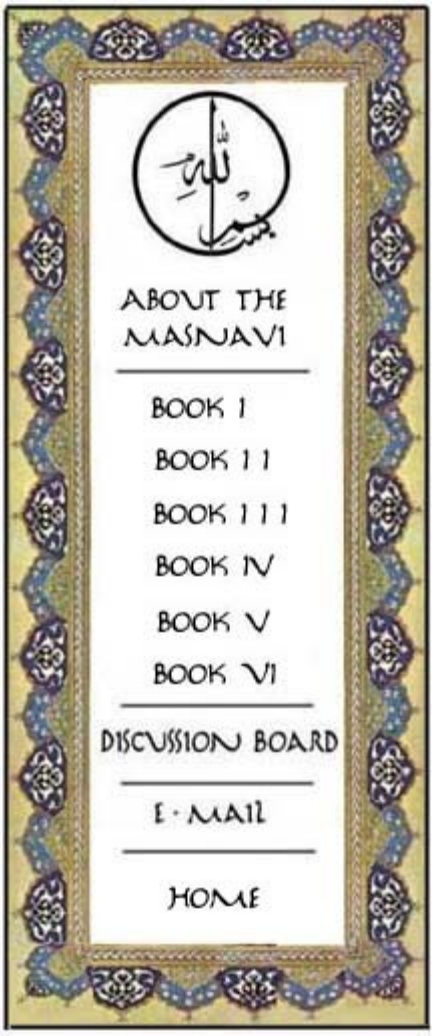

THE MASNAVI

ABOUT A NEW BOOK WITH MASNAVI TRANSLATIONS BY THE WEBMASTER OF THIS SITE (PUBLISHED 3/04)

About the Masnavi

What Rumi Said About the Masnavi

Book I

Book II

Book III

Book IV

Book V

Book VI

Looking for verses in Rumi's Masnavi?

NEW BOOK WITH MASNAVI TRANSLATIONS

To: friends of Dar-al-Masnavi.org
From: the webmaster of this site, Ibrahim Gamard
Date: March 21, 2004

INTRODUCTION (see also "Publicity For the Book" below)

I'm pleased to announce the publication of a book I was invited to write a year ago. An editor from Skylight Paths Publishing came across my Rumi website (www.dar-al-masnavi.org) and said that the format I use is similar to that used in their "Skylight Illuminations Series"--translations of selections from mystical classics on the right-hand pages, with facing-page explanatory notes on the left. She specifically invited me to write a book about what Rumi said about the Prophet Muhammad. What a blessed opportunity to write a book about what Mawlana (may God sanctify his spirit) and the Prophet (may God pour blessings upon him and give him peace) both said!

The book is now titled "RUMI AND ISLAM" and has three sections: (1) stories about the Prophet (exemplifying his kindness, compassion and wisdom), (2) wise sayings of the Prophet (where Rumi said "Ahmad/Mustafa/Payghambar said..."), and (3) praises of the Prophet (where Rumi mentioned the Prophet very favorably). The first part, more than half of the book, is from Rumi's Masnavi/Mathnawi; the rest of the book is mainly from Rumi's Divan-i Kabir ("ecstatic poems"), but also from the Masnavi and the Discourses ("Fihi Ma Fihi"), as well as a few quotes from the Sermons ("Majalis-i Saba`ah") and Letters ("Maktubat"). The selections from the Masnavi often have Rumi's own profound explanations following some of the verses. These are direct translations from Persian and include references to the Persian editions.

It is my hope that the book will further knowledge about how Rumi's mysticism was firmly rooted in Islam (in contrast to the popularized Rumi books which minimize or avoid the Islamic context, terms, and references in his poetry), how he was strongly devoted to the Prophet Muhammad and his example and wisdom (in addition to his famous devotion toward his spiritual master, Shams-i Tabrizi), and about how Islam is a religion of great compassion, wisdom, and moderation (in contrast to stereotypes about fanaticism).

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher at SkyligPaths.

Or from other sites on the Internet, such as Amazon.com.

PUBLICITY FOR THE BOOK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Shelly Angers Telephone: (802) 457-4000 Fax: (802) 457-4004 publicity@skylightpaths.com
BRINGING RUMI (BACK) TO MUHAMMAD
Great Islamic Mystic's Work--Popularized as "Love Poetry"--Finally Returns to Its Muslim Roots

"This work will shatter some old myths and bring new light to the subject." --Ravan Farhadi, former professor of history of Persian classics at the University of California, Berkeley; ambassador of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Mawlana Jalauddin Rumi is considered one of the most important Muslim teachers in history. But while Rumi has long been revered in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, in recent years, popularized versions of his poetry have made his name well known in America and Europe as well. This Western popularization emphasizes heartfelt themes of lover-Beloved mysticism and its spiritual joy, while sacrificing Rumi's profound Muslim piety as a dedicated follower of the Prophet Muhammad. In Rumi and Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems, and Discourses--Annotated & Explained (SkyLight Paths / April 2004 / Quality Paperback Original / $15.99)

Dr. Ibrahim Gamard focuses on Rumi's place within the Sufi tradition of Islam, as one of the greatest Muslim followers of the Prophet Muhammed, and on the Islamic foundations of his lover-Beloved mystical poetry. By probing Rumi¼s spiritual teachings verse by verse, Gamard provides insight into the mystical side of the Qur¼an and Islam, a religion that holds a deep love of God at its core.

Praise for RUMI AND ISLAM Selections from His Stories, Poems, and Discourses--Annotated & Explained Translation and Annotation by Dr. Ibrahim Gamard "Dr. Ibrahim Gamard, after painstaking research from classical Persian texts, has masterfully managed to assemble wonderful summaries, quotations, and a wealth of important information in one book. This work will shatter some old myths and bring new light to the subject." --Ravan Farhadi, former professor of history of Persian classics at

the University of California, Berkeley; ambassador of Afghanistan to the United Nations

2- Readers of Rumi and Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems, and Discourses--Annotated & Explained will experience the profound and uplifting wisdom of Rumi even if they have no previous knowledge of Sufism or Islam. In this edition, Gamard presents the most important of Rumi's writings, mainly from the Mathnawi, with insightful yet unobtrusive commentary that conveys how his teachings about the nature of love for God and God's love for people.

"This book you are now holding is a selection of what I believe are the best of Rumi's accounts of the compassionate actions, sayings, and qualities of the Prophet, which include Rumi¼s own inspired comments and explanations," writes Gamard in the preface. "It is my hope that you will be surprised and uplifted by the profound wisdom that Jalaluddin Rumi conveys through these stories and sayings."

Ibrahim Gamard first translated Rumi's poetry from Persian in 1985, and started posting selected Rumi translations, commentary, and Persian transliterations on the Internet in 1997. His website, www.dar-al-masnavi.org, is one of the best Web sources for in-depth information about the great Sufi mystic. Gamard is a member of the Mevlevi Order, a 730-year-old Sufi order that originated with Rumi himself. A licensed psychologist, Dr. Gamard converted to Islam twenty years ago.

"We are delighted to add this book to our successful SkyLight Illuminations series of classic spiritual texts," says Jon M. Sweeney, editor in chief, SkyLight Paths. "Ibrahim Gamard had done a great service by reintroducing Rumi's Muslim origins to those who wish to truly understand the richness and depth of his writings."

-more- -3- The SkyLight Illuminations series also includes annotated and explained reader-friendly editions of Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, The Gospel of Thomas, Hasidic Tales, The Way of a Pilgrim, and Zohar. Rumi and Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems, and

Discourses مAnnotated & Explained, tranlation and annotation by Dr. Ibrahim Gamard, is available at bookstores or directly from SkyLight Paths Publishing, Sunset Farm Offices, Route 4, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, Vermont 05091; Quality Paperback Original; $15.99; add $3.75 for shipping and handling for the first book, $2.00 for each additional book. For credit card orders, call

800-962-4544. # # # If possible, please include our 800 number with your mention or review. Thank you.

Rumi and Islam: Selections from His Stories, Poems, and Discourses--Annotated & Explained (5_" x 8_", 240 pp., Quality Paperback Original, ISBN 1-59473-002-4, $15.99) is available from Barnes & Noble, Borders, Books-a-Million, Cokesbury, Doubleday, Indigo/Chapters, Waldenbooks, B. Dalton, amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, DeVorss, New Leaf, and many other booksellers, or directly from SkyLight Paths Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Woodstock, VT 05091; Tel.: (802) 457-4000; Fax: (802) 457-4004; www.skylightpaths.com. For credit card orders, call (800) 962-4544. Add $3.75 shipping and handling for the first book, $2.00 each additional book.

ABOUT THE MASNAVI

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The "Masnavi" is Rumi's greatest poetic work, composed during the last years of his life. He began it when he was between the ages of 54-57 [about 1258-1261]1 and continued composing its verses until he died in 1273 (with the last story remaining incomplete). It is a compendium of sufi stories, ethical teachings, and mystical

teachings. It is deeply permeated with Qur'anic meanings and references. Rumi himself called the Masnavi "the roots of the roots of the roots of the (Islamic) Religion... and the explainer of the Qur'an [wa huwa uSûlu uSûlu uSûlu 'd-dîn... was kashshâf al-Qur'ân] (Masnavi, Book I, Preface).

Its full name is name is "Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî," which means "Rhyming Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning." The name "Mathnawî" (pronounced "Masnavî" in Persian) means "couplets" in Arabic [because the second half of the verse (in Arabic, "thanî") rhymes with the first]. It is the name of a type of poetry (called "mathnaw س). The second word, "Ma`nawî," means "significant," "real," "meaningful," "spiritual" in Arabic.

The following is an example of the particular mathnawi meter used by Rumi (there are other mathnawi meters used by other Persian sufi poets): XoXX XoXX XoX. The rhymes in the first three couplets of Rumi's Masnavi are "â-yat mê-ko-nad," "-îda-and, "-âq":

BESH-na-WEEN NAY CHOON shi-KAA-YAT MEE-ko-NAD
AZ jo-DAA-EEY-HAA hi-KAA-YAT MEE-ko-NAD

KAZ na-YES-TAAN TAA ma-RAA BOB-REE-da-AND
DAR na-FEE-RAM MAR-do ZAN NAA-LEE-da-AND

SEE-na KHWAA-HAM SHAR-ha SHAR-HA AZ fi-RAAQ
TAA be-GOO-YAM SHAR-he DAR-DE ISH-ti-YAAQ2

The story of how the beginning of the composition of the Masnavi has been told in the hagiography written by Aflaki (written between 1318-53), a disciple of Rumi's grandson:

"Sirâjuddîn, the Mathnawi-reciter [masnavi-khwân] at the Tomb (of Rumi) told the story that the reason for the composition of the book of the Masnavî-yé Ma`nawî, which is the Revealer of the secrets of the Qur'an was: One day Hazrat-i... Husâmuddîn [Chelebi-- Rumi's closest disciple], may God sanctify his precious secret, found out that some of the friends, in complete relish and great love, were making serious efforts to study the 'Book of the Divine' [Ilâhî-Nâma] of (the sufi poet) Hakîm (Sanâ'î) and the 'Speech of the Birds' [ManTiqu 'T-Tayr] and the 'Book of Misfortune' [MuSîbat-Nâma] of (the sufi poet) Farîduddîn `ATTâr, and (who) were delighted by (studying) their (mystical) secrets and (accounts of) the unusual spiritual amorousness (of the lovers of God) displayed by them. ..... One night, he found Hazrat-i Mawlana [= Rumi] alone. He bowed and said, 'The collections of

odes [ghazalîyât] have become plentiful.... (But) if there could be a book with the quality of the 'Book of the Divine' of Hakîm (Sanâ'î), yet in the (mathnawî) meter of the 'Speech of the Birds,' so that it might be memorized among the knowers and be the intimate companion of the souls of the lovers... so that they would occupy themselves with nothing else...' At that moment, from the top of his blessed turban, he [Rumi] put into Chelebî Husâmuddîn's hand a portion (of verses), which was the Explainer of the secrets of Universals and particulars. And in there were the eighteen verses of the beginning of the Masnavi: 'Listen to this reed, how it tells a tale, complaining of separations' up to. 'None (who is) 'raw' can understand the state of the 'ripe.' Therefore, (this) speech must be shortened. So farewell.'"3

The Masnavi is divided into six books, and Rumi wrote prefaces for each book. The earliest complete manuscript (the "Konya manuscript") was completed in December, 1278 (five years after Rumi's death). In a recent printed edition of this manuscript (by Dr. Tôfîq Sobhânî), the total number of lines is 25,575 (Book I, 4019 lines; II, 3721; III,4811; IV, 3855; V, 4240; VI, 4929)

R. A. Nicholson was the first to translate the entire Masnavi into English (1926-34). Unfortunately, he did not have access to this earliest manuscript until he had translated through Book III, line 2835. From line 2836, onwards, however, his printed edition is based on the Konya manuscript. As a result,the first two and a half books of his translation are based on less earlier manuscripts which contain numerous "improvements." (In Nicholson's printed edition, the total number of lines is 25,632 (Book I, 4003 lines; II, 3810; III, 4810; IV, 3855; V, 4238; VI, 4916.)

Over the centuries, many such "improvements" have been added to the Masnavi, with the result that many lovers of the Masnavi in Iran, India, and Pakistan have editions which contain more than two thousand extra verses (including many well-loved verses which were not composed by Rumi).

A recent book by Professor Franklin Lewis (which is an impressively thorough review of all aspects of Rumi's life, teachings, and influence throughout history) contains relevant information about the Masnavi: manuscripts, commentaries, sources of stories, translations, versions, historical influences -- and even listings of available compact disc recordings of verses recited in Persian.4

STUDIES OF THE MASNAVI

There are a number of scholarly works written about themes and teachings in the Masnavi, such as written by: Khalifa `Abdul Hakim ("The Metaphysics of Rumi," 1933, published in Lahore, Pakistan); William C. Chittick ("The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi: An Introduction," 1974, published in Tehran, Iran); K. Khosla ("The Sufism of Rumi," 1987), a Theosophist, originally from India; John Renard ("All the King's Falcons: Rumi on Prophets and Revelation," 1994), a revision of a doctoral dissertation (1978) done under the direction of Professor Annemarie Schimmel.5 Other books contain very informative chapters about Rumi's teachings in the Masnavi, such as by Annemarie Schimmel, ("The Triumphant Sun," 1978, "Rumi's Theology," pp. 225-366); by Afzal Iqbal ("The Life and Work of Jalaluddin Rumi," 1956,"The Message of the Mathnawi" and "The Poet As a Thinker," pp. 175-283); by Franklin D. Lewis ("Rumi-- Past and Present, East and West: The Life Teachings and Poetry of Jal'l al-Din Rumi," 2000, "The Teachings," pp. 394-419).

PREVIOUS TRANSLATIONS OFTHE MASNAVI IN ENGLISH

The only extensive translations from Persian directly into English have been done by British scholars. These translations sound very old-fashioned to modern, (especially American) ears.

Redhouse's translation

In 1881, James W. Redhouse made a rhymed translation of Book I (with many inaccuracies, according to Nicholson).

Here is an example of his approach:

"What boot from counsel to a fool?/ Waste not thy words; thy wrath let cool."

. . . . . .

A mirror best portrays when bright;/ Begrimed with rust, its gleam grows slight.

Then wipe such foul alloy away; / Bright shall it, so, reflect each ray.

Thou'st heard what tale the flute can tell;/ Such is my case; sung all

too well." 6

(Masnavi I: 18, 34-35)

Whinfield's translation

In 1898, E. H. Whinfield translated selections from all six books (totalling about 3,500 verses).

Here is an example of his approach:

"How long wilt thou dwell on words and superficialities?
A burning heart is what I want; consort with burning!
Kindle in thy heart the flame of love,
And burn up utterly thoughts and fine expressions.
O Moses! The lovers of fair rites are one class,
They whose hearts and souls burn with love are another." 7

(Masnavi II: 1762-1764)

Wilson's translation

In 1910, C. E. Wilson translated Book II (Volume I, Translation; Volume II, Commentary).8 He stated: "...the only way to make an abstruse Persian poem intelligible to Europeans is to give a plain literal prose translation accompanied by copious notes. I think, in fact, that translations from the Persian have attracted so little interest mainly because they have been so imperfectly explained, and I have therefore done my best with the help of the best Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and Arabic Commentaries to make this Work intelligible to all who have a little knowledge with mental science."9 He closely followed the Turkish commentary by Anqaravi, in addition to those in other languages. He included all references (in the second Book of the Masnavi) to Qur'anic verses, Traditions of the Prophet, and other poetic verses in translation as well as in transliteration. His approach to commentary is very similar to that later done by Nicholson, except that he made it a point to include transliterations (as well as translations) of all Qur'anic and Hadîth references, whereas Nicholson did so less often). He often refers to Anqaravi's commentary (as did Nicholson).

Here is an example of his approach:

"Enough of these words, conceptions, and figurative expressions! I wish for ardour, ardour! Content yourself with this ardour.

Light up a fire of love in your soul, (and) burn entirely thought and expression.

Those conversant with forms, O Moses, are of one kind; those whose souls and hearts are burnt are of another."

Every moment lovers are burnt (in the fire of love). Taxes and tithes are not exacted from a ruined village."10

(Masnavi II: 1762-1765)

Nicholson's translation

R. A. Nicholson was the first to make a full translation of all six books into English. It was published in three volumes (Books I and II, 1926; Books III and IV, 1930; Books V and VI, 1934). In addition to the three corresponding volumes of the Persian text, Nicholson also published two volumes (1937, 1940) of valuable commentary on the Masnavi.

Here is an example of his approach:

"The low (base) man is the enemy of what is high: the purchaser (seeker) of each place (Heaven or Hell) is manifest (made known by his actions).

O chaste woman, hast thou ever risen up and decked thyself for the sake of him that is blind?"

(Masnavi, I: 2388-89)11

Gupta's translation

A Hindu scholar, M. G. Gupta, made a translation into English of the entire Masnavi. It is not a word-for-word literal translation like that done by Nicholson, but a rather a paraphrase of each line followed by short commentary in brackets (sometimes incorporating the views of Hindu Vedantic mysticism). He seems not to have been aware of the work of Nicholson and other scholars regarding early manuscripts of the Masnavi. Instead, Gupta translated from an "inflated" Persian edition containing several thousand extra lines that have been added to the Masnavi over the centuries. (For example, the earliest manuscript of Book I contains 4,007, and Nicholson's edition has 4,003. But Gupta's Volume One of his translation consists of 4,563 verses).12

Here is an example of his approach:

"With the departure of the rose, and the garden ruined, whence will the nightingale seek the fragrance of rose? After all, it can come only from the rose, and not from rose-water, in the same order. [In the absence of the guru (rose) his disciples can only serve as a poor substitute (rose-water). But something is always better than nothing. If the guru is not manifest let us attend the company of his disciples. At the appropriate hour he may become manifest.]"

(line 40 [= Masnavi, I: 19])13

TRANSLATIONS OF SELECTIONS FROM THE MASNAVI

Arberry's translations

The British scholar A. J. Arberry re-translated (from Nicholson's translation) many of the stories in the Masnavi in two volumes.14 He made the stories easier to follow, by eliminating tangential sections (part of Rumi's teaching method of introducing associated material, commentary, sub-stories, etc.-- because his aim is to teach, not tell uninterrupted stories). The translations are very accurate, adopt many of Nicholson's translation words and phrases, but are often just as "Victorian-sounding" as is Nicholson's translation done decades before.

Türkmen's translations

An important contribution to Masnavi studies was done by Erkan T¸rkman.15 It includes several introductory chapters with much new information. The body of the work contains excerpts from the Masnavi in Persian script, each of which is followed by two short paragraphs in English: the first is not a word-for-word literal translation, but part translation and part paraphrase of the verses. The second paragraph in each selection gives some relevant explanations, drawn from commentaries in Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Persian, Urdu, and English.

Here is an example of his approach:

"Light up a fire of love in your soul, burn away thoughts and words totally. Lovers have to burn every moment for taxes and

tithes are not imposed on a ruined village. There exist no formalities of Ka'abe within Ka'abe and what does it matter if a diver has no snow-shoes? Do not seek guidance from intoxicated lovers, why do you ask about repairing your clothes from those whose own garments re torn. Religion of love is different from all religions, lovers' religion or belief is God."16

(Masnavi II: 1763, 1765, 1768-70)

Schimmel's translations

Annemarie Schimmel wrote an important book on the contents of Rumi's poetry, with many examples of his metaphors and images There are numerous short passages (often single lines only) from the Masnavi (and Rumi's other works) which illustrate references to nature, daily life, philosophy, religion, and mysticism.17

Chittick's translations

William C. Chittick made an important contribution to Masnavi studies in a book which organizes Rumi's teachings into themes. The book contains numerous short passages (often single lines only) from the Masnavi (as well as from Rumi's other works).18

Other translations

A couple of authors have included a small number of selections from the Masnavi translated into English selections from the French translations (made from Persian) of Rumi done by the scholar Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch. The translations are fairly reliable when compared to Nicholson and with the original Persian.

One is Simone Fattal, who translated one of de Vitray-Meyerivitch's books.19

Here is an example of her approach (which appears to have adopted some of Nicholson's wording):

"Love is an infinite ocean whose skies are a bubble of foam.
Know that it is the waves of Love which make the wheel of the heavens turn; without Love the world would be inanimate.
How is an inorganic thing transformed into a plant?
How are the plants sacrificed to become gifted with spirit?
How is the spirit sacrificed for the Breath, of which only a whiff was enough to impregnate Mary?
Each atom is intoxicated with this Perfection and hastens

toward it. . . their haste says implicitly: 'Glory be to God.'"20

(Masnavi V: 3853-59)

The other author is Muriel Maufroy, who states in the introduction of her book that she translated excerpts from de Vitray-Meyerovitch's work, and that she has also been connected with the Mevlevi shaykhs in Turkey-- and a preface for the book was written by the (then) Spiritual Director [Sar-i Tarîqat] of the Mevlevi sufi order, Hüseyin Töp.

Here is an example of her approach:

"Your intelligence is split into a hundred busy tasks,
in thousands of desires, in large and small things.
You must unite these scattered parts with love and
become as sweet as Samarkand and Damascus.
Once you are unified, grain by grain, then you can be
stamped with the royal seal."21

(Masnavi IV: 3288-90)

POPULAR VERSIONS OF SELECTIONS FROM THE MASNAVI

Versions differ from translations in that the version-makers do not know Persian and are not working from the Persian text, but instead produce their own renderings based on the literal translations made by others. Generally, version-makers have a poetic bent and are sincerely trying to bring some spiritual life out of dry, academic, and literal translations. Unfortunately there is a tendency for them to call their versions "translations"-- very misleading to both readers and reviewers (who are unable to determine the authenticity of such claims). Unfortunately, not knowing the original language, their "poetic inspiration" often leads them further away from the original meaning and spirit of the work-- instead of closer, as they hoped. Professor Frank Lewis has observed that, "The idea that poets can 'translate' without knowing the source language seems to have originated with Ezra Pound and his circle Pound took Ernest Fenellosa's scholarly translations of Li Po's Chinese poems and Japanese Noh plays and worked them into a startlingly new kind of English poem."22

However, it is extraordinary how the "spirit" of Rumi seems to sufficiently pervade the popular versions-- despite all the errors and distortions-- so that Rumi has become the most popular poet in America.

Two authors have published books consisting entirely of versions of short selections from the Masnavi: Coleman Barks and Kabir Helminski (together with his wife Camille). Both worked from Nicholson's literal translation. Barks was more "creative," whereas the Helminskis were faithful to the teachings of Rumi as conveyed by Nicholson's English text. Other popular authors have included a few short versions from Masnavi in books which contain mostly versions of Rumi's odes and quatrains.

Barks' versions

Encouraged by fellow poet Robert Bly, Coleman Barks began to produce his (enormously popular) versions of Rumi beginning about 1981. He has published books consisting entirely of versions of passages and stories from the Masnavi-- all based upon the literal translation from Persian by the British scholar, R. A. Nicholson (1926-1934): ("Delicious Laughter," 1989; "Feeling the Shoulder of the Lion," 1991; "One-Handed Basket Weaving," 1991) and several books which contain a number of versions from the Masnavi ("Open Secret: Versions of Rumi," 1984; "We Are Three," 1987; "This Longing," 1988). The best-selling collection of his versions, "The Essential Rumi," 1995, includes a selection of Masnavi versions from his earlier works.

Barks' most recent work, "The Soul of Rumi" (2001), consists mainly of versions from the Masnavi, plus some of his own thoughts and reflections about the passages. The book ends with a long section (120 pages) of continuous selections from Book IV of the Masnavi (based on Nicholson's translation as well as Gupta's translation).

From the start, Barks called his renderings "versions" and acknowledged his complete dependence on the literal translations made by others from Persian to English.23 However, after he became well-known, he allowed himself to be listed on the covers and title pages of his books as a "translator." Still, if one looks more carefully, acknowledgment is made of his dependence on specific translators, which he usually mentions.24 In his public readings of his versions of Rumi, he openly acknowledges that he does not read or speak Persian and depends on the translations of others. Nevertheless, he continues to be promoted as "widely regarded as the world's premier translator of Rumi's writings..."25

In spite of all the distortions, omissions, fabrications, and insertions of his own ideas in his versions, Coleman Barks has been the primary author to make Rumi's poetry so popular today.

And that is a stunning achievement, which has created an enormous interest, enthusiasm, passion, and love for Rumi's poetry-- after over 700 years.

In addition, Barks has had exposure to sufism and had regular contact with a sufi master.26 And the personal depth he has attained has clearly added to the spiritual power of his versions.

Here is an example of his approach, based on a passage from Nicholson's translation of the Masnavi:

"This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond."

(Masnavi V:3644-46, 3676-80, 3693-95)27

Helminski's versions

Kabir Helminski has long been aware of how the academic features and old-fashioned style of Nicholson's translation of the Masnavi makes it unattractively difficult for Americans. He has published two collections (together with his wife, Camille Helminski) of excerpts from the Masnavi: "Rumi: Daylight" (1994) [selections from Books I and II] and "Jewels of Remembrance" (1996) [selections from Books III - VI]. Some of these have been re-published in other formats (such as in "The Rumi Collection, edited by Kabir Helminski " (1998), which

contains a few more of his Masnavi versions, previously unpublished).

The Helminskis have been the most responsible of those who have made versions of passages from the Masnavi. As a shaykh (spiritual leader) of the Mevlevi ("Whirling Dervish") sufi tradition (which has preserved and disseminated the teachings of Rumi and his lineage over the past centuries), Helminski has (together with his wife) produced renditions into clear and readable American English which are faithful to Rumi's teachings. Unlike others, they have not been tempted to insert their own "creative-poetic" ideas into the selections, or to omit Rumi's Islamic terms and references. They have done a great service by revising passages from Nicholson's translation and making them attractive to the general public. Hopefully, more people will be drawn to the treasures of the Masnavi, as a result.

The Helminskis present themselves as if they have re-translated the selections directly from the Persian text.28 They give minimal acknowledgment of their dependence upon Nicholson. ("We are grateful for the extensive groundwork established by R. A. Nicholson in his full translation of the six books of the 'Mathnawi'" ["Rumi: Daylight," p. 8)]; "Although we have studied the Persian language, our work is to an extent based on Nicholson's somewhat literal rendering of the Mathnâwi [sic], supported by more than twenty years of practice and study within the Mevlevi Sufi tradition itself" ["Jewels of Remembrance," xxii]). However, by simply comparing their versions with Nicholson's text, it obvious (and it takes no knowledge of Persian to see) how they have re-Englished Nicholson's translation (and used it fully, not just "to an extent").

Here is an example of their approach, based on a passage from Nicholson's translation of the Masnavi:

"Every fantasy devours another fantasy:
one thought feeds on another.
You can't be delivered from fantasy
or fall asleep to escape from it altogether.
Your thoughts are like hornets, and your sleep is like the water
in which you are plunged: when you awake, the hornets return,
and many hornet-like fantasies fly in
and draw you now this way and then that way.
This mental fantasy is the least of the devourers:
the Almighty knows how great the others are.
Listen, flee from the hordes of devourers
towards the One who has said, 'We are your protector' [their footnote: "Qur'an: Surah Al-Imran (The House of Imran), 3:150"];

or if you can't hasten towards the Protector Himself,
towards the one who has gained that power of protection."29

(Masnavi V: 729-735)

Harvey's Versions

In one of his books of versions of Rumi's poetry,30 Andrew Harvey included a version of two lines which are from the Masnavi. However, this is not noted since he does not specify the sources for his versions (aside from referring in general to the French translations of Rumi done by Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch as one of his influences).

Here is the example of his approach:

"When in my heart the lightning of love arises
I know it is flashing and rearing in His heart also.
And when in ecstasy I can say only His Name
I know it is His Passion that erupts from me."31

(Masnavi III: 4395-96)

Here is another example from a book of which half are excerpts from the Masnavi:32

"Nearness to God is common to us all,
Because we're all created and sustained by God,
But only the authentically noble
Possess and live that nearness
that's a constant upswelling passion of love.
. . . .
Be one of those drunkards
Who make intellectuals blanch with envy;
Their whole being is alight
With the holy dancing flames of the Wine."33

(Masnavi III: 704, 711)

Scholey's Versions

Arthur Scholey is an English story teller who previously published a book of stories from the Persian poet, Sa`dî, also called by him "re-told." His book contains 57 concisely told stories from the Masnavi.34

Here is an example of his approach:

"There was once a greengrocer who had a most talkative and clever parrot. Every day it sat with him on a bench in the shop, chatting and even selling the goods to the customers. Increasingly, on the many occasions when the greengrocer had to slip away, he quite happily left the parrot in charge. However, on one of the days when the greengrocer was out, the parrot, in flying from the bench to perch, accidentally knocked over a bottle of rose oil."35

(Masnavi I: 247-50)

NOTES

1. Franklin Lewis, "Rumi, Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings and Poetry of Jalâl al-Din Rumi," Oneworld Publications, England, 2000.

2. Translation:

"Listen to the reed (flute), how it is complaining! It is telling about separations,

(Saying), 'Ever since I was severed from the reed field, men and women have lamented in (the presence of) my shrill cries.

(But) I want a heart (which is) torn, torn from separation, so that I may explain the pain of yearning.'"

--from Rumi's Masnavi, Book I, lines 1-3. This is the original text of the poem (later "improved" to "be-sh'naw az nay chûn Hikâyat mê-kon-ad...). For the complete translation, commentary, and transliteration of these lines, go to "The Song of the Reed (part one)" in the "Masnavi" section of this website.

3. Shamsu 'd-dîn AHmad Aflâkî al-`ârifî, "Manâqibu 'l-`ârifîn, pp. 739-41, translated from Persian by Ibrahim Gamard.

4. Franklin Lewis, p. 304.

5. Schimmel wrote in her preface to the book:

"There has been an increasing tendency among Western scholars and, even more, lovers and admirers of Mawlana [= Jalaluddin Rumi] to forget the deeply Islamic background of his poetry. Did not Jami call his Mathnawi 'the Qur'an in the Persian tongue'!? Modern people tried to select from often very vague secondhand translations only those verses that speak of love and ecstasy, of

intoxication and whirling dance. The role that the Prophet of Islam plays in Mawlana's poetry is hardly mentioned in secondary literature. But whosoever has listened with understanding to the na`t-i sharif, that introductory musical piece at the very beginning of the Mevlevi [= "Whirling Dervish"] ceremonies, feels, nay rather knows, how deep the poet's love for the Prophet Muhammad was, which is expressed in his words-- the Prophet, 'cypress of the garden of prophethood, springtime of gnosis, rosebud of the meadow of the divine Law and lofty nightingale.' He is the one whose secrets are communicated through Shams-i Tabrizi, the inspiring mystical friend. And as Muhammad was the last in the long line of God-inspired prophets from Adam to Jesus, it is the believers' duty to acknowledge and honor those who brought in divine message in times past. Thus, their stories [= the stories of the Prophets, such as rendered into Persian by Rumi in the Masnavi] as related or alluded to in the Qur'an form part and parcel of Muslim faith." (Annemarie Schimmel, in Renard's "All the King's Falcons," pp. x-xi).

6. James W. Redhouse, "The Mesnevi of Mevlana Jelalud'd-din Muhammed er-Rumi. Book the First," London, 1881.

Compare to Nicholson's accurate translation:

"None that is raw understands the state of the ripe: therefore my

. . . . . .

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

[The story of the king's falling in love with a handmaiden and buying her.]

O my friends, hearken to this tale: in truth it is the very marrow of our inward state."

(Masnavi I: 18, 34-35)

Discussion:

It can be seen how much distortion resulted from Redhouse's rhymed version. He fabricated one verse ("then wipe such foul alloy away..." And he mistakenly thought line 35 was part of the "Song of the Reed," and distorted that line as well.

7. E. H. Whinfield, "Masnaví-i Ma`naví: The Spiritual Couplets of Mauláná Jalálu-¥d-dín Muhammad-i Rúmí," Abridged and

translated by E. H. Whinfield (London, 1887) (Reprinted as "The Teachings of Rumi," Octagon Press, London, 1994)

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"How much (more) of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning: become friendly with that burning!

Light up a fire of love in thy soul, burn thought and expression entirely (away)!

O Moses, they that know the conventions re of one sort, they whose souls and spirits burn are of another sort."

(Masnavi II: 1762-1764)

8. The Masnavî by Jalâlu'd-Dîn Rûmî, Book II translated for the first time from the Persian into prose, with a Commentary," by C. E. Wilson (London, 1910).

9. Wilson, Volume I, "Translator's Preface," p. viii.

10. Wilson, Volume I, p. 153.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"How much (more) of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning: become friendly with that burning!

Light up a fire of love in thy soul, burn thought and expression entirely (away)!

O Moses, they that know the conventions re of one sort, they whose souls and spirits burn are of another sort.

To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment: tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village."

Here is some of Wilson's commentary on this passage:

"Words, conceptions, and figurative expressions": "i.e., generally, 'studied expressions'; or possibly, 'subtle discussions,' 'disquisitions.' The T. Com. [= Anqaravi's Turkish commentary] quotes the Tradition... 'the most hateful to me of you at the Day of the Resurrection, and the most distant of you (will be) the garrulous, the affected in speech, and the diffuse.'"

"Every moment lovers are burnt (in the fire of love)": "Lit., 'Every moment there is a burning for lovers."

"Taxes and tithes are not exacted from a ruined village": "The metaphorical sense is that forms are not expected of the lover who has given up everything and is burnt in the fire of the love of God. The T. Com. [= Anqaravi] quotes: ... 'when love has become perfect the stipulations of forms are discarded.'" (p. 225, Vol. II)

Discussion:

The example cited, when compared with Nicholson's translation (quoted above, in comparison with Whinfield's translation-- see footnote above), demonstrates what Nicholson wrote about Wilson's work: "Comparing it with my own version of the Second Book, I found that as similar methods produce similar results the two versions often agreed almost word for word, and that where they differed, the point at issue was usually one for discussion rather than correction." (Nicholson, "Introduction" to Volume II, containing the translation of the First and Second Books of the Mathnawi, p. xv.) Wilson's approach was an improvement over that of Whinfield, in that it was more accurate, had less of a Victorian sound (compared to Whinfield's, "How long wilt thou dwell on words..."), and included excellent commentary, very similar to Nicholson's approach twenty years later.

11. The Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddín Rúmí: Edited from the Oldest Manuscripts Available: With Critical Notes, Translation, and Commentary," by Reynold A. Nicholson (London, 1926-34)

Discussion:

The example cited is a typical example of Nicholson's turn of the century sound ("hast thou") and of how he (often awkwardly) interrupts the flow of the lines with explanations within parentheses. In this regard, he stated clearly his motives: "The present translation, in which the numeration of the verses corresponds with that of the text of my edition, is intended primarily as an aid to students of Persian; it is therefore as exact and faithful as I can make it, but it does not attempt to convey the inner as distinguished from the outer meaning: that is to say, it gives the literal sense of the words translated without explaining either their metaphorical or their mystical sense." (Introduction to Volume 2, containing Books I and II of the Mathnawi)

Another example of a typical Nicholson translation is: "'Tis (only)

out of pity that I am drawing thy feet (hither)..." (I: 799). Other examples of Victorian-sounding words and phrases are: "thither," "hark," "if thou canst not hasten." Nicholson's vocabulary contains words which would be unfamiliar to most Americans (such as: "exiguous," "augment," "assiduously."

12. "Maulana Rum's Masnawi," by M. G. Gupta, in six volumes, published in Agra, India, 1995.

13. Gupta, Volume One, Verses 1-4563, p. 5. Compare to Nicholson's translation:
"When the rose is gone and the garden faded, thou wilt hear no more the nightingale's story."

(Masnavi I: 29)

14. "Tales from the Masnavi," by A. J. Arberry, 1961; "More Tales from the Masnavi," by A. J. Arberry, 1963.

15. "The Essence of Rumi's Masnevi: Including His Life and Works," by Erkan Türkmen, 1992, revised and corrected in 1997, published by Eris Booksellers in Konya, Turkiye, p. 256.

16. Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"How much (more) of these phrases and conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning: become friendly with that burning!
....

To lovers there is a burning (which consumes them) at every moment: tax and tithe are not (imposed) on a ruined village.
....

Within the Ka'ba the rule of the qibla [= the direction toward Mecca] does not exist: what matter if the diver has no snow-shoes?

Do not seek guidance from the drunken: why dost thou order those whose garments are rent in pieces to mend them?

The religion of Love is apart from all religions: for lovers, the (only) religion and creed is--God."

(Masnavi II: 1763, 1765, 1768-70)

Here Türkmen's commentary on the quoted summary:

"When the love of God rules your thoughts and intellect, it burns

away everything but the presence of God. As a ruined village is exempt from taxes, similarly a ruined heart which loves God is not confined to the formal prayers. In the presence of God Himself what does a Qible mean? If you are not a lover of God yourself then don't go after the lovers, because they are intoxicated with the love-wine and no prayers are imposed on the intoxicated ones (as the Koran says, 'Approach not prayers with an intoxicated mind...' IV/43) and they cannot be your guide if you are an orthodox." (p. 256)

17. "The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalâloddin Rumi," by Annemarie Schimmel, London, 1978.

18. "The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi," by Wiliam C. Chittick, 1983.

19. "Rûmî and Sufism," by Eva de Vitray-Meyerivitch, translated from the French by Simone Fattal, 1987 (a translation of "Rûmî et le Soufisme," 1977.

20. "Rumi and Sufism," p. 102.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"Love is an (infinite) ocean, on which the heavens are (but) a flake of foam: (they are distraught) like Zalíkhá in desire for a Joseph.

Know that the wheeling heavens are turned by waves of Love: were it not for Love, the world would be frozen (inanimate).

How would an inorganic thing disappear (by change) into a plant? How would vegetive things sacrifice themselves to become (endowed with) spirit?

How would the spirit sacrifice itself for the sake of that Breath by the waft whereof a Mary was made pregnant?

Each one (of them) would be (as) stiff and immovable as ice: how should they be flying and seeking like locusts?

Every mote is in love with that Perfection and hastening upward like a sapling.

Their haste is (saying implicitly) 'Glory to God!' [= Qur'an 57:1] they are purifying the body for the sake of the spirit."

(Masnavi V: 3853-59)

21. Muriel Maufroy, "Breathing Truth -- Quotations from Jalaluddin Rumi," London, 1997.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"Thy intelligence is distributed over a hundred important affairs, over thousands of desires and great matters and small.

Thou must unite the (scattered) parts by means of love, to the end that thou mayest become sweet as Samarcand and Damascus.

When thou becomest united, grain by grain, from (after thy dispersion in) perplexity, then it is possible to stamp upon thee the King's die."

(Masnavi IV: 3288-90)

22. Franklin Lewis, p. 594

23. Night & Sleep: Rumi, Versions by Coleman Barks and Robert Bly," 1981 ("Coleman Barks' versions are the result of collaborating with John Moyne [= an Iranian immigrant and professor of linguistics]. Persian translations provide the base for the versions by Barks.")

24. The cover of the best-selling collection of his versions, "The Essential Rumi" (1994), states: "Translations by Coleman Barks with John Moyne." But the title page goes further: "Translated by Coleman Barks with John Moyne, A. J. Arberry, Reynold Nicholson". At the end of the book, Barks appends a note on the translations: "On the more literal level, the texts I work from to produce these poems are unpublished translations done by John Moyne, Emeritus Head of Linguistics at the City University of New York, and the following translations by Reynold Nicholson and A. J. Arberry, the famous Cambridge Islamicists..." (p. 292)

25. Jacket cover of "The Illuminated Rumi," Coleman Barks, 1997.

26. Bawa Muhaiyaddeen, died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1986.

27. "The Essential Rumi: Translations by Coleman Barks, with John Moyne, A. J. Arberry, Reynold Nicholson," 1995, p. 109.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"This body, O youth, is a guest-house: every morning a new guest comes running (into it).

Beware, do not say, 'This (guest) is a burden to me,' for presently he will fly back into non-existence.

Whatsoever comes into thy heart from the invisible world is thy guest: entertain it well!

. . . . . .

Comparing the daily thoughts that come into the heart with the new guests who from the beginning of the day alight in the house and behave with arrogance and ill-temper towards the master of the house; and concerning the merit of treating the guest with kindness and of suffering his haughty airs patiently.

Every day, too, at every moment a (different) thought comes, like an honoured guest, into thy bosom.

O (dear) soul, regard thought as a person, since (every) person derives his worth from thought and spirit.

If the thought of sorrow is waylaying (spoiling) joy, (yet) it is making preparations for joy.

It violently sweeps thy house clear of (all) else, in order that new joy from the source of good may enter in.

It scatters the yellow leaves from the bough of the heart, in order that incessant green leaves may grow.

. . . . . .

(Whenever) the thought (of sorrow) comes into thy breast anew, go to meet it with smiles and laughter,

Saying, 'O my Creator, preserve me from its evil: do not deprive me, (but) let me partake, of its good!

"O my Lord, prompt me" [= Qur'an 27:19; 46:15] to give thanks for that which I see (receive): do not let me feel any subsequent regret, if it (the benefit received) shall pass away.'"

(Masnavi V:3644-46, 3676-80, 3693-95)

Discussion

Barks presents Rumi as teaching the ideas of contemporary "pop psychology" that we should welcome and accept the "dark side" of

our negative thoughts and feelings rather than "repress" them, because this will help to heal our psyche. However, he leaves out the entire religious context of what Rumi says in this passage. Rumi does not say to welcome negative thoughts. Rather, he says that we should endure them patiently, pray to be protected from their evil, and pray in gratitude for everything which has been sent by God (perhaps because, as the Qur'an teaches, ingratitude for God's favors has brought misfortune upon the peoples of the past).

28. "Rumi-- Daylight: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance. Three Hundred and Sixty-Five Selections from Jelaluddin Rumi's Mathnawi Translated by Camille and Kabir Helminski," Threshold Books, 1994 ("Translation in verse of selected verses from : Masnawí, book 1-2. 1. Sufi poetry, Persian-- Translations into English. 2. Sufi poetry, English-- Translations from Persian.")

"Jewels of Remembrance: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance Containing 365 Selections from the Wisdom of Rumi, Selected and Translated by Camille and Kabir Helminski," Threshold Books, 1996 ("Sufi poetry, Persian-- Translations into English.")

29. "Jewels of Remembrance, Selected and Translated by Camille and Kabir Helminski," Threshold Books, 1996, p. 96).

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"Every phantasy is devouring another phantasy: (one) thought feeds on another thought.

Thou canst not be delivered from any phantasy or fall asleep so as to escape from it (altogether).

(Thy) thoughts are (like) hornets, and thy sleep is (like) the water (in which thou art plunged): when thou awakest, the flies (hornets) come back,

And many hornet-like phantasies fly in and (now) draw thee this way and (now) take thee that way.

This (mental) phantasy is the least of the devourers: the Almighty knows (how great are) the others.

Hark, flee from the troop of huge devourers towards Him who hath said, 'We are thy protector';

Or towards one who has gained that (power) of protection, if thou canst not hasten towards the Protector (Himself)."

(Masnavi V: 729-735)

Discussion:

This example reveals the Helminskis' basic method: they retain almost all of Nicholson's translation words, retain his punctuation (three colons, one semi-colon, and all the commas), simplify ("one thought feeds on another" instead of "(one) thought feeds on another thought"), occasionally reverse the first and second halves of sentences (or if you can't hasten..." instead of "Or towards one..."), substitute similar words here and there, (such as: "is devouring" instead of "devours"-- the opposite of simplifying, in this case), removed parentheses (ten sets), modernize archaic sounding words ("Hark," "Thou canst not," "who hath said," "thou," "thy," "thee"), and modernize older spellings ("fantasy" instead of "phantasy"). One disadvantage to removing these parentheses is that the words they contain are not translations of Rumi's words but are Nicholson's words of explanation, and this makes the result a less authentic mixture. In some cases, the Helminskis have also incorporated words from Nicholson's footnotes into their versions, giving the misleading impression that these are "translations" of Rumi's words. (For example: the incorporation of Nicholson's footnote number 6 ["I.e. 'repaired the tattered coat of my piety.'] in "Jewels of Remembrance," p. 112 [fin explanation of Masnavi V: 2307]; Nicholson's footnote number 3 ["The spirit came from God and will return to God. The present life is its 'intermediate state.'"] in "Rumi: Daylight," p. 94 [presented as an entire line of Masnavi II: 12, which it is not]).

In the example above, they guessed incorrectly that Nicholson's translation in quotes (but not italics), "towards Him who hath said, 'We are thy protector'" is a quote from the Qur'an, thinking that it was from Qur'an 3:150-- "God is your Protector" [allâhu mawlâ-kum]. However, the words from line 734 are different from the Arabic verse from the Qur'an and are actually in Persian [mâ-êm-at HafîZ].

30. Andrew Harvey ,"Love's Glory: Re-Creations of Rumi," 1996.

31. Harvey, p. 50.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"When the lightning of love for the beloved has jumped into this heart, know that there is love in that heart.

When love for God has become doubled in thy heart, without any doubt God hath love for thee."

(Masnavi III: 4395-96)

32. Andrew Harvey, "Teachings of Rumi," 1999.

33. Harvey, p. 38.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

Nearness (to God) in resect of (His) creating and sustaining (us) is common to all, (but only) these noble ones possess the nearness (consisting) of the inspiration of Love.
. . . .
Nay, be one of those inebriates on account of whom, whilst they are drinking the wine (of Divine Love), mature (strong) intellects suffer regret."

(Masnavi III: 704, 711)

Discussion

Harvey, a Rumi popularizer, produces versions which emphasize Rumi's passion-- and he does not hesitate to exaggerate this. In the first example, he has made the verses worse by injecting a sexual- like passion ("in ecstasy I can say only His Name... it is His Passion that erupts from me"). However, Nicholson's accurate translation shows that Rumi is talking, in the most sublime and yet reassuring way, about God's love toward those who are filled with love for Him.

In the second example, he has also altered the literal meaning in Nicholson's translation by injecting images of fiery passion. Nicholson's footnote for this passage states that "the nearness (consisting) of the insiration of Love" possessed by "these noble ones" refers to the prophets and saints. The Persian text has simply, "when they are drinking the wine," to which Nicholson added a parenthetical explanation, "whilst they are drinking the wine (of Divine Love)." But Harvey felt compelled to go further, depicting the wine itself as filled with "holy dancing flames" -- which actually detracts from Rumi's use of "wine" as a symbol for Divine Love.

34. Arthur Scholey, "The Paragon Parrot And Other Inspirational Tales of Wisdom: tales from Rumi retold by Arthur Scholey," London: Watkins Publishing, 2002.

35. Scholey, pp. 3-4.

Compare to Nicholson's translation:

"There was a greengrocer who had a parrot, a sweet-voiced green talking parrot.

(Perched) on the bench, it would watch over the shop (in the owner's absence) and talk finely to all the traders.

In addressing human beings it would speak (like them); it was (also) skilled in the song of parrots.

(Once) it sprang from the bench and flew away; it spilled the bottles of rose-oil."

(Masnavi I: 247-50)

Discussion

Scholey is more honest than many version-producers, in that he does not claim to be a "translator" but states that these stories are retold by him. However, he omits any mention of which translation from Persian he used, which is obviously that of Nicholson, as an analysis of word choices shows (as in the story of the deaf man's visit to a sick neighbor, Masnavi I: 1360, which shows that Scholey followed Nicholson's translation, not that of Arberry's). As this example shows, Scholey does not hesitate to make additions to Rumi's stories in order to make them more pleasing in contemporary British English.

WHAT RUMI SAID ABOUT THE MASNAVI

Translated (11/17/02) from the original Persian and Arabic by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926-34 British translation of the Masnavi, and for John O'Kane's 2002 translation of Aflaki's stories about Rumi)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)

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This is the book of the Masnavi,1 and it is the roots of the roots of the roots of "the Religion" [Qur'an 3:19] (of Islam) in regard to unveiling the secrets of obtaining connection (with God)2 and
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(spiritual) certainty3 (of the Truth). . . . For the possessors of (advanced spiritual) stations and (spiritual) wonders,4 (the Masnavi, like Paradise, is) "the best station and the best place of rest" [Qur'an 25:24]. The righteous ones eat and drink in it, and the (spiritually) free ones rejoice and delight in it. It is like the Nile (River) of Egypt5 (in that) it is a pure drink to those who are (devoutly) patient, but a sorrow to the followers of Pharaoh and the unbelievers-- just as (God) said, "He leads many astray by it,6 and He guides many (to the truth) by it" [Qur'an 2:26]. Because it is the remedy for hearts, the brightening polish for sorrows, the revealer of (the meanings of) the Qur'an, the opportunity for (finding spiritual) riches, and the purifying of (bad) natures and dispositions. . . . (Like the Qur'an), "Falsehood cannot reach it from in front (or behind)" [Qur'an 41:42], and God watches it and guards it. "And He is the Best of Preservers and He is the Most Merciful of the merciful ones" [Qur'an 12:64]. And God Most High has given other honorable titles to it.7
-- Mathnawi, I: Preface (Arabic text below)49

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If the Masnavi were like the sky in size, not (even) half a part of this (wisdom)8 would be contained in it.
-- Masnavi I: 2098 (Persian text below)50

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Some explanation about the wisdom for delaying this second volume:9 If all the Divine wisdom were made known to the servant (of God) about the benefits of an action, the servant would remain helpless to (do) the action; the endless Wisdom of God would destroy his understanding (and) he would not (be able to) perform the action (at all). Therefore, God Most High makes a tiny amount of that endless wisdom as a ring for his nose and draws him to (do) that action. If He doesn't give him any information about the benefits (of the action), he won't move-- because intentional movement is (only done) for human advantages, for the sake of which we act in (our) interest. But if He pours down (all) the wisdom about that (action) onto him, he will similarly be unable to move.10 For if there is no nose ring11 for the camel, it won't go, and if it is too big it will just lie down (and refuse to move). "And nothing exists except (that) its storehouses12 are with Us, and We do not send it down (in created form) except according to a measure known (to Us)."13
-- Masnavi II: Preface (Persian text below)51

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5 When (Husâmu 'd-dîn Chalabî) came back to the shore from the Sea,14 the harp of the Masnavi became tuned--
The Masnavi, which is the polisher of spirits15 -- (and) his return was the day of (my) seeking to begin (the composition of the second volume of it).
7 The (sun-) rise date of this "trade and profit" was during the year six hundred and sixty-two [= 1263 CE].
-- Masnavi II: 5-7 (Persian text below)52

And to the praise and glory is to Him (alone) for the collection of the divine and lordly book of the Mathnawi, for He is the One who assists and causes to prosper and the Bestower of benefits. And to Him is (the power to) give favor and kindness, especially upon His servants, the mystic knowers16 -- in spite of the contempt of a group who wish to extinguish the Light of God with their mouths. And God will complete His Light, even if the unbelievers hate it.
"Truly, We have (gradually) sent down the Reminder [= the Qur'an] and We will certainly protect it."17 [Qur'an 15:9]
-- Masnavi III: Preface (Arabic text below)53

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1 O Radiance of the Truth, Husamuddin, bring (the inspiration for) this third book, since "three times" has been a practice (of the Prophet).18
2 Open the treasure of (Divine) secrets, (and) abandon excuses in regard to this third book.
-- Masnavi III: 1-2 (Persian text below)54

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4232 A stupid man suddenly brought his head (into sight) out of a donkey shed,19 like a bitterly complaining woman,20

(Saying), "These words are lowly;" -- meaning the Mathnawi -- "It is (nothing more than) stories about the prophets21 and following (them).22

"There is no mention of (mystical) inquiry23 and lofty mysteries toward which the saints race on their mount--

4235 "(Such as) concerning the (spiritual) stations24 of separating
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oneself from the world25 to (the stage of mystical) annihilation (of self), (described) step by step up to the (station of intimate) encounter with God.

"(And it lacks) the explanation and defining bounds of every (spiritual) station and stage,26 so that by the wings of (that knowledge) a possessor of a (spiritually realized) heart27 may fly."

(Likewise), when God's Book (of the Qur'ân) came, those unbelievers also directed accusations and blame it in the same way,

4238 (Saying), "It is (only) stories and obscure; there isn't any deeply penetrating (insights) and exalted inquiry."
-- Masnavi III: 4232-4238 (Persian text below)55

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(This is) the fourth journey to the best Spring habitation and the most splendid benefits. The hearts of the mystic knowers will rejoice in contemplating (this book of the Mathnawi), just as the meadows rejoice at the (thunderous) sound of the clouds, and (just as) the eyes are familiar with the sweetness of sleep. There is happy rest for spirits within it, and healing for their corresponding (bodies). It resembles what the sincere (spiritual seekers) long for and take rest in. And (mystic) travellers seek it and desire it: a refreshing coolness for the eyes and a joy for the souls; the sweetest fruits for the one who plucks fruit; the most splendid of things desired and yearned for; the bringer of the sick man to his physician; the guide of the lover to his beloved. And it is-- God be praised-- among the greatest of gifts bestowed and the most precious of things longed for; the renewer of the pledge of friendship (with God); the cause of ease for the difficulty of people (suffering) hardship. Contemplating it increases the sadness of the one (suffering) distance (from God) and (increases) the happiness and gratitude for the one who is fortunate. It's breast contains (beautiful) "garments" not enclosing the breasts of (the grandest) ladies-- a reward for the people of (mystical) knowledge and application.28 For it resembles a full-moon (newly) risen and the return of riches and prosperity-- an increaser of hope of those who are hopeful and a forager of "food and water" for those who do (good) works. It lifts aspiration following depression and expands hope after its contraction-- like a sun which shines amidst (newly) scattered clouds. It is a light for our companions and a treasure for our (spiritual) children and successors.29
-- Masnavi IV: Preface (Arabic text below)56
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1 O Husamuddin,30 Light of God! You are (the one) who by your light the Mathnawi has passed beyond the (full) moon (in beauty).31
2 O hopeful one,32 your exalted aspiration is drawing this (poem) to where (only) God knows.
-- Masnavi IV: 1-2 (Persian text below)57

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3459 Or are you thinking that when you recite the discourse of the Mathnawi (that) you are hearing it free of charge?33
3460 Or (that) words of (Divine) wisdom and the hidden secret (of God) may enter (your) ears and mouth easily?
It enters, but like tales and fables, it reveals the (outer) rind, not the kernel (containing) the seeds--
(Just as) a heart-seizing (beloved) has concealed (her) face from your eyes by drawing a veil over (her) head and face.
3463 Because of (your) insolent pride, the books of fables and stories (such as) the "Shah-Nama" or "Khalilah" have become like the Qur'an to you.34
-- Masnavi IV: 3459-63 (Persian text below)58

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This is the fifth bound volume of the books of the Mathnawi and the clarification of spiritual meanings, in explanation that the (Islamic) religious Law [sharî`at] is like a candle (which) shows the way. For if you can't bring a candle to hand, there is no travelling on the way. And when you have come onto the way, that travelling of yours is (called) the (mystical) Path [Tarîqat], and when you have arrived to the goal, that is the Truth [Haqîqat]. And in regard to this, it has been said, "If (Divine) truths and realities were evident (for all to see), religious laws would be made useless."35
-- Masnavi V: Preface (Persian text below)59

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(This is) the sixth bound volume of the books of the Mathnawi and the demonstrations of spiritual reality which are (like) a "Lamp" (Qur'an 24:35] in the darkness of groundless imaginary fears, skepticism, day dreams, suspicions, and doubts. And the animal senses (of the body) aren't able to perceive this Lamp, since the rank of animality is "the lowest of the low" [Qur'an 95:5]-- since

they have been created (as animals) for the sake of making habitable the (outer) form of the lower world; and a circle has been drawn around (their) senses and comprehensions-- a circle beyond which they can't pass: "That is the ordering of the All-Powerful, the All-Knowing" [Qur'an 6:96]. In other words, He brought into existence the (limited) amount of attainment of their actions and of movement of their (mental) attention36 -- in the same way that there is a (restricted) amount (of orbit) and work space for every star from the sky, so that its actions reach to that limit.
-- Masnavi VI: Preface (Persian text below)60

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67 If you have become thirsty for the ocean of spiritual meaning, make a channel in the island of the Mathnawi37 --
Make such a channel so that every instant you will see the Mathnawi as (entirely) spiritual and nothing else.
When the wind removes (floating) straw from the river water, the water reveals its single coloredness.
70 See the fresh branches of coral: see the fruits grown from the water of the Spirit!
When (the Mathnawi) becomes single (and distinct) from (its) words and sounds, it passes (beyond) all that and becomes the Ocean;38
72 The reciter of (its) words, the hearer of (its) words, and (its) words-- in the end, all three become spirit.
-- Masnavi VI: 67-72 (Persian text below)61

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655 Therefore the person concerned with appearance is led astray by the form of the words of the Mathnawi,39 (yet) it is the guide for the person concerned with (spiritual) meaning.
In the Word (of God), He said, "This Qur'an, from the (depths of its) heart, is the (true) guide for some and the leader astray for others." [Qur'an 2: 26]
O God, God! When the mystic knower says (the word) "wine," the non-existent (metaphor) is never something (physical)40 in the view of the (Muslim sufi) knower!
Since your understanding is (limited to interpreting it as) the wine of Satan, you can never imagine the wine of the Most Merciful.41
-- Masnavi VI: 655-58 (Persian text below)62

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1525 There is a different (kind of) commerce for every store: the Mathnawi is the store for (spiritual) poverty,42 O son.
(For example), there is good leather in the shoe-maker's store: if you observe wood, it is (used for) a shoe-mold.
There is raw silk and brownish gray (fabrics) in front of the (stores of) cloth-sellers: if iron is (there) it is (used for) a unit of measurement.
1528 Our Mathnawi is the store of Unity: whatever you see besides the Oneness (of God), (know that) it is an idol.43
-- Masnavi VI: 1525-28 (Persian text below)63

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Similarly, it is recounted that one day Hazrat-i Sultan Walad said, "Among the companions, one made a complaint to my revered father, saying, 'The learned (religious) scholars argued with me, saying, "Why do they say that the Masnavi is the Qur'an?"' I (this humble) servant said, 'It is the commentary of the Qur'an.' Immediately, my father became silent for a moment. (Then) he said, 'O dog! Why is it not (the Qur'an)? O donkey! Why is it not (the Qur'an)? O (you who have a) sister (who is a) whore!44 Why is it not (the Qur'an)? Certainly, there is nothing contained in the vessels of the words of the prophets and the saints besides the lights of Divine Secrets. And the words of God have come forth from their pure hearts and flowed upon the streams of their tongues.'"
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 3, section 204 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 201) (Persian text below)64

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(Mawlânâ) said, "Whoever listens to the (spiritual) meanings of the Masnavi and doesn't perform actions in (the spirit of) it is (acting like those who said), 'We hear and we do not obey' [Qur'an 2:93; 4:46]. (They) are not (acting like those who said), 'We hear and we do obey' [Qur'an 2:285; 4:46; 5:8; 24:51]."
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 3, section 230 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 215) (Persian text below)65

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Hazrat-i Mawlânâ said one day, "Our mausoleum will be rebuilt seven times. The last time, a Turk will appear (who is) wealthy and will construct the tomb (alternating) with one brick of gold and one brick of virgin silver. And around our tomb there will be a very large city, and our tomb will stay in the center of the city. And in that time our Masnavi will act (the part of) a sufi teacher [shaykh]."
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 3, section 347 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 281) (Persian text below)66

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[Mawlânâ happened to see that someone had fallen asleep and, out of lethargic apathy and forgetfulness, had put the book of the Masnavi behind his back.] He said, "(Is) this what the meaning of our words has become, fallen (and forgotten) behind the back (of someone)? By Allah, by Allah! The meaning (of the words of the Masnavi) will take hold and extend from the rising place of the sun to where it sets, and it will travel to (all) the climates (of the world). And there will not be any meeting or gathering where these words will not be recited-- to the extent that they will be read (out loud) in places of worship and on benches. And all religious communities will wear a garment (consisting) of those words."
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 3, section 387 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 299) (Persian text below)67

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Similarly, one day the scribes of the words (of Mawlânâ) and the most noble memorizers (of the Masnavi) asked Hazrat-i Mawlânâ, "Do the Books of the Masnavi have any pre-eminence and superiority over each other? He said, "Regarding the second (Book), there is a superiority over the first (Book) that the second heaven has over the first (heaven);45 and regarding the third (Book), (the same) over the second (Book). And the same way regarding the sixth (Book) over the fifth (Book). Just as the superiority of the (spiritual) world of Sovereignty [malakût] over the (material) world of Dominion [mulk], and the superiority of the world of Omnipotence [jabarût] over the world of Sovereignty, ad infinitum. And similarly, as is said in the verse (of the Qur'an), "And truly,46 We gave pre-eminence to some of the prophets over some (others)" [Qur'an 17:55]." This may be understood (to mean

by extension), "And therefore We have given pre-eminence to some of humanity over some (others)," "some things over some (others)," "some (spiritual) secrets over some (others)." And similarly, this superiority and excellence is active in all things and existent beings."
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 3, section 427 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 315) (Persian text below)68

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Mawlânâ said . . . . "And similarly, our Masnavi47 is also a spiritual beloved [like the Qur'an, previously compared to a bride with a beautiful face hidden under a head-covering scarf of jealousy and a veil of dust] which has no equal in regard to its beauty and perfection. And it is also like an arranged garden and a digestible provision which has been made for the sake of those of illumined hearts who possess (spiritual) vision, as well as (for) lovers whose hearts are burnt (from yearning for God). Happy (is) a soul which is blessed by the good fortune of contemplating this hidden beloved and is viewed with affection by the gaze of grace of the men of God,48 so that (its name) is held in the register of (the verse) "What an excellent servant, truly he turned (to God) in repentance! [Qur'an 38:30]"

After that he said, "A great faith, a constant love, an unswerving sincerity, and a sound (spiritual) heart are needed for the understanding of the Masnavi's abstruse secrets full of illumination-- as well as its collections (of tales and sayings) written down; the occasions, explanations, and harmonious events (related) in the Traditions [aHâdîth] (about the Prophet Muhammad); the verses (of the Qur'an); the explanation of parables and allegories; and the evidence of the secret treasures and subtle truths. And likewise, great intelligence, (mastery of) the (main) branches of knowledge are needed to be able to reach the outer (meaning) of those secrets (contained in the Masnavi), as well as the most hidden secrets. But, lacking all these means, if (someone) is a sincere lover (of God), his love will eventually become his guide and he will reach a certain (spiritual) station [manzil]. And God is the Giver of Favor and the Guide, and He is the Helper and the One who directs rightly."
--acccording to Aflâki (died 1360, 87 years after Mawlânâ), "The Glorious Talents and Abilities of the Knowers of God, Chapter 6, section 19 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," pp. 535-36) (Persian text below)69
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EXPLANATORY NOTES

1(I: Preface) This is the book of the Masnavi [kitâbu 'l-mathnawi]: "In III, Pref., the poem is called 'al-Kitábu 'l-mathnawí.' Elsewhere the author always refers to it simply as 'Mathnawí.' the title 'Mathnawí-yi ma`nawí' [= rhymed couplets of spiritual meaning], by which it is often described, may have been suggested by such phrases as 'Mathnawí u Tibyán-i ma`nawí [= the Mathnawi and the clarification of spiritual meanings] (V, Pref). Cf. also VI 68: 'Mathnawí-rá ma`nawí bíní u bas." [=you will see the Mathnawi as (entirely) spiritual and nothing else] (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'Be aware, of seekers of Divine secrets, this referred to book is the Mathnawi.'" (from the famous 17th century Ottoman Turkish commentary by the Mevlevi scholar, Anqaravi, translated here from a Persian translation)

See also where Mawlânâ rhymes "Mathnawî" with "ma`nawî" in VI: 67, "If you have become thirsty for the ocean of spiritual meaning, make a channel in the island of the Mathnawi" [gar shod-î `aTshân-é baHr-é ma`nawî/ furja'yê kon dar jazîra-yé mathnawî]; and in VI: 655, "the words of the Mathnawi, (yet) it is the guide for the person concerned with (spiritual) meaning" [. . . lafZ-hây-é mathnawî/ Sûratî Zâl-ast-o hâdî ma`nawî].

2(I: Preface) obtaining connection (with God) [al-wuSûl]: "this (word) is the opposite of separation and remoteness. However in the view of the (sufi) elders [mashâyikh]: the meaning (is) advancing the knowledge of the totality of imagined and illusory things and reaching to the level of Truth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3(I: Preface) (spiritual) certainty [al-yaqîn]: "The mystic's intuitive certainty, 'the evidence of things not seen'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4(I: Preface) the possessors of (advanced spiritual) stations and (spiritual) wonders: "the adepts who have traversed all the states of the mystic Way and been endowed with miraculous gifts." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5(I: Preface) It is like the Nile (River) of Egypt: "Among the plagues sent upon the people of Pharaoh (Qur. VII 130) was the plague of blood, so that whenever an Egyptian would drink water, it turned to blood in his mouth. The story is handled characteristically by Rúmí in Book IV, 3431 foll." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6(I: Preface) just as (God) said, "He leads many astray by it: "Qur. II 24. 'bi-hi' [= by it] refers to the parables which occur in the Qur'án. So, as the poet says explicitly (VI 655 sqq.), much of the Mathnawí will lead into error those who cannot apprehend its mystical sense." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7(I: Preface) And God Most High has given other honorable titles to it: "Where are these 'other honorific titles' to be found? No doubt, in the Qur'án, with which (as the preceding passage has made clear) the Mathnawí is regarded as being essentially one." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Such as 'the Sublime Book' [sâmî-nâma-- I: 1149], since this is also one of the titles of the Mathnawi." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8(I: 2098) not (even) half a part of this (wisdom): Nicholson translated, "not half the portion of this (mystery) . . . "

"(It means), if the noble Mathnawi in regard to size, meaning spaciousness and capacity, was as extensive as the spacious sky and resembled the levels of the heavens-- not (even) half a part the amount of these (mystical) secrets would be contained.
If the Masnavi were like the sky in size, not (even) half a part of this (wisdom) would be contained in it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9(II: Preface) delaying this second volume: "On the authority of Aflákí [Rumi's hagiographer] (see note on I 3990) it is generally supposed that owing to the death of the wife of Husámu'ddín [Rumi's closest disciple, to whom he dictated the Mathnawi] an interval of two years elapsed between the completion of Book I and the resumption of the work in 1263-1264." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10(II: Preface) unable to move: "In this passage the 'postponement' is explained as an act of Divine Wisdom. God provides all the advantages for the sake of which men are impelled to act, and He bestows upon them just so much knowledge of these advantages as will produce the actions which He has decreed; otherwise they would be unable to act at all, for His knowledge is infinite, and none but Perfect Men possess the capacity for receiving it in full measure. Apparently the poet means to imply that his powers as a medium were intermittent and subject to conditions over which he had no control. At times God veils His glory even from prophets and saints." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11(II: Preface) nose ring: a piece of wood placed through the nostrils of a camel, in order to control it

12(II: Preface) storehouses: "i.e. everything that God has decreed He keeps, as it were, in store, ready to be brought forth and actualised whenever He pleases." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13(II: Preface) measure known to Us: from Qur'an 15:21. The terms "We" and "Us" in the Qur'an are "pronouns of majesty" and do not mean any plurality in the Divine Unity of God.

14(II: 5) to the shore from the Sea: "i.e. from the infinite Unity and Reality to the plane of phenomenal limitation."

15(II: 6) the polisher of spirits: "In truth (the Mathnawi) is the polisher of the spirits of the (spiritual) seekers and the cleanser of the (physical) forms of those who seek (Truth)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16(III: Preface) the mystic knowers [al-`ârifîn]: Nicholson translated, "the gnostics" -- as elsewhere in his translation.

17(III: Preface) We will certainly protect it: "These verses were revealed in regard to the revered Qur'an, but Hazrat-i Khodâwandagâr (Mawlânâ) has mentioned these verses here in regard to the criticism of the noble Mathnawi, for this reason: the noble Mathnawi is the meaning of the marrow and the pure sense of the revered noble Qur'an-- since God Most High has caused the inspiration of it in the noble heart of Mawlânâ. Therefore, the Mathnawi, which is the meaning of the Qur'an, may be considered to be the Light of God, since the noble Qur'an is the Light of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18(III: 1) since "three times" has been a practice (of the Prophet): if it was reliably reported that the Prophet Muhammad repeated a certain behavior at least three times (such as washing each part of the body three times during ritual ablutions before prayer), it was considered a mode of behavior [sunnah] laudable for Muslims to follow.

19(IV: Preface) out of a donkey shed: "i.e. 'from his house" (Fa) [= the Ottoman Turkish commentary of Anqaravi]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20(IV: Preface) like a bitterly complaining woman: Nicholson translated, "like a railing woman".

21(IV: Preface) It is (nothing more than) stories about the prophets: Nicholson translated, "(that) it is the story of the Prophet." He later corrected his translation: "'Prophet [payghambar] has a general

sense here. For 'Prophet' in the Translation read 'prophet'." (Commentary)

22(IV: Preface) and following (them): Nicholson translated, "and (consists of) imitation." And he explained: "i.e. '(a discourse on) imitation of the prophets and obedience to the saints'." (Commentary)

23(IV: Preface) There is no mention of (mystical) inquiry: Nicholson translated, "there is no mention of (theosophical) investigations. . . " And he quoted, "' The Masnavi is an exposition of 'experimental' mysticism, and not a treatise of 'doctrinal' mysticism. Hence Rumi does not set out all this Súfi gnosis with the logical precision of a systematic treatise. . . but rather assumes it as known to his readers. He describes it all in the language of emotion and imagination rather than in that of the intellect' (Whinfield, Masnavi-i ma`navi (1898), Introd. p. XXXV) [= "And sever (yourself) from everything and devote yourself completely to Him"]." (Commentary)

24(IV: Preface) the (spiritual) stations [maqâmât]: Nicholson translated, "(That from the stations of asceticism to the passing away (from self-existence) [=fanâ], step by step up to union with God [= malâqât-é khodâ]."

25(IV: Preface) of separating oneself from the world [tabattul]: "'detachment (inqitá`) from the world', a term belonging to the earliest period of Moslem asceticism. The Qur'án (LXXIII 8) uses the verb in this sense." (Nicholson, Commentary)

26(III: 4236) (And it lacks) the explanation and defining bounds of every (spiritual) station and stage: "These bungling criticisms and rejections have been spoken by them out of ignorance and negligence, since it is due to a lack of awareness of the lofty rank of the Mathnawi. If they were to look at the Mathnawi with reality-seeing vision, it is a book which contains all the branches of knowledge from the beginning to the ultimate (levels). And in regard to commentary on the Qur'an), it is a text which comprises the secrets of the Revelation of the Lord of the Worlds." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27(IV: Preface) a possessor of a (spiritually realized) heart [Sâhib-delê]: Nicholson translated, "a man of heart (a mystic)".

28(IV: Preface) the people of (mystical) knowledge and application: Nicholson translated, "followers of the theory and practice (of Súfism)."

29(IV: Preface) our (spiritual) children and successors ['a`qâbi-nâ]:

Nicholson translated, "a treasure for our (spiritual) descendants."

"And it is a treasure for our successors, who will come after us. (The word" 'descendants' [a`qâb] (means) the total some afterwards, in other words, children and (their) children and (their) children. However in this speech the intention is the dervishes [fuqarâ], lovers (of God) [aHbâb], and mystic knowers [`urafâ] who had been seekers on the Mawlawî Way, and then following Mawlânâ's transition (to the next world) will come after him." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30(IV: 1) Husamuddin: Husamuddin Chalabi was Mawlânâ's closest spiritual companion after the final disappearance of Shams-i Tabriz, as well as his first successor. Husamuddin was the one who first suggested that Mawlânâ compose a mathnawi poem, he was the one to whom Mawlânâ dictated it, and he was the one whom Mawlânâ credited as the recurring source of inspiration for continuing the composition of the poem.

31(IV: 1) the Mathnawi has passed beyond the (full) moon (in beauty): "The light of the moon is taken from the sun. Therefore, the sun is (the source of) the illumination of the moon. But the light of the Mathnawi is the sun of spiritual meaning [ma`nà]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23(IV: 2) O hopeful one [murtajâ]: Nicholson translated, "O thou in whom hopes are placed."

33(IV: 3459) (that) you are hearing it free of charge: Nicholson translated, "thou hearest them gratis (without giving aught in return)?" And he commented: "I.e. 'do not imagine that the real meaning of the Mathnawí is like something which you find on the road and pick up without any trouble'." (Commentary)

"The meaning (is), 'This Mathnawi is a subtle, finely savored, and noble discourse so that listening to it "free of charge" is not easy. And the one who doesn't have (true) faith (in God) [îmân] and conviction cannot understand anything of this (book of) spiritual meaning (which resembles) the Water of (Everlasting) Life.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

34(IV: 3463) the books of fables such as) the "Shah-Nama" or "Khalilah" have become like the Qur'an to you: "Cf. III 4227 sqq., 4282 sqq. Here the poet attacks those who read the Qur'án superficially and ignore the essential truth contained in it: thus, in effect, they treat it as a book of 'old stories' (asátíru 'l-awwalín) which may be compared with the Sháhnámah, Kalíla wa-Dimnah, etc. Though he speaks of the Qur'án, no one can miss the

implication or doubt that his words are aimed just as much at critics of the Mathnawí." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Therefore, you are seeing the words (of the Qur'an) of God Most High only from the viewpoint of the (outwardly) existing stories, metaphors, expressions, and words-- but you lack the ability to see the meanings and truths of it. Likewise, you are understanding this noble Mathnawi, which is the fountain of Divine secrets, only from the viewpoint of the (outwardly) existing verses and in regard to the existing metaphors and stories. . . . From this same viewpoint, this noble book has been understood by your mind (to be) like the rest of words made into poetic verses." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35(V: Preface): If (Divine) truths and realities were evident, religious laws would be made useless: "Positive religion depends on faith in the Unseen. Cf. I 3610 sqq. [= "This hope and fear are in the veil (separating the seen from the unseen), that they may be fostered behind this veil. When thou hast rent the veil, where are fear and hope?" (I: 3616-17, translated by Nicholson)] and the note on I 3555-3557 [= "God is the Concealer of faults (Sattáru 'l-`uyúb). He mercifully covers up the sins of His creatures and leaves them in ignorance of their final destiny, so that they may have hope and faith in the unseen" (translated by Nicholson)]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Just as when the time of the Hereafter has occurred, the Divine realities will become evident, the truths of the religious Law will become useless. Thus the laws of the religious Law are only (useful) up to a certain time-- when the soul exits from the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

36(VI: Preface) the (limited) amount of attainment of their actions and of movement of their (mental) attention: "All my MSS. except G [= the earliest manuscript, the "Konya Manuscript of the Mathnawi] have miqdár-i rasídan-i nazar-i íshán ú jawlán-i `amal-i íshán [= "the limited measure of their speculation and the (confined) range of their action"], which is probably the correct reading." (Nicholson, Commentary)

37VI: 67) make a channel in the island of the Mathnawi: "I.e. 'break through the words and expressions (alfáz) of the Mathnawí and gain access to its inner meaning". Rúmí likens the form of his poem to an island in the ocean of Reality, which flows in wherever it finds a channel of spiritual perception." (Nicholson, Commentary)

38(VI: 71) the Ocean: Nicholson translated, "the (spiritual) Ocean."

39(VI: 655) the person concerned with appearance is led astray by the form of the words of the Mathnawi: compare to Mathnawi I, Preface: "It is like the Nile (River) of Egypt (in that) it is a pure drink to those who are (devoutly) patient, but a sorrow to the followers of Pharaoh and the unbelievers-- just as (God) said, 'He leads many astray by it, and He guides many (to the truth) by it' [Qur'an 2:26]."

"It means, 'In regard to the noble expressions of the Mathnawi, anyone who is focussing on the outward form of those expressions and words of the Mathnawi and who is ignorant and unaware of its secrets and meanings, is led astray. Because there are some verses and stories in the noble Mathnawi which are the source of becoming lost if (someone) is brought to its external meaning (only)-- such as some of the stories which are concerned with humorous jests and obscene jokes, or some of the verses which are full of profound (spiritual) secrets.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

40(VI: 657) the non-existent (metaphor) is never something (physical): "an allusion to the Mu`tazilite doctrine that 'the non-existent is a thing'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

41(VI: 658) you can never imagine the wine of the Most Merciful: The "tasting" of spiritual wine means to experience something of the delights of Paradise in this world: "rivers of wine delightful to those who drink it" (Qur'an 47:15), "wherein is no headache, nor are they made drunk thereby" (Qur'an 37:47).

"Truly someone whose thinking is focussed (primarily) on worldly matters cannot comprehend a thing about God or about the (spiritual) savor (experienced by) the saints of God-- so his understanding will be especially (limited to) the wine of Satan. He will remain deprived of (being able to) imagine the wine of the Most Merciful and will be intoxicated by his own (deluded) understanding." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

42(VI: 1525) the Mathnawi is the store for (spiritual) poverty: Spiritual poverty [faqr, in Persian: darwêshî] means "absence of self" in sufism. It is related to the term "faqîr," a Muslim mystic. It refers to the absence of ostentation, pride, self-worship, and self-centered preoccupation. "What is with you will vanish, and what is with God will endure" (Qur'an 16:19. "O man, you are poor ([fuqarâ] in relation to God, and God is the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (Qur'an 35:15).

"Since the preceding verses have touched on questions of law (fiqh), it is natural for the poet to remind his hearers that the essence of the Mathnawí is pure mysticism (asrár-i tawhíd),

although, like many other books devoted to a particular subject, it includes matter that is merely accessory and incidental to its main purpose." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'This noble book is essentially the explanation of (spiritual) poverty and annihilation (of self) [faqr wa fanâ] and yearning (for God). Knowledge of (spiritual) poverty and annihilation is needed for (understanding) this shop of the Mathnawi." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

43(VI: 1528) it is an idol: "Any one who delights in the stories and anecdotes of the Mathnawí, without perceiving their real significance, resembles a worshipper of false gods; nevertheless by this means he may be led to the Truth." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"It means, 'Our Mathnawi is, in regard to its essence, the shop of (Divine) secrets and the Absolute Unity (of God), as well as the shop of the branches of knowledge from His Presence [`ulûm-é ladûnî] and the knowledge of certainty (of the Reality of God). The one who is seeing, in this noble book, anything besides the mysteries and Unity of (Divine) Reality and words about Divine Unity [tawHîd-é ilâhî], those words are (for him) like an idol-- the opposite of this speech-- for the sake of bringing some people into (a state of) humiliation." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

44(Aflaki, Chapter 3, section 204) O (you who have a) sister (who is a) whore: the only swear words Mawlânâ used when angry, at someone an expression used by the people of Khorâsân (the land where he was born and raised) according Aflaki, Chapter 3, section 66 (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 106).

45(Aflaki, Chapter 3, section 427) that the second heaven has over the first (heaven): refers to traditional Islamic cosmology, based on the ancient Ptolomaic system in which a series of larger sphere was viewed, such as: the sphere or heaven of the Moon, then Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the fixed stars, the starless heaven the sphere of the Divine Throne. According to another scheme, there are a series of worlds, such as the world of humanity [`âlam-é nasût], the world of sovereignty [`âlam-é malak¸t], the world of omnipotence [`âlam-é jabarût], and the world of Divinity [`âlam-é lahût].

46(Aflaki, Chapter 3, section 427) "And truly [wa laqad]: the Persian text-edition gives "wa ka-Zalika" which should be "wa laqad" in this quote from the Qur'an (17:55).

47(Aflaki, Chapter 6, section 19) our Masnavi [maSnawî-yé mâ]: When Mawlânâ is quoted as saying "our," this is a formal Persian way of expressing "mine." See VI: 1528 "Our Mathnawi is the store of Unity: whatever you see besides the Oneness (of God), (know that) it is an idol."

48(Aflaki, Chapter 6, section 19) viewed with affection by the gaze of grace of the men of God [malHûZ-é naZar-é `inâyat-é rijâlu 'llâh]: As John O'Kane explained, "The glance of a holy man has immense power to transform another person for the better (naZar-e `enâyat)." ("The Feats of the Knowers of God," p. 708). Aflaki relates that Mawlâna declared that one of his close disciples, Shamsuddîn Mardînî, became a saint [walî] without knowing it because he had received, during his adolescence, a blessed gaze [naZar-é mubârak] from one of the (saintly) men of God [az mard-ân-é khodâ]. He had been asked for water by a dervish, he immediately gave the dervish a jug of water and some food, and this made the dervish so happy that he gave him an amazing glance [yak naZarê `ajab]-- a sweet glance [naZar-é shîrîn] which caused him to be full of ecstasy [Zawq-nâk]. (see the translation by John O'Kane, "The Feats of the Knowers of God," pp. 266-67)

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49[I: Preface] haZa kibâbu 'l-mathnawiyya wa muwa uSûlu uSûli uSûli 'd-dîn fi kashfi asrâri 'l-wuSûl wa 'l-yaqîn. . . . wa `inda aSHâbi 'l-maqâmâti wa 'l-karâmâti "khayru maqâm-an wa aHsanu maqîl-an." al-abrâru fî-hi ya'kulûna wa yashrabûn, wa 'l-aHrâru fî-hi yafraHûna wa yaTrabûna. wa huwa kanîli miSra sharâb-un li-'S-Sâbirîn wa Hasrat-un `alà âli fir`ûna wa 'l-kâfirîn, kamâ qâla "yuZlillu bi-hi kathîr-an wa yahdî bi-hi kathîr-an." wa anna-hu shifâ'u 'S-Sudûri wa jalâ'u 'l-'aHzâni wa kashâfu 'l-qur'ân, wa sa`atu 'l-'arzâqi, wa taTayîbu 'l-'akhlâq. . . . "lâ ya'tî-hi 'l-bâTilu min bayna yaday-hi" wa 'llâhu yurSidu-hu wa yarqubu-hu wa huwa khayru HâfiZ-an "wa huwa arHamu 'r-râHimîn." wa la-hu 'alqâb-un 'ukharu laqqaba-hu 'llâhu ta`âlà.

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50I: 2098 maSnawî dar Hajm gar bûdy chô charkh
dar-na-gonjîdy dar-ô z-în nêm barkh

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51[II: Preface] bayân-é ba`Zê az Hikmat-é ta'khîr-é în mujallad-é

dowom: ke agar jomla-yé Hikmat-é ilâhî banda-râ ma`lûm shaw-ad dar fawâ'îd-é ân kâr, banda az ân kâr ferô mân-ad; wa Hikmat-é bê-pâyân-é Haqq idrâk-é ô-râ wîrân kon-ad ba-d-ân kâr na-pardâz-ad. pas Haqq-é ta`âlà shamma-yê az ân Hikmat-é bê-pâyân mihâr-é bînî-yé ô sâz-ad wa ô-râ ba-d-ân kâr kash-ad. ke agar ô-râ az ân fâ'îda hêch khabar na-kon-ad hêch na-jonb-ad, z-î-râ jonbânanda az bahrah-hây-é âdamiy-ân-ast ke az bahr-é ân maSlaHat kon-êm. wa agar Hikmat-é ân bar wây ferô rêz-ad ham na-tawân-ad jonbîdan chon-ân-ke agar dar bînî-yé oshtor mihâr na-bow-ad wa agar mihâr-é bozorg bow-ad ham ferô khosp-ad. "wa in min shay-in illâ `inda-nâ khazâ'inu-hu wa mâ nunazzilu-hu illâ bi-qadar-in ma`lûm."

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52II: 5 chûn ze-daryâ sôy-é sâHil bâz-gasht
chang-é shi`r-é maSnawî bâ sâz gasht

maSnawî ke Sayqal-é arwâH bûd
bâz-gasht-ash rôz-é istiftâH bûd

7 maTla`-é târîkh-é în sawdâ-wo sûd
sâl andar shash-sad-o ShaSt-o dô bûd

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53[III: Preface] wa la-hu 'l-Hamdu wa 'l-majdu `alà talfîqi 'l-kitâbi 'l-mathnawiyyi 'l-ilâhiyyi 'r-rabbâniyyi wa huwa 'l-muwaffiqu wa 'l-mutafaZZilu wa la-hu 'T-Tawlu wa 'l-mannu lâ siyyamâ `alà `ibâdi-hi 'l-`ârifîn `alà raghmi Hizbi yurîdûna an yuTfi'û nûra 'llâh bi' afwâhi'him. wa 'llâhu mutimmu nûri-hi wa law kariha 'l-kâfirûn. 'annâ naHnu nazzal-na 'dh-dhikra wa annâ la-hu la-HâfiZûn."

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54I: 1 ay Ziyâ' al-Haq Husâmu 'd-dîn be-y-âr
în sewom daftar ke sunnat shod se bâr

2 bar goshâ ganjîna-yé asrâr-râ
dar sewom daftar be-hel a`Zâr-râ

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55III: 4232 kharbaTê nâgâh az khar-khâna'iyê
sar berûn âward chûn Ta``âna'iyê

k-în sokhan past-ast, ya`nî mathnawî
qiSSa-yé payghâmgar-ast-o pay-rawî

nêst Zikr-é baHS-o asrâr-é boland
ke dawân-and awliyâ an sô samand

4235 az maqâmât-é tabattul tâ fanâ
pâya-pâya tâ malâqât-é khodâ

sharH-o Hadd-é har maqâm-o manzilê
ke ba-par z-ô bar-par-ad Sâhib-delê

chûn kitâbu 'llâh be-y-âmad ham bar ân
în chon-în Ta`na zad-and ân kâfir-ân

4238 ke asâTîr-ast-o afsâna-yé nezhand
nêst ta`mîqê-wo taHqîqiy-é boland

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56[IV: Preface] aZZa`nu 'r-râbi`u ilà aHsani 'l-marâbi`i, wa ajalli 'l-manafi`i. tusarru qulûbu 'l-`ârifîna bi-muTâla`ati-hi ka-surûri 'r-riyâZi bi-Sawti 'l-ghamâmi, wa 'unsi 'l-`uyûni bi-Tayibi 'l-manâmi. fî-hi irtiyâHu 'l-`arwâHi wa shifâ'u 'l-'ishbâHi. wa huwa kamâ yashtahî-hi 'l-mukhliSûna wa yahwawna-hu. wa yaTlubu-hu 's-sâlikûn wa yatamannûna-hu: al-`uyûni qurrat-un wa li-n-nufûsi masarrat-un; aTyabu 'th-thimâri li-man ijtanà; wa 'ajallu 'l-murâdâti wa 'l-munà; muwiSilu 'l-`alîli ilà Tabîbi-hi; wa hâdî 'l-muHibbi ilà Habîbi-hi. wa huwa bi-Hamdi 'llâhi min a`Zami 'l-mawâhib wa 'anfasi '-r-raghâyibi; mujaddidu `ahdi 'l-'alfati; musahhilu `usri aSHâbi 'l-kulfati. yazîdu 'n-naZaru fî-hi asaf-an li-man ba`uda, wa surûr-an wa shukr-an li-man sa`ida. taZammana Sadru-hu mâ lam yataZamman Sudûru 'l-ghaniyâni mina 'l-Hulali, jazâ'an li- ahli 'l-`ilmi wa 'l-`amali, fa-huwa ka-badr-in Tala` wa jadd-in raja`a zâyid-un `alà ta'mîli 'l-amilîn, râyid-un li-rawdi 'l-`âmilîna, yarfa`u 'l-'amala ba`da ankhifâZi-hi, wa yabsuTu 'r-rajâ'a ba`da anqibâZi-hi, ka-shams-in `ashraqat min bayni ghamâm-in tafarraqat, nûr-un li'aSHâbi-nâ wa kanz-un li-'a`qâbi-nâ.

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57IV: 1 ay Ziyâ'u 'l-Haq Husâmu 'd-dîn tôy-î
ke goZasht az mah ba-nûr-at mathnawî

2 himmat-é `âlîy-é tô ay murtajâ
mê-kash-ad în-râ khodâ dân-ad ko-jâ

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58IV: 3459 yâ tô pendâr-î ke Harf-é mathnawî
chûn be-khwân-î, râyegân-ash be-sh'naw-î?

3460 yâ kalâm-é Hikmat-o sirr-é nehân
andar ây-ad zaghbah dar gôsh-o dahân?

andar ây-ad, lêk chûn afsâna-hâ
pôst be-n'mây-ad na maghz-é dâna-hâ

dar sar-o rô dar-kashîda châdarê
rô nehân karda ze-chashm-at del-barê

3463 shâh-nâma yâ kalîla pêsh-é tô
ham-chon-ân bâsh-ad ke qur'ân az `utû

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59[V: Preface] în mujallad-é pangom-ast az daftar-hây-é mathnawi wa tibyân-é ma`nawî dar bayân ân-ke sharî`at, ham-chô sham`-ast, rah mê-nomây-ad. wa bâ ân-ke sham` ba-dast na-y-ward-î, râh rafta na-shaw-ad. wa bê-ân-ke sham` ba-dast âwar-î râh rafta na-shawad. wa chûn dar rah âmad-î, ân raftan-é tô Tariqat-ast, wa chûn rasîd-î ba-maqSûd, ân Haqîqat-ast. wa jehat-é în gofta-and ke: law Zaharati 'l-Haqâyiqu baTalati 'sh-sharâyi`".

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60[VI: Preface] mujallad-é shashom az daftar-hây-é mathnawî wa bayinât-é ma`nawî ke miSbâH-é Zalâm-é wahm wa shubhat wa khayâlât wa shakk wa raybat bâsh-ad. wa în miSbâh-râ ba-Hiss-é Haywânî idrâk na-tawân kardan, zîrâ maqâm-é Haywânî "asfal-é sâfilîn"-ast ke êshân-râ az bahr-é `imârat-é Sûrat-é `âlam asfal âferîda-and; wa bar Hawâss wa madârik dâyira'yê kashîda-and ke az ân dâyira tajâwuz na-kon-and: "dhâlika taqdîru 'l-`azîzu 'l-`âlîm." ya`nî miqdâr-é rasîdan-é `amal-é êshân wa jawlân-é naZar-é êshân padîd kard, chon-ân-ke har setâra-râ miqdârê-st wa kâr-gâhê az falak ke tâ ân Hadd `amal-é ô be-rasîd.

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61VI: 67 gar shod-î `aTshân-é baHr-é ma`nawî

furja'yê kon dar jazîra-yé mathnawî

furja kon chand-ân-ke andar har nafas
mathnawî-râ ma`nawî binîy-wo bas

bâd kah-râ z-âb-é jô chûn wâ-kon-ad
âb yak-rangîy-é khwad paydâ kon-ad

70 shâkha-hây-é tâza-yé marjân be-bîn
mîwa-hây-é rosta z-âb-é jân be-bîn

chûn ze-Harf-o Sawt-o dam yak-tâ shaw-ad
ân hama be-g'Zâr-ad-o daryâ shaw-ad

72 Harf-gô-wo Harf-nôsh-o Harf-hâ
har se jân gard-and andar intihâ

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62VI: 655 pas ze-naqsh-é lafZ-hây-é mathnawî
Sûratî Zâl-ast-o hâdî ma`nawî

dar nubî farmûd k-în qur'ân ze-del
hâdî-yé ba`Zê wo ba`Zê-râ muZil

allâh, allâh! chûn-ke `ârif goft may
pêsh-é `ârif kay bow-ad ma`dûm shay?

658 fahm-é tô chûn bâda-yé shayTân bow-ad
kay to-râ wahm-é may-é raHmân bow-ad?

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63VI: 1525 har dokânê-râ-st sawdâ'yê degar
mathnawî dokkân-é faqr-ast ay pesar

dar dokân-é kafsh-gar charm-ast khûb
qâlab-é kafsh-ast agar bîn-î tô, chûb

pêsh-é bazzâz-ân-é qaz-wo adkan bow-ad
bahr-é gaz bâsh-ad agar âhan bow-ad

1528 mathnawîy-é mâ dokân-é waHd-ast
ghayr-é wâhid har che bîn-î ân bot-ast

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64[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 3/204] ham-chon-ân manqûl-ast ke rôzê HaZrat-é sulTân walad farmûd ke: az yâr-ân, yakê ba-HaZrat-é pedar-am shikâyatê kard ke: dânesh-mand-ân bâ man baHS kard-and ke: maSnawî-râ qur'ân cherâ mê-gôy-and? man banda goft-am ke: tafsîr-é qur'ân-ast. hamânâ ke pedar-am laHZa-yé khâmôsh karda. farmûd ke: ay sag! cherâ na-bâsh-ad? ay khar! cherâ na-bâsh-âd? ay ghar khwâhar! cherâ na-bâsh-ad? hamânâ ke dar Zurûf-é Hurûf-é anbiyâ' wa awliyâ' joz anwâr-é ilâhî mudraj nêst. wa kalâmu 'llâh az del-é pâk-é êshân rosta bar jûy-bâr-é zabân-é êshân rawân shoda-ast."

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65[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 3/230] farmûd ke: "har ke ma`ânáyé maSnawî-râ be-shenûd wa ba-d-ân kâr na-kon-ad, 'sami`-nâ wa `aSay-nâ'-st; 'sami`-nâ wa aTa`-nâ' nêst."

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66[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 3/347] rôzê HaZrat-i Mawlânâ farmûd ke: "haft karrat turba-yé mâ-râ `imârat kon-and. âkhirîn bâr torkê bêrûn ây-ad mutamawwil wa turba-râ yak khesht az zar wa yak khesht az nuqra-é khâm be-sâz-ad. wa hawâlî-yé turba-yé mâ shahrê shaw-ad bas bozorg, wa turba-yee mâ dar meyâna-yé shahr be-mân-ad. wa dar ân zamân maSnawî-yé mâ shaykhê kon-ad."

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67[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 3/387] farmûd ke: "ya`nî-yé în sokhan-é mâ barây-é ân âmad ke pas-é posht oftad? w-allâh, w-allâh! az ân jâ ke âftâb sar mê-zan-ad tâ ân-jâ ke forô mê-raw-ad, în ma`nà khwâh-ad gereftan. wa dar eqlîm-hâ khwâh-ad raftan. wa hîch maHfilê wa majma`'ê na-bâsh-ad ke în kalâm khwânda na-shaw-ad. tâ ba-jiddî ke dar ma`bad-hâ wa miSTab-hâ khwânda shaw-ad. wa jamî`-yé milal az ân sokhan Hulal pôsh-and wa ba-har damand [?] shaw-and."

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68[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 3/427] ham-chon-ân kataba-yé kalâm wa HafaZa-yé kirâm rôzê az HaZrat-é Mawlânâ porsîd-and ke: "mujalladât-é maSnawî-râ bar ham-dîgar tarjîHê wa tafZîlê hast?"
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farmûd ke: Sânî-râ bar awwal faZîlat chon-ân-ast ke âsmân-é dowum-râ awwal. wa sewom-râ bar dowwom. wa ham-chon-ân shashom-râ bar panjom. chon-ân-ke tafZîl-é malakût bar `âlam-é mulk wa tafZîl-é jabarût bar malakût ilà mâ lâ nihâyat. wa ham-chon-ân az manTûq-é âyat-é 'wa laqad faDDal-nâ ba`Za an-nabiyyina `alà ba`Z-in." in mafhûm mê-shaw-ad ke: wa ka-Zalika faDDal-nâ ba`Za an-nâsi `alà ba`Z-in, ba`Za 'l-`ashyâ'i `alà ba`Z-in, ba`Za l-asrâri `alà ba`Z-in. wa ham-chon-ân dar jamî`-é ashyâ wa mawjûdât-é in faZîlat wa rujHân dar kâr-ast."

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69[Aflâki, manâqibu 'l`ârifîn, 6/19] wa ham-chon-în maSnawî-yé mâ nîz delbarê-st ma`nawî ke dar jamâl wa kamâl-é khwod ham-tâ'ê na-dâr-ad. wa ham-chon-ân bâghê-st muhayâ wa rizqê-st mahnâ ke jehat-é rawshân-del-ân-é SâHib-naZar wa `âshiq-ân-é sôkhta-jegar sâkhta shoda-ast. khonok jânê-râ ke az mushâda-yé în shâhid-é ghaybî maHZûZ shaw-ad wa malHûZ-é naZar-é `inâyat-é rijâlu 'llâh gard-ad, tâ dar jurîda-yé "ni`ma 'l-`abdu inna-hu 'awwâb-un" munkhariT shaw-ad. ba`d az ân farmûd ke: idrâk-é ghawâmiZ-é asrâr-é por-anwâr-é maSnawî-râ wa ZabT-é talfîqât wa taqrîbât wa taqrîrât wa tawfîqât-é aHâdîS-râ wa âyât wa basT-é imSâl wa Hikâyât wa bayyinât-é ramûz-é kanûz wa daqâyiq-é Haqâyiq-é ô-râ i`tiqâdê bây-ad `aZîm wa `ishqê bây-ad muqîm wa Sidqê bây-ad mustaqîm wa qalbê bây-ad salîm. wa ham-chon-ân Zakâwat-é ba-ghâyat wa funûn-é `ulûm wa darâyat mê-bây-ad tâ dar Zâhir-é ân sîrê tawân-ad kardan wa ba-sirr-é sirîy tawân-ad rasîdan .wa bê în hama âlât agar `âshiq-é Sâdiq bâsh-ad `âqibat `ishq-é ô rahbar-é ô shaw-ad wa ba-manzilê be-ras-ad. wa 'llâhu 'l-muwaffiqi wa 'l-murshidi wa huwa 'l-mu`în wa 'l-musaddid."
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BOOK I

Translations and Versions of "The Song of the Reed"

TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S AND ANQARAVI'S COMMENTARIES

Peace And War In The Illusory World (6/02)

He Is Abiding Peacefully (6/02)

We Are In His Hands In Anger And In Peace (4/02)

Things Are Revealed By Their Opposites (5/01)

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TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S COMMENTARY

The Song of the Reed (part one) (2/00)

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Breaths of Divine Mercy (12/99)

When You Become Sugar (12/99)

She Is a Ray of the Beauty of God (7/99)

The Dervish is Needy for God (7/00)

the Grammarian and the Boatman (11/99)

Who Is That at the Door? (1/00)

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Joseph and the Mirror (10/99)

The Visions of Zayd (part one) (8/00)

The Visions of Zayd (part two) (8/00)

The Wisdom of Luqman (5/00)

TRANSLATIONS AND VERSIONS OF "THE SONG OF THE RED" (MASNAVI, BOOK I: LINES 1-34)

Rhymed Translation by Jones, 17721

Rhymed Translation by Redhouse, 18812

Translation by Whinfield, 18873

Translation by Nicholson, 19264

Rhymed (Abbreviated) Translation by Nicholson, 19505

Prose Translation by Arberry, 19616

Translation by Türkman, 19927

Version by Barks, 19948

Rhymed Translation by Türkman, 19969

Version by Jonathan Star, 199710

Translation by Gupta, 199711

Version by Helminski, 199812

Rhymed Translation by Shahriari, 199813

Translation by Nasr, 200014

Translation by Gamard, 200015

Translation by Lewis, 200016

Rhymed Translation by Legenhausen, 200217

Rhymed Translation by Tamdgidi, 200318

Translation by Tillinghast and Shafak, 200319

Translation by Mojaddedi, 200420

1. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY JONES, 1772

1. Hear, how yon reed in sadly pleasing tales ***
Departed bliss and present woe bewails!

2. 'With me, from native banks untimely torn, ***
Love-warbling youths and soft-ey'd virgins mourn.

3. O! Let the heart, by fatal absence rent, ***
Feel what I sing, and bleed when I lament:

4. Who roams in exile from his parent bow'r, ***
Pants to return, and chides each ling'ring hour.

5. My notes, in circles of the grave and gay, ***
Have, hail'd the rising, cheer'd the closing day:

6. Each in my fond affections claim'd a part,***
But none discern'd the secret of my heart.

7. What though my strains and sorrows flow combin'd!***
Yet ears are slow, and carnal eyes are blind.

8. Free through each mortal form the spirits roll, ***
But sight avails not. Can we see the soul?

9. Such notes breath'd gently from yon vocal frame: ***
Breath'd said I? no; 'twas all enliv'ning flame.

10. 'Tis love, that fills the reed with warmth divine; ***
'Tis love, that sparkles in the racy wine.

11. Me, plaintive wand'rer from my peerless maid, ***
The reed has fir'd, and all my soul betray'd

12. He gives the bane, and he with balsam cures; ***
Afflicts, yet soothes; impassions, yet allures.

13. Delightful pangs his am'rous tales prolong; ***
And Laili's frantick lover lives in song.

14. Not he, who reasons best, this wisdom knows: ***
Ears only drink what rapt'rous tongues disclose.

A. Nor fruitless deem the reed's heart-piercing pain: ***
See sweetness dropping from the parted cane.

15. Alternate hope and fear my days divide: ***
I courted Grief, and Anguish was my bride.

16. Flow on, sad stream of life! I smile secure:
Thou livest! Thou, the purest of the pure!

19. Rise vig'rous youth! be free; be nobly bold: ***
Shall chains confine you, thou they blaze with gold?

20. Go; to your vase the gather'd main convey: ***
What were your secrets? The pittance of a day!

21. New plans for wealth your fancies would invent; ***
Yet shells, to nourish pearls, must lie content.

22. The man, whose robe love's purple arrows rend ***
Bids av'rice rest, and toils tumultuous end.

23. Hail, heav'nly love! true source of endless gains! ***
Thy balm restores me, and thy skill sustains.

24. Oh, more than Galen learn'd, than Plato wise! ***
My guide, my law, my joy supreme arise!

25. Love warms this frigid clay with mystik fire, ***
And dancing mountains leap with young desire.

17. Blest is the soul, that swims in seas of love, ***
And long the love sustain'd by food above.

18. With forms imperfectly can perfection dwell? ***
Here pause, my song; and thou, vain world, farewell.

--Translated by Sir William Jones (1746-1794). Quoted in A.J. Arberry, "Persian Poems," London, 1954, pp. 118-119. (Perhaps from "Poems, Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages," 1772.)

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2. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY REDHOUSE, 1881
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1. From reed-flute hear what tale it tells; ***
What plaint it makes of absence' ills.

2. "From jungle-bed since me they tore, ***
Men's, women's, eyes have wept right sore.

3. My breast I tear and rend in twain, ***
To give, through sighs, vent to all my pain.

4. Who's from his home snatched far away, ***
Longs to return some future day.

5. I sob and sigh in each retreat, ***
Be't joy or grief for which men meet.

6. They fancy they can read my heart; ***
Grief's secrets I to none impart.

7. My throes and moans form but one chain, ***
Men's eyes and ears catch not their train.

8. Though soul and body be as one, ***
Sight of his soul hath no man won.

9. A flame's the flute's wail; not a breath, ***
that flame who feels not, doom him death.

10. The flame of love, 'tis, prompts the flute, ***
Wine's ferment, love; its tongue not mute.

11. The absent lover's flute's no joy. ***
Its trills proclaim his grief, his joy.

12. Or bane, or cure, the flute is still; ***
Content, complaining, as you will.

13. It tells its tale of burning grief; ***
Recounts how love is mad, in brief.

14. The lover lover's pangs best knows; ***
As ear receives tongue's plaint of woes.

15. Through grief, his day is but a dawn; ***
Each day of sorrow, torment's pawn.

16. My days are waste; take thou no heed. ***
thou still are left; my joy, indeed.

17. Whole seas a fish will never drown; ***
A poor man's day seems all one frown.

18. What boot from counsel to a fool? ***
Waste not thy words; thy wrath let cool.

19. Cast off lust's bonds; stand free from all. ***
Slave not for pelf; be not greed's thrall.

20. Pour rivers into one small gill, ***
It can but hold its little fill.

21. The eye's a vase that's ne'er content; ***
the oyster's filled ere pearl is sent.

22. The heart that's bleeding from love's dart, ***
From vice of greed is kept apart.

23. Then hie thee, love, a welcome guest; -- ***
Physician thou to soothe my breast.

24. Thou cure of pride and shame in me; ***
Old Galen's skill was nought to thee!

25. Through love, this earthly frame ascends ***
To heaven; a hill, to skip pretends.

26. In trance of love, Mount Sinai shakes, ***
At God's descent; 'and Moses quakes.'

27. Found I the friend on whom I dote, ***
I'd emulate flute's dulcet note.

28. But from my love, while torn away, ***
Unmeaning words alone I say.

29. The spring is o'er; the rose is gone; ***
the song of Philomel is done.

30. His love was all; himself, a note. ***
His love, alive; himself, dead mote.

31. Who feels not love's all-quick'ning flame, ***
Is like the bird whose wing is lame.

32. Can I be quiet, easy, glad, ***

When my delight's away? No! Sad.

33. Love bids my plaint all bonds to burst. ***
My heart would break, with silence curst.

34. A mirror best portrays when bright; ***
Begrimed with rust, its gleam grows slight.

A. Then wipe such foul alloy away; ***
Bright shall it, so, reflect each ray."

35. Thou'st heard what tale the flute can tell; ***
such is my case; sung all too well.

--Translated by James W. Redhouse. Frolm "The Mesnevi of Mevl'n' Jel'lu'd-dس n Muhammed er-Rڑm س. Book the First" (London, 1881).

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3. TRANSLATION WHINFIELD, 1887

1. Hearken to the reed-flute, how it complains, ***
Lamenting its banishment from its home:--

2. "Ever since they tore me from my osier bed, ***
My plaintive notes have moved men and women to tears.

3. I burst my breast, striving to give vent to sighs, ***
And to express the pangs of my yearnings for my home.

4. He who abides far away from his home ***
Is ever longing for the day he shall return.

5. My wailing is heard in every throng, ***
In concert with them that rejoice and them that weep.

6. Each interprets my notes in harmony with his own feelings, ***
But not one fathoms the secrets of my heart.

7. My secrets are not alien from my plaintive notes, ***
Yet they are not manifest to the sensual eye and ear.

8. Body is not veiled from soul, neither soul from body, ***
Yet no man hath ever seen a soul."

9. This plaint of the flute is fire, not mere air. ***
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Let him who lacks this fire be accounted dead!

10. 'Tis the fire of love that inspires the flute, ***
'Tis the ferment of love that possesses the wine.

11. The flute is the confidant of all unhappy lovers; ***
Yea, its strains lay bare my inmost secrets.

12. Who hath seen a poison and an antidote like the flute? ***
Who hath seen a sympathetic consoler like the flute?

13. The flute tells the tale of love's bloodstained path, ***
It recounts the story of Majnun's love toils.

14. None is privy to these feelings save one distracted, ***
As ear inclines to the whispers of the tongue.

15. Through grief my days are as labour and sorrow, ***
My days move on, hand in hand with anguish.

16. Yet, though my days vanish thus, 'tis no matter, ***
Do thou abide, 0 Incomparable Pure One!

17. But all who are not fishes are soon tired of water; ***
And they who lack daily bread find the day very long;

18. So the " Raw " comprehend not the state of the "Ripe;" ***
Therefore it behooves me to shorten my discourse.

19. Arise, O son! Burst thy bonds and be free! ***
How long wilt thou be captive to silver and gold?

20. Though thou pour the ocean into thy pitcher, ***
It can hold no more than one day's store.

21. The pitcher of the desire of the covetous never fills, ***
The oyster-shell fills not with pearls till it is content;

22. Only he whose garment is rent by the violence of love ***
Is wholly pure from covetousness and sin.

23. Hail to thee, then, O LOVE, sweet madness! ***
Thou who healest all our infirmities!

24. Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit! ***
Who art our Plato and our Galen!

25. Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven, ***
And makes the very hills to dance with joy!

26. O lover, 'twas love that gave life to Mount Sinai, ***
When "it quaked, and Moses fell down in a swoon."

27. Did my Beloved only touch me with his lips, ***
I too, like the flute, would burst out in melody.

28. But he who is parted from them that speak his tongue, ***
Though he possess a hundred voices, is perforce dumb.

29. When the rose has faded and the garden is withered, ***
The song of the nightingale is no longer to be heard.

30. The BELOVED is all in all, the lover only veils Him; ***
The BELOVED is all that lives, the lover a dead thing.

31. When the lover feels no longer LOVE's quickening, ***
He becomes like a bird who has lost its wings. Alas!

32. How can I retain my senses about me, ***
When the BELOVED shows not the light of His countenance?

33. LOVE desires that this secret should be revealed, ***
For if a mirror reflects not, of what use is it?

34. Knowest thou why thy mirror reflects not? ***
Because the rust has not been scoured from its face.

A. If it were purified from all rust and defilement, ***
It would reflect the shining of the SUN of GOD.

35. O friends, ye have now heard this tale, ***
Which sets forth the very essence of my case.

--Translated by E. H. Whinfield. From "Masnav ج-i Ma'nav ج, The Spiritual Couplets of Maul·n· Jal·lu-¥d-d ج-n Muhammad-i R™m ج." (London, 1887). An abridged translation. Reprinted as "The Teachings of Rumi" (Octagon Press, London, 1994). [Lines indicated by a capital letter are invented and have no basis in the Persian text.]

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4. TRANSLATION BY NICHOLSON, 1926
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1. Listen to this reed how it complains: ***
it is telling a tale of separations.

2. Saying, "Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, ***
man and woman have moaned in (unison with) my lament.

3. I want a bosom torn by severance, ***
that I may unfold (to such a one) the pain of love-desire.

4. Every one who is left far from his source ***
wishes back the time when he was united with it.

5. In every company I uttered my wailful notes, ***
I consorted with the unhappy and with them that rejoice.

6. Every one became my friend from his own opinion; ***
none sought out my secrets from within me.

7. My secret is not far from my plaint, ***
but ear and eye lack the light (whereby it should be apprehended).

8. Body is not veiled from soul, nor soul from body, ***
yet none is permitted to see the soul."

9. This noise of the reed is fire, it is not wind: ***
whoso hath not this fire, may he be naught!

10. 'Tis the fire of Love that is in the reed, ***
'tis the fervour of Love that is in the wine.

11. The reed is the comrade of every one who has been parted from
a friend: *** its strains pierced our hearts.

12. Who ever saw a poison and antidote like the reed? ***
Who ever saw a sympathiser and a longing lover like the reed?

13. The reed tells of the Way full of blood ***
and recounts stories of the passion of Majn™n.

14. Only to the senseless is this sense confided: ***
the tongue hath no customer save the ear.

15. In our woe the days (of life) have become untimely: ***
our days travel hand in hand with burning griefs.

16. If our days are gone, let them go!-- 'tis no matter. ***
Do Thou remain, for none is holy as Thou art!

17. Except the fish, everyone becomes sated with water; ***
whoever is without daily bread finds the day long.

18. None that is raw understands the state of the ripe: ***
therefore my words must be brief. Farewell!

19. O son, burst thy chains and be free! ***
How long wilt thou be a bondsman to silver and gold?

20. If thou pour the sea into a pitcher, ***
how much will it hold? One day's store.

21. The pitcher, the eye of the covetous, never becomes full: ***
the oyster-shell is not filled with pearls until it is contented.

22. He (alone) whose garment is rent by a (mighty) love ***
is purged entirely of covetousness and defect.

23. Hail, our sweet-thoughted Love-- ***
thou that art the physician of all our ills,

24. The remedy of our pride and vainglory, ***
our Plato and our Galen!

25. Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies: ***
the mountain began to dance and became nimble.

26. Love inspired Mount Sinai, O lover, ***
(so that) Sinai (was made) drunken "and Moses fell in a swoon."

27. Were I joined to the lip of one in accord with me, ***
I too, like the reed, would tell all that may be told;

28. (But) whoever is parted from one who speaks his language ***
becomes dumb, though he have a hundred songs.

29. When the rose is gone and the garden faded, ***
thou wilt hear no more the nightingale's story.

30. The Beloved is all and the lover (but) a veil; ***
the Beloved is living and the lover a dead thing.

31. When Love hath no care for him, ***
he is left as a bird without wings. Alas for him then!

32. How should I have consciousness (of aught) before or behind
*** when the light of my Beloved is not before me and behind?

33. Love wills that this Word should be shown forth: ***
if the mirror does not reflect, how is that?

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

[The story of the king's falling in love with a handmaiden
and buying her.]

35. O my friends, hearken to this tale: ***
in truth it is the very marrow of our inward state.

After obtaining a copy of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, Nicholson corrected several lines in 1930, 1937, and 1940: line 1, from: "Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations--"; line 2, from, " Saying, 'Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament hath caused man and woman to moan."; line 8, from: omitting quotation marks after the words, 'to see the soul'; line 17, from "Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water; whoever is without daily bread finds the day long"; line 22, from "He (alone) whose garment is rent by a (mighty) love is purged of covetousness and all defect."; line 23, from "Hail, O Love that bringest us good gain-- thou that art the physician of all our ills" ["I believe that 'sawd·' in this epithet. . . is nearly synonymous with 'fikr'. . . and that 'khwash-sawd'' does not mean 'one with whom it is pleasant or profitable to have dealings'"]; line 35, from placement before the heading ("The story of the king's falling in love with a handmaiden and buying her"), to placement after the heading-- so that the words "hearken to this tale" refer to the story about the king and do not refer to the reed-flute.

--Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. From "The Mathnaw ج of Jal·lu'dd ج‌n R™m ج" (London: Cambridge University Press, 1926).

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5. RHYMED (ABBREVIATED) TRANSLATION BY NICHOLSON, 1950

THE SONG OF THE REED
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1. Hearken to this Reed forlorn,

2. Breathing, even since 'twas torn

2. From its rushy bed, a strain

3. Of impassioned love and pain.

7. "The secret of my song, though near,
7. None can see and none can hear.

A. Oh for a friend to know the sign

B. And mingle all his soul with mine!

10. 'Tis the flame of Love that fired me,
10. 'Tis the wine of Love inspired me.

13. Wouldst thou learn how lovers bleed,

35. Hearken, hearken to the Reed!"

--Translated by Reynold A. Nicholson. From "R ڑm س: Poet and Mystic (1207-1273): Selections from His Writings" (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1950). [Lines indicated by a capital letter are invented and have no basis in the Persian text.]

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6. PROSE TRANSLATION BY ARBERRY, 1961

The lament of the reed-flute is a symbol of the soul's sorrow at being parted from the Divine Beloved

1. Listen to this reed, how it makes complaint, ***
telling a tale of separation:

2. "Ever since I was cut off from my reed-bed, ***
men and women all have lamented my bewailing.

3. I want a breast torn asunder by severance, ***
so that I may fully declare the agony of yearning.

4. Every one who is sundered far from his origin ***
longs to recapture the time when he was united with it.
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5. In every company I have poured forth my lament, ***
I have consorted alike with the miserable and the happy:

6. Each became my friend out of his own surmise, ***
none sought to discover the secrets in my heart.

7. My secret indeed is not remote from my lament, ***
but eye and ear lack the light to perceive it.

8. Body is not veiled from soul, nor soul from body, ***
yet to no man is leave given to see the soul."

9. This cry of the reed is fire, it is not wind; ***
whoever possesses not this fire, let him be naught!

10. It is the fire of love that has set the reed aflame; ***
it is the surge of love that bubbles in the wine.

11. The reed is the true companion of everyone parted from a
friend: *** its melodies have rent the veils shrouding our hearts.

12. Whoever saw poison and antidote in one the like of the
reed?*** Whoever saw sympathizer and yearner in one the like of
the reed?

13. The reed tells the history of the blood-bespattered way, ***
it tells the stories of Majnun's hopeless passion.

14. Only the senseless is intimate with the mysteries of this Sense;
*** only the heedful ear can buy what the tongue retails.

15. Untimely the days have grown in our tribulation; ***
burning sorrows have travelled along with all our days;

16. Yet if our days have all departed, bid them be gone-- ***
it matters not; only do Thou abide, O Thou incomparably holy!

17. Whoever is not a fish is soon satiated with His water; ***
he who lacks his daily bread, for him the day is very long.

18. None that is inexperienced comprehends the state of the ripe,
*** wherefore my words must be short; and now, farewell!

--Translated by A. J. Arberry. From "Tales from the Masnavi,"
(London: George Allen and Unwin, 1961). Re-formated
here to accord translations in verse format.

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7. TRANSLATION BY TÜRKMAN, 1992

1. Listen to this Ney (the reed-flute) that is complaining ***
and narrating the story of separation.

2. Ever since they (the people) have plucked me from the reedland,
*** my laments have driven men and women to deep sorrow.

3. I want someone with a chest (heart) pierced by abandonment
*** so that I may tell him about the pain of my longing.

4. He who falls aloof from his origin ***
seeks an opportunity to find it again.

5. I am mournful in all sorts of company ***
and am sought by the happy as well as by the unhappy.

6. Everyone becomes friends with me according to his faculty of
perception, *** and many do not seek my inner secret.

7. My secret is not distant from my cries, ***
but physical eyes and ears do not possess the light (to see it).

8. (In fact) the body from the spirit and the spirit from the body are
not concealed, *** yet none (not many) are allowed to see it.

9. The sound of the Ney is fire and it is not the ordinary wind, ***
but he who does not have this fire, may he become non-existent.

10. It is the fire of Divine love that has entered the Ney, ***
it is the yearning for love that has brought the wine into action.

11. The Ney is friends with anyone who has been deserted, ***
and its musical divisions have torn off veils too.

12. Who has seen an antidote as well as a poison like the Ney; ***
who has seen a sympathizing and longing lover like the Ney?

13. The Ney speaks about the bloody and dangerous path, ***
and tells stories of Majnun (who sacrificed himself for his beloved
Layli).

14. None other but he who has abandoned his worldly senses can
comprehend the secret of my heart (or the story of the Ney); ***
and it is the ear that is the customer (receiver) of the tongue.

15. In sorrow, our days have lost sense of time ***
and they have become fellow travellers with our griefs.

16. If the days have passed away, tell them to keep on going, ***
there is nothing to worry about; but O you the purest one (the love
of God) stay with us.

17. Everyone except a fish is sated with water, ***
and he who is not provided with his daily bread (earning) fails to
pass the days easily (comfortably).

18. Since a raw (immature) man is unable to perceive the state of a
ripe (mature) man, *** it is better to cut a long story short and bid
him farewell.

--Translated by Erkan Türkman. From "The Essence of Rumi's
Masnevi: Including His Life and Works" (Konya, Turkey: Misket
Ltd., 1992).

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8. VERSION BY BARKS, 1994

1. Listen to the story told by the reed,
of being separated.

2. "Since I was cut from the reedbed,
I have made this crying sound.

3. Anyone apart from someone he loves
understands what I say.

4. Anyone pulled from a source
longs to go back.

5. At any gathering I am there,
mingling in the laughing and grieving,

6-7. a friend to each, but few
will hear the secrets hidden /
within the notes. No ears for that.

8. Body flowing out of spirit,
spirit up from body: no concealing /
that mixing. But it's not given us
to see the soul.
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9. The reed flute
is fire, not wind. Be that empty."

10. Hear the love-fire tangled
in the reed notes, as bewilderment
melts into wine.

11. The reed is a friend
to all who want the fabric torn
and drawn away.

12. The reed is hurt and salve combining.
Intimacy and longing for
intimacy, one song

13. A disastrous surrender,
and a fine love, together.

14. The one who secretly hears this
is senseless. A tongue has
one customer, the ear.

A. If a sugarcane flute had no effect,
it would not have been able to make sugar
in the reedbed. Whatever sound
it makes is for everyone.

15-16. Days full of wanting, let them go by
without worrying that they do.

B. Stay where you are, inside
such a pure, hollow note.

17. Every thirst gets satisfied except
that of these fish, the mystics,
who swim an ocean of grace
still somehow longing for it!

C. No one lives in that without
being nourished every day.

18. But if someone doesn't want
to hear the song of the reed flute,
it's best to cut conversation
short, say goodbye, and leave.

--Version by Coleman Barks. From "Say I Am You: Rumi"
(Athens, Georgia: Maypop Books, 1994, pp. 48-49); re-printed in

"The Essential Rumi," pp. 17-19. Original formatting changed here, in order to accord with the original Persian format. [Lines indicated by a capital letter are invented and have no basis in the Persian text.]

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9. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY TÜRKMAN, 1996

1. Listen to this Ney, while it's complaining,
The story of separation from God it's explaining.

2. Ever since they plucked me from my original ground,
Men and women cry upon my painful sound.

3. I need a breast pierced with the yearning of separation,
So that I may tell the meaning of my painful lamentation.

4. If anyone from his origin may ever fall away,
He seeks a chance to find it in a better way.

5. In every sort of company I cry, lament and moan,
Both the happy and the unhappy are charmed by my tone.

6. According to their opinions they have become my friend,
Little do they bother to discern my esoteric trend.

7. My secret is not concealed from my moaning cries,
But this light is not given to many ears and eyes.

8. The soul and the body aren't from each other concealed,
But to many an ear and eye this factor is not revealed.

9. This breath in the Ney is fire and isn't a sheer blow,
He who hasn't this fire let him die and let him go.

10. It is the fire of love that has made the Ney demented,
And is love-desire that renders the wine fermented.

11. The Ney is a friend to those who lose their companions,
Our breasts are also pierced like the Ney's divisions.

12. Who has ever seen an antidote and poison like the Ney?
Who has ever seen a consoling friend like the Ney?

13. The Ney is telling stories of the perilous ways and coils,
The love stories of Majnun and his bloody toils.
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14. The knower of these feelings is none but a senseless one,
Only an ear can be a customer of a speaking tongue.

15. Our sorrows have made our days from us go astray,
while the days have followed time to make us their prey.

16. If the days are passing, worry not, let them pass away,
O Thee, the Only Pious One, with me prolong Thy stay.

17. If you aren't the fish with water you're soon tired,
If you haven't any daily bread, time is for you undesired.

18. For a lower man the stage of a perfect man is too high,
So cut a long story short and say to him "Goodbye."

---Translated by Erkan Türkman. From "A Bouquet of
Rumi's Versified Poems" (Konya, Turkey: Misket Ltd., 1996).

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10. VERSION BY JONATHAN STAR, 1997

1. Listen to the song of the reed,
How it wails with the pain of separation:

2. "Ever since I was taken from my reed bed
My woeful song has caused men and women to weep.

3. I seek out those whose hearts are torn by separation
For only they understand the pain of this longing.

4. Whoever is taken away from his homeland
Yearns for the day he will return.

5. In every gathering, among those who are happy or sad,
I cry with the same lament.

6. Everyone hears according to his own understanding,
None has searched for the secrets within me.

7. My secret is found in my lament,
But an eye or ear without light cannot know it . . ."

9. The sound of the reed comes from fire, not wind,
What use is one's life without this fire?
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10. It is the fire of love that brings music to the reed.
It is the ferment of love that gives taste to the wine.

11. The song of the reed soothes the pain of lost love.
Its melody sweeps the veils from the heart.

12. Can there be a poison so bitter or a sugar so sweet
As the song of the reed?

A. To hear the song of the reed
everything you have ever known must be left behind.

--Version by Johathan Star. From "Rumi: In the Arms of the Beloved." (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1997). [Lines indicated by a capital letter are invented and have no basis in the Persian text.]

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11. TRANSLATION BY GUPTA, 1997

1. O man! Hear the flute (an instrument made out of reeds) ***
which in wistful tone complains of being separated from its native place, the reed-bed.

2. "From the moment they cut me off from my source, ***
I have been wailing, which has moved everyone, man or woman, who heard me, to tears.

3. "I wish my heart to be torn into pieces ***
so that they could tell the tale of pangs of my separation and of my longing for going back from where I came.

4. "Anyone who is thus removed from his spring, ***
waits every moment for an opportunity of returning to it.

5. "As for me, I have given vent to my feelings in every assembly, *** to people who are on way to redemption, and those who remain attached to this world.

6. "Everybody, according to his fancy, became friendly to me ***
but nobody sought to discover my secrets of my wistful wailings.

7. "And, yet my secrets are not far off from my cries ***
provided one has the eyes to see and the ears to hear them."

8. After all, spirit resides in the body, and body covers the spirit.
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*** But body cannot see the spirit; it can only realize it. The flute says: "My secret is not far away from my lamentation as the soul is not remote from the body."

9. The sound of the flute is the fire born of love; it is not merely wind and vapour.*** Anyone who is devoid of this fire is veritably dead to this sound and cannot figure it out.

10. It is the fire of love which has set the flute aflame; ***
it is the fervour of love which has invigorated wine.

11. Flute is the companion of one who has separated from one's beloved *** (for, only such a soul can understand the language of love of the flute). Its strains have torn apart the covers of our hearts (covers which prevent it from seeing reality; these covers are covers of attachment with this world).

12. The flute is both poison and its antidote; ***
it is both lover and beloved). Who has ever seen a comrade and a longing lover like the flute?

13. It points to the dangerous path of love-- the path on which all desires for this world are slaughtered; *** it reminds us of the passion of Qais-i Amri (Majnun) for his famous idol, Laila.

13a. The flute seems to have two apertures, one of which is pressed in the mouth of the flutist and s hidden, and from the other, which is open, the sound comes out. (But this sound is really the sound of the flutist who is everything to the flute and without whom the flute would not speak out. Similarly, every human being is like the flute of which the player is God. It is He whose will is supreme and who determines everything that happens or does not happen. Like the flute, we also have two apertures, one of which is blown by Him but remains hidden to us.)

13b. From the other aperture which opens towards you, the flute emits its cry of anguish which is shaking (the earth and) the heaven.

13c. But the really intelligent, the ones who have the eyes to see, know that the sound which is coming out of the outer aperture is the sound which comes from the mouth of the flute-player (and from none else).

13d. All the strands and notes of the sound of the flute emanate from the divine breath; every stirring of the soul is due to His ordinances.

14. Anyone who becomes aware of these divine secrets, becomes unconscious of everything else. *** It is only the ear which hears that can understand this language.

14b. After all, some people do understand this language of love of the flute. How else, can one explain the phenomenon of love which seeks to sweeten anything which is bitter or tasteless?

15. And as for the lovers, days after days of separation have gone by, *** when they burn in the fire of divine love.

16. But, what does it matter? If the days roll on, let them. *** For, there is our beloved, the Supreme Lord, who in His purity, is non-pareil. He is like the eternal river of ambrosia.

17. The fish in that river are never surfeit with its holy waters. *** And anyone who gets satiated, is really not fish. No one who wants anything from that Holiest of the holy can remain without his wishes being fulfilled; from that general court, no beggar returns disappointed.

18. To cut a long story short, no imperfect being can really understand the state of the perfect.*** (Who can understand what transpires in the mind and soul of the genuine, perfect lover?)

18a. There is, undoubtedly, fire in the wine which all wine-lovers know. But that Fire is hopelessly poor in comparison with the fire of true love. The heavens are known to revolve constantly but the way the lover revolves around his beloved, beggars all description.

18b. It is only the spirit of love which has produced that intoxicating effect in the wine; it is not the wine that intoxicates us. Similarly, it is the spirit which has given rise to the body and not vice versa.

18c. But, then, not everybody has the strength to stomach the whole truth; not every bird can feed on figs. (Similarly, if the lover of God were to narrate the tales of the flights of his lover, who will believe him? Who will even understand a fraction of these tales?)

19. And, therefore, my son, (if you are a true seeker,) break free from the bonds of this world. *** How long will you remain tied in the chains of silver and gold?

20. If you pour the sea into a cup, how will that be contained? *** One day's portion. (There is no limit to temptations; no end to the

quest for pour and pelf. Why remain bound by these strings?).

21. The greedy are never satisfied; their eyes are ever on the hunt for their prey. That explains their discontent. *** Look at the shell which receives one drop of rain and feels satisfied with it, closes its mouth and produces the pearl.

22. One whose garment is ripped up by love ***
becomes wholly purged of greed and blemish. (As Sarmad said: "He who conferred on you the emperor's crown has blest me with the goods of anxiety. Whomsoever He found full of blemishes, He clad him so that his blemishes might be covered. And whomsoever He found to be without a fault, He allowed him to remain stark naked.")

23. There is nothing as purifying as love, nothing as great a cleanser of dirt and filth as ardour for God, *** nothing as perfect a physician of all diseases as the fire of divine love. Blessed are such lovers!

24. Love is the cure for all the fundamental and chronic diseases of pride and the desire for honour and fame. *** For them, love is like Galen and Plato.

25. The material body which is made of elements and which eventually is dissolved back into them, can even go to heaven on the wings of the angel of Love.*** Even the mountain can start dancing and moving about, if it is energized by the power of love (allusion to Jesus; the Koran, IV, 157, and to Mohammed in ibid., XVII, 1).

26. O lover! Behold how love enlivened the Mount Sinai, ***
when Moses was given the glimpses of divine light by God on top of it, and fell down unconscious (the Koran, VII, 143).

26a. In the higher and lower notes of the flute, the divine secrets of the Lord are hidden. If those secrets were to be let out, the world might become topsy-turvy and people would be confused.

26b. If these notes of the flute could be decodified and if I could disclose its contents to the world, it might cease to exist.

27. If I had been in communion with my beloved in the same way as the blow-hole is in the mouth of the flutist, *** I could also speak of the secrets of my beloved exactly as the flute (is giving expression to the voice of the flutist, and I could also sing about these secrets, the way the flute does).

28. One who gets separated from his beloved, ***
loses his real support even if he is supported by hundreds of people in the world.

29. This is supported by the story of the nightingale which sings merrily when it is in the company of its darling, the rose, but sinks into silence with the advent of autumn in which the rose withers away.

30. The beloved (God) is all-pervasive; the lover (man) is only its screen. *** The beloved is ever alive; he alone is alive. The lover is merged into the beloved and has lost his identity.

31. If the beloved is indifferent towards the lover, ***
the latter is like a bird with its wings cut off; woe betide him.

31a. Our love for the Lord is like the string which can fly us unto His abode; it is like the hunter's net which can take the catch up to the hunter.

32. As for me, I am not sufficiently possessed of love yet; I am not yet completely lost in the love of my Lord. I am still aware of my whereabouts, and I yet think of what has gone by and what is yet to come. (This is because the light born of love for the Lord is yet evading me.). That light of love is everywhere-- West and East, North and South; it is in my crown; it is like a carcan around my neck.

33. That love demands that everyone bathes in it; everyone covers himself with its glory. *** But, unfortunately, the mirror of human heart is covered with the layers of dust of desire, anger, greed, attachment and pride and the love of that light cannot be reflected in that mirror.

34. And do you know why that light of love is not caught by the mirror of your heart? *** The reason is that it is all rusted with the rust of desire.

34a. the mirror which is clear of that rust and has no dust of desire etc. on it, ever reflects the light of the Supreme Sun (which sustains all the lower solar systems).

34b. O brother! Go and cleanse the mirror of your heart of all the rust of desire and then bathe in the effulgence of the light of God which it is bound to reflect.

34c. Listen to this counsel by the ear of your soul so that you may go out of this prison-house of earth and water.

34d. If you have even a grain of intelligence, give way to spirit;
only then you can be qualified to undertake the spiritual journey.
(First, get acquainted with the path; then alone your journey can be
negotiated without any let or hindrance.)

[The story of a king falling in love with a maid, his buying her, and
her falling ill and her treatment.]

35. O friends! Listen to this story (of a king's maid, with whom he
fell in love, her falling ill and the attempts to treat her). *** That
story is applicable to the current illness of man's spirit and the cure
which could be attempted.

--Translated by M. G. Gupta. From "Maulana Rum's Masnawi:
Volume One, Verses 1-4563." Translation and Commentary by M.
G. Gupta. (Agra, India: M. G. Publishers, second edition, 1997)
[This translation was from an edition of the Mathnawi with about
five hundred extra verses in Book One, added over the centuries;
lines indicated by a small letter are extra verses which Gupta
translated from Persian]

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12. VERSION BY HELMINSKI, 1998

1. Listen to the reed and the tale it tells,
how it sings of separation:

2. Ever since they cut me from the reed bed,
my wail has caused men and women to weep.

3. I want a heart that is torn open with longing
so that I might share the pain of this love.

4. Whoever has been parted from his source
longs to return to that state of union.

5. At every gathering I play my lament. I'm a friend to both happy
and sad.

6. Each befriended me for his own reasons,
yet none searched out the secrets I contain.

7. My secret is not different than my lament,
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yet this is not for the senses to perceive.

8. The body is not hidden from the soul,
nor is the soul hidden from the body, and yet the soul is not for everyone to see.

9. This flute is played with fire, not with wind,
and without this fire you would not exist.

10. It is the fire of love that inspires the flute.
It is the ferment of love that completes the wine.

11. The reed is a comfort to all estranged lovers.
Its music tears our veils away.

12. Have you ever seen a poison or antidote like the reed? Have you seen a more intimate companion and lover?

13. It sings of the path of blood;
it relates the passion of Majnun.

14. Only to the senseless is this sense confided.
Does the tongue have any patron but the ear?

15. Our days grow more unseasonable,
these days which mix with grief and pain. . .

16. but if the days that remain are few, let them go; it doesn't matter. But You, You remain, for nothing is as pure as You are.

17. All but the fish quickly have their fill of His water,
and the day is long without His daily bread.

18. The raw do not understand the state of the ripe,
and so my words will be brief.

19. Break your bonds, be free, my child!
How long will silver and gold enslave you?

20. If you pour the whole sea into a jug,
will it hold more than one day's store.

21. The greedy eye, like the jug, is never filled.
Until content, the oyster holds no pearl.

22. Only one who has been undressed by Love

is free of defect and desire.

23. O Gladness, O Love, our partner in trade,
healer of all our ills,

24. Our Plato and Galen,
remedy for our pride and our vanity.

25. With love this earthly body could soar in the air;
the mountain could arise and nimbly dance.

26. Love gave life to Mount Sinai, O lover.
Sinai was drunk; Moses lost consciousness.

27. Pressed to the lips of one in harmony with myself,
I might also tell all that can be told;

28. but without a common tongue, I am dumb,
even if I have a hundred songs to sing.

29. When the rose is gone and the garden faded,
you will no longer hear the nightingale's song.

30. The Beloved is all; the lover just a veil.
The Beloved is living; the lover a dead thing.

31. If Love withholds its strengthening care,
the lover is left like a bird without wings.

32. How will I be awake and aware
if the light of the Beloved is absent?

33. Love wills that this Word be brought forth.

34. If you find the mirror of the heart dull,
the rust has not been cleared from its face.

35. O friends, listen to this tale,
the marrow of our inward state.

--Version by Kabir Helminski. From "The Rumi Collection: An Anthology of Translations and Versions of Jalaluddin Rumi" (Putney, Vermont: Threshold Books, 1998), pp. 145-46. This is a revision of earlier versions ("Love is A Stranger," 1993, pp. 50-52; "Ruins of the Heart," 1981, pp. 19-20).

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13. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY SHAHRIARI, 1998

1. Pay heed to the grievances of the reed
Of what divisive separations breed

2. From the reedbed cut away just like a weed
My music people curse, warn and heed

3. Sliced to pieces my bosom and heart bleed
While I tell this tale of desire and need.

4. Whoever who fell away from the source
Will seek and toil until returned to course

5. Of grievances I sang to every crowd
Befriended both the humble and the proud

6. Each formed conjecture in their own mind
As though to my secrets they were blind

7. My secrets are buried within my grief
Yet to the eye and ear, that's no relief

8. Body and soul both unveiled in trust
Yet sight of soul for body is not a must.

9. The flowing air in this reed is fire
Extinct, if with passion won't inspire

10. Fire of love is set upon the reed
Passion of love this wine will gladly feed

11. Reed is match for he who love denied
Our secrets unveiled, betrayed, defied.

12. Who has borne deadly opium like the reed?
Or lovingly to betterment guide and lead?

13. Of the bloody path, will tell many a tale
Of Lover's love, even beyond the veil.

14. None but the fool can hold wisdom dear
Who will care for the tongue if not ear?

15 In this pain, of passing days we lost track
Each day carried the pain upon its back

16. If days pass, let them go without fear
You remain, near, clear, and so dear.

17. Only the fish will unquenchingly thirst,
Surely passing of time, the hungry curst.

18. State of the cooked is beyond the raw
The wise in silence gladly withdraw.

19. Cut the chain my son, and release the pain
Silver rope and golden thread, must refrain

20. If you try to fit the ocean in a jug
How small will be your drinking mug?

21. Never filled, ambitious boy, greedy girl,
Only if satisfied, oyster makes pearl.

22. Whoever lovingly lost shirt on his back
Was cleansed from greed and wanton attack

23. Rejoice in our love, which would trade
Ailments, of every shade and every grade

24. With the elixir of self-knowing, chaste
With Hippocratic and Galenic taste.

25. Body of dust from love ascends to the skies
The dancing mountain thus begins to rise

26. It was the love of the Soul of Mount Sinai
Drunken mountain, thundering at Moses, nigh.

27. If coupled with those lips that blow my reed
Like the reed in making music I succeed;

28. Whoever away from those lips himself found
Lost his music though made many a sound.

29. When the flower has withered, faded away
The canary in praise has nothing to say.

30. All is the beloved, the lover is the veil
Alive is the beloved, the lover in death wail

31. Fearless love will courageously dare
Like a bird that's in flight without a care

32. How can I be aware, see what's around,
If there is no showing light or telling sound?

33. Seek the love that cannot be confined
Reflection in the mirror is object defined.

34. Do you know why the mirror never lies?
Because keeping a clean face is its prize.

35. Friends, listen to the tale of this reed
For it is the story of our life, indeed!

--Translated by Shahriar Shahriari, April 27, 1998, Vancouver, Canada, posted on the Internet, at www.rumionfire.com. [The translator was born a Zoroastrian, was educated in England and Canada, and was a mechanical engineer until 1994.]

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14. TRANSLATION BY NASR, 2000

1. Listen to the reed how it narrates a tale,***
A tale of all the separations of which it complains.

2. Ever since they cut me from the reed-bed,***
Men and women bemoaned my lament.

3. How I wish in separation, a bosom shred and shred,***
So as to utter the description of the pain of longing.

4. Whoever becomes distanced from his roots,***
Seeks to return to the days of his union.

5. I joined every gathering uttering my lament,***
Consorting with the joyous and the sorrowful.

6. Everyone befriended me following his own opinion,***
No one sought the secrets from within me.

7. My secret is not far away from my lament,***
Yet, eye and ear do not possess that light.

8. Body is not hidden from soul, nor soul from body,***
Yet, none has the license to see the soul.
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9. The cry of the reed is fire, not wind,***
Whoso does not possess this fire may he be naught.

10. 'Tis the fire of Love that befelled the reed,***
'Tis the fervent desire of Love that entered the wine.

11. The reed is the comrade of whoever has become severed from a friend,*** Its strains have rent asunder our veils.

12. Who has ever seen a poison and an antidote like the reed?***
Who has ever seen a consort and a longing lover like the reed?

13. [omitted]

14. The confident of this consciousness is none other than the unconscious.*** For the tongue has no client save the ear.

15. In our sorrow the days of our life become unseasonable,***
The days have become fellow travelers of burning grief.

16. If the days have passed, say go it matters not,***
Do Thou remain, O Thou like whom there is no one pure.

17. Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water.***
Whoever has no daily bread, his day becomes long.

18. The state of the ripe, none who is raw understands,***
Hence brief my words must be. Farewell.

19. O Son, break the chains that bind thee and be free,***
For how long wilt thou continue to be a slave of silver and gold.

20. If thou pourest the sea into a pitcher,***
How much will it hold? The share of one day.

21. The pitcher that is the eye of the covetous full becomes not,***
Until the oyster shell becomes contented, it does not full of pearls become.

22. He whose garment is rent by Love,***
He alone becomes purified of covetousness and every defect.

23. Hail to thee O our Love with goodly passion,***
O physician of all our ailments,

24. O remedy of our pride and honor,***
O Thou our Plato and Galen besides.

25. The body of dust has risen to the heavens through Love,***
The mountain has begun to dance and become nimble.

26. O lover, Love became the soul of Mt. Sinai,***
Mt Sinai became drunk and Moses fell into a swoon.

27. If my lips were to be joined with a kindred soul,***
Like the reed I would tell all that could be told.

28. Whoever has become separated from one who his tongue understands,*** Becomes dumb were he to have a hundred songs.

29. When the flower departs and the rose garden fades,***
Thou hearest no longer the story of the nightingale.

30. The Beloved is all, the lover but a veil,***
The beloved is alive, the lover but a dead thing.

31. When Love no longer cares for him,***
He becomes like a bird without feather, alas for him!

32. How can I have consciousness before and after,***
If the light of my Friend not be before and after?

33. Love wills that this word be cast forth,***
If the mirror does not reflect, how is that so?

34. Doest thou know why thy mirror nothing reflects?***
Because the rust has not become cleansed from its face.

--Translated by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. From "The Lament of the Reed: Rumi," translated and recited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, music directed by Suleyman Ergunerm, 2000. A Compact Disc, Asr Media, P.O. Box 46069, Madison, WI 53744, www.asrmedia.com. In the English translation, line 13 was omitted, both in the English text and recording. In line 30, the text has "the lover but a dead being," but Professor Nasr recited, "the lover but a dead thing."

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15. TRANSLATION BY GAMARD, 2000

1. Listen to the reed (flute), how it is complaining! ***
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It is telling about separations,

2. (Saying), "Ever since I was severed from the reed field, ***
men and women have lamented in (the presence of) my shrill cries.

3. "(But) I want a heart (which is) torn, torn from separation, ***
so that I may explain the pain of yearning."

4. "Anyone one who has remained far from his roots, ***
seeks a return (to the) time of his union.

5. "I lamented in every gathering; ***
I associated with those in bad or happy circumstances.

6. "(But) everyone became my friend from his (own) opinion; ***
he did not seek my secrets from within me.

7. "My secret is not far from my lament, ***
but eyes and ears do not have the light (to sense it).

8. "The body is not hidden from the soul, nor the soul from the
body; *** but seeing the soul is not permitted."

9. The reed's cry is fire -- it's not wind! ***
Whoever doesn't have this fire, may he be nothing!

10. It is the fire of Love that fell into the reed. ***
(And) it is the ferment of Love that fell into the wine.

11. The reed (is) the companion of anyone who was severed from a
friend; *** its melodies tore our veils.

12. Who has seen a poison and a remedy like the reed? ***
Who has seen a harmonious companion and a yearning friend like
the reed?

13. The reed is telling the story of the path full of blood; ***
it is telling stories of Majnoon's (crazed) love.

14. There is no confidant (of) this understanding except the
senseless! *** There is no purchaser of that tongue except the ear
[of the mystic.]

15. In our longing, the days became (like) evenings; ***
the days became fellow-travellers with burning fevers.

16. If the days have passed, tell (them to) go, (and) don't worry.
*** (But) You remain! -- O You, whom no one resembles in

Purity!

17. Everyone becomes satiated by water, except the fish. ***
(And) everyone who is without daily food [finds that] his days become long.

18. None (who is) "raw" can understand the state of the "ripe." ***
Therefore, (this) speech must be shortened. So farewell!

19. O son, break the chains (and) be free! ***
How long will you be shackled to silver and gold?

20. If you pour the sea into a jug, ***
how much will it contain? (Just) one day's portion.

21. The jug of the eye of the greedy will never be filled. ***
(And) as long as the oyster is not content, it will never be filled by a pearl.

22. Anyone (whose) robe is torn from love, ***
becomes completely purified from greed and defect.

23. Be joyous! O our sweet melancholy Love! ***
O doctor of all our diseases!

24. O Medicine of our pride and vanity! ***
O you (are) our Plato and (our) Galen!

25. The earthly body went up to the heavens from Love! ***
The mountain began to dance and became agile!

26. O lover! Love became the soul of Mount Sinai! ***
Mount Sinai (became) drunk "and Moses fell down senseless"!

27. If I were joined with the lip of a harmonious companion, ***
I (too) would utter speeches like the reed!

28. (But) anyone who becomes separated from one of the same tongue *** becomes without a tongue, even if he has a hundred songs [to share].

29. When the rose has gone and the garden has passed away, ***
you will no longer hear from the nightingale (about) what happened.

30. The Beloved is All, and the lover (is merely) a veil; ***

the Beloved is Living, and the lover (is merely) a corpse.

31. When Love has no concern for him, ***
he is left like a bird without wings. Misery for him!

32. How can I have awareness of before and behind, ***
when the Light of my Beloved is no (longer) before and behind?

33. Love wants these words to manifest. ***
(But) how is it that the mirror reveals nothing?

34. Do you know why your mirror reveals nothing? ***
Because the rust is not separated from its face!

--Translated by Ibrahim Gamard. First published on the Web, on the listserve, "Sunlight," http://www.yahoogroups.com.,3/00. For explanatory notes and transliteration of the original Persian, see "The Song of the Reed," parts one, two, and four on this website.

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16. TRANSLATION BY LEWIS, 2000

1. Listen
as this reed
pipes its plaint ***
unfolds its tale
of separations:

2. Cut from my reedy bed ***
my crying
ever since
makes men and women
weep

3. I like to keep my breast
carved with loss ***
to convey
the pain of longing --

4. Once severed
from the root, ***
thirst for union
with the source
endures
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5. I raise my plaint
in any kind of crowd ***
in front of both
the blessed and the bad

6. For what they think they hear me say, they love me -- ***
None gaze in me my secrets to discern

7. My secret is not separate from my cry ***
But ears and eyes lack light to see it.

8. Not soul from flesh
not flesh from soul are veiled, ***
yet none is granted leave to see the soul.

9. Fire, not breath, makes music through that pipe -- ***
Let all who lack that fire be blown away.

10. It is love's fire that inspires the reed ***
It's love's ferment that bubbles in the wine

11. The reed, soother to all sundered lovers -- ***
its piercing modes reveal our hidden pain:

12. (What's like the reed, both poison and physic, ***
Soothing as it pines and yearns away?)

13. The reed tells the tale of a blood-stained quest ***
singing legends of love's mad obsessions.

14. Only the swooning know such awareness ***
only the ear can comprehend the tongue

15. In our sadness time slides listlessly by ***
the days searing inside us as they pass.

16. But so what if the days may slip away? ***
so long as you, Uniquely Pure, abide.

17. Within this sea drown all who drink but fish ***
If lived by bread alone, the day seems long

18. No raw soul ever kens the cooked one's state ***
So let talk of it be brief; go in peace.

19. Break off your chains
My son, be free! ***
How long enslaved
by silver, gold?

20. Pour the ocean
in a pitcher ***
can it hold more
than one day's store?

21. The jug, like a greedy eye,
never gets its fill ***
only the contented oyster holds the pearl

22. The one run ragged by love and haggard ***
gets purged of all his faults and greeds

23. Welcome, Love!
sweet salutary suffering ***
and healer of our maladies!

24. cure of our pride
of our conceits. ***
Our Plato
Our Galen!

25. By Love
our earthly flesh
borne to heaven ***
our mountains
made supple
moved to dance

26. Love moved Mount Sinai, my love, ***
and it made Moses swoon [K7:143]

27. Let me just touch those harmonious lips ***
and I, reed-like, will tell what may be told

28. A man may know a myriad of songs ***
but cut from those who know his tongue, he's dumb

29. Once the rose wilts and the garden fades ***
the nightingale will no more sing his tune.

30. The Beloved is everything -- the lover a veil ***
The Beloved's alive -- the lover carrion.

31. Unsuccored by Love, the poor lover is ***
a plucked bird

32. Without the Beloved's
surrounding illumination
how perceive what's ahead
and what's gone by?

33. Love commands these words appear; ***
if no mirror reflects them
in whom lies the fault?

34. The dross obscures your face ***
and makes your mirror
unable to reflect

--Translated by Franklin D. Lewis. From "Rumi-- Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teaching and Poetry of Jal'l al-Din Rumi," by Franklin D. Lewis (Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications), pp. 362-64

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17. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY LEGENHAUSEN, 2002

1. Listen to this reed as it complains,
As it tells of separations in its strains:

2. Ever since I was torn from the land in which I grew
Men have been weeping to my piping, men and women, too.

3. I want a breast torn apart by parting
So I can tell it of the pain that accompanies my longing.

4. Whoever stays too long away from his own country
Searches for reunion, and his search is made daily.

5. I have been lamenting in all sorts of assembly.
I have been in bad as well as in good company.

6. Each imagines himself to have befriended me;
None have sought out the secrets within me.

7. My secret is not far from this lament you hear,
But it is something seen by neither eye nor ear.

8. The soul is not barred from the body, nor body from soul,
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Yet no one is permitted to gaze upon the soul.

9. This blare and blast is not wind ؟it ?s fire!
Let there be no one who is without this fire!

10. It is the fire of love that blows through the reed,
It is the boiling of love that ferments the mead.

11. The reed is companion to anyone who has lost a friend.
Its piercing whistle pierces through to the end.

12. Who has seen such a poison and such an antidote as the reed?
Who has seen such companionship and such longing as the reed?

13. None are privy to this consciousness but those who have
become unconscious.
The tongue has no other customer but the ear for its produce.

14. The reed tells of a blood-soaked road; it ?s tale is gory.
Of the love of one possessed, the reed tells the story.

15. In my sorrow, how long it takes
The days to pass with my heartaches.

16. If those days are gone, let them go and be done with them.
You stay here with me, for you are pure like none of them.

17. For all except fishes, water will sate.
For all without bread, it seems to be late.

18 A seasoned state for the raw is all wrong,
Therefore my talk should be shortened: so-long!

--Translated by Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen ©2002
Sent to Dar Al-Masnavi on January 17, 2002:
"In the Name of the Exalted, Dear residents of Dar al-Mathnavi,
Salaam alaykum! Here's my version of the Reed's song."
Peace, Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen,
Qom, Iran

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18. RHYMED TRANSLATION BY TAMDGIDI, 2003

1. Listen to how this reed is wailing;
About separations it's complaining:

2."From reedbed since parted was I,
Men, women, have cried from my cry.

3."Only a heart, torn-torn, longing
Can hear my tales of belonging.

4."Whosoever lost her/his essence,
For reuniting seeks lessons.

5."In the midst of all I cried
For the sad and happy, both sighed

6."But they heard only what they knew,
Sought not after the secrets I blew.

7."My secret's not far from this, my cry;
But, eye or ear lack the light to seek and try.

8."Body and soul each other do not veil
But there is no one to hear her/his soul's tale."

9. What blows in reed's not wind, but fire;
Whoever lost it, is lost entire.

10. What set the reed on fire is love, love;
What brews the wine entire is love, love.

11. Reed comes of use when lovers depart;
It's wailing scales tear love's veilings apart

12. Like reed, both poison and cure, who saw?
Like reed, comrade and devout who saw?

13. Reed tells of the bleeding heart's tales,
Tells of what mad lovers' love entails

14. With the truth, only the seeker's intimate,
As the tongue knows only the ear's estimate.

15. Days, nights, lost count in my sorrow;
Past merged in this sorrow with tomorrow.

16. If the day is gone, say:"So what! go, go!
But remain, O you pure, O my sorrow!"

17. This water's dispensable, but not for the fish.
Hungry finds days long without a dish.

18. Cooked soul's unknowable if you're raw;
Must quit then, no more tire the jaw.

(pause)

19. Break the chain, . .. be free, ... O boy!
How long will you remain that gold's toy?!

20. Say you have oceans, but how can you pour
All oceans in a single day's jar, more and more?!

21. The greedy's eye-jar will never fill up;
No pearl, if oyster's mouth doesn't give up.

22. Whoever tore her/his robe in love's affair
Tore free of greed, flaw, and false care.

23. Joy upon you! O sorrowful sweet love!
O the healer! healer of ills! love! love!

24. O the healer of pride, of our shame!
O Galen in name, Platonic in fame!

25. Earth's whirling in heavens for love, love;
Hill's whirling round the earth for love, love.

26. Love's the soul in hill. It's Love in the hill
That brought the hill down and Moses the chill.

27. If coupled my lips with friend's on and on,
I'll tell tales, like reed, long, long.

28. Uncoupled, though, these lips will cease wails,
Lose tongue, though remain untold tales.

29. If the rose is dead, garden long gone,
No canary can recite her/his song long.

30. The lover is veiled; beloved's the all.
The veil must die to hear the beloved's call

31. If you do stay away from love, hear, hear!
Like a wingless bird you'll die, fear, fear!

32. How can I stay awake and see the road,
If lover's light shine not on my abode?

33. Love always seeks ways to spread the light.

Why, then, does your mirror reflect a night?

34. Your mirror bears no tales--you'd like to know?
'Cause your rust keeps away all lights' glow.

---Translated by Mohammad H. (Behrooz) Tamdgidi
--sent to Dar Al-Masnavi on November 20, 2003; revised February 18, 2005. Tamdgidi is Assistant Professor of Sociology, teaching social theory at UMass Boston. http://www.okcir.com

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19. TRANSLATION BY TILLINGHAST AND SHAFAK, 2003

1. Listen, how this flute complains; how it tells of estrangement.

2. It says: Ever since they cut me from my reedy bed, men have cried and wailed when I cried--and women too.

3. I want a heart wounded by separation, so I can tell the pain of longing.

4. He who is cut off from his essence looks for the time of reunion.

5. I wept and moaned in every gathering, with the well-off and the badly-off.

6. Everyone in his own way became my friend; no one wondered about the secrets I have inside of me.

7. My secret is no different from what I cry aloud; but the light to understand it is not found in the eye or in the ear.

8. The body is not hidden from the soul, nor is the soul a secret to the body; yet no one is permitted to see the soul.

9. The voice of the flute is fire, not wind; whoever does not have that fire inside him, let him disappear.

10. The fire of love has struck the flute; the frenzy of love has struck the wine.

11. The flute is one of a pair separated from a friend, and it is that friend; it has torn the curtains, it has ripped away our veils.

12. The flute speaks of a path full of blood; it also tells the love stories of Mejnun.
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13. Who has seen a poison like the flute, or a remedy like the flute?
Who has seen a breath-companion like the flute, or anyone
who yearns like the flute?

14. The secret of this knowing is no different from not-knowing;
the tongue's only customer is the ear.

15. The days have passed in sorrow, and become nights; the days
of fire became my traveling companions, then burned away.

16. If the days pass and go, say this: Pass, go, we have no fear.
You, friend, stay. There is nothing like you for purity.

17. Everyone gets their fill of water except the fish; for those
without their daily bread the day lengthens and gets longer.

18. The unripe have no understanding of the ripe; none at all. That
being the case, it's best to cut words short--Fare thee well!

--Translated (from a Turkish translation by Abdulbaki
Golpinarli) by Richard Tillinghast and Elif Shafak
--sent to Dar Al-Masnavi on December 16, 2003:
"I don't know if you would want to print this on the Mesnevi
website. Elif Shafak, the Turkish novelist, and I have translated
this from the Turkish translation by Golpinarli. It's not as poetic as
some of the other translations you print on the website, but perhaps
it has the virtue of greater faithfulness to the original."
Richard Tillinghast, Professor of English,
Dept. of English Language & Literature
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
http://www-personal.umich.edu/~rwtill

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20. TRANSLATION BY MOJADDEDI, 2004

1. Now listen to this reed-flute's deep lament
About the heartache being apart has meant:

2. 'Since from the reed-bed they uprooted me
My song's expressed each human's agony,

3. A breast which separation's split in two
Is what I seek, to share this pain with you:

4. When kept from their true origin, all yearn
For union on the day they can return.
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5. Among the crowd, alone I mourn my fate,
With good and bad I've learned to integrate,

6. That we were friends each one was satisfied
But none sought out my secrets from inside;

7. My deepest seecret's in this song I wail
But eyes and ears can't penetrate the veil:

8. Body and soul are joined to form one whole
But no one is allowed to see the soul.'

9. It's fire not just hot air the reed-flute's cry,
If you don't have this fire then you should die!

10. Love's fire is what makes every reed-flute pine,
Love's fervour thus lends potency to wine;

11. The reed consoles those forced to be apart,
Its notes will lift the veil upon your heart,

12. Where's antidote or poison like its song,
Or confidant, or one who's pined so long?

13. This reed relates a tortuous path ahead,
Recalls the love with which Majnun's heart bled:

14. The few who hear the truths the reed has sung
Have lost their wits so they can speak this tongue.

15. The day is wasted if it's spent in grief,
Consumed by burning aches without relief--

16. Good times have long passed, but we couldn't care
When you're with us, our friend beyond compare!

17. While ordinary men on drops can thrive
A fish needs oceans daily to survive:

18. the way the ripe must feel the raw can't tell,
My speech must be concise, and so farewell!

--translated by Jawid Mojaddedi. From "Rumi: The Masnavi, Book One," New York: Oxford University Press, 2004

Peace and War In The Illusory Material World

Mathnawi I:70-71

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70 Within the spirit,[1] imagined forms are as nothing -- (yet)
witness an (entire) world going on (based) upon something
imaginary!

71 (Witness how) their peace and their war (is based) upon
something imaginary, and (how) their pride and their shame
(derives) from something imaginary.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/20/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](70) the spirit [rawân]: there is a pun between two meanings of this word: "spirit" and "going." "The rational soul (rawán) belongs to the world of Reality, while phantasy, which records and preserves sense-data in the form of mental images, 'resembles a thing of naught'; being the mainspring of our illusory existence (V 319 sqq. [= translated by Nicholson: 'Every one is infatuated with some phantasy. . . '], 2648 sqq. [= translated by Nicholson: 'The world of imagination and the phantom of hope and fear is a great obstacle to the traveller (on the mystic Way).'])." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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70 nêst-wash bâsh-ad kheyâl andar rawân
tô jahânê bar kheyâlê bîn rawân

71 bar kheyâlê SulH-eshân-o jang-eshân
w-az kheyâlê fakhr-eshân-o nang-eshân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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He Is Abiding Peacefully

Mathnawi I: 988-989

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988 When the breeze of (spiritual) poverty[1] is (blowing) within (someone), he is abiding peacefully upon the surface of the world.

989 Even though this entire world is his kingdom,[2] (such a) kingdom is (as) nothing in the eye of his heart.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/27/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](988) (spiritual) poverty [darwêshî]: may also be translated as "the quality of being a (true) dervish. "It means, 'He is not absorbed in love of (the attractions of) the world and travels in the world of the spirit.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

[2](989) Even though this entire world is his kingdom: "The dervish whose heart is closed against worldly desires can never sink and perish; his spiritual poverty enables him to surmount every temptation and live in perfect peace with God, scorning the kingdom of this world which belongs to him as God's viceregent." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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988 bâd-é darwêshî chô dar bâTin bow-ad
bar sar-é âb-é jahân sâkin bow-ad

989 gar che jumla-yé în jahân mulk-é way-ast
mulk dar chashm-é del-é ô lâ-shay-ast

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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We Are In His Hands In Anger And In Peace

Mathnawi I: 1510-1513

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1510 If we come to (a state of) ignorance, that is His prison. And if we come to (a state of) knowledge, that is His (lofty) balcony.

If we come to (a state of) sleep, we are His drowsy-drunken ones. And if we come to (a state of) wakeful alertness, we are in His Hands.

If we come to (a state of) weeping, we are His cloud full of glistening (raindrops).[1] And if we come to (a state of) laughing,[2] we are His lightning in that moment.

1513 If we come to (a state of) anger and battle, it is the reflection of His Wrath.[3] And if we come to (a state of) peace and pardon, it is the reflection of His Love.[4]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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(4/27/02)

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1512) we are His (raining) cloud full of glistening (raindrops): The rhyme ("zarq" with "barq") suggests the idiom "zarq-o barq," which means "gleaming and flashing," "dark-blue and glittering (with lightning)," as well as "magnificence and grandeur." Nicholson later changed his translation to, "we are His cloud shedding rain-drops abundantly" (from, "we are a cloud laden with the bounty dispensed by Him"). And he explained: "i.e. full of the rain of Divine Mercy. GH [= the two earliest manuscripts of the Mathnawi] read 'zarq,' 'brightness', 'splendour'. . . In that case there would be a comparison of glistening tears to rain-drops." (Commentary)

[2](1512) laughing: refers to the flashing gleam of smiling or laughing teeth, which is compared to the flashing quality of lightning.

[3](1513) it is the reflection of His Wrath: "If we are full of anger and
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are quarrelsome, that anger of ours is the reflection and the effect of the Wrath of God [qahr-é khodâ]. In other words, the qualities of anger and rage which manifest in us are the reflection and effect of the qualities of Divine Punishment and Wrath which have manifested in us. Because human existence is the mirror and place of manifestation of the Divine Attributes." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

[4](1513) it is the reflection of His Love: "And, likewise, if we are inclined to peace and gentle kindness [SulH wa luTf], those are also the effects of the Love and Gentle Kindness of God which have appeared in us. In sum, whether (it is) anger or kindness, both qualities (derive) from Divine Being, become overflowing in the servant (of God) [= the human being] and mankind is never the source of any attribute." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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1510 gar ba-jahlây-êm, ân zendân-é ô-st
w-ar ba-`ilmây-êm, ân aywân-é ô-st

wa-r be-g'riy-ém abr-é por-zarq-é way-êm
w-ar ba-khand-êm ân zamân barq-é way-êm

1513 w-ar ba-khashm-o jang `aks-é qahr-é ô-st
w-ar ba SulH-o `aZr `aks-é mehr-é ô-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Things Are Revealed By Their Opposites

Mathnawi I: 1121-1149

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1121 You never see red, green, and reddish brown until you see light, prior to (seeing) these three (colors).

But because your mind was distracted by color, the colors became a veil to you from (perceiving) the light.

Since the colors are hidden at night, you have therefore found (that) the sight of colors is (necessarily) due to light.[1]
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(For) without external light, there isn't (any) sight of color. (It is) the same way (with the sight of) inward mental colors.[2]

1125 The outward (light is) from the sun and from the stars,[3] but the inward (light is) from the reflection of the lights of (Divine) Loftiness.

The ray of the eye's light is itself the light of the heart,[4] (since) the eye's light is the result of the light of hearts.

(Once) again, the ray of the heart's light is (from) the Light of God,[5] which is pure and distinct from the light of the intellect and the senses.

There isn't light (at) night, and (so) you don't see colors; therefore (light) is made evident by the opposite of light.[6]

(First) is the seeing of light, then the sight of color. And you know this instantly by (awareness of) the contrary of light.

1130 God created pain and (yearning) sorrow for this sake: so that happiness may occur by (means of) this opposite.[7]

Thus, hidden things are revealed by (their) opposites. (And) since God has no opposite, He is hidden.

Since the sight is (first cast) upon the light, then to color, contrary is revealed by contrary-- like the (light-skinned) Greek and the (dark-skinned) Ethiopian.[8]

Therefore, you know light by the opposite of light, (since the perception of) contrary reveals contrary within (people's) hearts.[9]

There is no opposite in existence to the Light of God, so that He may be made to appear evident by it.[10]

1135 Therefore, our eyes "do not see Him, but He sees" (our eyes).[11] See this from (the example of) Moses and the mountain (of Sinai).[12]

Know (that) form (derives) from (spiritual) reality,[13] just as the lion (springs) from the jungle, or as the voice

and words (emerge) from thoughts.

This speech and voice arose from thoughts, (but) you don't know where the ocean of thought is.

Yet since you've seen (that) the waves of speech are elegant, you know that the ocean of those (waves) is also noble.

When the waves of thought raced out from (intuitive) knowing,[14] it made[15] forms of speech and voice (for them).

1140 (Thus) the forms were born from (Divine) Speech[16] and once more died; the waves were brought back into the ocean.

The forms emerged from formlessness (and then) returned, for "Truly, we belong to Him and to Him we will return."[17]

Therefore, you have a death and a return (in) every moment. Muhammad[18] said, "This world is (only for) an hour."[19]

Our thought is (like) an arrow (flying) in the air from Him.[20] It can never be fixed in the air,[21] (so) it comes (back) to God.

The world is renewed every moment[22] but, in (seeing its) continuance, we (are) unaware of its being renewed.

1145 (For) life is like a stream: it arrives new and fresh (every instant),[23] (while) it appears constant in (its) material form.

It has come as a (seemingly) continuous form due its speed, like a spark which you move quickly in (your) hand.

(For if) you move a branch of fire in accord (with a pattern), the flame appears (to be) very lengthy to (your) sight.

The (appearance of) elongation (of objects for) a space of time[24] (is caused) by the swiftness of the (Divine) action. And (this) quickness appears (because of the) stimulation of the creative power (of God).[25]

1149 Although the seeker of this secret may be very learned-- now [seek the answer from] Husamuddin, who is a sublime book [of Divine mysteries].[26]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 5/10/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1123) the sight of colors is (necessarily) due to light: "According to the view of Ibn Síná [= died, 1037] and many Moslem philosophers colour is produced by light and has no independent existence. Others, while admitting that the visibility of colour depends on light, deny that it is non-existent in the absence of light." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[2](1124) (It is) the same way (with the sight of) inward mental colors: "As colours are produced by light from the heavenly bodies, so the inner light of reason, which is reflected from the Light of God (Universal Reason), produces ideal forms of knowledge and truth." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Thoughts and inward states come into (the mind's) vision with the light of discernment and insight [nûr-é baSîrat]." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation).

[3](1125) the stars: Nicholson translated literally, "from Suhá." And he explained that this means, "A small star." (Footnote) "Suhá, a small star, one of three in the tail of Ursa Major, is used here for the stars collectively." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[4](1126) The ray of the eye's light is itself the light of the heart: refers to the ancient physiological theory that vision is possible because of a subtle kind of "light" within the eyes. "The light of the heart (núr-i dil), which is reason, illumines the light of the eye, i.e. the sense of sight, and thereby enables it to discern the real quality of the objects which it perceives; hence it may be said that 'the light of the eye is produced by the light of hearts'. Since animals possess only the former, they lack the power of induction common to all rational men and blindly follow their instincts. But these 'lights' have their source in the transcendent Light of God, though neither physical sense nor carnal reason is in immediate contact with it. The heart of the mystic, however, receives illumination without any

'veil', so that he sees by the light of Pure Reason itself." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[5](1127) the ray of the heart's light is (from) the Light of God: the meaning here is that it derives from the Light of God (and not that it is the actual Light of God) because Rumi said (two verses prior) that, "the inward (light is) from the reflection of the lights of (Divine) Loftiness."

[6](1128) by the opposite of light: Nicholson translated, "by the opposite of light (darkness)."

[7](1130) happiness may occur by (means of) this opposite: "An ethical application of the principle that till we know what a thing is not we do not know what it is. The appearance of evil is necessary for the manifestation of good. Rúmí develops this topic elsewhere, e.g. II 2927 sqq., V 574 sqq., VI 1747 sqq." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[8](1132) like the (light-skinned) Greek and the (dark-skinned) Ethiopian: Rumi uses these as symbols of spiritual types, not as racial superiority or inferiority (which is alien to the principles of Islam). "i.e. white and black. In v. 3511 infra the fair-skinned inhabitants of Asia Minor are contrasted with the swarthy Ethiopians as types of the blest and the damned respectively. So Turk and Hindú (I 3526, etc.)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[9](1133) contrary reveals contrary within (people's) hearts [Sudûr]: Nicholson translated this term differently (according to a secondary meaning, "flowing," "rising," springing"): "opposite reveals opposite in (the process of) coming forth." And he explained: "Sudûr refers to phenomena and describes their coming into contingent existence. Fayd, the other term for 'emanation', denotes the 'overflowing' or 'raying out' of the Absolute." (Commentary)

[10](1134) There is no opposite in existence to the Light of God, so that He may be made to appear evident by it: "Reverting to the analogy of light and colour, the poet explains that we know light by distinguishing it from darkness; but the Divine Essence, which itself is the life and soul of all phenomenal existence, remains for ever hidden from us, because in reality there is nothing that it is not. Having no object to compare and contrast with God, the mind cannot apprehend Him: it perceives only the diverse forms in which He appears." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[11](1135) our eyes "do not see Him, but He sees" (our eyes): these words are from the Qur'an (6:103), modified for the sake of the meter: "No eyes perceive Him, but He perceives (all) the eyes." This may also be translated, "No (human) vision comprehends Him..."

[12](1135) (the example of) Moses and the mountain (of Sinai): "And when Moses came to Our (appointed) time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, 'O my Lord! Show (Yourself) to me, (so that) I may look at You.' (Then) He said, 'You cannot see Me. But look at the mountain, and if it remains firmly in place-- (only) then might you see Me.' When his Lord manifested (His) Glory to the mountain, He made it crumble, and Moses fell down unconscious." (Qur'an 7:143)

[13](1136) form (derives) from (spiritual) reality: Nicholson translated, "spirit (reality)." And he explained: "Here súrat [= form] includes both sensible and ideal forms of things springing forth, like lions, from the mysterious and impenetrable jungle of Reality [= ma`nà] and disappearing again in its dark depths." (Nicholson, Commentary) Rumi often contrasts outward "form" [Sûrat] with inward "meaning" [ma`nà]. (See William Chittick, "The Sufi Path of Love: the spiritual Teachings of Rumi," pp. 19-23.)

[14](1139) (intuitive) knowing [dánesh]: Nicholson translated, "Wisdom." "(It means), 'when the waves of thought and form entered (the mind) from the ocean of intelligence and wisdom...."

[15](1139) it made: Nicholson translated, "When the waves of thought sped on from (the sea of) Wisdom, it (Wisdom) made (for them) the form of speech and voice."

[16](1140) the forms were born from (Divine) Speech: this is another way of saying (as in line 1136) that form (derives) from the invisible realm of spiritual Reality (in contrast to the external world of transient appearances. In between these two lines, Rumi has said that the waves of speech and voice arise from the ocean of (hidden) thoughts and that the waves of thought arise from (more hidden) intuitive knowing. Now, he speaking of the Divine origin of forms, the Divine command, "Be!" "When He decrees something, He says to it, 'Be!' And it is [kun fa-yakun]." (Qur'an 2:117)

"Nicholson translated, "the form was born of the Word." And he quoted from Rumi's "Fíhi má fíhi [= "Discourses"], 30, 4: 'The heavens and earths are entirely Speech (sukhun)

in the view of one who perceives (mystically), and are born of Speech (sukhun), i.e. Kun fa-yakún.' The sudden assignment of a new meaning to sukhun [= speech] is quite in the manner of Rúmí. European translators and Oriental commentators alike retain the old meaning [= words], but the latter have difficulty in showing how 'form was born of words', which themselves are forms. I am dissatisfied with the explanation that since the formless thought is uttered in words and receives from them a definite shape, the words may therefore be said to 'produce' the form of the thought. The point is not whether they serve to express it, but whether they originate it. Sukhun [= speech] here is parallel to dánish [=intuitive knowing, wisdom] in the preceding verse, and to bí-súratí [= formlessness] in the next." (Commentary)

[17](1141) "Truly, we belong to Him and to Him we will return": Qur'an 2:156. "Bí-súratí [= formlessness] refers to Divine Knowledge (cf. dánish in v. 1139) or Universal Reason, of which the phenomenal world is the outward form." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi quoted an Arabic saying: "Everything returns to its source" [kullu shay-in yarji` ilà aSli-hi] (Commentary)

[18](1142) Muhammad [muSTafà]: literally, "the Chosen," an title used only to mean the Prophet Muhammad.

[19](1142) "This world is (only for) an hour": a saying of the Prophet ["al-duny' s'`at"].

[20](1143) in the air from Him: a word play between "in the air" [dar haw'] and "from Him" [az Huw].

[21](1143) It can never be fixed in the air: "i.e. wujúd-i insánî." [= human existence] (Nicholson, Commentary)

[22](1144) The world is renewed every moment: "The world has only the semblance of duration; in truth all phenomena are annihilated and re-created at every moment by the eternal manifestation of Divine energy." "WM [= the late nineteenth century Indian commentator, Walí Muhammad]... explains the Súfí doctrine known as 'the renewal of like by like' (tajaddud-i amthál) as follows: 'The Súfís believe that every moment a world (`álamí) is annihilated and that instantaneously the like of it comes into existence, because God has opposite attributes which never cease to be displayed...'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[23](1145) life is like a stream: it arrives new and fresh (every instant): "cf. the sayings of Heraclitus [= ancient Greek philosopher, died about 480 B.C.]: 'To him who enters the same river, other and still other waters flow'; 'into the same river we descend, and we do not descend: we are, and we are not'." (NIcholson, Commentary)

[24](1148) The (appearance of) elongation (of objects for) a space of time: Nicholson translated, "The swift motion produced by the action of God presents (this length of duration (Time) as (a phenomenon arising) from the rapidity of Divine action."

"This verse is an answer to the implied question, 'How is it possible that human life is one moment and the time-period of the world is one hour [= as the Prophet said], (when) at the same time there are all these long years and lengthy moments?' You may say in response that this lengthiness of time is in relation to humanity... (Yet) at the same time, in relation to Divine years, this world is (only) a single hour.... But this mystery cannot be understood by means of words and speech." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[25](1148) (this) quickness appears (because of the) stimulation of the creative power (of God): "The whole circle of existence really begins and ends in a single point, i.e. the Essence of God, which is perceived by us under the form of extension. Hence, as the Prophet said, 'the world is but a moment', i.e. a flash of Divine illumination (tajallí) revealing the One as the Many and the Many as the One. But in our minds this immediacy produces the illusion of Time, and we deem the world enduring." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[26](1149) Husamuddin, who is a sublime book [of Divine mysteries]: Nicholson translated, "(say to him), 'Lo, Husámu'ddín, who is a sublime book (where you will find the mystery revealed).'" Husamuddin Chelebi was Rumi's chief disciple (following the death of Salahuddin Zarkûb)), his first successor after his own death, and the one to whom he dictated the entire Mathnawi during the last fifteen years of his life. Rumi occasionally invites the listener to find out more about the mysteries he is expounding by asking Husamuddin (see I:428; also in the last line of fourteen ghazals in the Divan). He also praises Husamuddin as being the stimulus of his inspiration for this work (see I: Preface; II: 3-5, 1327-27; IV: 1, 754-55, 2075-78, 3824-26; VI: 1-3).

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kay be-bîn-î sorkh-o sabz-o fûr-râ
tâ na-bîn-î pêsh-az în seh nûr-râ

lêk chûn dar rang gom shod hôsh-é tô
shod ze-nûr ân rang-hâ rô-pôsh-é tô

chûn-ke shab ân rang-hâ mastûr bûd
pas be-dîd-î dîd-é rang az nûr bûd

nêst dîd-é rang bê-nûr-é berûn
ham-chon-în rang-é kheyâl-é andarûn

în berûn az âftâb-o az suhâ
w-andarûn az `aks-é anwâr-é `ulâ

nûr-é nûr-é chashm khwad nûr-é del-ast
nûr-é chashm az nûr-é del-hâ Hâsil-ast

bâz nûr-é nûr-é del nûr-é khodâ-st
k-ô ze-nûr-é `aql-o His pâk-o jodâ-st

shab na-bod nûr-o na-dîd-î rang-hâ
pas ba-Zidd-é nûr paydâ shod to-râ

dîdan-é nûr-ast ân-gah dîd-é rang
w-în ba-Zidd-é nûr dân-î bê-derang

ranj-o gham-râ Haq pay-é ân âfrîd
tâ ba-d-în Zid khwash-delî ây-ad padîd

pas nehânî-hâ ba-Zid paydâ shaw-ad
chûn-ke Haq-râ nêst Zid penhân bow-ad

ke naZar bar nûr bow-ad ân-gah ba-rang
Zid ba-Zid paydâ bow-ad chûn rûm-o zang

pas ba-Zidd-é nûr dânast-î tô nûr
Zidd Zid-râ mê-nomây-ad dar Sudûr

nûr-é Haq-râ nêst Ziddê dar wujûd
tâ ba-Zidd ô-râ tawân paydâ namûd

lâ-jaram abSâr-é mâ lâ tudrik-hu
wa-h'wa yudrik bîn tô az mûsà-wo koh
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Sûrat az ma`nà chô shêr az bêsha dân
yâ chô âwâz-o sokhon z-andêsha dân

în sokhon-o âwâz az andêsha khâst
tô na-dân-î baHr-é andêsha ko-jâ-st

lêk chûn mawj-é sokhon dîd-î laTîf
bahr-é ân dân-î ke bâsh-ad ham sharîf

chûn ze-dânesh mawj-é andêsha be-tâkht
az sokhon-o âwâz ô Sûrat be-sâkht

1140 az sokhon Sûrat be-zâd-o bâz mord
mawj khwad-râ bâz andar baHr bord

Surat az bê-Suratî âmad berûn
bâz shod ke in-nâ ilay-hi râji`ûn

pas to-râ har laHZa marg-o raj`atê-st
muSTafà farmûd dunyâ sâ`atê-st

fikr-é mâ têrê-st az hû dar hawâ
dar hawâ kay pây-ad? ây-ad tâ khodâ

har nafas naw mê-shaw-ad dunyâ-wo mâ
bê-khabar az naw-shodan andar baqâ

1145 `umr ham-chûn jôy naw-naw mé-ras-ad
mustamirrî mê-nomây-ad dar jasad

ân ze-têzî mustamir-shakl âmada-st
chûn sarar ke-sh têz jonbân-î ba-dast

shâkh-é âtash-râ be-jonbân-î ba-sâz
dar naZar âtash nomây-ad bas darâz

în darâzî muddat az têzîy-é Sun`
mê-nomây-ad sur`at angêzîy-é Sun`

1149 Tâlib-é în sirr agar `allâma'ê-st
nak Husâmu 'd-dîn ke sâmî nâma'ê-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Umar and the Harpist

Mathnawi I: 2199-2222

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Umar[1] -- may God be pleased with him -- changed (the harpist's) viewpoint from the station of weeping, which is being "existent," to the station of being "drowned."[2]

2199 Umar then told him, "This weeping of yours is also (one of) the signs of your sobriety.[3]

2200 "(But) the way of the one (who has) become annihilated[4] is another way (entirely), because sobriety is another error [for the mystic].[5]

"Sobriety is due to remembering what is past-- (but) past and

future are a veil (covering awareness) of God.[6]

"Set fire to both (of them). How long will you be full of knots like the reed,[7] because of these two?[8]

"As long as knots are in the reed, it isn't a confidant of secrets (and) it isn't the companion of the lips and outcry (of the flute player).[9]

"When you are (engaged) in circling [the Ka'ba], you are wrapped up in yourself in the circling. (Then) when you come home [from Mecca], you are also with yourself.[10]

2205 "Your learnings are uninformed of the Giver of knowledge. (And) your repentance is worse than your sin.[11]

"You are seeking repentance about a past situation. (But) say: when will you repent from this repentance?[12]

"Sometimes you are making a low tone[13] to be your direction (of focus), (and) sometimes you are "kissing" (shrill) cries[14] of weeping."

When Umar[15] became a mirror (revealing) secrets,[16] the old man's soulbecame awake within.

He became without weeping and without laughing, just like the soul. His soul[17] left, and another soul[18] became alive (within
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him).

2210 (In) that moment, (such) a bewilderment reached his interior that he went beyond the earth and the sky.[19]

(It was) a seeking and searching beyond seeking and searching.[20] I don't know (how to describe it). (If) you know, speak!

(It was) a state and an expression beyond states and expressions.[21] He became drowned in the Beauty of the Lord of Majesty.[22]

(It was) a drowning in which there could not be any deliverance for him, or (in which) anyone could know (about) him-- besides the Ocean.

The partial intellect would not be speaking about the Universal (Intellect)[23] if there wasn't urgent request after urgent request.
2215 Since pressing demand after demand is arriving, the waves of that Ocean are reaching here.

(And) since the story of the (spiritual) state of that old man has reached this place, the old man and his state have drawn (their) faces in (behind) the curtain.[24]

The old man has shed speech and speaking from (his) robe-- (so) half the talk has remained in my mouth.

(But) in order to produce this (kind of) joy and delight, it is necessary to gamble away a hundred thousand souls.

While hunting in the forest of the soul, be a falcon. Be gambling away (your) life, just like the sun of (this) world.

2220 The lofty sun falls (into the horizon), scattering (its) life. Every moment it becomes empty (and) then is made full (again).

O Sun of (spiritual) Reality! Scatter life, (and) cause newness to appear in this old world!

2222 Soul and spirit are coming into human existence from the Invisible (world) like flowing water.[25]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)

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Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](Heading) Umar: A famous companion of the Prophet Muhammad, and his second successor, or Caliph. In Rumi's story, a gifted harper became so elderly that his voice became worthless. He became impoverished and even unable to buy bread. He went to the graveyard in Medina and played his harp, singing out his grief to God and praying for money to buy new strings for his harp. The Caliph Umar heard a heavenly voice instructing him to bring some gold from the public treasury to the man who was sleeping in the graveyard. Umar brought the money to the man, who smashed his harp, repented of his attachment to music, and began praying and weeping loudly.

[2](Heading) being "existent," to the station of being "drowned": means being aware of one's separate self, in contrast to being "non-existent" of self-- which is a state of mystical consciousness beyond the mind, called "passing away" or "non-existence" [fanâ] by the sufis. Nicholson later changed his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "...weeping, which is (self-) existence, to the stage of absorption (in God)" (from, "... to the state of absorption (in God), which is non-existence (of self)").

[3](2199) sobriety: "Hushyárí [= sobriety, being sensible] is here opposed to mastí, 'mystical intoxication and self-abandonment'." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means, 'This weeping and lamenting which you are making is in some way a cause of (self-) existence and sobriety.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary-- translated here from a Persian translation of the famous 17th century Turkish commentary)

[4](2200) annihilated [fânî]: the mystical experience of being ecstatically free from the bonds of material existence and bodily and egoic identity. "The one whose path is becoming annihilated with love of God, it is another path." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[5](2200) because sobriety is another error [for the mystic]: Nicholson translated, "because sobriety is another sin." Nicholson refers to I:517, which he translated, "This uttering of praise (to Him) is (really) the omission of praise on my part, for this (praise) is a proof of (my) being, and being is a sin." And he explained the latter as related to a verse quoted by the famous sufi Junayd (d. 910), which he translated: "When I say, 'What sin have I committed'? she says in reply, 'Thy life is a sin with which no sin can be compared'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[6](2201) past and future are a veil (covering awareness) of God: Nicholson translated, "past and future are to thee a curtain (separating thee) from God." And he explained: "In the higher planes of mystical experience all relations, including those of time and space, are found to be unreal." (Commentary) "It means that bringing to mind the events of the past is an indication of sobriety and the action of the intellect." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[7](2202) full of knots like the reed: Nicholson translated, "full of knots (joints) like a reed." Refers to the reed cane which is not hollow (meaning here, "selfless") until the joints are removed from the inside. "I.e. 'so long as you remain in the bonds of illusion, you are cut off from Divine inspiration, just as a knotty unperforated reed is incapable of receiving the breath of the flute-player and making music.'" (Commentary)

[8](2202) because of these two: "It means, 'Ignite the fire of unity and the flame of negation of annihilation [lâ-yé fanâ] to the past and future so that they become erased.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[9](2203) the lips and outcry (of the flute player): refers to the shrill and yearning tones produced by the reed-flute player's breath. Nicholson translated, "the (flute-player's) lip and voice." "It means, 'Human existence is like the reed. And the bonds of past and future and the appearance of time and place in human existence are like knots and veils.... he is with God in such a way that the breath of the Spirit doesn't become his companion..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[10](2204) you are also with yourself: This line presents some difficulties. While "you are wrapped up" [murtad-î] could also mean, "you are rejected," the commentators interpret it as meaning "wrapped in (an ordinary garment called) a ridâ." The sufi master Junayd (d. 910) asked a man who had returned from the Pilgrimage to Mecca, "When you put on the pilgrim's garb at the proper place did you discard the attributes of humanity as you cast off your ordinary clothes?" The man said, "No." Junayd replied, 'Then you have not put on the pilgrim's garb. When you stood on 'Arafât [= the large plain outside Mecca where pilgrims gather and stand for one day in prayer] did you stand one instant in contemplation of God?" The man answered no to every question, and Junayd told him that he had not yet performed the Pilgrimage and he should return to Mecca with the right spiritual attitude. (Hujwiri's "Kashf Al-Mahjub," translated by Nicholson, p. 328)

Nicholson had a different interpretation, since he did not think the passage related to the Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Ka'ba, or

Temple, therein. He later changed his translation to, "When thou art touring (round thyself), thou art wrapped (absorbed) in the tour: when thou hast come home, thou art still with thyself (self-conscious)" (from, "When thou art (engaged) in going about:* when thou hast come home, thou art still with thyself (self-conscious)"; and he added in a footnote: *"I.e. 'thou art absorbed in thy search, not in God'"). "Most commentators explain tawf [= circling] as referring to the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, i.e. 'when you circumambulate the Ka'bah of Unity, wearing the ridá [= ordinary garment] of egoism (instead of the ihrám [= ritual garment worn during the rituals performed at Mecca] of self-abandonment), you cannot attain to the realisation of Unity'. In my opinion, however, tawf here describes the self-centered attitude of the penitent whose thoughts, instead of being fixed on God, are ever circling round his own past sins..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"When will you find the way to the Ka'ba of Unity and how will you circumambulate the place of circling (Divine) Reality if you are circling around yourself and you are wearing the (ordinary) garments of existence?" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[11](2205) your repentance is worse than your sin: "because self-consciousness is the greatest of all sins. Hence the elect do not repent of sinful acts as such, but only of ghaflat, i.e. forgetting God even for a moment. The true penitent is he who has been made immaculate by Divine grace, so that to him the very thought of sin is impossible; he is the lover in whom every attribute of self has been purged away." (Nicholson, Commentary) "Then, with (your) making repentance [= asserting your own self-conscious will], you are establishing yourself in partnership [sharîk] with God.... And by this very cause, your repentance is worse than your sin." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[12](2206) when will you repent from this repentance: "i.e. 'when wilt thou turn entirely to God?'" (Nicholson, Commentary) "Because this kind of repentance is a kind of sin to the verifiers of truth and those closest (to God), since (involvement with) that which has passed away is for them being in bondage." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[13](2207) a low tone: means groaning and moaning.

[14](2207) you are kissing (shrill) cries: Nicholson translated, "thou dost kiss (art in love with) weeping and wailing." In this verse there are word plays between "low tone" [zêr] and "shrill cries" [zâr]; and between "direction (of focus)" [qiblah] and "kissing" [qublah]. "These two states [= moaning and shrieking] are a barrier to the contemplation of God. So pass beyond this place."

(Anqaravi, Commentary)

[15](208) Umar: literally, "Fârûq"-- a title given to Umar, which means "discriminating" between truth and falsehood.

[16](2208) a mirror (revealing) secrets: "For his sake, (Umar) revealed divine secrets. He revealed plainly the (various) aspects of (Divine) mysteries for that old man." (Anqaravi, Commentary) (2208) became awake within: "The spirit of the old harpist became awake within his interior and he obtained a (higher) spiritual rank." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[17](2209) His soul: "i.e. his animal soul." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[18](2209) another soul: "i.e. the 'human' spirit (ján-i insaní) which God breathed into Adam." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means, his animal spirit departed and his godly spirit [rûH-é ilahî] became alive. With the godly spirit he found eternal life." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[19](2210) he went beyond the earth and the sky: "It means, he forgot whatever is besides [mâ-siwâ] (God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[20](2211) beyond seeking and searching: "i.e. inapprehensible by the intellect. This verse depicts the end of the mystic's quest, viz. faná [= annihilation of self], as God's drawing him (jadhbah) to Himself, so that he becomes majdhúb-i mutlaq" [= absolutely attracted (to God from all else]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

[21](2212) a state and an expression beyond states and expressions: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Feelings and words beyond (all) feelings and words" (from, "Words and feelings beyond..."). "It means, beyond these commonly known states and words." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[22](2212) the Lord of Majesty: "And the Face of thy Sustaining Lord will abide (for ever): the Lord of Majesty and Honor" (Qur'an 55:27, 78).

[23](2214) the Universal (Intellect): a term borrowed by Muslim philosophers from ancient Greek philosophy. It refers to the first "specification" willed by the Creator, from which the spirits of the prophets, saints, angels, and all of creation proceeded. A person's "partial" intellect is a particularization of the Universal Intellect, or Universal Reason. "I.e. Divine Wisdom requires that the nature of Reality should be made known through Man, whose spirit is an emanation of Universal Reason and perpetually receives from that

source the grace and knowledge whereby it ascends to union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[24](2216) in (behind) the curtain: means, "he reached the state of (mystical) drowning and absorption." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[25](2222) like flowing water: "It means, soul and spirit are going into the human body like flowing water, moment by moment. If you offer your entire soul in the way of God, that repeated newness-- and much newer than what you have offered-- will reach you from the Invisible World." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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gardânîdan `umar-- raZiyu 'llâhu `an-hu--
naZar-é ô-râ az maqâm-é gerya
ke hastî-st ba-maqâm-é istighrâq

2199 pas `umar goft-ash ke în zârîy-é tô
hast ham âSâr-é hoshyârîy-é tô

2200 râh-ê fânî-gashta râhê dîgar-ast
z-ân-ke hoshyârî gonâhê dîgar-ast

hast hoshyârî ze-yâd-é mâ-maZà
mâZî-wo mustaqbalat parda-yé khodâ

âtesh andar zan ba-har dô tâ ba-kay
por gereh bâsh-î az-în har dô chô nay?

tâ gereh bâ nay bow-ad, ham-râz nêst
ham-neshîn-é ân lab-o âwâz nêst

chûn ba-Tawf-î khwad ba-Tawf-î, murtad-î
chûn ba-khâna âmad-î, ham bâ khwad-î

2205 ay khabar-hâ-t az khabar-deh bê-khabar
tawba-yé tô az gonâh-é tô batar

ay tô az Hâl-é goZashta tâwba-jô
kay kon-î tawba az-în tawba be-gô?

ham-chô jân bê-gerya-wo bê-khanda shod
jân-sh raft-o jân-é dîgar zenda shod

gâh bâng-é zêr-râ qibla kon-î
gâh gerya-yé zâr-râ qubla zan-î
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chûn-ke fârûq ây'na-yé asrâr shod
jân-é pîr az andarûn bêdâr shod

2210 Hayratê âmad darûn-ash ân zamân
ke berûn shod az zamîn-o âsmân

jost-o jôyê az warây-é jost-o jô
man na-mê-dân-am, tô mê-dân-î be-gô

Hâl-o qâlê az waray-é Hâl-o qâl
gharqa gashta dar jamâl-é Zû 'l-jalâl

gharqa'yê na ke khalâSî bâsh-ad-ash
yâ ba-joz daryâ kasê be-sh'nâs-ad-ash

`aql-é juzw az kull gôyâ nêsty
gar taqâZâ bar taqâZâ nêsty

2215 chûn taqâZâ bar taqâZâ mê-ras-ad
mawj-é ân daryâ ba-d-în-jâ mê-ras-ad

chûn-ke qiSSa-yé Hâl-é pîr în-jâ rasîd
pîr-o Hâl-ash rôy dar parda kashîd

pîr dâman-râ ze-goft-o gô feshând
nêm-é gofta dar dahân-é mâ be-mând

az pay-é în `aysh-o `ishrat sâkhtan
Sad hazâr-ân jân be-shây-ad bâkhtan

dar shekâr-é bêsha-yé jân bâz bâsh
ham-chô khworshêd-é jahân jân-bâz bâsh
2220 jân-feshân oftâd khworshêd-é boland
har damê tay mê-shaw-ad, por mê-kon-and

jân-feshân ay âftâb-é ma`nawî
mar jahân-é kohna-râ be-n'mâ nawî

2222 dar wujûd-é âdamî jân-o rawân
mê-ras-ad az ghayb chûn âb-é rawân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Pharoah and Moses
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Mathnawi I: 2447-2481

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In explanation that Moses and Pharaoh are both subject to the control of the (Divine) Will, just as (are) poison and antidote, darkness and light.[1] And of the conversing of Pharaoh (with God) in private that (his good) reputation might not be destroyed.

2447 Moses and Pharaoh (were both) the slaves of Spiritual Reality--[2] (even though) outwardly that one kept (the right) way and this one (went) misguided.

Moses was lamenting (in prayer) before God during the day. (But) Pharaoh was also weeping[3] during the middle of the night,

Saying, "O God, what is this iron collar on my neck?[4] (For) no one can say 'I am I' if there is no (such) iron collar.[5]

2450 "By means of that (Decree) by which You have made Moses enlightened, by that same (Decree)[6] You have made me gloomy and darkened.

"(And) by that (Decree) by which You made Moses moon-faced (like the beautiful radiant full moon), You have made the moon of my soul to be dark-faced (as from an eclipse).

"My (guiding) star[7] was no better than a moon.[8] Since it has been eclipsed, what remedy is there for me?

"If they beat the drums for me (as their) Lord and Sultan, (it is no better than when) the moon is seized (during an eclipse) and they beat (their) bowls.[9]

"They are banging those bowls and making (such) a noisy clamor, (that) they are disgracing the moon because of those blows.

2455 "I, who am Pharaoh, sorrow for me for my reputation--that I (am) 'the Most High Lord,'[10] because of (the damage from) those blows on the bowls.

"We are (Your) fellow-servants,[11] but Your ax is
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splitting the branches[12] in Your forest.

"Again, it makes a particular tree shoot (to be) joined
and grafted,[13] but makes another shoot (to be) abandoned.

"The branch hasn't any power over the ax. (And) no
branch has ever escaped from the ax's power.

"By right of the power which Your ax has, make these
crookednesses (of ours) straight by means of (Your)
Generosity!"

2460 Once again, Pharaoh said to himself, "Oh (how) amazing!
Am I not (spending) the whole night in (praying), "O our
Lord!"?

"In secret I am becoming (as humble as) dust and
balanced. How (is it that) I am [so insolent and
rebellious][14] when I come (to be) together with Moses?

"The color of counterfeit (gold) is (made with) ten
layers, (yet) it becomes like someone with a black face (and
disgraced)[15] in the fire's presence.

"Are not my heart and body under His Command, (so that)
He makes me a kernel for a while, (and then) an outward skin
for a time?

"I become green (and flourishing) when He says, "Become
grain!" (And then) I become yellow (and dried-up) when He
says, "Become ugly!"

2465 "One moment He makes me (into) a (luminous) moon. (And)
one moment (He makes me) dark and black. How can the Action
of God be other than this?"

In the presence of the mallets of His Command of "Be!
And it was,"[16] we are running (like polo balls)[17] in (either
physical) place or placelessness.[18]

Since colorlessness became the captive of color,[19] a
Moses went into battle with a Moses.[20]

When you reach colorlessness--[21] which you had
(originally), Moses and Pharaoh will maintain peace and
harmony (with each other).[22]

(And) if comes to you (to ask) a question about this

subtle point, (consider that) color is never devoid of dispute.[23]

2470 It is amazing that this color has arisen from colorlessness. How did color rise (up) into battle with colorlessness?[24]

(Since) the origin of oil is an increase (of quality) from water, how did it finally become contrary to water?[25]

Since the rose is from the thorn and the thorn from the rose, why are both in battle and in dispute (with each other)?[26]

Or (perhaps) it is not conflict (and) it for the sake of (Divine) Wisdom. Is it (an) artificial (appearance), like the disputes of donkey-sellers?[27]

Or (perhaps) it isn't this or that, (and) it is bewilderment. The treasure must be searched for, and this is the ruin[28] (where it is to be found).

2475 That which you are imagining is the treasure-- because of that (false) supposition (of yours), you are losing the (real) treasure.

Know (that) imagination and opinion (are) like inhabited (areas). (But) treasure is not (found) in inhabited places.

There is (human) existence and conflict in inhabited (areas). For the non-existent (mystic) there is shame[29] because of existent things.

It is not that (self) existence has cried for help from non-existence,[30] rather non-existence has abandoned (self) existence.[31]

Don't say, "I'm escaping from non-existence." Rather, it is escaping from you.[32] (So) stop [believing as you do]![33]

Outwardly, it calls you to toward it. But inwardly, it is driving you (away)[34] with the club of rejection.

2481 O (man) of healthy (mind), it is (a situation) of shoes facing backwards.[35] Know that the aversion of Pharaoh[36] was [in reality] from Moses.[37]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of

Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 1/18/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](Heading) poison and antidote, darkness and light: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based upon the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "like poison and antidote" (from, "like antidote and poison").

"On the monistic theory underlying this section of the poem, see... notes on vv. 298 ["God, who has no like or opposite, is the ultimate source of good and evil, faith and infidelity, and all other opposites, since these are nothing more than reflexions of the Divine attributes of Beauty and Majesty, Mercy and Wrath, etc., i.e. aspects in which God reveals Himself to human minds. Such contradictions, though proper to the world of Appearance, are transcended and unified in the mystic's vision of Reality... The mystic, 'seeing by the Light of God', knows that the infinite Divine perfections include all that we describe as good or evil. Rúmí bids his readers 'break through to the Oneness, abandon their evil selves and the world in which evil is at war with good, and seek union with the Absolute Good.]... supra. The appearance of contrariety is necessary for the complete manifestation of God in the world; hence in successive ages His Beautiful and Terrible Attributes are personified and displayed as antagonists contending for mastery (cf. VI 2153 sqq.), though essentially they are one as He is one (al-sifát `aynu 'l-Dhát) [= The (Divine) Attribute is identical to the (Divine) Essence]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[2](2447) Moses and Pharaoh (were both) the slaves of Spiritual Reality: "Because Hazrat-i Moses-- peace be upon him-- chose the path of guidance, for he is the manifestation of the (Divine) Name "the Guide" [hâdî]. And that path is the dominion of the guidance of the Ruler (of the universe). And also, Pharaoh went misguided, for he was the manifestation of the Name, "the One Who Leads Astray" [muZill]." (Translated here into English from a Persian translation of the famous 17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi by Anqaravi)

[3](2448) Pharaoh was also weeping: "God is al-hádí [= the Guide], he who lets men be guided to salvation, and also

al-Mudill, he who lets them be led to perdition [spiritual ruin, Hell]: whether they appear to be saved or lost, in reality they are doing His eternal will in the way decreed by Him. Ibnu 'l-`Arabí [= famous sufi master, d. 1240] (Fusús, 99-1-1) draws the logical conclusion that all souls are ultimately saved, though the bliss of the ahlu 'l-nár [= the people of the Fire] is less pure than that enjoyed by the ahlu 'l-jannah [= the people of Paradise]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[4](2449) what is this iron collar on my neck: "The ghull [= shackle] is egoism." (Nicholson, Commentary) Refers to the verse: "Truly, We have put iron collars [aghlâl] around their necks reaching to their chins, so that their heads are forced up (so that they cannot see)." (Qur'an 36:8) This verse (in which the One God speaks in the "majestic plural") expresses the blindness of arrogance (which looks down at others as inferior), the deliberate denial of the truth, and the consequences of being led astray because of egotism.

[5](2449) no one can say, 'I am I' if there is no iron collar: "None but God has the right to say 'I'." (Nicholson, Commentary) It also means that without the iron collar of egotism and viewing others as inferior, no one would be able to express the "I-ness" of ego.

[6](2450) by that same (Decree): "[Moses was saying], 'Certainly, according to that same Wisdom and Will of Yours [by which You blessed Moses], You have created me to be led astray and lacking (guiding) light.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[7](2452) My (guiding) star: refers, astrologically, to the "rising star," or the planet which rose on the day of his birth. One's "lucky star" was believed to indicate good fortune in life, depending on other simultaneous astrological factors.

[8](2452) was no better than a moon: Nicholson translated, "was not better than a moon (so that it should be exempt from eclipse)..."

[9](2453) they beat (their) bowls: "I.e., 'all the marks of my reverence shown by my subjects to their sovereign lord are in effect a celebration of my spiritual downfall and disgrace'. In this and the following verses there is an allusion to the practice of beating copper or brazen bowls during an eclipse, in order that the dragon, whose head or tail [= the two places where eclipses can occur on the

moon's path on the ecliptic, called in astrology the Dragon's Head and Tail] was supposed to cover the moon, might be terrified by the din and driven away." (Nicholson, Commentary) In Islam, a special congregational prayer is prescribed to calm the people during an eclipse and to discourage superstitious fears by increasing faith in God.

[10](2455) 'I (am) the Most High Lord': a modification of words from the Qur'an, for metrical purposes. Pharaoh claimed to be God: "He said, 'I am your Lord, the Most High' [ânâ rabbu-kumu 'l-a`là]" (Qur'an 79:24). And: "O chiefs, I don't know any Divinity for you except myself." (Qur'an 28:38) Nicholson translated, "... because of (what is being done by) the people: my (title of) 'My supreme Lord' is (like) the blows on the bowl (since it proclaims my eclipse)."

[11](2456) We are (Your) fellow-servants: Nicholson translated, "We (Moses and I) are fellow-servants (to Thee).

[12](2456) splitting the branches: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi, to "cleaving the boughs" (from "cleaving the sappy boughs"). "We are both Your slaves and servants, but You are the Gardener of Reality since You split and tear off the branches of existence, in the forest of Your Creation, with the ax of Your Will and Decree.... In regard to another untalented and fruitless branch, a branch of grace and guidance is grafted onto its existence, and it is assisted and made complete.' 'And God will select for His Mercy whoever He Wills, for God is the Possessor of Magnificent Grace' [= Qur'an 2: 105].... And God Most High said, 'And if God touches you with affliction, no one can remove it except Him. And if He touches you with happiness--truly He is Powerful over all things' [= Qur'an 6:17]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[13](2457) joined and grafted: Nicholson translated, "Then it makes one bough to be firmly planted, another bough to be left uncared for." He later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi, to "Then it makes one bough to be grafted..." He also said: "Perhaps we should read 'muwaSSal' [= joined] with the oldest MSS. [= manuscript] and translate: 'then it makes one bough to be grafted (on to another)', i.e. causes a soul to be attached to the prophets and saints and led in the path of salvation. The same metaphor is used at II 1245 and II 2699, a verse which favours the view that 'muwaSSal' is the correct

reading here. On the other hand 'mu'aSSal' [= firmly planted] is a better antithesis to 'mu`aTTal' [= left uncared for]: the axe may be employed either for breaking up the earth in order to plant the twig or for cutting off the latter and leaving it to perish." (Commentary)

[14](2461) How (is it that) I am [so insolent and rebellious]: Nicholson translated, "how am I becoming (so different)." And he explained: "Gnostics [= mystic knowers] perceive that what is manifested in actual existence is the nature and character which existed potentially as an idea in the Divine mind. The actions of Pharaoh were in perfect agreement with God's fore-knowledge of him: from this point of view there was no opposition between him and God; he only became disobedient when confronted with Moses, who represents the command (amr) of God as revealed to His prophets and embodied in the religious law." (Commentary)

[15](2462) (yet) it becomes like someone with a black face (and disgraced): Nicholson translated, "how is it becoming black-faced in the presence of the fire?"

[16](2466) "Be! And it was" [kun fa-kân]: based on a verse from the Qur'an, modified here for metrical purposes. "Truly, His Command when He wills something, He says to it, 'Be!' and it is [kun fa-yakûn]." (Qur'an 36:82; see also 2:117; 16:40; 40:68)

[17](2466) running (like polo) balls): a frequent image used by Rumi to express the Almighty Power of God: we are like polo balls struck by His mallet.

[18](2466) in (either physical) place or placelessness: Nicholson translated, "(like balls) in Space and beyond." And he explained, "Literally, 'in space and non-space.'" (Footnote)

[19](2467) Since colorlessness became the captive of color: Nicholson translated, "Since colourlessness (pure Unity) became the captive of colour (manifestation in the phenomenal world)..." And he explained: "i.e. the realm of pure being and absolute unity, in which there is no 'colour', i.e. individualisation (ta`ayyun) or limitation of any kind. 'Colour' suggests the dyeing-vat of destiny and the characters of good or evil that emerge from it. See notes on vv. 764-766" [= "Qur. II 132: 'God's dyeing', i.e. God has imbued us, the true believers, with faith and knowledge of His Unity, in which our hearts are steeped like

garments in the vat of the dyer." (Commentary)

"The world of colorlessness is the level of the saying [attributed to the Prophet], 'God was, and there was nothing beside Him.' And it is the world of [the Divine saying], "I was a hidden treasure, and I loved to be known, so I created the universe so that I might be known.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[20](2467) a Moses went into battle with a Moses: "None of the commentators refers to VI 45-63, where the poet brings out the meaning of this hemistich very clearly [= which Nicholson translated: "Our war and our peace is in the light of the Essence: 'tis not from us, 'tis between the two fingers (of God). War of nature, war of action, war of speech-- there is a terrible conflict among the parts (of the universe). This world is maintained by means of this war: consider the elements, in order that it (the difficulty) may be solved. The four elements are four strong pillars by which the roof of the present world is (kept) upright. Each pillar is a destroyer of the other: the pillar (known as) water is destroyer of the flames (of fire). Hence the edifice of creation is (based) upon contraries; consequently we are at war for weal and woe. My states (of mind and body) are mutually opposed: each one is mutually opposite in its effect. Since I am incessantly waylaying (struggling with) myself, how should I act in harmony with another? Behold the surging armies of my 'states,' each at war and strife with another. Contemplate the same grievous war in thyself: why, then, art thou engaged in warring with others?"-- VI: 45-54]. The essence of Man is Divine and therefore one; conflict between spirit and flesh, mind and body, arises from creation, which involves plurality and difference. 'Our war and our peace is in the light of the Essence: 'tis not from us, 'tis between the two fingers of God', i.e. all this opposition has its source in the Divine attributes objectified in the world and in Man; for the 'edifice of creation is based on contraries.' In order that God may be known, the One appears as the Many, and His names and attributes are distinguished from His Essence, though in truth they are nothing but the Essence viewed under the form of 'otherness' and, like water and ice, are ultimately identical. This apparent difference-in-identity is described by the poet as war between a Moses and a Moses." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"If a (quality of Divine) Reality, such as that which manifested in Hazrat-i Moses, attends to the commanding ego

[nafsu 'l-amr], the opposite of Moses will come into manifestation facing that one, with opposite qualities-- and will be at war with Moses. In spite what is shown by these two (opposite) manifestations, (Divine) Reality is One." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi here appears to mean that the very existence of egotistical qualities-- even in a great Prophet such as Moses-- were sufficient to cause the manifestation of an opponent to Moses.

[21](2468) colorlessness: a major teaching of Rumi is that this world of contraries is like various colors, but the origin is Unity beyond distinct forms. Continuing the quote (translated by Nicholson) in the previous note: "Or (is it because thou hast no means of escape) unless God shall redeem thee from this war and bring thee into the unicoloured world of peace? That world is naught but everlasting and flourishing, because it is not composed of contraries. This reciprocal destruction is inflicted by (every) contrary on its contrary: when there is no contrary, there is naught but everlastingness. He (God) who hath no like banished contraries from paradise, saying, 'Neither sun nor its contrary, intense cold, shall be there.' Colourlessness is the origin of colours, peaces are the origins of wars. That world is the origin of this dolorous [= sorrowful] abode, union is the origin of every parting and separation. Wherefore, sire, are we thus in opposition, and wherefore does unity give birth to these numbers? Because we are the branch and the four elements are the stock: in the branch the stock has brought its own nature into existence. (But) since the substance, (which is) the spirit, is beyond ramifications, its nature is not this (plurality); it is the nature of (the Divine) Majesty." -- VI: 55-63

[22](2468) Moses and Pharaoh will maintain peace and harmony (with each other): "When you are freed from self-consciousness and absorbed in God, you regain your original unity." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[23](2469) color is never devoid of dispute: Nicholson translated, "(I reply), how should (the world of) colour be devoid of contradiction?"

[24](2470) How did color rise (up) into battle with colorlessness?: "Strife and discord are characteristic of phenomenal forms. But how shall we explain the mystery that these forms proceed from the formless Reality to which their phenomenal nature is opposed?" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[25](2471) how did it finally become contrary to water: This is the verse in the earliest manuscript. Written opposite it is a variant, which was used instead by Nicholson: "Inasmuch as oil has been formed (by God) from water, why have oil and water become opposites?" [chûn-ke rawghan-râ z-âb esreshta-and/ âb bâ rawghan che-râ Zid gashta-and] In an appendix, Nicholson added: "Substitute for this verse 'The original source of oil (the oil-producing tree) is made to grow by means of water: how (then) does it (oil) finally become opposed to water?"

"The analogy of the origin of oil, since the root of the olive tree and vegetables are oily. In the sense of, 'And [We made] from water all living things (Qur'an 21:30), it finds growth and increase from water and develops." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[26](2472) why are both in battle and in dispute (with each other): "Analogies by way of answer. That which is dark and gross may be derived from that which is pure and subtle, and vice versa." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[27](4273) like the disputes of donkey-sellers: Or shall we say that the show of discord mass a deep design and harmonious purpose? Wrangling ass-dealers are really engaged in a conspiracy to deceive the customer and incite him to buy (cf. IV 3014)" [= translated by Nicholson: "(Similarly) the ass-sellers became rivals to one another in order that they might open the way to the contract (of sale)."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

[28](2474) and this is the ruin: Nicholson translated, "and this (bewilderment) is the ruin (where it is hidden)." And he explained: "Or, again, is the creation of the world a riddle insoluble by the intellect? May not the key to it be found in mystical bewilderment? Treasures are buried in ruined places. The treasure of Divine Unity is discovered by the man of true self-abandonment..." (Commentary) "Desire the treasure of Unity, since the treasure of Oneness is in the ruin of opposites and contraries." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[29](2477) for the non-existent (mystic) there is shame: "'Níst' [= non-existent one] in this passage denotes the prophet or saint who has died to self; 'hast' the egoist and all that constitutes self-existence." (Nicholson, Commentary) See also Mathnawi I: 517-518 (translated by

Nicholson), "This uttering of praise (to Him) is (really) the omission of praise on my part for this (praise) is a proof of (my) being [= hastî], and being is a sin. It behoves (us) to be not-being in the presence of His Being..." Nicholson commented: "Cf. the verse quoted by Junayd... 'When I say, 'What sin have I committed?' she says in reply, 'Thy life [= Hayâtu-ka] is a sin with which no sin can be compared." (Commentary)

[30](2478) non-existence [nêstî]: refers to "mystical death" of egoic self-existence, as well as to the spiritual realm which transcends material existence and ego-identity.

[31](2478) non-existence has abandoned (self) existence: Nicholson translated, " It is not the case that the existent implored help against (sought to escape from) non-existence; nay, ('twas) the non-existent (that) repelled the existent." And he explained: "Wá-dád kardan = radd kardan, also at III 751. The unbelievers falsely imagine that they reject the holy man who calls them to God. In truth it is he who rejects them, for it is the nature of reality to reject illusion. Had there been any spiritual affinity between him and them, he would have accepted them, and then they would have responded to his call. Faith is a gift of Divine grace: there can be no question of refusing it. Cf. Qur. VI 125" [= "The one whom God Wills to guide, He opens his chest to surrender (to His Will) [islâm]). The one whom He Wills to let stray, He makes his chest narrow and tight, as if he was ascending [dangerously] to the sky. Thus does God make those who refuse to believe (to be) repellant."]

[32](2479) it is escaping from you: "O possessor of (self-existence), don't say, 'I am fleeing from non-existence and the people of annihilation [fanâ] [= the sufi saints].' But that world of non-existence and its people, and twenty more levels, have aversion toward you. If you say that, 'The people of annihilation are always inviting me near to them, and their connection to me is (one of) desire and yearning, then how can they have dislike of me?' The answer (is in the next line)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[33](2479) (So) stop [believing as you do]: Nicholson translated, "Stop! (Do not fancy yourself to be fleeing."

[34](2480) inwardly, it is driving you (away): "The aversion and dislike which is within your own existence was brought into manifestation." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[35](2481) it is (a situation) of shoes facing backwards: "I.e. a case in which the appearance is contrary to the reality." (Nicholson, Footnote) "The metaphor is taken from one who reverses the shoes of his horse in order to confuse the trail and mislead his pursuers." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[36](2481) the aversion of Pharaoh: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi, to "know that Pharoah's abhorrence (of Moses) (from, "know that the rebelliousness of Pharaoh..."

[37](2481) was [in reality] from Moses: Nicholson translated, "... was (really) from (caused by) Moses." And he explained: "I.e. it was the effect of the inward repudiation of Pharaoh by Moses, who was his opposite." (Nicholson, Footnote) "Outwardly, Moses-- peace be upon him-- was inviting Pharaoh (to God), but inwardly he had dislike of him. Then the inward aversion (within) Hazrat-i Moses-- peace be upon him-- had an effect upon Pharaoh's existence. He also outwardly had hatred of Moses-- peace be upon him." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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dar bayân-é ân-ke mûsà wa fir`awn har dô musakhkhar-é mashiyyat-and chon-ân-ke zahr wa pâzahr wa Zulmât wa nûr wa munâjât kardan-é fir`awn ba-khalwat tâ nâmûs na-shek-and

2447 mûsà-wo fir`awn ma`nî-râ rahî
Zâhir ân rah dâr-ad-o în bê-rahî

rôz mûsà pêsh-é Haq nâlân shoda
nêm-shab fir`awn ham geryân boda

k-în che ghull-ast ay khodâ bar gardan-am
w-ar-na ghul bâsh-ad ke gôy-ad man man-am?

2450 z-ân-ke mûsà-râ munawwar karda-î
mar ma-râ z-ân ham mukaddar karda-î

z-ân-ke mûsà-râ tô mah-rô karda-î
mâh-é jân-am-râ seyah-rô karda-î

behtar az mâhê na-bûd istâra-am
chûn khusûf âmad, che bâsh-ad châra-am?
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nawbat-am gar rabb-o sulTân mê-zan-and
mah gereft-o khalq pangân mê-zan-ad

mê-zan-and ân Tâs-o ghawghâ mê-kon-and
mâh-râ z-ân zakhma ruswâ mê-kon-and

man ke fir`awn-am ze-shuhrat wây-é man
zakhm-é Tâs ân rabbiya 'l-a`lây-é man

khwâja-tâsh-ân-ém ammâ têsha-at
mê shekâf-ad shâkh-râ dar bêsha-at

bâz shâkhê-râ mûwaSSal mé-kon-ad
shâkh-é dêgar-râ mu`aTTal mê-kon-ad

shâkh-râ bar têsha dastê hast? ney
hêch shâkh az dast-é têsha jast? ney

Haqq-é ân qudrat ke ân têsha to-râ-st
az karam kon în kazhî-hâ-râ tô râst

bâz bâ khwad gofta fir`awn ay `ajab
man na dar yâ rabba-nâ-am jumla shab?

dar nehân khâkî-wo mawzûn mê-shaw-am
chûn ba-mûsà mê-ras-am, chûn mê-shaw-am?

rang-é zarr-é qalb dah-tô mê-shaw-ad
pêsh-é âtesh chûn seyah-rô mê-shaw-ad

ne ke qalb-o qâlib-am dar Hukm-é ô-st
laHZa'yé maghz-am kon-ad yak laHZa pôst

sabz gard-am chûn-ke gôy-ad kesht bâsh
zard gard-am chûn-ke gôy-ad zesht bâsh

laHZa'yé mâh-am kon-ad yak dam seyâh
khwad che bâsh-ad ghayr-é în kâr-é ilâh?

pêsh-é chawgân-hây-é Hukm-é kun fa-kân
mê-daw-êm andar makân-o lâ-makân

chûn-ke bê-rangî asîr-é rang shod
mûsiyê bâ mûsiyê dar jang shod

chûn ba-bê-rangî ras-î k-ân dâsht-î
mûsà-wo fir`awn dâr-and âshtî

gar to-râ ây-ad bar-în nukta sû'âl
rang kay khâlî bow-ad az qîl-o qâl?

2470 în `ajab k-în rang az bê-rang khâst
rang bâ bê-rang chûn dar jang khâst?

aSl-é rawghan z-âb afzûn mê-shaw-ad
`âqibat bâ âb Zid chûn mê-shaw-ad?

chûn gol az khâr-ast-o khâr az gol che-râ
har dô dar jang-and-o andar mâjarâ?

yâ na jang-ast în barây-é Hikmat-ast
ham-chô jang-é khar-ferôsh-ân San`at-ast?

yâ na în-ast-o na ân Hayrâniy-ast
ganj bây-ad jost în wîrâniy-ast

2475 ân-che tô ganj-ash tawahhum mê-kon-î
z-ân tawahhum ganj-râ gom mê-kon-î

chûn `imârât dân tô wahm-o rây-hâ
ganj na-b'w-ad dar `imârat jây-hâ

dar `imârat hastî-wo jangî bow-ad
nêst-râ az hast-hâ nangî bow-ad

na ke hast az nêstî feryâd kard
bal-ke nêst ân hast-râ wâ dâd kard

tô ma-gô ke man gorêz-ân-am ze-nêst
bal-ke ô az tô gorêzân-ast be-îst.

2480 Zâhirâ mê-khwân-ad-at ô sôy-é khwad
w-az darûn mê-rân-ad-at bâ chûb-é rad

2481 na`l-hây-é bâz-gûna-ast ay salîm
nafrat-é fir`awn mê-dân az kalîm

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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THE SONG OF THE REED (part one)

Mathnawi I: 1-3
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1 Listen[1] to the reed (flute),* how it is complaining! It is telling
about separations,[3]

(Saying), "Ever since I was severed from the reed field,[4] men
and women have lamented in (the presence of) my shrill cries.[5]

3 "(But) I want a heart (which is) torn, torn from separation, so that
I may explain* the pain of yearning."[6]

-- From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1) Listen: states of spiritual ecstasy were induced in sufi gatherings by listening to mystical poetry and music. During such a "mystical concert" [samâ`-- literally, "audition" or "hearing" session] some dervishes would enter a spiritual state of consciousness and spontaneously begin to move. Sometimes they would stand up and dance or whirl. They would listen to the poetry or music as if they were hearing the voice of God, the Beloved. Such gatherings were controversial, were criticized by orthodox Muslim leaders, and were practiced by very few sufi orders--usually with restrictions and high standards for participants.

2. (1) the reed flute [nay]: a flute made by cutting a length of a naturally hollow reed cane and adding finger holes. "The nay or reed-flute as the poet's favourite musical instrument and has always been associated with the religious services of the Mawlawí ["Whirling Dervish"] Order, in which music and dancing are prominent features." (Nicholson, Commentary). The reed flute symbolizes the soul which is emptied of ego-centered desires and preoccupations and is filled with a spiritual passion to return to its original nearness to God. Rumi said, "The world (is) like a reed pipe [sornây], and He blows into every hole of it; every wail it has (is) certainly from those two lips like sugar. See how He blows into every (piece of) clay (and) into every heart; He gives a need and He gives a love which raises up a lament about misfortune." (Ghazal 532, lines 5664-5665) Rumi also said, "We have all been part of Adam (and) we have heard those melodies in Paradise. Although (bodily) water and clay have cast skepticism upon us,
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something of those (melodies) comes (back) to our memory.... Therefore, the mystical concert has become the food of the lovers (of God) for in it is the image of (heavenly) reunion." (Mathnawi IV: 736-737, 742)

3. (1) complaining... about separations: "The point is that while self-conscious lovers complain of separation from the beloved one, and reproach her for her cruelty, the mystic's complaint (shikáyat) is really no more than the tale (hikáyat) of his infinite longing for God-- a tale which God inspires him to tell." (Nicholson, Commentary). Rumi said: "I'm complaining [shikâyat mê-kon-am] about the Soul of the soul; but I am not a complainer [shâkê] -- I'm relating words [rawâyat mê-kon-am]. (My) heart keeps saying, 'I'm afflicted by Him!' And I have been laughing at (its) feeble pretense." (Mathnawi I: 1781-82). "Be empty of stomach and cry out, in neediness (neyâz), like the reed flute! Be empty of stomach and tell secrets like the reed pen!" (Divan: Ghazal 1739, line 18239). "Lovers (are) lamenting like the reed flute [nây], and Love is like the Flutist. So, what things will this Love breathe into the reed pipe [sôr-nây] of the body?! The reed pipe is visible, but the pipe-player is hidden. In short, my reed pipe became drunk from the wine of His lips. Sometimes He caresses the reed pipe, sometimes he bites it. (Such) a sigh, because of this sweet-songed reed-breaking Flutist!" (Divan: Ghazal 1936, lines 20374-20376)

Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscripts of the Mathnawi, to "Listen to this reed how it complains: it is telling a tale of separations" (from, "Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations." This is what the earliest known manuscript has. (This is the "Konya Manuscript," completed five years after Rumi died, and written by Muhammad ibn `Abdullâh Qûnyawî, a disciple of Rumi's son, Sultân Walad, under his supervision together with Husâmuddîn Chelabî -- who was present with Rumi during the dictation of every verse of the Mathnawi.) All manuscripts and editions after the 13th century adopted a changed (and "improved") version of this line: "Listen from the nay, how it tells a story... [be-sh'naw az nay chûn Hikâyat mê-kon-ad / az jodâ'îy-hâ shikâyat mê-kon-ad].

4. (2) the reed field [nay-estân]: lit., "place of reeds." A symbol for the original homeland of the soul, when it existed harmoniously in the presence of God. "... referring to the descent of the soul from the sphere of Pure Being and Absolute Unity, to which it belongs and would fain return." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (2) in (the presence of) my shrill cries: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to: "man and woman have moaned in (unison) with my lament" [dar nafîr-am]

(from, "my lament hath caused [az nafîr-am] man and woman to moan").

6. (3) explain: a pun on the two meanings of the same word [sharH], "explanation" and "torn."

7. (3) the pain of yearning: The longing of love is painful, because of separation-- yet also sweet. This is because the longing brings remembrance of the beloved's beauty. Longing for nearness to a human beloved, such as a spiritual master, is a means for the spiritual disciple to increase his longing for nearness to God, the only Beloved. Rumi said: "If thought of (longing) sorrow is highway-robbing (your) joy, (yet) it is working out a means to provide joy.... It is scattering the yellow leaves from the branch of the heart so that continual green leaves may grow.... Whatever (longing) sorrow sheds or takes from the heart, truly it will bring better in exchange." (Mathnawi V:3678, 3680, 3683)

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1 be-sh'naw în nay chûn shikâyat mê-kon-ad
az jodâ'îy-hâ hikâyat mê-kon-ad

k-az nayestân tâ ma-râ be-b'rîda-and
dar nafîr-am mard-o zan nâlîda-and

3 sîna khwâh-am sharHa sharHa az firâq
tâ be-gôy-am sharH-é dard-é ishtiyâq

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Song of the Reed (part two)

Mathnawi I: 4-18

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4 "Anyone one who has remained far from his roots,[1] seeks a return (to the) time of his union.[2]

5 "I lamented in every gathering; I associated with those in bad or happy circumstances.

"(But) everyone became my friend from his (own) opinion; he did not seek my secrets[3] from within me.
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"My secret is not far from my lament, but eyes and ears do not have the light[4] (to sense it).

"The body is not hidden from the soul, nor the soul from the body; but seeing the soul is not permitted."[5]

The reed's cry is fire[6] -- it's not wind! Whoever doesn't have this fire, may he be nothing![7]

10 It is the fire of Love that fell into the reed. (And) it is the ferment of Love that fell into the wine.[8]

The reed (is) the companion of anyone who was severed from a friend; its melodies tore our veils.[9]

Who has seen a poison and a remedy like the reed? Who has seen a harmonious companion and a yearning friend like the reed?

The reed is telling the story of the path full of blood;[10] it is telling stories of Majnoon's (crazed) love.[11]

There is no confidant (of) this understanding[12] except the senseless![13] There is no purchaser of that tongue[14] except the ear [of the mystic.]

15 In our longing,[15] the days became (like) evenings; [16] the days became fellow-travellers with burning fevers.

If the days have passed, tell (them to) go, (and) don't worry. (But) You remain![17] -- O You, whom no one resembles in Purity!

Everyone becomes satiated by water,[18] except the fish. (And) everyone who is without daily food [finds that] his days become long.[19]

18 None (who is) "raw" can understand the state of the "ripe."[20] Therefore, (this) speech must be shortened. So farewell![21]

-- From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/24/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4) roots: also means foundation, source, origin.

2. (4) union: also means being joined.

3. (6) my secrets: "The Perfect Man (prophet or saint) is a stranger in the world, unable to communicate his sorrows or share his mystic knowledge except with one of his own kind; he converses with all sorts of people, worldly and spiritual alike, but cannot win from them the heartfelt sympathy and real understanding which he craves. This is the obvious sense of the passage, and adequate so far as it goes, but behind it lies a far-reaching doctrine concerning the spiritual "Descent of Man.' .... The whole series of planes forms the so-called 'Circle of Existence', which begins in God and ends in God and is traversed by the soul in its downward journey through the Intelligences, the Spheres, and the Elements and then upward again, stage by stage-- mineral, vegetable, animal, and man-- till as Perfect man it completes its evolution and is re-united with the Divine Soul..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (7) the light: refers to the ancient Greek theory of Galen, that vision is caused by an "inner light" within the eye. Similarly, the faculty of hearing was believed to be caused by an "inner air" within the ear.

5. (8) not permitted: "As the vital spirit, though united with the body, is invisible, so the inmost ground of words issuing from an inspired saint cannot be perceived by the physical senses." (Nicholson, Commentary) The reed flute's speech ends here, and Rumi's commentary begins next.

6. (9) The reed's cry is fire: Nicholson, in his Commentary, quotes Rumi's verse (Divan, Ghazal 2994, line 31831): "The flute is all afire and the world is wrapped in smoke; / For fiery is the call of Love that issues from the flute."

7. (9) may he be nothing [nêst bâd]: a pun on another meaning of these words -- "it's not wind." It means, "May he experience absence of self so that he may burn with yearning love for the presence of the Beloved."

Nicholson interpreted that this means, "The Mathnawí is not mere words; its inspiration comes from God, whose essence is Love. May those yet untouched by the Divine flame be naughted, i.e. die to self!" He said that the words here [nêst bâd] "should not be taken as an imprecation [= a cursing]; the poet, I think, prays that by Divine grace his hearers may be enraptured and lose themselves in God." (Commentary)

8. (10) into the wine: "i.e. Love kindles rapture in the heart and makes it like a cup of foaming wine." (Nicholson, Commentary)
9. (11) tore our veils [parda-hâ]: a pun on the two meanings of this word, "veils" and "melodies." The meaning of this line is that the sounds of pure yearning from the reed flute tore through the veils covering up the inward spiritual yearning of listening mystics -- the sufis, who have had the capacity to understand the meaning of the reed flute's melodious wails. This is a reference to the "mystical concert" [samâ`] of the Mevlevi ("Whirling") dervishes in which the reed flute is prominent.

10. (13) the path full of blood: "the thorny path of Love, strewn with (Díwán, SP, XLIV, 6) 'with thousands slain of desire who manfully yielded up their lives'; for Love 'consumes everything else but the Beloved' (Math. V 588)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (13) Majnoon's crazed love: "Majnún: the mad lover of Laylà: in Súfí literature, a type of mystical self-abandonment." (Nicholson, Commentary). Majnoon (lit., "jinn-possessed") was a legendary Arab lover whose love for the beautiful Laylà [lit., "of the night"] made him crazy. Majnoon's love for Layla also symbolizes the perception of spiritual realities seen only by mystics, as in Rumi's lines: "The Caliph said to Layla, 'Are you the one by whom Majnoon became disturbed and led astray? You are not more (beautiful) than other fair ones.' She said, 'Be silent, since you are not Majnoon!'" (Mathnawi I: 407-08; see also V:1999-2019, 3286-99) This "craziness" of being an ecstatic mystic lover of God is quite different from the craziness of being psychotic or mentally ill.

12. (14) this understanding: "the spiritual or universal reason (`aql-i ma`ád) and transcendental consciousness of those who have escaped from the bondage of the carnal or discursive reason (`aql-i ma`ásh)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (14) the senseless [bê-hôsh]: a play on "understanding" (hôsh), and also means devoid of understanding lacking reason, swooned and insensible. The meaning is that no one can understand mystical understanding except one who is able to transcend the intellect.

14. (14) that tongue: an idiom for language. The meaning is that only a mystic who is capable of passing beyond the senses and ordinary mind has an "ear" which can understand the "tongue" or language of the heart. Nicholson explained: "i.e. every one desires to hear what is suitable to his understanding; hence the mysteries of Divine Love cannot be communicated to the vulgar" [= ordinary people]. (Commentary)

15. (15) longing [gham]: lit., "grief." An idiom here, meaning the suffering of longing love.

16. (15) evenings [bê-gâh]: An idiom meaning "evening." Means that the days became quickly used-up. Nicholson (1926) erred in translating this idiom too literally as "untimely." (I am indebted to Dr. Ravan Farhadi, an Afghan scholar, for this understanding of the idiom.)

17. (16) but You remain: 26. God is addressed directly as "Thou," or perhaps indirectly as "Love." "The meaning is: 'What matter though our lives pass away in the tribulation of love, so long as the Beloved remains?'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (17) water (âbash): Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "except the fish, every one becomes sated with water" (from, "Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water"). As Nicholson pointed out, the word for "water" here [âbash] is a noun (as in III: 1960-- Commentary). It therefore does not mean "his water" or "water for him" [âb-ash]. Nicholson also explained: "The infinite Divine grace is to the gnostic [= mystic knower] what water is to the fish, but his thirst can never be quenched." (Commentary)

19. (17) become long: Nicholson mentions this as "alluding to the proverb, har kih bí-sír-ast rúz-ash dír-ast" [The day are long for whoever is without satisfaction] (Commentary)

20. (18) the state of the ripe [pokhta]: refers to the spiritual state of the spiritually mature, experienced, refined. This contrasts to the state of the raw [khâm]-- the unripe, immature, inexperienced, uncooked, the one who bears no fruit. Rumi has been quoted as saying, "The result of my life is no more than three words: I was raw [khâm], I became cooked [pokhta], I was burnt [sokht]." However, this is not supported by the earliest manuscripts (collected by Faruzanfar), only one of which contains the following: "The result for me is no more than these three words: I am burnt, I am burnt, I am burnt (or: I am inflamed, burned, and consumed-- Divan, Ghazal 1768, line 18521).

In Rumi's famous story of the man who knocked on the door of a friend, the visitor was asked who he was and he answered, "Me." He was told to go, for he was too "raw" [khâm]. The man was then "cooked" by the fire of separation and returned a year later. Asked who he was, he answered, "Only you are at the door, O beloved." His spiritual friend then said, "Now, since you are me, O me, come in. There isn't any room for two 'me's' in the house!" (Mathnawi I: 3056-63)

21. (18) farewell: Here, Rumi's famous first eighteen verses end. Rumi's close disciple, Husamuddin Chelebi had asked him one night: "'The collections of odes [ghazalîyât] have become plentiful.... (But) if there could be a book with the quality of (the sufi poet Sana'i's) 'Book of the Divine,' yet in the (mathnawi) meter of (the sufi poet Attar's) 'Speech of the Birds,' so that it might be memorized among the knowers and be the intimate companion of the souls of the lovers ... so that they would occupy themselves with nothing else...' At that moment, from the top of his blessed turban, he [Rumi] put into Chelebi Husamuddin's hand a portion (of verses), which was the Explainer of the secrets of Universals and particulars. And in there were the eighteen verses of the beginning of the Mathnawi: 'Listen to this reed, how it tells a tale...." (Aflaki, pp. 739-741) After that, Husamuddin was present with Rumi for every verse he composed of the Mathnawi during the next twelve years until Rumi's death. The number eighteen has been considered sacred in the Mevlevi tradition ever since.

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4 har kasê k-ô dûr mând az aSl-é khwêsh
bâz jôy-ad rôzgâr-é waSl-é khwêsh

5 man ba-har jam`îyatê nâlân shod-am
joft-é bad-Hâl-ân-o khwash-Hâl-ân shod-am

har kasê az Zann-é khwad shod yâr-é man
az darûn-é man na-joft asrâr-é man

sirr-é man az nâla-yé man dûr nêst
lêk chashm-o gôsh-râ ân nûr nêst

tan ze-jân-o jân ze-tan mastûr nêst
lêk kas-râ dîd-é jân dastûr nêst

âtesh-ast în bâng-é nây-o nêst bâd
har-ke în âtesh na-dâr-ad nêst bâd

10 âtesh-é `ishq-ast k-andar nây fotâd
jôshesh-é `ishq-ast k-andar may fotâd

nay Harîf-é har-ke az yârê bor-îd
parda-hâ-ash parda-hâ-yé mâ darîd

ham-chô nay zahrê wo tiryâqê ke dîd?
ham-cho nay dam-sâz-o mushtâqê ke dîd?
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nay HadîS-é râh-é por khûn mê-kon-ad
qiSSa-hâ-yé `ishq-é majnûn mê-kon-ad

maHram-é în hôsh joz bê-hôsh nêst
mar zabân-râ mushtarê joz gôsh nêst

15 dar gham-é mâ rôz-hâ bê-gâh shod
rôz-hâ bâ sôz-hâ ham-râh shod

rôz-hâ gar raft gô raw bâk nêst
tô be-mân ay ân-ke chûn tô pâk nêst

har-ke joz mâhê ze-âbash sêr shod
har-ke bê-rôzî-st rôz-ash dêr shod

18 dar na-yâb-ad Hâl-é pokhta hêch khâm
pas sokhon kôtâh bây-ad wa 's-salâm

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Song of the Reed (part three)

Mathnawi I: 19-34

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19 O son, break the chains (and) be free! How long will you be shackled to silver and gold?

20 If you pour the sea into a jug, how much will it contain? (Just) one day's portion.

The jug of the eye of the greedy will never be filled. (And) as long as the oyster is not content, it will never be filled by a pearl.[1]

Anyone (whose) robe is torn from love, becomes completely purified from greed and defect.

Be joyous! O our sweet melancholy Love![2] O doctor of all our diseases!

O Medicine of our pride and vanity! O you (are) our Plato and (our) Galen![3]

25 The earthly body went up to the heavens[4] from Love! The

mountain began to dance[5] and became agile!

O lover! Love became the soul of Mount Sinai! Mount Sinai (became) drunk "and Moses fell down senseless"![6]

If I were joined with the lip of a harmonious companion, I (too) would utter speeches like the reed!

(But) anyone who becomes separated from one of the same tongue becomes without a tongue,[7] even if he has a hundred songs [to share].

When the rose has gone and the garden has passed away, you will no longer hear from the nightingale (about) what happened.[8]

30 The Beloved is All, and the lover (is merely) a veil; the Beloved is Living,[9] and the lover (is merely) a corpse.

When Love has no concern for him, he is left like a bird without wings.[10] Misery for him!

How can I have awareness of before and behind, when the Light of my Beloved[11] is no (longer) before and behind?

Love wants these words to manifest. (But) how is it that the mirror reveals nothing?[12]

34 Do you know why your mirror[13] reveals nothing? Because the rust is not separated from its face![14]

-- From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 3/2/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (21) will never be filled by a pearl: means that the oyster must close its mouth (after receiving a raindrop) and be patiently hopeful, rather than being greedy. Unless it does this, the raindrop will not be transformed into a pearl. This is a reference to the legend that pearls are the result of rain drops that fall into the sea and are consumed by oysters. The image of the rain drop and the oyster is a common one in Persian poetry.

2. (23) O our sweet melancholy Love: Rumi's poems often refer to

the longing lover who suffers from melancholy and who takes pleasure from the sorrow of longing for the beloved. Nicholson later changed his translation of this to "O our sweet-thoughted love" (from, "O Love that bringest us good gain"). In this way he corrected his mistranslation of "sawdâ" as "gain," but his translation still avoided the sense of extreme love which may drive the lover into a crazed state of melancholy and frenzy.

3. (24) Plato and Galen: were both viewed as famous ancient Greek physicians. In addition, Plato taught a metaphysical theory of Love.

4. (25) went up into the heavens: refers to the ascension of Jesus (Qur'an 4:158) and the night journey of the Prophet Muhammad (17:1).

5. (25) The mountain began to dance: refers to the Qur'anic account of how Moses came to Mt. Sinai and asked God to show Himself. He was told: "'You will never see Me. However, look at the mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me.' So when his Lord revealed His glory to the mountain, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down senseless" (Qur'an 7:143). In the next couplet, Rumi calls this mountain "Tûr," meaning the "Mountain" of Sinai (Tûri Saynâ-- 23:20). Since Moses was already on Mt. Sinai, what was destroyed can be understood as an elevated area of the mountain-- which the Torah calls "a place beside Me" (Exodus: 33: 21-22).

6. (26) "and Moses fell down senseless" [wa kharra Musà sa`iqâ]: this is a direct quote from Qur'an (23:20), as cited in the previous footnote.

7. (28) becomes without a tongue: lit., "he became tongueless." This means that he becomes like a mute person, since he doesn't have the company of a "same-language speaker."

8. (29) what happened: means past events, experiences, stories. This refers to the nightingale's passionate love for the rose-- a common theme in Persian literature.

9. (30) The Beloved is Living [zenda]: may be a reference to the verse,
"He is the Living (Huwa 'l-Hayy). There is no divinity but Him" (Qur'an 40:65).

10. (31) without wings [bê-parwâ-yé ô]: this is a pun with "concern for him" [parwâ-yé ô].

11. (32) the Light [nûr] of my Beloved: may also be translated as the Light of my Friend. May be a reference to the mention of Divine Light in the Qur'an: "God is the Light [nûr] of the heavens and the earth. . . . God guides to His Light whoever He wills" (24:35). "Their light will run in front of them and on their right hands, (and) they will say, 'Our Lord! Perfect our light and forgive us, for truly You are Powerful over all things.'" (Qur'an 66:8).

12. (33) reveals nothing: lit., "doesn't wink." An idiom meaning to bear tales, to gossip, to reveal secrets about somebody. This term also occurs in the next line.

13. (34) your mirror: refers to the "mirror of the heart." Until a few centuries ago, mirrors were made of polished metal and had to be regularly polished, or burnished. The "rust" of the heart's mirror is the result of sins, selfish behavior, and ego-centered thinking. Rumi says: "They give the sufis a place (in the prayer row) in front of themselves, for they [the sufis] are a mirror for the soul-- and they are better than a mirror, (for) they have made polished hearts by (means of) recollection and meditation, so that the mirror of the heart may receive virgin images." (Mathnawi I: 3153-54)

14. (34) the rust is not separated from its face: refers to the Qur'anic verse, "That which they have earned is rust upon their hearts" (Qur'an 83:14), as well as to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: "Truly for everything there is a polishing, and the polishing for the heart is the recollection of God [zikru 'llâh]." The meaning here is that the rust of the heart can be cleansed by means of recollecting, remembering, mentioning, celebrating the praises of God.

Remembrance of God [Zikru 'llâh] throughout the waking hours is a major practice of Muslim sufis, in addition to the five daily prayers. In sufi gatherings, short phrases and Names of God from the Qur'an are often chanted together in Arabic. The practice of "recalling" was inspired by the Qur'an: "Recollect your God often" (33:41; see also 3:41). "Remember your Lord within your soul with humility and in reverence" (7:205). Remember the name of your Lord" (73:8). "Recollect God standing, sitting down, and (lying down) on your sides" (4:103). ". . .those who believe and whose hearts find satisfaction in the recollection of God [bi-Zikri 'llâh]-- for truly in the recollection of God do hearts find satisfaction" 13:28). "Men, whom neither buying nor selling can divert from the remembrance of God" (24: 37). "And don't be like those who forgot God, for He made them forget themselves. Such are the transgressors" (59:19). "They have forgotten God; so He has forgotten them" (9:67). "Remembrance of God is the greatest [Zikru 'llâhi akbar]"-- Qur'an 29:45.

In the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, the heading for the first story ("A king's falling in love with a handmaiden and the king's buying her") precedes the next verse (line 35), so that the words "O friends, listen to this story" refer to the tale about the king (and not to the reed flute). Nicholson later published this correction (since his translation had this as the last line of the "Song of the Reed," followed by this heading).

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19 band bo-g'sel bâsh âzâd ay posar
chand bâsh-î band-é sîm-o band-é zar?

20 gar be-rêz-î baHr-râ dar kôza'ê
chand gonj-ad qismat-é yak rôza-'ê

kôza-yé chashm-é HarîSân por na-shod
tâ Sadaf qâni` na-shod por dor na-shod

har-ke-râ jâma ze-`ishqî châk shod
ô ze-HirS-o `ayb kullî pâk shod

shâd bâsh ay `ishq-é khwash-sawdâ-yé mâ
ay Tabîb-é jomla-yé `illat-hâ-yé mâ

ay dawâ-yé nakhwat-o nâmûs-é mâ
ay tô iflâTûn-o jâlînûs-é mâ

25 jism-é khâk az `ishq bar aflâk shod
kôh dar ragS âm-ad-o châlâk shod

`ishq jân-é Tûr âm-ad `âshiq-â
Tûr mast-o kharra mûsà Sâ`iqâ

bâ lab-é dam-sâz-é khwad gar joft-am-y
ham-chô nay man goftanî-hâ goft-am-y

har-ke ô az ham-zabânê shod jodâ
bê-zabân shod garche dâr-ad Sad nawâ

chûnke gol raft-o golestân dar goZasht
na-sh'naw-î z-ân pas ze-bolbol sar-goZasht

30 jomla ma`shûq-ast-o `âshiq parda'ê
zenda ma`shûq-ast-o `âshiq morda'ê

chûn na-bâsh-ad `ishq-râ parwâ-yé ô
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ô chô morghê mân-ad bê-par wây-é ô

man chegûna hôsh dâr-am pêsh-o pas
chûn na-bâsh-ad nûr-é yâr-am pêsh-o pas?

`ishq khwâh-ad k-în sokhan bêrûn bow-ad
âyina ghammâz na-b'w-ad chûn bow-ad?

34 âyina-t dân-î cherâ ghammâz nêst?
z-ânke zangâr az rokh-ash mumtâz nêst

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Spiritual Courtesy and Respect

Mathnawi I: 78-92

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(About) requesting from God,[1] the Protecting Lord of Grace, the favor of observing (spiritual) courtesy and respect in every situation, and explaining the harmfulness and losses (which result) from rudeness

78 We should seek from God the favor of [behaving with] (spiritual) courtesy and respect,[2] (since) the rude person is excluded from the grace of the Lord.

The rude person doesn't keep himself in (a state of) affliction alone, but sets fire to all the regions (of the world).

80 A table[3] was arriving from Heaven without (any effort of) buying and selling and talking and listening.[4]

(But then), in the midst of the people of Moses, some persons spoke rudely: "Where (are) garlic and lentils?"[5]

The table and bread from Heaven was ended [immediately], (and) there remained for us[6] the painful toil of farming with shovel [for planting] and scythe [for reaping].

Again, when Jesus interceded (with prayers), God sent a table[7] with an abundance (of food) on trays.

(Yet) again, (those) insolent ones ones abandoned courtesy and

respect, (and) took the food [home with them] like beggars.[8]

85 Jesus asked them earnestly [to be respectful], saying, "(But) this (food) is enduring and won't be decreased from the earth."

Acting suspiciously and bringing greed to the table of (Divine) Grandeur is rejection and ingratitude.[9]

(And so), because of those people, with faces like beggars and blinded by greed, that gate of (Divine) Mercy became shut for them.

After the refusal of (paying) charity (for the poor),[10] the (rain) clouds do not come. And when unlawful sex[11] occurs, the plague (spreads) to (all) directions.

Whatever gloom and grief comes to you is because of reckless impudence and also insolence.

90 Whoever acts with bold impudence in the path of the Beloved is a highway robber of the (true) men [of the spiritual Way] and is not a man.

By means of (spiritual) courtesy and respect, the Heavens became full of light, and by means of (such) respect the angels became innocent and pure.

92 (But) the sun became eclipsed because of insolence. (And) because of rashness, an (angel such as) Azazeel[12] was turned away from the gate [to the angelic realm].

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading (About) requesting from God: this heading was apparently forgotten, but was added to the margin of the earliest extant manuscript of the Mathnawi (the "Konya manuscript"). Just prior to this section was the beginning of Rumi's first story about the king and the handmaiden. After the king fell in love with her and bought her, she immediately became gravely ill. When his physicians were unable to cure her, he went into the mosque [masjid] to pray and "the place of prostration [sajda-gâh] became

filled with the king's tears" (I:56). He fell asleep and dreamed about a wise man who would be sent by God to help him. When the wise man was seen to be approaching the next day, instead of sending his important officials, the king himself went out to greet him, and said: "You were my (true) beloved, not that (maiden).... Oh you are to me (like) Muhammad, (and) I am like (his companion) `Umar. I will prepare myself for the sake of serving you" (I:76-77) Following this example of exceptional courtesy and respect, Rumi explains the importance of spiritual courtesy.

2. (78) (spiritual) courtesy and respect: "adab may be defined as the character, feelings, and manners which are the fruit of spiritual culture. The reverence shown by the King to the Sage and by `Umar to the Prophet (v. 77) naturally suggests this brief homily on a subject so important for novices in Súfism." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (80) A table: this word occurs in the Qur'an to describe a "table" of food from Heaven which the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) prayed for and received (5:114). But here the word refers to the manna and quails sent to the people of Moses in the desert: "And We shaded them with clouds, and We sent down to them manna and quails, (saying), 'Eat from among the good things that We have provided to you'.. But they did harm to themselves" [by complaining]. (Qur'an 7:160; 2:57) It seems that manna is a sweet gum secreted from tamarisk bushes in the Sinai desert (Yûsuf `Alî, "The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation, and Commentary," p. 31).

4. (80 talking and listening: means bargaining for a good price. Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi to: "without buying and selling and without speaking and hearing" (from, "without headache (trouble) and without selling and buying."

5. (81) garlic and onions: the people of Moses complained, "O Moses, we cannot endure one kind of food (only), so pray to your Lord for us, to bring forth for our sake of what the earth grows: its herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and its onions." (2:61)

6. (82) there remained for us: Nicholson later corrected his translation, to: "there remained for us (their successors) the toil of sowing, etc." (from, "there remained (for all of them) the toil of sowing and (labouring with) mattock and scythe." (Commentary)

7. (83) God sent a table: a "table" of food from Heaven which the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) prayed for and received: "When the disciples said, 'O Jesus son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us a table from Heaven?' He said, 'Be in awe of God [attaqû

'llâh] if you are (truly) believers'" (5:114). The disciples said that they only wanted to eat, as well as to know for certain, by seeing a miracle, that Jesus spoke the truth. Jesus prayed for food from heaven as a sign (of Divine support) and for sustenance from God who is the Best of Providers. God agreed to send it down, but warned of punishment for any who denied faith after this (miracle--5:116-118). In Persian, the word translated as "table" can mean a tray of food, but generally refers to the Middle Eastern custom of eating on the floor or ground with the food placed upon a cloth, or occasionally upon leather.

8. (84) like beggars: refers to the custom according to which guests were allowed to take food home with them after being invited to a meal. "It was not unusual (though considered unmannerly) for greedy guests to collect and carry away the food left over from a feast. Such a person was called zallah-band." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (86) rejection and ingratitude [kufr]: a Qur'anic term which also means unbelief and denial (toward the truth of the Oneness of God and the revelation sent to the prophets).

10. (88) charity (for the poor): one of the "five pillars" of Islam-- the requirement for Muslims to donate once a year to the poor approximately two and half percent of one's available wealth, if one is not poor. This verse refers to the punishment believed to follow widespread refusal or avoidance, not just a few cases.

11. (88) unlawful sex [zinâ]: this word means any kind of sexual relations outside marriage-- by the married (adultery) or by the unmarried (fornication), believed, when prevalent, to be the cause of plague. "The commentators quote from Traditions: wa-lá mana`ú l-zakáta illá hubisa `anhumu 'l-qatr [= "And there is no refusal of the (required) charity except that the rain is seized (and taken away) from them"] and idhá ra'aytumú 'l-wabá a qad fashá fa-`lamú anna 'l-zinâ qad fashá" [= "When you see that the plague has definitely spread, know that shameful sexual conduct has definitely spread"]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (92) Azazeel: the name of Satan before his fall. His insolence was to refuse to bow in obeisance to Adam when all the angels were commanded to do so. Satan refused, with the arrogant claim that he was superior to Adam since he was made from "fire" but Adam was made from (mere) clay (Qur'an 7:11-12). Satan also arrogantly blamed God for his own fall: "You caused me to err" (7:16), whereas Adam and Eve showed humble respect to God by saying, "O Lord! We have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and show mercy to us, we will surely be among the lost!" (7:23)

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az khodâwand-é waliyyu 'l-tawfîq dar khwâstan-é
tawfîqri`âyat-é adab dar hama Hâl-hâ-wo bayân
kardan-é wakhâmat-é Zarar-hây-ê bê-adabî

78 az khodâ jôy-êm tawfîq-é adab
bê-adab maHrôm gasht az luTf-é rab

bê-adab tan-hâ na khwad-râ dâsht bad
bal-ke âtesh dar hama âfâq zad

80 mâyida az âsmân dar mê-rasîd
bê-shirà-wo bay`-o bê-goft-o shenîd

dar meyân-é qawm-é môsà chand kas
bê-adab goft-and kô sêr-o `adas?

munqati` shod khwân-o nân az âsmân
mând ranj-é zar`-o bêl-o dâs-emân

bâz `îsà chôn shifâ`at kard, Haq
khwân ferestân-o ghanîmat bar Tabaq

bâz gostâkh-ân adab be-g'Zâsht-and
chôn gadâ-yân zalla-hâ bar dâsht-and

85 lâba karda `îsà êshân-râ ke în
dâyim-ast-o kam na-gard-ad az zamîn

bad-gomânî kardan-o HirS-âwarî
kufr bâsh-ad pêsh-é khwân-é mehtarî

z-ân gadâ-rôy-ân-é nâ-dîda ze-âz
ân dar-é raHmat bar-êshân shod farâz

abr bar n-ây-ad pay-é man`-é zakât
w-az zinâ oft-ad wabâ andar jihât

har-che bar tô ây-ad az Zulmât-o gham
ân ze-bê-bâkî-wo gostâkhî-st ham

90 har ke bê-bâkî kon-ad dar râh-é dôst
rah-zan-é mard-ân shod-o nâ-mard ô-st

az adab por-nôr gasht-ast în falak
w-az adab ma`Sôm-o pâk âmad malak
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92 bod ze-gostâkhî kasôf-é âftâb
shod `âzâzîlê ze-jur'at radd-é bâb

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Only Love Can Understand the Secrets of God

Mathnawi I: 109-116

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109 Love sickness[1] is clearly shown by the heart's misery. There isn't any sickness like the sickness of the heart.

110 The "sickness" of the lover is distinct from other illnesses. Love is the astrolabe[2] of the secrets of God.

Whether being a lover is from this or that origin, eventually it is our guide to that (Divine) Origin.[3]

Whatever I say about Love, (in regard to) description and explanation, when I reach Love (itself) I am ashamed of that [inadequate description].

(For) although the explanation of the tongue is (an excellent) illuminator,[4]yet Love (expressed) without the tongue is (much) clearer.

When the pen was hurrying in writing [descriptions], when it reached Love, it shattered against itself.

115 In (attempting) its explanation, the intellect lay down[5] like a donkey (stuck helplessly) in the mud. (Only) Love (itself) spoke (the real) explanation of both love and being in love.

116 The sun is the demonstration of the sun:[6]if you need proof, seek it) from (the sun)-- (and) don't turn (your) face away!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (109) Love sickness [`âshiqî]: also means "being a lover," "loverhood," "being in love." Nicholson translated, "Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart..."

Just prior to this line is the opening section of Rumi's first story in the Mathnawi, about a king who fell in love with a maiden. However,she was unhappy with him and began to look and act sickly. A wise physician came and discovered that she was actually physically healthy, but heart-sick from being in love with someone else, whom she grievously missed: "Her suffering was not from (an excess of) yellow or black bile. The scent of every (kind of) firewood is made evident from the (type of) smoke (it produces). He saw from her (type of) misery that it was the misery of the heart; (her) body was well, but she was the prisoner of the heart" (I: 107-08). Nicholson commented here: "i.e. the hidden nature and quality of a thing is indicated by the effects which it produces." (Commentary) The present line then follows ("Love sickness is clearly shown by the heart's misery").

2. (110) Love is the astrolabe: means that only love can "measure" and understand the depths of Divine mysteries-- not the intellect. The astrolabe is an ancient astronomical device, "an instrument for measuring the altitude of the stars and solving the problems of spherical astronomy." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson also made a reference to a related verse, which he translated, "Hence you and your intellect are like the astrolabe: by this means you may know the nearness of the Sun of existence" (IV: 3685).

3. (111) to that (Divine) Origin: means that being a lover eventually guides us to the Source of Love which is God, the Only Beloved. Nicholson translated, "Whether love be from this (earthly) side or from that (heavenly) side, in the end it leads us yonder." Nicholson said about this line: "The poet explains that what was said of love in the preceding verse bears a general application. Love, whether its immediate object be Divine or human, real or phenomenal, leads ultimately to knowledge of God and union with Him. All earthly beauty is but the reflexion of Heavenly Beauty, and as the reflexion fades away we turn our eyes towards the Light whence it came." (Commentary)

4. (113) illuminator: literally, "polisher." The meaning is that the nature of Love is revealed much more brightly and clearly when expressed in a non-verbal way. Nicholson explained that this term means "polisher" and "elucidator": "In I 3350 it is used of the angels, who keep their hearts pure and unsoiled with sin."

(Commentary) Nicholson translated this particular line as, "God said to them, 'If ye are enlightened'..." And he explained that "enlightened" literally means "polishers." (Footnote) He explained the meaning of "Love (expressed) without the tongue is (much) clearer": "i.e. the signs of love, such as agitation, pallor, and tears, speak for themselves. Cf. the saying, lisánu 'l-hál antaqu min lisáni 'l-maqál, 'the tongue of inward feeling is more eloquent than the tongue of discourse'." (Commentary)

5. (115) the intellect lay down: "The discursive reason (`aql-i ma`ásh), which maintains a distinction between the subject and object of thought, cannot possibly comprehend or describe the nature of mystical union. This is a mystery that Love reveals to the lover by immediate experienced (man lam yadhuq lam yadri)" [= He who doesn't taste doesn't know] (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (116) The sun itself is the demonstration of the sun: Nicholson explained that this is "A famous and oft-quoted verse" (of Rumi's), and related it to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: 'I know my Lord through my Lord' (`araftu Rabbí bi-Rabbí). To mystics their 'inner light' is its own evidence." (Commentary)

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109 `âshiqî paydâ-st az zâriy-é del
nêst bîmârê chô bîmâriy-é del

110 `illat-é `âshiq ze `illat-hâ jodâ-st
`ishq aSTurlâb-é asrâr-é khodâ-st

`âshiqî gar z-în sar-o gar z-ân sar-ast
`âqibat mâ-râ ba-d-ân sar rahbar-ast

har-che gôy-am `ishq-râ sharH-o bayân
chûn ba-`ishq ây-am khajil bâsh-am az ân

gar-che tafsîr-é zabân rôshan-gar-ast
lêk `ishq-é bê-zabân rôshan-tar-ast

chûn qalam andar neweshtan mê-shetâft
chûn ba-`ishq âmad qalam bar khwad shekâft

115 `aql dar sharH-ash chô khar dar gel be-khoft
sharH-é `ishq-o `âshiqî ham `ishq goft

116 âftâb âmad dalîl-é âftâb
gar dalîl-at bây-ad az way rô ma-tâb
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(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Creator and Creation

Mathnawi I: 596-610

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596 The tears of (our) eyes are running, because of separation from You.[1] (And) intense sighs are flowing from the depths of (our) souls.

An infant doesn't argue with (its) nurse [to get milk] but weeps,[2] while not knowing (anything about) bad or good.

We are like the harp, and You are strumming (upon it). The mournful (sound is) not from us, (but) You are causing the lament.

We are like the reed-flute, and the melody within us is from You.

600 We are like a chess game, (engaged) in capture and checkmate,[3] (but) our capture and checkmate is from You, O You of Beautiful Qualities![4]

O You, who are the Soul of our souls, who are we?-- that we should be[5] (in existence) with You in (our) midst!

We and our existences are non-existences, (while) You are the Absolute Existence[6] which causes (our) transient (existences) to appear.

We (are) all lions, but lions (painted) on a flag;[7] their charge (forward) is (only) because of the wind, moment by moment.

(And) their charge (forward) is visible, but the wind isn't visible. May that which is invisible never be lost[8] (to us)!

605 Our wind (which moves us) and our existence[9] is (part) of Your gift; our being is entirely from Your bringing (us) into being.

You made non-existence[10] (to become) Your lover, (and then) You showed the delight of existence to non-existence.

Do not take away the enjoyment of Your favors, (and) do not take away Your (sweet) desserts, wine, and goblet!

And if You take (them away), who will seek You[11] (for an accounting)? How can the painting act forcefully toward the Painter?

Do not gaze upon us, (and) do not look at us! (But) look upon Your own Honor[12] and Generosity!

610 We did not exist, and there was no demand[13] (from us), (but) Your Grace was hearing[14] our unspoken (prayer)!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (597) from You: in the text, these lines are addressed to a human beloved (a religious leader --probably the apostle Paul-- spoken by his disciples). But, as in Rumi's poetry (and in Persian sufi poetry in general), God is often intended at the same time.

2. (597) but weeps: in his Commentary, Nicholson makes a reference to Mathnawi 5, 135-36. "The day old infant continues to know the way, (thinking) 'I will cry until the kind nurse comes!' Don't you know that the Nurse of (all) nurses* gives no milk free, without (any) crying?" [* = God]

3. (600) capture and checkmate: refers to the capture of all the opponent's chess pieces, when only the king remains to be checkmated. The meaning includes both capturing and being captured, checkmating and being checkmated. Thus, Nicholson translated it as "victory and defeat."

4. (600) Beautiful Qualities: refers to the "Most Beautiful Names" (Qur'an 7:180) of God, such as the "Ninety Nine Names of God" used in Islamic devotions and sufi prayers.

5. (601) that we should be: Rumi quotes elsewhere (1:517) a sufi saying: "Existence is a sin"-- meaning, "Only God truly exists and your 'you-ness' is (for mystics) a kind of defect."

6. (602) You are the Absolute Existence: "Most commentators [of the Mathnawi] regard the... passage as spoken by the Vizier's disciples... but the words 'tú wujúd-i muTlaq-í' would naturally

indicate that the poet is speaking in his own person and describing the utter dependence of the creature on the Creator." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (603) on a flag: "In so far as Man belongs to the phenomenal world, he is not-being (`adam), which derives from Absolute Being a transient existence no more substantial than that of a shadow. God, the One Real Being, causes phenomena to appear, or appears in the form of phenomena in order that His attributes and actions may be manifested." (Nicholson, Commentary) "There is a very close parallel to these verses in Book IV, 3051 sqq., here the spirit, as the mover of the body, is compared with the wind which sets in motion a lion pictured on a banner" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (604) be lost: based on the earliest manuscript, Nicholson later changed his translation to: "may that which is unseen not fail!" (from "not fail from us").

9. (605) our wind and our existence: a word play on "wind" (bâd) and "existence" (bûd). One commentator (on the Mathnawi) explained this as "the intellect and spirit by which we are moved," but Nicholson disagreed, saying that it "seems rather to mean 'existence fleeting and empty as wind.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (606) You made non-existence: Nicholson believes that this passage was influenced by the teachings of the great mystic Ibnu 'l-`Arabî (died, 1240): "Here 'not-being' (níst) signifies 'relatively non-existent' (= potentially existent), i.e. the world existing as an idea in God's knowledge before the latent essence of things were brought into actual and objective existence. God caused this 'not-being' to love Him, i.e. He made every latent essence capable (= desirous) of receiving the concrete existence which He bestowed upon it." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (608) who will seek You?: based on the earliest manuscript, Nicholson later changed his translation to: "who will make inquiry of thee?" (from, "who is there that will make inquiry?").

12. (609) Honor (ikrâm): a part of one of the "Ninety Nine Names of God" often chanted by the sufis-- "the Possessor of Majesty and Honor [dhu 'l-jalâli wa 'l-ikrâm)" (Q.55:27, 78)

13. (610) there was no demand: "i.e. 'We did not exist (actually), nor did we (explicitly) request Thee to bring us forth from potential into actual existence.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (610) Your Grace was hearing: "i.e. 'it as through Thy grace that in response to our (implicit) prayer (cf. Qur. LV 29 ["Every (creature)

in the heavens and the earth seeks (its need) from Him"] we received actual existence and thus realised our potentialities.'.... for example the state of a parched plant is virtually a request for water, while a seed buried in the earth is virtually asking to grow and spring up.... Hence 'not-being' may be said to 'love' God who endows it with being, just as the beggar loves the bountiful giver." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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596 ashk-é dîda-st az firâq-é tô dawân
âh-âh-ast az meyân-é jân rawân

Tifl bâ dâya na estîz-ad wa-lêk
gerîd-ô gar-che na bad dân-ad na nêk

mâ chô chang-êm-o tô zakhma mê-zan-î
zârî az mâ na tô zârî me-kon-î

mâ chô nây-êm-o nawâ dar mâ ze to-st
mâ chô kôh-êm-o Sadâ dar mâ ze to-st

600 mâ chô shaTranj-êm andar bord-o mât
bord-o mât-é mâ ze to-st ay khwash-Sifât

mâ ke bâsh-êm ay tô mâ-râ jân-é jân
tâ ke mâ bâsh-em bâ tô dar meyân?

mâ `adam-hây-êm-o hastî-hây-é mâ
tô wujûd-é muTlaq-î fânî-nomâ

mâ hama shêr-ân walî shêr-é `alam
Hamla-shân az bâd bâsh-ad dam ba-dam

Hamla-shân paydâ-st-o nâ-paydâ-st bâd
ân-ke nâ-paydâ-st hargez gom ma-bâd

605 bâd-é mâ-wo bûd-é mâ az dâd-é to-st
hastî-yé mâ jomla az îjâd-é to-st

laZZat-é hastî namûd-î nêst-râ
`âshiq-é khwad karda bûd-î nêst-râ

laZZat-é in`âm-é khwad-râ wâ ma-gîr
nuql-o bâda-wo jâm-é khwad-râ wâ ma-gîr

w-ar be-gîr-î kî-t jost-o jô kon-ad
naqsh bâ naqqâsh chûn nîrô kon-ad?
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ma-n'gar andar mâ ma-kon dar mâ naZar
andar ikrâm-o sakhây-é khwad negar

610 mâ na-bûd-êm-o taqâZâ-mân na-bûd
luTf-é tô nâ-gofta-yé mâ mê-shonûd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Companionship With The Saints

Mathnawi I: 716-726

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716 The sword [of spiritual protection] is in the armory[1] of the saints;[2] for you, meeting them is the alchemical elixir.[3]

All of the wise ones have said this same thing: the wise man[4] is "a mercy to all the worlds."[5]

If you buy a pomegranate, buy it laughing (and open-mouthed)[6] so that its laughing may give information about (the state of its) seeds.

Oh (how) blessed is its laughter, since it is showing (its) heart by means of (its) mouth, like the pearl [of the soul] from the (open) box of the spirit.[7]

720 The laughter of the tulip[8] was not blessed, since the blackness of (its) heart was revealed by its mouth.[9]

The laughing pomegranate makes the (entire) garden laughing; (likewise,) companionship[10] with (spiritual) men makes you (one) of (such) men.

Even if you are a hard rock or marble, if you come to (the presence of) a lord of the heart,[11] you will become a jewel.

Put love for the pure ones into the midst of (your) spirit. Don't give (your) heart (to anyone) except in love for those (who have) joyous hearts.

Don't go (into) the lane of hopelessness,[12] (for) there are (still) hopes. (And) don't go (in) the direction of darkness, (for) there are (still) suns [to rise].

725 The heart draws you into the lane of the people of heart,[13] (but) the body draws you into the prison of water and clay.[14]

726 Take care, (and) give food for (your) heart from [the company of] a sympathetic friend.[15] Go (and) seek coming near [to the goal] from one who is advancing first."[16]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (716) armory: this word means a shop where coats of mail, made of iron rings, were made.

2. (716) the saints: "The saints alone can provide you with the needful weapons. Love and honour the men of God and become like them." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (716) alchemical elixir: means that being in the company of the sufi saints is not only the best protection, it leads to spiritual transformation in their presence (just like lead or copper is transformed into gold by contact with the elixir, or Philosopher's Stone). "Those who see the saints as they really are and follow them devotedly will experience a spiritual transformation." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (717) the wise man: "the gnostic who, according to the Súfí interpretation of the Hadíth al-`ulamá warathatu 'l-anbiyá [= the saying of the Prophet, "the learned are the heirs of the prophets"], is the spiritual heir of the prophets and of the Prophet Mohammed in particular." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (717) a mercy to all the worlds: "And We have not sent you [O Prophet], except as a mercy to (all) the worlds." (Qur'an 21:107) The words "to all the worlds" means "toward all mankind." Nicholson added: "I.e. the prophet or saint who knows God." (Footnote)

6. (718) laughing (and open-mouthed): Nicholson translated, " buy (it when it is) laughing (having its rind cleft open), so that its laughter (openness)..."

7. (719) box of the spirit: "I.e. 'if you are seeking a guide on the way to God, attach yourself to a saint from whose lips flow the words that reveal a heart illumined with Divine love and mystic knowledge, just as the bursting (khandah) of a ripe pomegranate displays the seeds enveloped in its red pulp.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (720) the laughter of the tulip: "laughter" of flowers is an idiom for opening of the buds, which resembles the happy display of teeth of the open-mouthed laughing person.

9. (720) its mouth: may mean that when it opened its mouth to laugh, it revealed foul and black-appearing "teeth," interpreted here as bad character. "The religious hypocrite, when unmasked, resembles a full-blown Persian tulip showing 'the blackness of its heart', i.e. the dark centre of its calyx." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (721) companionship [suHbat]: a technical sufi term, meaning spiritual blessing and transformation received by being in the company, and hearing the inspired words, of a spiritual master. This is also an expression of a frequent teaching of Rumi's: that a person takes on the (good or bad) qualities of those whose company is shared.

11. (722) lord of the heart: may also be translated as "possessor of the heart," "one possessed of heart." Means a sufi saint, who has mastered desires and passions and has a heart full of love for God. "...one possessed of spiritual apprehension, i.e. an adept in mysticism." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (724) hopelessness: "To despair of God's grace is an act of infidelity (Qur. XII 87." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (725) the people of heart: means the sufis, the true lovers of God.

14. (725) water and clay: means the human body, created from "water" and "clay" (Qur'an 25:54; 38:71). It also symbolizes the material world and the limitations of sensory knowledge and experience.

15. (726) a sympathetic friend: literally, "a same-hearted one."

16. (726) one who is advancing first: means, "Seek to draw near to God by being in the company of one of the sufi saints." May also be translated, "seek good fortune/prosperity from someone (who is) fortunate/prosperous." Nicholson translated, "seek (spiritual) advancement from one who is advanced." Nicholson explained: "Muqbil, one whose heart is turned towards the Truth." (Commentary)

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716 têgh dar zarrâd-khâna-yé awliyâ-st
dîdan-é êshân shomâ-râ kîmiyâ-st

jomla dânâ-yân ham-în gofta ham-în
hast dânâ raHmat-an li-l-`âlamîn

gar anârê mê-khar-î khandân be-khar
tâ deh-ad khanda ze-dâna-yé ô khabar

ay mubârak khanda-ash k-ô az dahân
mê-nomây-ad del chô durr az durj-é jân

720 nâ-mubârak khanda-yé ân lâla bûd
k-az dahân-é ô seyâhî-yê del namûd

nâr-é khandân bâgh-râ khandân kon-ad
SuHbat-é mardân-at az mard-ân kon-ad

gar tô sang-é Sakhra-wo marmar shaw-î
chûn ba-sâHib-del ras-î gawhar shaw-î

mehr-é pâk-ân dar meyân-é jân neshân
del ma-deh illâ ba-mehr-é del-khôsh-ân

kôy-é nawmêdî ma-raw ômêd-hâ-st
sôy-é târêkî ma-raw khworshêd-hâ-st

725 del to-râ dar kôy-é ahl-é del kash-ad
tan to-râ dar Habs-é âb-o gel kash-ad

726 Hîn ghaZây-é del be-deh az ham-delê
raw be-jô iqbâl-râ az muqbilê

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Stars Beyond The Stars

Mathnawi I: 754-768

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754 There are stars beyond the stars (of this world) in which there is no (risk of) being burnt up,[1] or misfortune[2]--

755 (Astral) wanderers[3] in other heavens besides the seven honored heavens[4] (of this world).

Durable ones among the shining lights of God, not joined or separate[5] from each other.

Whoever's rising sign[6] is from those stars, his soul burns (and drives away) the rejecting deniers[7] (who are) stoned[8] [by flaming meteors].

His anger isn't (like) the anger of a Mars-born person[9]-- going upside-down[10] (from having) a dominating nature and (then) a dominated one.[11]

The victorious light[12] (of the saints) is safe from defect and darkness (because it is) in between the two fingers[13] of the Light of God.

760 (Although) God scatters that light[14] upon (all) souls, (only) those who are fortunate have held up (their) robes (to receive it);

And they have understood[15] that scattering of light (and have) turned (their) faces from (anything) other than God.

Whoever is without (such) a robe of love[16] ends up without a share of that scattering of light.

The particulars have (their) faces toward the universal,[17] (just as) nightingales are in love with the rose's face.[18]

The bull's color (is seen) from the outside. But in regard to man, seek (his) red and yellow colors from the inside.[19]

765 Good colors are from the (dyeing) vat of purity. (But) the color of the ugly (wrongdoers) is from the black water of injustice.

The name of that fine color is "the hue of God,"[20] (but) the stench of this thick color is "the curse of God."
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That which (is) from the sea is going to the sea; it is going to the same place from which it came:[21]

768 The fast-going flood, from the top of the mountain and the departing soul mixed with love, from our body.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/8/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (754) (risk of) being burnt up: "...an astronomical term for the conjunction of one of the five planets (Venus, Mercury, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) with the sun in the same degree of the zodiac." (Nicholson, Commentary). In other words, the apparent danger (as seen by the human eye) that one of the planets might become burnt up by coming too close to the sun.

2. (754) misfortune: an astrological term referring to an "unlucky" conjunction of planets (understood in ancient times as "wandering stars"). Just prior to this line, Rumi had said (as translated by Nicholson): "Another king... addressed himself to the destruction of the people of Jesus. If you desire information about this second outbreak, read the chapter of the Qur'án (beginning): 'By Heaven which hath the (zodiacal) signs.... because the sun goes from sign to sign of the zodiac. Any one who has affinity with a star (planet) has a concurrence (of qualities) with his star. If his ascendant star be Venus, his whole inclination and love and desire is for joy;/ And if he be one born under Mars, one whose nature is to shed blood, he seeks war and malignity and enmity." (740-41, 750-753) Rumi mentions astrological images and beliefs sometimes in a poetic way, and sometimes due to the current belief that God rules the universe directly as well as indirectly (through angels and stars and constellations). As a Muslim, of course, Rumi did not believe that the stars control or influence fate apart from the Divine Will.

3. (755) (Astral) wanderers: refers to planets (see previous note)--meaning here orbiters near the Divine Throne beyond the physical universe.

4. (755) the seven honored heavens: refers to the orbital layers "ruled" by the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. In the earliest manuscript, the word "honored" [mu`tabar]

has a correction written above it ["well-known"-- mushtahar]. Nicholson chose this latter term in his translation but wrote that, "This reading entails either a bad rhyme or a fault in grammar (mushtahar for mushtahir)." (Commentary) He later changed his translation to, "Not these seven heavens (which are) held in high regard" (from, "not these seven heavens known to all").

5. (756) not joined or separate: refers to the Divine Names of God. "For the comparison of the Divine names and attributes to stars, see IV 514 sqq., VI 3180. These names and attributes, in so far as they are diverse in their effects, are not inseparable; but in so far as they inhere in the Divine Essence, which is beyond all distinctions, they are identical with each other." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (757) rising sign: an astrological term, meaning the planet which is the first to rise on the day a particular person is born.

7. (757) rejecting deniers [kuffâr]: often mistranslated as "infidels." Means here, those who, because of their disbelief in God and following His Will, may lead true believers astray and into misfortune.

8. (757) stoned [rujûm]: means driven off by being pelted by stones. This is a reference to passages in the Qur'an in which devils are depicted as being driven away by missiles (57:5) and a flaming fire, so that they cannot get close enough to hear what the angels are saying in their "exalted assembly" (37:6-10). "The radiant soul of the Perfect Man, acting under the direct influence of Divine grace, consumes infidelity in the same way as shooting stars burn the devils who are pelted with them." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (758) the anger of a Mars-born person: means a person born under the influence of the "rising star" of Mars, which (according to astrology) would cause him to tend toward "martial," or war-like, anger. Here, such a person is described as being subject to anger, both when feeling powerful and powerless.

10. (758) going upside-down: Nicholson translated this as "perverse," but later changed his explanation of it and said that the footnote in his translation should be deleted ("Literally, 'with face inverted,' i.e. directed towards base ends.").

11. (758) a dominated (one): means from becoming dominated by his own anger, or else caught between being powerfully angry at others and then becoming powerless because of the anger of others.

12. (759) The victorious light: "i.e. the illumined heart of the saint." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (759) between the two fingers: "... refers to the Tradition qalbu 'l-mu'mini bayna isba`ayni min asáb`i 'l-Rahmán, "the true believer's heart is between the two fingers of the Merciful God'. The 'two fingers' are the Divine attributes of Majesty (Jalál) and Beauty (Jamál)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (760) God scatters that light: "according to the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad]: inna 'lláha khalaqa 'l-khalqa fí zulmat-in thumma rashsha `alayhim min núrihi fa-man asábahu min dhálika 'l-núr ihtadá wa-man akhta'ahu dalla `an sawá'i 'l-sabíl, 'God created the creatures in darkness, then He sprinkled some of His light upon them. Those whom some of that Light reached took the right way, while those whom it missed wandered from the straight road.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (761) understood: Nicholson later stated that his translation ["And he (that is fortunate), having gained that strown largesse of light"] needed to be corrected, based on the earliest manuscripts (which had "wâ yâfta" instead of "ô yâfta"). He did not, however, add the correction, but explained instead: "The blessed souls received the Light in proportion to the capacity (isti`dád) with which they were created." (Commentary)

16. (762) (such) a robe of love: "The blessed are they whom God loves and who love Him (Qur. V 59). There is no light where the gift of Divine Love is withheld by eternal fore-ordainment." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (763) toward the universal: means that particular qualities seek to return to their universal source. For example, a particular light (such as that from the burning wick of a candle) is derived from Universal Light, and "seeks" to return to its origin.

18. (763) nightingales are in love with the rose's face: "Everything returns to its source: the part seeks union with its whole, the Divine spark in the mystic's heart with the Universal Light, the nightingale (lover) with the rose (beloved). Those created for damnation love only false lights, because they lack the inner light of the Truth." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to: "nightingales are in love with the face of the rose" (from, "nightingales play the game of love with the rose").

19. (764) from the inside: "If you would discriminate the righteous from the wicked, you must ignore externals and look within: all

depends on the purity or foulness of the original natures as God has made them." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (766) the hue of God: refers the verse, "(Say: 'Our religion is) the hue of God. And who can give a better hue than God? And we are His worshippers" (2:138) "'God's dyeing, i.e. 'God has imbued us, the true believers, with faith and knowledge of His Unity, in which our hearts are steeped like garments in the vat of the dyer.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson pointed out that this metaphor is not connected with "baptism" (since this verse is sometimes translated as "the baptism of God"-- referring to the Arab Christian practice of putting a colored dye in the baptismal water). The "hue of God" is contrasted with the "curse of God," a phrase also from the Qur'an.

21. (767) the same place from which it came: "These verses illustrate v. 763 [= "The particulars have (their) faces toward the universal"]. All existence proceeds from, and returns to, the One Being. As the torrent ultimately rejoins the sea from which it sprang, so the spirit impelled by love is re-united with its Lord." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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754 akhtar-ân-and az warây-é akhtar-ân
ke iHtirâq-o naHs na-b'w-ad andar ân

755 sâyir-ân dar âsmân-hây-é degar
ghayr-é în haft âsmân-é mu`tabar

râsikh-ân dar tâb-é anwâr-é khodâ
na ba-ham paywasta, na az ham jodâ

har ke bâsh-ad Tâli`-é ô z-ân nujûm
nafs-é ô kuffâr sôz-ad dar rujûm

khashm-é mirrîkhê na-bâsh-ad khashm-é ô
munqalib-raw ghâlib-o maghlûb-khô

nûr-é ghâlib îman az naqS-o ghasaq
dar meyân-é iSba`ayn-é nûr-é Haqq

760 Haq fashân-ad ân nûr-râ bar jân-hâ
muqbil-ân bar dâshta dâmân-hâ

w-ân niSâr-é nûr-râ wâ yâfta
rôy az ghayr-é khodâ bar tâfta
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harke-râ dâmân-é `ishqê nâ-boda
z-ân niSâr-é nûr bê-bahra shoda

juzw-hâ-râ rôy-hâ sôy-é kul-ast
bolbol-ân-râ `ishq bâ rôy-é gol-ast

gâw-râ rang az berûn-o mard-râ
az darûn jô rang-é sorkh-o zard-râ

765 rang-hây-é nêk az khumm-é Safâ-st
rang-é zesht-ân az seyâh-âba-yé jafâ-st

Sibghatu 'llâh nâm-é ân rang-é laTîf
la`natu 'llâh bôy-é în rang-é kaSîf

ân-che az daryâ ba-daryâ mê-raw-ad
az ham-ân-jâ k-âmad ân-jâ mê-raw-ad

768 az sar-é koh sayl-hây-é têz-raw
w-az tan-é mâ jân-é `ishq âmêz-raw

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Umar and the Ambassador (part one)

Mathnawi I: 1423-1442

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1423 (The ambassador looked at Umar and said): "This man sleeping on the ground is unarmed, (yet) I'm trembling (with fear) in the seven parts (of my body). What is this?[1]

"This isn't from (fear) of a created being; it is awe of God. It's not awe of this man (who) owns a (dervish) robe.

1425 "Whoever is (piously) afraid of God and has chosen reverential awe,[2] the jinn and mankind and all who see (him) are afraid of him."[3]

In this (state of) thought, (he stood with one) hand holding the other, in reverence. After a period of time, Umar jumped up from sleep.

He expressed respect to Umar and (the greeting of) "peace"[4]-- (since) the Prophet said, "First (the greeting of) "peace," then the talking."[5]

Then (Umar) said to him, "(And) upon you (be peace)."[6] And (then) he called him forward, made him (feel) safe, and had (him) sit in front of him.

"Do not fear"[7] is the gift (of hospitality) for the fearful, (and) it is suitable for (calming) one (who is) afraid.

1430 Whoever is fearful is made (to feel) secure; the frightened one's heart is made (to feel) peaceful.

You never say, "Don't be afraid" (to) the one who has no fear. What lesson can you give, (since) he has no need of (such) lessons?

(Umar) made that troubled heart happy[8] (and) made his devastated mind flourishing.

After that, he spoke subtle words to him, and (told) about the holy qualities of God-- (that most) excellent Companion![9]

And (he spoke) of God's soothing kindnesses toward the chosen saints,[10] so that (the ambassador) might know (the difference between (spiritual) stations and (spiritual) states.[11]

1435 (For) a (spiritual) state is like the unveiling of the beautiful bride[12] (presented to the bridegroom), whereas the (spiritual) station is (like) his being with the bride in private.

The king sees the unveiling, as well as (people) other than the king. (But during) the time of solitude, there isn't (anyone else with the bride) except the honored king.

The bride unveils (her face) to (both) nobles and commoners.[13] (But) in privacy, (only) the king is with the bride.

There are many people of (spiritual) states among the sufis, (but) people of (spiritual) stations are rare among them.

(Umar) mentioned to him about the stages of the soul. And he mentioned to him about the soul's journeys;[14]

1440 And about a particular Time which has (always) been devoid of time, and about a holy (spiritual) Station which has (always) been sublime;[15]

And (also) about an Atmosphere in which, before this (existence), the phoenix[16] of the spirit has experienced (wondrous) flights and openings[17] --

1442 (In which) its every flight is greater than the (distance of the world's) horizons, and greater than the hope and strong desire of the yearning (lover).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 9/7/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1423) What is this: In the section just prior, the story begins with how the Emperor of Rúm ("Rome," meaning the former Eastern Roman Empire and the Christian Anatolian "Byzantine Empire") sent an ambassador to Arabia to meet with the Muslim Caliph, Umar (a prominent companion of the Prophet Muhammad and his second successor [khalîfa]). When the ambassador arrived, he asked directions to the palace of the Caliph, but was told: "He has no palace; for Umar, there is (only) a palace of the enlightened soul" (1392)-- and that he lived in a hut, like the poor. The ambassador searched all around for him and then someone pointed to a palm tree and said that the Caliph was sleeping under it. As the ambassador approached Umar, he felt a sweet ecstasy together with a powerful sense of awe and fear, which surprised him because he had never felt overwhelmed with fear before, either in battle or in a jungle of lions. Then this verse follows.

2. (1425) reverential awe [taqwà]: this is the Qur'anic term, translated variously as "fear of God)," "consciousness of God," "reverence," "piety." This term, fundamental also in Judaism and Christianity, is nowadays commonly misunderstood as something similar to the fear of a "cruel monster." But it is actually a form of love for God: the pious believer, as well as the mystic lover of God, dreads doing any self-willful behavior which might result in greater distance from the Beloved.

3. (1425) the jinn and mankind and all who see (him) are afraid of him: "The commentators quote the Hadíth: 'God makes His creatures afraid of those who revere Him, and those who revere His creatures He makes afraid of them.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) Solomon was such a righteous prophet that God gave him power

over the jinn (genies) and men (Qur'an 27:17).

4. (1427) (the greeting of) "peace": The greeting of peace between Muslims is "as-salaamu `alaykum: "(May) the peace (of God) be upon you." The reply is a `alaykuma 's-salaam: "And upon you be the peace (of God)." See Qur'an 6:54; 28:55; 7:46; 13:24; 16:32; 39:73.

5. (1427) First (the greeting of) "peace," then the talking: "al-salám thumma 'l-kalám. Another form of the hadíth is al-salám qabla 'l-kalám" [= the (greeting of) peace before the talking] (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (1428) (And) upon you (be peace) [`alayk]: "When a Moslem receives the salám from a non-Moslem, he may reply 'wa `alayka', but is not obliged to do so. Between Moslems raddu 'l-salâm [= replying to the salaam] is obligatory." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1429) Do not fear: "Certainly, those who say, 'Our Lord is God,' (and) then stand straight and right (in their actions), the angels descend upon them (and say), 'Do not fear! (And) do not sorrow! But receive the good news of the Garden (of Paradise) which has been promised to you.'" (Qur'an 41:30)

8. (1432) that troubled heart happy: a word play involving to idioms containing the word "heart." Literally, "He made that gone-from-(its)-place heart happy-hearted."

9. (1433) (that most) excellent Companion [ni`ma 'r-rafîq]: Nicholson translated, "how good a Friend is He!"

10. (1434) the chosen saints [abdâl]: The highest class of saints in the (hidden) spiritual hierarchy of sufism (if the chief saint, or "Pole" [quTb], is included). The word means "changed ones" or "substitutes" because an abdâl who dies is immediately replaced by another saint who is raised, by the Will of God, to a more elevated spiritual rank. It is believed that these hidden saints are known to each other, and rarely by anyone else.

11. (1434) (spiritual) stations and (spiritual) states: Nicholson translated, "(the meaning of) maqám (permanent station) and hál (passing state)." And he explained: "In these lines the terms are applied loosely to the lower and higher states of mystical experience.... Hál [= spiritual state] refers here to the succession of alternating psychological 'states' characteristic of the seeker of God, while maqám [= spiritual station] indicates the spiritual perfection of the adept hose 'states' have passed beyond change and have become unified." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (1435) the unveiling of the beautiful bride: "Ecstatic 'states' are produced by momentary unveiling (jalwah or jilwah, tajallí) of the Divine Beauty and Majesty.... The saints are 'God's brides.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (1437) nobles and commoners: Nicholson later changed his translation, based upon the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "nobles and commons" (from "commons and nobles"), "i.e. 'to the elect (saints) and to the common herd (of seekers) alike.'" (Commentary)

14. (1439 the soul's journeys: "... the mystical 'journeys' of the soul from Unity to plurality and from plurality to Unity..."

15. (1440) sublime: "the state of pre-existence in which the soul was one with God. Cf. the Hadíth: 'With your Lord there is neither morn nor eve.' Maqám-i quds [= Holy spiritual Station], i.e. the absolutely transcendent Divine Unity (Ahadiyyah), when 'God was (as He is and ever shall be), and there was naught (no created thing) beside Him'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (1441) the phoenix [sîmorgh]: "...this mythical bird (the Avestan saêna, to which murgh is a superfluous addition... In Persian mysticism, the símurgh represents God or the soul as a model of Divine being, and is supposed to dwell on Mt Qáf, like the `anqá [= another mythical bird] with which it is often identified." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (1441) openings [futûH]: in this sense, it can also mean "revelations." Another meaning is "victories."

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1423 bê-salâh în mard-é khofta bar zamîn
man ba-haft andâm larzân, chîst în?

haybat-é Haqq-ast în az khalq nêst
haybat-é în mard-é SâHib-dalq nêst

1425 har ke tarsîd az Haq-o taqwà gozîd
tars-ad az way jinn-o ins-o har ke dîd

andar-în fikrat ba-Hurmat dast ba-dast
ba`d-é yak sâ`at `umar az khwâb jast

kard khidmat mar `umar-râ-wo salâm
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goft payghâmbar, salâm ân-gah kalâm

pas `alayk-ash goft-o ô-râ pêsh khwând
îman-ash kard-o ba-pêsh-é khwad neshând

lâ takhâfû hast nuzl-é khâyif-ân
hast dar khwar az barây-é khâyif ân

har ke tars-ad mar ô-râ îman kon-and
mar del-é tarsanda-râ sâkin kon-and

ân-ke khâwf-ash nêst chûn gôy-î ma-tars
dars che d'h-î nêst ô muHtâj-é dars?

ân del az jâ rafta-râ del-shâd kard
khâTir-é wîrân-'sh-râ âbâd kard

ba`d az ân goft-ash sokhon-hây-é daqîq
w-az Sifât-é pâk-é Haq ni`ma 'r-rafîq

w-az nawâzesh-hây-é haq abdâl-râ
tâ be-dân-ad ô maqâm-o Hâl-râ

hâl chûn jilwa-st z-ân zîbâ `arûs
w-în maqâm ân khalwat âm-ad bâ `arûs

jilwa bîn-ad shâh-o ghayr-é shâh nêz
waqt-é khalwat nêst joz shâh-é `azîz

jilwa karda khâs-o `âm-ân-râ `arûs
khalwat andar shâh bâsh-ad bâ `arûs

hast besyâr ahl-é Hâl az Sûfiy-ân
nâdir-ast ahl-é maqâm andar meyân

az manâzil-hây-é jân-ash yâd dâd
w-az safar-hây-é rawân-ash yâd dâd

w-az zamânê k-az zamân khâlî bod-ast
w-az maqâm-é quds ke ijlâlî bod-ast

w-az hawâyê k-andar-ô sîmorgh-é rûH
pêsh az-în dîd-ast parwâz-o futûH

har yakê parwaz-ash az âfâq bêsh
w-az omêd-o nahmat-é mushtâq bêsh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Umar and the Ambassador (part two)

Mathnawi I: 1443-1479

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1443 When Umar found the unknown face (to be) a friend,[1] he (also) found (that) his soul was a seeker of (spiritual) secrets.[2]

The (spiritual) master was matured (in his skill) and the seeker (was) desirous; the man was agile and the horse (was) of the (royal) court [and ready to go].[3]

1445 The (spiritual) guide saw that he had (receptivity for) guidance, (so) he planted the pure seed in the pure ground.

The Byzantine[4] ambassador's questioning of the Commander of the Faithful, may God be pleased with him.

The man asked him, "O Commander of the Faithful! How did the soul from above arrive to the earth?[5]

"How did the immeasurable bird go into the cage?" (Umar) answered, "God uttered spells[6] over the soul and (told fascinating) stories.

"When He utters spells over the non-existent [essences][7], which lack eyes and ears, they come to be continually agitated.

"(And) by means of His spells, the non-existent [essences] are immediately dangling and somersaulting happily toward existence.

1450 "(Then) again, when He utters a spell over an existent (being), He quickly[8] drives the existent (being back) into non-existence.

"He speaks into the ear of the rose and makes it laughing.[9] (And) He speaks to a rock and makes it a gemstone[10] (in) the mine.

"He speaks an indication to the body, so that it becomes alive. (And) he speaks to the sun, so that it becomes shining.

"(Then) again, He breathes a frightful saying into (the sun's) ear (and) a hundred eclipses fall upon the sun's face.

"What saying did He recite into the cloud's ear, so that it expelled tears from its eyes like a leather water bottle?

1455 "(And) what has God recited to the earth's ear, so that it became an observer[11] and has kept quiet?"

Whoever is disturbed (and) in (a state of) hesitation, God has spoken a puzzling riddle into his ear--

So that He might make him imprisoned within two (contrary) opinions: "Should I do that (action)? He said (to).[12] Or the opposite of it?"[13]

One side obtains superiority also because of (the Will of) God,[14] (and) from the two (choices) he selects (influenced) by that (Divine) side.

If you don't want (your) soul's understanding (to be) in (a state of) hesitation, (then) don't press cotton[15] into (your) spiritual ear--

1460 So that you may understand those puzzling riddles of His, (and) so hat you may comprehend (what) is secret and revealed.[16]

Then the spiritual ear may become the place for inspiration.[17] What is inspiration? A speech (which is) hidden from the senses.

The spiritual ear and the spiritual eye are (something) other than the senses, (since) the ear of the intellect and the ear of speculation and opinion are poor and penniless of this (wisdom).

The term "(Divine) compulsion" makes me restless and impatient[18] in regard to Love, but it makes the one who is not a lover restricted by (such) compulsion.

This is communion with God; it's not (something) forced.[19] This is the radiant splendor of the moon;[20] it's not a cloud.

1465 And if it is this compulsion, it's not the compulsion of the common people. It's not the coercion of the domineering self-willed (ego).[21]

O son, those who (truly) understand compulsion (are) those for whom God has opened an eye in (their) hearts.[22]

The unperceived (realm) and the future[23] have been revealed to them, (and) the memory of the past has become a (worthless) corpse to them[24].

Their free-will and compulsion is (something) different. Raindrops within oysters are (changed into) pearls.[25]

Outside, it is (merely) a small or large raindrop. (But) within the oyster, it is (either) a small pearl or a large (one).

1470 For those people, (their) nature is (like) the navel of the musk deer.[26] Outwardly (they are like) blood, but their inward (quality is like) musk (perfume).

Don't say, "This substance is (foul-smelling) blood (in its) external (nature), (so) how can it become (fragrant) musk if it goes into the (deer's) navel?"

(And) don't say, "This was lowly and contemptible copper (in its) external (nature), (so) how can it become gold[27] in the heart of the (alchemical) elixir?"[28]

(While) free-will and compulsion within you is (something) conceptual and imagined, it becomes the light of (God's) Majesty when it goes into them.

When bread is on the table cloth[29] it is inanimate, (but when it goes) inside the body of a man it becomes happiness of spirit.[30]

1475 It doesn't become changed within the heart of the table cloth, (but) the (animal) soul changes it by means of (the fountain of) Salsabeel.[31]

O correct reader (of the situation), (since) this is the power of the (animal) soul, then what is the power of the Soul of the soul?[32]

The human piece of meat[33] (which is) possessed of strength and soul[34] is splitting the mountain by means of water channels and mines.[35]

The soul's power in uprooting a mountain (is demonstrated by) rock-splitting. The power of the Soul of the soul (is demonstrated) by (the verse), "the moon was split."[36]

1479 If the heart opens the top of the leather bag of (this) mystery,[37] the soul will charge[38] toward the Throne (of God).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1443) When Umar found the unknown face (to be) a friend: refers to the earlier part of this story. The Emperor of Byzantium had sent his ambassador to meet with the Islamic Caliph, Umar (a famous companion of the Prophet Muhammad and his second successor as the leader of the new Muslim community). Umar welcomed the ambassador with hospitality and then discerned that he was receptive to learning spiritual wisdom.

2. (1443) (spiritual) secrets: Nicholson translated, "(Divine) mysteries."

3. (1444) the horse (was) of the (royal) court [and ready to go]: Nicholson translated, "the beast belonged to the royal court (was nobly bred and docile)." He later explained: "i.e. a horse, saddled and bridled, which was kept, day and night, at the gate (dargah) of the royal palace in readiness for any sudden emergency." (Commentary)

4. (Heading) Byzantine: literally, "the messenger from Rûm," meaning the Eastern Roman Empire, later called the Byzantine Empire, which ruled (a Christian and Greek-speaking) Anatolia from the capital at Constantinople.

5. (1446) How did the soul from above arrive to the earth: "In reply to the question asked in the second hemistich [= second half of the verse], Umar declares that the soul's imprisonment in the world is a mystery of Divine omnipotence. Such riddles, e.g. the problem of free-will, are not to be solved by the intellect, but only through mystical union with God; for perfect love harmonises every discord." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson then referred to a similar passage-- I: 595-641.

6. (1447) God uttered spells: "God is described as an enchanter creating in the soul the illusion of individuality, which is the immediate cause of its descent into the material world." (Nicholson, Commentary) This s a poetic interpretation of the verses in the Qur'an in which God creates from nothing: "And when He decrees something, He says to it, 'Be!' And it is." ((2:117)

7. (1448) the non-existent [essences]: "i.e. things not actually in being, though existing potentially in the knowledge of God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1450) quickly: literally, "quickly, with two fresh horses." "i.e. like a courier, riding one horse and leading another." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (1451) laughing: blossoming roses and flowers are often depicted as smiling or laughing (as if open mouthed with gleaming teeth) in Persian literature.

10. (1451) a gemstone: literally, "a carnelian," a type of translucent quartz used by jewelers. According to the ancients, gold, silver, and gemstones are produced in the earth by the rays of the sun.

11. (1455) an observer: "i.e. observing God intently, like a Súfí when practising 'meditation' (muráqabah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (1457) He said (to): means God commanded it, such as in the Qur'an or he Traditions of the Prophet's sayings and doings.

13. (1457) or the opposite of it: Nicholson later changed his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Shall I do that? He said that (bade me to do that)-- or the contrary thereof?" (from, "Shall I do what He told (me)"). And he explained: "All Nature hears, understands, and implicitly obeys the Divine Word. Man alone hesitates between obedience and disobedience, and he is free to choose, though God has decreed and creates both his vacillation and his final choice." (Commentary)

14. (1458) because of (the Will of) God: Nicholson translated, "From (the decree of) God."

15. (1459) cotton: "i.e. ignorance, self-conceit, worldliness and all that is an obstacle to communion with God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (1460) so that you may comprehend (what) is secret and revealed: Nicholson referred here to some earlier verses (I:933-935), which he translated: "When the maser put a spade in the slave's hand, his object was made known to him (the slave) without (a word falling from his) tongue. Hand and spade alike are His (God's) implicit signs; (our powers of) thinking upon the end are His explicit declarations. When you take His signs to heart, you will devote you life to fulfilling that indication (of His will). He will give you many hints (for the understanding) of mysteries. He will remove the burden from you and give you (spiritual) authority."

17. (1463) inspiration [waHî]: means mystic knowledge received from God. It was a convention in Rumi's time that this word was used to mean "revelation" received only by Prophets and another word [ilhâm] was used to mean "inspiration" received by saints and mystics. Rumi speaks specifically about this term in another place, "As an explanation, the sufis call it the inspiration of the heart [waHy-é del]-- as a way of concealing it from the common people. Take it to be the inspiration of the heart, for that is the place for seeing Him. How can there be any mistake when the heart is aware of Him?" (IV: 1853-54) And the commentators explained that the word "waHî" is, in fact, used in the Qur'an for someone not considered to be prophets-- in the case of the mother of Moses (20:38; 28:7).

18. (1463) The term "(Divine) compulsion" makes me restless and impatient: Nicholson translated, "The word 'compulsion (jabr) made me impatient (uncontrollable)..." And he explained: "Here the poet answers Necessitarians who assert that Divine omnipotence, as set forth in the foregoing passage, excludes the possibility of free action on the part of Man. Such a view implies separation between the creature and the Creator, the opposition of two wills, and the subjugation of the weaker. But mystics, who know God to be Love and themselves one with Him are not 'compelled'; on the contrary they enjoy the unconstrained rapture (bí-sabrí) of self-abandonment and the perfect freedom of feeling and acting in harmony with the will of their Beloved. The commentators discuss the meaning and construction of this verse, which they regard as one of the most obscure in the Mathnawi" Nicholson also explained about this line: "In the first hemistich jabr refers to jabr-i mahmúd (see note on v. 1073 supra [= "when one has passed away from self-consciousness by dint of the utmost asceticism and incessant concentration on God and has attained to the degree of jabr-i mahmúd, he mounts the Buráq [= miraculous steed] of Divine Power, and then actions proceed from him by the volition of God: he does not attribute these actions to himself, for he sees no agent except God"]); in the second, to jabr-i madhmúm, i.e. the antinomian [= rejecting that there are Divine laws that one should strive to obey] doctrine of necessitarianism." (Commentary)

19. (1464) This is communion with God; it's not (something) forced: Nicholson said that this verse "describes the jabr ["compulsion"] of the mystic as union (ma`iyyah) with God." (Commentary)

20. (1464) the radiant splendor of the moon: "i.e. the heart is illumined by the Truth, and there is no room for error." (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (1465) the coercion of the domineering self-willed (ego): Nicholson translated, "the compulsion of (exerted by) the evil-commanding self-willed (soul)." This refers to the soul [nafs] which commands to evil mentioned in the Qur'an (12:53). This means that the compulsion experienced by most people is from their own evil, selfish, greedy, angry, etc. desires.

22. (1466) an eye in (their) hearts: the sufi teaching that, for some who are blessed by God, a spiritual "eye of the heart" opens up which can see spiritual realities that the intellect cannot conceive of.

23. (1467) The unperceived (realm) and the future: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "To them the unseen and the future became manifest" (from, "...the unseen things of the future became manifest").

24. (1467) a (worthless) corpse to them: Nicholson translated, "... to them recollection of the past became naught." And he explained:"The unitive state is an 'eternal Now', comprehending in itself both the future and the past." (Commentary)

25. (1468) Raindrops within oysters are (changed into) pearls: "referring to the legendary origin of pearls. "As rain-drops when received by oyster-shells become pearls, so in the bodies of the saints evil is transformed into good. In them the pure doctrine of Divine Unity and Love replaces those vulgar notions of freedom and necessity, which represent Man either as the rival of the Almighty or as His involuntary scapegoat." (Nicholson, Commentary)

26. (1470) the navel of the musk deer: "a skin-pit (navel) or gland in the male musk-deer, which produces a secretion that is dried and used as a perfume. When freshly taken from the deer, this gland is blood-stained, and the secretion itself is derived from the animal's blood; hence khún [= blood] in the second hemistich [= half of the verse]. The real nature of the saints is disguised by their outward appearance." (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (1472) how can it become gold: this is a correction was added in the earliest manuscript, opposite the original, which had: "how can it take (the quality of) a pearl?"-- which Nicholson translated, "how should it assume nobility in the heart (midst) of the elixir?"

28. (1472) (alchemical) elixir [iksîr]: this word (derived from the Greek "kseros," which became in Arabic, "al-iksîr") refers to the "philosopher's stone," something which could be produced by a secret formula known only to alchemists. This substance was

believed to have the power to transform a "base metal" (such as copper or lead) into gold or silver. In sufism, these terms refer to the spiritual power of the spiritual master to transform the disciple (with the permission and help of God) from the "raw" state symbolized by copper to the "ripe" state symbolized by gold.

29. (1474) the table cloth: means a cloth, or leather mat, laid down on the floor or ground, upon which food is served. This is has been the Middle Eastern custom for many centuries.

30. (1474) happiness of spirit: Nicholson translated, "the glad spirit (of life)," which he explained as referring to the animal soul (Commentary). Here, Rumi expresses the view that bread is transformed into the "animal," or vital, soul of human beings. This is part of the doctrine of the descent of spirit into matter, followed by the ascent back to the heavens (from mineral, plant, animal human stages-- and then beyond).

31. (1475) (the fountain of) Salsabeel: a fountain of deliciously sweet and pure water in Paradise (Qur'an 76:18). "The commentators explain salsabíl here as 'sweet and fresh water which promotes digestion'; but in my opinion the word is used metaphorically for 'power of spiritual assimilation'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

32. (1476) the power of the Soul of the soul: "the spirit of the Perfect Man." (Nicholson, Commentary)

33. (1477) The human piece of meat: Nicholson translated, "The piece of flesh which is Man," and he commented: "Gásht-párah may be the human embryo (mudghah), as is most likely, or the body. I disagree with the commentators who say it is the hand." (Commentary)

34. (1477) possessed of strength and soul [zûr-o jân]: this is a correction written above the text of the earliest manuscript, which has "intellect and soul" [`aql-o jân]-- which Nicholson translated, "endowed with intelligence and soul."

35. (1477) splitting the mountain by means of water channels and mines: Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "cleaves the mountain by means of water-channel and mine" (from, "cleaves mountain and sea and mine").

36. (1478) the moon was split: "The splitting of the moon in twain (Qur. LIV 1 [= 54:1]) is a portent of the Resurrection; at an early date it was explained as a miracle wrought by the Prophet, and this is the view generally taken by Moslems." (Nicholson, Commentary)

37. (1479) mystery: "i.e. the mysterious nature of the Perfect Man." (Nicholson, Commentary)

38. (1479) will charge [tork-tâz]: literally, "will make a Turkish raid." An idiom which means a swift rush forward. Nicholson translated, "the soul would rush (in rapture) towards the highest heaven."

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1443 chûn `umar aghyâr rô-râ yâr yaft
jân-é ô-râ Tâlib-é asrâr yâft

shaykh kâmil bûd-o Tâlib mushtahî
mard châbok bûd-o markab dargahî

1445 dîd ân murshid ke ô irshâd dâsht
tokhm-é pâk andar zamîn-é pâk kâsht

sû'âl kardan rasûl-é rûm az amîru 'l-mû'minîn `umar, raZiyu 'llâh `an-hu

mard goft-ash k-ây amîru 'l-mû'minîn
jân ze-bâlâ chûn dar-âmad dar zamîn

morgh-é bê-andâza chûn shod dar qafaS?
goft Haq bar jân fosûn khwând-o qiSaS

bar `adam-hâ k-ân na-dâr-ad chashm-o gôsh
chûn fosûn khwân-ad hamê ây-ad ba-jôsh

az fosûn-é ô `adam-hâ zûd zûd
khwash mu`allaq mê-zan-ad sôy-é wujûd

1450 bâz bar mûjûd afsûnê chô khwând
zô dô asba dar `adam mûjûd rând

goft dar gôsh-é gol-o khandân-'sh kard
goft bâ sang-o `aqîq-é kân-'sh kard

goft bâ jism âyatê tâ jân shod ô
goft bâ khworshêd tâ rokhshân shod ô

bâz dar gôsh-ash dam-ad nukta-yé makhûf
dar rokh-é khworshêd oft-ad Sad kasûf
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tâ ba-gôsh-é abr ân gôyâ che khwând
k-ô chô mashk az dîda-yé khwad ashk rând?

tâ ba-gôsh-ê khâk Haq che khwânda-ast
k-o murâqib gasht-o khâmosh mânda-ast?

dar taraddud har ke ô âshofta-ast
Haq ba-gôsh-é ô mu`ammâ gofta-ast

tâ kon-ad maHbûs-ash andar dô gomân
ân kon-am ân goft yâ khwad Zidd-é ân?

ham ze-Haq tarjîH yâb-ad yak Taraf
z-ân dô yak-râ bar gozîn-ad z-ân kanaf

gar na-khwâh-î dar taraddud hôsh-é jân
kam feshâr în panba andar gôsh-é jân

tâ kon-î fahm ân mu`amma-hâ-sh-râ
tâ kon-î idrâk-e ramz-o fâsh-râ

pas maHall-é waHî gard-ad gôsh-é jân
waHî che b'w-ad? goftanê az His nehân

gôsh-é jân-o chashm-é jân joz în His-ast
gôsh-é `aql-o gôsh-é Zann z-în muflis-ast

lafZ-é jabr-am `ishq-râ bê-Sabr kard
w-an-ke `âshiq nêst Habs-é jabr kard

în ma`îyat bâ Haq-ast-o jabr nêst
în tajallî-yé mah-ast, în abr nêst

w-ar bow-ad în jabr, jabr-é `âma nêst
jabr-é ân ammâra-yé khwad-kâma nêst

jabr-râ îshân shenâs-ad ay pesar
ke khodâ be-g'shâd-eshân dar del baSar

ghayb-o âyanda bar-îshân gasht fâsh
Zikr-é mâZî pêsh-é êshân gasht lâsh

ikhtiyâr-o jabr-é êshân dêgar-ast
qaTra-hâ andar Sadaf-hâ gawhar-ast

hast bêrûn qaTra-yé khord-o bozorg
dar Sadaf ân durr-é khord-ast-o sotorg

1470 Tab`-é nâf-é âhow-ast ân qawm-râ
az berûn khûn-o darûn-ash moshk-hâ

tô ma-gô k-în mâya bêrûn khûn bow-ad
chûn raw-ad dar nâf moshkê chûn shaw-ad?

tô ma-gô k-în mis bêrûn bod muHtaqar
dar del-é aksîr chûn gasht-ast zar?

ikhtiyâr-o jabr dar tô bod khayâl
chûn dar-eshân raft shod nûr-é jalâl

nân chô dar sufra-st bâsh-ad ân jumâd
dar tan-é mardom shaw-ad ô rûH-é shâd

1475 dar del-é sofra na-gard-ad mustaHîl
mustaHîl-ash jân kon-ad az salsabîl

quwwat-é jân-ast în ay râst-khwân
tâ che bâsh-ad quwwat-é ân jân-é jân?

gôsht-pâra-yé âdamî bâ zôr-o jân
mê-shekâf-ad kûh-râ bâ baHr-o kân

zûr-é jân-é kûh-kan shaqq-é Hajar
zûr-é jân-é jân dar inshaqqa 'l-qamar

1479 gar goshây-ad del sar-é anbân-é râz
jân ba-sôy-é `arsh sâz-ad tork-tâz

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Merchant and the Parrot

Mathnawi I: 1547-58, 1575-1577, 1586-1592, 1649-1657, 1691-1701, 1815, 1825-1832, 1845-1854

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1547 There (once) was a merchant. And he had a parrot,
imprisoned in a cage[1]-- a beautiful parrot.

(Now) when the merchant prepared for a journey (and) was about
to travel to India,

He spoke to each male and female slave (and asked), out of generosity, "What shall I bring (back) for you? Answer quickly!"

1550 Each one asked him for something wished, (and) that good man gave (his) promise to all.

(Then) he said to the parrot, "What present from the journey do you want, so that I may bring it to you from the region of India."

The parrot answered him,[2] "When you see the parrots there,[3] explain my situation (and) say,

"'The parrot so-and-so, who is yearning to see you, is in my prison by the decree of the heavens.[4]

"She sends you greetings of peace and wants justice, and desires a remedy and the path of right guidance.

1555 "She said, 'Is it proper that I, in (such a state of) yearning, should give (up my) life here (and) die in separation?

"'Is it right that I (should be) in (such) strict bondage, while you (are) sometimes on the green grass (and) sometimes on the trees?

"'Is the faithfulness of (true) friends like this, (that) I (am) in prison and you (are) in the rose garden?'

1558 "O great ones, bring (to mind) the memory of this weeping bird, (by drinking) a dawn cup (of wine)[5] among the grassy meadows!"

. . . . . .

1575 (Since) the story of the [ordinary] parrot of the soul is like this, where is one who is the [chosen] confidant of the birds?[6]

Where is a bird (who is) helpless and without sin,[7] and (yet) within him (is a) Solomon[8] with (his entire) army?

1577 When he cries out bitterly, (but) without gratitude or complaint, a clamor [to aid him] occurs in the seven heavens!

. . . . . .

1586 The man of trade accepted this message (and agreed) that he would deliver the greeting from her to (her on) kind.

When he reached the farthest regions of India, he saw some parrots in a wilderness.

He held back (his) mount (from going), then gave a shout: he delivered the greeting and returned that (which he had been given in) trust.

Among those parrots, one parrot trembled greatly, fell, died, and stopped breathing.

1590 The merchant became sorry about telling (such) news, (and) he said, "I went in destruction of (that) animal.

"Is this one, perhaps, a relative of that little parrot? (Or) was this, perhaps, (a case of) two bodies and one spirit?

1592 "Why did I do this? Why did I deliver the message (and) burn up the helpless (creature) by means of this crude speech?"

. . . . . .

1649 The merchant finished his trading (and) returned to (his) home, satisfying (the best hopes of his) friends.[9]

1650 He brought a present to each male slave (and) gave a share to each female slave.

The parrot said, "Where is (this) slave's present? Tell what you saw and said!"

(The merchant) replied, "No. I am myself (very) sorry about that, (and am) chewing my hands and biting (my) fingers (over it).

"Why did I foolishly bring (such) a crude message out of ignorance and thoughtlessness?"

(The parrot) said, "O master, why are you (so) regretful? What is it that calls for (all) this anger and sorrow?"

1655 He replied, "I told your complaints to a group of your fellow parrots.

"That one parrot-- her heart broke from getting wind of your pain, and she trembled and died.

1657 "I became regretful (and thought), 'Why was (the use of) saying this?' But since I had (already) spoken, what was the benefit of remorse?"

. . . . . .

1691 When she heard about what that parrot did, she then trembled,[10] fell, and became cold.

When the master saw her fallen like this, he jumped up and hurled (his) cap on the ground.

(And) when the master saw her with this appearance and condition, he leaped up and tore the upper front (of his robe).

He said, "O beautiful and sweet-crying parrot, what happened to you? Why did you become like this?

1695 "Oh what sorrow! My sweet-sounding bird! Oh what misery! My close companion and confidant!

"Oh what regret! My sweet-singing bird! The wine of (my) spirit, (my) garden, and my sweet basil![11]

"If Solomon[12] (could have) had a bird like you, he never would have become occupied with (all) those (other) birds.

"Oh what a pity! The bird which I got (so) cheaply! (Yet how) quickly I turned my face away from her face![13]

"O tongue! You are a great injury to mankind![14] (But) since you are talking,[15] what can I say to you?

1700 "O tongue! You are both the fire and the harvest stack. How long will you set fire[16] to this harvest stack?

1701 "(My) soul is lamenting in secret because of you, even though it keeps doing everything you tell it (to do)."

. . . . . .

1815 The merchant, in (a state of) burning, and agony, and yearning, kept saying a hundred scattered and disturbed (things) such as this.
. . . . . .

1825 After that, he threw her out of the cage. The little parrot flew to a high branch--

The dead parrot made such a (swift) flight, (it resembled) the sun when it charges forth, like a Turk,[17] from the sky [and rises up at

dawn].

The merchant became bewildered by the bird's action. All of a sudden, (still) without understanding, he saw (that there were) secrets involving the bird.

He raised his head and said, "O nightingale, share a portion (of wisdom) with us in explanation of the situation.

"What did (that parrot) do so that you learned (something), prepared a trick, and burned us (with sorrow)?"

1830 The parrot answered, "She gave me advice by her (very) action, meaning, 'Escape[18] from (attachment to) elegance of voice and joyful expansion [of your breast in song].

"'Because your voice is keeping you in shackles.' She herself acted dead for the sake of (sending me) this advice,

1832 "Meaning, 'O (you who) have become a singer to (both) commoners and the elite: become "dead" like me[19] so that you may find deliverance!'"

. . . . . .

1845 The parrot gave him one or two (pieces of) advice, full of (spiritual) discrimination.[20] After that, he said to him the "salaam of parting."[21]

The merchant said to her, "Go in the protection of Allah. You have now shown me a new path."

The merchant (then) said to himself, "This is the advice for me: I will take her path, for this path is luminous.

"How should my soul be inferior to a parrot? The soul ought to (follow) such as this, for it is a (very) good track (indeed)!"

The body resembles a cage.[22] The body has become a thorn to the soul because of the deceptions of those (who are) inside and outside.

1850 This one tells her,[23] "I am your confidant," and that one tells her, "No, I am your companion."

This one tells her, "There is none like you in existence with (such) beauty, and grace, goodness, and generosity."

(And) that one tells her, "Both this world and the next are yours,
(and) all our souls are the (eager) uninvited guests of your soul."

When he sees the people drunk from (being with) him, he loses
control of himself and goes (about full) of pride and arrogance.

1854 He doesn't know that the Devil has thrown thousands (just)
like him into the river's water.[24]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/18/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1547) a parrot imprisoned in a cage: "In this Story, which illustrates vv. 1540-1545 ["But if you are accepting (the Qur'án), when you read the stories (of the prophets), the bird, your soul, will be distressed in its cage./ The bird that is a prisoner in a cage, (if it) is not seeking to escape, 'tis from ignorance./ The spirits which have escaped from their cages are the prophets, (those) worthy guides./ From without comes their voice, (telling) of religion, (and crying), 'This, this is the way of escape for thee./ By this we escaped from this narrow cage: there is no means of escape from this cage but this way,/ (That) thou shouldst make thyself ill, exceedingly wretched, in order that thou mayest be let out from (the cage of) reputation.'"-- Nicholson's translation], it is related how a parrot escaped from her cage by feigning death. Rúmí has borrowed, adapted, and expanded `Attár's tale of the Hindú sage and the King of Turkistán (Asrár-námah, 90, 6 sqq.), where a parrot plays the same trick with equal success. In both cases a message is sent by the captive parrot to her mates in India: on hearing it, they all (`Attár), or one of them (Rúmí), fall to the ground as though dead. When the news is brought to the caged parrot by the Hindú sage (`Attár), or by the merchant (Rúmí), she knows what to do in order to regain her liberty. She 'dies', is cast out of the cage, and immediately flies away." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (1552) answered him: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "The parrot said to him" (from, "The parrot said").

3. (1552) the parrots there: "i.e. the spirits of departed prophets and saints and living holy men." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (1553) the decree of the heavens: Nicholson translated, "the destiny of Heaven," and Arberry, "by heaven's decree." It can be interpreted either as the direct decree of God in Heaven, or indirectly, as the decree of God via the "fate" ordained by the planets (the heavenly spheres). Rumi makes numerous astrological references in the Mathnawi, but as a Muslim he of course believes that the ultimate source of destiny is God alone.

5. (1558) dawn cup (of wine): a metaphor for remembering a dear friend. Refers to the first cup of wine consumed at dawn by the pre-Islamic Persians. Four verses later, Rumi refers to another pre-Islamic Arab custom of pouring out the last drops of wine in memory of past friends. Alcoholic beverages are, of course, forbidden in Islam.

6. (1575) the (chosen) confidant of the birds: "The... prophets and saints who possess the transcendental spirit (rûh-i qudsí) and soar to God on the wings of love, ecstasy, and self-abandonment." (Nicholson, Commentary

7. (1576) helpless and without sin: "These words describe the saint in his human aspect." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1576) Solomon: "Solomon, on his accession to the throne, received homage from the birds, whose speech he had been taught (Qur. XXVII 16)". (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (1649) satisfying (the best hopes of) his friends: Nicholson later corrected his translation based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "returned home (prosperously) to the joy of his friends" (from, "returned home glad of heart").

10. (1691) she then trembled: Nicholson later corrected his translation based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "thereupon she trembled, fell" (from, "she trembled exceedingly, fell").

11. (1696) sweet basil: an aromatic herb used in cooking

12. (1697) If Solomon: a reference to the story of how God gave Solomon the ability to understand the speech of the birds (Qur'an 27:16).

13. (1698) from her face: "The love that inspires the soul of the mystic cannot be gained by his own efforts: it is a Divine gift." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (1699) since you are talking: "i.e. 'since thou art speaking and

blaming thyself'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (1699) a great injury to mankind: Nicholson later corrected his translation based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "thou art a great damage (very injurious) to mankind" (from "a great damage to me").

16. (1700) set fire: "The tongue utters both good and evil words: the latter are compared to a fire which consumes the stack of good words and works." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (1826) charges like a Turk: an idiom used by Rumi to mean a "rush, onrush, swift advance." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson used a variant, which exists in the oldest manuscript, and translated: "as when the orient sun rushed onward."

18. (1830) escape: Nicholson used a variant (present in the oldest manuscript), and translated, "Abandon thy charm of voice, and thy affection (for thy master)".

19. (1832) become "dead" like me: refers the sufi interpretation of the saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "Die before you die" as involving "mystical death"-- "annihilation" (fanâ) of ego and worldly attachments, followed by "subsistence" (baqâ) in God.

20. (1845) full of (spiritual) discrimination: Nicholson translated, "full of (spiritual) savour," interpreting the Arabic word here (maZâq) as equivalent to the sufi technical word meaning "spiritual taste/savor/experience" (Zawq).

21. (1845) the salaam of parting: "as-salâmu `alaykum" ("(May) the peace (of God be) upon you"]-- the salutation between Muslims when meeting and saying farewell.

22. (1849) the body resembles a cage: Rumi's teaching resembles that of Plato. However, as a Muslim mystic, he of course believed that the soul is confined in the "cage" of the body by the Will of God, and also that the soul can only escape from bondage to worldly attachments (or, in sufism, what is "other than God") by means of Divine guidance.

23. (1850) tells her: refers to the soul. Pronouns which refer to the parrot, the symbol for the soul, are translated here as "her."

24. (1854) into the river's water: Nicholson translated,"into the water of the river (of destruction)."

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1547 bûd bâzargân-o ô-râ TûTî'yê
dar qafaS maHbûs zêbâ Tûtî'yê

chûn-ke bâzargân safar-râ sâz kard
sôy-é hendostân shodan âghâz kard

har ghulâm-o har kanêzak-râ ze-jûd
goft bahr-é tô che âr-am? gô-î zûd

1550 har yakê az way murâdê khwâst kard
jomla-râ wa`da be-dâd ân nêk-mard

goft TûTî-râ che khwâh-î armaghân
k-âr-am-at az khiTTa-yé hendôstân?

goft-ash ân TûTî ke ân-jâ TûTiy-ân
chûn be-bîn-î, kon ze-Hâl-é man bayân

k-ân fulân TûTî ke mushtâq-é shomâ-st
az qaZây-é âsmân dar Habs-é mâ-st

bar shomâ kard ô salâm-o dâd khwâst
w-az shomâ châra-w' rah-é irshâd khwâst

1555 goft mê-shây-ad ke man dar ishtiyâq
jân deh-am în-jâ be-mîr-am dar firâq?

în rawâ bâsh-ad ke man dar band-é sakht
gah shomâ bar sabza gâhê bar derakht?

în chon-în bâsh-ad wafây-é dôst-ân
man dar-în Habs-o shomâ dar golestân?

1558 yâd âr-îd ay meh-ân z-în morgh-é zâr
yak SabûHê dar meyân-é marghzâr

. . . . . .

1575 qiSSa-yé Tûtî-yé jân z-în sân bow-ad
kô kasê k-ô maHram-é morgh-ân bow-ad

kô yakê morghê Za`îfê bê-gonâh
w-andarûn-é ô sulaymân bâ-sepâh

1577 chûn be-nâl-ad zâr bê-shukr-o gelah
oft-ad andar haft gardûn ghulghulah

. . . . . .

mard-é bâzargân paZêraft în payâm
k-ô rasân-ad sôy-é jens az way salâm

chûn-ke tâ aqSây-é hendostân rasîd
dar bayâbân TûTî'yê chandê be-dîd

markab istânîd pas âwâz dâd
ân salâm-o ân amânat bâz dâd

TûTî'yê z-ân TûTiy-ân larzîd bas
ôftâd-o mord-o be-g'sest-ash nafas

shod pashîmân khwâja az goft-é khabar
goft raft-am dar halâk-é jânwar

în magar khêsh-ast bâ ân TûTiy-ak
în magar dô jism bûd-o rûH yak?

în cherâ kard-am, cherâ dâd-am payâm
sôkht-am bêchâra-râ z-în goft-é khâm

. . . . . .

kard bâzargân tijârat-râ tamâm
bâz âm-ad sôy-é manzil dôst-kâm

har ghulâmê-râ be-y-âward armaghân
har kanêzak-râ be-bakhshîd ô neshân

goft TûTî armaghân-é banda kô?
ân-che dîd-î w-ân-che goft-î bâz gô

goft nah, man khwad pashîmân-am az ân
dast-é khwad khâyân-o angoshtân gazân

man cherâ payghâm-é khâmê az gezâf
bord-am az bê-dâneshî-wo az neshâf?

goft ay khwâja pashîmân-î ze-chîst
chîst ân k-în khashm-o gham-râ muqtaZî-st?

goft goft-am ân shikâyat-hây-é tô
bâ gorôhê TûTiy-ân ham-tây-é tô

ân yakê TûTî ze-dard-at bôy bord
zahra-ash be-d'rîd-o larzîd-o be-mord

1657 man pashîmân gasht-am, în goftan che bûd
lêk chûn goft-am, pashîmânî che sûd?

. . . . . .

1691 chûn shenîd ân morgh k-ân TûTî che kard
pas be-larzîd, ôftâd-o gasht sard

khwâja chûn dîd-ash fotâda ham-chon-în
bar jahîd-o zad kolah-râ bar zamîn

chûn ba-d-în rang-o ba-d-în Hâl-ash be-dîd
khwâja bar jast-o gorîbân-râ darîd

goft ay TûTîy-é khwob-é khwash-Hanîn
în che bûd-at în cherâ gasht-î chon-în?

1675 ay darîghâ morg-é khwash-âwâz-é man
ay darîghâ ham-dam-o ham-râz-é man

ay darîghâ morgh-é khwash-ilHân-é man
râH-é rûH-o rawZa-wo rayHân-é man

gar sulaymân-râ chon-în morghê bod-y
kay khwad ô mushghûl-é ân morgh-ân shod-y?

ay darîghâ morgh k-ârzân yâft-am
zûd rôy az rôy-é ô bar tâft-am

ay zabân tô bas zeyân-î bar warà
chûn tô-î gôyâ, che gôy-am man to-râ?

1700 ay zabân ham âtesh-o ham kherman-î
chand în âtesh dar-în kherman zan-î?

1701 dar nehân jân az tô afghân mê-kon-ad
gar-che har che gôy-î-ash ân mê-kon-ad

. . . . . .

1815 khwâja andar âtash-o dard-o Hanîn
Sad parâkanda hamê goft în chon-în

. . . . . .

1825 ba`d az ân-ash az qafaS bêrûn fekand
TûTiy-ak parrîd tâ shâkh-é boland

TûTî-yé morda chon-ân parwâz kard
k-âftâb az charkh torkî-tâz kard

khwâja Hayrân gasht andar kâr-é morgh
bê-khabar nâgah be-dîd asrâr-é morgh

rôy bâlâ kard-o goft ay `andalîb
az bayân-é Hâl khwad-mân deh naSîb

ô che kard ân-jâ ke tô âmôkht-î
sâkht-î makrê-wo mâ-râ sôkht-î?

1830 goft TûTî k-ô ba-fa`l-am pand dâd
ke rahâ kon luTf-âwâz-o goshâd

z-ân-ke âwâz-at to-râ dar band kard
khwêshtan morda pay-é în pand kard

1832 ya`nî ay muTrib shoda bâ `âm-o khâS
morda shaw chûn man ke tâ yâb-î khilâS

. . . . . .

1845 yak-dô pand-ash dâd TûTî por-maZâq
ba`d az ân goft-ash salâm-é al-firâq

khwâja goft-ash fî 'amâni 'llâh be-raw
mar ma-râ aknûn nomûd-î râh-é naw

khwâja bâ khwad goft k-în pand-é man-ast
râh-é ô gîr-am ke în rah rôshan-ast

jân-é man kam-tar ze-TûTî kay bow-ad?
jân chon-în bây-ad ke nêkô-pay bow-ad

tan qafaS shakl-ast, tan shod khâr-é jân
dar ferîb-é dâkhil-ân-o khârij-ân

1850 în-'sh gôy-ad man shaw-am ham-râz-é tô
w-ân'sh gôy-ad nay man-am anbâz-é tô

în-'sh gôy-ad nêst chûn tô dar wujûd
dar jamâl-o faZl-o dar iHsân-o jûd

ân-'sh gôy-ad har dô `âlam ân-é tô-st
jomla jân-hâ-mân Tufayl-é jân-é to-st

ô cho bîn-ad khalq-râ sar-mast-é khwêsh
az takabbur mê-raw-ad az dast-é khwêsh

1854 ô na-dân-ad ke hazâr-ân-râ chô ô
dêw afkand-ast andar âb-é jô

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Breaths of Divine Mercy

Mathnawi I: 1951-1965

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In explanation of the Tradition, "Truly, during the days of your time,[1] your Lord has certain breaths[2] [of Mercy]. So meet them [when they occur]!"

1951 The Prophet said, "God's Breaths (of Mercy) are increasing[2A] during these days.

"(So) keep your ears and minds (alert) for these times,[3] (and) seize (the opportunity of) such breaths as these."

The breath (of Mercy) came, saw you, and left;
it gave (spiritual) life to whomever it wished, and left.

Another breath has come. Be aware, so that you don't stay back from this (one) as well, O master of the house.

1955 The soul of fire[4] found (itself) being extinguished by it, (and) from its permanence, the soul of the dead wore a robe [of everlasting life].

This is the freshness and the movement of the Tooba tree[5] (in Paradise); it isn't like the movements of creatures.

If it should fall upon earth or heaven, their hearts will melt[6] (with fear) immediately.

Yet because of [their] fear of this limitless Breath-- read again (the verse), "But they refused to bear it."[7]

Otherwise, how would there be (the verse), "They were afraid of

it"?-- unless, from fear of it, the mountain's heart would have bled (to death).

1960 Last night, this (Breath) gave a different kind of opportunity, (but) some [desire for] mouthfuls[8] came and blocked the way.

For the sake of a mouthful, a Luqman[9] has become hostage. (But) it's the time for Luqman,[10] (so) go away, O mouthful!

These itches[11] (are) from desire for a mouthful. Keep seeking (instead to remove) the thorn from the sole of Luqman's (foot).

There is (actually) no thorn, or (even) its shadow, on the sole of Luqman's (foot), but you don't have the discrimination[12] (to see it) because of (your) greed.

Know (that) the thorn is what you have seen (as) a date, because you are very blind [in your greed] for food and not-seeing.

1965 Since the soul of Luqman is the rose garden of God, how can the
foot of his soul be wounded by a thorn?!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 12/2/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1.(Heading) in the days of your time: "i.e. at all times." (Nicholson, Commentary) Differently interpreted, it may mean during the times of the Prophet's companions in his presence, or during the whole Islamic era initiated by the Prophet and the Revelation he received-- since Rumi refers to it as current in his day (in line 1960: "Last night, this (Breath) gave a different kind of opportunity..."

2. (Heading) certain breaths: "Only part of the Hadíth is quoted here; the rest of it runs: la'allahu an tusíba-kum nafhat-un minhá fa-lá tashqawna abad-an, 'perchance one of the breaths will reach you , and then ye will nevermore be miserable'. The following passage develops the topic of Divine inspiration.... The meaning of nafahát [= breathings] is brought out in another Hadíth similar to this one: ta'arradú li-nafaháti rahmati 'lláhi, 'Address yourselves to (i.e. make yourselves the objects of) the sweet exhalations of Divine

mercy'.... [Regarding the latter words,] Rúmí is thinking especially of the spiritual teaching, influence, and favours of the saints." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2A. (1951) increasing: lit., "bringing precedence, priority" [sabaq--chosen to rhyme with "God," Haqq]. Nicholson translated, "In these days the breathings of God prevail." "The breaths of God Most High have become greater during these days. In other words, in all the times and in all the hours of the day, the breaths of God are manifesting, and are reaching man, and each of those are increasing for him in the moment." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (1952) these times: this relates to the sufi teaching of the "spiritual moment" ["waqt" in Arabic; "dam" in Persian]: the emphasis on the importance of the spiritual opportunity of the present time, when spiritual grace, blessing, and realization may occur--especially in the presence of, or through the connection with, a spiritual master. Such a moment must not be missed by the mystic lover of God because of neglect and inattention, which is symbolized by "falling asleep." The seeker must be wakeful, attentive, and receptive to what the Beloved may make available to the heart. Rumi has said, "The sufi is the son of the Moment, O companion;/ saying 'tomorrow' is not among the conditions for (being on) the Path" (Mathnawi 1:133). Nicholson wrote: "Waqt [= time] is used... in one of its technical senses, viz. the moment of immediate experience of being under Divine control (tasríf).... The Súfí is 'the son of the moment', i.e. subject to and dependent on the dominant state, mood, or emotion of the 'moment.'" (Commentary)

4. (1955) the soul of fire: may also be translated, "the life of fire." Nicholson later changed his translation of the is verse, on the basis of the earliest manuscripts, to: "The soul of fire gained therefrom extinction; from its everlastingness, the dead (soul) put on the mantle (of eternal life)" (from: "...an extinguisher of (its) fire, the dead soul felt within itself a movement (of life).").

5. (1956) the Tooba tree [Tûbà]: a tree in Paradise. Nicholson noted in his Commentary about this verse that, "most manuscripts have khalqán [= creatures] for haywán [= animals]," but he did not correct his translation accordingly.

6. (1957) their hearts will melt: literally, "their galls will change to water." According to ancient Greek physiological psychology, gall (also called bile) was believed to give men "fiery" courage.

7. (1958) they refused to bear it: from a verse in the Qur'an-- "We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and they were afraid of it. But man

undertook to bear it. Truly he is (prone to be) unjust, foolish." (33:72) This verse is usually understood as involving the offer of free will. Once man accepted free will, he was subject to Divine punishment for his injustice and foolishness. "In general terms the 'trust' (amánah) which Man alone accepted is the Faith of Islam and obedience to the Divine Law. Hence Súfís define it as gnosis (ma`rifah), which is the essence of the Faith; or the inspiration of Divine Grace and Love (al-faydu 'l-iláhí), in virtue of which Man is the viceregent (khalífah) of God and displays all the Divine attributes. Nothing in the universe was capable of supporting such a burden, except Man, whom God made in His own image." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1960) some "mouthfuls": "i.e. some human infirmities [= weaknesses] or unspiritual thoughts. It is improbable that the phrase is meant to be taken literally, according to the Hadíth 'when the belly is filled, Wisdom becomes mute', or that it refers to the intrusion of uninitiated persons." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (1961) a Luqman: There is a word play between "mouthful" (loqma) and "Luqman," the name of a prophet in the Qur'an who excelled in wisdom. "For Luqmán, the sage who gives his name to the thirty-first Súrah [= chapter] of the Qur'án... He appears as a sagacious negro slave in several anecdotes related by Rúmî.... The medieval Arabic version of Aesop's Fables is ascribed to Luqmán." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1961) it's the time for Luqman: "I.e. it is high time that the pure spirit, which sensuality and worldliness keep confined in the body, should be released from its prison." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1962) these itches: may also be translated, "these afflictions," "these wounds." This scratching and itching of a thorn is an idiom in Persian for "nagging desire." Nicholson later changed his translation of this verse, based on the earliest manuscript, to: "These pricks (of the flesh) from desire of a morsel! Seek ye always (to draw forth) the thorn from the sole of Luqmán" (from, "for the sake of a morsel! Pluck ye forth the thorn...").

12. (1963) the discrimination: "I.e. 'you have not sufficient discernment to perceive that within you is a pure spirit of Divine origin, which is your real self, and that the only "thorn" is the illusion of phenomenal existence'. The thorn is the lowest form of life in the vegetable kingdom, the date-palm is the highest.... The spines (khâr) on the stem of the date-palm (khurmá-bun) are proverbial: (khár bá khurmá-st" [= "Spines are next to dates."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

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dar bayân-é în HadîS ke "inna li-rabbi-kum fî ayyâmi dahri-kum
nafaHât-in alâ fa-ta`arraZu la-hâ"

1951 goft payghâmbar ke nafHat-hây-é Haq
andar-în ayyâm mê-âr-ad sabaq

gôsh-o hosh dâr-îd în awqât-râ
dar robây-îd în chon-în nafHât-râ

nafHa âmad mar shomâ-râ dîd-o raft
har-ke-râ mê-khwâst, jân bakhshîd-o raft

nafHa-yé dêgar rasîd âgâh bâsh
tâ az-în ham wâ na-mân-î khwâja-tâsh

1955 jân-é nârî yâft az way inTifâ
morda pôshîd az baqây-é ô qabâ

tâzagî-wo jonbesh-é Tûbî-st în
ham-chô jonbesh-hây-é khalq-ân nêst în

gar dar oftad dar zamîn-o âsmân
zahra-hâ-shân âb gard-ad dar zamân

khwad ze-bîm-é în dam-é bê-muntahâ
bâz khwân fa-bayna an yaHmilna-hâ

w-ar-na khwad ashfaqna min-hâ chûn bod-y
gar-na az bîm-ash del-é koh khûn shod-y?

1960 dôsh dêgar lawn în mê-dâd dast
loqma-yé chandê dar âmad, rah bo-bast

bahr-é loqma gashta luqmânê geraw
waqt-é luqmân-ast, ay loqma be-raw

az hawây-é loqma'yê în khâr-khâr
az kaf-é luqmân hamê jôy-îd khâr

dar kaf-é ô khâr-o sâya'sh nêz nêst
lêk-etân az HirS ân tamyîz nêst

khâr dân ân-râ ke khormâ dîda-î
z-ân-ke bas nân-kûr-o bas nâ-dîda-î
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1965jân-é luqmân ke golestân-é khodâ-st
pây-é jân-ash khasta-yé khârê cherâ-st?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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When You Become Sugar

Mathnawi I: 1975-1985, 1992-2011

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1975 But there is no dread for the soul from (being named in) the feminine gender, (because) the spirit has no association with (the qualities of) man or woman.

(For) it is higher than feminine and masculine. It isn't the spirit which is (in the form) of dry and moist.[1]

(And) it isn't the spirit which increases by (eating) bread,[2] or is sometimes like this, sometimes like that.

(Rather,) it is a doer of sweet (actions),[3] and (it is) sweet and the very substance of sweetness. Without [the substance of] sweetness there is no sweetness,[4] O bribed one![5]

When you are sweet because of sugar, it is (possible) that sometime the sugar may become absent from you.

1980 (But) when you become sugar[6] as a result of being faithful,[7] then sugar will never be separated from sugar.

When the lover (of God) finds nourishment from (within) himself[8] (in the form of) "pure wine," the intellect will become lost there, lost, O companion.[9]

The partial intellect[10] is the denier of Love, although it may appear that it is the companion of (Love's) secrets.

It is smart and learned, but it is not non-existent.[11] As long as the angel has not become nothing, it is a devil.[12]

It is our friend in (helping us with) words and actions, (but) when you come to the dominating power of the (spiritual) state,[13] (then) it is nothing.[14]

1985 It is nothing since it did not become nothing beyond (its) existence;[15] since it did not become nothing willingly, there are (a great) many (who do so) unwillingly![16]

. . . . . .

1992 Both love and soul are hidden and veiled. Although I have called Him "Bride,"[17] don't consider (it) a fault.

I would have kept quiet from (care not to risk) the Friend's annoyance[18] if He had also given (me time to) delay for a moment.

But He keeps saying, "Speak! Hurry up! There is no fault (in it); it is nothing except the prompting of mysterious Destiny."

1995 The (real) fault is regarding the one who doesn't see (anything) except faults, (for) the pure invisible spirit never sees faults.

Faults appear in relation to the ignorant creature, not in regard to the accepting Lord.

Blasphemy is also wisdom in regard to the Creator, (but) if you make it in relation to us, blasphemy is calamity.[19]

And if there is a single fault together with a long life,[20] it is like the wood in the (sugarcane) plant;

Both are carried to the scales just the same, because both of them are sweet, like body and soul.

2000 Therefore, the great ones [among the sufis] have not exaggerated by saying, "The bodies of the holy ones are pure, (like) the substance of the soul."

Their words, individualities, and forms became absolute spirit,[21] free of (any) sign or trace.

The souls of those who hate them are only bodies, like the "addition"[22] in (the game of) backgammon-- it is only a name.

That one went into the earth and became entirely earth, and this one went into the salt[23] and became entirely pure--

(Meaning) the salt (mine) by which Muhammad is more (spiritually) lovely (than anyone); he is (even) more eloquent than that elegant saying (of his).[24]

2005 This "salt" is continuing by means of his heritage, (and) those heirs[25] of his are with you. (So) seek them!

He (is) seated[26] in front of you, but where is "front"? He is before you, (but) where is a soul (which is) concerned about "before?"[27]

If you have a assumption about your having a "before" and "behind," (then) you are bound to the body and excluded from the soul.

"Below" and "above," "in front" and "behind," are bodily qualities, (and) the essence of the luminous soul is without (physical) sides and directions.

Open (your) vision[28] by means of the pure light of the (spiritual) King, so that you may not imagine (things), like a short-sighted (person does),

2010 (Such as believing) that you are only this[29] (bodily existence) in sorrow and happiness. O non-existent one! Where are "in front" and "behind" in relation to non-existence?

2011 It's a rainy day. Go on (traveling) until the evening-- not (refreshed) by this (physical) rain,[30] (but) by the rain of (our) Sustaining Lord![31]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 12/23/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1976) dry and moist: "The animal or vital spirit (rúh-i hayawání) is described as 'a subtle body' (jism latíf) originating in the heart and thence conveyed by the carotid arteries to the brain. Having a corporeal basis, it may be said to be a product of the elements and their four 'natures', viz. dryness, moisture, heat, and cold." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (1977) by eating bread: Rumi is still talking about the "animal spirit," which gives life to the body and which is more energetic after food is consumed.

3. (1978) the doer of sweet (actions): "The human spirit (rúh-i insání comes directly from God (min amri Rabbí). In the Perfect Man it is

'the soul of goodness', dispensing good to all the world." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (1978) there is no sweetness: "i.e. without real intrinsic goodness there can be no lasting joy and felicity." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1978) bribed one: chosen here for the rhyme. It means "bribed by the apparent sweetness of worldly enjoyments. Nicholson explained: "The 'taker of bribes' is he who takes pleasure in anything other than God" (footnote); and: "i.e. one whose happiness depends on the extraneous means whereby it is procured." (Commentary)

6. (1980) when you become sugar: "i.e. 'when by keeping faithfully [to] the Primal Covenant ["before the Creation between God and his creatures"] you shed the attributes of the lower self and assume the nature of the Spirit who is the Absolute Goodness and Love.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1980) as the result of being faithful: Nicholson later changed his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript, to: "from the effect produced by faithfulness" (from, "from abundance of faithfulness").

8. (1981 from (within) himself: "i.e. from his real self." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (1981) O companion: Nicholson later changed his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript, to: "there reason becomes lost, lost, O comrade" (from, "there reason will remain lost and companionless").

10. (1982) the partial intellect: "the particular, individual, discursive reason as opposed by Plotinus to the universal, super-individual, spiritual reason. Hence it is contrasted, as the distinctive quality of Iblís [= Satan], with Love, which is characteristic of Adam." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1983 not nonexistent: Nicholson translated, "but it is not naught (devoid of self-existence." This means it has not become annihilated of self-centered preoccupation.

12. (1983) a devil: "The nature of Reason, like that of the Angels, is 'the purest light of heaven' (III 3193, 4054); but egoism turns an angel into a devil." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (1984) the (spiritual) state [Hâl]: this word is a technical term in sufism, sometimes translated as "ecstasy." "i.e. when it is a

question of mystical experience, the discursive reason has nothing positive to say: it can only deny." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (1984) (then) it is nothing: Nicholson translated, "when you come to the case of inward feeling (ecstasy), it is naught (of no account)." He explained, "i.e. when it is a question of mystical experience, the discursive reason has nothing positive to say: it can only deny." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (1985) it did not become nothing from (its) existence: "lam yafna `an wujúdihi" [= "it did not pass away from its existence"]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (1985) unwillingly: refers to the inevitability of death, when intellect ceases, and the soul/spirit continues onward.

17. (1992) "Bride": in the previous verse, Rumi referred to the presence of God by saying, "the presence of the Bride," which involves a word-play.

18. (1993) the Friend's annoyance: may also be translated "the Beloved's annoyance," which would risk a period of separation of the mystic lover from the Beloved.

19. (1997) blasphemy is calamity: "In relation to God, who is the Absolute Good, nothing is absolutely evil (IV 65 sqq., VI 2597 sqq.). The same things are 'evil' in so far as they lack some positive quality that would make them good, and 'good' in so far as they cause that quality to be manifested (II 2927 sqq., V 574 sqq., VI 1747 sqq.). God has created nothing without a purpose: the existence of 'evil' serves to demonstrate His omnipotence and display the infinite perfections of His nature (II 2535 sqq.). But though He wills, decrees, and creates all actions quâ actions, He does not will, decree, and create them quâ good or evil. These are names given by God or by us to actions which are approved or condemned on religious grounds. Infidelity, in respect of its being Divinely ordained, 'is wisdom'; but in relation to human creatures it is disobedience to God's law and a deadly sin. Cf. III 1362 sqq.)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (1998) a long life: literally "a hundred life-times." This does not refer to reincarnation (rejected by Islam and Islamic sufism), but is an idiom meaning a lengthy life. Nicholson translated, "together with a hundred advantages (excellences)..."

21. (2001) became absolute spirit: "The transfiguration of the body of the prophet and saint by the Divine Light (Spirit) is finely described in VI 3058 sqq." ["Through the (Divine) omnipotence

the bodies of (holy) men have gained ability to support the unconditioned Light" (VI: 3066-- Nicholson's translation)] (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (2002) the "addition": "From the obscure definitions given in the Persian lexx. it would seem that the terms ziyád and naqsh-i ziyád denote an imaginary and merely nominal addition which is sometimes made to the numbers thrown by the dice in the game of nard (Oriental backgammon)." The meaning here is that such people "have souls only in name" and are like mere bodies because they reject the saints, who are the opposite: their bodies are more like pure souls.

23. (2003) went into the salt: "i.e. it assumed the Divine attributes of purity and loveliness (maláhat). for salt (milh) as an emblem of spiritual regeneration, cf. II 1344" ["When the dead ass felt into the salt-mine, it put aside asininity and mortality"-- Nicholson's translation] (Nicholson, Commentary)

24. (2004) that elegant saying of his: there are word plays here, since the word for salt [milH] also means beauty, elegance, and grace. Nicholson had, "The (spiritual) salt through which Mohammed is more refined (than all others): he is more eloquent than that salt-seasoned (elegantly expressed) Hadíth." "The commentators quote two Traditions of the Prophet: ana amlahu min akhi Yúsufa a-Yúsufu ajmalu minní, 'I am (inwardly) more lovely than my brother Joseph, though Joseph is (outwardly) more lovely than I'; and ana afsahu 'l-`Arabí, 'I am the most eloquent of the Arabs'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (2005) those heirs: "i.e. the perfect saints, who are the heirs of the Haqíqatu 'l-Muhammadiyyah" [= the "Reality of Muhammad"]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

26. (2006) He is seated: meaning, "such an heir of the Prophet, such a saintly inheritor of the Prophet's grace and refinement.

27. (2006) thinking about "before": "The saints are hidden from the eyes of the vulgar; in order to see them, you must rise from the plane of spatiality to contemplation of the Infinite (lá-makán), but how should the soul that thinks 'before' and 'behind', i.e. the animal soul, be capable of this?" (Nicholson, Commentary)

28. (2009) Open your vision: means open your inward vision by means of the spiritual light via spiritual contact with one of the saints {"the spiritual king"). The connection between eyesight and light relates to the ancient Greek psychophysiological theory that vision is possible because of an inner light within the eye.

29. (2010) only this: "Man is essentially immaterial: his spirit, being non-existent externally, transcends all spatial relations." (Nicholson, Commentary)

30. (2011) this (physical) rain: In Islamic tradition, rain is viewed as a blessing from God, and symbolizes grace. Nicholson had "not (sped) by this (earthly) rain."

31. (2011) the rain of (our) Sustaining Lord: "I.e. 'thy day of life is a journey to God, who sheds on thee the rain of His inspiration if thou wilt open thy heart to receive them.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1975 lêk az ta'nîS jân-râ bâk nêst
rûH-râ bâ mard-o zan ishrâk nêst

az mu'annaS w-az muZakkar bar-tar-ast
în nay ân jân-ast k-az khoshk-o tar-ast

în na ân jân-ast k-afzây-ad ze-nân
yâ gahê bâsh-ad chon-în, gâhê chon-ân

khôsh-kon-anda-st-o khôsh-o `ayn-é khwashî
bê-khôshî na-b'w-ad khôshî ay murtashî

chûn tô shîrîn az shakar bâsh-î, bow-ad
k-ân shakar gâhê ze-tô ghâyib shaw-ad

1980 chûn shakar gard-î ze-ta'Sîr-é wafâ
pas shakar kay az shakar bâsh-ad jodâ?

`âshiq az khwad chûn ghiZâ yâb-ad raHîq
`aql ân-jâ gom shaw-ad, gom ay rafîq

`aql-é jozwî `ishq-râ munkir bow-ad
gar-che be-n'mây-ad ke SâHib-sir bow-ad

zêrak-o dânâ-st, ammâ nêst nêst
tâ fereshta lâ na-shod, âharmanê-st

ô ba-qawl-o fa`l yâr-é mâ bow-ad
chûn ba-Hukm-e Hâl ây-î lâ bow-ad

1985 lâ bow-ad, chûn ô na-shod az hast nêst
chûn-ke Taw`-an lâ na-shod kurh-an basê-st
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. . . . . .

1992 `ishq-o jân har dô nehân-and-o satîr
gar `urûs-ash khânda-am `aybê ma-gîr

az malûlî-yé yâr khâmosh kard-am-y
gar ham-ô muhlat be-dâd-î yak-damê

lêk mê-gôy-ad be-gô hîn `ayb nêst
joz taqâZây-é qaZây-é ghayb nêst

1995 `ayb bâsh-ad k-ô na-bîn-ad joz ke `ayb
`ayb kay bîn-ad rawân-é pâk-é ghayb?

`ayb shod nisbat ba-makhlûq-ê jahûl
nay ba-nisbat bâ khodâwand-é qabûl

kufr ham nisbat ba-khâliq Hikmat-ast
chûn ba-mâ nisbat kon-î, kufr âfat-ast

w-ar yakê `aybê bow-ad bâ Sad Hayât
bar miSâl-é chûb bâsh-ad dar nabât

dar tarâzô har dô-râ yak-sân kash-and
z-ân-ke ân har dô chô jism-o jân khwash-and

2000 pas bozorg-ân în na-goft-and az gozâf
jism-é pâk-ân ayn-é jân oftâd Sâf

goft-eshân-o nafs-eshân-o naqsh-eshân
jomla jân-é muTlaq âmad bê-neshân

jân-é doshman-dâr-eshân jism-ast Sirf
chûn zeyân az nard, ô ism-ast Sirf

ân ba-khâk andar shod-o kul khâk shod
w-în namak andar shod-o kul pâk shod

ân namak k-az way muHammad amlaH-ast
z-ân HadîS-é bâ namak ô afSaH-ast

2005 în namak bâqî-st az mîrâS-é ô
bâ-tow-and ân wâriS-ân-é ô be-jô

pêsh-é tô shesta to-râ khwad pêsh kô
pêsh hast-at, jân-é pêsh-andêsh kô?

gar tô khwad-râ pêsh-o pas dâr-î gomân
basta-yé jism-î-wo maHarûm-î ze-jân

zêr-o bâlâ pêsh-o pas waSf-é tan-ast
bê-jihat-hâ Zât-é jân-é rôshan-ast

bar goshâ az nûr-é pâk-é shah naZar
tâ na-pendâr-î tô chûn kôtah-naZar

2010 ke ham-în-î dar gham-o shâdî-wo bas
ay `adam kô mar `adam-râ pêsh-o pas?

2011 rôz-é bârân-ast mê-raw tâ ba-shab
na az-în bârân az ân bârân-é rab

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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She Is a Ray of The Beauty of God

Mathnawi I: 2429-37

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2429 Water overpowers fire by (its) terror, (yet) it boils when it is inside a partition.

2430 (For) when a pot becomes the screen between (these) two,[1] it makes the water vanish (and) turns it (into) air.

If you dominate women outwardly, like water (over fire), you are dominated inwardly and you are seeking [and boiling in desire for] women.

This is such a special quality in mankind, (since) love is lacking in animals,[2] which is due to (their) deficiency.

The Prophet said,[3] "Women become very dominant over wise and pious (men),

"Yet ignorant (men) become dominant over women"-- because they go (about) in a rash and very hot-tempered (manner).[4]

2435 They are lacking tenderness, kindness, and love because animality dominates over (their) nature.

Love and tenderness are qualities of humanity, (while) anger and
lust are qualities of animality.

2437 She is a ray of [the Beauty of] God;[5] she is not a beloved.
She is a creator; you may say that she is not created.[6]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2430) between these two: this is the first half of the couplet in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, which Nicholson later corrected (from "When a cauldron comes between (them), O king").

2. (2432) love is lacking in animals: "Although animals relatively to man are deficient in love, they 'know what love is' and 'he that is blind to love is inferior to a dog' (V 2008)" (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2433) the Prophet said: refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "Truly, they dominate the wise man and the ignorant man dominates them."

4. (2434) hot-tempered manner: this is the second half of the couplet in the earliest manuscript, which Nicholson later corrected (from "for in them the fierceness of the animal is imprisoned").

5. (2437) a ray of God: "Woman is the highest type of earthly beauty, but earthly beauty is nothing except in so far as it is a manifestation and reflexion of Divine attributes" (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (2437) not created: "The expressions used in the second hemistich are remarkable. Sweeping aside the veil of form, the poet beholds in woman the eternal Beauty which is the inspirer and object of all love, and regards her, in her essential nature, as the medium par excellence through which that uncreated Beauty reveals itself and exercises creative activity. From this point of view she is a focus for the Divine tajallí [manifestation] and may be identified with the life-giving power of its rays." "...the context here, together with other passages in the Mathnawí, leaves no doubt that what the poet has in view is not the physical functions of woman but the spiritual

and essentially Divine qualities in her which 'create' love in man and cause him to seek union with the true Beloved." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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2429 âb ghâlib shod bar âtash az nahîb
z-âtash ô jôsh-ad chô bâsh-ad dar Hijâb

2430 chûn-ke dêgê Hâ'îl âm-ad har dô-râ
nêst kard ân âb-râ kard-ash hawâ

Zâhirâ bar zan cho âb ar ghâlib-î
bâTinâ maghlûb-o zan-râ Tâlib-î

în chon-în khâSîyatî dar âdamî-st
mehr Haywân-râ kam-ast, ân az kamî-st

goft payghâmbar ke zan bar `âqil-ân
ghâlib ây-ad sakht-o bar SâHib-del-ân

bâz bar zan jâhil-ân chîra shaw-and
z-ân-ke îshân tond-o bas khîra raw-and

2435 kam bow-ad-shân raqqat-o luTf-é wadâd
z-ân-ke Haywânî-st ghâlib bar nehâd

mehr-o raqqat waSf-é insânî bow-ad
khashm-o shahwat waSf-é Haywânî bow-ad

2437 partaw-é Haqq-ast ân ma`shûq nêst
khâliq-ast ân gô'îyâ makhlûq nêst

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Dervish Is Needy For God

Mathnawi I: 2752-2772

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(On) the difference between the one who is poor for (needing) God and (is) thirsty for God, and the one who is poor from (not needing) God and is thirsty for (what is) other (than God).
~~~~~~

2752 He is (only) the picture of a (true) dervish[1] and is not deserving of the bread[2] (he begs for). Don't throw a bone[3] to the picture of a dog!

He has need (only) for a mouthful, and (has) no need for God. Don't put a tray (full of food) in front of a lifeless picture!

The poor one needy for bread[4] is a fish of the earth;[5] (he has) the shape of a fish, but (is) scared of the ocean.

2755 He is a domestic fowl, not the phoenix[6] of the (lofty) air. He drinks large tasty portions, but isn't drinking from God.[7]

He is the lover of God (only) for the sake of (worldly) benefit; his soul is not the lover of the Goodness and Beauty (of God).

(And) if he imagines (having) love for the Essential Being (of God), opinions about the Names and Attributes (of God) are not (the same as) the Essence (of God).

Imagination is created[8] and has been born, (whereas) God is not born, for He is "not begotten."[9]

The lover of his own imagination and opinions will never be among the lovers of the Lord of Kindness and Grace.

2760 (But) if the lover of those opinions is sincere, those metaphors of his will become attractors[10] to the (Divine) Reality.[11]

The explanation of these words needs a commentary, but I am afraid of senile intellects.[12]

Senile understandings and narrow views bring a hundred fantasies of evil[13] into (a person's) thoughts.

In regard to correct listening, not everyone is successful. The fig is not the morsel of every little bird[14]--

Especially a bird (which is) a rotting dead one, one full of (vain) fantasies, or one blind (and) without eyes.

2765 What (difference does) ocean or land (make) to the picture of a fish? (And) what (difference does) soap or black grease (make) to the (dark) color of a Hindu?

If you paint a picture full of sorrow on a sheet of paper, it doesn't get a lesson[15] about (the difference between) sorrow or joy.

Its image (is) sorrowful, yet it (is) free of that. (Or) its image (is) laughing, yet it (is) without a trace of (the meaning of) that.

And this sorrow and joy, which are a written inscription in the heart, are nothing but (mere) pictures in the presence of that (spiritual) joy and sorrow.[16]

The laughing image of the picture is for your sake, so that by means of the picture the meaning may become correct[17] [in your mind].

2770 The images which are inside the bath houses are like clothes[18] (when seen at a distance) outside of the undressing room.[19]

As long as you are outside, you see nothing but clothes.[20] O dear companion! Enter (the changing room and) take off (your) clothes!

2772 Because there is no way (to) the inside (of the bath) with your clothes (on).[21] (Just as) clothes are unaware of the body, (so is) the body (unaware) of the soul.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2752) (only) the picture of a dervish: In the section prior to this line, Rumi's heading stated (as translated by Nicholson), "Showing that, as the beggar is in love with bounty and in love with the bountiful giver, so the bounty of the bountiful giver is in love with the beggar: if the beggar have the greater patience, the bountiful giver will come to his door; and if the bountiful giver have the greater patience, the beggar will come to his door; but the beggar's patience is a virtue in the beggar, while the patience of the bountiful giver is in him a defect." Nicholson explained the meaning of this heading: "While the rich man who waits for the poor to come to his door is deficient in liberality [= generosity], the poor man who will not wait for the bounty of the rich, but goes to seek it, is deficient in patience (sabr) and trust in God (tawakkul)." (Commentary)

In the verses that follow (2744-2751), Rumi says, "Bounty is seeking the beggars and the poor, just as fair ones who seek a clear

mirror. The face of the fair is made beautiful by the mirror, the face of Beneficence is made visible by the beggar.... In the one case, his (the giver's) bounty makes the beggar manifest (causes him to beg), while in the other case he (the giver), (without being asked), bestows on the beggars more (than they need). Beggars, then, are the mirror of God's bounty, and they that are with God are (united with) the Absolute Bounty: And every one except those two (types of beggar) is truly a dead man: he is not at this door (the Divine Court), he is (lifeless as) a picture (embroidered) on a curtain."

Nicholson explained these verses by quoting from a (contemporary Indian) commentator of the Mathnawi: "There... are two kinds of beggars (gadá): (1) he who is the mirror of God's bounty, i.e. whenever he begs of any one, he looks upon that person essentially as God and his munificence as the munificence of God; (2) he who has negated his own seeking and volition and only subsists in the presence and contemplation of God: he is the Absolute Bounty: he has sacrificed his individual existence and will to the Divine Essence and Will. Such an one is perfect." Nicholson then quoted a (non-Qur'anic) Divine saying [Hadîth al-qudsî]: "When a man is too much occupied with praising Me (dhikrí) to ask aught of Me, I give him (what he desires) before he asks Me (for it)."

2. (2752) not deserving of the bread: Nicholson translated, "He (that seeks other than God) is the (mere) picture of a dervish, he is not worthy of bread (Divine bounty)..."

3. (2752) a bone: Nicholson later corrected a mistake in his translation-- to, "do not throw a bone..." (from, "do not throw bread...").

4. (2754) the poor one needy of bread: Nicholson translated, "The dervish that wants bread." The Persian word for "poor, needy one" [darwêsh] and "poverty" 'darwêshî' were translations of the Arabic words "faqîr" and "faqr," respectively-- meaning, for the sufis, a "pious poor one" and "spiritual poverty."

5. (2754) a fish of the earth: Nicholson translated, "land fish." Means a fresh water fish which avoids salt water. Nicholson noted that Rumi compares the mystic to a fish in water (as in his comments on I: 17): "The infinite Divine grace is to the gnostic [= mystic knower] what water is to the fish, but his thirst can never be quenched." (Commentary)

6. (2755) the phoenix: literally, the simorgh-- a legendary bird with magical abilities, sometimes depicted as living on Mt. Qâf, a mountain imagined as surrounding the world.

7. (2755) drinking from God: means in the form of blessings which give a strength and sustenance far superior to physical food and drink.

8. (2758) Imagination is created: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Conception is created; it has been begotten" (from, "Conception is begotten of qualities and definition").

9. (2758) He is "not begotten": quoted from the famous "Chapter of the Unity" [sûratu 'l-tawHîd]-- "Say: 'He is God, the (Only) One, the Eternal. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. And there is no one comparable to Him." (Qur'an 112:1-4)

10. (2760) will become attractors: Nicholson translated, "that metaphor (unreal judgement) will lead him to the reality." He noted that most editions had a different form of the second line, but after he obtained a copy of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, he evidently didn't think the difference in word arrangement warranted a corrected English translation (from, "ân mazâsh-ash tâ Haqîqat mê-kash-ad").

11. (2760) to the (Divine) Reality: "E.g. though the sálik [= spiritual seeker] be concerned only with the Divine names and attributes and their manifestations (not with the Essence), so that he desires the joys of Paradise, yet on account of his sincere conviction and devotion to God, by an act of grace, may cause his false ideas to lead him to Reality." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (2761) senile intellects: Nicholson translated, "senile (feeble) minds."

13. (2762) a hundred fantasies of evil: means imagining the worst outcomes and the worst motives of others.

14. (2763) The fig is not the morsel of every little bird: "The doctrine of mystical Unity (al-majázu `aynu 'l-haqíqati) [= the metaphor is the fount of the truth] is for gnostics, since they alone can swallow and digest it." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (2766) it doesn't get a lesson: Nicholson translated, "it has no lesson (learns nothing)..."

16. (2768) that (spiritual) joy and sorrow: refers to the spiritual delight which the mystic experiences, either in a state of ecstatic joy or longing sorrow for the Beloved. After this line (2768), another line was added to the earliest manuscript, written facing the

margin: "The sorrowful image of the picture is for our sake,/ so that our memory may come the right way." [Sûrat-é gham-gîn-é naqsh az bahr-é mâ-st/ tâ ke mâ-râ yâd âyad râh-é râst] This, perhaps, refers to the soul's memory of its "original homeland" and its subsequent "exile" to the material world.

17. (2769) the meaning may become correct: "Whether the hypocrite look sad or glad, the feelings expressed in his demeanour are not spiritual and real. He is a type of worldly joys and sorrows which, if you read them rightly, should turn all your thoughts to God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (2770) like clothes: means that the pictures on the inside walls of the bath house are unaware of the living things they represent, just as clothes are unaware of the body (which covers the soul). Nicholson speculates that Rumi may have been reminded here of a passage from the earlier sufi poet, Sana'i, in which he "contrasts the letter of the Qur'án with its spirit and likens the former to the pictures in a bath-house (naqsh-i garmábah) which know nothing about the nature of the bath." (Commentary)

19. (2770) outside the dressing room: Nicholson translated this line, "The pictures (phenomena) which are in these hot baths (the world), (when viewed) from outside the undressing-room (of self-abandonment), are like clothes." He explained: "...in the present context the 'bath-house' is the world, and the 'pictures' phenomenal forms. Viewed eternally these forms are mere 'clothes'; in order to perceive the reality concealed by them, you must enter the 'disrobing-room' (jámah-kan = maslakh) of tajríd (remotio, self-abstraction), where everything is stripped of limitations and contemplated in its essence. While clothed with bodily qualities, you cannot penetrate within and attain to knowledge of the Spirit which is your real self; for the body is just as ignorant of the soul as the clothes you wear are unconscious of your body." (Commentary)

20. (2771) you see nothing but clothes: means that you only see external reality. The pictures look like real clothes when seen at a distance, apprently because the images are seen with the changing room in between. But after entering the changing room, one sees (more closely) that the images are unreal, one's own worldly clothes are removed, and one enters a place of purity (the bath). Nicholson translated this line: "you see only the clothes (phenomena): put off your clothes and enter (the bath of reality)..."

21. (2772) with your clothes (on): means wearing your worldly clothes. It should be noted here, that there is no public nudity in Islamic cultures. Men would go to the bath house, remove their

clothes in a private room, and enter the bath with towels covering their bodies from the waist to the knees.

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farq meyân ân-ke darwêsh-ast ba-khodâ wa
teshna-yé khodâ wa meyân ân-ke darwêsh-ast
az khodâ wa teshna-yé ghayr-ast

2752 naqsh-é darwêsh-ast ô na ahl-é nân
naqsh-é sag-râ tô ma-y-andâz astokhwân

faqr-é luqma dâr-ad ô na faqr-é Haq
pêsh-é naqsh-é morda'yê kam neh Tabaq

mâhî-yé khâkî bow-ad darwêsh-é nân
shakl-é mahî lêk az daryâ ramân

2755 morgh-é khâna-st ô na sîmorgh-é hawâ
lût nôsh-ad ô na-nôsh-ad az khodâ

`âshiq-é Haqq-ast ô bahr-é nawâl
nêst jân-ash `âshiq-é Husn-o jamâl

gar tawahhum mê-kon-ad ô `ishq-é Zât
Zât na-b'w-ad wahm-é asmâ-wo Sifât

wahm makhlûq-ast-o mawlûd âmad-ast
Haq na-zâyîda-st, ô lam yûlad-ast

`âshiq-é taSwîr-o wahm-é khwêshtan
kay bow-ad az `âshiq-ân-é Zû 'l-minan

2760 `âshiq-é ân wahm agar Sâdiq bow-ad
ân majâz-é ô Haqîqat-kash shaw-ad

sharH mê-khwâh-ad bayân-é în sokhon
lêk mê-tars-am ze-afhâm-é kahon

fahm-hây-é kohna-yé kôtah-naZar
Sad kheyâl-é bad dar âr-ad dar fikar

bar samâ`-é râst har kas chîr nêst
luqma-yé har morgh-akê anjîr nêst

khâSa morghê, morda-yé pôsîda-yê
por-kheyâlê, a`miyê, bê-dîda-yé
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

2765 naqsh-é mâhî-râ che daryâ-wo che khâk
rang-é hendô-râ che Sâbûn-o che zâk?

naqsh agar gham-gîn negâr-î bar waraq
ô na-dâr-ad az gham-o shâdî sabaq

Sûrat-ash gham-gîn-o ô fârigh az ân
Sûrat-ash khandân-o ô z-ân bê-neshân

w-în gham-o shâdî ke andar del khaTê-st
pêsh-é ân shâdî-o gham joz naqsh nêst

Sûrat-é khandân-é naqsh az bahr-é to-st
tâ az ân Sûrat shaw-ad ma`nî dorost

2770 naqsh-hâ'yé k-andar-în Hammâm-hâ-st
az berûn-é jâma-kan chûn jâma-hâ-st

tâ berûn-î, jâma-hâ bîn-î-wo bas
jâma bêrûn kon dar â ay ham-nafas

2773 z-ân-ke bâ jâma darûn-sô râh nêst
tan ze-jân, jâma ze-tan âgâh nêst

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Grammarian and the Boatman

Mathnawi I: 2829-2847

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2829 (Regarding) any skill by which a master has become known,
the souls of (his) students become endowed with it (also).

2830 [For example,] in the presence of a master of (theological)
doctrines,[1] the quickly achieving student also studies doctrines.

In the presence of a master jurist, the law-reader studies
(religious) law during the instruction, not doctrines.

(And) in the presence[2] of a master who is a grammarian, by him
the soul of his student becomes a grammarian.

Once more, [in the presence of] a master who is obliterated in the (sufi) Way, by him the soul of his student is annihilated[3] in [the Majesty and Glory of] the King.

Of all these (different) kinds of knowledge, the knowledge of (spiritual) poverty[4] is the (best) preparation and provision for the road[5] (on) the day of death.

The story of what occurred between the grammarian and the boatman:

2835 A grammarian sat down in a boat. That egotist[6] turned (his) face to the boatman

(And) said, "Have you studied any grammar." He replied, "No." (The grammarian) said, "(Then) half your life has gone to nothing."

The boatman became disturbed in (his) heart from burning (sorrow), but kept silent from answering at that moment.

(Then) the wind hurled the boat into a whirlpool. The boatman shouted to the grammarian,

"Do you know anything about swimming? Tell (me)! He replied, "No, O good-answering, handsome-faced (man)!"

2840 (The boatman) said, "(Then) the whole of your life is nothing, O grammarian, because the boat is (going to) drown in these whirlpools!"

Know that (mystical) obliteration[7] is required here, not grammar.[8] If you are annihilated (of self), ride into the water without danger!

The ocean water puts the corpse on the surface. But if he is (spiritually) alive [in God] he will never escape from the Ocean.

If you have died to human qualities,[9] the ocean of (Divine) secrets[1] will put you on the topmost surface.

O you who have called the people donkeys! This time you are stuck on this (slippery) ice like a donkey (yourself).[11]

2845 Even if you are the most learned person of the time in the (entire) world, look now at the perishing (nature) of this world and this time!

We have sewn in (the story) about the man of grammar so that we might teach you the grammar of the annihilation (of self).[12]

2847 O wonderful friend! In becoming less,[13] you will find the Law of the (religious) law, the Grammar of grammar, and the Transformation of the parts of speech.[14]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2830) (theological) doctrines: Nicholson usually translates this word [`usûl] more literally as "fundamentals." However, here he translated it as "(scholastic) theology," as if it meant "fundamentals of scholastic theology" [`usûlu kalâm].

2. (2832) in the presence: Nicholson later changed this, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "With the master..." (from, "Then the master...").

3. (2833) annihilated, obliterated: this word [maHw] is a word play on the word for "grammar" [naHw]. It has the same meaning as the sufi technical term, "fanâ," which derives from the verse, "All that is upon (the earth) will pass away [fân-in], but the Face of your Lord will abide [yabqâ], full of Majesty and Glory" (Qur'an 55: 26-27).

4. (2834) (spiritual) poverty: An important term in Islamic mysticism, related to the word "faqeer" (literally, "poor one"), meaning "Muslim mystic" or "sufi" [and this Arabic term was translated into Persian as "darveesh," poor beggar]. It refers to the absence of ostentation, pride, self-worship, and self-centered preoccupation. "What is with you will vanish, and what is with God will endure" (Qur'an, 16:97). "O man, you are poor [fuqarâ] in relation to God, and God is the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (Qur'ân 35:15). A related saying of the Prophet Muhammad is, "Poverty is my pride" [al-faqru fakhr-î].

5. (2834) preparation and provision for the road: "Cf. the Hadíth, 'Knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge in the heart, and that is useful; knowledge on the tongue, and that is useless.' As the following Story shows, mystical training and experience is the

viaticum [= "traveling expenses"] required for the voyage to union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (2835) egotist: literally, "self-worshipper."

7. (2841) (mystical) obliteration, annihilated (of self): see footnote above.

8. (2841) not grammar: "Grammar (nahw) is concerned with names (asmá); the mystic with the Essence, which is the real object of all names" (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (2843 died to human qualities: refers to the teaching that sufism is the annihilation of human attributes and the lasting awareness of the Divine Attributes of God, which are reflected in the individual sufi in different degrees.

10. (2843) the Ocean of (Divine) secrets: Nicholson translated, "Inasmuch as you have died to the attributes of the flesh, the Sea of (Divine) consciousness will place you on the crown of its head (will raise you to honor)." "God upholds and exalts those who have died to self, while those who rely on their own attainments and efforts are submerged in the whirlpools of illusion." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (2844) like a donkey (yourself): "i.e. in the phenomenal world. The great scholar, with all his pride of intellect, is unable to take a single step towards true knowledge." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (2846) the grammar of the annihilation (of self): another word play on "grammar" [naHw] and "obliteration"-- which may also be translated as "(mystical) effacement, perishing, vanishing, erasing, passing away (of self)."

13. (2847) in becoming less: "kam-âmad = níst shudan [= "becoming nothing"]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (2847) the Transformation of the parts of speech: "I.e. the cream and essence of these sciences." (Nicholson, footnote) The Turkish commentators explain fiqh-i fiqh [="Law of law"] as mafhúm-i fiqh [= "the understanding of law']; nahw-i nahw [= the Grammar of grammar"] as maqsúd-i nahw [= "the purpose of grammar"]; and sarf-i sarf [= "the Transformation of the parts of speech"] as tabdíl-i sarf [= "the conversion of conjugation, inflection, declension, etymology"]; but in such phrases the first word denotes the 'essence' or 'reality' of the second. Sárí's commentary on this verse includes a short treatise by Qushayrí... in which the author points out parallels and correspondences between the technical

terms of Arabic grammar and the istiláhát [= technical vocabulary]
of the Súfís." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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2829 har honar ke ostâ ba-d-ân ma`rûf shod
jân-é shâgerd-ân ba-d-ân mawSûf shod

2830 pêsh-é ostâd-é uSûlê ham uSûl
khwân-ad ân shâgerd-é chost-é bâ-HuSûl

pêsh-é ostâd-é faqîh ân fiqh-khwân
fiqh khwân-ad na uSûl andar bayân

pêsh-é ostâdê ke ô naHwî bow-ad
jân-é shâgerd-ash az-ô naHwî shaw-ad

bâz ostâdê ke ô maHw-é rah-ast
jân-é shâgerd-ash az-ô maHw-é shah-ast

z-în hama anwâ`-é dânesh rôz-é marg
dânesh-é faqr-ast sâz-é râh-o barg

Hikâyat-é mâ-jarây-é naHwî wa kashtî-bân

2835 ân yakê naHwî ba-kashtî dar neshast
rô ba-kashtî-bân nehâd ân khwad-parast

goft hêch az naHw khwând-î? goft lâ
goft nêm-é `umr-é tô shod dar fanâ

del-shekasta gasht kashtî-bân ze-tâb
lêk ân dam kard khâmosh az jawâb

bâd kashtî-râ ba-gard-âbê fakand
goft kashtî-bân ba-d-ân naHwî boland

hêch dân-î âshnâ kardan be-gô?
goft nay ay khwash-jawâb-é khwob-rô

2840 goft kull-é `umr-at ay naHwî fanâ-st
z-ân-ke kashtî gharq-é în gard-âb-hâ-st

maHw mê-bây-ad na naHw în-jâ be-dân
gar tô maHw-î, bê-khaTar dar âb rân

âb-é daryâ morda-râ bar sar nehad
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

w-ar bow-ad zenda ze-daryâ kay rahad?

chûn be-mord-î tô az awSâf-é bashar
baHr-é asrâr-at nehad bar farq-é sar

ay ke khalq-ân-râ tô khar mê-khwânda-î
în zamân chûn khar barîn yakh mânda-î

2845 gar tô `allâma-yé zamân-î dar jahân
nak fanây-é în jahân bîn w-în zamân

mard-é naHwî-râ az ân dar dôkht-êm
tâ shomâ-râ naHw-é maHw âmôkht-êm

2847 fiqh-é fiqh-ô nahw-é naHw-o Sarf-é Sarf
dar kam âmad yâb-î ay yâr-é shegarf

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Who Is That At the Door?

Mathnawi I: 3052-3067, 3077-3080, 3099-3100

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3052 (Regarding the verse), "Everything will perish except His Face,"[1] don't seek existence if you are not within His Face.[2]

Whoever is annihilated[3] within My Face,[4] is not recompensed[5] by (the verse) "Everything will perish."

(This is) because he is in (the condition of) "except (Him)," (and so) he has passed beyond "not (any divinity)."[6] Whoever is in "except (Him)" has not perished [from true Existence].

3055 Whoever is saying "I" and "we" at the door is rejected at the door[7] and is (still) involved in [the illusion of] "not (any divinity)."

The story of the person who knocked on the door of a friend. (The friend) said from within, "Who is that?" He answered, "It's me."[8] The friend said, "Since you are you, I will never open the door. I don't know anyone among (my) friends who is "me," (so) go (away)!"

Someone came (and) knocked on the door of a friend. His friend said, "Who are you, O trustworthy one?"

He answered, "Me." (The friend) said, "Go (away), it's not the (right) time. At such a table as this[8] there is no place for the raw."[10]

What can cook the raw one, except the fire of separation. What (else) can free him from hypocrisy?

That poor miserable man left and traveled for a year. He burned from sparks [of painful longing] in separation from (his) friend.

3060 That burned one became "cooked," (and) then returned. He went back to the house of (his former) companion.

(Using) the door-ring, he knocked at the door with a hundred worries and courtesies [in mind], so that no rude words might spring forth from (his) lips.

His friend called out, "Who is that at the door?" He answered, "Only you[11] are at the door, O seizer of hearts!"[12]

(The friend) said, "Now, since you are me, O me, come in, (since) there's no room for two 'me's' in the house.

"The two ends of the thread are not (suitable) for the needle. (So), if you are a single strand,[13] come into the needle."

3065 (Only) the thread becomes connected with the needle; the eye of the needle is not appropriate for a camel.[14]

The camel's existence can never become thin except by (means of) the shears of strict exercises[15] and work.

3067 (But) for that, O so-and-so, the Power of God is needed--since it is the "Be! And it was"[16] for every (apparently) impossible (situation).

. . . . . .

3077 The friend told him, "Come in, O (you who are) entirely me, (and) not contrary like the rose and thorn of the garden."

(Since) the thread has become single, don't go into error now if you see the letters "B" and "E" [of the word "Be!"][17] as two-fold.

(The letters) "B" and "E" are pulling, like a lasso, in order to

draw the non-existent[18] into important matters [in the world of existence].

3080 Therefore, the lasso must be two-fold in (the world) of forms, although those two (strands) are (actually) single in effect.

. . . . . .

3099 Know that the world of Unity is beyond the side (known to) the senses. (So) if you want Unity, ride toward that (other) side.

3100 The (Divine) Command of "Be!" was a single act. And (although the letters) "B" and "E" occurred in words, the meaning is pure and unmixed.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3052) His Face: from a verse in the Qur'an, altered for metrical purposes in a mixture of the original Arabic words and Persian translation. "And do not invoke (in prayer) another god besides (the One True) God. There is not (any) divinity except Him [lâ ilâha illâ huwa]. Everything will perish except His Face [kullu shay-in hâlik-un illâ wajha-hu]. With Him is the Judgment, and to Him (all of) you will be returned." (28:88) Muhammad Asad's translation reads, "Everything is bound to perish, save His [eternal] Self." Asad explained that in classical Arabic, the word "face" can mean "the 'self' or 'whole being' of a person-- in this case, the essential Being, or Reality, of God." Nicholson made a similar interpretation that "Face" in Rumi's verse here equals "Dhát," or the Divine Essence. (Commentary)

2. (3052) if you are not in His Face: "i.e. 'seek only the real and essential existence which God bestows on those who have abandoned their imaginary and phenomenal self-existence (hastí)'." (Nicholson, Commentary) For advanced sufis, "(separate) existence is a sin [khaTâ]"-- or a wrong, an error (Mathnawi I: 517; Nicholson's Commentary on this line includes a verse from the sufi master Junayd (died, 910): "When I say, 'What sin [dhanb] have I committed'? she says in reply,/ 'Your life/self-existence is a sin with which no sin can be compared'.")

3. (3053) annihilated [fanâ]: a technical term in sufism, meaning "mystical death" or passing away from the transient (such as one's thoughts, personality, and identity) and remaining in essential subsistence [baqâ] in God. These terms are based on the Qur'anic verse: "All that is upon (the earth) will pass away [fân-in], but the Face of your Lord will abide [yabqâ], full of Majesty and Glory." (55:26-27)

4. (3053) within My Face: "Here the poet speaks with the voice of God." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson translated, "When any one has passed away (from himself) in my face (essence)..."

5. (3053) is not recompensed: Nicholson translated, "(the words) everything is perishing are not applicable (to him)."

6. (3054) "except (Him)" and "not (any divinity)": refer to the verse quoted above: "There is not (any) divinity except Him." "lá [= "not"] equals the self-existence which really is non-existence; illá [= "except"] equals real existence in God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (3055) at the door Nicholson translated, "at the door (of the Divine Court)."

8. (Heading) It's me: "This famous apologue may have been suggested, as the Turkish commentators believe by a Hadíth.... 'I came to the Prophet's door and knocked. He said, "Who is there?" I answered, "I". He said, "I", "I", as though he disliked it.'" (Nicholson, Commentary).

9. (3057) At such a table as this: means, "at such a mystical feast." The word translated as "table" means a cloth placed on the ground or floor, around which people ate their meals.

10. (3057) raw [khâm]: a technical sufi term which also means unripe, immature, inexperienced, unprepared, unrefined, uncooked, bearing no fruit. Means immature on the spiritual path, and is the opposite of "ripe" or "cooked" [pokhta]. Rumi has been quoted as saying, "The result of my life is no more than three words: I was raw [khâm], I became cooked [pokhta], I was burnt [sokht]." However, in the earliest manuscripts, this line is: "The result for me is no more than these three words: I am burnt, I am burnt, I am burnt." (Dîvân, ghazal 1768).

11. (3062) Only you: Nicholson comments, "According to the early sufi Sarí al-Saqatí [died, 867], there is no true love between two persons till each says to the other, 'yá ana,' 'O (thou who art) I.'" He also mentions ". . .the verse of Halláj [died 922], 'I beheld my Lord

with the eye of my Lord. He said, "Who art thou?" I answered, 'Thou' " (Commentary)

12. (3062) seizer of hearts: an idiom meaning "beloved who has won the love of my heart."

13. (3064) a single strand: "The mystic becomes 'single' when he ceases to be conscious of himself as an alter ego besides God, who is the only real Ego." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (3065) camel: a reference to the verse, ". . . nor will they enter the Garden, until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle: such is Our reward for those in sin." (Qur'an 7:40)

15. (3066) strict exercises [riyâzât]: a technical sufi term for austere disciplines (usually assigned by a spiritual master) so that the disciple may become spiritually matured and "cooked." And here it means that the "camel" of ego and ego-centered cravings may become thin and thread-like.

16. (3067) Be and it was: a modification (for purposes of rhyme and meter) of the Qur'anic words (as in 19:35): "When He determines a matter, He only says to it, 'Be!' and it is [kun fa-yakûn]."

17. (3078) the letters "B" and "E" [of the word "Be!"]: In the text, the letters are "K" and "N" in the Arabic word "kun," which means "Be!." In the earliest Arabic of the Qur'an, only the consonants were written-- "kn"-- and the vowel "u" was not (but was added in latter copies as a mark above the consonant letters). "Although the Creative Word KuN consists of two letters, yet essentially it is one, and its effect, i.e. its bringing the whole contingent universe into being, is single; it may be compared to a noose which, though double in form, has but one meaning and object, namely, to draw the world, hidden in the knowledge of God, from potential into actual existence. Khutúb [= "important matters"-- translated by Nicholson as "great affairs"] refers to the great issues at stake in the life-experience of the soul." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (3079) the non-existent: in Islamic philosophy, the term "non-existent" here means something which has essential existence (in the "Mind of God," so to speak) in the world of non-existent essences. By means of the Divine Command, "Be!", such essences are manifested in the material world of existence.

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3052 kullu shay-in hâlik-un joz wajh-é ô
chûn na-î dar wajh-é ô hastî ma-jô
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har-ke andar wajh-é mâ bâsh-ad fanâ
kulla shay-in hâlik-un na-b'w-ad jazâ

z-ân-ke dar illâ-st ô az lâ goZasht
har-ke dar illâ-st ô fânî na-gasht

3055 har-ke bar dar ô man-o mâ mê-zan-ad
radd-é bâb-ast ô-wo bar lâ mê-tan-ad

qiSSa-yé ân kas ke dar-é yârê be-kôft az darûn goft kî-st ân, goft man-am, goft chûn tô tow-î dar na-mê-goshây-am hêch kas-râ az yâr-ân na-mê-shenâs-am ke ô man bâsh-ad, be-raw

ân yakê âm-ad dar-é yârê be-zad
goft yâr-ash kî-st-î ay mu`tamad?

goft man, goft-ash be-raw hangâm nêst
bar chon-în khwânê maqâm-é khâm nêst

khâm-râ joz âtesh-é hajr-o firâq
kay paz-ad, kay wâ rahân-ad az nifâq?

raft ân miskîn-o sâlê dar safar
dar firâq-é dôst sôzîd az sharar

3060 pokhta gasht ân sôkhta pas bâz gasht
bâz gard-é khâna-yé ham-bâz gasht

Halqa zad bar dar ba-Sad tars-o adab
tâ be-na-j'h-ad bê-adab lafZê ze-lab

bâng zad yâr-ash ke bar dar kî-st ân?
goft bar dar ham tô'î ay del-setân

goft aknûn chûn man-î, ay man dar â
nêst gonjây-é dô man-râ dar sarâ

nêst sôzan-râ sar-é reshta-yê dô-tâ
chûn-ke yak-tây-î dar-în sôzan dar â

3065 reshta-râ bâ sôzan âm-ad irtibâT
nêst dar khwar bâ jamal sammu 'l-khiyâT

kay shaw-ad bârîk hastiy-é jamal
joz ba miqrâZ-é riyâZât-o `amal?

3067 dast-é Haq bây-ad mar ân-râ ay fulân
k-ô bow-ad bar har muHâlê kun fa-kân

. . . . . .

3077 goft yâr-ash k-andar â ay jomla man
nay mukhâlif chûn gol-o khâr-é chaman

reshta yaktâ shod, ghalaT kam shaw konûn
gar dô-tâ bîn-î Hurûf-é kâf-o nûn

kâf-o nûn ham-chûn kamand âmad jaZûb
tâ kashân-ad mar `adam-râ dar khuTûb

3080 pas dô-tâ bây-ad kamand andar Suwar
gar-che yaktâ bash-ad ân dô dar aSar

. . . . . .

3099 z-ân sôy-é His `âlam-é tawHîd dân
gar yakî khwâh-î, ba-d-ân jânib be-rân

3100 amr-é kon yak fa`l bûd-o nûn-o kâf
dar sokhon oftâd-o ma`nà bûd Sâf

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Guard Your Thoughts

Mathnawi I: 3124-3149

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(How) Noah-- may (God's) peace be upon him-- warned the people, saying, "Don't rebel against me, since I am (merely) a face-veil.[1] O forsaken ones, in reality, you are rebelling against God (who is present) underneath this (veil)."

3124 Noah said (to his people), "O stubborn ones! I am not me-- I have died (and am free) from the (lower) soul[2] and am living by means of the Beloved.[3]

3125 "Since I have died (and am freed) from the senses of the

father of mankind,[4] God has become my hearing, perceiving, and seeing.[5]

"(And) because I am not me, this breath[6] (of mine) is from Him. Whoever breathes (a word) in the presence of this breath is a denier."[7]

The lion is (appearing) in the form of the fox. Going bravely toward this (kind) of fox is not suitable (at all)!

If you don't accept the appearance of his form, you won't hear the fierce roar of the lions.[8]

If Noah had not had a (helping) hand from God,[9] then how could he have overthrown a (whole) world?[10]

3130 He was (like) a hundred thousand lions in a (single) body; he was like fire and the world (was like) a harvest stack.

(But) since the stack didn't keep its portion of a tenth[11] (for charity), (Noah) sent such a (consuming) fire upon that stack.

Whoever rudely opens his mouth, like the wolf,[12] in the presence of this hidden lion,

That lion will tear him up, like the wolf, (and) will recite to him (the verse), "So We took punishing payment from them."[13]

(And) he will receive wounds from the lion's paws, like the wolf. (For) the one who went boldly in front of the lion is foolish (indeed)!

3135 If only those wounds had come upon the body, so it might have been that (his) faith and heart were (kept) sound (instead)!

My strength broke when it reached this place, (for) how am I able to reveal this secret.[14]

Keep (yourself) decreased of belly, like the fox,[15] (and) don't play fox's tricks in His presence.

Put (down) all (your assertions of) "I and we" before Him.[16] (And) give the kingdom to Him, since it is His kingdom.[17]

(For) if you become poor men[18] in the true path, the lion[19] and the lion's prey are yours.

3140 Because He is Pure and Holy, and His quality is

(Transcendent) Glory. He is free from needing wonderful things-- either the (inward) kernel or the (outward) shell [of anything].

Any hunted quarry or miraculous gifts which exist is for the sake of the servants of that King.[20]

(For) the King has no desire (for anything). He made this entire dominion for the sake of created beings. The one who has known (this) is happy (indeed)!

What need does He have for (worldly) kingdoms and dominions?-- the one who created (all) dominions as well as this world and the next!

Therefore, guard (your) hearts[21] (carefully) in the presence of the Glorious One, so that you don't become ashamed because of bad opinions.

3145 For he sees (our) hidden thoughts and ideas, (and our) searching and seeking-- just as (clearly as) a bit of hair in pure milk.

The one whose heart[22] has become pure (and) free of images[23] is a mirror for images from the Invisible (world).

He knows for certain our hidden thoughts, without a doubt, because "the believer is a mirror[24] for (another) believer."

When he rubs our coin[25] against the touchstone,[26] he then knows the distinction between certainty and doubt.

3149 (And) when his soul becomes the touchstone for coins, he then will see (the difference between) counterfeit and the (true) heart.[27]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/1/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) I am (merely) a face-veil: "The bodily nature of the Perfect man is nothing but a mask for the Divine attributes and actions." (Nicholson, Commentary) Regarding this, Nicholson

referred to the lines beginning at IV: 2102 ("Bayazid, the great dervish, came to his disciples (and) said, "Look! I am God!").

2. (3124) the (lower) soul: means the unpurified soul, dominated by ego. When undisciplined, it is called the "soul which commands (the doing of) evil" (Qur'an 12:53); when improved by discipline it is called the "self-blaming soul" (Qur'an 75:2).

3. (3124) I am living by means of the Beloved: means the state of the "tranquil soul," which is "well-pleased and well-pleasing" to God (Qur'an 89:27-30). The word for "Beloved" [jânân] is a pun on the word for "soul" (jân). Nicholson translated, "I am living through the Soul of souls."

4. (3125) the father of mankind: means Adam, but here means the ordinary human senses and ordinary perceptions. Nicholson translated, "the father of mankind (human sense-perceptions)."

5. (3125) and seeing: refers to the Divine saying [hadith al-qudsi] related by the Prophet Muhammad: "... And My servant continues to draw near to Me with extra devotions until I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks." This is a favorite saying among the sufis. Rumi said, "To him He has said, 'I am your tongue and eye; I am your senses and your satisfaction and wrath. Go, for you are (the object of My saying), "By Me he hears and by Me he sees." You are the secret. What (is that)? You are (in) the place of the Possessor of the secret'" (Mathnawi I: 1937-38).

6. (3126) breath [dam]: also has the idiomatic meaning of "word"--meaning his words really come from God, and others should be silent in the presence of these words.

7. (3126 denier [kâfir]: this word, sometimes incorrectly translated as "infidel," means here someone who denies, rejects, and disbelieves that God is able to send revelations, in a chosen human language, to humanity through the lips of His chosen prophets (such as Noah, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad).

8. (3128) the fierce roar of the lions: "i.e. 'you will not be aware of the Majesty and Omnipotence which are disguised by his outward appearance'." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson translated, "Unless thou believe in him from his exterior aspect (accept him in the form in which he appears), thou wilt not hear from him the lions' roar."

9. (3129 a (helping) hand from God: Nicholson later changed his

translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Unless Noah had had a hand (a powerful aid) from God, why should he have cast a whole world into confusion?" (from, "If Noah had not been the Eternal Lion...").

10. (3129) overthrown a (whole) world: refers to the Flood: "Previously, the people of Noah rejected Our servant, called him crazy, and he was driven away. So he called out to his Sustaining Lord: 'I am defeated, so help (me)!' Then We opened the gates of the sky, with water pouring down. And we made the earth to burst open with springs (of water), so that the waters met according to an ordained measure. And We made him to be carried on that (ark) which was made of (wooden) planks and nails..." (Qur'an 54: 9-13)

11. (3131) its portion of a tenth: refers to the required tax for the poor. In Judaism, it was a tenth (or tithe) and in Islam it a tenth [`ushr] of crops and a fourth of a tenth for money. Since the world (symbolized by the stack) would not obey Noah (in this non-Qur'anic story) by paying the charity tax, he called for the world to be consumed. "Since Noah's people would not pay him the 'tithe' (reverence and obedience) due to God's Khalífah [= Caliph, representative], they were consumed by the flames of Divine wrath." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (3132) like the wolf: refers to the story, just prior, of how a lion went hunting, attended by a fox and a wolf. After catching an ox, a goat, and a fat rabbit, the lion asked the wolf how the prey should be divided. The wolf answered that the lion should have the ox, the little fox should have the rabbit, and he should have the middle-sized goat. The kingly lion tore the wolf to pieces for his rudeness (or lack of "adab"), by mentioning himself as "I" in the lion's royal presence. (3124) punishing payment from them: Qur'an, 7:136; 15:79; 43:24. Means, here, that God inflicted a "tax" on them (for their refusal to pay the charity tax) which He took from them--meaning their lives.

13. (3133) "So We took punishing payment from them": refers to the drowning of Pharaoh and his army. "So We took punishing payment from them. For We drowned them in the sea, because they rejected Our signs and were oblivious of them." (Qur'an 7:136)

14. (3136) this secret: "i.e. the mystery of infidelity and spiritual blindness, which involves 'the mystery of predestination' (sirru 'l-qadar) and the abstruse theological questions connected with it." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3137) like the fox: in the story just prior, the lion asked the fox

how the prey should be divided. The fox answered that the lion should have the ox for breakfast, the goat for lunch, and the rabbit for supper. The lion was so pleased with the fox's respectful courtesy (and selflessness), that he gave all the carcasses to the fox as a gift.

16. (3138) before Him: means, "Surrender your identity before God's Identity. The "kingly lion" is primarily a symbol for God here, but also symbolizes the spiritual master, saint or prophet. "Some commentators regard this and the following seven verses as a description of the Perfect Man, but formally at any rate the reference is to God himself." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (3138) it is His kingdom [mulk-é ô-st]: "Blessed be He, in whose hands is the Kingdom [mulk]." (Qur'an 67: 1)

18. (3139) poor men (faqîr): means someone on the sufi path of spiritual poverty (faqr), being lacking in egotism, selfishness, greed, etc. in the presence of God, who is the Rich.

19. (3139) the lion: the meaning of "the lion is yours" here refers to the prior story, and the verses (translated by Nicholson): "The lion said, 'Inasmuch as thou hast become pledged to love of me, pick up all the three (animals), and take (them) and depart. O fox, since thou hast become entirely mine, how should I hurt thee when thou hast become myself?'" (I:3110-11)

20. (3141) the servants [banda-gân] of that King: literally, "the slaves." "... i.e. the saints." "... i.e. he serves none other than God and loses himself in the Object of his devotion; hence the paradox... that perfect 'servitude' (`ubúdiyyah) is the essence of freedom (hurriyyah). 'You are not truly His slave (`abduhu)', said an eminent Súfí, 'till you become free'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (3144) guard (your) hearts: according to ancient physiological psychology, the heart was the source of thoughts. Guarding one's thoughts is a traditional sufi practice (called "murâqabah"): a type of God-centered meditation in which thoughts about other than God are guarded against, by bringing the mind back to focussing on the Presence of God. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "Sincerity (in religion) is to worship God as if you saw Him; but if you don't see Him, know that He sees you!" Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "keep watch, then, over your hearts" (from, "keep close watch over your hearts").

22. (3146) whose heart [sîna]: literally, "chest." See previous note.

23. (3146) free of images: means free of mental images of worldly things, which can then lead to intuiting knowledge about heavenly things.

24. (3147 the believer is a mirror: "according to the Hadíth al-mu'minu mir'átu 'l-mu'mini, the true believers who 'see by the light of God'... know intuitively all that is in each other's hearts; and their clairvoyance can penetrate the most secret thoughts." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3148) When he rubs our coin: Nicholson later changed his translation, to "When he rubs our coin" (from, "When he rubs our (spiritual) poverty").

26. (3148 touchstone: a type of stone used by goldsmiths to determine if a metal is true gold or not, per the color produced by rubbing the golden object on it.

27. (3149) counterfeit and the (true) heart: a pun between the two meanings of the word "qalb": "counterfeit" (or "false coin") and "heart."

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tahdîd kardan nûH-- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- mar qawm-râ ke bâ
man ma-pêch-îd ke man rô-pôsh-am bâ khodây mê-pêch-îd
dar meyân-é în ba-Haqîqat ay makhZûl-ân

3124 goft nûH ay sar-kash-ân man man ne-y-am
man ze-jân mord-am, ba-jânân mê-zey-am

3125 chûn be-mord-am az hawâss-é bû 'l-bashar
Haq ma-râ shod sam`-o idrâk-o baSar

chûn-ke man man nêst-am în dam ze-hû-st
pêsh-é în dam har-ke dam zad kâfir ô-st

hast andar naqsh-é în rôbâh shêr
sôy-é în rôbah na-shây-ad shod delêr

gar ze-rôy-é sûrat-ash mê-na-g'raw-î
ghorra-yé shêr-ân az-ô mê-na-sh'naw-î

gar na-bûd-y nûH-râ az Haq yadê
pas jahânê-râ che-râ bar-ham zad-y?

3130 Sad hazâr-ân shêr bûd ô dar tanê
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ô chô âtesh bûd-o `âlam khermanê

chûn-ke kherman pâs-é `ushr-é ô na-dâsht
ô chon-ân shu`la bar ân kherman gomâsht

har-ke ô dar pêsh-é în shêr-é nehân
bê-adab chûn gorg be-g'shây-ad dahân

ham-chô ân shêr bar derrân-ad-ash
f-antaqam-nâ bin-humu bar khwân-ad-ash

zakm yâb-ad ham-chô gorg az dast-é shêr
pêsh-é shêr ablah bow-ad k-ô shod delêr

3135 kâsha-kî ân zakhm bar tan âmad-y
tâ bod-y k-îmân-o del sâlim bod-y

quwwat-am be-g'sist chûn în-jâ rasîd
chûn tawân-am kard în sir-râ padîd?

ham-chûn ân rôbah kam-é ishkam kon-îd
pêsh-é ô rôbâh-bâzî kam kon-îd

jumla mâ-wo man ba-pêsh-é ô neh-îd
mulk mulk-é ô-st, mulk ô-râ deh-îd

chûn faqîr ây-îd andar râh-é râst
shêr-ô Sayd-é shêr khwad ân-é shomâ-st

3140 z-ân-ke ô pâk-ast-o subHân wasf-é ô-st
bê-neyâz-ast ô ze-naghz-o maghz-o pôst

har shekâr-o har karâmâtê ke hast
az barây-é banda-gân-é ân shah-ast

nêst shah-râ Tam` bahr-é khalq sâkht
în hama dawlat khonok ân-k-ô shenâkht

ân-ke dawlat âfarîd-o dô sarâ
mulk-o dawlat-hâ che kâr ây-ad ô-râ?

pêsh-é subHân pas negah dâr-îd del
tâ na-gard-îd az gomân-é bad khajel

3145 k-ô be-bîn-ad sirr-o fikr-o jost-o jô
ham-chô andar shîr-é khâliS târ-é mô

ân-ke ô bê-naqsh sâda sîna shod

naqsh-hây-é ghayb-râ âyîna shod

sirr-é mâ-râ bê-gomân mawqin shaw-ad
z-ân-ke mû'min âyena-yé mû'min bow-ad

chûn zan-ad ô naqd-é mâ-râ bar miHak
pas yaqîn-râ bâz dân-ad ô ze shak

3149 chûn shaw-ad jân-ash miHakk-é naqd-hâ
pas bo-bîn-ad qalb-râ wo qalb-râ

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Joseph and the Mirror

Mathnawi I: 3157-3163, 3170-3171, 3192-3227

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3157 A kindhearted friend arrived from the (far) horizons (and)
became the guest of Joseph, the truthful one.[1]

For they had been friends (since) the time of childhood, leaning
against the cushion of friendship (together).

(The friend) reminded him of the cruelty and envy of (his)
brothers.[2] He replied, "That was (like) a chain, but I (was) a lion.

3160 "The lion is not dishonored by the chain, (and) I have no
complaint about what is destined by God.

"Even if there is a chain on the lion's neck, he is (still) a prince
over all the chain-makers."

(The friend) asked, "How were you as a result of the prison and
the well?"[3] He replied, "Like the moon in (its cycle of) waning and
fading.

3163 "Even if the new moon becomes folded-up during (its)
waning, does it not eventually become the full moon in the sky?"

. . . . . .

3170 After telling him the (whole) story, he said, "O so-and-so,
what traveler's present did you bring me? Hurry!

3171 "Arriving at the door of friends empty-handed (is) like going to the mill without wheat."[4]

. . . . . .

The guest's saying to Joseph-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him, "I've brought you a mirror (as a gift), so that any time you look in it you will see your own beautiful face (and so that) you may remember me."

3192 Joseph said, "Bring the present, right away!" (The friend) groaned out of shame at this request,

(And) said, "I searched [and considered] so many presents for you, (but) a (worthy enough) present never came into view.

"I wouldn't take a particle (of gold) to a region (full) of (gold) mines, (and) I wouldn't take a drop (of water) to (the sea of) Oman.[5]

3195 "(But) I would bring cumin-seeds to Kerman[6] if I could bring (my) heart and soul (as a gift) before you.

"There isn't a seed (of grain) which is not in the granary [of the world], except for your beauty-- which has no equal.[7]

"I found it suitable that I should bring before you a mirror like the light of a [pure-hearted] chest,

"So that you might see your own beautiful face within it, O you who are the candle of the heavens like the sun.

"I brought you a mirror, O light (of my eyes), so that when you look at your face you may remember me."

3200 He brought out the mirror from (under his) armpit. The beautiful one is occupied with a mirror.

What is the mirror of existence? Non-existence.[8] (So) take non-existence (as a gift), if you aren't foolish.

Existence can be shown in non-existence, (just as) those possessing wealth bring generosity to the poor.[9]

The hungry man[10] himself is the clear mirror for bread. Also,

something burnable is the mirror for flint.[11]

Any place that non-existence and deficiency arise is the mirror for the beauty of all crafts and professions.

3205 For if a robe is sewn and fitting, how can it become a place to see the tailor's learning?

Tree trunks need to be kept uncut so that the carpenter may form the roots or branches (into something).

The doctor of bone setting goes to the place where the broken foot is located.

If there is no thin sickly person, the elegant skill of medicine can never be revealed.

The alchemical elixir[12] can never be shown (to be effective) if the inferior and base quality of copper items is not made public.[13]

3210 Imperfections are the mirror for the quality of perfection, and that lowness is the mirror for the Glory and Majesty (of God).

Because opposite[14] makes opposite truly perceptible, (and) because (the nature of) honey is evident with (the taste of) vinegar.

Whoever has seen and known his own defects has galloped with ten horses[15] in perfecting himself.

For the one who carries a presumption about his own perfection is not flying toward the Owner of Majesty[16] because of it.

O owner of pretense,[17] there isn't a worse fault in your soul than the (high) opinion of (your) perfection.

3215 In order for this self-admiration to go out of you, much blood (needs to) flow from your heart and eyes.[18]

The fault of Satan was in (thinking), "I am better,"[19] and this disease exists in the self[20] of every (human) creature.

Although (the human) sees himself (as) very broken [and humble], know that clear water (may have) dung under the stream.

If (Satan) makes you disturbed during a trial, the water will become dung-colored at that time.

O young man, there is dung in the bottom of the stream, even

though the steam looks clear.

3220 It is the (sufi) elder[21] full of understanding, the knower of the (mystical) Way, who digs a channel for the (pure) streams of the Universal Soul.[22]

(Man) can never (by) himself, purify the stream; human knowledge becomes useful (only) from the knowledge possessed by God.[23]

The sword can never carve its own handle. Go (and) entrust this wound (of yours) to a surgeon.

Flies come (and crowd) together on top of each wound, so that a person doesn't see the ugliness of his wound.

The flies (are) your anxious cares and your possessions; your wound (is) the darkness of your states.[24]

3225 And if the (sufi) elder puts a bandage on your wound,[25] (your) pain and shrill cries become calmed at that time--

So that (a person) imagines[26] that he has found (good) health (by himself). (But) the (healing) ray of the bandage (which) was shining on that place[27] [was the real cause].

3227 Take care! Don't (arrogantly) draw your head (away)[28] from the bandage, O you (with a) wounded back! But realize that (healing is) from the ray. Don't regard (it as) originating from you.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3157) the truthful one [yûsuf-é Siddîq]: In the Qur'an (12:46), Joseph is addressed, "Joseph, O truthful one!" [yûsufu ayyuhâ 'S-Siddîq]

2. (3159) the cruelty and envy of his brothers: refers to the story of Joseph in the Qur'an (12:8: "They said, 'Certainly Joseph and his brother are more loved by our father [Jacob] than we...").

3. (3162) the prison and the well: Joseph's envious brothers threw

him into a well (Qur'an 12:10-19), and later, he was thrown into prison (12:32-42; also in Genesis 37:11-28, 39:40, 40:1-23). "The comparison of the soul imprisoned in the world to Joseph in the well is very frequent" [in Rumi's poetry]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (3171) without wheat: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on a correction added on the margin of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi: "O youth, he who is empty-handed at the door of friends is like a man without wheat in the mill" (from, "To come empty-handed to the door of friends is like going without wheat to the mill").

5. (3194) (the sea of) Oman: often used as an idiom, meaning the sea, the ocean. "Bahr-i [the Sea of Oman], the southernmost part of the Persian Gulf." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (3195) cumin-seeds to Kerman: cumin is an aromatic seed-like fruit, used as a spice, and a spice abundantly available in the Persian city of Kerman. Thus, this is a metaphor for acting foolishly: "... a proverb like 'carrying coals to Newcastle'" (Nicholson, Commentary), or taking ice to Alaska.

7. (3196) no equal: "There is nothing in the world that God does not bring into existence, and every existent thing reveals some aspect of Him; but His Essence is only revealed to itself when it is mirrored in the Perfect Man who has 'passed away' and become one with the Object of his contemplation. 'None but God has contemplated the beauty of God'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (3201) non-existence: ["non-existence," "not-being"] in the first hemistich [first half of the couplet] denotes the relative non-existence, i.e. the mere potentiality of existence, which is perpetually being actualised and clothed with Divine attributes and names; this 'not-being' is, so to speak, the material on which God works in order that His perfections may be displayed; and for that purpose no other mirror can serve so well as the 'not-being' of the mystic whose heart is entirely purged of egotism." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (3202) generosity to the poor: "Bounty and indigence are mutually dependent on each other: the poor man needs the alms of the rich, but the rich man also needs the poor in order that his munificence may be shown." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3203) the hungry man: Nicholson suggested that this word also "may mean 'hunger'." (Commentary)

11. (3203) flint: literally, "fire-striker" [tesh-zana], and refers to flint or

metal which is struck in order to produce a spark on dry kindling.

12. (3209 alchemical elixir: the "philosopher's stone," which was supposedly able to transform base metals, such as copper or lead, into gold.

13. (3209) not made public: means by a demonstration of the power of the alchemical elixir .

14. (3211) opposite: "This passage [this and the previous ten lines] illustrates the doctrine that the nature of a thing is made manifest by contrast with something else that lacks its qualities. Our knowledge of phenomena depends on knowledge of their correlates. Were there no appearance of darkness and evil, we should be ignorant of light and good. To be conscious of deficiency is the first step toward perfection." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3212) galloped with ten horses: an idiom meaning to advance far (by being able to exchange an exhausted horse for a fresh one). Nicholson translated, "has ridden post-haste (made rapid progress)" and added a footnote ("Literally, 'has galloped with two horses'"-- which he later corrected based on the earliest manuscript, to: "... with ten horses").

16. (3213) the Owner of Majesty: refers to God, as in the verse, "And the Face of your Sustaining Lord will remain (for ever): the Owner of Majesty and Honor" (Qur'an 55:27, 78).

17. (3214) owner of pretense": a word play which contrasts with "Owner of Majesty" in the previous line. Means here one who flirts with the eyes due to a conceited self-opinion.

18. (3215) blood... from the heart and eyes: an idiom of wounded (emotional) suffering.

19. (3216) I am better: In the Qur'an, Satan is ordered by God to bow in obeisance to Adam, who showed his superiority over the angels by knowing "the names of all things" (interpreted by the sufis to mean the Divine Names of God) which they did not know (Qur'an 2: 31-34). Satan refused because of arrogance, and said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay" (Qur'an 7:12). Sufis have long taught that this attitude is a disease which remains within the souls of all humanity, is a major cause of conflict and suffering, and that a path of spiritual discipline (sufism, or "taSawwuf") is necessary to purify the soul from it.

20. (3216) self (nafs): may also be translated as soul, or ego.

21. (3220) elder: this word [pir] is a translation into Persian of the Arabic word "shaykh." Both words literally mean "old man," but when used in sufism, mean a mature sufi guide and master.

22.(3220) the Universal Soul: "...the second emanation from the One in the Neoplatonic system" (Nicholson, Commentary)-- of which the individual human soul is the particular manifestation. (The first emanation is "Universal Reason.") Means here the state of the purified and saintly soul, in this life and the next. Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on an the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi to: "...digs a channel for the gardens of the Universal Soul" (from, "digs a channel for (draining off) the streams of the flesh and the body"). And he explained: "The vine-grower digs a channel to irrigate his orchard: so all souls, each in proportion to its capacity, are purified by emanations of spiritual influence from the P ج r [= the spiritual master]." (Commentary)

23. (3221) the knowledge of God: Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "Who is able to cleanse the channel of his (sensual) self? Man's knowledge is made beneficial (only) by God's knowledge" (from, "Can the water of the (polluted) stream clear out the dung? Can man's knowledge sweep away the ignorance of his sensual self?")

24. (3224) your states: means the ugly reality of your physical, emotional. and spiritual situation and condition.

25. (3225) a bandage on your wound: means a poultice or dressing, with medicinal ointment, which is wrapped around a wound.

26. (3226) imagines: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "So that he (the patient) fancies..." (from, "So that you fancy it (the wound) is healed..."). "...i.e. 'he (whose soul is sick) fancies that he has become well (of his own accord'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (3226) on that place: Nicholson translated, "upon the (wounded) spot."

28. (3227) draw your head away: a metaphor expressing arrogant stubbornness. A stubborn animal turns its head away from the direction it should go, prior to moving its feet to leave.

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3157 âmad az âfâq yâr-é mehrbân
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yûsuf-é Siddîq-râ shod mêhmân

k-âshnâ bûd-and waqt-é kôdakî
bar wisâda-yé âshnâyî muttakî

yâd dâd-ash jawr-é ikhwân-o Hasad
goft k-ân zanjîr bûd-o mâ asad

3160 `âr na-b-w-ad shêr-râ az silsila
nêst mâ-râ az qaZây-é Haq gela

shêr-râ bar gardan ar zanjîr bow-ad
bar hama zanjîr-sâz-ân mîr bow-ad

goft chûn bûd-î ze-zendân-o ze-châh?
goft ham-chûn dar muHaq-o kâst-é mâh

3163 dar muHaq ar mâh-é naw gard-ad dô-tâ
ney dar âkhir badr gard-ad bar samâ?

. . . . . .

3170 ba`d-é qiSSa-goftan-ash goft ay fulân
hîn che âward-î tô mâ-râ armaghân?

bar dar-é yâr-ân tahî-dast-âmadan
ham-chô bê-gandom sôy-é TâHûn shodan

. . . . . .

goftan-é mehmân-é yûsuf-- `alay-hi as-salâm-- ke âyena
âward-am-at ke tâ har bârî ke dar way negar-î rôy-é khûb-é
khwêsh-râ bîn-î ma-râ yad kon-î

3192 goft yûsuf hîn be-y-âwar armaghân
ô ze-sharm-é în taqâZâ zad feghân

goft man chand armaghân jost-am to-râ
armaghânê dar naZar n-âmad ma-râ

Habba'yê-râ jânib-é kân chûn bar-am
QaTra'é-râ sôy-é `ummân chûn bar-am?

3195 zêra-râ man sôy-é kermân âwar-am
gar ba-pêsh-é tô del-o jân âwar-am

nêst tokhmê k-andar-în anbâr nêst
ghayr-é Husn-é tô ke ân-râ yâr nêst

lâyiq ân dîd-am ke man âyena'yê
pêsh-é tô âr-am chô nûr-é sîna'yê

tâ be-bîn-î rôy-é khwob-é khwad dar ân
ay tô chûn khworshêd sham`-é âsmân

ânyena âward-am-at ay rôshanî
tâ chô bîn-î rôy-é khwad, yâd-am kon-î

3200 âyena bêrûn kashîd ô az baghal
khwob-râ âyena bâsh-ad mushtaghal

âyena-yé hastî che bâsh-ad? nêstî
nêstî bar, gar tô ablah nêst-î

hastî andar nêstî be-t'wân namûd
mâl-dâr-ân bar faqîr âr-and jûd

âyena-yé Sâfîy-é nân khwad gorsna-ast
sôkhta ham âyena-yé âtesh-zana-ast

nêstî-wo naqS har jâyê ke khâst
âyena-yé khûbîy-é jumla-yé pêsha-hâ-st

3205 chûn-ke jâma chost-o dôzîda bow-ad
maZhar-é farhang-é darzî chûn shaw-ad?

nâ-tarâshîda hamê bây-ad juZû`
tâ dorôgar aSl sâz-ad yâ furû`

khwâja-yé eshkasta-band ân-jâ raw-ad
k-andar ân-jâ pây-é eshkast bow-ad

kay shaw-ad chûn nêst ranjûr-é nizâr
ân jamâl-é San`at-é Tibb âshkâr?

khwârî-wo dûniy-é mes-hâ bar malâ'
gar na-bâsh-ad kay nomây-ad kîmiyâ?

3210 naqS-hâ âyena-yé waSf-é kamâl
w-ân Haqârat âyena-yé `izz-o jalâl

z-ân-ke Zid-râ Zid kon-ad paydâ yaqîn
z-ân-ke bâ serka padîd-ast angabîn

har-ke naqS-é khwêsh-râ dîd-o shenâkht
andar istikmâl-é khwad dah aspa tâkht

z-ân na-mê-parr-ad ba-sôy-é Zû 'l-jalâl
k-ô gomânê mê-bar-ad khwad-râ kamâl

`illatê battar ze-pendâr-é kamâl
nêst andar jân-é tô a Zû 'l-dalâl

3215 az del-o az dîda-at bas khûn raw-ad
tâ ze-tô în mu`jabî bêrûn shaw-ad

`illat-é iblîs 'anâ khayrî bod-ast
w-în maraZ dar nafs-é har makhlûq hast

gar-che khwad-râ bas shekasta bîn-ad ô
âb-é Sâfî dân-o sargîn zêr-é jô

chûn be-shôrân-ad to-râ dar imtiHân
âb-é sargîn rang gard-ad dar zamân

dar tak-é jô hast sargîn ay fatà
gar-che jô Sâfî nomây-ad mar to-râ

3220 hast pîr-é râh-dân-é por-fïTan
jôy-hây-é nafs-é kull-râ jôy kan

jôy khwad-râ kay tawân-ad pâk kard?
nâfi` az `ilm-é khodâ shod `ilm-é mard

kay tarâsh-ad têgh dasta-yé khwêsh-râ?
raw ba-jarrâHê sepâr în rêsh-râ

bar sar-é har rêsh jâm` âmad magas
tâ na-bîn-ad qubH-é rêsh-é khwêsh kas

ân magas andêsh-hâ-wo ân mâl-é tô
rêsh-é tô ân zulmat-é aHwâl-é tô

3225 w-ar neh-ad marham bar ân rêsh-é tô pîr
ân zamân sâkin shaw-ad dard-o nafîr

tâ ke pendâr-ad ke SiHHat yâft-ast
partaw-é marham bar ân-jâ tâft-ast

hîn ze-marham sar ma-kash ay posht-rêsh
w-ian ze-partaw dân ma-dân az aSl-é khwêsh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Visions of Zayd (part one)

Mathnawi I: 3500-3542

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(About) the Prophet's asking, may God bless him and give (him) peace, of Zayd, "How are you this morning and how did you (feel when you) rose (from sleep)?" And his reply, saying, "O Messenger of God, this morning I am a (true) believer."[1]

3500 The Prophet said to Zayd one morning, "How are you this morning, O good (hearted) friend?"[2]

(Zayd) answered, "A faithful servant (of God)." He asked him again, "Where is the sign from the garden of Faith, if it has blossomed?"

(Zayd) replied, "I've been thirsty (during) the days, (and) I haven't slept at night because of love and the burnings (in my heart)--

"To such an extent that I've passed through[3] the days and nights in the same way that the tip of a spear passes through a shield.

"For from that side, all religions are one,[4] and a hundred thousand years and a single hour are one.

3505 "Pre-eternity and post-eternity are united.[5] The intellect has no way to that side by means of search and investigation."

(The Prophet) said, "Where is a gift brought (home) from this road[6] (which you travelled)? Bring (it forth)! --(something) suitable for the understanding and intellects of these regions."[7]

(Zayd) replied, "When people are looking at the sky, I see the Throne (of God),[8] together with those (in the vicinity) of the Throne.

"The eight Paradises (and) the seven Hells[9] are visible in front of me, just like the idol in front of the idolater.

"I'm recognizing the people, one by one, just like wheat from

barley in the mill,

3510 "So that whoever is (to be) one of Paradise or whoever is (to be) an outsider is clear to me,[10] jut as a snake and a fish are (clearly different)."

(During) this (present) time (the verse), "The Day[11] when faces will turn white and (others) will turn black" has become manifest to this band of people.[12]

Prior to this,[13] although the soul was full of defects, it was hidden in the womb (of the body) from the people (and) was invisible.

The miserable persons are the ones who were (decreed to be) miserable in the mother's womb.[14] Their condition is known from the signs on (their) bodies.[15]

The body (is) like a mother, pregnant with the infant of the soul. (And) death is the suffering and turmoil of being "born."

3515 All the souls (who have) passed on[16] are waiting so that (they may see in) what manner that insolent soul will be born (into the next world).

The (dark spirits of the) Ethiopians say, "It is ours." (And) the (light spirits of the) Anatolians[17] say, "It is very beautiful."[18]

When it is born into the world of spirit and generosity, then disagreement (among) the white and black (spirits) no longer remains. If it is an Ethiopian (spirit), the Ethiopians drive it (forth).

(And) the Anatolian also carries off (any spirit from) Anatolia[19] from amidst (the arriving souls).

As long as it isn't "born" (into the Hereafter), it is (presenting) difficulties for the world-- (since) the one who can recognize (the destiny of) the "unborn" is scarce.

3520 But he [who is able] sees by the light of God, since he has a way (to see) underneath the skin.

The essence of sperm juice is white and good.[20] But the reflection of the Anatolian or (of) the Ethiopian spirit

Gives color to "the best of upright forms" (in the one case and) carries this (other) half (down) to "the lowest (of the low)."[21]

This speech does not have (an) end. Ride back, so we aren't left (behind) by the train (of camels) in the caravan.

"(On) the Day when faces will turn white and (others) will turn black,"[22] it will make[23] the (difference between the pale) "Turk" and the (dark) "Hindu" generally known among the people[24] [gathered on the Day of Judgment].

3525 In the womb (of the body the difference between) "Hindu" and "Turk" is not clear. (But) when one is "born" (into the Hereafter), (the observer there) can see him as (either) miserable or great.[25]

(Zayd continued): "I see clearly all of the men and women[26] revealed [as to their fate], just as (it will be on) the Day of Resurrection.

"Look, shall I (keep) talking or shall I shut (my) breath?" The Prophet bit his (own) lip, meaning, "Enough!"[27]

(Zayd continued): "O Messenger of God, shall I tell the secret of the Gathering (on the Day of Judgment)? Today, shall I make public to the world (the mystery of) the Revival (of the dead)?

"Leave me (unhindered), so that I may tear up the (concealing) veils, (and) so that my pearl-like nature may shine like a sun.

3530 "So that the sun may become eclipsed by me, (and) so that I may reveal (the difference between) the date palm and the willow tree.[28]

"I will reveal the mystery of the Resurrection, of the true coin, and of the true coin mixed with counterfeit,

"(And of) the People of the Left Hand[29] (with their) hands severed.[30] I will reveal openly the color of denying unbelief and the color of fraud and deceit.[31]

"I will open (the mystery) of the seven pits of hypocrisy[32] in the light of the Moon which has no eclipse or waning.[33]

"I will openly reveal the coarse clothing of the wretched[34] and contemptible, (and) will make audible the tambourines and kettle drums of the prophets.

3535 "I will bring clearly before the eyes of the rejecting disbelievers (the sight of) Hell, Paradise, and the intermediate (state)[35] in between (them).

"I will reveal the surging Fountain of Kawthar,[36] which splashes (refreshingly) against their faces,[37] (while) its sound pulsates in (their) ears.

"And I will reveal clearly (in) this moment those persons who have been made to run, (remaining) thirsty, around it.[38]

"(I can feel) their shoulders rubbing against my shoulder, (and) their (desperate) shouts are coming into my ears.

"The people of Paradise are drawing one another into [joyful] embraces, out of free choice, (right) before my eyes.

3540 "(And) they are visiting each other's seats of honor, (and) also robbing kisses from the lips [of the maidens of Paradise].[39]

"These ears of mine have become deaf from the (miserable) shouts of 'Oh, oh!' from the vile and corrupt ones (in Hell), and by (their) screams of, 'Oh misery for me!'[40]

3542 "These are (only) indications. I would speak (further) from the depths (of my experience), but I'm afraid of the disapproval and censure of the Messenger (of God)."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) I am a (true) believer: "Zayd b. Háritha... was the freedman and adopted son of the Prophet, and is mentioned by name in Qur. XXXIII 37. The Hadíth to which the Heading refers is generally known as the Hadíth of Hárithah and runs as follows.... 'One morning the Prophet said to Zayd, "How art thou this morning, Zayd?" He answered, "O Prophet of Allah, this morning I am a true believer." The Prophet said, "Verily, everything has an essence (haqíqah): what is the essence of thy faith?" Zayd answered, "I have separated (`azaltu-- or, refrained, azaftu) myself from the world: I have passed my days in thirst and my nights in wakefulness, and me seems [= it seems to me] I behold the Throne of my Lord before mine eyes, and the people of Paradise enjoying their pleasures and delights, and the people of Hell-fire howling at one another like dogs (yata`áwawna-- or, being tormented,

yu`adhdhabúna)." The Prophet said, "Thou hast attained (unto real faith): hold it fast."'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3500) good (hearted) friend: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "sincere friend" (from "sincere Companion").

3. (3503) I've passed through: Nicholson translated, "passed through (and beyond) day and night..."

4. (3504) all religions are one [jumla-yé millat yakî-st]: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "For beyond (the realm of contraries) all religion is one" (from, "... contraries, nativity and continued growth are one").

5. (3505) Pre-eternity and post-eternity are united: Nicholson translated, "Everlastingness and eternity are unified (yonder)." Beginninglessness [azal] is the eternity before the beginning of time and the creation of the universe. Endlessness [abad] is the eternity following the end of time.

6. (3506) a gift brought (home) from this road: refers to the custom in which a traveller was expected to bring home gifts from his travels.

7. (3506) these regions: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Produce (a gift) suitable to the understanding of (intelligible to) the minds of this country (the phenomenal world)" (from, "Produce it. Where is the token of sincerity (that thou hast brought) from yon fair land?").

8. (3507) the Throne (of God): Nicholson later corrected his translation to "the Throne of God" (from "the Empyrean").

9. (3508) the Seven Hells: Nicholson referred to I:779 (which he translated), "Read the story of Hell with its seven gates"], and the source of this in the Qur'an (15:44). (Commentary)

10. (3510) is clear to me: "Zayd claims knowledge of the mystery of the Divine decree (sirru 'l-qadar) concerning salvation and damnation." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (3511) The Day: a quote from the Qur'an, slightly altered for metrical purposes: "(On) the Day (of Judgment) when (some) faces will turn white (with joy) and (some) faces will turn black (with gloom). And regarding those whose faces turn black, (they will be told), 'Did you reject and disbelieve after (attaining) your faith?

Then taste the punishment for what you have rejected (of the Truth).' But regarding those whose faces turn white, they will be in the Mercy of God, to dwell therein forever." (Qur'an 3:106-107) The commentators on the Qur'an make it clear that "white" and "black" are symbolic of light, purity, virtue, and happiness, versus darkness, defilement, sin, and misery. According to Arabic grammar, a man is called "white" to mean that he is free from moral defects.

12. (3511) this band of people: means the sufis. Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript, to "At the present time there hath been made manifest to this (illuminated) class of men (what shall come to pass) 'on the Day when'" (from, "The day of birth for Anatolians and Ethiopians and every race (of mankind) is 'the Day...'"). And he commented about the meaning of "this (illuminated) class of men": "i.e. to the perfect Súfís it is manifest in this world what will be the fate of every soul at the Resurrection." (Commentary)

13. (3512) Prior to this: means before the nature of souls became visible on the Day of Judgment, or "in the present time" "to this band of people"-- the sufis. Nicholson translated, :Before this (birth)..." and he explained: "i.e. before entering on the next life. So long as the soul is 'in the womb', i.e. confined in the present world, its good or evil nature remains hidden from the vulgar, though known to the elect. Some commentators explain písh az-ín [Before this] as referring to the pre-existence of the soul 'in the womb' of the Invisible; its nature is revealed only after it has been born into the world." (Commentary)

14. (3513) (decreed to be) miserable in the mother's womb: "According to the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet]: 'the blest is he who is blest in his mother's womb, and the damned is he who is damned in his mother's womb.' The alternative interpretation of fí batni 'l-umm [= in the mother's womb] is 'in the Ummu 'l-Kitáb, i.e. in the Book of Divine Destiny and eternal Foreknowledge'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3513) the signs on (their) bodies: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "their state is known from the bodily marks" (from "all of them are known by the marks of God"). And he explained that this "alludes to Qur. LV 41: yu`rafu 'l-mujrimúna bi-símáhum, 'the guilty will be known by their marks', i.e. by the anguish expressed on their faces." (Commentary)

16. (3515) All the souls (who have) passed on: "i.e. the spirits of the blest and damned in the intermediate state (barzakh) between death

and resurrection." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (3516) Anatolians: literally, the "Rumis," meaning the light-skinned, Greek-speaking, people of the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire (half-conquered by the Turks in Rumi's day). Here, the "Anatolians" symbolizes the spirits of light in the next world, and the "Ethiopians" symbolize the spirits of darkness. Nicholson translated, "The Ethiopians (the damned spirits).... the Anatolians (the blessed spirits)..."

18. (3516) It is very beautiful: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "It is very comely" (from, "Nay, it is comely").

19. (3518) (any spirit from) Anatolia: Nicholson acknowledged that two of the earliest manuscripts had a different line, but he did not correct the translation he had for the second half of this line: "and if it is an Anatolian (a blessed spirit), the Anatolians lead it away."

20. (3521) The essence of sperm juice is white and good: Nicholson translated this into Latin. It refers to the colorless [maZî] that is produced when a man is sexually aroused, yet does not ejaculate sperm. According to Islamic law, this fluid is considered pure and does not end the state of ritual purity (in contrast to ejaculation, which causes a state of "major ritual impurity" for which a full bath is required before a man can do the next ritual prayer).

21. (3522) the lowest (of the low): Rumi here quotes a verse from the Qur'an, interpreting the first part of the verse as pertaining to the noble and pure souls who are the best of creation (the "Anatolians"), and the second part of the verse as applying to the base and ignoble souls (the "Ethiopians"). In the verse, the One God speaks in the plural form (indicative of a Divine Majesty which transcends human understanding): "Certainly, We have created mankind in the best of upright forms. Then, we reduce him to the lowest of the low." (95:4-5) Nicholson translated, "... Is giving colour (glory) to 'those (the Anatolians) who are most excellent in their (original) constitution,' (while) it is bearing this (other) half (i.e. the Ethiopians) down to the lowest depth." And he commented: "The soul, though essentially it belongs to the world of Unity and pure colourlessness (`âlam-i bí-rangí), is 'created half to rise and half to fall'. It descends into the world of colour (plurality) in order that it may exhibit the diversity of the Divine attributes which in this world is reflected in the form of good and evil..... 'Verily We created Man in the best proportion; then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.' The meaning... is that the reflexion of the 'Rúmí's' [= the Anatolian's] soul bestows (on the 'Rúmí' [= the Anatolian] the capacity for spiritual perfection

denoted by the words ahsanu 'l-taqwím [= best proportion, best of moulds, best of upright forms], while the reflexion of the 'Ethiopian's' soul brings him to the lowest depth of degradation; one mounts to Paradise, the other sinks to Hell. The Translation should be corrected accordingly." (Commentary)

22. (3524) and some will turn black: see footnote 11.

23. (3524) it will make: means that the Day of Judgment will make the distinction clear between those who deserve to go to Paradise and those who deserve to go to Hell.

24 (3524) among the people: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Turk and Hindú shall become manifest (shall be clearly discerned) from among that company" (from, "by whom shall reverence still be paid to Turk and Hindoo (alike)?"). And he commented: "i.e. among those gathered for the Judgement it will be easy to see who is blest and who is damned." (Commentary)

25. (3525) miserable or great: Nicholson translated, "In the womb (of this world) Hindoo and Turk are not distinguishable, (but) when each is born (into the next world) he (the seer) sees that each is miserable or glorious (according to his spiritual nature)." As for the poor rhyme, Nicholson noted: "This seems to be the only instance in the Mathnawí of 'k' rhyming with 'g.'" (Commentary)

26. (3526) all of the men and women: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript, to "I am seeing them all plainly and with ocular vision, as (they shall be) on the Day of Resurrection" (from, "I am seeing them all plainly, as (they shall be) on the Day of Resurrection, like (multitudes of) people, men and women."

27. (3527) Enough: Nicholson later corrected an error in his translation, to "Mustafá (Mohammed) bit his lip (in anger at him (Zayd) , as though to say, 'Enough!'" (from, "Mustafà (Mohammed) bit his (Zayd's) lip...").

28. (3530) the date palm and the willow tree: Nicholson translated, "(the difference between) the (fruitful) date-palm and the (barren) willow." And he explained, "Nakhl [= the date-palm tree] and bíd [= the willow tree] typify the righteous and the wicked respectively." (Commentary)

29. (3532) the People of the Left Hand: the name of those who are to be punished in Hell (Qur'an 56:41).

30. (3532) with their hands severed: the Islamic punishment for repeated theft (not applied in cases of starvation and mass famine). The hand that is punished in this manner is the one which stole, the right hand. Loss of the right hand is also shameful because greetings are with the right hand only (since the left hand is used when wiping after defecation).

31. (3532) the color of fraud and deceit: Nicholson translated, "the colour of the (Prophet's) folk." And he commented that one of the commentators of the Mathnawi explained the word "âl" as from "the Traditions álu 'l-Qur'án álu 'lláh, 'the people of the Qur'án are the people of Allah', and álu Muhammad-in kullu taqiyy-in naqiyy-in, 'the family of Mohammed includes every one who is God-fearing and pure'. But it seems very doubtful whether ál can have this meaning here. I don not believe that rang-i âl [= the color of the descendants of the prophet, physically and spiritually] is equivalent to rang-i ímán [= the color of true faith]. Al is far more likely to be the Persian word, in which case rang-i âl will mean 'the colour of deceit'." (Commentary)

32. (3533) the seven pits of hypocrisy: "i.e. the seven vices of the carnal soul (pride, greed, lust, envy, anger, avarice, and malice), which are compared to the seven gates of Hell." (Nicholson, Commentary) See footnote 9.

33. (3533) the Moon which has no eclipse or waning: "i.e. in the splendour of mystic illumination." (Nicholson, Commentary)

34. (3534) the coarse clothing of the wretched: "Palás [= course clothing] is an emblem of misery and squalor, tabl u kús [= tambourines and kettle drums] of glory and magnificence." (Nicholson, Commentary)

35. (3535) the intermediate (state) [barzakh]: the state of souls following physical death until the Resurrection.

36. (3536) Fountain of Kawthar: a blessed fountain in Paradise (mentioned in Qur'an 108:1), which satisfies all thirsts.

37. (3536) which splashes (refreshingly) against their faces: Nicholson translated, "which dashes water on their (the blessed ones') faces..."

38. (3537) around it: means around the Fountain of Kawthar-- those who are not allowed near it, and are thus denied the refreshing reward of being in Paradise. Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "And those who have been made to run athirst round it I will

show clearly at this moment" (from, "And those who are running athirst round Kawthar I will name one by one (and tell) who they are."

39. (3540) robbing kisses from the lips [of the maidens of Paradise]: Nicholson translated, "snatching kisses from the lips (of the houris)." These are the "houris," or virgins, of Paradise (Qur'an 44:54; 52:20--one of a number of Qur'anic metaphors of Heavenly bliss).

40. (3541) Oh misery for me [wâ Hasratâh]: slightly modified from a term in the Qur'an: "And turn toward your Sustaining Lord and surrender (your will) to Him, before the punishment (of your rejection) comes to you. For then (after that) you will not be helped.... So that a soul will exclaim, "Oh misery for me [yâ Hasratà!], for what I disregarded (of my obligations) toward God!...." (39: 54, 56).

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porsîdan-é payghambar-- Sallà 'llâhu `alay-hi wa sallim-- mar zayd-râ ke emrôz chûn-î wa chûn bar-khâst-î wa jawâb-goftan-é ô ke "aSbaHtu mû'min-an yâ rasûla 'llâh"

3500 goft payghâmbar SabâHê zayd-râ
kayfa aSbhaHt ay rafîq-é bâ-Safâ?

goft `abd-an mû'min-an, bâz ô-sh goft
kô neshân az bâgh-é îmân gar shegoft?

goft teshna bûda-am man rôz-hâ
shab na-khoft-ast-am ze-`ishq-o sôz-hâ

tâ ze-rôz-o shab goZar kard-am chon-ân
ke ze-espar be-g'Zar-ad nûk-é sinân

ke az ân sô jumla-yé millat yakî-st
Sad hazâr-ân sâl-o yak sâ`at yakî-st

3505 hast azal-râ-wo abad-râ ittiHâd
aql-râ rah nêst ân sô z-iftiqâd

goft az-în rah kô rah-âwardê? be-y-âr
dar khwor-é fahm-o `aqûl-é în diyâr

goft khalq-ân chûn be-bîn-and âsmân
man be-bîn-am `arsh-râ bâ `arshiy-ân
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hasht jannat haft dôzakh pêsh-é man
hast paydâ ham-chô bot pêsh-é shaman

yak ba-yak wâ mê-shenâs-am khalq-râ
ham-chô gandom man ze-jaw dar âseyâ

3510 ke beheshtê kî-st-o bêgâna kiy-ast
pêsh-é man paydâ chô mâr-o mâhiy-ast

în zamân paydâ shoda bar în gorôh
yawma tabyaZZu wa taswaddu wujûh

pêsh az-în har-chand jân por `ayb bûd
dar raHim bûd-o ze-khalq-ân ghayb bûd

ash-shaqiyyu man shaqî fî baTni 'l-'um
min simâti 'l-jismi yu`raf Hâlu-hum

tan chô mâdar Tifl-é jân-râ Hâmila
margh dard-é zâdan-ast-o zalzala

3515 jumla-yé jân-hây-é goZashta muntaZir
tâ che-gûna zây-ad ân jân-é baTir

zangiy-ân gôy-and khwod az mâ-st ô
rûmiy-ân gôy-and bas zîbâ-st ô

chûn be-zây-ad dar jahân-é jân-o jûd
pas na-mân-ad ikhtilâf-é bîZ-o sûd

gar bow-ad zangî, be-rand-ash zangiy-ân
rûm-râ rûmî bar-ad ham az meyân

tâ na-zâd ô mushkilât-é `âlam-ast
ân-ke nâ-zâda shenâs-ad ô kam-ast

3520 ô magar yanZur bi-nûri 'llâh bow-ad
k-andarûn-é pôst ô-râ rah bow-ad

aSl-é âb-é nuTfa ispîd-ast-o khwash
lêk `aks-ê jân-é rûmî-wo Habash

mê-deh?ad rang aHsanu 't-taqwîm-râ
tâ ba-asfal mê-bar-ad în nîm-râ

în sokhon pâyân na-dâr-ad bâz rân
tâ na-mân-êm az qiTâr-é kârawân

qawma tabyaZZu wa taswaddu wujûh
tork-o hendû shohra kard-ad z-ân gorôh

dar raHim paydâ na-bâsh-ad hend-o tork
chûn-ke zây-ad bîn-ad-ash zâr-o sotorg

jumla-râ chûn rôz-é rastâ-khêz man
fâsh mê-bîn-am `ayân az mard-o zan

hîn be-gôy-am yâ ferô band-am nafas?
lab gozîd-ash muSTafà ya`nî ke bas

yâ rasûla 'llâh be-gôy-am sirr-é Hashr
dar jahân paydâ kon-am emrôz nashr?

hel ma-râ tâ parda-hâ-râ bar der-am
tâ chô khworshêdê be-tâb-ad gawhar-am

tâ kusûfây-ad ze-man khworshêd-râ
tâ nomây-am nakhl-râ-wo bêd-râ

wâ nomây-am râz-é rostâkhêz-râ
naqd-râ-wo naqd-é qalb-âmêz-râ

dast-hâ bo-brîda aSHâb-é shimâl
wâ nomây-am rang-é kufr-o rang-é âl

wâ goshây-am haft sôrâkh-é nifâq
dar Ziyây-é mâh-é bê-kasf-o muHâq

wâ nomây-am man palâs-é ashqiyâ
be-sh'nawân-am Tabl-o kôs-é anbiyâ

dûzakh-o jannât-o barzakh dar meyân
pêsh-é chashm-é kâfir-ân âr-am `ayân

wâ-nomây-am HawZ-é kawSar-râ ba-jôsh
k-âb bar rô-shân zan-ad bâng-ash ba-gôsh

w-ân kas-ân ke teshna bar-gerd-ash dawân
gashta-and în dam numây-am man `ayân

mê-be-sây-ad dôsh-eshân bar dôsh-é man
na`ra-hâ-shân mê-ras-ad dar gôsh-é man

ahl-é jannat pêsh-é chashm-am z-ikhtiyâr
dar-kashîda yak degar-râ dar kenâr

3540 dast-é ham-dîgar ziyârat mê-kon-and
az lab-ân ham bôsa ghârat mê-kon-and

kar shod în gôsh-am ze-bâng-é âh-âh
az khas-ân-o na`ra-yé wâ Hasratâh

3542 în ishârat-hâ-st gôy-am az noghôl
lêk mê-tars-am ze-âzâr-é rasûl

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Visions of Zayd (part two)

Mathnawi I: 3543-3583

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3543 (Zayd) was talking in this (ecstatic) manner,[1] very "drunk" and "smashed." (Then) the Prophet gave (Zayd's) collar a twist.[2]

He said, "Be careful, (and) draw in (your reins)! For your horse has become (over-) heated. (Your sense of) shame left (you) when the reflection of (the verse) 'God is not ashamed (of speaking the Truth)'[3] struck (upon your heart).

3545 "Your mirror has jumped out of (its) covering. The mirror and the scales can never speak contrary (to the truth).

"The mirror and the scales can never close the breath (of their speech) for the sake of (avoiding) harm and shame to anyone.

"The mirror and the scales (are) sublime and venerable touchstones,[4] so even if you perform services (to bribe them)[5] for two hundred years,

"Saying, 'Hide the truth, for my sake! Show increase and don't show decrease!'--

"(They) will say to you, 'Don't laugh at (your own) beard and moustache![6] (Can there be) a mirror and scales, and then fraud and (biased) advice?[7]

3550 "'Since God has elevated us (in rank) for the (end result) that one is able to recognize the truth by (means of) us,

"'If this was not (the case), young man, what (would be) our worth? We would never be a decoration for the faces of the beautiful.'

(The Prophet continued), "But you should draw the mirror into (its) felt (covering) when He has made (your) chest a (Mount) Sinai by means of (spiritual) illumination."[8]

(Zayd) said, "But the Sunlight of Truth and the Sun of Eternity can never be contained under the armpit--

"(Since) it tears up both deceit as well as armpit,[9] (and) neither craziness nor reason can remain before it."

3555 The Prophet replied, "If you place a single finger over an eye, it sees the world[10] devoid of the sun.

"(Similarly), a single tip of the finger becomes the moon's veil, and this is a sign of the veiling (power) of the King--[11]

"So that He can cause the world to be covered[12] (by) a (little) spot, (and) the sun can become eclipsed by some (small piece of) rubbish (in the eye)."[13]

Close your lips and observe the depths of an ocean (within you), (for) God made the ocean subject to the power of mankind--[14]

Just as the Fountain of Salsabeel and the (cups of Heavenly) ginger [15] are (going to be) under the control of the majestic inhabitants of Paradise.

3560 And) the four rivers of Paradise[16] are (going to be) under our control. (Yet) this (will) not (be) by our power, but by the Command of God.

We maintain them flowing (toward) anywhere we wish,[17] just like magic, according to the magician's desire.

(And) just as these two flowing fountains of (our) eyes are under the control of the heart and (under) the command of the soul.

If (the heart) wishes, (the person) goes toward poison and snakes. And if it wishes, (the person) goes toward trustworthy counsel.

If it wishes, (the person) goes toward objects perceived by the senses. And if it wishes, (the person) goes toward objects wearing clothes.[18]

3565 If it wishes, (the person) rides toward universals. And if it wishes, (the person) remains confined to particulars.[19]

Likewise, each of the five senses (are) like the spout (of a jug);[20] (its water) is allowed to pass at the will and command of the heart.

All of the five senses go along, dragging (their) gowns (toward) any direction which the heart directs them.

The hands and feet are, in public (view for all to see), under the heart's command, just like the staff in the hand of Moses.[21]

(If) the heart wishes, the foot starts dancing by means of it. Or it escapes from deficiency (and goes) toward abundance.

3570 If the heart wishes, the hand begins considering and estimating together with the fingers, so that it may write (the words for) a book.

(And) the hand is in (the control of) a hidden hand;[22] (from) inside, it has appointed (actions for) the body, outside.

If it wishes,[23] the (outward) hand becomes a snake to the enemy. And if it wishes, it becomes a friend to the saint.[24]

And if it wishes, (the outward hand becomes like) a spoon for (eating)[25] food; and if it wishes, (it becomes) like a mace of ten maunds.[26]

What is the heart saying to those (members of the body)? Oh (how) amazing (it must be)! (Such) a wonderful connection! (Such) a wonderful hidden cause!

3575 Perhaps the heart has obtained the Seal of Solomon,[27] so that it can twist the (nose) toggle[28] of the five senses.

Five outward senses are easy for it (to control); five inward senses[29] are (also) under its command.

(Thus) there are ten senses and seven limbs (of the body), and other (numbers of parts). You may count whatever (else) isn't (included) in (this) speech.

O heart, since you are (like) Solomon in dominion, strike (the power of your magic) seal ring upon the genies and demons.[30]

If you are free from deceit in this kingdom of yours, the three demons won't seize the seal (ring)[31] from your hand.

3580 After that, your name will conquer the (whole) world (and) this world and the next (will be) subject to your power, like your body.

And if the demon takes the seal ring from your hand, (your) kingship will have passed away (and) your good fortune will be dead.

After that, O servants (of God), "Oh misery for me!"[32] will become decreed for you (as a lament) until the Day of being called together.[33]

3583 (And) if you are presenting (an appearance of) denial of your deceit,[34] (your) soul (will never be) guiltless from (the judgment of) the (Divine) Scales[35] and the Mirror [of Truth].

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3543) Zayd) was talking in this (ecstatic) manner: in the previous lines (I: 3500-3542), Zayd, a freed slave who became the adopted son of the Prophet, was telling the Prophet about how he was able to see vividly, as if it were occurring in the present moment, which people's souls would be in Paradise and which would be in Hell. And in the line just prior to this, Zayd said about his descriptions of these visions, "These are (only) indications. I would speak (further) from the depths (of my experience), but I'm afraid of the disapproval and censure of the Messenger (of God)."

2. (3543) gave (Zayd's) collar a twist: means the upper hem of the shirt or gown, near the throat. Nicholson translated, "the Prophet twitched his collar."

3. (3544) God is not ashamed (of speaking the Truth): a modification, for metrical purposes, of the verse which has the words, "Certainly, that (behavior) of yours might offend the Prophet, and he might feel bashful of (asking) you (to leave). But God is not ashamed of (revealing) the truth [about the situation]" (Qur'an 33:53). Nicholson explained: "This Divine quality is reflected by the

prophets and saints, but may be displayed too boldly in moments of ecstasy." (Commentary)

4. (3547) touchstones: a touchstone is a kind of stone which demonstrates the presence of real gold (by changing color) when rubbed against it. Used for centuries by assayers as a test for genuine gold.

5. (3547) even if you perform services (to bribe them): Nicholson referred to Mathnawi I: 572-73, which he translated: "If desire were to arise in the mirror, that mirror would be like us in (respect of) hypocrisy. If the balance had desire for riches, how would the balance give a true description of the case?"

6. (3549) beard and moustache: laughing at another's beard or moustache is a Persian idiom, meaning making fun of someone's vanity or foolishness.

7. (3549) fraud and (biased) advice: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "deceit and (plausible) advice" (from, "deceit and trickery"). And he explained, "I.e. 'The idea that mirror and balance should deceive is absurd.'" (footnote)

8. (3552) by means of (spiritual) illumination: Nicholson translated, "if (Divine) illumination has made thy breast a Sinai." There is a word-play here between "chest" or "breast" [sîna] and "Sinai" [sînâ]. Nicholson also referred to a line from Rumi's Divân, which ends with "sína-i Síná-yi `ishq." (Commentary) This is line 13878, from Ghazal 1311: "See the (Holy) Mountain in (your) belly; (see) a chest (containing) the Sinai of Love."

9. (3554) both deceit as well as armpit: a word play between "armpit" [baghal] and "deceit," or "false pretence" [daghal]. Nicholson later corrected his translation, based upon the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "both imposture (daghal) and armpit (baghal)" (from "armpit (baghal) and imposture (daghal)."

10. (3555) it sees the world: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based upon the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "it (the eye) sees the world" (from, "thou seest the world").

11. (3556) a sign of the veiling (power) of the King: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based upon the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "a symbol of the King's covering" (from "a symbol of God's covering"). The term here is "sâtir," which is one of the Attributes of God meaning His power to conceal His mysteries from humanity, as well as to conceal an individual's sins

(temporarily or forever). Nicholson commented: "God is the Concealer of faults (Sattáru 'l-`uyúb). He mercifully covers up the sins of His creatures and leaves them in ignorance of their final destiny, so that they may have hope and faith in the Unseen. The muríd [= spiritual seeker, disciple] for whom the veil is lifted must not divulge the mystery. It behoves him to exercise self-control: by moving a finger he can make himself blind to the sun: cannot he be dumb when the Divine revelation shines forth in his heart? The perfect mystic keeps his experiences under control: he is hákim-i hál [= commander of (spiritual) states], not mahkúm-i hál [= commanded by (spiritual) states]. In verse 3557 the literal translation of the first hemistich is: 'so that He (God) causes a single point to conceal the (whole) world.'" (Commentary)

12. (3557) can cause the world to be covered: Nicholson translated, "the (whole) world may be covered (hidden from view)..."

13. (3557) by some (small piece of) rubbish (in the eye): Nicholson translated, "by a splinter." He commented: "Comparison with v. 92 supra [= I: 92, which he translated, "By reason of irreverence the sun was eclipsed"] suggests that az saqta-í [= "by a splinter"] might be translated: 'because of a single deviation from its course.'" (Commentary)

14. (3558) God made the ocean subject to the power of mankind: "Look within, contemplate silently the deep, still ground of your real self, the infinite sea of mystic knowledge in the heart (qalb). 'God hath made the sea subject to you' (Qur. XVI 14, XLV 11). The owner of this knowledge is master not only of himself but of everything in earth and heaven." (Commentary) "And He has made the night and the day subservient to you [for sleeping and seeing], and the sun and the moon (also). And the stars are subjugated by His Command.... And He is the one who has made the ocean subservient, so that you may eat fresh meat from it, and bring forth from it ornaments to wear." (Qur'an 16: 12, 14; see also 14:33) The meaning here is that, by the command of God, mankind has some (limited) power over nature in ways which result in benefits.

15. (3559) the Fountain of Salsabeel and the (cups of Heavenly) ginger: "And [in Paradise] they will be given to drink therein a cup (of wine) which is mixed with ginger [Zanjabîl], (and there is) a fountain therein named Salsabîl." (Qur'an 76: 17-18) Nicholson translated, "the fountains of Salsabíl and Zanjabíl."

16. (3560) the four rivers of Paradise: "The four rivers of Paradise (Qur. XLVII 16-17) are under our control, since they are the effects of our actions and qualities, as manifested in the present life." (Nicholson, Commentary) "A parable of the Garden which

the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of incorruptible water; and rivers of milk, the taste of which never changes; and rivers of wine delightful to those who drink; and rivers of purified honey." (Qur'an 47:15)

17. (3561) anywhere we wish: Nicholson made a reference to a similar line, Book III: 3464-69, which he translated: "Since these causes were (obedient) to your command, the four rivers (of Paradise) likewise showed obedience to you. You make them flow in whatever direction you wish: (even) as that quality (of disposition) was (in this world), such do you make it (the effect) to be (in the next world), As (for example) your semen, which is at your command-- the progeny thereof are ready to (obey) your command. Your young son runs (obediently) at your command, saying, 'I am the part of thee which thou didst deposit (in my mother's womb).' That (praiseworthy) quality was (obedient) to your command in this world: likewise (in the next world) those rivers flow at your command. Those trees (of Paradise) are obedient to you, because those trees are (made) fruitful by your (good) qualities."

18. (3564) objects wearing clothes: Nicholson translated, "things clothed (in the forms of thought and phantasy)."

19. (3565) remains confined to particulars: a philosophical term, which means the specifications of universals. For example, someone limited to a particular object of love (a woman, a valuable possession, etc.) who then loses it, is left with nothing. But someone who discovers Universal Love has found something which transcends particular loves and which is their Source. Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "they remain in bondage to particulars" (from, "they remain turned towards particulars").

20. (3566) the spout (of a jug): the senses are compared to a jug with five spouts. The "water" is not allowed to flow (into perception) from any particular spout unless allowed by the heart. Nicholson later corrected his translation, to "like the spout" (from, "like the spool (in the hand of the weaver)"). And he made a reference to an earlier passage which he translated: "What is that jug? Our confined body: within it is the briny water of our senses.... ('Tis) a jug with five spouts, the five senses: keep this water pure (and safe) from every filth..." (I:2708, 2710)

21. (3568) the rod in the hand of Moses: The miraculous staff of the Prophet Moses (Qur'an 7:107) which he cast down on the ground. It became a snake, which then swallowed up the deceptions (7:117) that were the (illusory) snakes produced by Pharaoh's

magicians.

22. (3571) a hidden hand: "i.e. the heart." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (3572) If it wishes: Nicholson translated, "If it (the hidden hand) will, it (the external hand) becomes a snake..."

24. (3572) it becomes a friend [yârê] to the saint [walî]: Nicholson translated an alternative meaning-- "it becomes a helper to the friend."

25. (3573) like) a spoon for (eating): in Islamic cultures, food us generally eaten with the right hand.

26. (3573) like a mace (weighing) ten maunds: means, in this case, a hand can become as powerful as a mace in battle: a club-like weapon with spikes, used for breaking the armor of the enemy.

27. (3575) the Seal of Solomon: Solomon was given (by God) control over the jinn (genies) and demons, who became builders and divers for him (Qur'an, 38:36-37). According to later legend, it was said that Solomon had a magic seal (as on a ring), which he used to exert control over jinn, demons, birds, and men.

28. (3575) the (nose) toggle: a piece of wood inserted into the (perforated) nose of a camel, twisted (by hand, or reins) to make the camel follow the directed course.

29. (3576) five inward senses: "The five 'internal senses' are the common sense (hiss-i mushtarak), phantasy (khayál), judgment (wahm), and the faculties of memory (háfizah) and imagination (mutasarrifah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

30. (3578) your magic) seal ring upon the genies and demons: see note 27 above. The word translated as "genies" [parî] originally meant "fairy" in Persian, but later was used to translate the Arabic word "jinn" (genie).

31. (3579) the three demons won't seize the seal (ring): According to later Islamic legend, Solomon lost his seal ring to the demons, one of which used it in order to impersonated him on the throne for a time.

32. (3582) Oh misery for me: "And turn toward your Sustaining Lord and surrender (your will) to Him, before the punishment (of your rejection) comes to you. For then (after that) you will not be helped.... So that a soul will exclaim, "Oh misery for me [yâ Hasratà!], for what I disregarded (of my obligations) toward

God!...." (Qur'an 39: 54, 56). (

33. (3582) the Day of being called together [yawmu 't-tanâd-- shortened form, for metrical purposes, of yawmu '-tanâdî]: the Day of Judgment.

34. (3583) denial of your deceit: the first half of this line in Nicholson's text is slightly different from that in the earliest manuscript, but because the meaning is the same, he did not offer a correction in his translation. Following this line, Rumi tells the story of Luqman, who was accused by his fellow slaves of eating their master's fruit (when they ate it, instead of delivering the fruit as the master commanded). Luqman asked the master to order all the slaves to drink hot water and then force them to run into the desert. As a result, the other slaves vomited fruit, and Luqman vomited pure water. Rumi likens this to the Day of Judgment, when all hidden sins will be revealed. Then he continues the rest of the story of how the Prophet answered Zayd.

35. (3543) the (Divine) Scales: refers to a passage in the Qur'an, where God says (in the plural form, expressing Transcendent Majesty beyond human understanding), "We will set up Scales of Justice on the Day of Judgment, so that no soul will be wronged any (amount)." (21:47)

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3543 ham-chon-în mê-goft sar-mast-o kharâb
dâd payghâmbar gerîbân-ash ba-tâb

goft hîn dar kash ke asb-at garm shod
`aks-é Haq lâ yastaHî zad sharm shod

3545 ây'na-yé tô jast bêrûn az ghilâf
ây'na-wo mîzân ko-jâ gôy-ad khilâf?

ây'na-wo mîzân ko-jâ band-ad nafas
bahr-é âzâr-o Hayây-é hêch kas?

ây'na-wo mîzân miHak-hây-é sanî
gar dô Sad sâl-ash tô khidmat-hâ kon-î?

k-az barây-é man be-pôshân râstî
bar fozûn bo-n'mâ-wo ma-n'mâ kâstî

ô-at gôy-ad rêsh-o sablat bar-ma-khand
ây'na-wo mîzân-o ân-gah rêw-o pand?
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chûn khodâ mâ-râ barây-é ân farâkht
ke ba-mâ be-t'wân Haqîqat-râ shenâkht

în na-bâsh-ad mâ che arz-êm ay jawân
kay shaw-êm âyîn-é rôy-é nêkow-ân?

lêk dar-kash dar namad âyena-râ
k-az tajallî kard sînâ sîna-râ

goft âkhir hêch gonjad dar baghal
âftâb-é Haqq-o khworshêd-é azal

ham daghal-râ ham baghal-râ bar-dar-ad
na junûn mân-ad ba-pêsh-ash na kherad

goft yak iSba` chô bar chashmê neh-î
bîn-ad az khworshêd `âlam-ra tahî

yak sar-é angosht parda-yé mâh shod
w-în neshân-é sâtirîy-é shâh shod

tâ be-pôshân-ad jahân-râ nuqTa'yê
mehr gard-ad munkhasif az saqTa'yé

lab be-band-o ghawr-é daryâyê negar
baHr-râ Haq kard maHkûm-é bashar

ham-chô chashma-yé salsabîl-o zanjabîl
hast dar Hukm-é beheshtîy-é jalîl

chân jôy-é jannat andar Hukm-é mâ-st
în na zûr-é mâ ze-farmân-é khodâ-st

har ko-jâ khwâh-êm dâr-êm-ash rawân
ham-chô siHr andar murâd-é sâHir-ân

ham-chô în dô chashma-yé chashm-é rawân
hast dar Hukm-é del-o farmân-é jân

gar be-khwâh-ad raft sôy-é zahr-o mâr
w-ar be-khwâh-ad raft sôy-é i`tibâr

gar be-khwâh-ad sôy-é maHsûsât raft
w-ar be-khwâh-ad sôy-é malbûsât raft

gar be-khwâh-ad sôy-é kullîyât rând
w-ar be-khwâh-ad Habs-é juzwîyât mând

ham-chon-în har panj His chûn nâyeza
bar murâd-o amr-é del shod jâyiza

har Taraf ke del ishârat kard-eshân
mê-raw-ad har panj His dâman kashân

dast-o pâ dar amr-é del andar malâ
ham-chô andar dast-é mûsà ân `aSâ

del be-khwâh-ad, pâ dar ây-ad z-ô ba-raqS
yâ gorêz-ad sôy-é afzûnî ze-naqS

3570 del be-khwâh-ad, dast ây-ad dar Hisâb
bâ aSâbi` tâ nawîs-ad ô kitâb

dast dar dast-é nehânê mânda-ast
ô darûn tan-râ berûn be-n'shânda-ast

gar be-khwâh-ad bar `adû mârê shaw-ad
w-ar be-khwâh-ad bar walî yârê shaw-ad

w-ar be-khwâh-ad kaf-cha'yê dar khwordanî
w-ar be-khwâh-ad ham-chô gorz-é dah manî

del che mê-gôy-ad ba-d-êshân ay `ajab?
Turfa wuSlat, Turfa penhânî sabab

3575 del magar mohr-é sulaymân yâft-ast
ke mahâr-é panj His bar-tâft-ast?

panj Hissê az berûn maysûr-é ô
panj Hissê az darûn ma'mûr-é ô

dah His-ast-o haft andâm-o degar
ân-che andar goft n-ây-ad mê-shomar

chûn sulaymân-î del-â dar meh-tarî
bar parî-wo dêw zan angoshtarî

gar dar-în mulk-at barî bâsh-î ze-rêw
khâtam az dast-é tô na-s'tân-ad se dêw

3580 ba`d az ân, `âlam be-gîr-ad ism-é tô
dô jahân maHkûm-é tô chûn jism-é tô

w-ar ze-dast-at dêw khâtam-râ be-bord
pâdshâhî fawt shod, bakht-at be-mord

ba`d az ân yâ Hasratâ shod yâ `ibâd
bar shomâ maHtûm tâ yawma 't-tanâd

3583 makr-é khwad-râ gar tô inkâr âwar-î
az tarâzû-wo ây'na kay jân barî?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Wisdom of Luqman

Mathnawi I: 3584-3607

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3584 In the presence of his master, Luqman[1] (was) despised
(because) of (having a black) body amidst his (other) slaves.

3585 He would send the slaves to the orchard so that fruit might
come to him for his relaxation and enjoyment.

Among the slaves, Luqman was (viewed) as a parasite.[2] (He was)
dark of appearance like the night, (yet) full of deep understanding.

Those slaves happily ate (up) all of the fruits, due to the plundering
(nature) of greed.

They told the master (that) Luqman ate them, (so that) the master
became bitter and gravely serious toward Luqman.

When Luqman inquired about the cause, he opened (his) lips in
disapproval of his master.

3590 Luqman said, "O princely master! In the presence of God, a
faithless servant is not approved.

"(So) test all of us. O noble (master): give us an excessive fill of
hot water,

"(And) after that, (make us go) into a great desert, you riding (on a
mount and) we running on foot.

"Then observe the wrong-doer (as well as) the actions of the
Revealer of Secrets!"[3]

The master became the water-server of hot water for the

slaves and they drank it out of fear.

3595 After that, he forced them into the desert plains. That group of men were running up and down[4] (the hills).

They began vomiting due to (their) misery, (and) the water brought (forth) the fruit from (within) them.

When Luqman happened to vomit from the center (of his belly), (only) pure water was coming up from his inside.

If the wisdom of Luqman knows (about) this demonstration, then (think) what the Wisdom of the Lord of Existence is (in comparison)!

"(On) the Day (when)" all "hidden things will be put to the test,"[5] something hidden and unwished-for will appear from (within) you.

3600 (And) when they are "given hot water to drink,"[6] all the veils will be "torn up" from (hiding) what is utterly detestable.

(Hell) fire will be the punishment of the rejecters[7] (of God), since fire is the (best) test for stones.[8]

How many (times) we have spoken mildly to these hearts (of ours) like stones-- and they did not accept (our) advice!

The vein gets a painful remedy for a harmful wound, (and) the dog's teeth [are the correction] for the donkey's [stubborn] head.[9]

"Corrupt women" are for "corrupt men"[10] is wisdom. For an ugly and rude (woman), an equally ugly and rude (man) is the mate and suitable (companion).

3605 Therefore, whatever companion you want, go (and) become absorbed and (take on) a similar appearance and (also) her qualities.

If you want light, become worthy to receive light. (And) if you want distance [from the light of God], become self-centered[11] and distant.

3607 And if you want a way (to escape) from this ruined prison, don't draw (your) head away from the Beloved, "but prostrate (yourself) and draw near (to God)."[12]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with

gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 5/11/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3584) Luqman: mentioned in the Qur'an (chapter 31) as having received wisdom from God. Nicholson said, "He appears as a sagacious [= wise] negro slave in several anecdotes related by Rúmí." Nicholson also notes that this anecdote "is identical with a story which occurs in the 14th cent. 'Life of Aesop' by Maximus Planudes. The medieval Arabic version of Aesop's Fables is ascribed to Luqmán." (Commentary)

2. (3586) a parasite: means viewed with resentment like an unwanted guest.

3. (3593) the Revealer of Secrets: means God. "And He is God in the heavens and on earth. He knows your secret (thoughts) as well as your open (words)" (Qur'an 6:3).

4. (3595) running up and down: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "those persons were running up and down" (from, "they were running amidst the cornfields").

5. (3599) (On) the Day (when) hidden things will be put to the test: a verse from the Qur'an, modified for the meter: "(On) the Day (when) hidden things will be put to the test, (man) will have no power and no helper" (86: 9-10). This refers to the Day of Judgment when hidden thoughts and secret deeds will be plainly revealed in the light of Truth.

6. (3600) hot water to drink: "and (they will) be given hot water to drink so that it will tear their intestines" (Qur'an 47:15). This symbolizes the future suffering of sinners in Hell. Rumi interprets the verse in terms of the story: that what will be torn up will be the veils covering what people do not wish to be revealed. Their veils are like intestines, hiding the utterly detestable excrement of their hidden sins. In contrast, the "intestines" of the pious and saintly servants of God, like Luqman, will be shown to be clean and full of pure water. Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "from the things which (when they are revealed) are found to be abominable" (from, "from that which is abhorred").

7. (3601) the rejecters: Orientalists often mis-translate the Qur'anic word "kâfir" as "infidel." However, it means those who reject,

deny, and disbelieve that there is One God, whose Light of Truth and Justice will inevitably expose all hidden lies and wrongdoing.

8. (3601) fire is the (best) test for stones: Nicholson linked this line to the verse, "Then your hearts hardened after this, so that they became like rocks, or even harder" (Qur'an 2:74). (Commentary) In this sense, fire is the best way to soften stones that have become hardened.

9. (3603) the donkey's [stubborn] head: means the donkey which is stubbornly going in the wrong direction. Nicholson notes that this saying about the donkey is a proverb (Commentary).

10. (3604) corrupt men: refers to the verse, "Corrupt women are for corrupt men and corrupt men are for corrupt women. And good women are for good men and good men are for good women" (Qur'an 24:26). This means that corrupt people are attracted to the company other corrupt people, whereas good and virtuous people are attracted to the company of other good and virtuous people. The idea that like-minded people (which Nicholson translated as "congeners") attract each other is a frequent teaching of Rumi's in the Mathnawi.

11. (3606) self-centered [khwêsh-bîn]: literally, "seeing (only) yourself," and is an idiom meaning conceited, arrogant, proud. Means becoming so involved with ego-centered preoccupations that one forgets about God, and therefore becomes distant from the Only Beloved.

12. (3607) "but prostrate (yourself) and draw near (to God)": Qur'an 96:19.

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3584 bûd luqmân pêsh-é khwâja-yé khwêshtan
dar meyân-é banda-gân-ash khwâr-tan

3585 mê-ferestâd ô ghulâm-ân-râ ba-bâgh
tâ ke mêwa ây-ad-ash bahr-é firâgh

bûd luqmân dar ghulâm-ân chûn Tufayl
por ma`ânî, têra-Sûrat ham-chô layl

ân ghulâm-ân mêwa-hây-é jam`-râ
khwash be-khward-and az nahîb-é Tam`-râ

khwâja-râ goft-and luqmân khward ân
khwâja bar luqmân torosh gasht-o gerân
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chûn tafaHHuS kard luqmân az sabab
dar `itâb-€é khwâja-ash be-g'shâd lab

3590 goft luqmân sayyid-â pêsh-é khodâ
banda-yé khâ'in na-bâsh-ad murtaZà

imtiHân kon jumla-mân-râ ay karîm
sêr-emân dar deh tô az âb-é Hamîm

ba`d az ân mâ-râ ba-SaHrây-é kalân
tô sowâra, mâ peyâda mê-dawân

ân-gahân be-n'gar tô bad-kardâr-râ
Sun`-hây-é kâshifu l-asrâr-râ

gasht sâqî khwâja az âb-é Hamîm
mar ghulâm-ân-râ wa khward-and ân ze-bîm

3595 ba`d az ân mê-rând-eshân dar dasht-hâ
mê-dawîd-and ân nafar taHt-o `ulà

qay dar oftâd-and êshân az `anâ
âb mê-âward ze-êshân mêwa-hâ

chûn ke luqmân-râ dar âmad qay ze-nâf
mê bar âmad az darûn-ash âb-é Sâf

Hikmat-é luqmân chô dân-ad în namûd
pas che bâsh-ad Hikmat-é rabbu 'l-wujûd?

yawma tublà wa 's-sirâyir kullu-hâ
bâna min-kum kâmin-un lâ yushtahà

3600 chûn suqû mâ-an Hamîm-an quTTi`at
jumlatu 'l-astâri mimmâ ufZi`at

nâr ze-ân âmad `aZâb-é kâfir-ân
ke Hajar-râ nâr bâsh-ad imtiHân

ân del-é chûn sang-râ mâ chand chand
narm goft-ém-o na-mê-peZroft pand

rêsh-é bad-râ dârûy-é bad yâft rag
mar sar-é khar-râ sar-é dandân-é sag

al-khabîSâtu 'l-khabîthîn Hikmat-ast
zesht-râ ham-zesht joft-o bâbat-ast

3605 pas tô har joftê ke mê-khwâh-î be-raw
maHw-o ham-shakl-o Sifât-é ô be-shaw

nûr khwâh-î, musta`idd-é nûr shaw
dûr khwâh-î, khwêsh-bîn-o dûr shaw

3607 war rahê khwâh-î az-în sijn-é kharib
sar ma-kash az dôst w-asjud w-aqtarib

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Ali and the Enemy Who Spat in His Face

Mathnawi I: 3721-3733, 3745-3751, 3787-3809

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(and) so that a lightning like that appeared and (then) jumped back?

3730 "What did you see so that a splendor appeared in my heart and soul from the reflection of that sight?[4]

"What did you see which was higher than the universe (and was) better than life, so that you gave me life?

"In being brave, you are the Lion of the Lord. (And) in manly generosity, who knows who you are?

3733 "In generosity you are (like) the cloud of Moses in the desert, out of which came incomparable trays (full of food) and bread."[5]

. . . . . .

3745 "O Ali, (O) you who are entirely intelligence and vision! Tell (me) a little bit about what you have seen!

"The sword of your mildness has ripped (through) my soul, (and) the water of your knowledge has purified my earth.

"Speak openly.[6] I know that these are His secrets, because killing without (need of) a sword is His (way of) action.

"The Creator (who is) without (need of) tools or limbs, (and) the Generous Giver of [all] these excellent gifts,

"Causes the understanding to taste a hundred thousand 'wines' (of) which the two eyes and ears are unaware.

3750 "Speak openly, O Falcon of the (Divine) Throne (and capturer of) good prey! What did you see this moment from the Maker?

3751 "(Since) your eyes have been taught understanding of the invisible (realms), (while) the eyes of those who are present [here][7] have been sewn up."

. . . . . .

3787 (Ali) said, "I strike (with) the sword for the sake of God (only). I am the servant of God; I am not commanded by the body.

"I am the Lion of God, not the lion of craving, (and) my actions are evidence of my religion.

"In battle, (the verse) 'You did not throw when you threw'[8] (is

the attitude) for me. I am like the sword, but the one who strikes is (like) the Sun.[9]

3790 "I have removed the baggage of self from [blocking] the way, (and) I have considered (anything) other than God (to be) nothing.

"I am a shadow (and) the Sun is my lord; I am the doorkeeper, not a curtain (barring the way) to Him.

"I am like a sword, covered with jewels of Union; in battle, I make (men) living[10] not killed.

"Blood does not cover the lustre of my sword, (and) the wind never takes (away) my clouds.

"I'm not straw. I am a mountain[11] of restraint and patience and justice. The strong wind never steals (away) the mountain!

3795 "Whatever leaves (its) place because of some wind is (nothing but) twigs. Because there are many unfavorable winds.

"The winds of anger, lust, and greed carry (off) the one who isn't among those devoted to the (daily ritual) prayers.

"I am a mountain and my existence is His foundation. And if I become like straw, the wind (moving) me is remembrance of Him.[12]

"My affection doesn't move (toward anything) except by His wind, (and) the captain of my cavalry is nothing except love for the One.

"Anger (is a) king over kings, but (it is) my slave; I have also tied anger underneath the bridle.

3800 "The sword of my restraint has struck the neck of my anger, (and) God's anger has come upon me like mercy.[13]

"I am drowned in light, even though my roof is destroyed.[14] I became a garden, even though I am (called) the Father of Dust.[15]

"Since a cause (other than God's cause) came [into my mind] during the battle, I found (it) suitable to hide (my) sword,[16]

"So that 'he loves for (the sake of) God'[17] may become my name, (and) so that 'he hates for (the sake of) God' may become my desire.

"So that 'he gives for (the sake of) God' may become my

generosity, (and) so that 'he withholds for (the sake of) God' may become my existence.

3805 "My avarice (is) for (the sake of) God, (my) generosity (is) for (the sake of) God and (for) none else. I belong completely to God, (and) I don't belong to anyone (else).

"And that which I do for (the sake of) God is not imitation or show (of piety), nor is it (done from) imagination or opinion; it is nothing other than (direct) vision.[18]

"I am liberated from striving and careful choosing, (for) I have attached my sleeve to the (hem of) the robe[19] of God.

"If I keep flying, (it is because) I keep seeing the place (worthy) to fly to, and if I keep circling (it is because) I keep seeing the object (worthy) of revolving around.

3809 "And if I am carrying a burden, I know where (to take it) to: I am the moon and the Sun is the guide in front of me!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 9/9/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3721) Ali: the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, and the fourth successor (khaleefa). "This well-known anecdote of `Alí, which illustrates the meaning of ikhlás [= sincerity], i.e. pure disinterestedness and entire devotion to God..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3721) the Lion of God: a title of Ali, who was famous for his courage in battle.

3. (3722) battle (against the unbelievers): refers here to the battles which the earliest Muslims fought to defend themselves against the attacking armies of the Arab polytheists, who vastly outnumbered them and were determined to destroy the new monotheistic faith. Ali was one of the greatest champions among the Muslims, and was famous for challenging the best fighter among the enemy and defeating him in one-to-one combat.

4. (3730) the reflection of that sight: Nicholson later changed his

translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi to: "What did you see, that from the reflexion of the vision seen (by thee) thereof a flame appeared in my heart and soul?" (from: "that from seeing (only) the reflexion thereof a flame...").

5. (3733) bread: a reference to the Qur'anic story of the Prophet Moses and his people in the desert: "And We shaded you with clouds and sent down manna and quails for you, saying, 'Eat of the good things We have provided for you'" (Qur'an 2:57; see also 7:160).

6. (3747) Speak openly: "Here 'Alí is described as the Perfect Man whose actions are divine. It is God's way to kill without sword, i.e. to mortify the carnal soul and bestow spiritual life. The forbearance and generosity of 'Alí had killed the unbelief of his foe and opened his heart to knowledge and love of God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (3751) those who are present [here]: "may mean 'those who are present with God', i.e. in comparison with 'Alí even the greatest adepts are blind and ignorant." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (3789) You did not throw when you threw': Qur'an 8:17. "At the battle of Badr the Prophet threw a handful of gravel in the faces of the Quraysh, who immediately fled before the Moslem onset. The Qur'án declares that the gravel was really thrown by God, 'that He might give the true believers a good proof of His favour'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (3789) like the sun: this is a word-play on the Persian idiom for a ray of sunlight, which is poetically compared to the gleam of sunlight reflected from a polished sword. "Tígh-i áftáb [= sword of the sun] means 'sunbeam.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3792) I make men living: "i.e. 'I endow the soul with spiritual life by destroying the evil qualities which defile its purity, as a sheeny sword is tarnished by blood.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (3794) I am a mountain: "Cf. the saying al-rijál ka-'l-jibál, 'holy men are like the mountains', i.e. they have attained to tamkín [= being solidly established], so that the fierce blasts of sensual passion leave them unmoved." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (3797) remembrance of Him: Nicholson later corrected his translation here, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "my wind (the wind that moves me) is recollection of Him" (from "is His wind").

13. (3800) like mercy: "i.e. 'to me the Divine attribute of wrath has appeared in the form of mercy'. In God, and consequently in the Perfect man, mercy prevails over wrath: his anger is a disguised grace (lutf-i khafí)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (3801) my roof is destroyed: "i.e. 'my egotism is destroyed, I am dead to self.' (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3801) the Father of Dust: "The name Abú Turáb is said to have been given to 'Alí by the Prophet, who on one occasion found him lying asleep on the ground and covered with dust." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (3802) my sword: Nicholson later corrected this translation, based on the earliest edition of the Mathnawi, to: "Since a motive (other than God) entered (my heart) in the (holy) war, I deemed it right to sheathe the sword" (from: "Since (the thought of something) other than God has intervened, it behoves (me) to sheathe my sword."

17. (3803) for (the sake of) God: refers to a Tradition of the Prophet: "If the (faithful) believer loves, he loves for (the sake of) God, and if he is angry, he is angry for (the sake of) God, and if he is generous, he is generous for (the sake of) God, and if he withholds, it is for (the sake of) God. For he is from God, he belongs to God, and is (returning) toward) God." (Translated from Nicholson's quotation of the Arabic, Commentary)

18. (3806) (direct) vision: literally, "seeing." Nicholson translated it as "intuition," and added, "immediate vision (mu`áyanah), in which every doubt vanishes." (Commentary)

19. (3807) (hem of) the robe: an idiom meaning earnest supplication. Grasping the bottom edge of someone's robe was an action expressing the need for protection or supplication for a request. Nicholson interprets this line: "i.e. 'my heart is firmly attached to the Divine command.'" (Commentary)

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3721 az `alî âmôz ikhlâS-é `amal
shêr-é Haq-râ dân muTahhar az daghal

dar ghazâ bar pahlawânê dast yâft
zûd shamshêrê bar âward-o shetâft

ô khadô andâkht dar rôy-é `alî
iftikhâr-é har nabiyy-o har walî
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ân khadô zad bar rokhê ke rôy-é mâh
sajda âr-ad pêsh-é ô dar sajda-gâh

3725 dar zamân andakht shamshêr ân `alî
kard ô andar ghazâ-ash kâhilî

gasht Hayrân ân mubâriz z-în `amal
w-az namûdan `afw-o raHmat bê-maHal

goft bar man têgh-é têz afrâsht-î
az che afkand-î ma-râ be-g'Zâsht-î?

ân che dîd-î behtar az paykâr-é man
tâ shod-î tô sost dar ishkâr-é man?

ân che dîd-î ke chon-în khashm-at neshast
tâ chon-ân barqê namûd-o bâz jast?

3730 ân che dîd-î ke ma-râ z-ân `aks-é dîd
dar del-o jân shu`la'yê âm-ad padîd?

ân che dîd-î bartar az kawn-o makân
ke beh az jân bûd-o bakhshêd-î-m jân?

dar shajâ`at shêr-é rabbânî-st-î
dar murûwat khwad ke dân-ad kî-st-î

3733 dar murûwat abr-é mûsî-î ba-tîh
k-âmad az way khwân-o nân-é bê-shabîh

. . . . . .

3745 ay `alî ke jomla `aql-o dîda-î
shamma'yê wâ gô az ân-che dîda-î

têgh-é Hilm-at jân-é mâ-râ châk kard
âb-é `ilm-at khâk-é mâ-râ pâk kard

bâz gô dân-am ke în asrâr-é hû-st
z-ân-ke bê-shamshêr koshtan kâr-é ô-st

Sâni`-é bê-âlat-o bê-jâriHa
wâhib-é în hadya-hây-é râjiHa

Sad hazâr-ân may chashân-ad hôsh-râ
ke khabar na-b'w-ad dô chashm-o gôsh-râ

3750 bâz gô ay bâz-é `arsh-é khwash-shekâr

tâ che dîd-î în zamân az kardegâr?

3751 chashm-é tô idrâk-é ghayb âmôkhta
chashm-hây-é HâZir-ân bar dôkhta

. . . . . .

3787 goft man têgh az pay-é Haq mê-zan-am
banda-yé Haq-am, na ma'mûr-é tan-am

shêr-é Haq-am, nêst-am shêr-é hawâ
fa`l-é man bar dîn-é man bâsh-ad gowâ

mâ ramayta iZ ramayta-m dar Hirâb
man chô têgh-am-w-ân zananda âftâb

3790 rakht-é khwad-râ man ze-rah bar dâsht-am
ghayr-é Haq-râ man `adam angâsht-am

sâya'yê-am kad-khodâ-am âftâb
Hâjib-am man, nêst-am ô-râ Hijâb

man chô têgh-am por-gawhar-hây-é wiSâl
zenda gardân-am na koshta dar qitâl

khûn na-pôsh-ad gawhar-é têgh-é ma-râ
bâd az jâ kay mord mêgh-é mar-â?

kah na-y-am kôh-am ze-Hilm-o Sabr-o dâd
kôh-râ kay dar robây-ad tond-bâd?

3795 ân-ke az bâdê raw-ad az jâ khasê-st
z-ân-ke bâd-é nâ-muwâfiq khwad basê-st

bâd-é khashm-o bâd-é shahwat bâd-é âz
bord ô-râ ke na-bûd ahl-é namâz

kôh-am-o hastîy-é man bonyâd-é ô-st
w-ar shaw-am chûn kâh, bâd-am yâd-é ô-st

joz ba-bâd-é ô na-jonb-ad mayl-é man
nêst joz `ishq-é aHad sar-khayl-é man

khashm bar shâh-ân shah-o mâ-râ ghulâm
khashm-râ ham basta-am zêr-é legâm

3800 têgh-é Hilm-am gardan-é khashm-am zad-ast
khashm-é Haq bar man chô raHmat âmad-ast

3800 gharq-é nûr-am, gar-che saqf-am shod kharâb
rawZa gasht-am, gar-che hast-am bû turâb

chûn dar âm-ad `illatê andar ghazâ
têgh-râ dîd-am nehân kardan sazâ

tâ aHabba li-llâh ây-ad nâm-é man
tâ ke abghaZ li-llâh ây-ad kâm-é man

tâ ke a`Tâ li-llâh ây-ad jûd-é man
tâ ke amsak li-llâh ây-ad bûd-é man

bukhl-é man li-llâh `aTâ li-llâh-o bas
jomla li-llâh-am ney-am man ân-é kas

3805 w-ân-che li-llâh mê-kon-am taqlîd nêst
nêst takhyîl-o gomân joz dîd nêst

z-ijtihâd-o az taHarrî rasta-am
âstîn bar dâman-é Haq basta-am

gar hamê parr-am, hamê bîn-am maTâr
w-ar hamê gard-am, hamê bîn-am madâr

3809 w-ar kash-am bârê be-dân-am tâ kojâ
mâh-am-o khworshêd pêsh-am pêshwâ

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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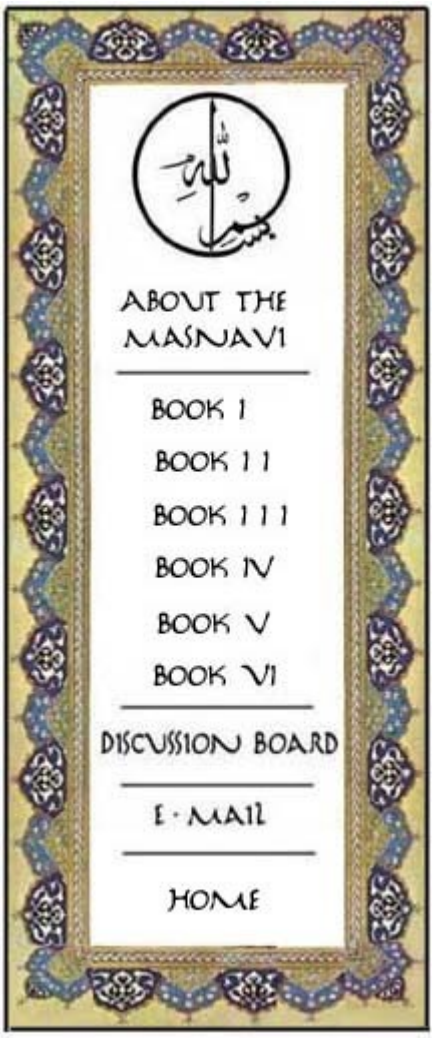

BOOK II

TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S AND ANQARAVI'S COMMENTARIES

Seek A Friend of God (part one) (11/01)

Seek A Friend of God (part two) (12/01)

Seek A Friend of God (part three) (12/01)

What is the Benefit of This Existence? (part one) (2/02)

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Quarreling Over Names (3/02)

Seek A Friend of God (part one)

Mathnawi II: 1-22

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1 The Mathnawi was postponed for a time.[1] A delay was necessary until blood became (changed to) milk.[2]

Listen well: as long as your luck doesn't give birth to a new child,[3] blood will not change to sweet milk.

Since the Splendor of God, Husamuddin,[4] turned the reins (of his mount)[5] from the top of the heavens,

Since he had gone for an ascension[6] to (spiritual) realities--without (the influence of) his Spring, the rose-buds (of mystical poetry) had not burst forth.[7]

5 (But) when he returned from the Ocean toward the shore,[8] the harp of the Mathnawi's verses became tuned (again).

(And as this is) the Mathnawi which is the polisher of spirits,[9]his return was the day of (my) seeking help in opening [the Mathnawi once again].[10]

The date of the arising[11] of this (spiritual) gain and profit was in the year six hundred and sixty two.[122]

A nightingale[13] went from here, returned, (and) became a falcon for the sake of hunting these spiritual truths.

May the forearm of the King be the resting place for this falcon![14] (And) may this door be open to the people for the length of eternity![15]

10 The misfortune of this doorway is (the result of) craving desire and sensual lust; otherwise, there is drink after drink (of spiritual knowledge) here.

Shut this mouth (of yours) so that you may see clearly, for the throat and mouth (of greed) are the eye-covering (which prevents the seeing) of that (transcendent) world.[16]

O mouth, you are the mouth of Hell.[17] And O world, you resemble the interval (between death and resurrection).[18]

The eternal Light (is) to the side of (this) lowly world; the pure Milk (is) to the side of [these bodily] rivers of blood.[19]
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If you take a step in (this lowly world) without caution, your milk may change to blood because of mixture.[20]

15 Adam took a single step in tasting the pleasures of ego-cravings,[21] (and) separation from the uppermost seat in Paradise became a chain upon (his) base self.[22]

The angels were running away from him as (if he were) a devil.[23] He shed (so) many tears from (his) eyes for the sake of a (bit of) bread.[24]

Even though the sin which he had acquired was (only the size of) a single hair, yet that hair had grown in both (of his) eyes.

(Because) Adam was the eye of the Beginningless Light, (and) a hair in (such) an eye is (like) a huge mountain.[25]

If Adam had asked advice,[26] he would not have (needed to) express apologies (to God) in repentance.[27]

20 Since, if a discerning intellect is joined with (another) discriminating mind,[28] it becomes an obstacle to (committing) harmful and sinful actions and speech.

(But) if the base ego becomes friends with another base ego, the partial intellect becomes worthless and useless.

22 When you become hopeless because of isolation,[29] (if) you go beneath the shadow of a (spiritual) friend[30] you will become a (shining) sun.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/29/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1) The Mathnawi was postponed for a time: apparently, Rumi stopped composing the Mathnawi for about two years. Rumi dictated the Mathnawi to his closest disciple and spiritual friend, Husamuddin Chelebi-- whose presence he found necessary for the inspiration of the verses. When Husamuddin's wife died, Husamuddin was in such a state of bereavement that he was "absent" for a time as the inspiring companion he had been.

Nicholson commented on the words Rumi used in the Preface to Book II, "part of the reason of its postponement" as follows: "In this passage the 'postponement' is explained as an act of Divine Wisdom.... Apparently the poet meant to imply that his powers as a medium were intermittent and subject to conditions over which he had no control. At times God veils His glory even from prophets and saints." (Commentary)

2. (1) A delay was necessary until blood became (changed to) milk: "i.e. 'in order that inspiration might flow pure and undefiled'. Cf. I 4001 sqq. The metaphor, as the following verse makes plain, alludes to the process of purification whereby the blood which nourishes the embryo in the womb is converted, after birth, into milk for the nourishment of the child. Cf. Qur. XVI 68, where the inner meaning of nusqíkum miná fí butúnihi min bayni farth-in wa-dam-in laban-an khális-an [= "... We produce (wholesome) drink for you from what is within the (cow's) body, between the excretions and the blood..."] is explained by Najmu 'ddín Kubrá [= sufi master who died in 1221]: 'God gives you to drink the pure milk of Divine inspiration (extracted) from the chyme and blood of sensual thoughts within your carnal souls.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2) as long as your luck doesn't give birth to a new child: "I.e. 'before your heart can absorb the mysteries of gnosis [= mystical-intuitive knowledge], it must experience a spiritual regeneration'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (3) the Splendor of God, Husamuddin: "See note on I 428 [= "In bestowing this title on Husámu'ddín, the poet alludes to Qur. X 5: Huwa 'lladhí ja`ala 'l-shamsa diyá-an [= "He is the one who made the sun a shining splendor"]. See Book IV 16 sqq."]. It is implied that Husámu'ddín [= Rumi's closest disciple and spiritual companion] is the very Light of God with which, as the Qutb (supreme saint) of the age, he irradiates all beneath him." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (3) the reins (of his mount): Nicholson translated, "the reins (of his spirit)..."

6. (4) an ascension [mi`râj]: the famous Ascension [Mi`râj] of the Prophet Muhammad into the Heavens (from Jerusalem) has been the model which sufi mystics have sought to aspire in their journey toward spiritual Reality.

7. (4) without (the influence of) his Spring, the rose-buds (of mystical poetry) had not burst forth: Nicholson translated, "without his (life-giving) springtide the buds (of mystic knowledge) were

unburst (in my heart)..."

8. (5) Since he returned from the Ocean toward the shore: "i.e. from the infinite Unity and Reality to the plane of phenomenal limitation." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (6) the Mathnawi which is the polisher of spirits: Nicholson translated, "which was the burnisher (purifier) of spirits..."

10. (6) the day of (my) seeking help in opening [istiftâH] [the Mathnawi once again]: Nicholson translated, "the day of (my) seeking (an auspicious) commencement (for it)." And he mentioned "the expression istiftáhu 'l-dhikr [= seeking (God's) help in opening (the sufi practice of chanting in a group) the remembrance (of God)], i.e. the introductory prayer changed by dervishes about to perform the dhikr [= remembrance of God]..." (Commentary)

11. (7) The date of the arising: "Literally, 'the rising-point of the date (of composition).'" (Nicholson, Footnote)

12. (7) in the year six hundred and sixty two: this date is according to the Islamic calendar (beginning with the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca, where they had been harshly persecuted for years, to Medina, where they were welcomed to settle), and is equivalent to the C.E. (Common Era) year of 1264, when Rumi was 57 years old.

"On the authority of Aflákí (see note on I 3990 [= This is a figurative way of saying that the flow of the poet's inspiration has temporarily ceased.... Among the conjectures made by different commentators the most plausible is one suggested by Sárí [= a Turkish commentator, who wrote a commentary on Book I in 1871]-- the death of Husámu'ddín's wife, which occurred 'just as the First Book was completed' (Aflákí in the abridged translation by Redhouse, Mesnevî, p. 89) and caused the further progress of the poem to be delayed for a long time"]) it is generally supposed that owing to the death of Husámu'ddín's wife an interval of two years elapsed between the completion of Book I and the resumption of the work in A.H. 662/A.D 1263- 1264. The date is certain, but Rúmí does not mention explicitly either the cause of the interruption or the length of its duration. What he says here... neither confirms nor contradicts Aflákí's account of the matter. We only gather that Husámu'ddín... had withdrawn his inspiring influence and was 'occupied with inward experiences' (I 594)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (8) A nightingale: "the meaning of 'a nightingale' is intended for

Hazrat-i Husamuddin." (Anqaravi, the famous Mevlevi 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

14. (9) May the forearm of the King be the resting place for this falcon: a common image in Rumi's poetry, in which a falcon trained for hunting symbolizes the return of a saintly soul to its Divine Origin.

15. (9) may this doorway be open to the people for the length of eternity: Nicholson translated, "May this gate (to the Truth) be open to (all) the people..." And he explained: "i.e. may Husámu'ddín ever enjoy intimate communion (uns) with God!' The words ín dar [= this door/gate] may refer to the Mathnawí, or (as Wilson [= C.E. Wilson, who translated and wrote a commentary on Book II, in 1910] thinks) to Husámu'ddín himself." (Commentary)

"And the intended meaning of 'this doorway' is this same noble Mathnawi." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (11) for the throat and mouth (of greed) are the eye-covering (which prevents the seeing) of that (transcendent) world: Nicholson transposed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Close this mouth that you may see plainly: gullet and mouth are the eye-bandage (which makes you blind) to yonder world" (from, "Gullet and mouth are the eye-bandage (which makes you blind) to yonder world: close this mouth, that you may see (it) plain").

17. (12) O mouth, you are the mouth of Hell: "For the comparison of the appetitive soul (nafs) to Hell, see I 1375 sqq. [= translated by Nicholson: "The carnal self (nafs) is Hell, and Hell is a dragon (the fire of) which is not diminished by oceans (of water)...."] and note on I 779 [= "The nafs is Hell (I 1375) or a part of Hell (I 1382); in essence it is one with the Devil (III 4053). Therefore Hell, being the nature of the nafs-i ammárah (the soul that commands to evil [= a term from Qur'an 12:53]), is really within you. The seven gates or limbos of Hell typify the vices which lead to perdition (muhlikát). According to Sárí [= a Turkish commentator] on I 1376, these are pride, cupidity [= greed, excessive desire], lust, envy, anger, avarice, and hatred. Hell is called 'a seven-headed dragon' (VI 4657)"]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"It means, 'You are the mouth of the Hell of the base ego [nafs]. And you will never be satisfied by any amount of food you consume. And you will always shout, "Are there more (mouthfuls)?"'" [= "(On the Day (of Judgment), We will ask Hell, 'Are you filled?' And it will say, 'Are there any more

(mouthfuls)?'" (Qur'an 50:30)] (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (12) O world, you are the likeness of the interval (between death and resurrection): Nicholson translated, "O world, thou art like the intermediate state." And he explained: "The spirit came from God and will return to God. The present life is its 'intermediate state.'" (Footnote) Nicholson further explained: "The Oriental commentators take jahán [= world] in the sense one would expect it to have in such a context, viz. the material world.... The resemblance between jahán [= world] and barzakh [= interval/intermediate state] consists in the fact, which is stated figuratively in the following verse, that during the present life those destined for paradise and those doomed to Hell-fire dwell together externally, but are separated inwardly by an insuperable barrier: baynahum barzakh-un lá yabghiyáni [= "Between them is an (invisible) barrier (barzakh) which they cannot pass"] (Qur. LV 20). See I 297 sqq., 2570 sqq. Although the world is not itself this barrier, it is the theatre in which the conflict of good and evil and the separation of the 'sheep' from the 'goats' are exhibited, so that the name barzakh (sometimes used of the wall between Hell and Paradise) may easily be transferred to it." (Commentary)

19. (13) the pure Milk (is) to the side of [these bodily] rivers of blood: see note on line 2. Here, pure milk is a metaphor for Paradise, which is hidden by a barrier yet has close proximity to this impure world-- just as pure milk from a mother's breast is secreted from a place in close proximity to veins and arteries filled with blood. (The latter is viewed as an impure substance in Islam, since contact with blood requires ritual washing with water before one can do the required daily ritual prayers.).

20. (14) your milk may change to blood because of mixture: "The spirit, while confined in the world and the body, is side by side with sensuality and liable to contamination. Cf. the Story of the gazelle among the donkeys (V 833 sqq.)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (15) tasting the pleasures of ego-cravings [Zawq-é nafs]: Nicholson translated, "sensual pleasure." "It means (that) he ate wheat." (Anqaravi, Commentary) For this, see note below on line 16.

22. (15) base self [nafs]: Nicholson translated, "(fleshly) soul." Means the ego which identifies with the body and is preoccupied with satisfying its endless worldly cravings.

23. (16) The angels were running away from him as (if he were) a devil: Nicholson translated, "The angels were fleeing from him as

from a devil." The meaning here is not that angels are fearful of devils, but that they flee from being repelled by their evil qualities--just as they were repelled from being in the presence of Adam after he sinned.

24. (16) for the sake of a (bit of) bread: "i.e. gandum [= wheat], the forbidden fruit." (Nicholson, Commentary) According to Islamic beliefs, the forbidden "fruit" eaten by Adam and Eve was wheat.

25. (18) a hair in (such) an eye is (like) a huge mountain: "Adam, typifying the Perfect Man [= a concept in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240, according to which the "completed" saint reflects all the Attributes of God] is the eye with which God beholds the world. What would be a venial [= minor] sin in ordinary men is in him a grave offence, just as a hair in the eye is especially pernicious. Cf. the saying, hasanátu 'l-abrár sayyi'átu 'l-muqarrabín, 'the good actions of the devout are the evil actions of the elect'..."

26. (19) If Adam had asked advice: "i.e. if he had consulted Universal Reason, of which the Angels are an embodiment (cf. III 3193 sqq., 4054)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (19) he would not have (needed to) express apologies (to God) in repentance: "They [= Adam and Eve] said, "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. We will surely be among the lost if You do not forgive us and give us mercy." (Qur'an 7:23)

28. (20) if a discerning intellect is joined with (another) discriminating mind: Nicholson referred to other passages in the Mathnawi which have this theme (and its opposite: associating with a base, or lowly, person): "Cf. III 2689 sqq., IV 1263 sqq., V 167, 738 sqq., VI 2611 sqq." (Commentary)

29. (22) because of isolation: Nicholson translated, "loneliness." And he explained: "i.e. religious seclusion (khalwat)." (Commentary) "(It means), 'If, because of isolation from other persons, you find that your state is hopeless, it is necessary for you to take comfort and rest beneath the shadow of a friend-- and (then) you are a (shining) sun.' In other words, '(If) you perform devoted service to a trained (spiritual) guide [murshid] and convey your devoted attachment to him, you may obtain (Divine) grace and favor from his company.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (22) beneath the shadow of a (spiritual) friend [yâr]: Nicholson translated, "under the shadow (protection) of the friend." And he explained: "Yár, i.e. the saint and spiritual guide." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1 maddatê în maSnavî ta'khîr shod
muhlatê bâyast tâ khûn shîr shod

tâ na-zây-ad bakht-é tô farzand-é naw
khûn na-gard-ad shîr-é shîrîn, khwash shenaw

chûn Ziyâ 'ul-Haq Husâmu 'd-dîn `inân
bâz gardânîd ze awj-é âsmân

chûn ba-mi`râj-é Haqâyiq rafta bûd
bê-bahâr-ash ghoncha-hâ nâ-kafta bûd

5 chûn ze-daryâ sôy-é sâHil bâz-gasht
chang-é shi`r-é maSnawî bâ sâz gasht

maSnawî ke Sayqal-é arwâH bûd
bâz gasht-ash rôz-é istiftâH bûd

maTla`-é ta'rîkh-é în sawdâ-wo sûd
sâl andar shash-Sad-o ShaSt-o dô bûd

bolbolê z-în-jâ be-raft-o bâz-gasht
bahr-é Sayd-e în ma`ânî bâz gasht

sâ`id-é shah maskan-é în bâz bâd
tâ abad bar khalq în dar bâz bâd

10 âfat-é în dar hawâ-wo shahwat-ast
w-ar-na în-jâ sharbat andar sharbat-ast

în dahân bar band, tâ bîn-î `ayân
chashm-band-é ân jahân Halq-o dahân

ay dahân tô khwad dahâna-yé dûzak-î
w-ay jahân tô bar miSâl-é barzakh-î

nûr-é bâqî pahlawî-yé dunyây-é dûn
shîr-é Sâfî pahlawîy-é jô-hây-é khûn

chûn dar-ô gâmê zan-î bê-iHtiyâT
shîr-é tô khûn mê-shaw-ad az ikhtilâT

15 yak qadam zad âdam andar Zawq-é nafs
shod firâq-é Sadr-é jannat Tawq-é nafs
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ham-chô dêw az way fereshta mê-gorêkht
bahr-é nânê chand âb-é chashm rêkht

gar-che yak mô bod gonah k-ô josta bûd
lêk ân mô dar dô dîda rosta bûd

bûd âdam dîda-yé nûr-é qadîm
mô'ê dar dîda bow-ad kôh-é `aZîm

gar dar ân âdam be-kardy mashwarat
dar pashîmânê na-gofty ma`Zirat

20 z-an-ke bâ `aqlê chô `aqlê joft shod
mâni`-yé bad-fa`lê-wo bad-goft shod

nafs bâ nafs-é degar chûn yâr shod
`aql-é juzwî `âTil-o bê-kâr shod

22 chûn ze-tanhâ'î tô nawmêdî shaw-î
zêr-é sâya-yé yâr khworshêdê shaw-î

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Seek A Friend of God (part two)

Mathnawi II: 23-55

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23 Go, (and) seek a friend of God quickly. When you have done that, God is your friend.

The one who has fastened (his) sight on solitude has, in the end, learned (to do) that from the Friend.[1]

25 Solitude from "strangers" is necessary,[2] (but) not from a (spiritual) friend.[3] A fur cloak is (necessary) for Winter, not Spring.

When the (discerning) intellect becomes combined with another intellect, the (total amount of) light become increased and the road becomes clear.

(However, when) the base ego laughs (happily) with another ego,[4] the (total amount of) darkness becomes increased and the road

becomes hidden.

O man of the hunt! A (spiritual) friend is (like) your (own) eye,[5] (so) keep it clean of (bits of) twigs and straw.[6]

Take care! Don't make any dust (rise) with the broom of (your) tongue. (And) don't give (your) eye a traveling present[7] of (bits of) straw (from the road).

30 Since the (true) believer is the mirror for (another true) believer,[8] his face is protected from impurity.[9]

A (spiritual) friend is (like) a mirror for the soul in (a state of) sadness. O (you who are as dear as the) soul, don't breathe upon the face of the mirror![10]

It's necessary to swallow (your) breath (in) every moment, so that it doesn't hide its face in the presence of your breath.[11]

You are not less (valuable) than the earth: when a piece of earth finds a friend from (among the qualities of) Spring,[12] it obtains a hundred thousand (white) flowers.

A tree which becomes joined with a friend from (among the qualities of) the sweet air (of Spring) blossoms from head to foot.

35 (But) in the Fall, when it sees a contrary and opposing companion,[13] it draws in (its) face and head beneath (its) outer garment.[14]

It says, "(Having) a foul companion is to disturb (one) with affliction. Since he has come, sleep is the best way for me.[15]

"So I will sleep, (and) I will be (like) one of the Companions of the Cave[16]-- (since being) a lamenting prisoner is better than (suffering the tyranny of) Daqyanoos.[17]

Their waking (hours) were spent by (the tyranny of) Daqyanoos, (but) their sleep was the (preserved) stock[18] of (their) fame.

Sleep is wakefulness when it is (combined) with wisdom.[19] (But) what sorrow (there is) for any wakeful one who sits with[20] the ignorant!

40 When the crows set-up (their) tents in the middle of Winter,[21] the nightingales become hidden, and are silent.[22]

(This is) because the nightingale is silent without the (presence of)

the rose garden. (And) the hiddeness of the sun[23] is the killer of (the nightingale's) wakefulness.

O sun! You leave this rose garden so that you may radiate light under the earth.[24]

(But) the sun of mystical knowledge[25] has no movement, (and) it's rising-place is none other than the spirit and the discriminating intellect--

Especially, a Sun of Perfection[26] which is (active) in that (transcendent) direction.[27] It's occupation is (in radiating) an illumination, day and night.

45 If you are an Alexander (the Great), come to the rising-place of (this) Sun.[28] After that, anywhere you travel, you are well-illumined.[29]

After that, anywhere you travel is the rising-place (of this Sun),[30] (and all) rising-places will be in love with your place of sunset.[31]

Your (bodily) senses (resembling those) of the bat are running toward the place of sunset, (but) your pearl-scattering senses[32] are traveling toward the place of sunrise.[33]

O mounted rider![34] The way of the (physical) senses is the road for donkeys. O you (who are) bothering donkeys,[35] have (some) shame!

Besides these five (bodily) senses, there are five (spiritual) senses,[36] (and) those (are) like red (colored) gold. But these (physical) senses (are) like copper.

50 In the market, where the people at the place of gathering (for the Day of Judgment)[37] will never buy the copper (-like) sense as (if it had the worth of) gold.

The (physical) senses of bodies are eating the food of darkness, (but) the senses of the soul are grazing from a (spiritual) Sun.

O you (who) have carried the belongings of (your) senses to the Unperceived (World), bring (your) hand from (your) chest, like Moses.[38]

O you whose qualities (are those of) the Sun of spiritual knowledge[39]-- yet the revolving sun is bound to one attribute[40]--

Sometimes you are a Sun, and then you become an Ocean;[41]

sometimes (you are) the mountain of Qaf,[42] and then you become the Phoenix (bird).[43]

55 O you (who are) greater than (what can be conceived by) imaginations, and much more than that, within your essence, you are not this or that.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (24) the Friend [yâr]: may also be translated as "the Beloved," meaning God. Nicholson interpreted this line as referring to a human spiritual companion (Husamuddin Chelebi). However, the previous line states, "your friend is God" [yâr-é tô]. Nicholson translated: "He who has fixed his gaze upon seclusion (and made it his) object), after all 'tis from the friend (of God) that he has learned that (lesson)."

2. (25) Solitude from "strangers" is necessary: means from non-mystics who might distract the spiritual seeker from the Path

3. (25) (but) not from a (spiritual) friend: "The object of khalwat [= spiritual retreat] is to be alone with God; but.... The murɛd [= spiritual disciple] who would guard himself against thinking of his Shaykh [= spiritual master and guide] resembles a man who in warm spring weather puts on the fur-coat that he wore as a protection against the winter cold." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (27) the base ego laughs (happily) with another ego: Nicholson translated: "(But if) the fleshly soul makes merry with another fleshly soul..." The "base ego" [nafs] is the "bodily self," which pressures one's mind, emotions, and strives after bodily and worldly cravings for various pleasures and satisfactions. This often conflicts with the inclinations of the spirit and the intellect (using this word in its best sense of wise discernment).

Nicholson commented: "Literally, 'becomes laughing,' i.e. friendly and familiar." (Footnote)

5. (28) A (spiritual) friend is (like) your (own) eye: "Since the saint endowed with knowledge of God is the means whereby the seeker attains to spiritual perception, care must be taken to avoid anything

that might hurt his feelings and disturb his inward vision." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"It means, 'A guide [murshid] who directs spiritual guidance is like your (own) eye...'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

6. (28) (so) keep it clean of (bits of) twigs and straw: Nicholson translated, "keep him pure from (unsoiled by) sticks and straws."

7. (29) a traveling present [rah-awardê]: literally, "a road-bringing." This is a word-play since the meaning here is gifts expected to be given to the family and friends of someone who has returned from a long journey-- not the dust and rubbish of broken straw and twigs from the road.

8. (30) the (true) believer is the mirror for (another true) believer: On this Hadíth [= saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad] see I 1327-1328 supra and notes ad loc." [= "The true believer is a mirror to the true believer." (al-mu'minu mir'át'u 'l-mu'mini] (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (30) his face is protected from impurity: "I.e. he, being entirely pure, reflects thy spiritual state and shows thee what thou really art." (Nicholson, Footnote)

10. (31) don't breathe upon the face of the mirror: "It means, 'Don't act with bold rudeness toward the spiritual guide [murshid] and don't give signs of stubbornness toward him.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (32) so that it doesn't hide its face in the presence of your breath: "(It means), 'So that the spiritual guide won't suddenly turn (his) face away from you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "Lest it cover its face to (conceal itself from) thee at once [dar dam-at], thou must swallow (suppress) thy breath at every moment" (from, "Lest it cover its face on account of thy breath [az dam-at], thou must...").

In regard to this verse, Nicholson quoted (from his own translation of Hujwiri's "Kashfu 'l-Mahjûb" by Hujwiri (died, 1071), p. 357): "The seeker of God, who is absorbed in servantship, must be silent in order that the adept [= sufi master], who proclaims Lordship, may speak and by his utterances may captivate the hearts of his disciples. The rule in speaking is not to speak unless bidden, and then only of the thing that is bidden; and the rule in silence is not to be ignorant or satisfied with ignorance and forgetful. The

disciple must not interrupt the speech of spiritual directors, or let his personal judgement intrude therein, or use far-fetched expressions in answering them."

12. (33) a friend from (among the qualities of) Spring [az bahârî]: "Bahárí probably stands for bárán-i bahárí [= rain of Spring], as in I 2039." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson also referred to I: 2042-43, which he translated, "This breath of the Abdál (saints) is from that (spiritual) springtide: from it there grows a green garden in heart and soul. From their breaths there comes (is produced) in him who is fortunate the (same) effect (as that) of the spring rain on the tree."

"The intended meaning of 'springtide' is the (invigorating) wind and rain (of Spring).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (35) in the Fall, when it sees a contrary and opposing companion: "i.e. the autumn rain, bárán-i páyízí, which 'is like a consuming fever to the garden' (I 2038)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (35) it draws in (its) face and head beneath (its) outer garment: "As applied literally to the tree, the second hemistich means that in autumn the tree makes no display of leaves and fruit, while its allegorical sense is that 'no spiritual development can be derived from a bad friend, and what one has in one's soul is best concealed from him' (Wilson, Comm., p. 10, note 44)." [= Volume II, C.E. Wilson's Commentary on his translation into English of Book II of the Mathnawi] (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (36) Since he has come, sleep is the best way for me: "The words... continue the metaphor of the fever-stricken patient who seeks relief in sleep." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (37) the Companions of the Cave [aSHâb-é kahf]: refers to the story in the 18th chapter [sûrah] of the Qur'an, according to which some pious young men fled religious persecution and hid in a cave, fell asleep, and (by the Will of God) woke up to find that many years had passed.

17. (37) the tyranny of) Daqyanoos: "Decius (A.D. 249-251) is the name of the pagan emperor who persecuted them." (Nicholson, Commentary) This emperor persecuted the Christians within his realm.

18. (38) their sleep was the (preserved) stock: means that their value was preserved while they were asleep, but was spent and wasted while they were awake and forced to serve an idol-worshiping tyrant.

19. (39) Sleep is wakefulness when it is (combined) with wisdom: "Cf. VI 4463: 'Put thyself to sleep (and escape) from this (vain) thinking: (then) lift up thy head from sleep into (spiritual) wakefulness.' The 'sleep' of the mystic is really a higher state of consciousness, and has nothing in common with the 'sleep of ignorance' (khwáb-i ghaflat), in which most people pass their conscious lives. See also I 388-393)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (39) sits with: an idiom which means spends time together: talking, being friendly, doing things together, etc.

21. (40) When the crows set-up (their) tents in the middle of Winter: "The crow (zágh) represents the seeker of worldly goods." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (40) the nightingales become hidden, and are silent: "The saints hold aloof from any association with worldliness and conceal themselves from the worldly." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (41) the hiddeness of the sun: refers to the fewer daylight hours during Winter, as well as the frequent over-cast and stormy days. Nicholson translated, "the absence of the sun" And he explained: "'The absence of the sun' refers to the dark days of winter, not to the darkness of night." (Commentary)

24. (42) under the earth: Nicholson translated, "(the region) below the earth..."

25. (43) mystical knowledge [ma`rifat]: a technical term in sufism. Nicholson translated, "Divine knowledge."

26. (44) a Sun of Perfection: means Husamuddin Chelebi, Rumi's closest disciple and spiritual friend, whom he praised as inspiring him to compose the verses of the Mathnawi.

27. (44) which is (active) in that (transcendent) direction: Nicholson translated, "which is of yonder (world of Reality)." And, regarding the term "sarê" [= "that (transcendent) direction"; "of yonder (world of Reality")), he referred to Mathnawi I: 111 (which he translated), "Whether love be from this (earthly side [= z-în sar] or from that (heavenly) side [= z-ân sar], in the end it leads us yonder."

28. (45) If you are an Alexander (the Great), come to the rising-place of (this) Sun: "According to Qur. XVIII 82-89, where it is related that Dhú 'l-Qarnayn (Alexander the Great) journeyed to 'the place of sunset' and 'the place of sunrise'. The verses (XVIII 88-89), 'then

he followed a road until, when he reached the rising-place of the sun, he found it rising on a people for whom We had made no shelter from its beams', are explained mystically: 'after having marched to the setting-place of the sun (i.e. the darkness of the carnal soul), he pursued his way to its rising-place (i.e. the illumined heart and spirit) and found there a people who were not veiled from the sun (of Reality) by anything but the excess of its light and the perfection of its manifestation.' Here matla`-i shams [= "the rising-place of (this) Sun"] may signify the Perfect Man who, as a murshid [= spiritual master and guide], sheds spiritual radiance on his disciples." (Nicholson, Commentary)

29. (45) you are well-illumined [nêkô-far]: Nicholson translated, "thou art possessed of goodly splendour."

30. (46) After that, anywhere you travel is the rising-place (of this Sun): "'When you reach the goal, you will see that God reveals Himself everywhere and that everything displays some attribute of Him.'" Here, Anqaravi quotes a famous verse from the Qur'an: "Whichever way you turn, there is the Face of God." (2:115)

31. (46) (and all) rising-places will be in love with your place of sunset: "i.e. your maghrib [= place of sunset] (state of occultation, spiritual darkness) will become a focus for the sunbeams of the Divine tajallí [= manifestation]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

32. (47) pearl-scattering senses: "pearl-scattering" is an idiom meaning "light-showering," due to the reflecting gleams of light from pearls. "(It means), 'But each one of your inward senses is scattering the pearls of mystical-intuitive knowledge [ma`rifat].'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

33. (47) traveling toward the place of sunrise: "This verse contrasts the purblind external senses and their gross objects with the spiritual senses which gather pearls of mystic knowledge." (Nicholson, Commentary)

34. (48) O mounted rider: Nicholson stated that this meant, "according to the commentators, 'O thou who art mounted on the steed of passion (hawá).'" And he opined, "This may be the meaning intended, but the verse seems to me to have more point if suwár [= mounted rider] denotes Man, who in his real nature 'rides on the spirit' (cf. I 1115 sqq., V 1077), yet is so fallen from his high estate that he wallows in sensuality, like the ass (a type of the animal and appetitive soul)." (Commentary)

35. (48) bothering donkeys: Nicholson translated, "jostling (vying) with asses."

36. (49) there are five (spiritual) senses: "Concerning the five 'senses of the heart' see infra, v. 3236 sqq." [= Book II, translated by Nicholson: "The five (spiritual) senses are linked with one another, because all these five have grown from one root. The strength of one becomes the strength of the rest: each one becomes a cup-bearer to the rest. Seeing with the eye increases speech; speech increases penetration in the eye. Penetration (of sight) becomes the (means of) awakening (stimulating) every sense, (so that) perception (of the spiritual) becomes familiar to (all) the senses."] (Commentary)

"(It means) the common (outward) senses and (faculties such as) the power of imagination, the power of thinking, the power of memory..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

37. (50) the people at the place of gathering (for the Day of Judgment): Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "In the bazaar where the people of the Last Congregation (on the Day of Judgement) are (purchasers)..." (from, "In the bazaar where they (the buyers) are expert...").

38. (52) bring (your) hand from (your) chest, like Moses: refers to the Qur'anic account of a miracle manifested (by the permission of God) by Moses, in which "he drew forth his hand [from the folds of his garments] and it was [radiantly] white to those who observed." (7:108; 26:34; see also 27:12 and the account in Exodus IV:6).

39. (53) O you whose qualities (are those of) the Sun of spiritual knowledge: "These verses [= II: 52-55] are addressed to the Perfect Man [= a sufi saint who reflects all the attributes of God; a concept in the mystical philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240], probably with special reference to Husámu'ddín." [= Husamuddin Chelebi, for which see note on line 54]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

40. (53) the revolving sun is bound to one attribute: "i.e. the production of sensible light." (Nicholson, Commentary)

41. (54) Sometimes you are a Sun, and then you become an Ocean: "The Perfect Man illumines the world by the light of gnosis [= mystical-intuitive knowledge]; his oceanic nature comprehends all realities; like Mt Qáf, he encircles and upholds the universe; and like the `Anqá (I 1441, note), he is essentially unknowable." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'But, O mystic knower [`ârif], you are a sun of mystic

knowledge: you are endowed with [the blessing of reflecting] all the Divine Attributes. Sometimes you are a sun...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

42. (54) the mountain of Qaf: the legendary habitation of the phoenix bird [sîmorgh, `anqâ], said to surround the world.

43. (54) the Phoenix (bird) [`anqâ]: a legendary bird with magical abilities. For the Muslim sufis who wrote in Persian, the sîmorgh symbolized the transcendent wisdom of spiritual love. The Persian poet `Attar (died ca. 1225) composed his famous "Speech of the Birds" [Mantiqu 't-Tayr] in which the quest of thirty birds [sî morgh] is to find the simorgh [sîmorgh].

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23 raw be-jô yâr-é khodâyê-râ tô zûd
chûn chon-ân kard-î, khodâ yâr-é tô bûd

ân-ke dar khalwat naZar bar dôkht-ast
âkhir ân-râ ham ze-yâr âmôkht-ast

25 khalwat az aghyâr bây-ad na ze-yâr
pôstîn bahr-é day âmad na bahâr

`aql bâ `aql-é degar dô-tâ shaw-ad
nûr afzûn gasht-o rah paydâ shaw-ad

nafs bâ nafs-é degar khandân shaw-ad
Zulmat afzûn gasht-o rah penhân shaw-ad

yâr chashm-é to-st ay mard-é shekâr
az khas-o khâshâk ô-râ pâk dâr

hîn ba-jârûb-é zabân gardê ma-kon
chashm-râ az khas rah-âwardê ma-kon

30 chûn-ke mû'min âyena-yé mû'min bow-ad
rôy-é ô z-âlûdagê îmin bow-ad

yâr âyîn-ast jân-râ dar Hazan
dar rokh-é âyîna ay jân dam ma-zan

tâ na-pôsh-ad rôy-é khwad-râ dar dam-at
dam forô khwordan be-bây-ad har dam-at

kam ze-khâk-î, chûn-ke khâkê yâr yâft
az bahârî Sad hazâr anwâr yâft
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ân derakhtê k-ô shaw-ad bâ yâr joft
az hawây-é khwosh ze-sar tâ pâ shekoft

dar khazân chûn dîd ô yâr-é khilâf
dar kashîd ô rô-wo sar zêr-é liHâf

goft yâr-é bad balâ-âshoftan-ast
chûn-ke ô âmad Tarîq-am khoftan-ast

pas be-khosp-am bâsh-am az aSHâb-é kahf
beh ze-daqyânûs ân maHbûs-é lahf

yaqZa-shân maSrûf-é daqyânûs bûd
khwâb-eshân sarmâya-yé nâmûs bûd

khwâb bêdarî-st, chûn bâ dânesh-ast
wây-é bêdârê ke bâ nâ-dân neshast

chûn-ke zâgh-ân khayma bar bahman zad-and
bolbol-ân penhân shod-and-o tan zad-and

z-ân-ke bê-gol-zâr bolbol khâmosh-ast
ghaybat-é khworshêd bêdârî kosh-ast

âftâb-â tark-é în gol-shan kon-î
tâ ke taHta 'l-'arZ-râ rôshan kon-î

âftâb-é ma`rifat-râ naql nêst
mashriq-é ô ghayr-é jân-o `aql nêst

khâSa khworshêd-é kamâlê k-ân sarê-st
rôz-o shab kerdâr-é ô rôshan-garê-st

maTla`i shams ây gar iskandar-î
ba`d az ân har jâ raw-î nêkô-far-î

bad az ân har jâ raw-î mashriq shaw-ad
sharq-hâ bar maghrib-at `âshiq shaw-ad

Hiss-é khuffâsh-at sôy-é maghrib dawân
Hiss-é dur-pâsh-at sôy-é mashriq rawân

râh-é His râh-é khar-ân-ast ay sowâr
ay khar-ân-râ tô muzâHim, sharm dâr

panj Hissê hast joz în panj His
ân chô zarr-é sorkh-o în His-hâ chô mes

50 andar ân bâzâr k-ahl-é muHshar-and
Hiss-é mes-râ chûn His-é zar kay khar-and?

Hiss-é abdân qût-é Zulmat mê-khwor-ad
Hiss-é jân az âftâbê mê-cher-ad

ay be-borda rakht-é His-hâ sôy-é ghayb
dast chûn mûsà berûn âwar ze-jayb

ay Sifât-at âftâb-é ma`rifat
w-âftâb-é charkh band-é yak Sifat

gâh khworshêdê-î-wo gah daryâ shaw-î
gâh kôh-é qâf-wo gah `anqâ shaw-î

55 tô na în bâsh-î na ân dar Zât-é khwêsh
ay fozûn az wahm-hâ w-az bêsh bêsh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Seek A Friend of God (part three)

Mathnawi II: 56-80

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56 The spirit[1] is a companion with (spiritual) knowledge and the discerning intellect. The spirit has no occupation with (languages such as) Arabic and Turkish.

Both the asserter of (Your Transcendent) unity[2] and the asserter of (Your Immanent) similarity (to created qualities)[3] are amazed by You-- O (You[4] who are) devoid of image[5] and (yet manifesting) with (so) many forms!

Sometimes He makes the asserter of similarity (to become) an asserter of unity;[6] sometimes the forms [reflecting Divine Attributes] are highway-robbing the asserter of unity.

At times, Abu 'l-Hasan[7] says to you out of drunkenness, "O (beautiful one), young of teeth and fresh of body!"[8]

60 (And) at times, he is destroying his own image;[9] he does that

for the sake of (asserting) the Transcendence of the Beloved.[10]

The eye of (the physical) sense is the doctrine of schism,[11] (but) the eye of the discerning intellect[12] is the Sunnite (doctrine)[13] in regard to being united.[14]

Those who are compelled by (the view of) the (physical) senses are the followers of schism[15]-- (even though) they present themselves, due to confusion, as Sunnite.

Whoever stays (bound) to the (bodily) senses is a schismatic, even if he says, "I am Sunnite"-- which is because of ignorance.[16]

Whoever has gone beyond the (bodily) senses is a Sunnite. The one (who is) endowed with (spiritual) sight is (possessed of) the eye of the fortunate-stepping intellect.[17]

65 If the "animal senses"[18] could see the King [of the universe], then the cow and the donkey could see God.

If, aside from the "animal senses," you didn't have other senses beyond (worldly) desires,[19]

Then when would the children of Adam have been honored?[20] They would never have been confidants (of spiritual secrets) possessed of the common senses (only).[21]

Your saying the words, "unformed" or "formed" is useless[22] without your escaping from form.[23]

(The concepts) "unformed" or "formed" are (useless) before Him, since He is entirely "kernel" and is beyond the husk.[24]

70 If you are blind, "there is no fault in (the case of) the blind."[25] But otherwise, go (forward),[26] since "Patience is the key to joy."[27]

The medicine of patience will burn (away) the veils upon the eyes[28] (and) also will prepare (the way for) the expansion of the heart [to the love and knowledge of God].[29]

If the mirror of (your) heart becomes untarnished and pure, you will see images beyond (the physical world of) water and earth.[30]

You will see both the picture as well as the Painter. (You will see) both the carpet of good-fortune[31] as well as the Spreader (of the Carpet).[32]

The (visionary) image of my beloved[33] became like Abraham: its

form (like) an idol (and) its inward reality an idol-breaker.[34]

75 Gratitude (is) to God! For when he became visible, (my) soul saw its own image[35] in his (visionary) image.

The dust of your doorway[36] has (so) charmed my heart (that), (may there be) dust upon him who has endured without your dust!

I said, "If I am beautiful, I will receive this (dust) from him.[37] And if not, he has certainly laughed at ugly-faced me.

"The remedy (for) that is that I should look at myself (first). And if (I'm) not (suitable), he will laugh at me, (saying), 'I will never buy (this)!'"[38]

He is beautiful, and a lover of the beautiful.[39] A young man will never choose a very old woman.

80 Know this: the Beautiful attracts a beautiful one.[40] Recite, in regard to it, (the verse), "women of (spiritual) goodness (are) for men of (spiritual) goodness."[41]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (56) the spirit: "i.e. the spirit of the Perfect Man [= the completed saint, who reflects all the Attributes of God; a term in the mystical philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240], whose knowledge is infinite and unconditioned by any forms of human speech." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'The human spirit, which is the "Divine command" [amr-é ilâhî], is the companion of (spiritual) knowledge and the discerning intellect. And this spirit is the same as was blown by the Sustaining Lord.'" [= when God breathed into Adam of His spirit--Qur'an 15:29] (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (57) the asserter of (Your Transcendent) unity [muwaHHid]: literally, "one who asserts oneness." Means, here, one who asserts that there is nothing which resembles God. "Say: 'He is God, the (Only) One, the Eternal. He does not beget, nor is He begotten.

And there is no one comparable to Him.'" Qur'an 112: 1-4) [qul huwa 'llâhu aHad, allâhu 'S-Samad, lam yalid wa lam yûlad, wa lam yakul-lahu kufuw-an aHad]. "there isn't anything like Him" (Qur'an 42:11). This is the sufi teaching of Divine transcendence [tanzíh, literally "keeping far away from"], meaning that God is beyond comparison with anything in creation or conceived by the human mind. Those of this view cite verses from the Qur'an regarding the non-resemblance of God to anything that can be conceived of by the human mind, and they view "anthropomorphic" images in the Qur'an as metaphorical.

3. (57) the asserter of (Your Immanent) similarity (to created qualities) [mushabbih]: literally, "one who asserts resemblance." Means one who asserts that God is imminent, or within, the creation in respect of Divine Omnipresence, and Whose Attributes resemble qualities in the creation which reflect such Attributes. "Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God" (Qur'an 2:115. "He is the Outward [aZ-Zâhir] and the Inward [al-bâTin]" (Qur'an 57:3). This is the sufi teaching of Divine immanence [tashbîh, literally "resembling"], meaning that natural beauty is a reflection of God's Attribute of Beauty; human love is a reflection of God's Attribute of Love, and so on. Thus the sufis view the Divine as both transcendent and imminent at the same time. Among those who assert resemblance are literalists who cite verses from the Qur'an which contain anthropomorphic images of God (sitting on a Throne, seeing, hearing, having a hand, etc.).

"Here muwahhid is contrasted with mushabbih (assimilator) and is equivalent to munazzih, a term which in its theological sense denotes 'one who excludes all human likeness from pronouncements regarding the Godhead' (Muslim Creed, 207). The orthodox hold that Allah is beyond comparison (tashbíh), that in His absolute Unity He is remote (munazzah) and different (mushkálif) from all created things, and that the qualities ascribed to Him in the Qurán are not to be understood in the sense in which they are applicable to any of His creatures. Pantheistic Súfís, while accepting the doctrine of Divine transcendence (tanzíh), regard it as only one half of the truth: the whole truth, they say, consists in combining tanzíh with tashbíh, the doctrine of Divine immanence. The former doctrine, by itself, leads to the duality of God and the world; the latter, by itself, is polytheism; the true worshippers of Allah are those who see Him as the One Real Being in all forms of existence-- at once transcending all and immanent in all."

"The varying states of consciousness that make up the inner life of the mystic swing him to and fro between these two ways of contemplating Reality, so that he falls into bewilderment (hayrat). Sometimes the multiplicity of phenomena throws a veil over the

One whom they manifest, while at other times an overwhelming experience of the One blots out all the created forms of which He is the Essence." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (57) are amazed by You-- O (You: "I think the pronouns of the second person refer, as Fa [= Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Mevlevi Turkish commentator] says, to the Real Beloved (Mahhbúb-i haqíqí)." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The amazement of the asserter of (Transcendent) unity is at the time when he contemplates Absolute Beauty (reflected) in the 'fixed mirror' [= of Creation]. An the amazement of the asserter of (Immanent) similarity is the moment when his spirit becomes overwhelmed by (Divine) Transcendence, Unity, Absolute Disengagement, and Freedom from being bound (by anything)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (57) O (You who are) devoid of image: Nicholson translated, "O thou who, being without image (external appearance)..."

6. (58) Sometimes He makes the asserter of similarity (to become) an asserter of unity: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Sometimes He causes the mushabbih (who regards the forms in which God is immanent) to become a muwahhid (who regards God under the aspect of pure transcendence; sometimes (these) forms are waylaying the muwahhid (so that he cannot gain access to God who transcends all forms)" (from, "Sometimes the muwahhid (God regarded as the only real Being) is destroying the mushabbih (who asserts that God is immanent in forms): sometimes (these) forms are waylaying..."). And he explained this interpretation as follows: "Although the text-reading (muwahhad mí-kanad) [= is highway-robbing/waylaying the asserter of unity] is exactly parallel to suwar rah mí-zanad [= "are highway robbing"] in the second hemistich, it is better to keep muwahhid [= the asserter of unity] as the correlate of mushabbih [= the asserter of similarity] ." (Commentary)

7. (59) Abu 'l-Hasan: "a 'name of honour' given here to no person in particular but to any God-intoxicated man.... Otherwise, the person most likely to have suggested the use of 'Bú 'l-Hasan' as a typical name for the `árif [= mystical knower] would be Abú 'l-Hasan `Alí ibn Ahmad al-Kharraqání, a great saint of Khurásán [= died, 1034]." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi thought that "'Abu 'l-Hasan' is a name [kunya] of Mawlana (Jalaluddin Rumi) or of Husamuddin Chelebi (Rumi's closest disciple and companion). (Commentary)

8. (59) out of drunkenness, "O (beautiful one), young of teeth and

fresh of body: Nicholson translated more literally, "...in drunkenness (ecstasy) says to thee, 'O thou whose teeth are small (whose years are few), O thou whose body is tender!'" "This verse illustrates the meaning of tashbíh [= comparison]. The second hemistich [= half of the couplet] is quoted from an Arabic ghazal [= ode] by Rúmí (Díwán, Tab. 273, 13, marg.)" [= Faruzanfar edition, no. 2727, line 22495]

9. (60) (And) at times, he is destroying his own image: Nicholson translated, "Sometimes he is laying waste (ruining and defacing) his own image." And he explained: "When the `árif [= mystic knower] dies to self, his phenomenal 'form' passes away and only God remains. This verse, which describes the inward aspect (bátin) of Reality, is complementary to the preceding one, which depicts the outward aspect (záhir). It is the harmonious unification of these aspects that constitutes perfect gnosis [= mystical-intuitive knowledge]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'Sometimes Abu 'l-Hasan is destroying his outward image, qualities, and inward states for the sake of the Transcendence and Pure Holiness of the Beloved.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (60) he does that for the sake of (asserting) the transcendence of the Beloved: Nicholson corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to: "he is doing that in order to assert the transcendence of the Beloved (God)" (from, "he is destroying (it) [= mê-kan-ad] in order to assert..."). (Commentary)

11. (61) The eye of (the physical) sense is the doctrine of schism [i`tizâl]: Nicholson translated, "The doctrine held by the eye of sense is Mu'tazilism." And he explained: "Here the poet resumes the topic discussed in vv. 47-51. Having already contrasted the 'bat-like' eye of sense with the 'eye of the heart' (oculus cordis), he now declares that those who are blind to spiritual things virtually occupy the position of the Mu'tazilites, who denied that it is possible for the Faithful to see God either in this world or the next. One the other hand, those who possess spiritual vision are like Sunnís who believe that the Faithful see God both in Paradise and in this world. Fa [= Anqaravi, the Mevlevi Turkish commentator] cites a saying attributed to `Umar, 'I saw my Lord with my heart' [= ra'aytu rabb-î bi-qalb-î], and another of `Alí, 'I do not worship a Lord whom I have not seen' [= lâ a`budu rabb-an lam uri-hu]" (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (61) the eye of the discerning intellect: "`Aql [= reason, intellect] here is `aql-i ma`ád, the spiritual intelligence." (Nicholson,

Commentary)

13. (61) is the Sunnite (doctrine) [sunnî]: Nicholson translated, "is Sunnite (orthodox)..." This refers to the creed and practice of the majority of Muslims in the world. Rumi, himself, followed the Hanafî school of Sunni Islam. The only orthodox Muslims other than the Sunnite majority are who follow the Shi'ite doctrine and practice (estimated at about 10% of Muslims).

14. (61) in regard to being united: means, being united with the majority of Muslims, the Sunnis/Sunnites-- and not a schismatic, separative, sect. Nicholson translated, "in respect of (its) union (vision of God)."

15. (62) the followers of schism [i`tizâl]: Nicholson again translated, "Mu'tazilite."

16. (63) which is because of ignorance: This (repetitious) line exists in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi as a line added to the margin. "Because the Sunnite creed that the vision and contemplation of God Most High is prescribed and believed." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (64) the eye of the fortunate-stepping intellect: Nicholson translated, "the eye of sweet-paced (harmonious) Reason."

18. (65) the "animal senses": means the five bodily senses which human beings have in common with animals.

19. (66) beyond (worldly) desires: Nicholson translated, "outside of (unconditioned by) the desires of the flesh..."

20. (67) Then when would the children of Adam have been honored: means all the descendants of Adam. "Cf. Qur. XVII 72." [= Qur'an 17: 70, "And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam. And We transport them [upon camels] on the land and [upon ships] on the sea. And we provide them with good and pure (things). And We have favored them over most of Our Creation." ("We" is the "royal we," a plural tense indicative of the Awesome Grandeur of the One God.)

21. (67) They would never have been confidants (of spiritual secrets) possessed of the common senses (only): Nicholson translated, "How by means of the common sense should they have become privileged (to know these mysteries)?" And he explained: "I.e. the senses which Man has in common with other animals." (Footnote) "In this verse, the intended meaning of the common senses are the senses which are shared between humanity and animals, not those

common senses which are special to human beings [= reason, memory, etc.]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (68) Your saying the words, "unformed" or "formed" is useless: Nicholson translated, "Your calling (God) 'formless' (transcending forms) or 'formed' (immanent in forms)..." And he explained: "So long as you are under the dominion of your senses and discursive reason, it makes no difference whether you regard God as transcendent or immanent, since you cannot possibly attain to true knowledge of either aspect of His nature." (Commentary)

23. (68) without your escaping from form: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "your liberation from form (unless you yourself are freed from sense-perception)" (from, "your liberation..." In the oldest manuscript, the original wording was "your going" [raftan-at] and this was corrected below the line to "your escaping" [rastan-at].

24. (69) (The concepts) "unformed" or "formed" are (useless) before Him, since He is entirely "kernel" and is beyond the husk: the meaning here is that all our concepts are like the "husk" and this barrier of the mind prevents us from discerning the qualities of the "kernel," meaning the Reality of God.

Nicholson interpreted this line differently: "(Whether God is) "formless" or "formed," He is with him that is all kernel and has gone forth from the husk." And he commented: "Cf. I 706 sqq. [= "For the metaphor, cf. ... 'The walnut that possesses the kernel' is the body of the true Unitarian (muwahhid). When the walnut-shell is broken, its contents are revealed; similarly, when death shatters the body of the muwahhid, his spirit is found to be pure and immortal, since it is illumined with gnosis [= mystical knowledge], faith, and love, and has realised its essential oneness with God; otherwise the spirit is good-for-nothing."] (Commentary)

25. (70) "there is no fault in (the case of) the blind": "Qur. XLVII 17 [= Qur'an 48:17]: 'it is no crime in (the case of) the blind or the lame or the sick (if they do not take part in the jihádu 'l-asghar, i.e. war against the infidels)'" [jihádu 'l-asghar, the "Lesser Jihad," in contrast to what the Prophet, peace be upon him, called the "Greater Jihad (jihádu 'l-akbar), the struggle/effort/combat against the nafs (= self-centered ego-cravings)] (Nicholson, Commentary)

Nicholson then quoted some verses from the Mathnawi which quote the same Qur'anic verse: "These passages bring out quite clearly the poet's purpose in quoting the text, 'it is no crime in the blind'. Physical blindness is a misfortune involving disabilities which excuse the sufferer from performing certain religious duties,

but spiritual blindness is 'a bad disease' and an accursed thing, and neglect to seek a remedy for it is a heinous crime. The second hemistich of the present verse indicates what that remedy is: the via purgativa [= way of purification] of the Súfís. In the first hemistich the poet says ironically to the sensualist: 'If you are blind, i.e. unable to become a "traveller" (sálik) in the Súfí Path of self-purification, then no doubt you are excusable.' From what follows it seems evident that this means, 'Such an hypothesis is absurd: you are not really incapacitated and therefore will not be excused for holding back from the fight for spiritual perfection.'" (Commentary)

"(It means), 'O you who have become captive to the (bodily) senses! I you are blind from (being incapable of) witnessing the Divine, (then) in accordance with (the verse), 'There is no fault in (the case of) the blind'... And if you are not blind, then be patient, for 'patience is the key to joy.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (70) go (forward): Nicholson translated, "go (persevere in purifying yourself)..."

27. (70) "Patience is the key to joy": an Arabic proverb which Rumi often quotes in the Mathnawi.

28. (71) the veils upon the eyes: "Cf. VI 2870 sqq." (Nicholson, Commentary) "In other words, "the veils over the eye of the heart, the purpose of which is (to maintain) heedlessness, ignorance, love of the world, and inclination to 'what is besides (God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (71) (and) also will prepare (the way for) the expansion of the heart [to the love and knowledge of God]: Nicholson translated, "and will also effect the opening of your breast (to Divine knowledge)." And he explained: "Cf. Qur. XCIV I [= Qur'an 94:1, " Have We not expanded your breast?"] and Math. V 1066 sqq., VI 2863 [= Mathnawi lines which quote this from the Qur'an]." (Commentary)

30. (72) you will see images beyond (the physical world of) water and earth: "It means, 'The images and forms in the Invisible World [`âlam-é ghayb] will appear in the mirror of your heart and your gaze will fall upon those (in contemplation).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

31. (73) both the carpet of good-fortune: Nicholson translated, "the carpet of (spiritual) empire."

32. (73) the Spreader (pf the Carpet): "the farrásh [= Spreader of the carpet] is God: cf. Qur. LI 48 [= " And We have spread out the

earth (like a carpet)"]. Fa [= the Mevlevi Turkish commentator, Anqaravi] says that farsh-i dawlat [= the carpet of (spiritual) empire"] signifies 'the earth of Paradise' or 'the earth of Reality', i.e. the World of Ideas (`alamu 'l-mithál)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

33. (74) The (visionary) image of my beloved: Refers to the mental image of one's beloved, as seen in a dream or a vision. In sufism, it refers to one's spiritual master or to a close spiritual friend-- as in this case, Husâmuddîn Chelebî, Rumi's closest disciple. Nicholson translated, "The phantom (seen in mystical vision) of my Friend."

And he explained: "With the exception of vv. 79-89 (addressed to the reader), the whole of this passage down to 108 describes the mystical relation between Rúmí and his bosom-friend Husámu'ddín as a type of the soul's union with the Divine Beloved who is mirrored in the Perfect Man. The poet, says WM [= Walí Muhammad, who wrote a commentary on the Mathnawi, India, 1894], is explaining the experience of faná fí 'l-Shaykh [= annihilation of ego-self in the consciousness of the spiritual master], in which the muríd [= spiritual disciple] feels himself identified with the Pír (`ayn-i Pír) [= essence of the spiritual master] and the Pír with himself to such a degree that no distinction between the Pír and himself is possible." (Nicholson, Commentary)

34. (74) became like Abraham: its form (like) an idol (and) its inward reality an idol-breaker: Nicholson translated, "my Friend seemed (to me) like Khalíl (Abraham)-- its form an idol, its reality a breaker of idols." And he explained: "alluding to Qur. XXI 52 sqq. [= the story of how the Prophet Abraham destroyed the idols worshipped by his people; he is called the "friend of God" (Khalîlu 'llâh) per Qur'an 4:125, "for God chose Abraham for a friend (khalîl)] Rúmí means that although the image of his friend appears to be other than God and therefore an 'idol', in reality it is (like Abraham) a breaker of idols, i.e. it destroys the illusion of 'otherness' by self-effacement and absorption in the Divine Unity which it reflects."

35. (75) its own image: Nicholson translated, "its own phantom (reflected image)." And he explained: "The perfect saint is a mirror in which every one sees himself as he really is; hence the poet thanks God that in Husámu'ddín he beholds nothing but the image of spiritual beauty and purity." (Nicholson, Commentary)

36. (76) The dust of your doorway: i.e. 'the holy influence emanating from thee which inspires all who come into thy presence.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

37. (77) I will receive this (dust) from him: Nicholson translated, "I shall receive this (dust of Divine grace and love) from him."

38. (78) he will laugh at me, (saying), 'I will never buy (this): Nicholson later corrected his translation, to: "he will laugh at me (and say), 'How should I buy (desire thee)?'" (from, "he will laugh at me: how shall I buy (gain his love)?") (Commentary)

39. (79) He is beautiful, and a lover of the beautiful [ô jamîl-ast-o muHibb-un li-l-jamâl]: "Cf. the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad]: inna 'lláha jamíl-un yuhibbu 'l-jamál." [= "Truly, God is Most Beautiful (and) He loves the beautiful."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

40. (80) the Beautiful attracts a beautiful one: Nicholson translated differently, "The Beautiful attracts the beautiful (to itself)." And he explained, in regard to his translation of "the beautiful," "literally, 'beauty' or 'a beautiful one.'" (Footnote)

41. (80) (the verse), "women of (spiritual) goodness (are) for men of (spiritual) goodness": "Vile and corrupt women (are) for vile and corrupt men, and vile and corrupt men (are) for vile and corrupt women-- just as pure and good women (are) for pure and good men, and pure and good men (are) for pure and good women." (Qur'an 24:26)

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56 rûH bâ `ilm-ast-o bâ `aql-ast yâr
rûH-râ bâ tâzi-wo torkî che kâr?

az tô ay bê-naqsh bâ-chand-în Suwar
ham mushabbih ham muwaHHid khîra-sar

gah mushabbih-râ muwaHHid mê-kon-ad
gah muwaHHid-râ Suwar rah mê-zan-ad

gah to-râ gôy-ad ze-mastî bû 'l-Hasan
yâ Saghîra 's-sinn yâ raTba 'l-badan

60 gâh naqsh-é khwêsh wêrân mê-kon-ad
ân pay-é tanzîh-é jânân mê-kon-ad

chashm-é His-râ hast maZhab-é i`tizâl
dîda-yé `aql-ast sunnî dar wiSâl

sukhra-yé Hiss-and ahl-é i`tizâl
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

khwêsh-râ sunnî nomây-and az Zalâl

har-ke dar His mân-ad ô mu`tazzilî-st
gar-che gôy-ad sunnîy-am az jâhilî-st

har ke bêrûn shod ze-His, sunnî way-ast
ahl-é bînesh chashm-é `aql-é khwash-pay-ast

65 gar be-dîdy Hiss-é Haywân shâh-râ
pas be-dîdy gâw-o khar allâh-râ

gar na-bûdy Hiss-é dêgar mar to-râ
joz His-é Haywân ze-bêrûn-é hawâ

pas banî âdam mukarram kay body
kay ba-Hiss-é mushtarik maHram shody?

nâ-muSawwar yâ muSawwar goftan-at
bâTil âmad bê ze-sûrat rastan-at

nâ-muSawwar yâ muSawwar pêsh-é ô-st
k-ô hama maghz-ast-o bêrûn shod ze-pôst

70 gar tô kôr-î, nêst bar a`mà Haraj
w-ar-na raw, k-aS-Sabru miftâHu 'l-faraj

parda-hây-é dîda-râ dârûy-é Sabr
ham be-sôz-ad, ham be-sâz-ad sharH-é Sadr

âyena-yé del chûn shaw-ad Sâfî-wo pâk
naqsh-hâ bîn-î berûn az âb-o khâk

ham be-bîn-î naqsh-o ham naqqâsh-râ
farsh-é dawlat-râ-wo ham farrâsh-râ

chûn khalîl âmad kheyâl-é yâr-é man
Sûrat-ash bot, ma`niy-é ô bot-shekan

75 shukr-é yazdân-râ ke chûn ô shod padîd
dar kheyâl-ash jân kheyâl-é khwad be-dîd

khâk-é dar-gâh-at del-am-râ mê-ferêft
khâk bar way k-ô ze-khâk-at mê-shekêft

goft-am ar khûb-am paZîr-am în az-ô
w-ar-na khwad khandîd bar man zesht-rô

châra ân bâsh-ad ke khwad-râ be-n'gar-am

w-ar-na ô khand-ad ma-râ man kay khar-am?

ô jamîl-ast-o muHibb-un li-l-jamâl
kay jawân-é naw gozîn-ad pîr-é zâl?

80 khwûb khûbê-râ kon-ad jaZb în be-dân
Tayyibât wa Tayyibîn bar way be-khwân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What Is the Benefit of This Existence? (part one)

Mathnawi II: 1047-1072

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The envy of the (king's) attending slaves toward (his) special slave

1047 A king, from generosity, had selected a slave (as his favorite) over all the attending slaves.

His salary[1] (was) the stipend of forty princes; a hundred prime ministers wouldn't see one tenth of its value.[2]

Due to the perfection of (his) rising star,[3] good luck, and fortune, he was (like) Ayaz and the king was the Mahmood of the time.[4]

1050 Before he had been (born) in this body, his spirit in its origin was joined together with the spirit of the king--a "fellow kinsman."

(Only) that has usefulness which was prior to the body. (So) pass (beyond) these (worldly) things which have been appearing anew.

The mystic knower has (important) business,[5] since he is not cross-eyed. His eye is (focussed) on the first things planted.[6]

For him, that which has been planted of wheat and

barley[7]-- his eyes are pledged (to remain fixed on) the place (of planting),[8] day and night.

Night has not given birth (to anything) except that (with) which it is pregnant.[9] (Human) stratagems and tricks are (mere) wind, (empty) wind.

1055 The one who sees the stratagems of God [dominating] over his head[10] will never delight (his) heart with attractive stratagems.

He (who relies on his own intelligence)[11] (is) within the trap (of God) and placing a trap (of his own design). By your life![12] That (one) won't escape, nor will this (trap) escape (either).[13]

If a hundred plants grow and (then) drop and scatter, in the end (only) those planted by God will grow up (and remain).[14]

New seed was planted upon the first (planted) seed.[15] (However), this second is fading away and (only) the first (seed is) sound.[16]

The original seed is perfect and chosen, (but) the second seed is corrupt and decayed.

1060 Throw (away) this scheme of yours[17] in the presence of the Friend[18]-- even though your plan is also His plan.

(Only) that has usefulness which God has raised up; in the end, (only) that grows which He has originally planted.

Whatever you plant, plant (it) for Him, since you are the prisoner of the Beloved, O lover.

Don't wrap (yourself) around the thieving ego[19] and its actions, (since) whatever (is) not the work of God is nothing, nothing.

(Plant for Him), before the Day of Judgment[20] appears (and) the night thief is disgraced before the King (of Judgment)--

1065 (With) the articles stolen by his tricks and skills remaining upon his neck at the Day of Justice.[21]

(Even if) a hundred thousand minds leap up (to plot) in

unison[22] so that they may set a trap other than His trap,

They will find their own trap more severe and unpleasant[23]-- and nothing else. (For) straw can never show any strength toward the wind.

If you say, "What was the benefit of (this) existence?"[24]-- there is benefit in your question,[25] O rebellious one.

(For) if your question has no benefit, why should I listen to it in vain (and) without profit?

1070 But if your question has many benefits,[26] then why indeed is the world unprofitable?

And if the world is unprofitable in one respect,[27] from other points of view it is full of gain.

1072 (For) if your gain is no profit to me, since it is beneficial to you, don't stay away from it.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/14/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1048) his salary: "(It means), 'The value of the clothing of that special slave was equal to the stipend of forty princes.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (1048) one tenth of its value: Nicholson translated, "a tenth of its amount" (based on his text, "dah yakê qadr") and later wrote, "The two oldest MSS. have dah yak-i qadr-ash." He did not offer a corrected translation on this (minor) difference.

3. (1049) rising star [Tâli`]: refers to the planet which first rose during the day of his birth, which could be fortunate or unfortunate according to astrology. Rumi speaks of astrological influences in his poetry, but as a Muslim he views God as the only Determiner of Destiny and the stars as

intermediaries of the Divine Will.

4. (1049) he was (like) Ayaz and the king was the Mahmood of the time: refers to the story of Mahmood the king of Ghazna (in present day Afghanistan), who chose a favorite slave, Ayaz. "Ayáz ibn úymáq, the handsome Turcoman slave and favourite of Sultan Mahmúd of Ghaznah. In the Mathnawí Ayáz represents the saint endowed with perfect knowledge, who is envied by those inferior to him in spiritual capacity (cf. especially VI 385 sqq.)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1052) The mystic knower has (important) business: Nicholson translated, "That which matters belongs to the knower (of God)."

6. (1052) since his eye is (focussed) on the first things planted: Here, Nicholson referred to his note on II: 167: "The Pír [= sufi master] sees things as they exist potentially in God's eternal knowledge before they are actualised.... Where ordinary men perceive only the phenomenal form, he discerns the essential nature and character."

7. (1053) that which has been planted of wheat and barley: Nicholson translated, "That which was sown as wheat (good) or as barley (relatively evil)..."

8. (1053) his eyes are pledged (to remain fixed on) the place (of planting): Nicholson translated, "his eye is fastened on that place (where it was sown). And he explained: "Literally, '(deposited as) a pledge in that place.'" (Footnote) "It means, 'Looking and holding the attention upon the actions of God is particular to the knower, because the knower isn't cross-eyed. And the eye of the knower is upon the first plantings: it is upon the seeds which had been planted upon the ground of existence in pre-eternity [azal]. (For) nothing planted will become green and thriving in the end, except that very seed which was planted in pre-eternity.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (1054) Night has not given birth (to anything) except that (with) which it is pregnant: The proverbial saying shab ábistan-ast [= the night is pregnant] occurs in a great variety of forms... Fa [= Anqaravi] cites the equivalent Arabic phrase al-laylatu hublá as a Hadíth. Here shab denotes the mysterious Night of Eternity and Divine Predestination (sirr-i taqdír-i azal), in which the essential natures and ultimate results of all things lie

hidden like the embryo on the womb." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"It means, 'Nothing will be born during the time on earth and the time of the Afterlife other than that with which the 'night' of pre-eternity was pregnant." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (1055) the stratagems of God [dominating] over his head: means the hidden plots of God, descending upon earth from the heavens. Nicholson translate, "the design of God (prevailing) over them." And he explained: "Cf. Qur. III 47: 'and they plotted and Allah plotted, and Allah is the best plotter of them all.'" (Commentary) "'Over his head': in this verse it is an expression with the meaning of (Divine) supremacy and dominance." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (1056) He (who relies upon his intelligence): Nicholson translated, "He (who trusts in his own devices)..." "(It means), 'The person who has reliance upon his own schemes and intelligence-- he (is) within the trap (of God), (yet) placing another trap.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1056) By your life: "The preposition is often omitted in oaths." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (1056) (is) within the trap (of God) and placing a trap.... That (one) won't escape, nor will this (trap) escape (either): Nicholson translated, "is laying a snare within the snare (of God)... neither this (snare) will escape (destruction) nor will that (man)." Nicholson later pointed out that his text differs from an earlier one. (Commentary)

14. (1057) (only) that planted by God will grow up (and remain): "It means, 'If an action proceeds from the ground of human existence and it is sufficient and adequate, that is a seed which God has planted during pre-eternity into his being, and that same seed will at last grow up.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (1058) New seed was planted upon the first (planted) seed: Nicholson translated, "He (the cunning man) sowed new seed over the first seed." However, he did not offer a corrected translation based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi.

16. (1058) (only) the first (seed is) sound: Nicholson translated, "He (the cunning man) sowed new seed... and

(only) the first is sound (and enduring)."

17. (1060) Throw (away) this scheme of yours: "I.e. 'abandon self-will, self-activity, and self-interest, which separate you from God'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (1060) the Friend [dôst]: may also be translated as "the Beloved" (as in line 1062).

19. (1063) the thieving ego: Nicholson translated, "the thievish fleshly soul." It means the bodily self [nafs] which "steals" to satisfy its worldly cravings. "The egoist is compared to a night-thief [= in the next verse] because he seeks by stealth and cunning to gratify his selfish desires in the darkness of this world. The 'stolen goods' are the huzúz-i nafs [= pleasures of the bodily self]... These the egoist regards as belonging to himself, though in reality all 'property' whatsoever, whether it consists in thought, feeling, action, or material possessions, belongs to God who created and gave it. When this fact is fully realised, human 'contrivance' (tadbír) is neither futile nor sinful..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (1064) (Plant for Him), before the Day of Judgment: Nicholson translated, "(Sow the good seed) ere the Day of Resurrection...."

21. (1065) (With) the articles stolen by his tricks and skills remaining upon his neck at the Day of Justice: "The intended meaning of 'stolen articles is those actions which the thief has committed by means of tricks and deceptions, and (which) will be remaining upon his neck on the Day of Requital." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (1066) (Even if) a hundred thousand minds leap up (to plot) in unison: "(It means), 'A hundred thousand minds in unison (which) heap tricks and schemes together." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23. (1067) They will find their own trap more severe and unpleasant: Nicholson translated, "(But) they only find their snare more grievous (to themselves)..."

24. (1068) What was the benefit of (this) existence: Nicholson translated, "the profit of (our created) being." "For a questioner about the mentioned meaning regarding the Decree and Destiny of God, (the answer) arose in the verses prior to this question, since the contents of those verses

[= starting at II: 1051] were spoken (thus): A person has something useful when it has existed prior to bodily existence. (So) pass those matters which have appeared afresh in this (material) world." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (1068) there is benefit in your question: "With these verses cf. the parallel passage, I 1515-1524 [= translated by Nicholson: "... What was the wisdom and mystery of imprisoning that pure one (the spirit) in this dirty place?..."] and notes ad loc [for example: "This question is answered more definitely in other parts of the Mathnawí, e.g. III 4159 sqq., IV 521 sqq., 2540 sqq., 3015 sqq., VI 2102 sqq." And on I : I521: "The innumerable benefits arising from the connexion of ideas with speech are as nothing in comparison with that which God has bestowed on Man by bringing him into bodily existence and thus enabling him to reflect the Divine attributes; for a mirror must needs be dark on one side."]. If man is a straw driven helplessly to and fro by the winds of Destiny, what was the use of creating him and the world in which he moves? The poet retorts that the very asking of this question supplies an example of the use and purpose inherent in all created things (cf. Qur. XV 85, XXIII 117, XXXVIII 26); for, at the least, it serves to give form and expression to a thought in the asker's mind. On the same analogy, God brings the world and man and all human activities into existence for the purpose of giving form and expression to His idea of Himself through and in the Perfect Man" [= a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240, meaning the completed saint who reflects all the Attributes of God]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

26. (1070) if your question has many benefits: "(It means), 'since those benefits are connected to hidden (areas of) knowledge which have come into manifestation by means of your question.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (1071) if the world is unprofitable in one respect: "i.e. from the aspect of absolute Divine transcendence (tanzíh)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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Hasad-kardan-é Hasham bar ghulâm-é khâSS

1047 pâdshâhê banda'ê-râ az karam
bar-gozîda bûd bar jumla-yé Hasham
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

jâmagîy-é ô waZîfa-yé chel amîr
dah yak-é qadr-ash na-dîdy Sad wazîr

az kamâl-é Tâli`-wo iqbâl-o bakht
ô ayâzê bûd-o shah maHmûd-é waqt

rûH-é ô bâ rûH-é shah dar aSl-é khwêsh
pêsh az-în tan bûda ham-paywand-o khwêsh

kâr ân dâr-ad ke pêsh az tan bod-ast
be-g'Zar az în-hâ ke naw-HâdiS shod-ast

kâr `ârif-râ-st k-ô na aHwal-ast
chashm-é ô bar kesht-hây-é awwal-ast

ân-che gandom kâsht-and-ash w-ân-che jaw
chashm-é ô ân-jâ-st rôz-o shab geraw

ân-che âbest-ast shab joz ân na-zâd
Hila-hâ-wo makr-hâ bâd-ast, bâd

kay kon-ad del khwosh ba-Hîlat-hây-é kash
ân-ke bîn-ad Hîla-yé Haq bar sar-ash?

ô darûn-é dâm-o dâmê mê-neh-ad
jân-é tô nê ân jah-ad, nê în jah-ad

gar be-rôy-ad w-ar be-rêz-ad Sad geyâh
`âqibat bar rôy-ad ân keshta-yé ilâh

kasht-é naw kâr-and bar kasht-é nokhost
în dowom fânî-st-o ân awwal dorost

tokhm-é awwal kâmil-o be-g'zîda-ast
tokhm-é Sânî fâsid-o pôsîda-ast

afkan în tadbîr-é khwad-râ pêsh-é dôst
gar-che tadbîr-at ham az tadbir-é ô-st

kâr ân dâr-ad ke Haqq afrâsht-ast
âkhir ân rôy-ad ke awwal kâsht-ast

har che kâr-î, az barây-é ô be-kâr
chûn asîr-é dôst-î ay dôst-dâr

gerd-é nafs-é dozd-o kâr-é ô ma-pêch
har-che ân na kâr-é Haq, hêch-ast, hêch

pêsh az ân-ke rôz-é dîn paydâ shaw-ad
nazd-é mâlik dozd-é shab roswâ shaw-ad

1065 rakht-é dozdîda ba-tadbîr-o fan-ash
mânda rôz-é dâwirî bar gardan-ash

Sad hazâr-ân `aql bâ ham bar jah-and
tâ ba-ghayr-é dâm-é ô dâmê neh-and

dâm-é khwad-râ sakht-tar yâb-and-o bas
kay nomây-ad quwwatê bâ bâd khas?

gar tô gôy-î fâyida-yé hastî che bûd
dar sû'âl-at fâyida hast ay `anûd

gar na-dâr-ad în su'âl-at fâyida
che sh'naw-êm în-râ `abaS bê-`âyida?

1070 w-ar su'âl-at-râ basê fâyidda-hâ-st
pas jahân bê-fâyida âkhir cherâ-st?

w-ar jahân az yak jehat bê-fâyida-ast
az jehat-hây-é degar por-`âyida-ast

1072 fâyida-yé tô gar ma-râ fâyidda nêst
mar to-râ chûn fâyida-st az way ma-êst

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What Is the Benefit of This Existence? (part two)

Mathnawi II: 1073-1105

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1073 The beauty of Joseph[1] (was) a benefit for a (whole) world, even though it was vain and excessive to (his) brothers.

The melodies of a David[2] were so beloved (to those who recognized him as a prophet), but were (no more than) noise (produced) from wood to (someone) deprived (of faith).[3]

1075 The water of the Nile (river) was greater (in delight)

than the Water of Life,[4] but it was (no more than) blood to (one) deprived (of faith) and a denier.[5]

Martyrdom is (true) life to the believer,[6] (yet) it is death and deterioration to the hypocrite.[7]

Speak (up and say) what single favor is there in the world from which some group are not deprived.

Cattle and donkeys have no benefit in (eating) sugar. Every soul has a different (kind of) food.[8]

But if that food is (presented) by chance to it,[9] then giving admonishing advice is the (appropriate) correction for it.

1080 (For example), if a person has love for (eating) clay because of sickness,[10] even though he thinks that it is itself his (suitable) food,

He has forgotten the original food (suitable for him) (and) has brought (his) face toward the food of sickness.

(Since) he has abandoned sweet drink, he has consumed poison (and) made the food of sickness (as nourishing in his view) as fat.

The Light of God is the original food for mankind, (and) animal food is (actually) not worthy of him.[11]

But because of sickness, (the craving of his) heart has fallen into this (belief) that day and night his (proper) food is from this (material) water and clay.[12]

1085 (And he has become) sallow-faced, weak of legs, and infirm of heart.[13] Where is the food (spoken) of (in the verse), "By the Heavens, full of (starry) paths"?[14]

That is the food of the elect ones of (Divine) good-fortune,[15] the eating of which is without (need of) throat or (physical) instrument.

The food of the sun is from the light of the Throne,[16] (but the food) for the envious and demonic is from the "smoke" of the carpet (of the material world).[17]

God said about (the souls of) the martyrs, "they are nourished."[18] (And) there is no mouth nor dish (needed) for

(consuming) that food.

The heart eats a (type of) food from (the presence of) every companion. (Likewise), the heart draws a (type of) pleasure from every (type of) knowledge.[19]

1090 The form of every human being is like a cup, (and only) the (spiritual) eye is endowed with the perception (to see anything) about his inward reality.

You are consuming something from meeting anyone, and you draw something from association with any companion.

When a conjunction has occurred between a planet (and another) planet, the effect suitable for both is surely generated.[20]

When the joining of a man and a woman (has occurred), a human being is generated. And from the association of rock and iron, sparks occur.

And from the connection of earth with rainfalls, fruits, green plants, and fragrant herbs (are produced).

1095 From the association of (beautiful) green (places) with man,[21] joyfulness of heart, freedom from any sorrow, and happiness (result).

And from the joining of happiness with our souls, our (natural) goodness and kindness (are generated).[22]

Our bodies become able to consume (food and drink) when our desire attains fulfillment from relaxation and amusement.

(Healthy) redness of face is from the connection of blood (underneath the skin). (And) blood is from the beautiful scarlet red quality of the sun.[23]

Red is the best of colors, is from the sun, and reaches (us) from it.

1100 Any land which has become associated with (the influence of) Saturn has become salty and is not the place for planting (crops).

Power comes into action from agreement,[24] like the association of the Devil with the people of hypocrisy.[25]

These true spiritual meanings, (which are) from the ninth heaven,[26] (have) grandeur and magnificence without (any need of worldly) magnificence.

Regarding the (physical) creation, (its) magnificence is borrowed. (But) regarding the (Divine) Command, (its) grandeur and magnificence is essential.[27]

For the sake of (worldly) magnificence, (people) endure degradation and humiliation;[28] in hope of greatness (of position and power), they are happy in being despised.

1105 In hope of the great honor of ten days (full) of irritation,[29] they have made their necks (thin) as a spindle because of anguish.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1073) The beauty of Joseph: refers to the Qur'anic story of Joseph and the jealousy of his brothers. Joseph is viewed in Islamic tradition as one of the Prophets of God, as well as being extraordinarily good-looking (see Qur'an 12:30).

2. (1074) The melodies of a David: refers to David (viewed as a Prophet in Islam) and his famous Psalms (mentioned in the Qur'an as one of the previous books of Divine revelation, together with Torah and the Gospel). He is viewed, in Islamic tradition, as singing the praises of God (see Qur'an 34:10; 38:18l; 21:79).

3. (1074) to (one) deprived (of faith): Nicholson translated, "to the interdicted (unbeliever)." "(It means), 'The melodies of Hazrat-i Da'ood [= David]-- may the peace (of God) be upon him, which were of a quality (that made them) held dear and famous. But for the one who was denying that revered (Prophet) and who was deprived (of faith), they were similar to (noise produced by) wood.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

4. (1075) The water of the Nile (river) was greater (in delight) than the Water of Life: Nicholson translated, "was superior to..." "Another similitude: The water of the Nile was greater in enjoyment than the Water of Life." (Anqaravi, Commentary) According to Islamic legend, one who is able to find and sip from the Water of Life will be granted immortality. According to the Qur'an (and the Torah), the water of the Nile River was good when the children of Israel drank from it, but became blood when the Egyptian followers of Pharaoh attempted to do so.

5. (1075) but it was (no more than) blood to (one) deprived (of faith) and a denier: "Among the plagues sent upon the people of Pharaoh (Qur. VII 130) was the plague of blood, so that whenever an Egyptian would drink water, it turned to blood in his mouth. The story is handled characteristically by Rúmí in Book IV, 3431 foll." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (1076) Martyrdom is (true) life to the believer: In Islam, a true believer [mû'min] who is a martyr [shahîd] attains a blessed state in the afterlife (prior to the Resurrection). Martyrs are those killed in defensive battle against an invading and oppressive army of non-Muslims, as well as those killed in plagues. "Permission (to fight is given from God) for those who have been wronged-- and truly God is the All-Powerful for helping them-- (and they are) those who have been driven from their homes (in a manner) not right, (for no reason) other than that they said, 'Our Lord is God.'" (Qur'an 22:40) Martyrdom is only for those who die when fighting a defensive battle and who conform to the Islamic laws for engaging in warfare (which forbid the killing of innocent non-combatants such as women, children, and the elderly; and which forbid the destroying of orchards and crops, poisoning wells, and other kinds of spoliation of the lands of the enemy).

7. (1076) the hypocrite [munâfiq]: In the Qur'an, hypocrites (those who remain polytheists and reject the One True God, while pretending to be believers) are considered more dangerous to Islam than the oppressive pagans. Hypocrites are viewed as cowards who fear death, who will not fight to defend the survival of Islam (Qur'an 3:167-68), and will be cursed by God (9: 68)

8. (1078) Every soul has a different (kind of) food: "Therefore the nourishment and food of the people of salvation is spiritual and an enjoyable (form of) mystical

knowledge. And the food of the people (who are) led astray is like (that of) cattle and donkeys-- bodily food and selfish cravings [shahwât-é nafsânî]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (1079) if that food is (presented) by chance to it: Nicholson translated, "accidental to it (and not according to its real nature)..."

10. (1080) if a person has love for (eating) clay because of sickness: means due to an illness (understood nowadays as some kind of mineral deficiency). Since Rumi mocks "clay-eaters" elsewhere in the Mathnawi, this may include those who began eating clay during a state of illness, but continued eating it after developing an acquired attachment to its taste.

11. (1083) The Light of God is the original food for mankind, (and) animal food is (actually) not worthy of him: refers to the condition of humanity before the Fall from the Garden of Paradise. This is also the condition (to some extent) for some of the saints, as well as the future condition of the inhabitants of Paradise after the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment.

Nicholson referred, here, to Mathnawi V: 288 [= translated by him: "Although that (Light) is the food of the spirit and the (spiritual) sight..."] and V: 1748-49 [= "the Food of God"]. And he also said: "The 'Light of God' is Universal Reason." (Commentary)

12. (1084) from this (material) water and clay: an idiom meaning something physical and related to the body, since Adam's body was created out of water and clay (Qur'an 25:54; 38:71).

13. (1085) infirm of heart: Nicholson translated, "faint-hearted."

14. (1085) Where is the food (spoken) of (in the verse), "By the Heavens, full of (starry) paths [wa 's-samâ Zâti 'l-Hubuk]": a direct quotation of the Arabic from Qur'an 51:7. It means the Heavenly food of the Light of God-- as manifested by the shining planets. "Qur. LI 7, explained by Najmu'ddín al-Kubrà [= a sufi master, died in 1221] as 'the heaven of the heart (qalb) which is possessed of the ways that lead to God'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (1086) the elect ones of (Divine) good-fortune: Nicholson translated, "the chosen ones of the (Divine) sovereignty."

16. (1087) The food of the sun is from the light of the Throne: Nicholson translated, "The food of the (spiritual) sun is (derived) from the light of the (celestial) Throne..." And he explained: "i.e. the prophet or saint." (Commentary)

17. (1087) (but the food) for the envious and demonic is from the "smoke": According to the Qur'an, the jinn (or genies) are made from "smokeless fire" (55:15). In the last two chapters of the Qur'an are prayers for seeking protection from the "evil of the envious one when he acts enviously" (113:5) and from "the evil of "the whisperer... who whispers (evil) within the hearts of mankind among the jinn and human beings" (114: 4-6)

18. (1088) God said about (the souls of) the martyrs, "they are nourished [yurzaqûn]": Nicholson translated, "God said concerning the martyrs, 'they are (alive with their Lord) receiving sustenance.'" This refers to Qur'an 3:169: "Don't consider those who are killed in the way of God as dead. Rather, they live (and) are nourished [yurzaqûn] in the presence of their Sustaining Lord." Nicholson referred, here, to his note on Mathnawi I: 3872: "The poet, however, is not thinking of Moslems who have fallen in battle, but of mystics who have died to self for God's sake. These are the real martyrs." (Commentary)

"The martyrs have been given sustenance in the presence of their Sustaining Lord, from the favor which the Lord Most High has given to them from His Grace. At the time when they are full of joy and happiness, they are 'eating and drinking.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (1089) the heart is drawing a (type of) pleasure from every (type of) knowledge: Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "the heart is getting a (particular) excellence from every single (kind of) knowledge." (from: "every single (piece of) knowledge."

20. (1092) When a conjunction has occurred between a planet (and another) planet, the effect suitable for both is surely generated: "... such as (producing) good fortune, bad luck, or 'obliteration' (when hidden by apparent closeness to the sun)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

Although Rumi sometimes refers in the Mathnawi to astrological effects upon the earth as if they are a reality, it is important to keep in mind that, as a poet, he uses all kinds of images in a poetic and metaphorical way. And as a Muslim, he certainly believed that all power to effect events on earth originates from the Command of God (and perhaps viewed the stars and planets as intermediaries of the Divine Will).

21. (1095) from the association of (beautiful) green (places) with man: "Because if the son of Adam has a green and watery viewing place and is near greenery and water, he obtains happiness of heart." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (1096) our (natural) goodness and kindness (are generated): Nicholson later changed his translation, to "our beauty and beneficence" (from, "our goodness and beneficence").

23. (1098) (Healthy) redness of face is from the connection of blood (underneath the skin). (And) blood is from the beautiful scarlet red quality of the sun: "In other words, by means of the heat of the sun, blood manifests (through) movement and predominance (just under the skin) by means of the heat of the sun and becomes the cause of (healthy) redness of the face." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (1101) Power comes into action from agreement: "I.e. what is potential becomes actual." (Nicholson, Footnote)

25. (1101) like the association of the Devil with the people of hypocrisy: See note above on line 1076.

26. (1102) the ninth heaven: refers to the most lofty of the concentric spheres believed to surround the earth (the lowest is the moon, followed by Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, the sphere of the constellations, and the Divine Throne. "...i.e. the `Arsh [= the level of the Divine Throne], which Súfís identify with the Divine consciousness wherein the potentialities of all things are eternally latent." (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (1103) (But) regarding the (Divine) Command, (its) grandeur and magnificence is essential: Nicholson translated, "the pomp and grandeur belonging to the (world of) Command is an essential thing." And he explained the meaning of "the (world of) Command": "The supersensible

world." (Footnote) And he explained further: "amr = `álamu 'l-amr [= Command equals the world of Command], i.e. the spiritual world brought into existence immediately and directly, without space and time, by the Divine fiat (kun) [= "Be! And it is" (Qur'an 2:117)].... The '(world of) creation' (al-khalq) and the '(world of) command' (al-amr) are opposed to each other in Qur. VII 52." [= "Do not the creation and the command (to govern it) belong to Him?" (Qur'an 7: 54)] (Commentary)

"...(its) grandeur and magnificence: in other words, it is essentially the (magnificent) 'pavilion' and dwelling place of the World of Command [`âlam-é amr] and the World of Spirits [`âlam-é arwâH]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (1104) For the sake of (worldly) grandeur and magnificence, (people) endure degradation and humiliation: it means that, out of ambition and greed, people will endure humiliating treatment from those who have power over them in hopes of replacing them and living in their magnificent palaces some day.

29. (1105) the great honor of ten days (full) of irritation: in other words, once someone comes briefly into power over others, he experiences much annoyance and little satisfaction: such as having to deal with resistance to his commands, envious hatred, etc.

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1073 Husn-é yûsuf `âlamê-râ fâyida
gar-che bar ikhwân `abaS bod zâyida

laHn-é dâwudê chon-ân maHbûb bûd
lêk bar maHrûm bâng-é chûb bûd

1075 âb-é nîl az âb-é Haywân bod fozûn
lêk bar maHrûm-o munkir bûd khûn

hast bar mû'min shahîdî zendagî
bar munâfiq mordan-ast-o zhendagî

chî-st dar `âlam be-gô yak ni`matê
ke na-maHrûm-and az way ummatê?

gâw-o khar-râ fâyida che dar shakar
hast har jân-râ yakê qûtê degar
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lêk gar ân qût bar way `âriZî-st
pas naSîHat-kardan ô-râ râyiZî-st

chûn kasê k-ô az maraZ gel dâsht dôst
gar-che pendâr-ad ke ân khwad qût-é ô-st

qût-é aSlî-râ farâmosh karda-ast
rôy dar qût-é maraZ âwarda-ast

nôsh-râ be-g'Zâshta sam khwarda-ast
qût-é `illat-râ chô charbesh karda-ast

qût-é aSliy-é bashar nûr-é khodâ-st
qût-é Haywânî mar-ô-râ nâ-sazâ-st

lêk az `illat dar-în oftâd del
ke khward-é ô rôz-o shab z-în âb-o gel

rôy-zard-o pây-sost-o del-sabok
kô ghaZây-é wa 's-samâ Zâti 'l-Hubuk

ân ghaZây-é khâSa-g-ân-é dawlat-ast
khwardan-é ân bê-golô-wo âlat-ast

shod ghaZây-é âftâb az nûr-é `arsh
mar Hasûd-o dêw-râ az dûd-é farsh

dar shahîd-ân yurzaqûn farmûd Haq
ân ghaZâ-râ nê dahân bod nê Tabaq

del ze-har yârê ghaZâyê mê-khwar-ad
del ze-har `ilmê Safâyê mê-bar-ad

Sûrat-é har âdamê chûn kâsa'ê-st
chashm az ma`niy-é ô Hassâsa'ê-st

az liqây-é har kasê chêzê khwar-î
w-az qirân-é har qarîn chêzê bar-î

chûn setâra bâ setâra shod qarîn
lâyiq-é har dô aSar zây-ad yaqîn

chûn qirân-é mard-o zan zây-ad bashar
w-az qirân-é sang-o âhan shod sharar

w-az qirân-é khâk bâ bârân-hâ
mêwa-hâ-wo sabza-wo rayHân-hâ

1095 w-az qirân-é sabza-hâ bâ âdamî
del-khwashî-wo bê-ghammî-wo khorramî

w-az qirân-é khurramî bâ jân-é mâ
mê be-zây-ad khwobî-wo iHsân-é mâ

qâbil-é khwardan shaw-ad ijsâm-é mâ
chûn bar-ây-ad az tafarruj kâm-é mâ

sorkh-rôyî az qirân-é khûn bow-ad
khûn ze-khworshêd-é khwash-é gol-gûn bow-ad

beh-tarîn-é rang-hâ sorkhî bow-ad
w-ân ze-khworshêd-ast-o az way mê-ras-ad

1100 har zamînê k-ân qarîn shod bâ zuHal
shôra gasht-o kasht-râ na-b'w-ad maHal

quwwat andar fa`l ây-ad z-ittifâq
chûn qirân-é dêw bâ ahl-é nifâq

în ma`âniy-é râst az charkh-é nohom
bê-hama Tâq-o Torom Tâq-o Torom

khalq-râ Tâq-o Torom `âriyyat-ast
amr-râ Tâq-o Torom mâhiyyat-ast

az pay-é Tâq-o Torom khwâri kash-and
bar omêd-é `izz dar khwârî khwash-and

1105 bar omêd-é `izz-é dah-rôza-yé khodûk
gardan-é khwad karda-and az gham chô dûk

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What Is the Benefit of This Existence? (part three)

Mathnawi II: 1106-1130

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1106 How can they not come (to) this place where I am? For I am (like) the radiant sun in [the presence of] this (Divine) Glory.[1]

(Although) the rising place of the (physical) sun is the pitch black area of sky,[2] my Sun[3] is beyond (any) rising places.

His "rising place" (exists only) in regard (to the location) of His motes (of dust)-- (since) His Essence has not (ever) risen , nor has it (ever) descended.

(Although) I am (one) who is kept behind His motes,[4] (still) I am (like) a shadowless sun in this world and the next.

1110 Again, (how) amazing[5] (it is that) I am revolving around the (Divine) Sun, (And) also, (how) the Glory of the Sun is the cause of this![6]

The Sun is aware of (all) causes, (while) the rope of causes is detached from (having any hold on) Him..[7]

I have broken off hope a hundred thousand times. Of whom? Of the Sun? Believe this (if you will)![8]

In regard to me, don't believe that I can endure (apart) from the Sun or (that) the fish (can endure apart) from the water.

And if I become hopeless, my hopelessness is (caused by) the essential Action of the Sun,[9] O good-natured (man).

1115 The essential action cannot be severed from the self of the doer.[10] (And) an existent being can never "graze" from (anywhere) other than (Divine) Existence.

All existent beings are "grazing" from this Meadow whether they are the miraculous steed (of the Prophet)[11] and Arab horses or even if they are donkeys.[12]
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1116(b) But the "blind" horse grazes in a blind manner (and) doesn't see the Meadow because of that hindrance.[13]

And the one who doesn't view (all) changes (as coming) from that Ocean turns (his) face to a new orientation every moment.[14]

He drank salt water from the Sea of sweet-tasting water until the salt water made him blind.

The Sea continues saying, "Drink of My Water with (your) right hand,[15] O blind (one), so that you may obtain vision."

1120 (The term) "right hand" here is (a symbol for) right thinking, which knows (the difference between) good and evil (and) from where they are (originating).[16]

O spear, there is a Spear-Holder,[17] so that at times you become straight, (and) at times (bent) double.

(But) due to love for Shams-i Din,[18] I am without (strength to) grasp[19]-- or else I would produce clear-sightedness for this blind one.[20]

(O) Husamuddin,[21] the Light of Truth, take care (and) quickly apply the remedy to him-- against the will of the envious.[22]

(Apply) the quick-acting collyrium[23] of (Divine) Grandeur, the darkness-killing medicine for the stubborn-acting (one)--

1125 The (medicine) which, if rubbed onto the eyes of the blind one will eradicate the blindness of a hundred years from him.

Cure all the blind ones, except the envious, who is bringing denial against you out of envy.[24]

In regard to your envier, don't give (him spiritual) life, even if I am (such a one as) that, so that I may suffer the tearing out of the soul[25] just like (him)--

The one who is envious of the Sun and the one who is offended because of the existence of the Sun.[26]

Consider this: it is an affliction without cure which he has. What a pity! Consider this: he has fallen to the bottom

of the deep pit forever.

1130 His demand (is) the non-existence of the Sun of Eternity.[27] Tell (me), when will this wish of his will come to be (realized)?

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/28/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1106) For I am (like) the radiant sun in [the presence of] this (Divine) Glory: Nicholson translated, "for in this (spiritual) glory I am the shining Sun."
Nicholson wrote about this verse and the one following: "It is possible that this and the following verse are supposed to be spoken by God (so Fa [= Anqaravi]); but I think they are better understood as referring to the unitive experience of the saint." (Commentary)

2. (1107) he pitch black area of sky: Nicholson translated more literally, "the pitch-coloured tower (of heaven)..."

3. (1107) my Sun: i.e. the Divine Essence, of which the manifestations (tajallíyát) are without beginning or end: it neither 'rises' nor 'sets' except in relation to the phenomenal forms in which it is revealed." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (1109) (Although) I am (one) who is kept behind His motes: the "motes" are the angels and the prophets. Nicholson translated, "I who am left behind (surpassed in eminence) by His motes." And he explained: "I.e. 'although I am inferior in spiritual rank to the prophets (who themselves, from an external point of view, are but "motes" irradiated by the Divine Sun), yet I too (like them in their real nature) am one with the Essential Light'." (Commentary)

"In other words, 'I am (in) the group of the saints which, in relation to the angels of nearness (to the Divine Throne) and the prophets-- may the blessings of God be upon the prophets and upon all of them, are among the motes remaining behind those exalted presences.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into

English from a Persian translation)

5. (1110) (how) amazing: "i.e. 'the marvel is that I, not being essentially other than the Divine Sun, should revolve round it and seek union with it'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (1110) also, (how) the Glory of the Sun is the cause of this: "i.e. the saint, though invested with all the Divine attributes, is not God: he is a reality (haqq), but not 'the' reality (al-Haqq." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1111) (while) the rope of causes is detached from (having any hold on) Him: Nicholson translated, "at the same time the cord of (all secondary) causes is severed from him." And he explained, "I.e. He is independent of them." (Footnote)

8. (1112) Believe this (if you will): Nicholson translated, "Do you believe this?" And he later explained: "The verb is imperative, i.e. 'believe this (if you can', meaning, 'it is incredible that I have ever lost hope of God, who is my very life'." (Commentary)

"In other words, 'I say: "A hundred thousand times I have broken off hope." Will you ask, "Broken off hope) of whom?" (But) if I say, "Of the Sun of Reality," will you believe this?'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (1114) my hopelessness is (caused by) the essential Action of the Sun: Nicholson translated, "my despair is the objective manifestation of the Sun's work..." Nicholson later expressed dissatisfaction with this translation: "I.e. 'if I were to despair, it would essentially be His doing (`ayn-i sun`); and since "doing" is an essential attribute of the Doer, even despair could not separate me from Him'. `Ayn [= essential] in these verses has not the meaning 'objective manifestation' in which it is often used by Ibnu 'l-`Arabí [= a sufi master, died 1240] and which I have wrongly attached to it in the Translation." (Commentary)

10. (1115) The essential action cannot be severed from the self of the doer: refers to Actions of God. Nicholson translated, "How should the objective manifestation of the work be cut off from the very self of the Worker?"

11. (1116) the miraculous steed (of the Prophet) [burâq]: a miraculous animal which arrived from Heaven to carry the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Jerusalem and then straight

up into the Heavens.

12. (1116) and Arab horses or even if they are donkeys: "Of course the animals mentioned in this verse are merely emblems of spirituality and sensuality." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (1116b) But the "blind" horse grazes in a blind manner (and) doesn't see the Meadow because of that hindrance: This verse is not in Nicholson's text, but was written in the margin of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, indicated for this place. Anqaravi commented on this verse, saying, "In other words, the ignorant ones who are like blind ones." (Commentary)

14. (1117) And the one who doesn't view (all) changes (as coming) from that Ocean turns (his) face to a new orientation every moment: "Those who do not perceive that God is the Author of all existence look to His creatures for the help and guidance given by Him alone; consequently that which, if seen in its real light, would become a means to salvation, leads them blindfolded to perdition. The 'sweet Sea' of Divine Reality appears to them under the terrible aspect of Jalál (Wrath) and turns, as it were, to brine [= salt water] in their mouths." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Hazrat-i Mawlana-- may God sanctify his precious spirit-- in the preceding verses has applied (the term) 'Meadow' to the level of the Divine. In this verse, he has also interprets it with the term 'Ocean.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (1119) Drink of My Water with (your) right hand: In Islam, the right hand represents righteousness, and many actions are to be done with this hand: to eat, shake hands with another Muslim man, to hold ones prayer beads, etc. (In contrast, the left hand is used to wipe oneself after defecating, then rubbed in the dirt or washed.) Rumi here contrasts drinking Divine "water" with the different hands in a way which is similar to the Qur'anic account of how the Children of Israel drank pure water from the Red sea, while it turned to blood when the Egyptian followers of Pharaoh tried to drink from it.

16. (1120) which knows (the difference between) good and evil (and) from where they are (originating): "On this level, the right hand is an expression of right opinion, the intended meaning which is the knowledge of certainty [`ilmu

'l-yaqîn]-- the same knowledge of certainty which knows from where good and evil are (originating) and determines the difference between truth and falsehood." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1121) O spear, there is a Spear-Holder: Means God, who shapes us to be straight if we think and act rightly, or makes us crooked if we think and act unjustly. Nicholson translated, "O lance, there is a Lancer..." And he explained: "Literally, 'one who turns or wields the lance.'" (Footnote) He also referred to his note on Mathnawi IV: 153-155: "...with everything that moves there is a mover. If you do not see him visibly, apprehend him by means of the manifestation of the effect. The body is moved by the spirit: you do not see the spirit; but from the movement of the body know the spirit (to be its mover)."

"In other words, 'O one who is ignorant of the Real Actor, you are in the hand of the Absolute Doer, like a spear. There is a spear-turner who is God. O spear, you become bent and curved. See clearly (that) these states of your are from the control of the Two Fingers of God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (1122) due to love for Shams-i Dîn: Rumi's spiritual master and dearest friend. Here Shams-i Dín (Shams-i Tabríz) is a type of the Divine Beloved, in whom the poet says he is so naughted (fání) that he cannot concern himself with caring for the spiritually blind." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (1122) I am without (strength to) grasp: "in other words, 'I have become overwhelmed and annihilated by the intensity of (my) love for him. And in this state, the diligent attention (necessary) for spiritual guidance is not possible. Otherwise...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (1122) or else I would produce clear-sightedness for this blind one: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "else I would make that blind one see" (from, "else would not I make this blind one see?"). "The work of the spiritual masters [murshidîn] is this: that the minds of the blind-hearted ones are made to shine with the collyrium of mystical knowledge." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (1123) Husamuddin: Husamuddin Chelebi was Rumi's closest companion during the time of the composition of the Mathnawi. He dictated the verses of the Mathnawi to

Humsamuddin and appointed him to train all the disciples. He became Rumi's first successor after the latter's death.

22. (1123) against the will of the envious [kôriy-é chashm-é Hasûd]: an idiom: literally, "(despite) the blind eye of the envious." Nicholson referred, here, to his note on I: 1012-13, in which he explained that the meaning is derived from the phrase, "May my enemy become blind." The envious means those who wish evil upon the righteous. There is a prayer in the next to last chapter in the Qur'an which involves seeking refuge in God "from the evil of the envious one who practices envy." (113: 5).

23. (1124) collyrium [tôteyâ]: literally, "tutty." A medicine, here used to increase sight in the eyes. "...oxide of zinc and other mineral substances used in the treatment of ophthalmia, which are applied to the eye in the form of powder." (Nicholson, Commentary)

24. (1126) who is bringing denial against you out of envy: see note on line 1123. That the eyes of the envious should not be healed may relate to the association of the "evil eye" as belonging to the envious. "The blindness of ignorance may be cured by a spiritual teacher, but the blindness arising from envy of the saints and disbelief in them is irremediable." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (1127) so that I may suffer the tearing out of the soul: Nicholson translate, "so that I may be suffering the agony of (spiritual) death..."

26. (1128) because of the existence of the Sun: "i.e. the Perfect Man" [= a term used in the mystical philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240, according to which the completed saint reflects all the attributes of God]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (1130) the Sun of Eternity: "The intended meaning of the 'Sun of Eternity': it is the Perfection by which Its Light is Everlasting." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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1106 chûn na-mê-ây-and în-jâ ke man-am
k-andar-în `izz âftâb-é rôshan-am

mushriq-é khworshêd burj-é qîr-gûn
âftâb-é mâ ze-mashriq-hâ berûn
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mashriq-é ô nisbat-é Zarrât-é ô
na bar âmad, na forô shod Zât-é ô

mâ ke wâ-pas mânda Zarrât-é way-êm
dar dô `âlam âftâb-é bê-fay-êm

1110 bâz gerd-é shams mê-gard-am `ajab
ham ze farr-é shams bâsh-ad în sabab

shams bâsh-ad bar sabab-hâ muTTali`
ham az-ô Habl-é sabab-hâ munqaTi`

Sad hazâr-ân bâr be-b'rîd-am omêd
az ke az shams în shomâ bâwar kon-îd

tô ma-râ bâwar ma-kon k-az âftâb
Sabr dâr-am man-o yâ mâhî ze-âb

w-ar shaw-am n-ômêd, n-ômêdîy-é man
`ayn-é Sun`-é âftâb-ast ay Hasan

1115 `ayn-é Sun` az nafs-é Sâni` chûn bor-ad
hêch hast az ghayr-é hastî chûn char-ad.

jumla-yé hastî-hâ az-în rawZa char-and
gar burâq-o tâziy-ân w-ar khwad khar-and

1116(b) lêk asp-é kôr kôrâna char-ad
mê-na-bîn-ad rawZa-râ z-ân-ast rad

w-ân-ke gardesh-hâ az ân daryâ na-dîd
har dam âr-ad rô ba-miHrâbê jadîd

ô ze-baHr-é `aZb âb-é shôr khward
tâ ke âb-é shôr ô-râ kôr kard

baHr mê-gôy-ad ba-dast-é râst khwar
z-âb-é man, ay kôr tâ yâb-î baSar

1120 hast dast-é râst în-jâ Zann-é râst
k-ô be-dân-ad nêk-o bad-râ k-az kojâ-st

nêza-gardânê-st ay nêza ke tô
râst mê-gard-î gahê, gâhê dô-tô

mâ ze-`ishq-é shams-é dîn bê-nâkhon-êm
w-ar-na bâ în kôr-râ bînâ kon-êm

hân Ziyâ' 'l-Haq Husâmu 'd-dîn tô zûd
dârow-ash kon kôriy-é chashm-é Hasûd

tôteyây-é kibriyây-é têz-fa`l
dârôy-é Zulmat-kosh-é estêz-fa`l

1125 ân-ke gar bar chashm-é a`mî bar-zan-ad
Zulmat-é Sad sâla-râ z-ô bar-kan-ad

jumla-yé kôr-ân-râ dawâ kon, joz Hasûd
k-az Hasûdî bar tô mê-âr-ad JuHûd

mar Hasûd-at-râ agar che ân man-am
jân ma-dêh tâ ham-chon-în jân mê-kan-am

ân-ke ô bâsh-ad Hasûd-é âftâb
w-ân-ke mê-ranj-ad ze-bûd-é âftâb

în-at dard-é bê-dawâ k-ô-râ-st âh
în-at oftâda abad dar qa`r-é châh

1130 nafy-é khworshêd-é azal bâyest-é ô
kay bar ây-ad în marâd-é ô be-gô

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Evils of Procrastination (part one)
Mathnawi II: 1227-1243

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(Concerning) the governor's ordering a particular man, "Tear out this thornbush which you've planted on the road!"

1227 Like (the story of),[1] that harsh and oppressive man of pleasant speech[2] (who) had planted a thorn bush in the middle of the road.

Travelers became his critics. They told him often, "Dig this up!" (But) he didn't pull it out.

That thorn bush was becoming greater (in size) every moment,

(while) the feet of the people were becoming bloody from its stabs.

1230 Peoples' clothes were torn by the thorns, (while) the feet of the poor were severely wounded.

When the governor told him, (very) seriously, "Root it up!" He replied, "Yes, I'll dig it out some day."

For a time, he gave promises about tomorrow and the next day. (Meanwhile) his thorn bush became (more) strong and bulky in form.

One day, the governor said to him, "O crooked promiser! Come forward to the task (assigned) by us.[3] (And) don't crawl back again (from it).

He answered, "O uncle! The days (to accomplish it) are between us,[4] O uncle." (The governor) said, "Hurry, (and) don't stretch out (paying your) debt to us."[5]

1235 You who are saying, "Tomorrow," should know this: that with each day that time keeps coming,

That bad and corrupt tree[6] keeps getting younger and this digger keeps getting old and (also) needy and desperate.

The thorn bush (gains) in strength and rising higher, (while) the uprooter of the thorn (bush) (gains) in old age and becoming less.

Every day and every moment the thorn bush (is) green and fresh, (while) the thorn (bush) digger (is) more groaning and dried-up every day.

It is becoming younger, (while) you (are becoming) older. Be quick, and don't gamble away your time (wastefully).

1240 Know (that) every one of your bad habits[7] (is like) a thorn bush (which) has stabbed (your) feet many times.

You have been wounded many times by your own (bad) qualities. You lack sense[8] (and) you've become very senseless.

If, in regard to other people being wounded-- which is because of your ugly disposition that it is made to reach (them)--

1243 You are thoughtless and unaware, at any rate, you are not (inattentive) of your own wounds. (For) you are the (cause of) torment for (both) yourself and every stranger.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 10/19/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. Like (the story of): Just prior, Rumi told the story of how a thirsty man tore down a brick wall which prevented him from reaching a stream. This immediate action saved him, and Rumi interpreted (as translated by Nicholson): "Oh, blest is he that deems his early days an opportunity to be seized, and pays his debt-- In the days when he has the power, (when) he has health and strength of heart and vigour.... Ere the days of eld [= being elderly] arrive and bind your neck.... (Ere) the soil becomes nitrous (barren), crumbling, and poor.... (When) the water of strength... (is) cut off.... The face, from wrinkling, like the back of a lizard.... The day late, the ass lame, and the way long; the shop ruined and the business in disorder; The roots of bad habit firmly set, and the power to tear them up decreased" (II: 1215-26). Then the present section begins.

2. that harsh and oppressive man of pleasant speech: "It means he is, essentially, crude and harsh-tempered--while, outwardly, he is a pleasing speaker." (Anqaravi, Commentary-- translated here from the Persian trans. of the 17th century Turkish commentary)

3. Come forward to the task (assigned) by us: "It means, 'Obey my command." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. The days (to accomplish it) are between us: "I.e. 'there is still some time before the account between us need be settled.'" (Nicholson, footnote) "It means that the person who was the owner of the thorn bush said to the governor of the district.... 'If uprooting the thorn bush is not a (finished) task today, I will finally eradicate it (after) one more day.'"

5. don't stretch out (paying your) debt to us: means to withhold and delay. "The intended meaning of the thorn bush: the desires of the ego [nafs] and a blameworthy character. And the intended meaning of the governor: the perfected spiritual guide [murshid]... (who) constantly advises the beginner and the one who seeks guidance.... 'Purify your craving nature [nafs] and cleanse your heart from (worldly) desires. Because if you neglect doing so, day by day the ugly character of your ego will become stronger.'"

(Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. That bad and corrupt tree: Nicholson translated, "That evil tree." The word translated here [bad] means evil, malignant, wicked, foul, corrupt, bad.

7. bad habits [khoy-é bad: means bad (corrupt, foul, etc.) habits, natures, manners, customs, qualities of temperament and disposition. "It means ugly and blameworthy habits and manners..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. You lack sense: "i.e. 'you cannot perceive that the pain which you are conscious of suffering is caused by your own evil nature.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

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farmûdan-é wâlî ân mard-râ ke în khâr-bon-râ ke neshânda-î bar sar-é râh bar-kan

1227 ham-chô ân shakhS-é dorosht-é khwash-sokhon
dar meyân-é rah neshând ô khâr-bon

rah-gozar-yân-ash malâmat-gar shod-and
bas be-goft-and-ash be-kan în-râ na-kand

har damê ân khâr-bon afzûn shody
pây-é khalq az zakhm-é ân por-khûn shody

1230 jâma-hây-é khalq be-d'rîdy ze-khâr
pây-é darwêsh-ân be-khasty zâr zâr

chûn ba-jid Hâkim ba-d-ô goft în be-kan
goft ârî bar-kan-am rôzê-sh man

maddatê fardâ-wo fardâ wa`da dâd
shod derakht-é khâr-é ô muHkam-nehâd

goft rôzê Hâkim-ash ay wa`da-kazh
pêsh â dar kâr-é mâ wâ-pas ma-ghazh

goft al-'ayyâmu yâ `am bayna-nâ
goft `ajjil lâ tumâTil dayna-nâ

1235 tô ke mê-gôy-î ke fardâ, în be-dân
ke ba-har rôzê ke mê-ây-ad zamân
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ân derakht-é bad jawân-tar mê-shaw-ad
w-în kananda pîr-o muZTar mê-shaw-ad

khâr-bon dar quwwat-o bar-khâstan
khâr-kan dar pîrî-wo dar kâstan

khâr-bon har rôz-o har dam sabz-o tar
khâr-kan har rôz zâr-o khoshk-tar

ô jawân-tar mê-shaw-ad tô pîr-tar
zûd bâsh-o rôzegâr-é khwad ma-bar

1240 khâr-bon dân har yakê khôy-é bad-at
bâr-hâ dar pây khâr âkhir zad-at

bâr-hâ az khôy-é khwad khasta shod-î
His na-dâr-î, sakht bê-His âmad-î

gar ze-khasta-gashtan-é dîgar kas-ân
ke ze-khulq-é zesht-é tô hast ân rasân

1243 ghâfil-î, bârê ze-zakhm-é khwad na-î
tô `aZâb-é khwêsh-o har bê-gâna-î

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Evils of Procrastination (part two)

Mathnawi II: 1244-1279

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1244 Either pick up the axe[1] and strike manfully[2]--and tear up this gate of Khaybar, like Ali--[3]

1245 Or make these thorns united with the rosebush,[4] (and) make the light of the friend (of God)[5] united with the fire (of your passions).

So that his (spiritual) light may kill your fire, (and so that) union with him[6] may make your thorns a rose garden.

You are similar to Hell, (and) he is a true believer.[7] (But) the smothering of the fire (of Hell) by the true believer is possible.

(Because) the Prophet[8] said, regarding the speech of Hell, that it becomes a groaning supplicant toward the true believer because of fear.

(And) it says to him, "Pass on from me quickly, O king. Hurry! Since your light has carried off the burning of my fire."[9]

1250 Therefore, the destruction of the fire (of Hell) is (caused by) the light of the true believer. Since the repelling of an opposite is not possible without an opposite.

The fire (of Hell) will be the opponent of the light (on) the Day of Justice,[10] because that (fire) was caused by (Divine) wrath,[11] (and) this (light) by (Divine) grace.

If you want the removal of the fire's evil, send the water of (Divine) Mercy[12] into action against the heart of the fire.

The (gushing) fountain of that water of (Divine) mercy is the true believer. The Water of Life[13] is the pure spirit of the kindly doer of good.[14]

Therefore, your ego is running away from him[15] because you are (the nature of) fire (and) he (is) watery-natured.[16]

1255 Fire runs away from water because its flames are destroyed by water.

Your senses and thoughts are entirely (made) of fire,[17] (but) the senses of the (spiritual) master,[18] and his thoughts, are (made) of beautiful light.

If the water of his light drips onto the fire, (the sound of) "chak chak" rises up from the fire and it jumps up.[19]

When it makes the "chak chak" (noise), tell it, "(May you suffer) pain and death!"-- so that this (fiery) Hell of your ego[20] may become cold,[21]

So that it won't burn up your rose garden, (and) so that it won't burn up your justice and good actions.[22]

1260 After that, anything which you plant[23] will deliver (flowers); it will present tulips, narcissus, and thyme.

Once again we are traveling wide of the straight road.[24] Turn back, O master! Where is our way?

We were (involved) in explaining, O envious man,[25] that your donkey is lame and the resting place (is) distant--[26] (so move) quickly!

The year has become late, (it's) not planting time, (and there's) nothing (in your account) except ugly actions and disgrace.

Worm have fallen into the tree roots of the body.
They need to be eradicated and placed in the fire.[27]

1265 Move on and hurry, O traveler! It's gotten late. The sun of life has gone (down) toward the well.[28]

(For) these two short days when your strength (still) exists, (act) quickly! Shed (your) old age by way of (youthful) generosity.[29]

Gamble away[30] the (small) amount of seeds which remain to you, so that long life may grow from these few moments.

As long as this jewelled lamp[31] (of yours) is not extinguished, be quick! Adjust its wick and (add) oil as soon as possible![32]

Hurry! Don't say, "Tomorrow"-- since (too many) tomorrows have elapsed. Don't let the planting days pass away completely!

1270 Hear my advice, that the body is a strong shackle.[33] Throw out the old, if you have the wish for what is fresh and new.[34]

Shut (your) lips[35] and open up (your) hand full of gold. Quit the body's stinginess[36] and bring generosity forward.

(For) generosity is the abandonment of sensual cravings and pleasures. Whoever has become sunk in sensual cravings[37] doesn't rise up.

This generosity is a branch from the cypress tree of Paradise.[38] (What) sorrow for him who lets a branch such as this fall from (his) hand![39]

The abandonment of sensual cravings is "the most trustworthy handhold."[40] (And) this branch draws the soul up to the heavens.

1275 (Then act) so that the branch of generosity may carry you aloft, O man of good religion, drawing (you) toward its origin.

You are (like) beautiful Joseph[41] and this world (is) like the well.[42] And this rope (of escape) is patience with God's commands.[43]

O Joseph! The rope has come,[44] (so) grab (it with) two hands.
Don't be neglectful of the rope, (since) it's become late.

(All) praise is to God that this rope has been lowered and dangled,
(and that Divine) Grace and Mercy have been mixed together,[45]

1279 So that you may see the new and fresh spiritual world--[46] a world very evident, yet not visible.[47]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1244) Either pick up the ax: this is a warning not to procrastinate, as did the man (in this continuing story) who planted a thorn bush in the middle of the road (which tore the clothes and feet of passers- by), and who delayed obeying the district governor's order to uproot it.

2. (1244) and strike manfully: "I.e. fight manfully in the jihádu 'l-akbar" [= the greater combat]. (Nicholson, Commentary) This is the struggle against the ego. "And those who strive (jâhadû) for Our sake, surely We will guide them to Our paths" (Qur'an 29:69). Once, when the Prophet returned from a military expedition, he said, "We have returned from the Lesser Combat [al-jihâd al-aSghar = physical battle] to the Greater Combat [al-jihâd al-akbar]." He defined the latter as the "struggle [jihâd] against the ego [nafs]." He also said, "The warrior [mujâhid] is the one who struggles against his ego for the sake of God." A common mistranslation of the word "jihad" is "Holy War," which is a Christian term that does not coincide with the Islamic meaning of the term. In sum, the word "jihad" means much more than physical combat in defense of Religion, since there are many ways to struggle and strive in the cause of God. The sufis use the term "mujâhada" to mean spiritual struggle on the path toward God, of which an important aspect is the combat against the ego. "It means, you must seize the ax of strict self-discipline [riyâZat] and (spiritual) combat [mujâhadat] and strike at your blameworthy

qualities, which resemble a thorn bush." (Anqaravi, Commentary--translated here from the Persian trans. of the 17th century Turkish commentary)

3. (1244) like Ali: the cousin, son-in-law, and fourth successor of the Prophet Muhammad. He was famous for his heroism as a warrior. "At the siege of Khaybar, a Jewish settlement which was attacked by the Moslems in A.H. 7/A.D 628, `Alí pulled down a fortress gate and used it as a shield." (Nicholson, Commentary) The Jewish tribes in the Medina area of Arabia (who had long maintained a sense of superiority among the surrounding illiterate pagan Arabs, due to their knowledge of the ancient scriptures and traditions of Judaism) unfortunately allied themselves with the neighboring polytheist tribes against the small group of (fellow monotheist) Muslims in Medina-- who found out about this secret alliance and felt they had no choice but to expel the Jews from the Medina area (most of whom moved to Iraq).

4. (1245) Or make these thorns united with the rosebush: means, either eradicate the fire of your ego and its cravings through your own efforts-- if you can, or seek help by associating with a spiritual guide. "The 'rosebush' signifies the pure nature of the spiritual guide (murshid), which assimilates to itself and endows with its own goodness the evil dispositions that are 'grafted' on it." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1245) the friend [yâr] (of God): means a spiritual master, or sufi guide, as well as one of the "saints," or "near ones" [awliyâ], of God.

6. (1246) union with him: means close association with a saintly spiritual guide. "Annihilation in the spiritual master" [fanâ fi 'sh-shaykh] on the sufi path precedes "annihilation in God" [fanâ fi 'llâh]. "Union: has the meaning here of being a follower" [= of the sufi guide].... "The intended meaning: constantly present the (spiritual) qualities and rays of light of the spiritual guide [murshid] to your being. And regarding qualities which are offensive and lead astray, make them distant from yourself and erased." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (1247) a true believer [mû'min]: "the mu'min in this passage represents the Perfect Man." [= al-insânu 'l-kâmil, the saint who reflects all the Names of God, the goal of creation-- a teaching of the Ibnu `Arabi school of sufism] (Nicholson, Commentary) "The true believer is the spiritual guide [murshid]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1248) the Prophet [muSTaf`a]: literally, "the Chosen One," a title

used exclusively to mean the Prophet Muhammad.

9. (1249) your light has carried off the burning of my fire: "Cf. the Traditions [= sayings of the Prophet] that on the Day of Resurrection Hell will say to the Faithful, 'Cross (the bridge Sirát), O true believer, for thy light hath put out my flames (fa-qad atfa'a núruka lahabí)'; and that when the Faithful enter Paradise they will say to God, 'Didst not Thou promise us that we should come to Hell-fire (on our way)' whereupon God will answer, 'Yes; but it was extinguished when ye passed by.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1251) The Day of Justice: another name for the Day of Judgment.

11. (1251) (Divine) wrath [qahr]: also means severity, punishment, vengeance, subduing. This word is related to one of the traditional Ninety-Nine Names of God: the Dominant, the Subduer [al-Qahhâr-- Qur'an 38:65-66; 13:16; 14:48; 39:4; 40:16).

12. (1252) (Divine) Mercy [raHmat]: this word is related to the Divine Names, the Merciful [ar-raHmân] and the Compassionate [ar-raHîm]. The Mercy of God is a central theme of the Islamic revelation, pervading the Qur'an-- as well as the Divine sayings, such as: "Truly, My Mercy prevails over My Wrath;' "My Mercy Precedes My Wrath" (sayings referred to in Mathnawi III: 4166-68).

13. (1253) the Water of Life: the fountain of eternal youth, a fabled spring of water said to confer immortality to the one who drinks from it. According to popular Islamic legend, the Water of Life was discovered by the Prophet Khizr in the Land of Darkness, who drank it and became immortal. It is a frequent metaphor in Rumi's poetry.

14. (1253) the kindly doer of good: "The meaning of the good-doer [muHsin] is that person who worships God Most High in the path of contemplation [Tarîqu 'l-mushâhidah]-- according to the Tradition (of the Prophet): 'Sincere goodness [al-iHsân] is to worship God as if you see Him-- for if you don't see Him, He certainly sees you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (1254) Therefore, your ego is running away from him: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Your fleshly soul is fleeing mightily from him" (from, "Hence your fleshly soul is fleeing from him"). Here, he read the first word in the verse as "bas" ("mightily") instead of "pas" (Hence, Therefore). However, the Iranian editor, Tôwfîq Sôbhanî, printed it as "pas" in his edition of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi (followed here).

16. (1254) he (is) watery-natured [ô âb-khô]: Nicholson translated, "he (is) the water of the stream," following his text [ô âb-é jô]. Since he did not later list that the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi contained a different word in this verse, it was either an oversight on his part, or perhaps an error in Tôwfîq Sôbhanî's edition (followed here, and which has a "sukûn" added between "âb" and "khô"). "But he, by whom is intended the shaykh [= spiritual master] who is overflowing with (spiritual) abundance and virtue, is the water of the stream." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1256) entirely (made) of fire: "It means arising from the Hellish quality of your ego." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (1256) the (spiritual) master [shaykh]: literally, "elder." Nicholson translated, "Shaykh (spiritual guide)." Means, here, a sufi master and guide.

19. (1257) it jumps up: Nicholson translated, "it leaps up (in fury)." "It means that if the inner light of the spiritual master, which resembles water, splashes upon your fiery ego, the fire of your ego will become disturbed by that and will become agitated and yelling." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (1258) ego [nafs]: Nicholson translated, "fleshly soul." Means the self, and in sufism means the base and sensual bodily self, or ego driven by cravings for worldly pleasures and superiority. Rumi said, "This ego [nafs] is Hell, and Hell is a dragon which does not become less (fiery) by oceans (of water)." (Mathnawi I: 1375)

21 (1258) may become cold: "It means (so) that the fire of sensual cravings and anger may be obliterated from your ego." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (1259) good actions: this line has been added, facing the text in the margin, to the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi. Nicholson wrote: "An interpolated verse; it is omitted in the four oldest MSS." "So that... the orchard of the heart and the garden of religion and (true) belief may not become burned up and destroyed." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23. (1260) anything which you plant: "... anything which you plant in the earth of (your) body.... Here, the intended meaning (of the flowers) is the lights of (Divine) Unity [tawHîd], the secrets of the praise (of God) [tasbîH], and the spiritual states [Halât-é rûHânî]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (1261) we are traveling wide of the straight road: "I.e. 'we have

been digressing: let us resume the argument'." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The sense is (the Arabic saying), 'Speech attracts (more) speech.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (1262) envious man: "The epithet hasúd is commonly applied in the Mathnawí to those who regard the saints with hostility and disbelief." (Nicholson, Commentary)

26. (1262) your donkey is lame and the resting place (is) distant: refers to an earlier verse, which Nicholson translated: "The day late, the ass lame, and the way long..." (II: 1225) "(It means): O envious one, for whom the donkey of your ego is lame... Therefore, don't delay.... It's been said (in Arabic), 'The procrastinator was destroyed.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (1264) eradicated and placed in the fire: Nicholson translated, "dug up and put in the fire." "The nafs [= ego; see note 14 above] must be mortified and purged of corruption." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means that the tree of the body must be put on the fire of austerity and strict discipline [riyâZat], because the worms of corrupt thoughts within it should be burned up, erased, and obliterated." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (1265) toward the well: Nicholson translated, "toward the pit (is about to set)." A poetic image of the near-setting of the sun below the horizon. "(It means): O traveler, or O (spiritual seeker) [sâlik], be aware!... for the sun of life... is close to setting." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (1266) Shed (your) old age by way of (youthful) generosity: Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "(be) quick, devote the old man (your old age) generously (to serving God)" (from, "flap your wings generously"). Nicholson later wrote, "Most edd. and the best MSS. read pír-afsháni bi-kun, which the commentators explain by 'devote your old age (to serving God).' But can these words bear the sense of hangám-i pírí kárí qawí bi-kun" [= (in) the time of elderliness, make a strong effort]?.... Translate, therefore: '(be) quick, make a last effort with all your might.'" (Commentary) However, Steingass' "Persian-English Dictionary" (1892, which Nicholson appears to have overlooked) defines "pîr-afshânî as "The acting in a youthful manner in old age." "It means: In the path of God, make old age (a time of) offering and generosity. And in this life of one or two days, be occupied with worship and service (to God), for everlasting life may (then) come to (your) hand." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (1267) Gamble away [be-bâz]: Nicholson translated, "Devote..." -- another meaning of the verb.

31. (1268) this jewelled lamp: "i.e. the lamp of life, precious to those who do not neglect to trim it with the wick and oil of righteousness." (Nicholson, Commentary)

32. (1268) Adjust its wick and (add) oil as soon as possible: "It means: inward strength with obedience and worship (toward God). And make the lamp of your spirit illuminated." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

33. (1270) the body is a strong shackle: Nicholson translated, "a strong bond." "In the path of God, there is no stronger veil and obstacle than the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

34. (1270) if you have the wish for what is fresh and new: "It means: If you have the desire to find spiritual enjoyment and real being [wujûd-é Haqqânî], throw away and expel from your heart those chains which your old body is demanding (that you keep)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35. (1271) Shut (your) lips: "Just as (the Prophet) said, may the peace of God be upon him: 'There is blessing for the one who occupied himself with his own faults apart from (other) people's faults, and restrained (himself) from excess in his speech and from excess in spending his property.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

36. (1271) the body's stinginess: means the strong tendency of the ego (identified with the body's base desires) to be withholding and selfish.

37. (1272) sunk in sensual cravings: "Anyone who has become drowned in sensual cravings-- meaning, who has gone down into the whirlpool of sensual desires-- won't rise up again: (meaning) he won't be freed from the chains of sensual cravings." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

38. (1273) This generosity is a branch from the cypress tree of Paradise: "Cf. the Hadíth that generosity (sakhá) is a tree of paradise with branches drooping to the earth, and that any one who grasps a branch thereof is drawn into Paradise." (Nicholson, Commentary)

39. (1273) who lets a branch such as this fall from (his) hand: "They will be deprived of everlasting good fortune, and in the end will be disappointed and losers." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

40. (1274) the most trustworthy handhold: "Qur. II 257: 'whoso denieth Tághút and believeth in Allah, he surely hath grasped the

firmest handle'; and XXXI 21: 'whoso giveth himself up to Allah in doing good, he surely hath grasped the firmest handle.' Súfís identify Tághút (idols or the Devil) with the nafs [= ego] (cf. I 769 sqq., III 4053 sqq.)." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The intended meaning of 'the most trustworthy handhold' is metaphorical.... some say that the meaning.... is the Sacred Law [sharî`at], some (that it is) religious faith [îmân], and some say the Qur'an. And (for) another group, (it is) the grace and guidance of the Merciful (God). And others say (it is) the love and attraction of the Creator of (physical) existence and location. But our holy master [HaZrat-é Mawlânâ = Jalaluddin Rumi] said: 'The most trustworthy handhold is the abandonment of (worldly) desire.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

41. (1276) beautiful Joseph: In the Qur'an, the Prophet Joseph is described as so good-looking that the women friends of his Egyptian master's wife cut their hands (instead of the melons they were cutting with knives) in awe and said, "God protect us! This is not a man. This is none but a noble angel." (Qur'an 12: 31)

42. (1276) like the well: refers to the story of Joseph, whose jealous brothers decided not to kill him but to throw him down a well. A caravan stopped by the well and lowered a bucket, discovered Joseph, rescued him, and sold him in Egypt (Qur'an 12: 10-20).

43. (1276) patience with God's commands: Nicholson translated, "patience with (submission to) the command of God."

44. (1277) The rope has come: "And hold firmly to the Rope of God..." (Qur'an 3:303) "Don't be neglectful of holding firmly to the command of God, since the time for doing (so) has become short." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

45. (1278) mixed together: means in the two strands of the rope.

46. (1279) the new and fresh spiritual world: Nicholson translated, "the world of the new spirit..." and he explained: "either 'the world of the new (regenerated) spirit' or 'the new (ever fresh and incorruptible) spiritual world'. I think the latter interpretation is preferable." (Commentary)

47. (1279 a world very evident, yet not visible: "It means a world which is hidden and not visible according to the apparent (vision), and (yet) is very evident and clear according to the inner (vision). Contemplate, and arrive to that world." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Rumi clarifies this theme in the next lines (as translated by Nicholson): "This (phenomenal) world of non-existence has become like (real) existence, while that world of (real) existence has become very hidden. The dust is on the wind: it is playing, it is

making a false show and forming a veil. This, which is busy (in appearance) is (really) idle and (superficial, like) a husk; and that which is hidden is its core and origin. The dust is as a tool in the hand of the wind; deem the wind high and of high descent. The gaze of the eye of dust falls on the dust; an eye that sees the wind is of another sort." (II: 1280-1284)

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1244 yâ tabar bar gîr-o mard-âna be-zan
tô `alî-wâr în dar-é khaybar be-kan

1245yâ ba-gol-bon waSl kon în khâr-râ
waSl kon bâ nâr nûr-é yâr-râ

tâ ke nûr-é ô kosh-ad nâr-é to-râ
waSl-é ô golshan kon-ad khâr-é to-râ

tô miSâl-é dûzakh-î ô mû'min-ast
koshtan-é âtesh ba-mû'min mumkin-ast

muSTafà farmûd az goft-é jaHîm
k-ô ba-mû'min lâba-gar gard-ad ze-bîm

gôy-ad-ash be-gZar ze-man ay shâh zûd
hîn ke nûr-at sôz-é nâr-am-râ robûd

1250 pas halâk-é nâr nûr-é mû'min-ast
z-ân-ke bê-Zid daf`-é Zid lâ-yumkin-ast

nâr Zidd-é nûr bâsh-ad rôz-é `adl
k-ân ze-qahr angêkhta shod în ze-faZl

gar hamê khwâh-î tô daf`-é sharr-é nâr
âb-é raHmat bar del-é âtesh gomâr

chashma-yé ân âb-é raHmat mû'min-ast
âb-é Haywân rûH-é pâk-é muHsin-ast

pas gorêzân-ast nafs-é tô az-ô
z-ân-ke tô az âtesh-î ô âb-khô

1255 z-âb âtesh z-ân gorêzân mê-shaw-ad
k-âtesh-ash az âb wêrân mê-shaw-ad

Hiss-o fikr-é tô hama az âtash-ast
Hiss-é shaykh-o fikr-é ô nûr-ê khwash-ast
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

âb-é nûr-é ô chô bar âtesh chak-ad
chak-chak az âtesh bar ây-ad, bar jah-ad

chûn kon-ad chak-chak tô gôy-ash marg-o dard
tâ shaw-ad în dôzakh-é nafs-é tô sard

tâ na-sôz-ad ô gol-estân-é to-râ
tâ na-sôz-ad `adl-o iHsân-é to-râ

ba`d az ân chêzê ke kâr-î bar deh-ad
lâla-wo nasrîn-o sîsanbar deh-ad

bâz pahnâ mê-raw-êm az râh-é râst
bâz gard ay khwâja râh-é mâ ko-jâ-st?

andar ân taqrîr bûd-êm ay Hasûd
ke khar-at lang-ast-o manzil dûr zûd

sâl bê-gah gasht, waqt-é kesht ney
joz seyah-rôyî-wo fa`l-é zesht ney

kerm dar bîkh-é derakht-é tan fotâd
bây-ad-ash bar kan-ad-o dar âtesh nehâd

hîn-o hîn ay râh-raw bê-gâh shod
âftâb-é `umr sôy-é châh shod

în dô rôz-ak-râ ke zûr-at hast zûd
pîr-afshânî be-kon az râh-é jûd

în qadar tokhmê ke mând-ast-at be-bâz
tâ be-rôy-ad z-în dô dam `umr-é darâz

tâ na-mord-ast în cherâgh-é bâ-gawhar
hîn fatîl-ash sâz-o rawghan zûd-tar

hîn ma-gô fardâ ke fardâ-hâ goZasht
tâ ba-kullî na-g'Zar-ad ayyâm-é kasht

pand-é man be-sh'naw ke tan band-é qawî-st
kohna bêrûn kon gar-at mayl-é nawî-st

lab be-band-o kaff-é por zar bar goshâ
bukhl-é tan be-gêZâr-o pêsh âwar sakhâ

tark-é shahwat-hâ-wo laZZat-hâ sakhâ-st
har ke dar shahwat ferô shod bar na-khâst

în sakhâ shâkhê-st az sarw-é behesht
wây-é ô k-az kaf chon-în shâkhê be-hesht

`urwatu 'l-wuSqâ-st în tark-é hawâ
bar kash-ad în shâkh jân-râ bar sama

1275 tâ bar-ad shâkh-é sakhâ ay khwob-kêsh
mar to-râ bâlâ kashân tâ aSl-é khwêsh

yûsuf-é Husn-î-wo în `âlam chô châh
w-în rasan Sabr-ast bar amr-é alâh

yûsuf-â âmad rasan, dar zan dô dast
az rasan ghâfil ma-shaw bê-gah shod-ast

Hamdu li-lâh k-în rasan âwêkht-and
faZl-o raHmat-râ ba-ham âmêkht-and

1279 tâ be-bîn-î `âlam-é jân-é jadîd
`âlam-é bas âshkâr-é nâ-padîd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Chains of Craziness

Mathnawi II: 1372-1385

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1372 (Regardless of) whether you are straight[1] or crooked, keep crawling[2] toward Him. Don't crawl backwards.[3]

Although there may be danger to (your) life in the presence of kings,[4] nevertheless, those with (strong) aspiration cannot tolerate (being distant) from Him.[5]

Since the King is more sweet than sugar, it is more delightful that (your) life should go[6] to that sweetness.

1375 O blamer,[7] may you have safety! (And) O seeker of safety, you have weak handles.[8]

My soul is a furnace (and) is happy with the fire. For the furnace, it (is) sufficient that it is the house for the fire.

In regard to love, there is something burning[9] -- just like the furnace. Whoever is blind to this[10] is not a "furnace."

When your provision becomes a provision without (need) of (worldly) provision,[11] you will find everlasting life, and death will go (away).[12]

(And) when your longing sorrow obtains increasing joy,[13] the garden of your soul will obtain roses and lilies.

1380 That which is frightening to others is your safety.[14] Because of the river, the duck (is) strong, but the domestic hen[15] (is) weak (and helpless).[16]

O doctor! I've become crazy again.[17] O beloved! I've become melancholy (from yearning).

The rings of Your chain possess (various) manners.[18] Every single ring gives a different (kind of) craziness.[19]

The gift of every ring is a different way (of acting)[20] -- so I have a different (kind of) craziness every moment.[21]

Therefore, "craziness is of (various) modes" has become a proverb[22] -- especially in (regard to) the chains of this Glorious Emperor.[23]

1385 A craziness such as this has broken (my) shackles,[24] so that all the crazy people[25] will offer me advice.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 10/26/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1372) whether you are straight: Nicholson translated, "Whether you be straight (righteous)..." Also means upright, just, good, truthful, sincere.

2. (1372) keep crawling: this word means to make short sliding movements on one's bottom, as do small children and cripples.

3. (1372) Don't crawl backwards: "Don't crawl backwards toward the

body.... not toward the world, ego [nafs], and desires. When you incline toward Him, you will be acting rightly and you will discover the stage of true companionship [SuHbat-é Haqîqî] (with God)." (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's 17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi)

4. (1373) there may be danger to (your) life in the presence of kings: means that a king could become unpredictably infuriated by someone and order that he be beheaded.

5. (1373) those with (strong) aspiration cannot tolerate (being distant) from Him: means that the lovers of God, while having great reverential awe toward God [taqwà-- sometimes translated as "fear of God"], cannot resist their overpowering yearning and attraction to ever greater nearness to the Lord of Majesty. "But those who have found the stage of love (for God) and who possess strong spiritual determination cannot abstain from [approaching closer to] the Real King. And they never fear for their own lives and cannot bear distance from His Presence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (1374) it is more delightful that (your) life should go: Nicholson translated, "'tis better that life should go (as a sacrifice)..." "It means: "In regard to the True King [= God], Who is symbolized by the sweetest sugar and enjoyment, if one completely sacrifices (his) life to the sweetness and enjoyment of (Divine) Beauty, it will become more delightful and exquisite, and he will discover the stage of becoming the essence of enjoyment and (of becoming) pure sweetness." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (1375) O blamer: Nicholson translated, "O blamer (of lovers)." "(It means), O you who blame the lovers [= of God], may you be safe." (Anqaravi, Commentary) The implication here is that those who blame, criticize, accuse, revile the true lovers of God will face the consequences of Divine Justice. There is also a word play between "blame" [malâmat] and "safety" [salâmat].

8. (1375) you have weak handles: in the oldest manuscript of the Mathnawi, a variant to this was added in the margin. Nicholson commented that Anqaravi's commentary had this variant, "which gives poor rhyme." (Commentary) However, Nicholson did not mention that Anqaravi also wrote about the above reading, which he interpreted: "O seeker of safety, you yourself are a weak rope, for you have been clutching at a very weak rope. But those lovers who have declared renunciation of safety have grasped 'the most trustworthy handhold' [= a phrase from Qur'an 2:256] While Anqaravi wrote that the word "`urà" is said to mean a rope, Nicholson wrote that it literally means "stays or handles" (footnote) and he translated, "O seeker of safety, thou art infirm."

The meaning here is that the one who seeks safety (apart from true safety in God's Grace) is in danger of falling and becoming broken and injured.

9. (1377) something burning [sôzîdanê-st]: "literally, 'there is a burning', i.e. the true lover is consumed in the fire of Divine Love. Súzídaní, meaning 'that which is, or ought, to be burned', has yá-yi ma`rúf [=the "î" of an abstract noun] and therefore would not make a correct rhyme in this verse." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means that, in the same manner that a furnace is the place for fire, and it burns night and day, the lover is also necessarily like a furnace, burning in the fire of love..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (1377) Whoever is blind to this: a word play between "furnace" [kûra] and "blind" [kûr].

11. (1378) a provision without (need) of (worldly) provision: "i.e. faqr ú faná" [= spiritual poverty and mystical annihilation]. (Nicholson, Commentary) The word for "provision" [barg] means provision for a soldier, traveller, or guest; it also means riches or wealth. However, its literal meaning is "leaf." Nicholson translated this same phrase in I: 2237-- "the provision of leaflessness (spiritual poverty)." And he explained: "Barg-i bí bargí denotes the grace of spiritual poverty and selflessness, and the riches which God bestows on the spiritually poor. Rúmí is fond of this phrase..." (Commentary) "It means: When your strength and food has become powerlessness and lack of provision, then your soul will obtain purity by means of helplessness and nothingness, and it will take pleasure from spiritual poverty [faqr] and annihilation [fanâ].... and your soul will always travel in the world of everlastingness." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1378) and death will go (away): there is a word play between "provision" [barg] and "death" [marg].

13. (1379) when your longing sorrow obtains increasing joy: Nicholson translated, "When the pain (of love) has begun to increase your (spiritual) joy..." "Just as your sorrow and pain have become the cause of your (spiritual) enjoyment, and have begun to increase your joy and happiness, the garden of your soul will become filled with roses and lilies. It means that you will have reached the stage in which your soul will be surrounded by spiritual states and lordly secrets [asrâr-é rabbânî]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (1380) That which is frightening to others is your safety: Nicholson translated, "That which is the dread of others is your safety (safeguard)."

15. (1380) the domestic hen: "The duck represents the Divine spirit in man, while the hen is an emblem of his carnal nature." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It is about the issues and questions regarding the (various) kinds of trials and misfortunes and strict discipline in the path of God-- which the multitude of men are afraid of.... But the lovers, like a water bird, become strong in facing the sea of trials and misfortunes. And their spirits and hearts acquire strength and power from those sorrows." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (1380) is weak (and helpless): "The multitude of men... quickly become weak and powerless, and die of grief and pain." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1381) I've become crazy again: "The connection of this verse with its previous verse is this:.... the followers of ego and the intellect, who resemble the domestic hen in weakness, are afraid of this: that they might lose control of intellect and understanding, and become crazy.... Therefore in this connection, Mawlana [Rumi] negates the partial intellect from himself-- by means of love for God-- and goes into craziness." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Here, Anqaravi interprets that Rumi became stronger by the torrent of the river, like a duck, and became drowned in the ocean of love. Therefore, his partial intellect became negated (the very thing feared most by the multitude of people). The partial intellect is the particularization of the Universal Intellect, or Universal Reason.

18. (1382) The rings of Your chain possess (various) manners: "The intended meaning of the chain is the Divine Attributes. Because every Divine Attribute requires another Attribute [to be connected to]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (1382) Every single ring gives a different (kind of) craziness: "The mystic's reason is distraught by the infinite variety of aspects in which God reveals Himself, each aspect forming, as it were, a new link in the chain that enthrals him." (Nicholson, Commentary) "(It means): 'O True Beloved,... every Attribute of Your Attributes gives a different kind of craziness.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Crazy people used to be bound by chains to protect them from harming themselves or others.

20. (1383) The gift of every ring is a different way (of acting): "i.e. diverse mystical experiences." (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (1383) I have a different (kind of) craziness every moment: "(It means): 'For me, therefore, a kind of veil for (my) intellect occurs every moment because of those Attributes. Since the ecstasy of that Attribute covers and surrounds my intellect.'" (Anqaravi,

Commentary)

22. (1384) "craziness is of (various) modes" has become a proverb: "Among the lovers (of God) it has become an expression about being hidden by love and being drowned by (spiritual) yearning." (Anqaravi, Commentary) "Here the proverb al-junúnu funún is applied to spiritual love as the concomitant of gnosis [= mystical knowledge]. In view of the following Story, it may be mentioned that 'Dú 'l-Nún [=the sufi Master described, in the story which immediately follows, as becoming crazed by love] took a very important step in the development of Súfism by distinguishing the mystic's knowledge of God (ma`rifah) from traditional or intellectual knowledge (`ilm) and by connecting the former with love of God (mahabbah)'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (1384) Glorious Emperor [mîr-é ajal]: means God. Nicholson translated, "this most glorious Prince."

24. (1385) has broken (my) shackles: Nicholson translated, "has broken the bonds (of my reason)..." "(It means): 'My craziness is such that it has broken the shackles of (my) intellect.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (1385) the crazy people: "i.e. the vulgar, who are devoid of reason (`aql-i ma`ád) and ignorant of the Truth. Cf. the Stoic [= an ancient Greek and Roman school of thought} doctrine that every fool is mad." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1372 gar tô bâsh-î râst w-ar bâsh-î tô kazh
pêsh-tar mê-ghazh ba-dô, wâ-pas ma-ghazh

pêsh-é shâh-ân gar khaTar bâsh-ad ba-jân
lêk na-sh'kêb-and az-ô bâ-himmat-ân

shâh chûn shîrîn-tar az shakkar bow-ad
jân ba-shîrînî raw-ad khwash-tar bow-ad

1375 ay malâmat-gar salâmat mar to-râ
ay salâmat-jô tow-î wâhî 'l-`urà

jân-é man kûra-st bâ âtesh khwash-ast
kûra-râ în bas ke khâna-yé âtash-ast

ham-chô kûra `ishq-râ sôzîdanê-st
har ke ô z-în kûr bâsh-ad kûra nêst
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barg-é bê-bargî to-râ chûn barg shod
jân-é bâqî yâft-î-wo marg shod

chûn to-râ gham shâdî-afzûdan gereft
rawZa-yé jân-at gol-o sûsan gereft

1380 ân-che khawf-é dîgar-ân, ân amn-é to-st
baT qawî az baHr-o morgh-é khana sost

bâz dêwâna shod-am man ay Tabîb
bâz sawdâyî shod-am man ay Habîb

Halqa-hây-é silsila-yé tô Zû funûn
har yakê Halqa deh-ad dîgar junûn

dâd-é har Halqa funûnê dîgar-ast
pas ma-râ har dam junûnê dîgar-ast

pas funûn bâsh-ad junûn, în shod maSal
khâSa dar zanjîr-é în mîr-é ajal

1385 ân-chon-ân dêwânagî be-g'sest band
ke hama dêwân-agân pand-am deh-and

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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He is the Governor of the Universe

Mathnawi II: 1618-32

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1618 If He makes air and fire (to be) lowly,[1] and if He makes the thorn to surpass the rose,

He is the Governor (of the Universe) and (the One who said about Himself), "God does what He wills."[2] For He creates the remedy from the source of the pain.

1620 (So) if He makes air and fire (to be) lowly, making (them full of) darkness, (murky) dregs, and sediment,[3]

And if He makes earth and water[4] (to be) lofty (and) makes the way to Heaven (to be) undertaken by [human] foot[5]--

Then it has been certain that, (as in the verse), "You exalt whomever You will,"[6] God has said to an earthly creature: "Open (your) wings (and soar)!"[7]

(Just as) He said to a fiery creature, "Go (and) become (like) Satan;[8] go underneath the Seventh Earth[9] with (your) deceitfulness.[10]

(And as He said: "O) earthly Adam, go on top of the star Suhâ[11]! (O) fiery Satan, go as far as the (lowest) dust!

1625 (And He also said), "I am not (limited by) the four temperaments[12] or the original cause (of any event).[13] (Rather), I am remaining in eternal control[14] (of all things).

"My actions are without (need of) cause and (are) direct and undeviating. O ailing one, the (power to) Decree is mine (with) no (other) cause.

I change my own practice[15] according to the (particular) time: at a (particular) time, I may place (obscuring) dust[16] in front [of people].

"I will say to the sea (on the Day of Judgment): 'Pay heed! Become full of fire!'[17] (And) I will say to the fire: 'Go (and) become a rose bower!'[18]

"I will say to the mountain: 'Become as light as wool!'[19] (And) I will say to the sky: 'Tear down (yourself)[20] in front of the eyes (of people).'

1630 "I will say, 'O sun! Become fastened to the moon!'[21] (And) I will make both (of them to look) like two black clouds.

"We[22] will make the fountain of the Sun (to become) dry. (And) We[23] will make the fountain of blood (to become) musk."

1632 (In such a case), the sun and moon (will become) like two black oxen[24] (with) God binding a "yoke"[25] upon (their) necks.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Translated, 10/16/03, as a favor to the Rumi Society of Vancouver, Canada

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1618) If He makes air and fire (to be) lowly: "Therefore, Hazrat-i Mawlana, on the basis of the Ahl-i Sunnat, is saying, 'Air and fire have a lofty nature, but if God wishes, He makes both lowly.... And similarly, the rose has a greater value and a lofty rank, but (if) God wishes, He makes the lowly thorn to more lofty, desirable, and loved than the rose.'" (translated from a Persian translation of Anqaravi, the 17th century Ottoman Turkish Mevlevi commentator on the Masnavi)

[2](1619) God does what He wills: "(The angel said), 'That is the manner in which God does what He wills [yaf`alu 'llâhu mâ yashâ]" (Qur'an 3:39). Just prior to this verse, the Prophet Zakarîya asked God, "My Lord, how can I have a son when I am very old and my wife is barren?" "God, whenever He pleases, makes the so-called 'laws' of natural philosophy null and void. See I 830-853 and notes ad loc." [= " (God is the only real Agent. All causes in the phenomenal world are secondary; they are created by God and subject to essential causes, viz. the Divine Names and Attributes, which determine the production or non-production of all effects whatsoever."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

[3](1620) sediment [Suflî]: a word play on "lowly" [suflî] in the first half of the verse. This verse was added in the margin in the oldest manuscript of the Masnavi.

[4](1621) earth and water: means the human body, made of "water and clay," ascended fully into the Heavens like several of the Prophets (see note below). Here, Rumi has mentioned the four elements in two couplets--considered a artful achievement in classical Persian poetry.

[5](1621) foot: refers to the physical ascension to the Heavens of Prophets such as Enoch [Idrîs], Elijah [Ilyâs], Jesus [`îsà], and Muhammad (according to Muslim belief, during his "Night Journey" and "Ascension"). It also refers to the essential superiority of the saintly human being over the angel, according to Islamic theology and sufi teachings.

[6](1622) You exalt whomever You will: "You exalt whomever You will, and you make lowly whomever You will." Qur'an 3:26.

[7](1622) Open (your) wings (and soar): "And similarly, God said to an human made of clay, 'Stretch the wings of your intellect and take (wing) to the lofty summit level (of the Heavens) and be the adored one of the protecting angels, and drink the wines of

Paradise.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[8](1623) Go (and) become (like) Satan [Iblîs]: refers to verses in the Qur'an which describe the arrogance of Satan [Iblîs] who refused to bow in obeisance to Adam, after which he boasted of his superiority, saying, "I am better than him, (since) You made me from fire and You made him from clay." (7:11-18)

[9](1623) the Seventh Earth: "According to some Moslem authorities, Hell 'is situated under the pedestal of the world, above the Bull and The Fish (corresponding to the Behemoth and Leviathan of the Bible) who support the earth'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[10](1623) deceitfulness [talbîs]: a word play on "Satan" [Iblîs].

[11](1624) Suhâ: a star in the constellation Ursa Minor.

[12](1625) the four temperaments: a theory of personality temperaments which originated in the ancient Greek school and further developed by Galen, after which they became accepted medical doctrine for centuries: sanguine (air warm-most, red blood), choleric (fire, hot-dry, yellow bile), phlegmatic (water, cold-moist, white blood), and melancholic (earth, cool-dry, black bile). "The elements are continually passing into one another through the medium of that quality they possess in common... This process of transmutation of the simple elements, which is called 'generation and corruption' (kawn u fasád), is brought about by the influences of the seven planets, and results in the production of the three classes of compound bodies, namely, minerals, vegetables, and animals." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[13](1625) the original cause (of any event): "In Moslem philosophy God, the necessarily existent Being, is the First Cause whence proceeds a series of emanations, beginning with Universal Reason (the first Caused) and Universal Soul, through which the Many are linked with the One." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[14](1625) I am remaining in eternal control: "God's fiat is absolute. Nothing can happen but what He has directly willed and decreed. The doctrine of those who conceive Him as a physical cause or as acting from the necessity of His nature is entirely false." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[15](1627) I change my own practice: "Though God is the only real Agent, normally He acts by means of secondary causes (asbáb). This 'custom', however, is not invariable; God can at any time make such causes ineffective or decree that they shall produce effects contrary to their nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[16](1627) I may place (obscuring) dust: "i.e. the illusion of intermediate causes." (Nicholson, Commentary) "...the dust of doubt and uncertainty" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[17](1628) I will say to the sea: 'Pay heed! Become full of fire: "possibly referring to Qur. LXXXI 6: wa-idhá 'l-biháru sujjirat." ["And when the seas (are made to) boil over (on the Day of Judgment)."]

[18](1628) I will say to the fire: 'Go (and) become a rose bower: "...see I 547 [trans. by Nicholson: "He cherisheth Abraham in the fire"] and note ["Abraham, having broken the idols of his people, was cast by order of Nimrod into a fire, which God changed into a delightful rose-garden (I 790, III 10016, VI 4291). See Qur. XXI 69."]; but since all the other examples given in this passage are eschatological, the poet may have in mind several Traditions concerning the extinction of Hell-Fire." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[19](1629) I will say to the mountain: 'Become as light as wool: "Cf. Qur. CI 4: 'and the mountains shall be like carded wool.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[20](1629) I will say to the sky: 'Tear down (yourself): Cf. Qur. LXXXI 11: wa-idhá 'l-samá'u kushitat." ["And when the sky is unveiled"]. (Nicholson, Commentary) In a preceding verse (1615), Rumi quoted the verse, (trans. by Nicholson: "heaven was rent asunder" (Qur'an 84:1).

[21](1630) I will say, 'O sun! Become fastened to the moon: "Qur. LXXV 8-9: 'and when the moon shall be eclipsed and the sun and moon united (in darkness).'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[22](1630) I will say, 'O sun! Become fastened to the moon: "i.e. 'We cause the blood-red sun to become dark as musk."

[23](1631) We: the "plural of Majesty." In the Qur'an, the One God sometimes speaks as "I" and sometimes as "We"--which should not be interpreted as referring to a plurality of Divinities.

[24](1632) he sun and moon (will become) like two black oxen: "At the Resurrection the sun and moon, rising together in the west, shall be deprived of light and yoked, like two black oxen, in obedience to their Lord." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi states that commentators of the Qur'an have interpreted this as a prophecy that on the Last Day the sun and moon will be joined together, resembling two black oxen tied together. (Commentary)

[25](1632) yoke [yûgh]: this is the equivalent to the Sanskrit word

"yoga," as well as the English word "yoke"--all derived from the same ancient Indo-European word.

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1618 gar kon-ad suflî hawâ-wo nâr-râ
w-ar ze-gol ô be-g'Zarân-ad khâr-râ

Hâkim-ast-o yaf`alu 'llâh mâ yashâ
k-ô ze- `ayn-é dard angêz-ad dawâ

1620 [gar hawâ-wo nâr-râ suflî kon-ad
tîragîy-wo dordî-wo Suflî kon-ad]

w-ar zamîn-o âb-râ `ulwîy kon-ad
râh-é gardûn-râ ba-pâ maTwî kon-ad

pas yaqîn shod ke tu`izzu man tashâ
khâkîyê-râ goft par-hâ bar-goshâ

âteshê-râ goft raw iblîs shû
zêr-é haftom khâk bâ talbîs shû

âdam-é khâkî be-raw tô bar suhâ
ay balîs-é âteshî raw tâ Sarà

1625 châr Tab`-o `illat-é awlà ney-am
dar taSarruf dâyimâ man bâqiy-am

kâr-é man bê-`illat-ast-o mustaqîm
hast taqdîr-am, na `illat ay saqîm

`âdat-é khwad-râ be-gardân-am ba-waqt
în ghabâr az pêsh be-n'shân-am ba-waqt

baHr-râ gôy-am ke hîn por nâr shû
gôy-am âtash-râ ke raw gol-zâr shû

kûh-râ gôy-am sabak shû ham-chô pashm
charkh-râ gôy-am forô dar pêsh-é chashm

1630 gôy-am ay khworshêd maqrûn shû ba-mâh
har dô-râ sâz-am chô dô abr-é seyâh

chashma-yé khworshêd-râ sâz-êm khoshk
chashma-yé khûn-râ ba-fan sâz-êm moshk

1632 âftâb-o mah chô dô gâw-é seyâh
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yûgh bar gardan be-band-ad-'shân ilâh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and the Shepherd (part one)

Mathnawi II: 1720-1749

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The condemning by Moses-- may peace be upon him-- of the shepherd's devotional prayer[1]

1720 Moses met a shepherd on the road,[2] who kept saying, "O God!" and "O Allah!"[3]

"Where are You?-- so I can become Your servant, and mend Your sandals[4] and comb Your head.

"(So) I can wash Your robe, kill Your lice, (and) bring milk in front of You, O Great (Lord).

"(So) I can kiss Your small hand, massage Your small foot,[5] and sweep Your little (dwelling) place (when) the time for sleep comes.

"All my goats are a sacrifice for You. (And all) my (shouts of) 'Hey!' and 'Ho!'[6] are in remembrance of You.

1725 The shepherd was talking foolishly in this manner, (and) Moses said, "O so-and-so, to whom is this (being said to)?"

He replied, "To the One who created us, by Whom the earth and the heavens came into view."

Moses said, "Hey! You have become very backwards. You have certainly not become a Muslim.[7] (Rather), you have become an unbeliever.

"What is this foolish talk? What is this gibberish and ignorance of (true) belief?[8] Press some cotton into your mouth!

"The stink of your unbelief has made the world (to) smell bad. (And) your unbelief has made the brocaded silk of religion (into) an old patched garment.

1730 "Sandals and sandal straps[9] are suitable for you, (but) things like these aren't right for (One who is like) a Sun.

"If you don't block your throat from (saying) these words, a fire will come to burn up the people.

"(And) if a fire hasn't come,[10] what is this smoke? Why has (your) soul become black (and your) spirit rejected (by God)?[11]

"If you know that God is the Judge and Ruler (of the world), how can this foolish babble and insolent familiarity of yours be acceptable?

"The friendship of one who lacks judgment and reason is (equivalent to) hatred. God Most High is Independent of (needing) service such as this.

1735 "Who are you telling this to? You're uncles? Are the body and (bodily) needs among the (Divine) Attributes of the Lord of Majesty?

"One drinks milk who is (involved) in growth and increase. (And) one wears sandals who needs feet.

"And if your words[12] are (addressed) to His servant-- the one (about) whom God said, 'He is Me and I am him';[13]

"The one (about) whom He said, 'Truly, I was sick (and) you didn't visit (Me),'[14] (meaning) 'I became sick, not only him';

"(And) the one (about whom He said), 'He became hearing by Me and seeing by Me'--[15] in regard to that servant, this (talk of yours) is also absurd.

1740 "(For) speaking disrespectful words to one chosen by God causes the heart to die (and) keeps the pages (recording your actions) black.[16]

"If you call a man (by the woman's name) 'Fatima-- as if men and women were one kind (only)--

"He will want (to shed) your blood, as much as it is possible (for him to do so), even if he is pleasant-natured, meek, and peaceful.

"In regard to women, Fatima is a praiseworthy (name).[17] But if you say it to a man, it is (like) a spear-wound.

"In regard to us, 'hand' and 'foot' are praiseworthy;[18] (but) in regard to Holy Purity of God, they are foul and unclean.[19]

1745 "(The verse), 'He does not beget nor is He begotten'[20] is suitable for Him, (since) He is the Creator of the begetting parent and the begotten child.

"Whatever became embodied has the attribute of birth. Whatever is born, is from this side of the river (of existence),[21]

"Because it is (made) from (what is physically) existent, decaying, and contemptible; it is something appearing and certainly needs a Causer to appear."

(The shepherd) said, "O Moses, you've sewn my mouth (shut) and burned my soul with regret and repentance."

1749 He tore (his) robe,[22] made a (deep) sigh, and quickly turned (his) head toward a desert plain[23] and left.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 1/25/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) devotional prayer [munâjât]: a fervent, heart-felt, and intimate form of personal prayer to God, usually in one's native language (in contrast to more formal prayers in Arabic). The "Intimate Invocations" [munâjât] of the famous early sufi master, `Abdullah Ansari (died, 1089) are famous examples of this, such as (from Persian): "O God, people indicate how near You are, but You are more lofty than that. People think how far You are, but You are much closer than the soul. You are found in the spirits of Your champions, (for) You are present in the hearts of those who

mention Your Name." (from "Abdullah Ansari of Herat: An early Sufi Master," by A. G. Ravan Farhadi, Curzon, 1996, pp. 120-121)

2. (1720) Moses met a shepherd on the road: just prior to this line, Rumi had said (as translated by Nicholson): "Our King (God) has given permission, (saying) 'Commemorate Allah':* He saw us in the fire and gave us light. He has said, 'Although I far transcend your commemoration (of Me), (and although) the pictorial ideas (of human speech) are not suitable to Me,/ Yet he that is intoxicated with (pictorial) imagination and fancy will never apprehend My essence without (the help of) similitude.'* Bodily commemoration* is an imperfect fancy:* the Kingly attributes are remote from those (forms of speech). If any one says of a king, 'He is not a weaver,' what praise is this?* He (that person) is surely ignorant." (II: 1715-1719)

*"Commemorate Allah" [uZkurû 'llâh Zikr-an kathîr]: "Remember God (with) frequent remembrance" (Qur'an 33:41). *Bodily commemoration: "I.e. praise and prayer uttered by the tongue." (Nicholson, footnote) *an imperfect fancy: "'the idea of one who is deficient (in knowledge'. Such persons use anthropomorphic terms in praising God (dhikr-i jismánah [= bodily commemoration], like the shepherd in the following Story." *without (the help of) similitude: "cf. the saying of Dhú 'l-Nún [= an early sufi master, died 859]: 'Whatever idea you may form of God in your mind, He is different from that'. Nevertheless, without the aid of images, similitudes, and metaphors most people could form no conception at all of the Divine nature." *what praise is this?: "i.e. 'to praise God by declaring Him to be exempt from bodily attributes is really no praise at all'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Hazrat-i Moses-- upon him be peace-- met a shepherd on the road: at the time of going to the mountain of Tûr [= Sinai], he met a shepherd in the middle of the road..." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (1720) "O God!" and "O Allah!": these words are corrections added in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, which originally had, "O God, the Chooser! [ay gozînanda allâh]-- which is the text which Nicholson chose and translated as, "O God who choosest (whom Thou wilt)."

4. (1721) sandals: a type of peasant's shoes, made from rawhide.

5. (1723) Your small hand, massage Your small foot: smallness of hands and feet were considered qualities of beauty.

6. (1724) 'Hey!' and 'Ho!' [hay-hay, hayhâ]]: these are also the shouts of a shepherd when leading sheep and goats to pasture.

7. (1727) a Muslim: In Islam, every Prophet of God is considered to have been a muslim-- literally, "one who surrenders (to the Will of God)." And the followers of the Prophets, who believed in One God and kept the commandments revealed to His Prophets are considred to have been true muslims.

8. (1728) ignorance of (true) belief [kufr]: Nicholson translated this as "blasphemy" in this line and the following line. This a Qur'anic term which means denial and rejection of the existence of One God who has no partners, as well as rejection of what was revealed by God to the Prophets concerning the beliefs and behaviors expected of true believers. The word also means unbelief and lack of true belief, impiety, and blasphemy. Here, Moses is accusing the shepherd of extreme anthropomorphism: viewing God as similar to a creature such as a human being-- instead of as the All-Powerful Creator of humanity, who utterly transcends His Creation.

9. (1730) sandal straps: shoe straps twisted around the feet from the ankles to the knees.

10. (1732) if a fire hasn't come: "i.e. 'a fire of Divine Wrath', of which the shepherd's blasphemous language is the 'smoke,' i.e. the outward sign." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1732) Why has (your) soul become black (and your) spirit rejected (by God): "(It means), 'The foolish and nonsensical words which you are speaking are... also a sign of the blackness of (your) soul and of your soul being rejected.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1737) your words: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi to "these words of yours" (from, "these words (of yours)").

13. (1737) 'He is Me and I am him': Nicholson referred here

to Mathnawi I: 423, (which he translated), "The shadow of God is that servant of God who is dead to this world and living through God." And he also cited I: 1936 (which he translated), "Absolutely, indeed, that voice is from the King (God) though it be from the larynx of God's servant." Anqaravi quotes the following verses from the Qur'an to explain this line: "Truly, those who pledge their allegiance to you [O Muhammad] are pledging their allegiance to God, (and) the Hand of God is over their hands." (Q. 48:10); "And you did not throw (a handful of gravel, O Muhammad) when you threw (it), but God threw [it at the enemy]..." (Q. 8:17). And he quoted a saying [Hadîth] of the Prophet (cited by Al-Bukhari and Al-Muslim): "The one who has seen me, truly he has seen God" [man ra`â-nî fa-qad ra'â 'l-Haqq] (quoted by Faruzanfar, "AHâdîS-é Masnavi," p. 63, in regard to Mathnawi II: 2247; see also VI: 3197)

14. (1738) 'Truly, I was sick (and) you didn't visit (Me)': "Cf. St Matthew XXV 43-45. The Hadíth runs as follows: 'On the Day of Resurrection God most High will say: "O son of Adam, I was sick and thou didst not visit Me." He will reply: "O Lord, how should I visit Thee, who art the Lord of all created beings?" God will say: "Didst not thou know that such and such a one, My servant, was sick, and thou didst not visit him? Did not thou know that if thou hadst visited him though wouldst have found Me beside him?... """ (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (1739) 'He became hearing by Me and seeing by Me': Nicholson commented on this, per Mathnawi I: 1938: "These words are quoted from the famous Hadíth-i qudsí concerning qurb-i fará'id [= nearness to God due to required acts of worship] and qurb-i nawáfil [nearness to God due to voluntary acts of worship]: 'God said, "My servant doth not draw nigh unto Me by any means that pleaseth Me better than performance of the obligatory duties of worship (fará'id) which I have laid upon him; and My servant doth not cease to draw nigh unto Me by voluntary works of devotion (nawáfil) until 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.'" While in qurb-i fará'id the mystic is fání [annihilated of self] and God acts through him, in qurb-i nawáfil he is báqí [remaining in God] and acts through God. The commentators cite [= unusual (rarely quoted by sufis as authentic)] Traditions in which God says al-insánu sirr-un min asrárí [= man is a secret among My secrets] and al-insánu sirrí wa-ana sirruhu [= man is My secret and I am

his secret]." (Commentary)

16. (1740) the pages (recording your actions):

17. (1743) In regard to women, Fatima is a praiseworthy (name): "Fátimah, the Prophet's daughter and the wife of `Alí, is regarded by Shi'ites and Sunnís alike as the ideal of Moslem womanhood." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (1744) In regard to us, 'hand' and 'foot' are praiseworthy: "Because to be without hands and feet is a fault and defect [= for human beings]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (1744) (but) in regard to Holy Purity of God, they are foul and unclean: "Because the intention is [to limit God by viewing Him with] limbs. But if the aim is not [to limit God by viewing Him with] limbs, it is not a fault and defect, but a perfection. Because the Holy God Most High has described Himself with hands and feet, and this is in the Book (of the Qur'an) and established in the traditions (of what the Prophet has said)." (Anqaravi, Commentary) This refers to the "anthropomorphic" depictions of God in the Qur'an as Speaking, Seeing, and Hearing, having a Face (Q. 55:27) and a Hand (Q. 48:10), and sitting on a Throne (Q. 7:54). Also, the Prophet said, "Adam was created in His image." Whether these descriptions should be understood as metaphorical or literal is a centuries-old controversy in Islam. [Compare with: "His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth" (Q. 2:255); "No vision can comprehend Him" (Q. 6:103); "He is glorified and exalted beyond their (attempts at) describing (Him)." (Q. 6:100)]

20. (1745) 'He does not beget nor is He begotten': "Say: 'He is God, the One, the Eternal. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. And there is no none comparable to Him.'" (Qur'an 112:1-4) Here, Moses is depicted as quoting from the Qur'an-- an instance of Rumi's disregard for chronology.
21. (1746) Whatever is born, is from this side of the river (of existence): "i.e. opposed to the eternal and suprasensible world (`álamu 'l-amr) [= the world of (Divine) Command]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (1749) He tore (his) robe: refers to the ancient Middle Eastern, and pre-Islamic, custom of rending one's garments during times of great anguish and extreme emotions. It is strongly discouraged in Islam. Rumi uses it as a symbol for the passionate devotion of the mystic lover. In any case,

since public nudity is forbidden in Islam, the tearing of robes by dervishes usually involved the upper part of the shirt or the outer cloak.

23. (1749) a desert plain: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi to "a desert" (from, "the desert").

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inkâr kardan-é mûsà-- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- bar munâjât-é shobân

1720 dîd mûsà yak shobânê-râ ba-râh
k-ô hamê-goft ay khodâ-wo ay allâh

tô ko-jây-î tâ shaw-am man châkar-at?
châroq-at dôz-am, kon-am shâna sar-at

jâma-at shoy-am, shoposh-hâ-at kosh-am
shîr pêsh-at âwar-am ay muHtasham

dast-ak-at bôs-am, be-mâl-am pây-ak-at
waqt-é khwâbây-ad, be-rôb-am jây-ak-at

ay fidây-é tô hama boz-hây-é man
ay ba-yâd-at hay hay-o hay-hây-é man

1725 în namât bê-hôda mê-goft ân shobân
goft mûsà bâ key-ast în ay fulân?

goft bâ ân-kas ke mâ-râ âfrîd
în zamîn-o charkh az-ô âmad padîd

goft mûsà hây bas mudbir shod-î
khwad musalmân nâ-shoda kâfir shod-î

în che zhâzh-ast, în che kufr-ast-o fushâr
panba'yê andar dahân-é khwad feshâr

gand-é kufr-é tô jahân-râ ganda kard
kufr-é tô dîbây-é dîn-râ zhanda kard

1730 châroq-o pâtâba lâyiq mar to-râ-st
âftâbê-râ chon-în-hâ kay rawâ-st?

gar na-band-î z-in sokhon tô Halk-râ
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âteshê ây-ad be-sôz-ad khalq-râ

âteshê gar n-âmad-ast în dûd chîst
jân seyah gashta rawân mardûd chîst?

gar hamê dân-î ke yazdân dâwar-ast
zhâzh-o gostâkhî to-râ chûn bâwar-ast

dôstîy-é bê-kherad khwad doshmanî-st
Haq ta`âlà z-în chon-în khidmat ghanî-st

1735 bâ ke mê-gôy-î tô în bâ `amm-o Khâl
jism-o Hâjat dar Sifât-é Zû 'l-jalâl?

shîr ô nôsh-ad ke dar nashw-o namâ-st
châroq ô pôsh-ad ke ô muHtâj-é pâ-st

w-ar barây-é banda-sh-ast în goft-é tô
ân-ke Haq goft ô man-ast-o man khwad-é ô

ân-ke goft inn-î mariZtu lam ta`ud
man shod-am ranjûr ô tan-hâ na-shod

ân-ke bî yasma` wa bî yubSir shoda-ast
dar Haq-é ân banda în ham bê-hoda-st

1740 bê-adab goftan sokhon bâ khâS-é Haq
del be-mîrân-ad, seyah dâr-ad waraq

gar tô mardê-râ be-khwân-î fâTima
gar che yak jins-and mard-o zan hama

qaSd-é khûn-é tô kon-ad tâ mumkin-ast
gar che khôsh-khô-wo Halîm-o sâkin-ast

fâtima madH-ast dar Haqq-é zan-ân
mard-râ gôy-î, bow-ad zakhm-é sinân

dast-o pâ dar Haq-é mâ istâyesh-ast
dar Haq-é pâkîyy-é Haqq âlâyesh-ast

1745 lam yalid lam yûdlad ô-râ lâyiq-ast
wâlid-o mawlûd-râ ô khâliq-ast

har-che jism âmad walâdat waSf-é ô-st
har-che mawlûd-ast ô z-în sôy-é jô-st

z-ân-ke az kawn-o fasâd-ast-o mahîn

HâdiS-ast-o muHdiSê khwâh-ad yaqîn

goft ay mûsà dahân-am dôkht-î
w-az pashîmânî tô jân-am sôkht-î

1749 jâma-râ be-dr'îd-o âhî kard taft
sar nehâd andar beyâbânê-wo raft

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and the Shepherd (part two)

Mathnawi II: 1750-1764

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The reprimanding by God Most High of Moses-- peace be upon him-- for the shepherd's sake

1750 A revelation from God came to Moses: "You separated Our servant from Us.[1]

"Did you come for the sake of uniting[2] or did you come for the sake of separating and cutting off?

"As much as you are able, do not step in (the direction of) separation. The most hateful of (lawful) things to Me is divorce.[3]

"I have given to every person a (particular) nature and temperament, (and) I have given to every person a (particular) form of speech and idiomatic expression.

"It is praiseworthy in regard to him, but blameworthy in regard to you; it is (like) honey in regard to him, but (like) poison in regard to you.[4]

1755 "We[5] are (utterly) free from every (form of) purity or impurity[6] (and) from every (kind of) sluggishness or quickness.[7]

"I did not command (something)[8] so that I might make a profit,[9] but so that I might do a generous kindness for (My) servants.

"The idiomatic speech of Hindustan[10] is the (mode of) praise for the Hindus,[11] (and) the idiomatic speech of Sind is the (mode of) praise for the Sindians.[12]

"I do not become pure and holy by their praise, but they become purified and shining (by it).

"We do not regard the tongue and (outward) speech, (but) We regard the soul and the (inward) state.[13]

1760 "We are the Observer of the heart, (to see) if it is humble, even though the spoken words may not be humble.

"Because the heart is the substance, (but) talking (is only) the outward quality. Therefore, the substance (is) the desired object (and) the outer quality is dependent.[14]

"So many of these phrases, ideas, and metaphors! I want burning, burning. Become harmonious with that burning![15]

"Ignite a fire of love in (your) soul[16] (and) burn up thoughts and explanations, completely![17]

1764 "O Moses! Those who know polite manners[18] are one kind. (And) those who are inflamed of soul and spirit are another kind."[19]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/8/01

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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1751) Our servant from Us: Rumi here uses the "majestic plural," which is a characteristic of the speech of the One

God in the Qur'an (as well as the first person singular-- "I" and "Me"). Nicholson translated, "Thou hast parted My servant from Me."

2. (1752) Did you come for the sake of uniting: Nicholson translated, "didst thou come (as a prophet) to unite..." "(It means), 'Did you come for the sake of making My servants close to Me...?'" (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi)

3. (1753) The most hateful of (lawful) things to Me is divorce: "referring to the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad]: 'God has not created any lawful thing more pleasing to Him than the emancipation of a slave (`atáq), and God has not created any lawful thing more hateful to Him than divorce (taláq).'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (1754) (like) poison in regard to you: "Forms of worship vary according to the spiritual capacity of the worshipper; and one man's meat is another man's poison. As Junayd [= famous early sufi master, died 910] said, 'the water takes its colour from the vessel containing it.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1755) We: the One God, speaking again in the "majestic plural."

6. (1755) (utterly) free from every (form of) purity or impurity: "i.e. tanzíh [= transcendence beyond the created universe] and tashbíh [= immanence within the universe]." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The orthodox hold that Allah is beyond comparison (tashbíh), that in His absolute Unity He is remote (munazzah) and different (mukhálif) from all created things, and that the qualities ascribed to Him in the Qur'án are not to be understood in the sense in which they are applicable to any of His creatures. Pantheistic Súfís, while accepting the doctrine of Divine transcendence (tanzíh), regard it as only one half of the truth: the whole truth, they say, consists in combining tanzíh with tashbíh, the doctrine of Divine immanence. The former doctrine, by itself, leads to the duality of God and the world; the latter, by itself, is polytheism; the true worshippers of Allah are those who see Him as the One Real Being in all forms of existence-- at once transcending all and immanent in all." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1755) from every (kind of) sluggishness or quickness:

Nicholson translated, "of all slothfulness and alacrity (in worshipping Me)."

8. (1756) I did not command (something): Nicholson translated, "I did not ordain (Divine) worship) ..."

9. (1756) so that I might make a profit: "God is absolutely self-sufficient (ghaní). He does not need the 'slaves' (`ibád) whom His mercy brings into existence. The text (Qur. LI 56), 'I created the Jinn and mankind only that they might worship Me', signifies that they were created in order that by worshipping God they might make themselves perfect." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1757) Hindustan: now called India.

11. (1757) the (mode of) praise (of God) for the Hindus: means here, "the manner of praising Me" (= God). Nicholson translated differently: "In the Hindoos the idiom of Hind (India) is praiseworthy." He explained "idiom" as: "I.e. the local and traditional forms of speech used in the practice of religion." (Footnote) Rumi is not saying here that all forms of religious worship are valid, but that God accepts praise directed to him by His true lovers expressed in any language, no matter how idiomatic.

"Therefore, if Hindus exhibit humility and worship in the Court of God with the Hindu language, and Sindians utter gratitude and praise and glorification of Him in the language of Sind, (and if) they are praisers of Him (using) the purest speech of any language, it is not forbidden in the (Islamic) religious law, or according to reason. Although the best of languages (for prayer) is the Arabic language, yet if someone speaks (to God) with a language other than Arabic he is not considered a wrongdoer.... It is in accordance with this that Imâm Abû Hanîfa [= the founder of the Hanafi school of Islamic law] has understood that saying the congregational prayer [namâz] in the Persian language is lawful." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1757) Sindians: refers to to the peoples of western India, living along the Sind river, also called the Indus.

13. (1759) We regard the soul and the (inward) state: the Divine "majestic plural" again. Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi, to "I look at the spirit and the state (of feeling)" (from, "I look at the inward (spirit)..." Related

to this is the well-known saying of the Prophet, "Actions will be judged (by God) according to the intention [niyyah]." "Just as it is related that the Prophet of God-- may God bless him and give him peace-- said: 'Truly God does not look at your appearance or at your actions'-- and in another narration, 'and not to your speech,' 'but He looks to your hearts and your intentions.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (1761) dependent: Nicholson translated, "... speech (only) the accident; so the accident is subservient, the substance is the (real) object."

15. (1762) Become harmonious with that burning: there is a word play here between "burning" [sôz] and "become harmonious" [sâz].

16. (1763) Ignite a fire of love in (your) soul: "Ignite a fire of love for God in your soul and heart." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1763) burn up thoughts and explanations, completely: "(It means), 'And make the pretensions of words and speech (your) enemy. Because the desire of the hypocritical ego is (manifested) through these eloquent expressions.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (1764) Those who know polite manners: Nicholson translated, "they that know the conventions..."

19. (1764) are another kind: here the revelation containing God's rebuke of Moses ends.

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`itâb kardan Haqq-é ta`âlà mûsà-râ -- `alay-hi 's-salâm -- az bahr-é ân shobân

1750 waHî âmad sôy-é mûsà az khodâ
banda-yé mâ-râ ze-mâ kard-î jodâ

tô barây-é waSl-kardan âmad-î
yâ barây-é faSl-kardan âmad-î?

tâ tâwân-î pâ ma-neh andar firâq
abghaZu 'l-'ashyâ'i `ind-î 'T-Talâq

har kasê-râ sîratê be-n'hâda-am
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

har kasê-râ iSTilâHê dâda-am

dar Haq-é ô madH-o dar haqq-é tô Zam
dar Haq-é ô shahd-o dar Haqq-é tô sam

1755 mâ barî az pâk-o nâ-pâkî hama
az gerân-jânî-wo châlâkî hama

man na-kard-am amr tâ sûdê kon-am
bal-ke tâ bar banda-gân jûdê kon-am

hendow-ân-râ iStilâH-é hend madH
sendey-ân-râ iSTilâH-é send madH

man na-gard-am pâk az tasbîH-eshân
pâk ham êshân shaw-and-o dur-feshân

mâ zabân-râ na-n'gar-ém-o qâl-râ
mâ rawân-râ be-n'gar-êm-o Hâl-râ

1760 nâZir-é qalb-ém agar khâshi` bow-ad
gar-che goft-é lafZ nâ-khâZi` bow-ad

z-ân-ke del jawhar bow-ad, goftan `araZ
pas Tufayl âmad `araZ, jawhar gharaZ

chand az-în alfâZ-o iZmâr-o majâz
sôz khwâh-am sôz, bâ ân sôz sâz

âteshê az `ishq dar jân bar forôz
sar ba-sar fikr-o `ibârat-râ be-sôz

1764 mûsiy-â âdâb-dânân dîgar-and
sôkhta-jân-o rawân-ân dîgar-and

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and the Shepherd (part three)

Mathnawi II: 1765-1771

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1765 For lovers, there is a conflagration[1] every moment.
There are no taxes (imposed) on a ruined village.[2]

If (the lover) speaks wrongly,[3] don't call him[4] a
sinner. If the martyr is bloody, don't wash him.[5]

For martyrs, blood is better than (being washed by)
water. This fault (of being bloody) is better than a hundred
correct actions.[6]

Inside the Ka`ba, there is no rule for (determining) the
prayer direction.[7] (And) there's no regret if the diver has
no snow shoes.

Don't seek guidance from those who are drunk. Why should
you command those with garments torn (from ecstasy)[8] to mend
(them)?

1770 The sect of Love (of God) is distinct from all
religions; the sect and doctrine of the lovers is God
(alone).[9]

1771 If the ruby doesn't have an (engraved) seal, there's no
worry.[10] In the sea of sorrow, Love is not sorrowful.[11]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/8/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1765) there is a conflagration: Nicholson translated,
"there is a burning (which consumes them)..." He referred to
the (Mathnawi) verses (which he translated), "My soul is a
furnace: it is happy with the fire: 'tis enough for the
furnace that it is the fire's house. For Love, as (for) the
furnace, there is something to be burned: any one that is
blind to this is not a furnace." (II: 1376-77) "(It means),
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'For lovers there is a burning every moment in the fire of love....'" (translated hear from a Persian translation of the famous 16th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi by Anqaravi)

2. (1765) There are no taxes (imposed) on a ruined village: "The distraught lover of God is not liable to the penalties inflicted on those who fail to show a proper respect for religious forms and observances. Abú Yazíd al-Bistámí [= sufi master, died 875], on being questioned concerning gnosis (ma`rifah), quoted Qur. XXVII 34, 'Lo, kings, when they enter a city, ruin it and abase the mighty men of its people', meaning that when gnosis [= mystical knowledge] enters the heart it consumes and casts out everything besides." (Commentary) "It means that the observance of polite manners is not expected from the devastated lover." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (1766) If (the lover) speaks wrongly: means speaking imperfectly due to his emotional or mystical state while praying.

4. (1766) don't call him: the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi has here, "wa-râ... ma-gô" instead of the usual "ô-râ."

5. (1766) don't wash him: refers to the Islamic requirement for the corpses of Muslims to be washed with water prior to burial. However, this is not to be done in the case of martyrs (killed in combat), since the blood on their bodies is considered an honor and a blessing, not a defilement. The meaning here is: just as being buried covered with blood is not a wrong burial for a martyr, the speech of a lover of God is not wrong if it appears "covered with errors." Nicholson pointed out that the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi has "...the martyr, don't wash him" (in contrast to the text he translated as "do not wash (those who are) martyrs"). "The meaning of this is... Since the lover is the martyr of the sword of love, therefore one should not compare his fault with the faults (of others), according to reason." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (1767) better than a hundred correct actions: Nicholson translated, "is better than a hundred right actions (of another)." "A mistake which appears from the lovers (of God) is better than a hundred righteous actions." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (1768) Inside the Ka'ba, there is no rule for (determining) the prayer direction: the Ka'ba is the prayer direction [qibla] for all Muslims wherever they are in the world. However, when inside the Ka'ba (which is empty, except for some hanging lamps and a ladder to the roof) there is no rule and one can pray facing any direction one wishes. The meaning here is that there is no fixed rule for proper conduct for one of God's lovers who is consumed and drunk with love for God. "To the mystic in union with God external forms are as useless as rules for finding the qiblah to a Moslem inside the Ka'bah, or as snowshoes (which prevent sinking) to a diver submerged in the sea." (Nicholson, Commentary) "Therefore the lovers of God are persons who have become united with the Ka'ba of Truth and in accordance with (the verse), 'Whichever way you turn, there is the Face of God.'" [Qur'an 2: 115] (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1769) those with garments torn (from ecstasy): "(It means), the lovers who have torn the robe of the intellect and understanding." (Anqaravi, Commentary) This refers to dervishes who have gathered together for mystical prayer and dance [samâ`] and have torn their cloaks or the tops of their shirts or outer cloaks when in an ecstatic state of consciousness. There is no public nudity in Islam. Often, dervishes would eagerly grab pieces on the ground from one of their member's torn cloak, to patch onto their cloaks (as a blessing). The meaning here is, "Don't expect an ecstatic dervish, drunk with love of God, to be "sober" enough to mend what he has ripped apart."

9. (1770) The sect of Love (of God) is distinct from all religions; the sect and doctrine of the lovers is God (alone): Nicholson translated, "The religion of Love is apart from all religions: for lovers, the (only) religion and creed is-- God." W. C. Chittick translated more accurately, "Love's creed is separate from all religions: The creed and denomination of lovers is God." ("The Sufi Path of Love: the Spiritual Teachings of Rumi," 1983, p. 213) Translating the word "millat" as "religion" in the two cases here is somewhat misleading, because Rumi has used this term five times in the Mathnawi (out of a total of eleven occurrences) to refer to the "seventy-two sects" which divide and weaken Islam. "According to the celebrated Hadíth the Prophet predicted that the Moslems would be divided into 73 sects of which only one would enter Paradise..." (Nicholson, Commentary) Rumi said (as translated by Nicholson): "Love hath estrangement with (is a

stranger to) the two worlds [= this world and the Hereafter]: in it are two-and-seventy madnesses. It is exceedingly hidden, and (only) its bewilderment is manifest: the soul of the spiritual sultans is pining for it. Its religion [kêsh] is other than (that of) the two-and-seventy sects [= millat]: beside it the throne of kings is (but) a splint-bandage. At the time of the samá` [= ecstatic movement and dancing to music] Love's minstrel strikes up this (strain): 'Servitude is chains and lordship headache.' Then what is Love? The Sea of Not-being: there the foot of the intellect is shattered" (III: 4719-23).

A study of Rumi's use of the two key words in the present line, which Nicholson translated as "religion" [millat, maZhab], shows that Rumi mainly uses them to refer to various competing doctrinal schools within Islam (such as advocates of extreme necessitarianism/fatalism, extreme free will, scholastic rationalism, as well as the four schools of Sunni Islamic law). Like the early sufi woman mystic, Rabi`a al-`Adawiyya (died around 796-801) [who prayed, as translated by Nicholson: "O God, if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thy own sake, grudge me not Thy everlasting beauty."], Rumi taught that the essence of worship is constant devotion and love for God alone. He called this "the sect of Love" [maZhab-é `ishq: Quatrain 14], "the sect of the lovers" [maZhab-é `ushshâq: Ode 232, line 2610], "the school of Love" [madrasa-yé `ishq: Ode 429, line 4534]. However, he did not intend "the sect of Love" to mean a religion or sect separate from Islam, but as the pure essence of Muslim worship of God-- and of a different quality from the externals of Islamic worship. He said, "What is the ascension [mi`râj] to Heaven? This being nothing [nêstî]. For the lovers (of God), the sect [maZhab] and religion [dîn] is being annihilated of self [nêstî]." (Mathnawi VI: 233)

In the present line, Rumi goes further and says that the "sect of love" [millat-é `ishq] is distinct, separate, apart from "all religions" [dîn-hâ]. Here, he emphasizes that pure love of God is what is essential in religion, and that it is distinct from the external practices of all religions. However, this does not mean that he affirms the validity of other religions. Rather, he affirms that the true lovers of God everywhere are of one "sect"-- having pure love of God as their primary religious devotion.

This is one of the few instances in which Rumi refers to other religions. He evidences little knowledge of religions other than Islam-- besides the minimal obtained (in a negative context) from a traditional Islamic education. He has used the term "religions" [dîn-hâ] in only two other places in the Mathnawi: once in a general and neutral way (4: 842), and once in the sense of falling into error (as translated by Nicholson): "(Many) different roads have become easy (to follow): every one's religion [= millat] has become (to him) as (dear) as life. If God's making (religion) easy were the (right) road, every Jew and Zoroastrian would have knowledge of Him.... Every sort of religious sect [= millat] foresaw the end (according to their own surmise): of necessity they fell captive to error. To foresee the end is not (as simple as) a hand-loom; otherwise, how would there have been differences in religions [= dîn-hâ]?" (I: 483-484, 491-492). Here, the Zoroastrians are viewed as believing in two gods (one of Good and one of Evil. And Jews are viewed as not being informed, carefully attentive, wary [âgah] of God This is presumably because of the criticisms in the Qur'an of "the People of the Book" (Jews and Christians).

Where Nicholson translated (in his correction, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi), "For beyond (the realm of contraries) all religion [= millat] is one: hundreds of thousands of years are the same as a single hour" (I: 3504), Rumi is, again not affirming that all sects or religions are valid, but is describing an ecstatic mystical experience of transcendent oneness transcending all differences and separations. When Rumi uses the word "religion" in the singular case [dîn, kêsh], he means the Islamic religion in general, such as: "your religion" (I: 2315); "weakness of religious faith" (III: 4572); "the kings of religion" [= the sufi saints] (III: 307).

"It is said that (the word) '`ishq' is very strong love [muHabbat], meaning a love that is extreme beyond (normal) bounds. The 'sect of love' [millat-é `ishq] means that the religion of love is separate from all religions [adyân]. Because in all religions, religious duties are based on reason. But the lover is not ruled by reason. Rather, he is ruled by love and is the captive of extreme love." "Another view is that it means that the lover does not know another [= "another religion"] besides the Beloved. And he contemplates no beloved except his own beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

"The sect and doctrine of the lovers is God: meaning that the place of going [Zahâb] and seeking and the sect of the lovers is God. The lovers sometimes are travelling "in God' [fî 'llâh] and sometimes travelling 'with God' [ma`a 'llâh] in the context of (the verse), 'And He is with you [ma`a-kum] wherever you are.'" [Qur'an 57: 4] (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (1771) If the ruby doesn't have an (engraved) seal, there's no worry: "... the absence of a 'seal', i.e. an engraved superscription, is a matter of no concern to the ruby..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1771) In the sea of sorrow, Love is not sorrowful: the true lover of God is not concerned with having an approved label. Ecstatic love enables the lover to transcend the sorrow of worldly blame and rejection. "The meaning is that the (ecstatic) lover has not become obedient to the customs of the religious law and polite manners.... The meaning is that.... the rank of the (ecstatic) lover is higher and more exalted than the level of sorrow and joy. And the intellect is blind and deaf in (the capacity for) understanding the secrets of the lovers." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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1765 `âshiq-ân-râ har nafas sôzidanê-st
bar deh-é wêrân kharâj-o `ushr nêst

gar khaTâ gôy-ad wa-râ khâTê ma-gô
gar bow-ad por-khûn shahîd ô-râ ma-shô

khûn shahîd-ân-râ ze-âb awlà-tar-ast
în khaTâ az Sad Sawâb awlà-tar-ast

dar darûn-é ka`ba rasm-é qibla nêst
che gham ar ghawwâS-râ pâchîla nêst

tô ze-sar-mast-ân qalâwûzî ma-jô
jâma-châk-ân-râ che farmây-î rafô?

1770 millat-é `ishq az hama dîn-hâ jodâ-st
`âshiq-ân-râ millat-o maZhab khodâ-st

1771 la`l-râ gar mohr na-b'w-ad bâk nêst
`ishq dar daryây-é gham gham-nâk nêst

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)
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Moses and the Shepherd (part four)

Mathnawi II: 1772-1815

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The coming of a revelation (from God) to Moses--may peace be upon him-- about excusing the shepherd

1772 After that, God spoke secretly into the inmost consciousness of Moses--[1] secrets which cannot be spoken.[2]

(Divine) words were scattered upon Moses' heart, (so that) vision and speech were mixed together.

So many times he became lost of self,[3] so often he arrived (back) to himself, (and) so many times he flew from beginninglessness to endlessness.[4]

1775 After this, it would be foolishness if I should explain (further), because the explanation of this is beyond (the mind's) awareness.

If I speak (any further), it would tear out (the ability to) reason (from the listeners).[5] And if I write (about it), it would shatter pens.[6]

When Moses heard this reprimand from God, he rushed into the desert plain in pursuit of the shepherd.

He propelled (himself) over the footprints of that bewildered and wandering one. (In his haste), he scattered dust from the flats of the desert.[7]

It is evident (that) the footsteps of a disturbed man[8] (are) both (different) from the steps of others.

1780 One step (is) like the rook,[9] (moving) from top to bottom (on the chessboard). And one step (is) like the elephant,[10] going crookedly.

Sometimes, like a wave, he raises a flag; sometimes,

like a fish, he goes (along) on (his) stomach.[11]

(And) sometimes (he is) writing on the ground (about) his own state, like a geomancer who is telling fortunes.[12]

Finally, he found him and looked at (him). (As) the giver of happy news, he said, "Permission has come (to you from God).

"Do not seek (to have) any polite manners or (formal) arrangement [in your praying]. Say whatever your anguished heart wishes.

1785 "Your 'impiety' is (true) religion[13] and your religion is the light of the spirit. You are secure (in God's protection), and by means of you an (entire) world is protected.[14]

"O you (who are) spared by (the verse), 'God does what He wills':[15] go (and) start speaking (to God again), without (any need of) formal respect."[16]

(The shepherd) replied, "O Moses, I've advanced beyond that--[17] now that I've been smeared by the blood of (my) heart.[18]

"I've passed[19] beyond the Lote tree of the Farthest Limit,[20] (and) I've gone a hundred thousand years beyond that side.

"You struck my horse (with) a whip;[1] it turned,[22] made a leap, and (then) passed beyond the heavens.

1790 "May the Divine Nature be the intimate friend of our human nature![23] May praise and blessings be on your hands and arms![24]

"Now, my (spiritual) state is beyond talking (about). (And) these (words) I'm saying are not (describing) my (true inward) states."

The image which you are seeing in a mirror is your (own) image;[25] the image doesn't belong to the mirror.

Is the breath which the flute player blows within the reed-flute suitable (as a quality) to the reed-flute? No, it's (something) suitable to the man.

Take care (and) know (that) whether you speak (words of) praise or gratitude (to God), it is like the foolish (words) of that shepherd.

1795 Even though your praise is superior in comparison to that (of his), yet it is worthless in relation to God.[26]

When the covering has been removed,[27] how often you say, "It wasn't what it was supposed to be!"[28]

The acceptance of your praising (God) is from (His) Mercy. It is permitted, like the ritual prayer of the woman who has just completed her menstrual period.[29]

Her ritual prayer is stained with blood, (just as) your praise is defiled with comparisons and likenesses.[30]

Blood is unclean, but goes (away) with some water.[31] Yet the interior [of the praying person] has impurities,[32]

1800 Which will not fade from the interior of the man of [pious] action[33] except with the water of the Grace of the Creator.[34]

If only you could know the (true) meaning of (praying the words), "Glory be to my Lord!" (when) you turn (your) face (to the ground) in prostration--[35]

(Thinking), "My prostration is as unworthy (of You) as my existence. May You give (me) some goodness in return for (my) wrongness![36]

The earth has the influence of God's gentle patience to the extent that it takes defilement and produces flowers,[37] (And) to the extent it hides our impurities (and) buds grow up from it in return.

1805 So when the unbeliever saw that, (while) he (was) in a generous and giving (state), he was (actually) lesser and poorer than (a clod of) dirt,

(That) no flowers or fruit grew from his being,[38] (and that) he found (nothing) except the decay and barrenness of all purities,

He said, "I've gone backwards in my going (onward). What sorrow! If only I were (nothing more that) dust![39]

"If only I had not chosen to journey (away) from
earthiness and had collected some seeds,[40] like a (piece of)
dirt!

"(For) when I travelled, the road tested me. What
traveler's gift[41] was there (from me) as a result of this
travelling?"

1810 (Yet) it is because of all his inclinations toward the
earth[42] that he doesn't see any profit in front of him after
the journey.

His facing back is that greed and avarice (he has),
(but) his facing toward the road[43] (is) sincerity and
(humble) neediness (before God).

Every plant which has the inclination for loftiness is
(continuing) in (a state of) increase, life, and growth.

(But) when it turns (its) head toward[44] the earth, (it is
continuing) in (a state of) loss, dryness, lack, and feeling
cheated.[45]

If the inclination of your spirit is toward the heights,
(it will be) in (a state of) increase. (And) your return
will be to that place.[46]

1815 But if you are upside-down (and) your head is toward
the ground,[47] you are something which sets[48]-- (and) God does
not love things which set.[49]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1772) God spoke secretly into the inmost consciousness
of Moses: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on
the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi/Masnavi, to "...God
spake secretly in the inmost heart of Moses..." (from, "God
hid in the inmost heart of Moses mysteries...").

2. (1772) secrets which cannot be spoken: "I.e. God
revealed to Moses the essential mystery of Divine Love, in

which the shepherd was an adept." (Nicholson, Commentary) "But the tongue is unable to explain those secrets, since the knowledge gained from nearness to God [`ilm-é ladunî (a term based on Qur'an 18:65)] cannot be held by the intellect." (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi)

3. (1774) lost of self [bê-khwad]: also means "ecstatic." This is related to the sufi technical term "fanâ," which refers to the mystical experience of passing away, annihilation, and being erased of self.

4. (1774) beginninglessness to endlessness: terms used in sufism which mean Eternity prior to the creation of the universe and Eternity after it. Another translation is "Eternity before time [azal] to Eternity after time [abad]," or "pre-Eternity to post-Eternity."

5. (1776) it would tear out (the ability to) reason (from the listeners): "It means that the intellect would become crazy from listening to those (secrets)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (1776) if I write (about it), it would shatter pens: this is similar to Rumi's famous lines (as translated by Nicholson): "Whatsoever I say in exposition and explanation of Love, when I come to Love (itself) I am ashamed of that (explanation). Although the commentary of the tongue makes (all) clear, yet tongueless love is clearer. Whilst the pen was making haste in writing, it split upon itself as soon as it came to Love." (I: 112-114)

7. (1778) he scattered dust from the flats of the desert: "it means he ran while in a state of hurrying and confused amazement." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1779) the footsteps of a disturbed man: Nicholson states that this line and the next three are, "A figurative description of ecstatic states." (Commentary)

9. (1780) like the rook [rokh]: the chess piece, also called the tower or castle, which moves straight up and down (or horizontally, from side to side).

10. (1780) like the elephant: this is the ancient Indian and Iranian name for the chess piece known in the West as the bishop, which moves diagonally.

11. (1781) he goes (along) on (his) stomach: "It means, for a time he was raising his head high and going upwards. And sometimes he was also sliding on his stomach like a fish and going along (like that). Such is the manner of the lovers (of God) who have become drowned in the ocean of Unity." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1782) like a geomancer who is telling fortunes: geomancers would foretell the future based on a way of drawing lines in the desert sand.

13. (1785) Your 'impiety' is (true) religion: the word translated as "impiety" [kufr] also means denial and rejection of the essentials of the Islamic revelation-- or in this case, the apparent presence of such denial. Nicholson translated, "Your blasphemy is (the true) religion."

14. (1785) by means of you an (entire) world is protected: Nicholson translated, "you are saved, and through you a (whole) world is in salvation." And he explained: "I.e. 'you have attained to the rank of the saint, who is safe in God's keeping and guides others to salvation.'" (Commentary) However, it seems best to avoid the word "salvation," since for many readers it is so heavily loaded with Christian connotations. "(It means), 'You are safe from the punishment of God, and through you the people of the world are (also) in safety.' In other words, 'In recognition of your reverence (toward God), the people of the world are also safe from the punishment of God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (1786) God does what He wills: a modification, for metrical purposes, of the verse, "God does what He wills" (Qur'an 3:40). The meaning here is that the shepherd is spared by God from any punishment due to lack of conventional reverence and formal manners-- because God can act as He wishes and excuse whomever He wishes. "But if someone like this shepherd completes an action which is outside (the bounds of) reason and the religious Law [shar`]... he will be accepted by God." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Islamic law allows that an insane person cannot be punished for heretical speech. And this may account for the fact that Muslim jurists usually ignored reports of heretical-sounding ecstatic speech on the part of pious sufis (perhaps viewing it as a kind of "temporary insanity"). (See Carl Ernst, "Words of Ecstasy in Sufism," 1985, p. 126.)

16. (1786) without (any need of) formal respect: "Go loosen your tongue like a careless and fearless person and without (need) of formal reverence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1787) I've advanced beyond that: "The meaning can be said (to be this): 'I have reached to the degree of (mystical) annihilation [fanâ] and vanishing (from self), and by means of Divine attraction [jaZba-yé ilâhî] I have passed beyond the Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (1787) now that I've been smeared by the blood of (my) heart: Nicholson translated, "I am now bathed in (my) heart's blood." And he explained: "i.e. 'I have died to self and am a martyr (shahíd) to God.'" (Commentary) This is because the corpses of Muslims who die in battle as martyrs for the sake of Islam are not to be washed with water--which is the requirement prior to burial for all other Muslims.

19. (1788) I've passed [be-g'Zashta-am]: this is what was first written in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi. A correction was added below: be-sh'kafta-am (in order to rhyme better with "rafta-am"). However, it is unclear how this word should be vowelled or what it should mean.

20. (1788) the Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit: refers to a verse from the Qur'an (53:3) involving the Prophet Muhammad's Heavenly journey [mi`râj]: "[... an angel] endowed with surpassing power, who in time manifested himself in his true shape and nature, appearing in the horizon's loftiest part, and then drew near, and came close until he was but two bow-lengths away, or even closer. And thus did [God] reveal unto His servant whatever He deemed right to reveal.... And, indeed, he saw him a second time by the lote-tree of the farthest limit...." (Qur'an 53: 6-10, 13; translated by Muhammad Asad). "The legend relates that when the Prophet was about to enter into the presence of God, he said to Gabriel, who had been his guide thus far, 'O my brother, why hast thou fallen behind me?' and that Gabriel replied, 'Were I to come one finger-tip nearer, surely I should be consumed.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit is above the seven levels of the heavens. The abode of Paradise is near to it, as well as the station of (the archangel) Gabriel.... The minds of humanity and the domains of (human) knowledge find

(their) ultimate limit before it.... But the lovers of the Divine, who have become joined with God-- after attaining to the level of the Lote Tree of the Farthest Limit-- have gone further, and have drunk the wine of Love from the Hand of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (1789) You struck my horse (with) a whip: "It means, 'O Moses, you struck the horse of my spirit with the whip of (spiritual) guidance, and you gave it (needed) correction." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (1789) it turned: Nicholson translated, "my horse shied..."

23. (1790) May the Divine nature be the intimate friend of our human nature: Nicholson translated, "May the Divine Nature be intimate with my human nature..." (The question is whether the shepherd includes both himself and Moses here, or speaks of himself only using the formal plural; he had used the first person singular possessive-- "my horse"-- in the previous line.) Nicholson explained: "Here láhút [= Divine nature] denotes the inward, eternal aspect of Reality; násút [= human nature] the outward, phenomenal aspect, from which the mystic 'passes away' in moments of ecstasy. Both aspects are combined in the Perfect Man [= a term used in the mystical philosophy of the famous sufi, Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240], and it is this supreme perfection that is the object of the shepherd's prayer." (Commentary)

"(It means), 'God Most Holy and Exalted has become the intimate confidant of my human nature, and He has manifested His Names and Attributes within the realm of my human nature." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (1790) May praise and blessings be on your hands and arms: means, "For whipping my 'horse' so that I travelled beyond the heavens."

25. (1792) The image which you are seeing in a mirror is your (own) image: an analogy meaning, "The descriptions of my spiritual states are expressions of my human limitations as though reflected in a mirror. But they are not the mirror, which is their source and which is a symbol for Divine Reality." In this line, Rumi begins to comment on the speech of the shepherd, which concluded in the previous line.

Nicholson disagreed with Anqaravi's elaborate interpretation of this line and the following line (1793) as a continuation of the shepherd's speech: "... the view that these verses are addressed by the shepherd to Moses ignores the point of the preceding verse and those which follow. 'How', asks the poet, 'can the intellect describe what it cannot comprehend? The relation between reality and description is that of the mirror to the reflected image or of the flute-player to the flute. In praising God we merely express our subjective and more or less inadequate ideas of the Divine nature.'" (Commentary)

26. (1795) your praise... is worthless in relation to God: in explaining this line, Anqaravi referred to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "We are unable to count Your praises, (for) You are (praised only) as You praise Yourself. Glory be to You! We cannot praise you according to the praise You deserve, O praised One."

27. (1796) When the covering has been removed: "I.e. when you shall see things as they really are." (Nicholson, Footnote) And Nicholson explained further: "i.e. at the Resurrection, or after having experienced a mystical revelation." (Commentary)

28. (1796) It wasn't what it was supposed to be: "How often you say to yourself, 'I am a (good) praiser, rememberer, and thanker (of God).' But on the day of Resurrection, when the veils are raised up or pulled to the side, this is not (the case)-- what people, within their own minds, had assumed." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (1797) just completed her menstrual period: means that our celebrating the praises [Zikr] of God is accepted despite the imperfections of our praise. The latter is compared to the ritual prayer of a woman whose menstrual bleeding lasts more than ten days. Since bodily contact with blood causes ritual impurity, women are excused from the obligatory five daily prayers until their period is completed. After ten days, the menstrual period is considered completed, further bleeding is not considered to be "menstrual blood," and women are permitted to perform the daily prayers again. If not for this allowance in Islamic law, many Muslim women would be excessively prohibited from praying the five daily prayers.

30. (1798) your praise is defiled with comparisons and likenesses: means, spoiled by comparing God to created

things, when He transcends all comparisons to transient objects and qualities-- of which He is the Creator. "And there is no one comparable to Him." (Qur'an 112:4)

31. (1799) but goes (away) with some water: this refers to the ritual washing with water [wuZû']. Washing the hands, face, arms, and feet (together with intention and prayer) removes minor impurities which have exited the body (from urination, defecation, gas, bleeding). Taking a full bath or shower eliminates major impurities (from sexual discharge). A Muslim can only do the obligatory ritual prayers while in a state of ritual purity.

32. (1799) Yet the interior [of the praying person] has impurities: Nicholson translated, "but the inward part (the inner man) hath impurities." This means that (like the woman described above, who has done the ritual washing prior to prayer) our prayer may be pure in appearance, but it is soiled by continuing impurities of our ego-centered desires and the imperfections of our minds, which imagine God by means of comparisons.

33. (1800) the man of [pious] action: Nicholson translated, "the man of works." And he explained: "i.e. spiritually experienced, efficient, and adept." And he referred other places this phrase has been used (III: 1149; V 2182, 2786). (Commentary)

34. (1800) except with the water of the Grace of the Creator: "But the inward part (of man) has impurities, like the whispered temptations of Satan and blameworthy character, which cannot be cleansed with water. Yet the 'water' of Divine Grace can purify those.... Any time the Grace of God Most High surrounds the (inward) state of a servant, the (various) kinds of purification become possible for him and he may become cleansed from all impurities." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35. (1801) in prostration: during the five daily Islamic ritual prayers, when prostrating (with one's forehead and nose) to the ground, one prays these Arabic words three times: "Glory be to my Lord, the Most Exalted!" The meaning of this line is, "If only you knew how little you can comprehend of the glorious reality of God." "i.e. tanzíh [= transcendence], the declaration that God transcends all human conceptions." (Nicholson, Commentary)

36. (1802) some goodness in return for (my) wrongness: a

humble prayer that God overlook the defects (of attitude and ignorance) in our prayers, and pay (or recompense, requite) us instead with Divine Grace, Mercy, and Kindness.

37. (1803) produces flowers: for example, dung falls to the earth and flowers grow from that place. This is an example of the influence of God's compassionate forbearance [Hilm], a word related to one of the Ninety-Nine Names of God, the Most Forbearing and Clement [al-Halîm]

38. (1806) (That) no flowers or fruit grew from his being: "It means that in the being of the unbeliever, the flower of (true) faith does not bloom and the fruits of (mystical) knowledge and faith does not reach fruition." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

39. (1807) If only I were (nothing more that) dust: according to the Qur'an, these are the words that the unbeliever [kâfir], or denier of God (and of the revelations given to His prophets) will say on the Day of Judgment. God will say (in the "majestic plural"): "Truly, We have warned you of a punishment drawing near, (on) the day when man will clearly see (the deeds) which his hands have sent forward. And the unbeliever will say, 'If only I were (mere) dust!'" (78:40) Regarding the meaning of this phrase, one translator and commentator of the Qur'an referred to a similar passage (69:27), which he translated: "Oh, would that this [death of mine] had been the end of me!" (Muhammad Asad, "The Message of the Qur'ân," 1984)

40. (1808) and had collected some seeds: "i.e. would that, like earth, I had been capable of receiving the good seed and producing crops that delight the sowers' (Qur. XLVIII 29)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

41. (1809) What traveler's gift* was there (from me): travellers on long journeys were expected to bring gifts back for their family and friends. In the case of merchants, this would also be a sign of successful business.

42. (1810) it is because of all his inclinations toward the earth: Rumi explains that the man misunderstands his backwards viewpoint: he thought he was travelling to a higher rank, but in reality he was already facing downwards, due to his worldly materialistic cravings and mentality. "The reason for the strong inclination of the unbeliever [= rejector of God and Divine Guidance] toward the earth is this: that, at the time of making a journey, the unbeliever

doesn't see any profit ahead of himself-- in other words, in a higher path-- but sees loss. But on the level of (materialistic) earthiness, he imagines gain and profit for himself-- and for this reason he desires to be earth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

43. (1811) his facing toward the road [rah]: Nicholson translated, "his turning his face to the Way." He also translated similarly in line 1809: "When I travelled, the Way tried me..." And he explained: "Life is a journey from this perishable world (dáru 'l-faná) to the world everlasting (dáru 'l-baqá). The traveller whose faith has borne the test brings the result as an offering to God, but the infidel comes empty-handed. If now and then he aspire to enter on the sulúk ilá 'lláh [= the journey to God], his earthly appetites soon cause him to turn back." (Commentary)

44. (1813) when it turns (its) head toward: an idiom which refers to leading a riding or grazing animal to go in a certain direction by turning its head to face that direction.

45. (1813) feeling cheated: Nicholson translated, "disappointment."

46. (1814) your return will be to that place: means your final destination will be a lofty place. The words, "your return [marji`-at]," is Qur'anic, as in the verse, "And follow the path of the one who turns to Me. Then [= on the Day of Judgment] to Me will be your return [marji`u-kum] and I will inform you of the truth of what you did (during your earthly life)." (Qur'an 31:15)

"It means, 'O seeker, if the inclination of your spirit is to reach the higher realm and a lofty degree, in the same way you will reach to limit of total increase and advancement, and the place of your return will be that same place-- meaning to that lofty degree." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

47. (1815) (and) your head is toward the ground: "Meaning, the 'head' of your heart is (facing) toward the ground and toward (what is) lowly." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

48. (1815) you are something which sets: "Meaning, you will fade (from view) and vanish and become lost." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

49. (1815) God does not love things which set: a reference to the Prophet Abraham, who rejected the idol worship of his father. "And so We showed the kingdom of the heavens and the earth to Abraham, so that he might be among those with certainty. When the night overshadowed him, he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord.' But when it set, he said, 'I do not love the things which set.'" (Qur'an, 6:75-76) Rumi has altered this verse, for metric reasons, and attributed the dislike to God, not Abraham, in order to fit the context. It means here a dislike of transient things.

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waHî-âmadan musà-râ -- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- dar `uZr-é ân shabân

1772 ba`d az ân dar sirr-é mûsà Haq nehoft
râz-hâyê goft k-ân n-ây-ad ba-goft

bar del-é mûsà sokhon-hâ rêkht-and
dîdan-o goftan ba-ham âmêkht-and

chand bê-khwad gasht-o chand âmad ba-khwad
chand parrîd az azal sôy-é abad

1775 ba`d az-în gar sharH gôy-am ablahî-st
z-ân-ke sharH-é în warây-é âgahî-st

w-ar be-gôy-am, `aql-hâ-râ bar kan-ad
w-ar nawês-am, bas qalam-hâ be-sh'kan-ad

chûn-ke mûsà în `itâb az Haq shenîd
dar beyâbân dar pay-é chôpân dawîd

bar neshân-é pây-é ân sar-gashta rând
gard az parra-yé beyâbân bar feshând

gâm-é pây-é mardom-é shôrîda khwad
ham ze-gâm-é dêgar-ân paydâ bow-ad

1780 yak qadam chûn rokh ze-bâlâ tâ nashêb
yak qadam chûn pêl rafta bar werêb

gâh chûn mâwjê bar afrâzân `alam
gâh chûn mâhê rawâna bar shekam

gâh bar khâkê nebeshta Hâl-é khwad
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ham-chô rammâlê ke ramlê bar zan-ad

`âqibat dar yâft ô-râ-wo be-dîd
goft mozhda-deh ke dastûrê rasîd

hêch âdâbê-wo tartîbê ma-jô
har-che mê-khwâh-ad del-é tang-at, be-gô

1785 kufr-é tô dîn-ast-o dîn-at nûr-é jân
îman-î w-az tô jahânê dar amân

ay mu`âf-é yaf`alu 'llâh mâ yashâ'
bê-muHâbâ raw zabân-râ bar-goshâ

goft ay mûsà az ân be-g'Zashta-am
man kanûn dar khûn-é del âghashta-am

man ze-sidra-yé muntahà be-g'Zashta-am
Sad hazâr-ân sâla z-ân sô rafta-am

tâzeyâna bar zad-î asp-am be-gasht
gonbadê kard-o ze-gardûn bar-goZasht

1790 maHram-é nâsût-é mâ lâhût bâd
âferîn bar dast-o bar bâzû-t bâd

Hâl-é man aknûn berûn az goftan-ast
în che mê-gôy-am, na ahwâl-é man-ast

naqsh mê-bîn-î ke dar âyîna'ê-st
naqsh-é to-st ân, naqsh-é ân âyîna nêst

dam ke mard-é nâyî andar nây kard
dar khwar-é nây-ast, na dar khward-é mard

hân-o hân gar Hamd gôy-î gar sepâs
ham-chô nâ-farjâm-é ân chôpân shenâs

1795 Hamd-é tô nisbat ba-d-ân gar behtar-ast
lêk ân nisbat ba-Haq ham abtar-ast

chand gôy-î chûn ghiTâ bar dâsht-and
k-în na-bûd-ast ân-ke mê-pendâsht-and

în qabûl-é Zikr-é tô az raHmat-ast
chûn namâz-é mustaHâZa rukhSat-ast

bâ namâz-é ô be-y-âlûd-ast khûn

Zikr-é tô âlûda-yé tashbîh-wo chûn

khûn palîd-ast-o ba-âbê mê-raw-ad
lêk bâTin-râ najâsat-hâ bow-ad

k-ân ba-ghayr-é âb-é luTf-é kardagâr
kam na-gard-ad az darûn-é mard-é kâr

dar sujûd-at kâsh rô-gardân-î'iy
ma`nî-yé subHâna rabb-î dân-î'iy

k-ây sujûd-am chûn wujûd-am nâ-sazâ
mar badî-râ tô nekôyê deh jazâ

în zamîn az Hilm-é Haq dâr-ad aSar
tâ najâsat bord-o gol-hâ dâd bar

tâ be-pôsh-ad ô palîd-hây-é mâ
dar `iwaZ bar rôy-ad az way ghoncha-hâ

pas chô kâfir dîd k-ô dar dâd-o jûd
kam-tar-o bê-mâya-tar az khâk bûd

az wujûd-é ô gol-o mêwa na-rost
joz fasâd-é jumla pâkî-hâ na-jost

goft wâ-pas rafta-am man dar Zahâb
Hasratâ yâ laytan-î kuntu turâb

kâsh az khâkî safar na-g'zîd-amy
ham-chô khâkê dâna'yê mê-chîd-amy

chûn safar kard-am ma-râ râh âzmûd
z-în safar-kardan rah-âward-am che bûd?

z-ân hama mayl-ash sôy-é khâk-ast k-ô
dar safar sûdê na-bin-ad pêsh-é rô

rôy wâ-pas kardan-ash, ân HirS-o âz
rôy dar rah kardan-ash, Sidq-o neyâz

har geyâ-râ ke-sh bow-ad mayl-é `ulâ
dar mazîd-ast-o Hayât-o dar namâ

chûn-ke gardânîd sar sôy-é zamîn
dar kamîy-wo khoskhî-wo naqS-o ghabîn

mayl-é rûH-at chûn sôy-é bâlâ bow-ad

dar tazâyud marji`-at ân-jâ bow-ad

1815 w-ar negô-sâr-î sar-at sôy-é zamîn
âfil-î, Haq lâ yuHibbu 'l-afilîn

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Heart Is Not Made Peaceful By Lying Speech

Mathnawi II: 2733-2736

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2733 He said, "The Prophet (Muhammad) has given a sign: he has established the touchstone[1] for (discerning the difference between) counterfeit coins and good (ones)

He has said, "A lie is (the source of) uneasy doubt in (people's) hearts." And he (also) said, "Truth is (the source of) a (feeling of) joyful peace."[2]

2735 The heart is not made peaceful by lying speech, (just as) water and oil[3] do not ignite (lamp) light.

2736 (But) there is peace for the heart in words of truth. Truths are the seeds of the snare for (the tranquillity of) the heart."[4]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/13/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](2733) touchstone: a type of stone which, when rubbed against true gold, changes to a particular color -- therefore used by assayers of gold.

[2](2734) a (feeling of) joyful peace: "Fa [= Anqaravi] cites the Hadíth: da` má yuríbuka ilá má lá yuríbuka, fa-inna 'l-Sidqa Tuma'nín-un wa-inna 'l-kidhba rayb-un." (Nicholson, Commentary) See also Mathnawi VI:2576-79 for a similar

passage.

[3](2735) water and oil: "used metaphorically in the sense of 'mere varnish', 'deceit', as at IV 346" [= translated by Nicholson: "abandon water and oil (specious varnish)"]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[4](2736) the seeds of the snare for (the tranquillity of) the heart: Nicholson translated, "the bait that entraps the heart."

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2733 goft payghâmbar neshânê dâda-ast
qalb-o nêkô-râ miHak be-n'hâda-ast

gofta-ast al-kiZbu rayb-un fi 'l-qulûb
goft aS-Sidqu Tuma'nîn-un Tarûb

2735 del na-y-ârâm-ad ze-goftâr-é dorôgh
âb-o rawghan hêch na-f'rôz-ad forôgh

2736 dar HadîS-é râst ârâm-é del-ast
râstî-hâ dâna-yé dâm-é del-ast

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Miracles of Ibrahim son of Adham (part one)

Mathnawi II: 3207-3228

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3207 The (truly wise) thought is what opens a way,[1] (and) the way (of spiritual wisdom) is that (one) before which a (spiritual) king comes.

(And) the (spiritual) king is (one) who is a king from (within) himself,[2] not (one) who becomes king by (possessing) treasuries and an army--

So that his kingship lasts forever, like the grandeur of the kingdom of the Muhammadan Religion.[3]

The miracles of Ibrahim, the son of Adham[4]-- may God sanctify
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his spirit--[5] on the bank of a river

3210 Just as (the story) about Ibrahim (the son) of Adham has reached (us), that after a journey he sat down on the bank of a river.

That spiritual sultan was sewing his (patched woolen) dervish garment, (when) suddenly a prince arrived there.[6]

That prince was (previously) among the servants of the Master;[7] he recognized the Master and quickly prostrated (in obeisance).[8]

He was amazed at the Master and at his dervish garment (and thought), "His disposition and manner (have) changed to a (very) different appearance;"[9]

That, "He had abandoned such a great kingdom (and) chosen that very thin (life of) poverty;[10]

3215 (And that), "He left a kingdom (comprising) of seven climates,[11] (and) he stabs a needle at (that) ragged robe like a beggar."

The Master became aware of his thought, (for) a (spiritual) master is like a lion and the hearts [of disciples] are (like) his jungle;

(He is) going into (their) hearts[12] like hope and fear. The secrets of the world are not hidden from him

O unprofitable ones, guard (the thoughts of your) hearts in the presence of the holy majesty of the owners of (sanctified) hearts.[13]

In front of (worldly) people of the body, courtesy is on the outward (level) since God is veiling the inward (level) from them.[14]

3220 (But) in front of the owners of (sanctified) hearts, courtesy is on the inward (level),[15] since their hearts are the intelligent perceivers of the secrets (of others).[16]

You are the opposite: you come into the presence of (spiritually) blind ones for the sake of (worldly) rank and status (and) you sit (proudly) in the hallway (filled with shoes and sandals).

(Yet) in front of (spiritually) perceptive ones you abandon courtesy and respect. Because of that you have become firewood for the flames of excessive desire.

Since you don't have (such) intelligent perception and light of (Divine) guidance, (go ahead and) keep brightening (your) face for the sake of the (spiritually) blind!

(But) in front of (spiritually) perceptive ones, rub excrement on your face![17] (Go ahead and) keep acting proud (in their presence) with such a foul-smelling state (that is yours)!

3225 The Master quickly threw the needle into the river (and) asked for the needle with a loud voice.

A hundred thousand divine fish[18]-- a golden needle in the lips of each fish--

Raised (their) heads from the God's River, saying, "O Master take God's needles!"

3228 (The Master) turned (his) face toward him and asked him, "O prince! Is the kingdom of the heart better or such a lowly and contemptible (worldly) kingdom?"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3207) a way [rahê]: "i.e. a means of attaining to spiritual perfection." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3208) (And) the (spiritual) king is (one) who is a king from (within) himself: "i.e. in virtue of the kingly nature with which God has endowed him." (Nicholson, Commentary) These words were added, in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, as a correction in red ink above the original first half of the line, which read, "(And) the (spiritual) king is (one) who goes before the King"-- meaning God [shâh ân bâsh-ad ke pêsh-é shah raw-ad]. Nicholson later adopted this as a correction, based on the earliest manuscript: "The (true) king is he that goes into the presence of the King" (from, "The (true) king is he that is king in himself").

3. (3209) like the grandeur of the Muhammadan Religion [dîn-é AHmadî]: literally, "the Ahmadic Religion." The name "Ahmad" is a shortened form of Muhammad and, in religious literature, always refers to him. It means the religion "colored" by the

inspired, noble, and generous personality of the Prophet. Islam is not considered a new religion, but as expressing the essence of the same Revelation given to previous prophets (from Noah to Jesus). While Muhammad was the instrument for Revelation, only God is the source of salvation. And since Muhammad is not the source of salvation (as Jesus is in Christianity or Buddha is in certain kinds of Buddhism), it is incorrect to refer to Islam as "Muhammadism" (a term invented by Western orientalists).

"It remains like the grandeur and nobility of the kingdom of the Ahmadic Religion, which is increased from age to age. And (like) the grandeur and nobility of the saints, who are its lasting and enduring inheritors. But it is not easy for any one to see the [hidden] grandeur and nobility of the saints-- just as in the case of Hazrat-i Ibrahim Adham..." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here from Persian)

4. (Heading) The miracles of Ibrahim, the son of Adham: "Ibráhím ibn Adham of Balkh, whose legend is modelled on the life of Buddha (cf. IV 726 sqq., 829 sqq., VI 1736 sqq., 3938). He died in A.H. 160/A.D. 776-777..... he abandoned his worldly kingdom and became a spiritual king." "The prose version of the miracle related in this passage runs as follows [= a translation from `Attar's "taZkiratu 'l-awliyâ"]: 'One day whilst he was seated on the banks of the Tigris [= River], stitching his tattered khirqah [= dervish cloak], the needle fell into the river. Some one said to him, "You gave up such a splendid kingdom: what have you gained?" Ibráhím signified to the river that his needle should be given back. Immediately a thousand fishes rose from the water, each carrying in its mouth a needle of gold. He said to them, "I want my needle", whereupon a poor little fish came to the surface with the needle in its mouth. "This", said Ibráhím, "is the least thing I have gained by giving up the kingdom of Balkh: the other things you cannot know."'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (Heading) may God sanctify his spirit [qaddas allâhu sirru-hu]: these words were added, in the earliest manuscript, as a correction in red ink to the original wording.

6. (3211) That spiritual sultan was sewing his (patched) dervish robe, (when) suddenly a prince arrived there: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "(Whilst) that spiritual king was stitching his mantle, an Amír suddenly came to that spot" (from "(Whilst) he was stitching his Súfí mantle, an Amír, walking on the shore, suddenly came to that spot."

7. (3212) the Master [shaykh]: literally, "old man." Means a spiritual

elder, who is a sufi master and guide. The equivalent word in Persian is "pîr."

8. (3212) prostrated [sajda kard]" this is a prostration of obeisance (expressing deferential courtesy as well as obedience) to a king, not to be confused with prostration and worship toward God. Dervishes also prostrated before their spiritual master (shaykh) as their spiritual king. Presumably the actual posture had clear difference with the prostration in the Islamic ritual prayer. "He quickly placed (his) head on the ground and expressed reverence and respect [ta`Zîmî kard]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3213) his disposition and manner (had) changed to a different appearance: Nicholson translated, "(for) his nature and outward guise had become transformed." "In other words, he had become transformed inwardly." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3214) that very thin (life of) poverty: literally, "that thin-lettered poverty." Probably refers to the "slender" letter "a" [alif]. A metaphor for a life of little food and a thin (and frequently hungry) body. Nicholson translated "that very pettifogging (spiritual) poverty." And he explained, "I think 'bârîk Harf' [= thin-lettered] is best taken as a compound adjective. The alternative rendering would be '(spiritual) poverty-- a very subtle (slender and unsubstantial) affair.' In any case there is an antithesis between 'shegarf' [= great] and bârîk [= slender]." (Footnote) He also explained: The literal meaning of the word is 'thin-edged', which makes a good antithesis to shigarf [= great]." (Commentary)

"'It is very slender letter': meaning that Ibrahim's renunciation of such a great kingdom and his choosing poverty is (something involving) a very subtle meaning, since the understanding of every person cannot comprehend it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (3215) (And that), "He left a kingdom (comprising) of seven climates: Nicholson later corrected his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "(And why) he renounced the sovereignty of the Seven Climes" (from "(And why) he lets the sovereignty of the Seven Climes be lost (by him)").

12. (3217) (He is) going into (their) hearts: regarding this line, Nicholson quoted from Qushayri (died 1074) about "the saying of Ahmad ibn `âsim al-Antákí: 'when ye consort with the sincere (ahlu 'l-sidq), do so with sincerity for they are the spies upon hearts (jawásísu 'l-qulúb): they enter into your hearts and go out of them in such a way that ye perceive it not.'" (Commentary)

13. (3218) the holy majesty of the owners of (sanctified) hearts:

Nicholson translated, "the presence of the majesty of the men of heart (saints)."

14. (3219) since God is veiling the inward (level) from them: "Because God Most High has hidden the inward (level) and secrets [of others] from them." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (3220) courtesy [adab] is on the inward (level): "Therefore it is necessary to show watchfulness of deceitful, spoiled, and impure thoughts in your heart (while) in their presence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (3220) since their hearts are the intelligent perceivers of the secrets (of others): "I.e. 'holy men can read the thoughts and feelings of veneration with which you ought to regard them, whereas worldly magnates perceive only outward marks of respect and deserve nothing." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (3224) rub excrement [Hadath} on your face: Nicholson translated, "daub thy face with dirt!." And he explained: "The poet ironically recommends such a person to let his heart be defiled with malice and rancour."

"The meaning of 'excrement' is denial and corrupt thoughts, as well as deceitful and impure thoughts which arise from enmity and hatred." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (3226) divine fish [mâhî-yé allâhîyê]: "(The meaning is) 'connected with God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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3207 fikr ân bâsh-ad ke be-g'shây-ad rahê
râh ân bâsh-ad ke pêsh ây-ad shahê

shâh ân bâsh-ad ke az khwad shah bow-ad
na ba-makhzan-hâ-wo lashkar shah shaw-ad

tâ be-mân-ad shâhî-yé ô sarmadî
ham-chô `izz-é mulk-é dîn-é aHmadî

karâmât-é ibrâhîm adham-- qaddasu 'llâhu sirru-hu-- bar lab-é daryâ

3210 ham ze-ibrâhîm-é adham âmad-ast
k-ô ze-râhê bar lab-é daryâ neshast
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dalq-é khwad mê-dôkht ân sulTân-é jân
yak amîrê âmad ân-jâ nâgahân

ân amîr az bandag-ân-é shaykh bûd
shaykh-râ be-sh'nâkht, sajda kard zûd

khêra shod dar shaykh-o andar dalq-é ô
shakl-é dêgar gashta khulq-o khalq-é ô

k-ô rahâ kard ân-chon-ân mulkê shegarf
bar gozîd ân faqr-é bas bârîk Harf

3215 tark kard ô mulk-é haft-aqlîm-râ
mê-zan-ad bar dalq sôzan chûn gadâ

shaykh wâqif gasht az andêsha-ash
shaykh chûn shêr-ast-o del-hâ bêsha-ash

chûn rajâ-wo khawf dar del-ha rawân
nêst makhfî bar way asrâr-é jahân

del negah-dâr-îd ay bê-HâSil-ân
dar HuZûr-é HaZrat-é SâHib-del-ân

pêsh-é ahl-é tan adab bar Zâhir-ast
ke khodâ z-îshân nehân-ra sâtir-ast

3220 pêsh-é ahl-é del adab bar bâTin-ast
z-ân-ke del-shân bar sarâyir fâTin-ast

tô ba-`aks-î pêsh-é kôr-ân bahr-é jâh
bâ HuZûrây-î, neshîn-î pây-gâh

pêsh-é bînây-ân kon-î tark-é adab
nâr-é shahwat-râ az ân gasht-î HaTab

chûn na-dâr-î fiTnat-o nûr-é hudà
bahr-é kôr-ân rôy-râ mê-zan jalâ

pêsh-é bînây-ân HadaS dar rôy mâl
nâz mê-kon bâ chon-în gandîda-Hâl

3225 shaykh sôzan zûd dar daryâ fekand
khwâst sôzan-râ ba-âwâz-é boland

Sad hazâr-ân mâhî-yé allâhîyê
sôzan-é zar dar lab-é har mâhîyê

sar bar âward-and az daryây-é Haq
ke be-gîr ay shaykh sôzan-hây-é Haq

3228 rô ba-d-ô kard-o be-goft-ash ay amîr
mulk-é del beh yâ chon-ân mulk-é Haqîr?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Five Inward Senses

Mathnawi II: 3229-3249

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3229 This [miracle which was seen][1] is (merely) an outward indication; this isn't anything. Wait until you go into the inward [reality] (and) see [the miracles there]!

3230 (Although) a (flowering) branch may be brought to town from a garden (as a present),[2] the (entire) garden and orchard can never be taken there.

Especially a Garden (in comparison to) which the (starry) heaven is a (mere) leaf. No, rather that (Garden) is (like the delicious) pulp and this (material) world is (merely) the skin.[3]

(Since) you lack (the ability to take) steps toward that Garden,[4] seek greater scent and drive away your head-cold,[5]

So that the scent may become the attracter of your soul, (and) so that the scent may become the light of your eyes.[6]

(It was) for the sake of (such a) scent (that) Joseph, the son of the Prophet Jacob, said, "[Take my shirt and] cast (it) over the face of my father."[7]

3235 (And) for the sake of this scent Muhammad always said during (his) preachings, "The brightness of my eyes is in the ritual prayer."[8]

The five (spiritual) senses are connected with each other, (since) each of these five have grown from an exalted source.[9]

The strength of one becomes the strength of the rest;[10] each one

becomes the cupbearer for the remainder.

(Thus) the eye's seeing increases love (and) love in the eye increases truthful (vision).[11]

Truthful (perception) becomes wakefulness for every sense, (so that) the discernment (of truth from falsehood) becomes the companion of (all) the senses.[12]

The beginning of the mystic knower's becoming illumined by the light which sees the Unseen (world).

3240 If a single sense has loosened [its physical] bonds while proceeding [to perceive truly], all the rest of the senses become altered.

(For) if a single sense has sensed (things) not (physically) perceivable, (then) the Unseen (World) becomes evident to all of the senses.

If a single sheep of the flock has leaped across a stream, then all leap across the (same) side in succession.

(So) drive the sheep of your senses to pasture: cause them to graze on (what is referred to in the verse), "(The One who) brings forth (green) herbage"[13]--

So that they may graze upon hyacinth and sweet basil there, so that they may take the road to the flower-garden of (Divine) Realities;[14]

3245 (So that) each of your senses may become a messenger[15] to the senses [of other people], so that they may (all) go toward that Paradise one by one;[16]

(And so that those) senses will tell (their) secrets to your senses--without (need) of (verbally stated) facts, (using) language, or (giving) metaphors.[17]

For these (verbally stated) facts are capable of (different) explanations, and these suppositions are the basis for deceptions.

(But in regard to) the actuality which is (directly) observed,[18] there isn't any room for explanation therein.

3249 When every sense has become[19] the servant of your sense, the (sight of all the) heavens will not be (far) away from you.[20]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 1/3/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3229) This [miracle which was seen]: this refers to the (just completed) story about a king (Ibrahim, son of Adham) who became a dervish. An aristocrat happened to encounter him while he was sewing his dervish cloak, sitting by the edge of the sea. He quickly discerned the man's thoughts (about what a sorry sight it was to see someone who had possessed a great kingdom sewing a tattered cloak like a beggar) and threw his needle into the sea. Numerous fish then appeared, offering him golden needles in their mouths, saying (as translated by Nicholson), '"Take, O Shaykh, God's needles.' He turned his face towards him (the Amír) and said to him, 'O Amír, is the kingdom of the heart (spirit) better, or such a despicable kingdom (as I once possessed)?'"

2. (3230) (Although) a (flowering) branch may be brought to town from a garden (as a present): "It was customary to bring presents of flowers from gardens in the vicinity of a town." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (3231) and this (material) world is (merely) the skin: Nicholson later changed his translation, on the basis of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "And this world is as the husk" (from, "and this (other) world is as the husk"). And he explained, in regard to the word "garden": "i.e. the world of the Divine Essence and Attributes (`álam-i Láhút, `álam-i Amr)." (Commentary)

4. (3232) (Since) you lack (the ability to take) steps toward that Garden: Nicholson translated, "(If) you are not stepping on (briskly) towards that Garden." "It means, 'you lack the power to find that place.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3232) seek greater scent and drive away your head-cold: Persian and Turkish poets play with the idea, founded on popular belief, that the scent of a species of dark-red rose produces a cold in the head.... Alluding to this Jalálu 'ddín [= Rumi] says that the perfume of the Divine Rose-garden, i.e. spiritual influences and mystical intimations, has no such chilling effect: on the contrary, it clears away the 'rheum' of worldliness and sensuality by which the soul is benumbed and made torpid. Cf. I 1897 sqq." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (3233) so that the scent may become the light of your eyes: "It means, '(So that) the scent of that Garden of Reality may attract your soul to that direction. May it be that the scent of Divine Glory and the Breath of Lordship becomes the light of the eyes* of your mind and heart.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) [*light of the eyes: refers to the ancient psychophysiological belief that the eyes are able to see because of a power of light within the eyes.]

7. (3234) "[Take my shirt and] cast (it) over the face of my father": Qur'an 12: 93, slightly modified for the meter. This refers to the story of Joseph, how he revealed himself (as alive and a powerful person in Egypt) to his brothers, and instructed them to cast his shirt over their father's face. When the brothers returned from Egypt, Jacob said that he smelled the scent of Joseph (12:94). Then Joseph's shirt was cast over his face and Jacob regained his sight.

8. (3235) "The brightness of my eyes is in the ritual prayer": This is a saying [Hadîth] of the Prophet Muhammad. It is literally, "the coolness of my eyes," which is an idiom meaning what causes luster and brightness in the eyes due to joy, delight, and pleasure. "The Hadíth is related in more than one form. Fa [= Anqaravi] gives: hubbiba ilayya min dunyákumu 'l-nisá'u wa-tíbu 'l-rá'ihati wa-qurratu `ayné fí 'l-salát,' In this world of yours women and sweet perfume have been made dear to me; and my delight is in the ritual prayer.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

Nicholson also quoted from his own translation of Hujwiri's "Kashf Al-MaHjûb," (p. 302): "The Prophet said, 'I delight in prayer', because prayer is a source of joy to the steadfast. When he was brought nigh unto God on the night of the Ascension... he said, not of his own will, but inspired by longing: 'O God, do not transport me to yonder world of affliction! Do not throw me under the sway of carnal nature and passion!' God answered: 'It is My decree that thou shalt return to the world to establish the religious law, in order that I may give thee there what I have given thee here.' When the Prophet returned to this world, he used to say as often as he felt a longing for that exalted station: 'O Bilál [= his favorite caller-to-prayer], comfort us by the call to prayer!' Thus to him every time of prayer was an Ascension and a new nearness to God." "Cf. also III 2401 sqq. and note on I 57." [= translated by Nicholson: "'The naughting of the attributes of the conscious self' (faná'u 'l-sifát), which results from intense concentration of every faculty on God in the performance of the ritual prayer, is often described by Súfís."] (Commentary)

9. (3236) each of these five have grown from an exalted source: Nicholson later corrected his translation, in accord with the earliest

manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "all these five have grown (are derived) from a sublime root (source)" (from, "because all these five have grown from one root"). And he explained: "i.e. the faculties of the soul, corresponding to the five bodily senses with which they are associated. In reality all these faculties are derived from the Universal Spirit and serve to manifest Divine attributes: they are not separate and distinct, like the bodily senses, but involved in one another." (Commentary)

10. (3237) The strength of one becomes the strength of the rest: "It means, 'If only one sense among these five senses receives strength, the rest of the senses gain strength from that one sense, and it becomes a water-server to every one of the rest.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (3238) the eye's seeing increases love (and) love in the eye increases truthful (vision): Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "Seeing with the eye increases love; love increases penetration in the eye" (from, "... increases speech; speech increases penetration in the eye"). "The eye's vision gives an increase to love in the heart, (and) the occurrence of love in the heart increases truthfulness in the eye. In other words: When you see the beloved with the eye of the heart, love for the beloved increases.... Observation and (close) inspection [of the beloved's beauty] increase love." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (3239) becomes the companion of (all) the senses: Nicholson translated, "Penetration (of sight) becomes the (means of) awakening (stimulating) every sense, (so that) perception (of the spiritual) becomes familiar to (all) the senses."

13. (3243) "(The One who) brings forth (green) herbage": Qur'an 87:4.

14. (3244) the flower-garden of (Divine) Realities: Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "the garden of the Realities" (from, "the verdant meadows..."). In regard to the word, "Realities," Nicholson explained: "i.e. Divine attributes which take the place of spiritual faculties in the Perfect Man." [= a "completed" saint who reflects all the Names of God, according to the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240]

15. (3245) each of your senses may become a messenger [payghambar]: Nicholson translated, "an apostle." And he explained: "The illumined saint is the Universal Spirit who comes as an apostle to shed light on all and guide them to the Truth. He reads their hearts by pure intuition; his knowledge is infallible

since it is not communicated to him verbally. Words are ambiguous..." (Commentary)

16. (3245) so that they may (all) go toward that Paradise one by one: Nicholson later changed his translation in accord with the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi to "so that severally they may go towards that Paradise" (from, "and lead all senses into that Paradise").

17. (3246) without (need) of (verbally stated) facts, (using) language, or (giving) metaphors: Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "without the proper meaning, without tongue, and without metaphor" (from, "without tongue and without (conveying either) the proper or the metaphorical meaning").

18. (3248) (But in regard to) the actuality which is (directly) observed: Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the oldest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "(But in the case of) that truth which is (perceived) from intuition" (from, "... that truth which is immediate and intuitive"). In regard to the word "Haqîqat," translated just prior as "(verbally stated) facts" (and by Nicholson as "the proper meaning"), Nicholson explained: "Here the term haqíqat is applied, not to the literal meaning of words, but to the real nature of things." (Commentary)

19. (3249) When every sense has become the servant: Nicholson later changed his translation, in accord with the oldest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "When every sense has become subject to" (from, "When (all) senses have become subject to..."

20. (3249) the (sight of all the) heavens will not be (far) away from you: Nicholson translated, "the heavenly spheres cannot avoid (obedience to) thee." "Certainly the nine heavenly spheres, and what is between them, will also be among what is perceived-- but will not be apart from obeying your command and will. You will be in the (higher) rank of spirit, and the heavens on the (lower) level of body, and your intelligence and perception will be (in a position of) regulating and managing." (Anqaravi, Commentary) After this explanation, Anqaravi quoted the famous Egyptian sufi poet, Ibnu 'l-Fârid (died 1235), translated by Nicholson in his Commentary on this verse: "There is no celestial sphere but therein, from the light of my inward nature, is an angel who gives guidance by my will."

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3229 în neshân-é Zâhir-ast, în hêch nêst
tâ ba-bâTin dar-raw-î, bîn-î tô b-êst

3230 sôy-é shahr az bâgh shâkhê âwar-and
bâgh-o bostân-râ ko-jâ ân-jâ bar-and?

khâSa bâghê k-în falak yak barg-é ô-st
bal-ke ân maghz-ast-o în `âlam chô pôst

bar na-mê-dâr-î sôy-é ân bâgh gâm
bôy afzûn jôy-wo kon daf`-é zukâm

tâ ke ân bô jâZib-é jân-at shaw-ad
tâ ke ân bô nûr-é chashm-ân-at shaw-ad

goft yûsuf ibn-é ya`qûb-é nabî
bahr-é bû 'alqû `alà wajhi 'ab-î

3235 bahr-é în bô goft aHmad dar `iZât
dâyimâ qurratu `ayn-î fî 'S-Salât

panj His bâ ham-degar paywasta-and
rosta în har panj az aSlê boland

quwwat-é yak quwwat-é bâqî shaw-ad
mâ-baqî-râ har yakê sâqî shaw-ad

dîdan-é dîda fazây-ad `ishq-râ
`ishq dar dîda fezây-ad Sidq-râ

Sidq bêdârîy-é har His mê-shaw-ad
His-hâ-râ Zawq mû'nis mê-shaw-ad

âghâz-é munawwar-shodan-é `ârif ba-nûr-é ghayb-bîn

3240 chûn yakê His dar rawesh be-g'shâd band
bâ-baqî His-hâ hama mubdal shaw-and

chûn yakê His ghayr-é maHsûsât dîd
gasht ghaybî bar hama His-hâ padîd

chûn ze jô jast az gala yak gôsfand
pas pay-a-pay jumla z-ân sô bar jah-and

gôsfand-ân-é Hawâss-at-râ be-rân
dar charâ az 'akhraja 'l-mar`à charân

tâ dar ân-jâ sunbul-o rayHân char-and
tâ ba-golzâr-é Haqâyiq-é rah bar-and

3245 har His-at payghâmbar-é His-hâ shaw-ad
tâ yak-â-yak sôy-é ân jannat raw-ad

Hiss-hâ bâ Hiss-é tô gôy-and râz
bê-Haqîqat, bê-zabân-o bê-majâz

k-în Haqîqat qâbil-é ta'wîl-hâ-st
w-în tawahhum mâya-yé takhyîl-hâ-st

ân Haqîqat-râ ke bâsh-ad az `ayân
hêch ta'wîlê na-gonj-ad dar meyân

3249 chûn-ke har His banda-yé Hiss-é tô shod
mar falak-hâ-râ na-bâsh-ad az tô bod

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Nothing is Granted Without Need

Mathnawi II: 3250-3285

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3250 When a legal dispute is going on about the ownership of husks,[1] [the judge says] "Who is the owner of the kernels? The husks are his."

When a dispute occurs about a sack of straw, see who is the owner of the grain.

Therefore, the (sphere) of the heavens[2] is (like) the husk and the light of the spirit (is like) the kernel. (Although) this is visible (and) that is hidden, don't trip for this reason.

The body is evident, (but) the (animal) spirit[3] has been hidden. The body (is) like a (long) sleeve,[4] (while) the spirit (is) like the hand (hidden within it).

Once again, the (faculty of) reason flutters more secretly than the (animal) spirit.[5] (For) the senses find the way to the (animal) spirit more quickly (than to the intellect).

3255 (If) you see some movement, you can know that (the person) is alive. (But) you can't know this: whether he is full of intelligence,

Until harmonious movements [from the person] make (their) appearance (and) make the copper's movement[6] into gold by means of (alchemical) knowledge.[7]

From the appearance of appropriate actions of the hand, the understanding comes to you that it is (a) rational (motion).

The spirit (capable) of (receiving Divine) inspiration is more hidden[8] than the intellect because it is (completely) invisible[9] (and) it is from that unperceived) side.

The rational mind of Muhammad was not concealed from anyone, (but) his spirit inspired (by Divine Revelation) was not comprehended by every soul.

3260 The spirit inspired (by Revelation) has appropriate (actions) as well, (but) the intellect can't understand (them) because that (spirit) is superior in authority and power.[10]

At times (the intellect) sees (the inspiration of the spirit as) insanity (and) at times it becomes perplexed, since it is delayed (in understanding) until it becomes (like) that.[11]

When the mind of Moses was disturbed by seeing the appropriate actions of [the mysterious prophet] Khizr,[12]

His actions appeared inappropriate to Moses, since he did not have his (advanced spiritual) state.[13]

If the mind of Moses becomes tied and bound by the mysterious [behavior of Khizr], then what is (the capacity) of a (mere) mouse (to understand),[14] O worthy man?

3265 Shown-off knowledge is for the sake of being sold. When it obtains a buyer, it becomes lit-up [with pride].

(But) the buyer of verified knowledge[15] is God; its market is continually possessed of bright splendor.

(His) lips (are) shut, (he's happily) drunk during the selling and buying, (since) the buyers are unlimited-- (as indicated by the verse) "God has purchased."[16]

The angels (were) the buyers of Adam's teaching,[17] (but) the devils and the jinn are not those who have access to his lessons.[18]

"'(O) Adam, tell them the Names (of God)!'[19] Explain the secrets of God, hair by hair.

3270 So the person who is near-sighted, drowned in (the world's) changing colors, and is unsettled

I called "a mouse," since his place is in the (dark) earth.[20] Earth is the mouse's (proper) dwelling.

He knows the pathways, but (only) beneath the earth, (and) he has torn the earth (to make tunnels) in every direction.

The (animal) soul of a mouse is nothing except a scraper of morsels.[21] A mind is given in accord with the amount of the mouse's need--

Since, without need, God the Glorious doesn't grant anything to anyone.[22]

3275 If there hadn't been (any) need (on the part) of the creatures of the world for the earth, the Lord of (all) the worlds would not have created any (such place).[23]

And if this agitated earth had not been in need of mountains,[24] He would not have created (them so) full of grandeur.

And also, if there had not been (any) need for the heavens, He would not have brought forth the seven (heavenly) spheres from non-existence.

The sun, moon, and these stars would never have appeared manifest except by need.

Therefore, need is the lasso for existent (beings). He gives instruments to man in accord with the amount of (his) need.[25]

3280 So increase (your) need at once, O needy one, so that the Sea of Generosity may surge forth in Benevolence.

These beggar and every distressed (person) on the road are showing their needs to the people--

Blindness, withered hands, sickness, and pain-- so that because of these needs the compassion of men may be stirred.

No one says, "Give bread, O people, since I have wealth, harvest stacks, and large trays (full of delicacies)."

God hasn't put eyes in the mole, since it has no need (to have) eyes for the sake of (finding) food.

3285 It can live without eyes and sight (since) it is free of (needing) eyes in the damp earth.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 1/24/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3250) husks: "The 'husk', i.e. the physical universe; the 'kernel', i.e. the Divine attributes, which are its hidden ground." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3252) the (sphere) of the heavens: this expresses the ancient view that the earth is surrounded by concentric layers of seven heavenly spheres.

3. (3253) the (animal) spirit [rûH]: Nicholson translated, "the vital spirit." This is the invisible life-force that both humans and animals share. It is not the soul-spirit, because in the next line Rumi describes how the power of reason is superior to this (animal/vital) spirit.

4. (3253) The body (is) like a (long) sleeve: "i.e. like a long sleeve concealing the hand. For the simile, cf. IV 2775." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (3254) the (faculty of) reason flutters more secretly than the (animal) spirit: Nicholson corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "the intellect flies (moves) in a more occult manner than the vital) spirit." (from, "(your mental) perception makes its way to (apprehends) the (vital) spirit sooner (than it apprehends the intellect)."

6. (3254) (For) the senses find the way to the (animal) spirit more quickly (than to the intellect): Nicholson translated, "(your mental) perception makes its way to (apprehends) the (vital) spirit sooner (than it apprehends the intellect)." "Because the senses quickly find the way to the (animal) spirit and comprehend it, but not to the

intellect." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

7. (3256) make the copper's movement into gold by means of (alchemical) knowledge: refers to the effect of the "secret science" of alchemy, and its legendary ability to transform "base metals" such as copper into gold. It is not the copper's movement which changes to gold, but the copper itself. Perhaps Rumi is referring to the flowing motion of liquid copper in a furnace. Nicholson explained "the copper's movement" as follows: "i.e. the movements of the animal soul, which are dictated by passion and desire. The metaphor is used in the same way in v. 3003 supra." [= translated by Nicholson: "now the copper is overcome, the gold overpowers it."] (Commentary)

8. (3258) The spirit (capable) of (receiving Divine) inspiration is more hidden: "the Spirit of Divine Revelation (Universal reason, the Logos): its organs are the prophets and saints in whom it is immanent. Cf. IV 410 sqq., VI 2877 seq." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (3258) because it is (completely) invisible: Nicholson later made a minor correction of his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "because it is of the Unseen" (from,"because it is (of) the Unseen." This means is part of the invisible, non-material, side of reality, where the human soul and angels exist.

10. (3260) that (spirit) is superior in authority and power: this passage describes a series of levels, or layers within humanity (body, animal/vital spirit, intellect, spirit, and Revelation-inspired spirit) that perhaps parallel the later sufi teaching of "subtle centers" [laTâ'if]: the ego [nafs], the heart [qalb], the spirit [rûH], the mysterious [khafî], the deeply hidden [akhfâ] center [laTîfa]. These centers do not have pin-point locations like the "chakras" in Hindu yoga, but their location differs according to the experiences and development of different spiritual teachers.

11. (3261) since it is delayed (in understanding) until it becomes (like) that: "I.e. the intellectual man can never understand the spiritual man until he himself becomes spiritualised." (Nicholson, Footnote)

12. (3262) [the mysterious prophet] Khizr [khaZir]: this refers to the story of Moses and his encounter with "one of Our servants, whom We gave Mercy from Ourself and whom We taught knowledge from Our Presence" (Qur'an 18:65). He is unnamed in the Qur'an, but according to a saying [Hadîth] of the Prophet Muhammad his name was KhâDir (usually spelled "Khidhr," "Khizr" in sufi literature). Moses was allowed to follow this mysterious prophet

on a journey, with the provision that he not question his actions. Along the way, Khizr sunk a ship, killed a boy, and built up a fallen wall. Moses could not tolerate these seemingly very unjust actions and they parted ways, but not before Khizr explained the Divine Wisdom behind his (angel-like) actions: he was commanded by God to protect a people from a tyrannical king who was seizing ships to increase his military power; to spare the parents from raising a child who had an evil character, to be replaced with a pious and loving child; to protect the inheritance of two orphan exposed by the crumbling wall within which it was hidden. (18:78-82)

13. (3263) since he did not have his (advanced spiritual) state: Nicholson translated, "since he (Moses) had not his (Khadir's) state (of Divine inspiration)."

14. (3264) a (mere) mouse [mûshê]: "'mouse' or 'mole', a word chosen here because of its similarity (tajnís-i khattí) to mûsà [= Moses], signifies the muqallid [= imitator]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3266) the buyer of verified knowledge: Nicholson translated, "The purchaser of real knowledge..." And he explained: "Literally, 'the knowledge that is verified (by mystical experience).'" (Footnote)

16. (3267) "God as purchased": "Truly, God has purchased from the (true) believers their lives and their wealth and possessions. Paradise is theirs (in return)." (Qur'an 9:111) Nicholson, here, referred to commentary he made on related verses: I: 2709 ["the price to be paid for union with God is world-abandonment."]; II: 2437: ["God repays with the mystic's Paradise those who give up all for His sake."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (3268) The angels (were) the buyers of Adam's teaching: refers to a passage in the Qur'an (2: 31-33) in which God taught Adam "the names of all things" (interpreted by the sufis to mean the Names of God), which even the angels did not know. Then He asked the angels what they were and they replied, "May You be glorified! We have no knowledge except what you have taught us." Then God said to Adam, "O Adam, tell them (these) names," and Adam did so.

18. (3268) the devils and the jinn are not those who have access to his lessons: in the same passage in the Qur'an is the further account of how God commanded the angels to bow (in obeisance) to Adam, but Satan refused and was among the rejectors (2:34). Satan is usually considered one of the jinn, and therefore represents evil (meaning the devils, or evil ones, among the jinn. "But since the devils and jinn [= genies] do not have the disposition and capacity

[isti`dâd] for this knowledge, therefore they cannot enter with the group of the angels and are not given awareness (of it)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (3269) '(O) Adam, tell them the Names (of God)!': See note on the previous line. "Here 'Adam' represents the muhaqqiq, the owner of real knowledge, i.e. the Perfect Man [= a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240, which means the "completed" saint who reflects all the Divine Attributes]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (3271) since his place is in the (dark) earth: Nicholson translated, "because his place is in the earth (of the body)."

21. (3273) a scraper of morsels: Nicholson translated, "a nibbler." "The carnal reason (`aql-i ma`ásh) can satisfy all the needs of the 'mouse-soul.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (3274) without need, God the Glorious doesn't grant anything to anyone: "God gives to everything just that which its original nature and capacity (isti`dâd) require." (Nicholson, Commentary) "Because God Most Great doesn't grant anything to anyone without need and without capacity. But He gives a natural disposition and mind to every person according to the amount of his need and capacity in regard to everything. And therefore He guides him to an appropriate activity." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23. (3275) would never have created any (such place): This is a very different way of thinking about life on earth than modern theories of evolution. It presupposes "needs" of invisible spiritual forces (pre-existent souls, effects of the influence of Divine Attributes onto a physical level, etc. and the influences of various non-physical levels in between).

24. (3276) if this agitated earth had not been in need of mountains: Nicholson translated, "if this quaking earth had not needed mountains..." The Qur'an describes how God set up firm mountains to steady the earth from shaking (except when He wills). See Qur'an 16:15; 21:31, 31:10; 78:7.

25. (3279) He gives instruments to man in accord with the amount of (his) need: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "He (God) gives to Man instruments in proportion to his need." (from, "Man has instruments in proportion..."). "God Most High gives instruments and abilities [âlat wa qudrat] to man according to the amount of his need." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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chûn-ke da`wiyê raw-ad dar mulk-é pôst
maghz ân-é ke bow-ad, qishr ân-é ô-st?

chûn tanâzu` dar-fot-ad dar tang-é kâh
dâna ân-é kî-st, ân-râ kon negâh

pas falak qishr-ast-o nûr-é rûH maghz
în padîd-ast, ân khafî, z-în raw ma-laghz

jism Zâhir, rûH makhfî âmad-ast
jism ham-chûn âstîn, jân ham-chô dast

bâz `aql az rûH makhfî-tar par-ad
Hiss sôy-é rûH zû-tar rah bar-ad

jonbeshê bîn-î, be-dân-î zenda-ast
în na-dân-î ke ze-`aql âghanda-ast

tâ ke jonbesh-hây-é mawzûn sar kon-ad
jonbesh-é mes-râ ba-dânesh zar kon-ad

z-ân munâsib âmadan af`âl-é dast
fahm ây-ad mar to-râ ke `aql hast

rûh-é waHy az `aql penhân-tar bow-ad
z-ânke ô ghaybî-st, ô z-ân sar bow-ad

`aql-é aHmad az kasê penhân na-shod
rûH-é waHy-ash mudrak-é har jân na-shod

rûH-é waHyî-râ munâsib-hâ-st nêz
dar-na-yâb-ad `aql k-ân âmad `azîz

gah junûn bîn-ad, gahê Hayrân shaw-ad
z-ân-ke mawqûf-ast tâ ô ân shaw-ad

chûn munâsib-hây-é af`âl-é khaZir
`aql-é mûsà bûd dar dîd-ash kadir

nâ-munâsib mê-namûd af`âl-é ô
pêsh-é mûsà, chûn na-bûd-ash Hâl-é ô

`aql-é mûsà chûn shaw-ad dar ghayb band
pêsh-é mûshê khwad kiy-ast ay arjmand?

`ilm-é taqlîdî bow-ad bahr-é ferôkht
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chûn be-yâb-ad mushtarî, khwash bar forôkht

mushtarîy-é `ilm-é taHqîqî Haq-ast
dâyimâ bâzâr-é ô bâ-rawnaq-ast

lab be-basta mast dar bay`-o shirà
mushtarî bê-Had ke allâhu 'shtarà

dars-é âdam-râ fereshta mushtarî
maHram-é dars-ash na dêw-ast-o parî

âdam 'anabi'hum bi-'asmâ dars gô
sharH kon asrâr-é Haq-râ mô-ba-mô

3270 ân-chon-ân kas-râ ke kôtah-bîn bow-ad
dar talawwun gharq-o bê-tamkîn bow-ad

mûsh goft-am z-ân-ke dar khâk-ast jâ-sh
khâk bâsh-ad mûsh-râ jây-é ma`âsh

râh-hâ dân-ad walê dar zêr-é khâk
har Taraf ô khâk-râ kardast châk

nafs-é mûshê nêst illâ luqma-rand
qadr-é Hâjat mûsh-râ `aqlê deh-and

z-ân-ke bê-Hâjat khodâwand-é `azîz
mê-na-bakhshad hêch kas-râ hêch chêz

3275 gar na-bûdy Hâjat-é `âlam zamîn
n-âfrîdy hêch rabbu 'l-`âlamîn

w-în zamîn-é muZTarib muHtâj-é kôh
gar na-bûdy n-âfrîdy por shokôh

w-ar na-bûdy Hâjat-é aflâk ham
haft gardûn n-âwarîdy az `adam

âftâb-o mâh-o în estârag-ân
joz ba-hâjat kay padîd âmad `iyân?

pas kamand-é hast-hâ Hâjat bow-ad
qadr-é Hâjat mard-râ âlat deh-ad

3280 pas be-y-afzâ Hâjat ay muHtâj zûd
tâ be-jôsh-ad dar karam daryay-é jûd

în gadây-ân bar rah-o har mubtalâ

Hâjat-é khwad mê-nomây-ad khalq-râ

kôrî-wo shallî-wo bêmâriyî-wo dard
tâ az-în Hâjat be-jonb-ad raHm-é mard

hêch gôy-ad nân deh-îd ay mardom-ân
key ma-râ mâl-ast-o anbâr-ast-o khwân?

chashm na-n'hâd-ast Haq dar kôr-mûsh
z-ân-ke Hâjat nêst chashm-ash bahr-é nûsh

3285 mê-tawân-ad zîst bê-chashm-o baSar
fârigh-ast az chashm ô dar khâk-é tar

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Greatness of the Soul of the Saint (part one)

Mathnawi II: 3303-3334

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A stranger expressed blame toward a spiritual master[1] and the master's disciple gave an answer to him

3303 That one placed an accusation against a spiritual master, saying, "He's (doing) wrong and is not on the road of right conduct.

"He's a drinker of wine, a hypocrite, and a vile person. How is he a helper to (spiritual) disciples?"[2]

3305 The one (disciple) said to him, "Keep aware of (your) manners! Suspicion such as this toward the great ones is no little (matter).[3]

"(It is) far from him and far from those (spiritual) qualities of his that his purity should become muddied by a flood.[4]

"Don't place such false accusations upon the people of God! This is (merely) your imagination, (so) change the leaf (of paper to the other side).[5]

"This is not (true, what you are saying), but (even) if it is, O land-bird,[6] the Red Sea has no fear of (being polluted by) a corpse.[7]

"(The Master) is not less than two (large) jugs or small tank (of water) so that a drop (of filth) is able to take it out of business.[8]

3310 "The fire is not harmful to Abraham,[9] (but) tell anyone who is a Nimrod: 'Be afraid of it!'"

The (craving) ego is Nimrod and reason and spirit are (Abraham) the Friend (of God).[10] The spirit is (focussed) on the essential nature (of something), but the ego (is focussed) on (outward) signs and indications.

These indications of the road are for the traveller who becomes lost in the desert at every moment.

(But) for those who have arrived (to nearness with God) there is no (need for anything) except the eye and lamp (of the spirit);[11] they are freed from (any need) for signs and roads (for travelling anywhere).[12]

(And) if the man of attainment (to nearness with God) has mentioned any indication, he has spoken for the sake of (increasing) the understanding of the people of debate.[13]

3315 A father makes a "Tiy-tiy" (sound)[14] for the sake of a new (born) child, even though his intellect (is able to) calculate (the geometrical measure of) the whole world.

The master's learning does not become decreased in greatness if he says, "The (letter) 'a' doesn't have anything (to indicate its pronunciation)."[15]

(The teacher) must go beyond the (customary patterns of) his own language for the sake of instructing the closed-mouthed (child).

It is necessary to match his language so that he may learn knowledge and (mental) skills from you.[16]

Therefore, all the people are like the (spiritual Master's) children; this is required for the (spiritual) Master (to remember) at the time of (giving) advice and guidance.

[3319(a) As for the one who spoke evil (slander), the one who became filled with denial and deviated (belief)-- the (spiritual)

master's disciple[17]

[3319(b) Said to him, "Don't hit (your hand) against sharp sword. Take care, don't fight with the king or with the sultan.[18]

[3319(c) "If a pool of water inclines next to the ocean, (the latter) will tear it out by the roots of (its) existence.

[3319(d) "There's no ocean which has a (limited amount of) shore so that it might become darkened by (the presence of) your corpse."]

3320 Know (that) there is a (fixed) limit and amount (allowed) for denial [of Divine Truth],[19] (but) there is no boundary for the (spiritual) master and the master's (spiritual) light.

In the presence of the Limitless, anything limited is not [truly existent].[20] Everything except the Face of God is perishing.[21]

(In) the place where (the spiritual master) is, there is no (room for either) unbelief or belief--[22] because he is the kernel and these two (are only the external) color and skin.

These perishing things became a veil over the face (of the master),[23] like a hidden lamp underneath a (large) tub.

Therefore the (physical) head of the (master's) body is a veil over that (spiritual) 'head.'[24] In the presence of that 'head,' this bodily head is (like) an unbeliever."[25]

3325 Who is the unbeliever? The one (who is) ignorant of (the greatness of) (spiritual) master's faith.[26] Who is the corpse? The one (who is) unaware of (the greatness of) the (spiritual) master's soul.[27]

(Greatness of) soul is nothing except (spiritual) awareness during (times of difficult) trial:[28] whoever is more (spiritually) aware, his soul is greater.

Our soul (is certainly) greater than the soul of animals. (But) why? From the (point of) view that it has greater awareness.[29]

Therefore the angel's soul is greater than our soul, since it is (completely) free from the common (bodily) senses.[30]

And the souls of the lords of the heart[31] are greater than (those of) the angels. (So) abandon (your) confusion (about this).[32]

3330 (And) for that reason Adam is the object of their bows (of obeisance):[33] his soul is greater than their existence.

Otherwise, commanding the better one to bow (in obeisance) to someone more lowly would never be suitable.[34]

The Justice and Kindness of the Creator would never accept that a rose should bow (in obeisance) in front of a thorn.[35]

Since the soul (of the saint) has become greater [than the angel[36] (and) passed beyond the Limit.[37] The souls of all things are submissive to it--

3334 (Of) birds, fish, jinn,[38] and humans-- because it is greater and they are at a lower (level).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) spiritual master [shaykh]: literally, "an old man." Means a wise sufi master.

2. (3303) How is he a helper to (spiritual) disciples: "In other words, 'How is this kind of wicked shaykh able to be a be benefactor of disciples and enlighten their hearts?'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (3305) Suspicion such as this toward the great ones is no little (matter): "Especially to be considering major sins in regard to the (sufi) masters [mashâyikh].'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (3306) that his purity should become muddied by a flood: Nicholson translated, "... and far from those (saintly) qualities of his that his clear (spirit) should be darkened by a flood (of sin)."

5. (3307) change the leaf (of paper to the other side): "In other words, 'Don't regard the exterior, but look to the inward, so that you may see the true state (of the spiritual master).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (3308) O land-bird: "i.e. 'earth-bound.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (3308) the Red Sea has no fear of (being polluted by) a corpse: "Even if you pour the world's wine and other impure things into the ocean to its other side, taking (ritual) ablutions (from it for prayers) is (still) permissible." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (3309) not less than two (large) jugs or small tank (of water) so that a drop (of filth) is able to take it out of business: Nicholson translated, "is not less than the (statutory) two jugfuls or the small tank, so that a single drop (of impurity) should be able to disqualify him (for religious purposes)." This refers to the standard of the purity of water used for the required ritual washing prior to the five daily prayers. The standard is strict, but not so rigid as to be an undo hardship upon the people. Thus, in this case, if more than two drops of filth were to accidentally fall into a small tank of water (there is another standard in the case of wells), the water could not be used for the ritual washing (of the face, forearms and feet). For anyone who used it would not be in the required state of ritual purity and his or her prayer would not be legally valid. In this verse, Rumi suggests that even a certain amount of sin cannot spoil the spirituality of an authentic sufi master.

"According to Sháf`ite law, stagnant water used for ritual purification is regarded as undefiled when it amounts to what would fill two large jars (qullatán). Ghazáli (Ihyá, I 128, 20 cites a Hadíth to this effect. The Hanfites must perform their ablutions 'with running water, or from a tank or pool at least ten cubits in breadth and the same in depth' (Lane, 'The Modern Egyptians, I 85)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (3310) The fire is not harmful to Abraham: "Abraham, having broken the idols of his people, was cast by order of Nimrod into a fire, which God changed into a delightful rose-garden (I 790, III 1016 VI 4291). Cf. Qur. XXI 69.

10. (3311) (Abraham) the Friend (of God) [khalîl]: "And God took Abraham as a friend [khalîl-an]." (Qur'an 4:125) On the basis of this verse, the Prophet Abraham has been known by the title, the Friend of God [khalîlu 'llâh].

11. (3313) except the eye and lamp (of the spirit): Nicholson translated, "except the eye (of the spirit) and the lamp (of intuitive faith)..." "Nothing is (needed) by them except the eye of the heart and the lamp of (spiritual) certainty." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (3313) they are freed from (any need) for signs and roads (for travelling anywhere): "Signs and clues are for the carnal reason which has lost its way amidst the illusions of 'otherness', not for the

spirit that enjoys immediate contemplation of the One."
(Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (3314) for the sake of (increasing) the understanding of the people of debate: Nicholson translated, "in order that the dialecticians may understand (his meaning)."

14. (1315) Tiy-tiy" (sound): Nicholson explained that this onomatopoeic word occurs here "in the sense of 'childish language' but that the lexicons refer to it "...only in the sense of 'bird-call', i.e. a fowler's imitation of the note of the bird he wishes to decoy..." (Commentary)

15. (3316) The (letter) 'a' doesn't have anything (to indicate its pronunciation): this refers to the Arabic letter, "alif," which is a straight vertical line. It can only be spoken as such a line lacking diacritical markings from a hypothetical viewpoint, because such markings are required in order to indicate how a particular alif should be pronounced (such as with a particular vowel sound, skipped entirely, or blended with another letter).

16. (3318) It is necessary to match his language so that he may learn knowledge and (mental) skills from you: Here Anqaravi mentions a saying attributed to the Prophet which is often quoted by sufis--kallamû 'n-nâs `alà qadri `aqûli-him lâ `alà qadri `aqûli-kum ("Speak to the people according to the amount of their understanding, not according to the amount of your understanding"). (Commentary)

17. (3319a) the (spiritual) master's disciple: These four lines were added in the margin of the earliest manuscript. According to Nicholson, they do not occur in any of other earliest manuscripts.

18. (3319b) Take care, don't fight with the king or with the sultan: "(In other words), 'Be alert!'-- meaning, 'May it not be that you act quarrelsome and spiteful towards sultans and kings!'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (3320) Know (that) there is a (fixed) limit and amount (allowed) for denial [of Divine Truth]: "(It means), 'Know this: disbelieving denial [kufr] and sin have not found a way to the (exalted spiritual) level of the completed shaykh [shaykh-é kâmil = the perfected saint, a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240]. But if, supposedly, some actions and words resembling disbelief [kufr] were to be observed, the entire meaning of those actions is the essence of wisdom and for the sake of truth. And also know that there is a limit and (restricted) extent of disbelieving denial--this is known and understood by means of the Book (of the Qur'an)

and the Traditions (of the Prophet), but there is no boundary for the spiritual master and the light of the spiritual master.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (3321) In the presence of the Limitless, anything limited is not [truly existent]: "It means, 'The superabundance of things (in the creation) are (such) that they become annihilated and destroyed.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (3321) Everything except the Face of God is perishing [kullu shay-in ghayri wajhu 'llâh fanâ-st]: this is a paraphrase of a famous verse of the Qur'an, especially loved by sufis-- "Everything perishes except His Face [kullu shay-in hâlik-un illâ wajha-hu]." (28:88)

22. (3322) (In) the place where (the spiritual master) is, there is no (room for either) unbelief or belief: means that when the true spiritual master experiences Divine Reality directly, the beliefs of the mind in favor of this or against that have little relevance.

23. (3323) These perishing things became a veil over the face (of the master): "In other words, the face of permanence [baqî] becomes hidden underneath the veil perishing things [fanâ-hâ]..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (3324) is a veil over that (spiritual) 'head': Nicholson translated, "... is a screen to that (spiritual) head (source of mystic consciousness)..." And he explained: "The 'self' which is conscious of bodily existence is an 'infidel' because it denies the eternal Self, i.e. the Divine consciousness which is the essence of all things.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3324) (like) an unbeliever [kâfar]: this word (properly spelled "kâfir), is also spelled "kâfar" in Persian (and completes the rhyme here). This word (often mistranslated by the Latin Christian word "infidel") may be translated as "unbeliever," "denier," "rejecter" of God and of the revelation of the Prophets. Here, this denial is portrayed as also being toward the sufi saints (viewed as the successors of the Prophet Muhammad and the vice-regents of God). A similar word (unbelief, denial, rejection [kufr]) occurs in this section in lines 3319(a), 3320, and 3322. "'Unbeliever [kâfir]: idiomatically is said (to mean) 'cover' [sâtir].'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (3325) Who is the unbeliever? The one (who is) ignorant of (the greatness of) (spiritual) master's faith: "The mystic's faith has nothing to do with religious faith or unbelief: it consists in real experience of the Unity (tawhíd), and without this experience there

can be no spiritual life." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The unbeliever [kâfir] exists both according to the (mystical) Way as well as to the (religious) Law [sharî`at]. The unbeliever, according to the (religious) Law, is someone who completely denies God and everything which is on the side of God (such as) the prophets and messengers and whatever appears from them. And according to the people of the Law, any time someone denies on the inward (level) but affirms on the outward (level), they call him a believer [= because the Law judges who is a Muslim by what he says and does]. However, the people of the Way, who are Truth-seeing (and) don't rely only on the speech and actions of someone, don't (automatically) recognize him as a believer. But among them an unbeliever is someone who is unaware of the faith of the spiritual master-- who is the inheritor of the Prophet-- and (who) remains derived of having a faith like the faith of the spiritual master." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (3325) The one (who is) unaware of (the greatness of) the (spiritual) master's soul: Nicholson translated an equally correct translation, "One ignorant of the (spiritual) life of the Shaykh."

28. (3326) (Greatness of) soul is nothing except (spiritual) awareness* during (times of difficult) trial: Nicholson continued with his alternative translation of "soul" here (as "life"-- although he translates it as "spirit" in the following line) in this well-known verse, "(Spiritual) life is naught but knowledge in (the time of) trial: the more knowledge one has, the more (spiritual) life one has." "It means, 'If it happens that a soul is in a time of trial and tribulation, he is not unaware of God. Therefore, anyone's soul is greater and increased whose awareness and knowledge is returning to God (during such difficult circumstances).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (3327) it has greater awareness [khabar]: Nicholson translated "more knowledge." "For the reason that its knowledge and awareness of the reality of God Most High is greater." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (3328) the common (bodily) senses: "ordinary men are subject to 'the common sense' associated with 'phantasy' (khayál) and the discursive reason (`aql-i ma`ásh)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

31. (3329) the souls of the lords of the heart [jân-é khodâwand-án-é del]: Nicholson translated less literally, "the spirit of mystical adepts..." Rumi has called the sufi saint the "possessor of the heart" [SâHib-é del] (I: 722, 2433; II: 3473).

32. (3329) (So) abandon (your) confusion (about this): "(It means),

'Forsake confusion that sages have said the opposite of this. Don't give the words of those a opportunity to confuse you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

33. (3330) for that reason Adam is the object of their bows (of obeisance): Nicholson translated, "...Adam is their object of worship..." This is the sufi interpretation of the Qur'anic account of how God taught Adam the names (interpreted by the sufis as meaning the "Names of God"), which the angels did not know, then commanded them to bow to Adam, in acknowledgment of his superiority. All bowed, except Satan who refused (Qur'an 2:31-34) Bowing in obesisance (as before a king) is an affirmation of the acceptance of the superiority of the other-- and is different than bowing in worship.

34. (3331) would never be suitable: Nicholson translated, "Else, (why were they commanded to worship him?): it would not be at all a suitable thing to command the superior to worship an inferior."

35. (3332) The Justice and Kindness of the Creator would never accept that a rose should bow (in obeisance) in front of a thorn: "In other words, Adam is the Vice-Regent [khalîfa] of God. But (regarding) the angels and the rest of created subjects and human beings, the Justice of the Creator and the Wisdom of the Provider would not allow the one who is the Vice-Regent to bow in respect to (such) subjects and become obedient (to him). Rather it is just that the subjects, in facing (him), should demonstrate (such) reverence and become obedient and submissive to the Vice-Regent." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

36. (3333) Since the soul (of the saint) has become greater [than the angel]: refers to the greatness of the saints, called the "lords of the heart" whose souls are greater than those of the angels in line 3329.

37. (3333) passed beyond the farthest limit [intihâ]: Nicholson translated, "has passed beyond the utmost limit (reached by men and angels)..." Refers to Qur'anic verses which describe a part of the Prophet's ascension [mi`râj] into the Heavens when he saw the angel Gabriel for the second time: "And certainly he saw him during a second ascent, near the Lote-tree (beyond which is) the farthest limit [al-muntahà]. Near to it is the Paradise of Abode." (Qur'an 53:13-14) The general interpretation is that the Prophet was able to proceed further toward the Presence of God) than the angel Gabriel was allowed. The sufis extrapolate from this that the souls of the saints (which are regarded as the inheritors of the Prophet) are also able to go beyond the limitations of the angels. "Just as the soul (of the saint) has passed beyond the extreme limit, which is the place of arrival [mablagh] of the angels and the

farthest limit of [angelic] intellects and perception." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

38. (3334) jinn: a class of invisible creatures. The Qur'an says some are true believers in God, many are mischievous, and some are evil and demonic.

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Ta`na-zadan-é bêgâna dar shaykh wa jawâb-goftan-é murîd-é shaykh ô-râ

3303 ân yakê yak shaykh-râ tuhmat nehâd
k-ô bad-ast-o nêst bar râh-é rashâd

shârib-é khamr-ast-o sâlûs-o khabîS
mar murîd-ân-râ ko-jâ bâsh-ad mughîS

3305 ân yakê goft-ash adab-râ hôsh-dâr
khord na-b'w-ad în chon-în Zan bar kibâr

dûr az-ô-wa dûr az ân awSâf-é ô
ke ze-saylê têra gard-ad Sâf-é ô

în chon-în buhtân ma-neh bar ahl-é Haq
k-în kheyâl-é to-st, bar-gardân waraq

în na-bâsh-ad, w-ar bow-ad ay morgh-é khâk
baHr-é qulzum-râ ze-mordârê che bâk?

nêst dûna 'l-qullatayn-o HawZ-é khord
ke tawân-ad qaTra-y-ash az kâr bord

3310 ât'sh ibrâhîm-râ na-b'w-ad zeyân
har-ke nimrûdê-st gô mê-tars az ân

nafs nimrûd-ast-o `aql-o jân khalîl
rûH dar `ayn-ast-o nafs andar dalîl

în dalîl-é râh rah-raw-râ bow-ad
k-ô ba-har dam dar beyâbân gom shaw-ad

wâSil-ân-râ nêst joz chashm-o cherâgh
az dalîl-o râh-eshân bâsh-ad firâgh

gar dalîlê goft ân mard-é wiSâl
goft bahr-é fahm-é aSHâb-é jidâl
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bahr-é Tifl-é naw pedar tî-tî kon-ad
gar-che `aql-ash hindisa-yé gîtî kon-ad

kam na-gard-ad faZl-é ostâd az `ulû
gar alif chêzê na-dâr-ad goy-ad ô

az pay-é ta`lîm-é ân basta-dahan
az zabân-é khwad berûn bây-ad shodan

dar zabân-é ô be-bây-ad âmadan
tâ be-y-âmôz-ad ze-tô ô `ilm-o fan

pas hama khalq-ân chô Tifl-ân-é way-and
lâzim-ast în pîr-râ dar waqt pand

[3319(a) ân murîd-é shaykh bad-gôyanda-râ
ân ba-kufr-o gom-râhî âganda-râ

[3319(b) goft khwad-râ tô ma-zan bar têgh-é têz
hîn ma-kon bâ shâh-o bâ sulTân setêz

[3319(c) HawZ bâ daryâ agar pahlû zan-ad
khwêsh-râ az bêkh-é hastî bar kan-ad

[3319(d) nêst baHrê k-ô karân dâr-ad ke tâ
têra gard-ad ô ze-mordâr-é shomâ]

kufr-râ Hadd-ast-o andâza be-dân
shaykh-o nûr-é shaykh-râ na-b'w-ad karân

pêsh-é bê-Had har-che maHdûd-ast, lâ-st
kullu shay-in ghayri wajhu 'llâh fanâ-st

kufr-o îmân nêst ân-jâyê ke ô-st
z-ân-ke ô maghz-ast-o în dô rang-o pôst

în fanâ-hâ parda-yé ân wajh gasht
chûn cherâgh-é khufya andar zêr-é Tasht

pas sar-é în tan Hijâb-é ân sar-ast
pêsh-é ân sar în sar-é tan kâfar-ast

kî-st kâfar? ghâfil az îmân-é shaykh
kî-st morda? bê-khabar az jân-é shaykh

jân na-bâsh-ad joz khabar dar âzmûn
har-ke-râ afzûn khabar, jân-ash fozûn

jân-é mâ az jân-é Haywân bêsh-tar
az che? z-ân raw ke fozûn dâr-ad khabar

pas fozûn az jân-é mâ jân-é malak
k-ô munazzah shod ze-Hiss-é mushtarak

w-az malak jân-é khodâwand-ân-é del
bâsh-ad afzûn, tô taHayyur-râ be-hel

3330 z-ân sabab âdam bow-ad masjûd-eshân
jân-é ô afzûn-tar-ast az bûd-eshân

w-ar-na beh-tar-râ sujûd-é dûn-tarê
amr-kardan, hêch na-b'w-ad dar-khwarî

kay pasand-ad `adl-o luTf-é kerdegâr
ke golê sajda kon-ad dar pêsh-é khâr?

jân chô afzûn shod, goZasht az intihâ
shod muTî`-ash jân-é jumla chêz-hâ

3334 morgh-o mâhî-wo parî-wo âdamê
z-ân-ke ô bêsh-ast-o êshân dar kamê

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Miracles of Ibrahim son of Adham (part two)

Mathnawi II: 3335-3363

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3335 The fish became the needle-makers for his dervish garments;
they were following the needles (like) threads.

The remainder of the story about Ibrahim (the son) of Adham on the banks of the river

When the prince saw the effective (power) of the (spiritual) Master's command in regard to the coming of the fish, a (state of) ecstasy was disclosed to him.[1]

He said, "Ah! (Even) the fish is aware of the spiritual masters.[2]

Curses on a person who is driven out of a (sufi) gathering place![3]

"The fish are aware of the (spiritual) Master-- and we (are so) far away [from knowing him].[4] We (are) miserably deprived of this good-fortune, but they are blessed.[5]

He bowed (in obeisance) and went (away) sobbing and devastated. He became crazed from love of the opening of the door [to ecstasy].[6]

3340 So what are you [occupied with], O you (who have an) unwashed face?[7] With whom are you (engaged) in quarrel and in envy?

You are playing with the tail of a lion; you are charging (forth) in a plundering raid[8] against the angels.[9]

Why do you speak (so) badly of pure good? Take care, (and) don't regard that abasing (of a saint) as elevating (yourself)![10]

What is evil? The copper (which is) lacking and despised. Who is the (spiritual) Master?[11] The alchemical elixir (which is) without bound.

Even if the copper was not receptive (to transformation) by the elixir, the elixir never becomes copper by (contact with) the copper.[12]

3345 What is evil? An arrogant rebel (whose) actions (are as harmful as) fire. Who is the (spiritual) Master? The essence of the endless ocean.[13]

Fire is always made to be fearful of water.[14] (But) water is never afraid of burning.[15]

You are finding fault with the face of the moon. You are gathering thorns in a paradise.

O seeker of thorns, if you go into Paradise, you will not find any thorns there-- other than you.

You are (trying to) cover a sun within a clod of dirt. You are searching for cracks from a perfect full-moon.

3350 A sun which shines upon the world will never become hidden for the sake of a (blind) bat.

Faults become faults by the rejection (of the behavior) by the

(spiritual) masters.[16] Mysteries become mysteries because of their jealousy.[17]

At least, if you are far away from (being able to do them) service, be friendly (in your regard for them).[18] (And) be active and diligent in repentance,

So that a (sweet) breeze may reach you from that way. Why are you closing off the water of mercy because of (your) envy?

If you are far away, (at least) wag (your) tail (in a friendly manner from) afar[19] (and recall the verse), "Wherever you are, turn your faces."[20]

3355 When a donkey falls into the mud because of (an overly) swift pace, he moves frequently from determination to rise.

It doesn't make the place flat for the sake of being (there). (Rather) it knows that it isn't the place for living.

Your (common) sense has been less than the (common) sense of a donkey, since your heart has not jumped away from this mud.[21]

You interpret (Islamic law) and allow yourself (a legal) excuse[22] (in order to remain) in the mud, since you do not want to tear (your) heart away from it,

Saying (to yourself), "This is permitted for me (because) I am forced by necessity.[23] God won't blame a helpless one (such as me) due to (His Infinite) Kindness."

3360 But He has blamed you-- (yet), like a blind hyena, you don't see the blaming because of arrogant (self-) deception.[24]

(The hunters) say, "The hyena isn't in this place, so search outside, since he isn't in the cave."

They keep saying this and (easily) place ropes on him-- (while) he keeps saying (to himself), "They are unaware of me.

3363 "(Since) if these enemies were aware of me, they would never have called out, (saying) 'Where is that hyena?'"[25]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)

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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 1/17/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3336) a (state of) ecstasy was disclosed to him: Nicholson translated less literally, "he fell into an ecstasy."

2. (3337) the (spiritual) masters [pîr-ân]: literally, "elders." This is the Persian equivalent of the Arabic word "mashâyikh" (singular "shaykh), which also means "elders"-- but is a sufi term meaning "wise sufi elders" or "masters."

3. (3337) a (sufi) gathering place [dar-gah]: literally, "door-place," an idiom used for the court of a king. Later, the term was used for a (very simple) building where sufis met, viewed as the "court" of a dervish "king"-- sufi master [shaykh].

4. (3338) and we (are so) far away [from knowing him]: Nicholson translated, "and we afar (from him)!"

5. (3338) but they are blessed: Nicholson translated, "and they blest (with enjoyment of it)!"

6. (3339) He became crazed from love of the opening of the door [to ecstasy]: Nicholson translated, "he became mad for love of the opening of the door (to union with God)." "(It means), 'And the door of craziness became open due to love.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator on the Mathnawi, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

7. (3340) what are you [occupied with], O you (who have an) unwashed face: "In this passage I think the poet himself addresses any 'dirty fellow' who presumes to criticise the Pírs; it may, however, be directed by the Shaykh's disciple against the particular villain of the Story." (Nicholson, Commentary) "These verses are spoken by the disciple of the Shaykh at the rejection (by anyone) of the Shaykh. 'Therefore, O you who are inwardly of unwashed face, on what level are you? With whom are you quarreling and toward whom are you envying?' In other words, 'With what person are you quarreling and disputing? And with what person are you engaged in fault-finding? And in regard to whom are you envious?'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

8. (3341) you are charging (forth) in a plundering raid [tork-tâzî mê-kon-î]: literally, "you are making a Turkish assault." An idiom meaning a lightning raid in order to plunder.

9. (3341) against the angels: "i.e. 'you are insulting the angels, who paid homage to the Perfect Man [= a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240, which means the "completed" saint who reflects all the Divine Attributes of God] in the person of Adam." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3342) Take care, (and) don't regard that abasing (of a saint) as elevating (yourself): Nicholson translated, "Beware, deem not that lowness (villifying the saints) to be eminence!"

11. (3343) the (spiritual) Master [shaykh]: literally, "elder." Means a wise sufi guide [the equivalent word in Persian is "pîr"].

12. (3344) the elixir never becomes copper by (contact with) the copper: "The saint is able to make carnal folk spiritual; his perfection cannot be impaired by reprobates unsusceptible to holy influence." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (3345) The essence of the endless ocean: Nicholson translated, "The very Sea of Eternity." He added: "Or, 'the objective manifestation of the Sea.'" (Footnote)

14. (3346) Fire is always made to be fearful of water: "The fire of lust and passion dreads the murshid [= sufi master] who seeks to extinguish it." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3346) (But) water is never afraid of burning: "It means, 'The one who is the spring-source of light and pure water never fears burning from sensuality and the conflagration of animal qualities. So he has no fear.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (3351) (spiritual) masters [pîr-ân]: see above note on line 3343.
17. (3351) because of their jealousy: Nicholson corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "by their jealousy" (from, "by the jealousy of Pirs." "Being the touchstone of Reality, the saint rejects, and thereby stamps as evil, whatever is opposed to his own nature (cf. I 2478-2481 and note ad loc. ["The unbelievers falsely imagine that they reject the holy man who calls them to God. In truth it is he who rejects them, for it is the nature of reality to reject illusion. Had there been any spiritual affinity between him and them, he would have accepted them, and then they would have responded to his call. Faith is a gift of Divine grace: there can be no question of refusing it."]); he knows all things good and evil here and hereafter, and would make them known were he not jealous of revealing Divine mysteries." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (3352) At least, if you are far away from (being able to do them) service, be friendly (in your regard for them): Nicholson translated, "If you are far (aloof in spirit from the saints), at any rate be joined (with them) through (paying) respect (to them)."

19. (3354) If you are far away, (at least) wag (your) tail (in a friendly manner from) afar: Nicholson translated, "Though you are far aloof, at (that) distance wag your tail (ingratiate yourself with them)." Physical distance and a friendly-pleasing attitude are themes of this line and line 3352 (in contrast to Nicholson's interpretation of distance as aloofness).

20. (3354) "Wherever you are, turn your faces": "So wherever you are, turn your faces toward (the sacred Mosque) [= the Ka`ba]." (Qur'an 2:144) Slightly altered to fit the meter.

21. (3357) since your heart has not jumped away from this mud: "i.e. the world and the flesh, which... are 'a very miry slough'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (3358) You interpret (Islamic law) and allow yourself (a legal) excuse: Nicholson noted, "The three oldest MSS. [= manuscripts] read ta`wíl u rukhsat." (Commentary) However, he did not offer a correction (by adding the word "and") of his translation ("You interpret (some canonical text) as an indulgence (authorising you to stay) in the mud...").

23. (3359) This is permitted for me (because) I am forced by necessity: "Cf. supra, v. 520 [= translated by Nicholson: "(In case) of necessity a carcase is lawful (food)"] and note ad loc [= "Cf. Qur. V 5: 'if anyone without inclination to sin be forced by hunger (to eat what is unlawful)-- verily God is forgiving and merciful.'"]." (Nicholson, Commentary) (

24. (3360) like a blind hyena, you don't see the blaming because of arrogant (self-) deception: "If the carnal man counts on God to save him, he is greatly deceived: he cannot persist in sin with impunity; nay, the signs of his punishment are already apparent in the blindness and self-delusion with which God has afflicted him. This mode of Divine action (makr and istidráj [= trickery, seeking gradual removal (in order to punish)]) whereby the wicked are inspired with false confidence and insensibly led on to meet their doom, resembles a trick employed in order to capture the hyena." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3363) that hyena: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "that hyena" (from, "this hyena"). "Among the Arabs the hyena was proverbial for its

stupidity.... The poet makes use of the same illustration in a similar passage (IV 179 sqq.)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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3335 mâhiy-ân sôzan-gar-é dalq-ash shaw-and
sôzan-ân-râ reshta-hâ tâbi`i bow-and

baqiyya-yé qiSSa-yé ibrâhîm adham bar lab-é ân daryâ

chûn nafâZ-é amr-é shaykh ân mîr dîd
z-âmad-é mâhî shod-ash wajdê padîd

goft ah, mâhi ze-pîr-ân âgah-ast
shoh tanê-râ k-ô la`în-é dar-gah-ast

mâhiy-ân az pîr âgah mâ ba`îd
mâ shaqî z-în dawlat-o îshân sa`îd

sajda kard-o raft geryân-o kharâb
gasht dêwâna z-`ishq-é fatH-é bâb

3340 pas tô ay nâ-shoshta-rô dar chîst-î
dar nizâ`-wo dar Hasad bâ-kîst-î?

bâ dom-é shêrê tô bâzî mê-kon-î
bar malâyik tork-tâzî mê-kon-î

bad che mê-gôy-î tô khayr-é maHZ-râ?
hîn taraffu` kam shomor ân khafZ-râ

bad che bâsh-ad? mes-é muHtâj-é muhân
shaykh ke b'w-ad? kîmiyây-é bê-karân

mess agar az kîmiyâ qâbil na-bod
kîmiyâ az mess hargez mes na-shod

3345 bad che bâsh-ad? sar-kashê, âtesh-`amal
shaykh ke b'w-ad? `ayn-é daryây-é azal

dâyim âtesh-râ be-tarsân-and az âb
âb kay tarsîd hargez z-iltihâb?

dar rokh-é mah `ayb-bînî mê-kon-î
dar beheshtê, khâr-chîn-î mê-kon-î
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gar behesht andar raw-î tô khâr-jô
hêch khâr ân-jâ na-yâb-î ghayr-é tô

mê be-pôsh-î âftâbê dar gelê
rokhna mê-jôy-î ze-badr-é kâmilê

3350 âftâbê ke be-tâb-ad dar jahân
bahr-é khuffâshê ko-jâ gard-ad nehân?

`ayb-hâ az radd-é pîr-ân `ayb shod
ghayb-hâ az rashk-é îshân ghayb shod

bârê ar dûr-î ze-khidmat, yâr bâsh
dar nadâmat châbok-o bar kâr bâsh

tâ az ân râh-at nasîmê mê-ras-ad
âb-é raHmat-râ che band-î az Hasad?

gar-che dûr-î dûr, mê-jonbân tô dom
Haythu mâ kunt-um fa-wallû wajha-kum

3355 chûn karê dar gel fot-ad az gâm-é têz
dam ba-dam jonb-ad barây-é `azm-é khêz

jây-râ ham-wâr na-k'n-ad bahr-é bâsh
dân-ad ô ke nêst ân jây-é ma`âsh

Hiss-é tô az Hiss-é khar kam-tar bod-ast
ke del-é tô z-în waHal-hâ bar na-jast

dar waHal ta'wîl-o rakhSat mê-kon-î
chûn na-mê-khwâh-î k-az ân del bar-kan-î?

k-în rawâ bâsh-ad ma-râ, man muZTar-am
Haq na-gîr-ad `âjizê-râ az karam

3360 khwad gereft-ast-at, tô chûn kaftâr-é kûr
în gereftan-râ na-bîn-î az ghurûr

mê-gôy-and în jây-gah kaftâr nêst
az berûn jôy-îd, k-andar ghâr nêst

în hamê gôy-and-o band-ash mê-neh-and
ô hamê gôy-ad ze-man bê-âghah-and

3363 gar ze-man âgâh bûdy în `adû
kay nidâ kardy ke ân kaftâr kô?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Hidden Punishment

Mathnawi II: 3364-3397

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(when) upon something white.

When the pot becomes blackened, then after this no one will quickly see the effect of smoke upon it.
3375 The man (who is a) blacksmith-- when he is an Ethiopian, the smoke is the same color as his face.

(Whereas) the (light-skinned) Greek man-- when he is engaged in blacksmithing, his face becomes mixed with black and white from accepting the smoke.

He will then quickly know the effects of sin[4] so that he soon cries out, saying, "O God!"

(But) when he persists and (still) engages in bad works, and puts dust into the eyes of (his) thinking,[5]

He will not think of repentance again. Those sins will become (so) sweet to his heart that he will become devoid of Religion.[6]

3380 That regret and (pleas of) "O Lord!" (will then) have gone from him, (for) a five-fold (layer) of rust (will have) settled upon the (mirror of his) heart.[7]

The (layers of) rust (will have) started to eat his (mirror's) iron, (and) the rust (will have) begun to decrease its luster.

When you write upon white paper, the writing comes to be read (easily) by (a single) glance.

(But) when you write on top of a line (previously) written, the understanding (of it) doesn't come (easily),[8] (and) its reading becomes incorrect.

For that (additional) blackness has fallen upon blackness and both scripts have become darkened and obscure and do not yield any meaning.

3385 And if you write a third time on top of it, (then) you will make (it even) darker, like a soul full of its (own) evil.[9]

Then, what help (is there) except the refuge of (God) the (only) Helper? Hopelessness (is like) copper and it's (transformative) elixir is the (Divine) Glance.[10]

Place (all your) despairs before Him, so that you may
leap beyond incurable suffering.

When Shu'ayb told him these points (of spiritual truth),
roses blossomed in his heart from that spiritual breath.

His soul heard the inspiration from Heaven. (Yet) he
said, "If I am seized (in punishment), where is the sign?"

3390 (Shu'ayb) said, "O Lord! He speaks (in a way which)
rejects me, (and) he seeks the sign of being held in blame."

(God) said, "I am the Veiler (of sins). I will not tell
his secrets-- except (for) one secret by way of (giving) him
trial.[12]

"One sign of the (ways) that I am seizing him (is) that
he has (done) acts of devotion, fasting, and invocation of
prayer,

"And (also) of ritual prayer, charity, and others
besides-- but he doesn't have a single atom of spiritual
savor and delight.

"He does (many) acts of worship and lofty (pious) deeds,
but doesn't have a single atom of (spiritual) taste and
relish.

3395 "His devotion is excellent, but the inward spirituality
(is) not good. (There are) many walnuts, but no kernel
inside them."

(Spiritual) taste[12] is needed, so that acts of worship
may give fruit. (And) a kernel is needed, so that the seed
may produce a tree.

3397 A seed without a kernel will never become a young tree.
Form without spirit will become nothing except (vain)
imagination.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) (the Prophet) Shu`ayb: one of the Prophets mentioned in the Qur'an. "... the Midyanite prophet Shu`ayb (whom some identify with Jethro." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3370) has corroded (your) face inside of you: Nicholson translated, "hath marred the visage of thy heart."

3. (3371) Rusts upon rusts have collected upon your heart: The heart is compared to a rusty mirror (since mirrors used to be made from iron). "The gradually corrupting and deadening effects of sin upon the heart is likened to the slow accumulation of rust upon the face of a steel mirror. Cf. Qur. LXXXIII 14: 'nay, but that (sin) which they were committing hath become rust upon their hearts (rána `alá qulúbihim).' One the technical term rayn, see Kashf., Eng. 4 seq., 391[= Nicholson's translation of Hujwiri's Kashfu 'l-Mahjub]... The Prophet said: 'When a creature (`abd) commits a sin, a black spot appears on his heart. If he ask pardon of God, it will be rubbed off; but if he sin repeatedly, it will increase until his (whole) heart is blackened; and that is the (meaning) of rána [= rust] in the verse of the Qur'án.'" (Nicholson , Commentary)

4. (3377) He will then quickly know the effects of sin: "Then the one who has become illumined with the white light of Unity [tawHîd] upon his heart will quickly understand the effects of sin and he will quickly plead and wail toward the Court of God [dargâh-é khodâ]..." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from Persian).

5. (3378) and puts dust into the eyes of (his) thinking: "(It means), 'He causes the eye of his mind and thinking to be blind.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (3379) will become devoid of Religion: Nicholson translated, "he comes to be without the Faith (he turns infidel)." Later, he wrote, "Fa [= Anqaravi] renders this word (as I have done) by káfir [= unbeliever]; but 'undevout' suits the context better." (Commentary)

7. (3380) rust (will have) settled upon the (mirror of his) heart: This is referred to in the Qur'an: 'That which they have earned is rust [râna] upon their hearts' (83:14). The sufis have loved the traditional saying [Hadîth] attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "Truly for everything there is a polishing, and the polishing for the heart is the

recollection of God" [inna li-kulli shay-in Siqâlat-an wa Siqâlatu 'l-qulûb Zikru 'llâh]. Anqaravi quotes a different Hadîth: "qâla `alay-hi 's-salâm 'inna 'l-qulûbu taSadâ' kamâ yaSdâ' al-Hadîd.' qâlû wa mâ jalâ'û-hâ yâ rasûlu 'llâh? qâla Zikru 'llâh." (He said-- may peace be upon him, "Truly, hearts are rusted just as iron is rusted." They said, "And what is its polish, O Messenger of God?" He said, "Remembrance of God.")

8. (3383) the understanding (of it) doesn't come (easily): "It means, 'When the heart is (like) white paper, any time that you write an incorrect line upon it, that writing will be read (clearly) in the first glance..."

9. (3385) darker, like the soul full of its (own) evil: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "black as a soul full of wickedness" (from, "black as the infidel's soul").

10. (3386) like) copper and it's (transformative) elixir is the (Divine) Glance: a metaphor from alchemy, the supposed science of making an "elixir" which may transform copper into gold. Nicholson wrote that the word for "Glance, " naZar is equivalent to `ináyah, the Divine favour which transforms despair into hope. Fa [= Anqaravi] says that naZar here may signify 'expectation (intizár) of God's mercy'. Such expectation, however, is the 'gold' rather than the 'elixir'." (Commentary)

11. (3391) by way of (giving) him trial: "i.e. 'in order to test the sincerity of his repentance'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (3396) (Spiritual) taste: "The intended meaning of 'taste': it is purity and presence of heart. As long as there is no purity and presence of heart, acts of devotion will not yield produce and fruit." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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da`wî-kardan-é ân shakhS ke khodây ta`âlà ma-râ na-mê-gîr-ad gonâh wa jawâb-goftan-é shu`ayb-- `alay-hi 's-salaam-- mar ô-râ

3364 ân yakê mê-goft dar `ahd-é shu`ayb
ke khodâ az man basê dîd-ast `ayb
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3365 chand dîd az man gonâh-o jurm-hâ
w-az karam yazdân na-mê-gîr-ad ma-râ

Haq ta`alà goft dar gôsh-é shu`ayb
dar jawâb-é ô faSîH az râh-é ghayb

ke be-goft-î chand kard-am man gonâh
w-az karam na-g'reft dar jurm-am alâh

`aks mê-gôy-î-wo maqlûb ay safih
ay rahâ-karda rah-wo be-g'refta tîh

chand-chand-at gîr-am-o tô bê-khabar
dar salâsil mânda-î pâ tâ ba-sar

3370 zang-é tô bar tô-t ay dêg-é seyâh
kard sîmây-é darûn-at-râ tabâh

bar del-at zangâr bar zangâr-hâ
jam` shod tâ kôr shod z-asrâr-hâ

gar zan-ad ân dûd bar dêg-é nawê
ân aSar be-n'mây-ad ar bâsh-ad jawê

z-ân-ke har chêzê ba-Zid paydâ shaw-ad
bar sapêdê ân seyah roswâ shaw-ad

chûn seyah shod dêg pas ta'Sîr-é dûd
ba`d az în bar way ke bîn-ad zûd-zûd

3375 mard-é âhan-gar ke ô zangî bow-ad
dûd-râ bâ row-ash ham rangê bow-ad

mard-é rûmî k-ô kon-ad âhan-garî
rôy-ash ablaq gard-ad az dûd-âwarî

pas be-dân-ad zûd ta'Sîr-é gonâh
tâ be-nâl-ad zûd, gôy-ad ay alâh

chûn kon-ad aSrâr-o bad-pêsha kon-ad
khâk andar chashm-é andêsha kon-ad

tawba n-andêsh-ad, degar shîrîn shaw-ad
bar del-ash ân jurm tâ bê-dîn shaw-ad

3380 ân pashêmânî-wo yâ rab raft az-ô
shest bar âyîna zang-é panj-tô

âhan-ash-râ zang-hâ khwordan gereft
gawhar-ash-râ zang kam-kardan gereft

chûn newês-î kâgaZ-é espêd bar
ân nebeshta khwânda ây-ad dar naZar

chûn newês-î bar sar-é be-n'veshta khaT
fahm n-ây-ad, khwândan-ash gard-ad ghalaT

k-ân seyâhî bar seyâhî ôftâd
har dô khaT shod kôr-o ma`nîyê na-dâd

3385 w-ar seyom bâra newês-î bar sar-ash
pas seyah kard-î chûn jân-é por-shar-ash

pas che châra joz panâh-é châra-gar
nâ-omêdî mess-o iksîr-ash naZar

nâ-omêdî-hâ ba-pêsh-é ô neh-îd
tâ ze-dard-é bê-dawâ bêrûn jah-îd

chûn shu`ayb în nukta-hâ bâ ô be-goft
z-ân dam-é jân dar del-é ô gol-shekoft

jân-é ô be-sh'nîd waHî-yé âsmân
goft agar be-g'reft mâ-râ kô neshân?

3390 goft yâ rab daf`-é man mê-gôy-ad ô
ân gereftan-râ neshân mê-jôy-ad ô

goft sattâr-am na-gôy-am râz-hâ-sh
joz yakê ramz az barây-é ibtilâ-sh

yak neshân-é ân-ke mê-gîr-am ô-râ
ân-ke Tâ`at dâr-ad-o Sawm-o du`â

w-az namâz-o az zakât-o ghayr-é ân
lêk yak Zarra na-dâr-ad Zawq-é jân

mê-kon-ad Tâ`ât-o af`âl-é sanî
lêk yak Zarra na-dâr-ad châshnî

3395 Tâ`at-ash naghz-ast-o ma`nî naghz nê
jawz-hâ besyâr-o dar way maghz nê

Zawq bây-ad tâ deh-ad Tâ`ât bar
maghz bây-ad tâ deh-ad dâna shajar

3397 dâna-yé bê-maghz kay gard-ad nehâl?
Sûrat-é bê-jân na-bâsh-ad joz kheyâl

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Greatness of the Soul of the Saint (part two)

Mathnawi II: 3398-3423

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The rest of the story of the stranger who vented blame against the (spiritual) Master

3398 That vile man was speaking vain nonsense about the (spiritual) Master. The distorted-viewing mind is always seeing crookedly.[1]

(He was) saying, "I saw him among a (shameful) gathering (of people). He is one (who is) stripped and bankrupt of pious fear of God.[2]

3400 "And if there is no acceptance (of this) on your part, get up (these) nights (and go), so that you may clearly see the immorality of your master."

(During) the night he brought him to the side of a window. He said, "Observe the immoral and pleasure (-seeking) behavior!

"Observe the hypocrisy (during) the daytime and the immorality at night! (During) the day (he is) like Muhammad, (but like the Prophet's enemy) Bu Lahab[3] at night.

"He has been named God's servant[4] (during) daytime. (But at) night-- (and) we seek refuge in God (from this)-- (there is) a wine cup in (his) hand!"

(The disciple) saw a glass in the hand of that (spiritual) Master (which was) full. He said, "O Master, is there a (diseased) tumor on the neck[5] even in your case?

3405 "Didn't you say 'The Devil pisses into the wine cup sooner or later'?[6]

(The Master) said, "They have made my goblet so full
that a single wild rue seed can't be contained in it.[7]

"Look here! There's no room for an (extra) mote. Some
deceived person has heard (about) this situation wrongly."[8]

This is not (about)[9] the external goblet or the outward
wine. Consider this (outward appearance to be) far from the
(spiritual) master (capable of) perceiving the Invisible
(world).[10]

O fool! The "goblet of wine" is the (spiritual) being of
the master, within which the urine of the Devil can't find
(any) room.[11]

3410 He is filled and overflowing with the Light of God
(and) has broken the goblet of the body. He is Pure Light.[12]

If the light of the sun falls upon excrement, it is (still) the
same light;[13] it doesn't receive (any) impurity
(from it).

The Master said, "This is itself not a goblet and not
wine. Take care, O unbeliever! Come down (and) look at it!"

(The accuser) came and saw (that) it was pure honey.[14]
That miserable enemy became blind.[15]

(In) that moment, the Master told his disciple, "Go
(and) seek wine for me, O hero!

3415 "Since I have such a suffering (and) have become
afflicted by necessity. I have passed beyond extreme
hunger.[16]

"In (times of) necessity, any carcass is "pure" (and
lawful to eat)[17]-- may dust (full) of curses be upon the head
of the denier (of this)!"[18]

The disciple went around the taverns (and) tasted from
every (wine) jar for the Master.

(But) he didn't find wine in all the taverns: the wine
jars had become full of honey.

He said, "O drunkards! What is this situation? What (is)
the matter? I'm not finding wine in any jar."

3420 All the drunkards came to the Master, (they were) weepy-eyed (and) were beating on (their) heads (with their) hands.

(They said), "(O) most excellent Master, you came into the tavern (and) all the wines became honey because of your arrival.

"You have transformed the wine from being filthy.[19] Transform our souls also from being impure!"

3423 Even if the (entire) world (were to be) full (and) overflowing with blood, the servant of God would never consume (anything) except (what is) lawful.[20]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/8/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3398) The distorted-viewing mind is always seeing crookedly: Nicholson translated, "the squinting (envious) man is always of distorted understanding." He later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "the perverted intellect is always squinting (envious)." "(It means),'The careless and foolish mind of man is always seeing crookedly and understanding crookedly.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (3399) stripped and bankrupt of pious fear of God [taqwà]: means lacking in the reverential awe of God's Majesty and pious dread of God's Justice that strengthens a religious person's ability to lead a righteous and, in the case of a sufi master of saintly reputation, holy life.

3. (3402) like the Prophet's enemy) Bu Lahab: Abu Lahab (literally, "Father of Flame") was the nickname given to one of the Prophet Muhammad's worst and most dangerous pagan enemies.

4. (3403) He has been named God's servant [`abdu 'llâh]:

means one who is the surrendered slave of God, a Muslim (literally, "surrenderer) who is obedient to God's Will.

5. (3404) a (diseased) tumor on the neck: "'tumor', 'goitre', and metaphorically 'malady', 'vice'. See IV 3107." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (3405) Didn't you say, 'The Devil pisses into the wine cup sooner or later: This line was translated by Nicholson into Latin. He commented: "i.e. quickly, yet deliberately and with the determination to achieve his object..." (Commentary)

7. (3406) so full that a single wild rue seed can't be contained in it: means that the Master's cup is protected from being "poisoned" by any addition of the "Devil's urine."

8. (3407) has heard these words (of mine) wrongly: Nicholson translated less literally, "has wrongly apprehended this matter."

9. (3408) This is not (about): Rumi comments here.

10. (3408) the Invisible (world) [ghayb]: means the non-physical world, where the hidden realities of all things can be seen by those given the gift of such vision by God, as well as the dimension where spirits, angels, etc. dwell.

11. (3409) within which the urine of the Devil cannot find room: these words were translated by Nicholson into Latin.

12. (3410) He is Pure Light: "The master [shaykh] broke the cup of his (worldly) existence by erasing and annihilating (it). Therefore he became the essence of pure Light. The cup of the master's existence had become so subtle and rarefied that he had become the wine of absolute Light." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (3411) If the light of the sun falls upon excrement, it is (still) the same light: Nicholson referred to similar lines in the Mathnawi: "Cf. V 1258 sqq. and vv. 3343-3344 supra" [= Book II]. (Commentary)

14. (3413) (The accuser) came and saw (that) it was pure honey: Nicholson referred here to a similar line in the Mathnawi: II: 3569-72. (Commentary)

15. (3413) became blind: Nicholson translated, "became blind (with shame and confusion)."

16. (3415) I have passed beyond extreme hunger: Nicholson translated, "beyond starvation." And he explained: "Literally, 'the condition of one whose stomach is empty.'" (Footnote) In the case of starvation, Islamic law allows one to eat forbidden food in order to survive, such as the meat of a carcass or pig. Likewise, if one was in a state of extreme thirst and in danger of dying and the only liquid available was wine, it would be allowed.

"It means, 'I'm going to faint from extreme agony.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (3416) In (times of) necessity, any carcass is "pure" (and lawful to eat): "Qur. XVI 116: "He hath made unlawful to you only carrion and blood and swine-flesh and that which hath been slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah but whosoever is driven (to eat thereof), neither craving nor (willfully) transgressing. lo, then Allah is forgiving and merciful.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (3416) may dust (full) of curses be upon the head of the denier (of this): "(It means), "May dust (full) of curses be upon the head of the one who is unaware of (what) Islamic Law [sharî`at] (states about this).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (3422) You have transformed the wine from being filthy: means from having an Islamic legal status as an "unclean" beverage, since the drinking of wine is forbidden in Islam and judged as sinful.

20. (3423) he servant of God would never consume (anything) except (what is) lawful: Rumi comments here at the end of the story, asserting that the true saint is protected by God from eating or drinking anything forbidden as sinful in Islam. Nicholson interprets the "servant of God [banda-yé khodâ] to mean the "Perfect Man" (a term used in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240). He referred to his commentary on this term in I: 423, as one who "serves none other than God and loses himself in the Object of his devotion." And he referred to what he said on I: 1936: "According to Kásháni (Istiláhát, 91), it [= the Arabic name, `abdu 'llâh, "the servant of God"] is properly applied to none but Mohammed (to whom God has applied it: Qur. LXXII 19), and to the heads of the Súfí hierarchy (Aqtáb) as his spiritual heirs." (Commentary)

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baqiyya-yé qiSSa-yé Ta`na-zadan-é ân mard-é bêgâna dar shaykh

3398 ân khabîS az shaykh mê-lâyîd zhâzh
kazh-negar bâsh-ad hamêsha `aql-é kâzh

ke man-ash dîd-am meyân-é majlisê
ô ze-taqwà `âriy-ast-o muflisê

3400 w-ar ke bâwar nêst-at khêz embshab-ân
tâ be-bîn-î fisq-é shaykh-at-râ `ayân

shab be-bord-ash bar sar-é yak rôzanê
goft be-n'gar fisq-o `ishrat-kardanî

be-n'gar ân sâlûs-é rôz-o fisq-é shab
rôz ham-chûn muSTafà, shab bû lahab

rôz `abdu 'llâh ô-râ gashta nâm
shab na`ûZu bi-'llâh-o dar dast jâm

dîd shêsha dar kaf-é ân pîr por
goft shaykh-â mar to-râ ham hast ghor

3405 tô na-mê-goft-î ke dar jâm-é sharâb
dêw may mê-zad shetâbân-nâ-shetâb

goft jâm-am-râ chon-ân por karda-and
k-ândar-ô andar na-gonj-ad yak sepand

be-n'gar în-jâ hêch gonj-ad Zarra'ê?
în sokhon-râ kazh shenîda ghirra'ê

jâm-é Zâhir khamr-é Zâhir nêst în
dûr dâr în-râ ze-shaykh-é ghayb-bîn

jâm-é may hastîy-é shaykh-ast ay felêw
k-andar-ô andar na-gonj-ad bawl-é dêw

3410 porr-o mâl-â-mâl az nûr-é Haq-ast
jâm-é tan be-sh'kast, nûr-é muTlaq-ast

nûr-é khworshêd ar be-y-oft-ad bar HadaS
ô ham-ân nûr-ast, na-paZîr-ad khabaS
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shaykh goft în khwad na jâm-ast-o na may
hîn ba-zêr â munkir-â be-n'gar ba-way

âmad-o dîd angabîn-é khâS bûd
kôr shod ân doshman-é kôr-o kabûd

goft pîr ân dam murîd-é khwêsh-râ
raw barây-é man be-jô may ay keyâ

3415 ke ma-râ ranjê-st, muZTar gashta-am
man ze-ranj az makhmaSa be-g'Zashta-am

dar Zurûrat hast har mordâr pâk
bar sar-é munkir ze-la`nat bâd khâk

gerd-é khum-khâna bar-âmad ân murîd
bahr-é shaykh az har khumê ô mê-chashîd

dar hama khum-khâna-hâ ô may na-dîd
gashta bod por az `asal khumm-é nabîd

goft ay rend-ân che Hâl-ast în, che kâr?
hêch khummê dar na-mê-bîn-am `uqâr

3420 jumla-yé rend-ân nazd-é ân shaykh âmad-and
chashm-geryân dast bar sar mê-zad-and

dar kharâbât âmad-î shaykh-é ajal
jumla may-hâ az qudûm-at shod `asal

karda-î mubdal tô may-râ az HadaS
jân-é mâ-râ ham badal kon az khabaS

3423 gar shaw-ad `âlam por az khûn mâl-mâl
kay khwor-ad banda-yé khôd illâ Halâl?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Quarreling Over Names

Mathnawi II: 3679-3692, 3699-3705

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3679 Pass beyond (external) names and look at the (underlying) qualities,[1] so that the qualities may show you the way to the essence.

3680 The opposition (among) people takes place because of names.[2] Peace occurs when they go to the real meaning.

The argument of four persons over grapes, which each one had understood by a different name

A man gave four persons a silver coin. The (first) one (who was a Persian) said, "I will give this for (buying) some angûr."

An other one (who) was an Arab said, "No! I want `inab -- not angûr, O deceitful (man)!"

The (third) one was a Turk and he said, "This (coin) is mine.[3] I don't want `inab. I want üzüm."

The (fourth) one, an Anatolian Greek, said, "Quit (all) this talk! I want istâfîl."[4]

3685 In (their) disagreement, those individuals were (soon) in a fight -- since they were uninformed of the hidden (meaning) of the names.

They were striking at each other (with their) fists out of ignorance. They were full of foolishness and (were) devoid of knowledge.

If a master of (the meaning of) secrets, a venerable one (with knowledge) of numerous languages,[5] had been there, he would have given them reconciliation and peace.

Then he would have said, "By means of this one silver coin, I will grant the wishes of all of you.

"This coin will cause effects such as these when you submit (your) hearts (to me) without deceit.
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3690 "Your one coin will become (like) four (coins) for the desired (result). (And) four enemies will become (as) one from unity (of friendship).

"The words of each one of you offer (only) fighting and separation. But my words will bring you harmonious agreement.

3692 "Therefore, you be quiet (and) stay silent![6] So that I may become your tongue for (needed) conversation."

. . . . . .

3699 Tranquillity and peaceful association[7] come from (hearing) the sayings of the spiritual master,[8] (but) the words of envious people[9] bring discord and separation.[10]

3700 Such as (in the case of) Solomon, who rushed from the direction of the (Divine) Presence (as a Messenger of God),[11] for he understood the languages of all birds.[12]

During the era of his just (rule), the deer obtained friendship with the leopard and emerged from conflict and war.

The pigeon became safe from (the clutches of) the hawk's talons, (and) the sheep did not (need to) maintain (fear and) avoidance of the wolf.

(Solomon) became a mediator between enemies; he became a (maker of) unity among (creatures that) beat (their) feathers.[13]

You are like an ant, running for the sake of a seed (of grain). Hurry (and) look for (one like) Solomon![14] Why are you (going) astray?

3705 As for the seeker of grain, the seeds are (used as) a trap for him.[15] But the seeker of (one like) Solomon has both ["Solomon" and "grain"].[16]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](3679) look at the (underlying) qualities: "i.e. 'contemplate the Divine attributes in the hope that you may be invested with them and led to mystical union with the Essence'." (Nicholson,

Commentary)

"In other words, 'Pass on from various Names (of God) and detach (yourself from) looking at different Attributes -- for each Name has been placed to correspond to a single Attribute-- so that those numerous Attributes may give you an indication of the way toward the Essence of the One endowed with (such) qualities. (And) so that you may contemplate the Essence of the Uniquely One, which manifests with different glorious Attributes and various Actions, and become free from skepticism and doubts.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

[2](3680) The opposition (among) people takes place because of names: "(It means), 'The differences among mankind began because of (the differences between) names -- a time which departed with (the understanding of) the (real) meaning (and when) peace and tranquillity were apparent.... But when the real meaning is found, in that moment peace and tranquillity are (also) found.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[3](3683) mine [banom]: "modern Turkish 'benim.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[4](3684) istâfîl: Nicholson noted that this derives from (the more common Greek word) "staphulê." (Commentary)

[5] (3687) (with knowledge) of numerous languages: "i.e. familiar with the realities underlying all names and forms of expression. Cf. I 1205-1207[= trans. by Nicholson: "To speak the same tongue is a kinship and affinity: a man, (when he is) with those in whom he cannot confide, is like a prisoner in chains. Oh, many are the Indians 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."] and v. 3742 infra [= trans. by Nicholson: "Until the spiritual Solomon, skilled in tongues, shall intervene, this duality will not disappear"]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[6](3692) stay silent: Qur'an 7:203. ". . . and when the Qur'án is recited, listen to it and keep silence (wa-ansitú), that ye may obtain mercy.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[7](3699) Tranquillity and peaceful association [jam`iyyat]: Nicholson translated, "union (concord)."

[8](3699) the spiritual master [shaykh]: literally, "old man." Means, in

sufism, a master of the Islamic mystical path.

[9](3699) envious people [ahl-é Hasad]: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on two early manuscripts (which have "ahl-é jasad) to "the words of the corporealists (materialists)" (from, "the words of the envious"). "Read 'ahl-i jasad,' 'unspiritual men', with the two oldest MSS." (Commentary) However, the edition used here of the Mathnawi by Tôfîq Sobhânî, which is based on the oldest manuscript, has "ahl-é Hasad."

[10](3699) bring discord and separation: "(It means), 'But the words of envious people lead the heart to discord, separation, and dispersion.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[11](3700) who rushed from the direction of the (Divine) Presence (as a Messenger of God): "In other words, 'He was sent from nearness to the Presence of God Most High for the sake of inviting the people to [return to the one] God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[12](3700) Such as (in the case of) Solomon. . . for he understood the languages of all birds: According to the Qur'an, Solomon was taught by God to understand the "language of the birds" ["manTiqu 'T-Tayr," Qur'an 26:16-28]. The great Persian poet, `Attâr (d. circa 1225 C. E.), Rumi's predecessor, composed a famous sufi work named the "Language of the Birds" using this phrase from the Qur'an. For the story in the Mathnawi, see I: 1202-33.

[13](3703) he became a (maker of) unity among (creatures that) beat (their) feathers: "In other words, by means of the peace-making of Solomon, friendship and companionship became manifest among the (various kinds of) birds." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[14](3704) look for (one like) Solomon: "i.e. a murshid [= a spiritual guide]." (Nicholson, Commentary) For the connection between "You are like an ant" and "look for (one like) Solomon," see Qur'an 27:18-19, where Solomon understood the speech of an ant.

[15](3705) the seeds are (used as) a trap for him [dâna-ash dâmê shaw-ad]: Nicholson translated, "his grain becomes a snare..." However, Anqaravi read it as, "... the seed becomes a trap for his sake," which makes more sense. (Commentary)

[16](3705) But the seeker of (one like) Solomon has both ["Solomon" and "grain"]: "In other words, 'For the seeker of the food of egotism [ghaZây-é nafs], the food becomes a snare and causes deception and loss for him. But for the one who is a seeker of a true Solomon, both a true Solomon--who was his sought object -- as well as physical and spiritual nourishment are gained.'"

(Anqaravi, Commentary)

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3679 dar-goZar az nâm-o be-n'gar dar Sifât
tâ Sifât-at rah nomây-ad sôy-é Zât

3680 ikhtilâf-é khalq az nâm ôftâd
chûn ba-ma`nà raft, ârâm ôftâd

munâza`at-é chahâr kas jehat-é angûr ke har yakê ba-nâm-é dîgar fahm karda bûd ân-râ

châr kas-râ dâd mardê yak deram
ân yakê goft în ba-angûrê deh-am

ân yakê dêgar `arab bod goft lâ
man `inab khwâh-am na angûr ay daghâ

ân yakê torkê bod-o goft în ban-om
man na-mê-khwâh-am `inab khwâh-am ,z,m

ân yakê rûmî be-goft în qîl-râ
tark kon, khwâh-êm istâfîl-râ

3685 dar tanâzu` ân nafar jangî shod-and
ke ze sirr-é nâm-hâ ghâfil bod-and

mosht bar-ham mê-zad-and az ablahî
por bod-and az jahl-o az dânesh tohî

SâHib-é sirrê, `azîzê Sad zabân
gar body ân-jâ, be-dâdî SulH-éshân

pas be-goftî ô ke man z-în yak deram
ârzôy-é jumla-tân-râ mê-deh-am

chûn-ke be-s'pâr-êd del-râ bê-daghal
în deram-tân mê-kon-ad chand-în `amal

3690 yak deram-tân mê-shaw-ad châr al-murâd
châr doshman mê-shaw-ad yak z-ittiHâd

goft-é har yak-tân deh-ad jang-o firâq
goft-é man âr-ad shomâ-râ ittifâ q
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3692 pas shomâ khâmôsh bâsh-êd 'anSitû
tâ zabân-tân man shaw-am dar goft-o gô

. . . . . .

3699 az HadîS-é shaykh jam`iyyat ras-ad
tafriqa âr-ad dam-é ahl-é Hasad

3700 chûn sulaymân k-az sôy-é Hazrat be-tâkht
k-ô zabân-é jumla-yé morgh-ân shenâkht

dar zamân-é `adl-ash âhû bâ palang
uns be-g'reft-o berûn âmad ze-jang

shod kabûtar âmin az changâl-é bâz
gôsfand az gorg n-âward iHtirâz

ô meyânjî shod meyân-é doshman-ân
ittiHâdê shod meyân-é par-zan-ân

tô chô mûrê bahr-é dâna mê-daw-î
hîn sulaymân jô, che mê-bâsh-î ghawî?

3705 dâna-jô-râ dâna-ash dâmê shaw-ad
w-ân sulaymân-jôy-râ har dô bow-ad

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Real Beloved Is Not The Form

Mathnawi II: 679-722

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679 The seal of God is upon the hearing[1] and sight.[2] (For) in (behind) the veils are many [subtle] forms and sounds.

680 He causes to be sent to the eyes that which He wills of beauty, perfection, and amorous looks

And He sends to the ears that which He wills of (mystical) concerts,[3] good news, and (ecstatic) shouts (of longing).

Existence is full of remedies, (but there are) no remedies for you as

long as God doesn't open a window for you.

Although you are heedless of it now, God will make it clear (to you in) the time of need.[4]

The Prophet said,[5] "God Most Glorious created a remedy for every pain."

685 But you won't find the color or sent of that remedy for your pain without His command.

O remedy-seeker, hurry up (and) set your eyes on non-existence,[6] like the eyes of someone killed[7] (which are turned) toward the spirit.

This world has become visible by means of the Directionless, since world was placed (here) by the Placeless.[8]

Turn back from existence (and go) toward non-existence, (if) you are a seeker of the Lord and pious and godly.[9]

This non-existence[10] is the place of income, (so) don't flee in fear of it. (But) this existence of "more and less" is the place of expense.

690 Since non-existence is the workplace for the action of God, who is there in the world of existence except (those who are) useless.[11]

O Most Kind Friend! Teach us precise and subtle and words--those which may bring Your Mercy.

The prayer (is) from You, as well as the answer. (And) protection (is) from You, as well as awe.

If we spoke wrongly,[12] You correct it, (for) you are the Corrector, O King of speech!

You possess the alchemy, (by) which You may transform it. Even if it is a river of blood, You may make it a (pure) Nile.[13]

695 Alchemies such as this are Your work, and elixirs[14] such as these are Your secrets.

You beat water and earth together, (and) from water and clay You made the bodily form of Adam.[15]

You gave him lineage and marriage[16] and maternal and paternal

uncles, together with a thousand worries, joys, and sorrows.

(Once) again, You have given liberation to some,[17] (whom) you have granted separation from these sorrows and joys.

You have take (that one away) from temperament, relatives, and family connections (and) You have made every good thing (in the world) ugly in his eyes.

700 He rejects everything perceptible to the senses, and he makes that which is not visible (to be his) support.

(Then) his love is visible and his Beloved is hidden; the Friend (is) beyond, (but) the His afflictions[18] (upon the lovers are) in the world.

Abandon these[19] loves for an image. [Real love) isn't for the form or face of the lady.

That which is the (real) beloved is not the form, whether (it is) love for (something in) this world or the (next) world.[20]

(And as for) that which you have become the lover for (its) form, why did you let go of it when its soul went beyond?

705 Its form is (still) in place, (so) what is this weary disgust about? O lover, search for who your beloved (really) is.

If the beloved is that which is perceptible to the senses, (then) whoever has perception would be a lover (of that beloved).[21]

Since that love (which is real) increases faithful devotion, the (change of) form never changes faithfulness.[22]

The sun's rays were shining on the wall, (but) the wall obtained (only) a borrowed radiance.[23]

O simpleton! Why do you bind (your) heart to a clod of earth? Seek back the source which is shining continually.

710 O you who are both the lover of your intellect (and also) seeing yourself (as) greater (in regard) to form-worshippers,

It[24] is a ray of the (Universal) Intellect (shining) upon your perception and senses. Know (that) it is (something) borrowed, (like) gold upon your copper.[25]

Beauty in humans is like gold coating. Otherwise, how did your

beloved become a worn out old donkey?

She was (like) an angel, (but) she became (ugly) like a demon.
Because that beauty and excellence in her was (something)
borrowed.

Bit by bit, that beauty is taken.[26] (And) by degrees, the young
plant becomes dried-up.

715 Go (and) recite (the verse), "(If) We grant him long life, We
reverse him."[27] (So) seek the heart, (and) don't set (your) heart on
(worthless) bones.

For the beauty of the heart is the enduring beauty; its (good)
fortune is the cupbearer[28] of the Water of (Eternal) Life.[29]

It is both the liquid, the cupbearer, and the drunkard.[30] All three
will have become one when your talisman (is) shattered.[31]

You can't know that Oneness by means of analogy and reasoning.
O ignorant man, don't talk nonsense, (but) worship and serve
(God)!

Meaning and significance for you[32] is (what has) form and (is)
borrowed.[33] You are happy with (outward) proportion and
rhyme.[34]

720 (But real) meaning and significance is that which seizes[35] you
and makes you become without need of form.

(Real) meaning and significance is not that which makes
(someone) blind and deaf, (or which) makes a man more a lover of
form.

722 The blind man's portion is sorrow-increasing thoughts. (But)
the portion for the (perceiving) eye's is thoughts about passing
away (from forms).[36]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (679) the hearing: Just prior to this line is the story of the greedy

pauper who was imprisoned because he deliberately incurred debts he was too lazy to pay back. But he ate so much of the other prisoners' food that they complained bitterly to the judge and asked his help. The judge ordered that the pauper be taken all around the city together with drummers and criers to announce that no one should sell anything to the man on credit or lend him any money, because the judge would not put him in prison again. To carry out the judge's order, an officer seized the camel of a Kurdish wood seller, put the pauper on the camel, and led an entourage which made the proclamation throughout the city. The owner of the camel, whose protests were ignored, ran behind. At the end of the day, the pauper climbed down from the camel and the owner demanded that he pay him for the use of his camel. The pauper said (as translated by Nicholson): "'Why then,' he rejoined, 'have we been going round (the city) until now? Where are your wits? Is nobody at home? The (sound of the) drum (giving notice) of my insolvency [= indebtedness] reached the Seventh Heaven, and you have not heard the bad news! You ear has been filled with foolish hope; (such) hope, then, makes (one) deaf (and) blind, my lad.'" (674-676)

2. (679) The seal of God is upon the hearing and sight: "Have you considered the one who takes his own vain desire as his deity? And God has (thereby) led him astray, knowing (him as such), and has sealed his hearing and his heart and put a veil over his sight. Who, then, will guide him after God (has withdrawn His guidance)?" (Qur'an 45:23) The preceding story about the foolish Kurd can be seen as an illustration of this verse. Another related verse is, "Say: 'Have you considered that if God took away your hearing and your sight and sealed your hearts, is there a deity other than God who could bring it back to you?'" (Qur'an 6:46) Nicholson explained, "People like the Kurd are blinded by cupidity [= greed] and self-interest: they perceive only the phenomenal forms by which Reality is veiled." (Commentary)

3. (681) (mystical) concerts [samâ`]: Nicholson did not bring out the full meaning here in his translation ("of music"). This is a technical sufi term which means ecstatic listening, chanting, singing, moving, and sometimes dancing and whirling as a result of listening to mystical music and poetry. Sometimes the dervishes would become so spiritually moved that they would shout their feelings of ecstatic joy or longing sorrow for God.

4. (683) the time of need: "The cure for all the pains of the present life is the revelation of Beauty and Love which God bestows on those who in their distress turn to Him with heartfelt longing and humble prayer." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (684 The Prophet said: A translation of the Hadíth [= traditional saying of the Prophet Muhammad]: inna 'lláha khalaqa li-kulli dá'in dawá'an" [= Truly, God has created a remedy for every illness] (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (686) on non-existence: Nicholson translated, "on non-spatiality" and added a footnote-- "I.e. the Divine consciousness which transcends space."

7. (686) like the eyes of someone killed: Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "like the eye of one who is killed" (from, "as the eye of one (about to be) killed"). He explained, "At the moment of death the eye follows the flight of the departing spirit. Cf. the Hadíth: inna 'l-rúha idhá qubida tabi`ahu 'l-basar." [= When the spirit is seized, the eyes follow it] (Commentary)

8 (687) the Placeless: Nicholson translated, "This (spatial) world has been produced from that which is without spatial relations, for the world has received (the relation of) place from placelessness."

9. (688) pious and godly [rabbânî]: Nicholson translated, "and belong to the Lord." Nicholson translated "al-rabbâniyîn" as "the godly" in Book I, Preface, which he explained as meaning, "the men of God." (Commentary)

10. (689) This non-existence: "'Non-existence' (`adam), i.e. the immaterial world in which the essence of things (a`yán-i thábitah) exist as ideas in the Divine Mind, is a 'place of income' in the sense that the Súfí who has risen to this plane of mystical experience through the passing-away of his contingent existence (faná-yi hasti-yi imkání) is endowed with real being and everlasting spiritual life (cf. V 1019 sqq., VI 1360 sqq.). On the contrary, the world of 'more and less' (i.e. contingency and change) is a 'place of expenditure', i.e. loss of reality and dissipation of spiritual goods." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (690) except (those who are) useless: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "in the world of (phenomenal) existence, who is (to be found) except the idle?" (from, "outside of the workshop there is (only) worthlessness"). And he explained: "Since God, working in the unseen factory of 'non-existence', is the only real Agent in the universe, it follows that all existence and action other than His is devoid of reality and value. In the second hemistich G [= the "Konya," or earliest manuscript] and most MSS. have the reading of... 'Who is there in the world of material existence that is not (really) idle?'" (Commentary)

12. (693) If we spoke wrongly: "Probably the poet is referring to his discourse on 'non-existence', which might be misunderstood and used as an argument for necessitarianism (jabr)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (694) a (pure) Nile: refers to one of the plagues sent by God to Egypt (mentioned in Qur'an 7:130), the plague of blood. Nicholson commented: "Conversely, God made the Nile a river of blood for the people of Pharaoh. According as He wills, error becomes truth or truth error." (Commentary) Rumi has a story (beginning at IV: 3430) which tells how, when the Israelites drank from the Nile, it was pure water, but for the Egyptians it was blood. Rumi also refers to it (in Book I, Preface, translated by Nicholson) in another place (as an analogy about the Mathnawi): "... and like the Nile of Egypt it is a (pleasant) drink to them that endure patiently, but a grief to the people of Pharaoh and the unbelievers..."

14. (695) elixirs: refers to the transforming agent ("al-iksîr," in Arabic, from the Greek word "kseros") of the science of alchemy ("al-kîmiyâ," in Arabic), also known as the "philosopher's stone." This is the secret science that supposedly was able to transmute "base metals" such as lead into gold and silver. Rumi uses the terms of alchemy to symbolize spiritual transformation.

15. (696) bodily form of Adam: "And He is the one who created man from water" (Qur'an 25:54). "When your Lord said to the angels, 'Truly, I am going to create a human being from clay. And when I have formed him completely and breathed into him of My spirit..." (38:71-72)

16. (697) You gave him lineage and marriage: "And He is the one who created man from water. Then He made for him relationships of lineage [nasab-an] and marriage..." (Qur'an 25:54).

17. (698) some: "i.e. mystics who have died to self." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (701) afflictions [fitna]: means the trials, discord, disturbances, disruptions which the lover must suffer in his yearning passion for union with the beloved-- here, meaning God.

19. (702) Abandon these: Nicholson read this line differently and translated, "Give up this (belief). Loves (felt) for what is endued with form have not as their object the (outward) form or the lady's face." Regarding his parenthetic explanation of "belief," he added in a footnote: "I.e. the belief in phenomena." And he further explained: "The preceding words (fitna-i ú dar jahán) [= "His fascination is in the world"] might seem to imply that phenomenal

form (súrat) can be an object of love. Hence the poet says, 'Dismiss this idea from your mind', and in the following passage explains that the real object of all love is spiritual." (Commentary)

20. (703) this world or the (next) world: means that the real beloved (God) is beyond any attractive form in this world or in Paradise.

21. (706) would be a lover (of that beloved): Nicholson later corrected his translation of this line, to "... would be in love (with her)" (from, "would be in love (with it)." And he explained: "I.e. 'if a woman's appearance were the true source of attraction, every one who saw her would be attracted in the same way'." (Commentary)

22. (707) the faithfulness: Nicholson later improved his translation to, "Inasmuch as constancy is increased by love, who is it that the form (the supposed object of love) alters constancy (into inconstancy)?" (from, "... is increased by that (spiritual) love, how is constancy altered (impaired) by the (decay of the material) form?"). And he explained: "The poet has demonstrated that if the object of lover were the sensible form, the mere fact of the spirit's leaving the body at the moment of death would make no difference to the lover, because (as he now adds) the fruit of love is constancy. Why, then, do lovers change as soon as life departs from the form which they loved? The reason must be that they loved something besides the form itself.... The point is that love remains faithful to its object: constancy is inseparable from love. Therefore, on the hypothesis that the 'form' is the object of love and does not disappear when the spirit flies away, its lover must continue to be in love with it. Since this conclusion is notoriously untrue, the premise on which it is based falls to the ground." (Commentary)

23. (708) a borrowed radiance: "Human (and all phenomenal) beauty is a reflexion of the Divine (Jamál) [= Beauty]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

24. (711) it: means your individual intellect, which is a particular manifestation of the Universal Intellect.

25. (711) gold upon your copper: means that your individual ability to think and reason appears "brighter" to you because of a quality which you have "borrowed" for a limited time-- but it is not your quality.

26. (714) that beauty is taken: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "they take away that beauty" (from, "He (God) takes away that beauty").

27. (715) We reverse him: "And if We grant him long life, We reverse

him in nature. Won't they understand?" (Qur'an 36:68) Means that if God grants long life to someone, that person will eventually decline and become as weak and helpless as a small child.

28. (716) its (good) fortune is the cupbearer: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "its fortune gives to drink..." (from, "its lips give to drink...") The cupbearer [saqî], literally, "water-carrier," is a frequent term in Persian literature. It means the dispenser of pure water, or wine-- which are symbols of spiritual blessings in sufi poetry.

29. (716) the Water of (Everlasting) Life: the legendary Fountain of Eternal Youth. Whoever found this fountain and drank from it was said to have become immortal. It is a frequent metaphor in Rumi's poetry.

30. (717) the liquid, the cupbearer, and the drunkard: Nicholson translated, "Truly it is both the water and the giver of drink and the drunken..." He explained: "Cf. Báyazíd's saying: 'I am the wine-drinker and the wine and the cup-bearer', and 'I came forth from Báyazíd-ness (individuality) as a snake from its skin. Then I looked and saw that lover, beloved, and lover are one, for in the world of Unity all can be one'. Mystical experience transcends the logical distinctions of subject, object, and attribute." (Commentary)

31. (717) when your talisman (is) shattered: "i.e. 'when your illusion of individuality is destroyed'." (Nicholson, Commentary) Talismans were pieces of clay with magical inscriptions written on them. They were placed in the vicinity of treasures as a magical protection. For Rumi, the talisman symbolizes the body, which when "destroyed" reveals the spiritual treasure of the spirit. Similarly, he said that treasures are hidden in ruins, so one should destroy the ruin of the body (meaning when the power of bodily and egoistic desires is broken) in order to find the treasure.

32. (719) Meaning and significance [ma`nî/ma`nà]: What is the inward meaning and reality, in contrast to the shell or appearance. For Rumi, this is spiritual reality, in contrast to the outward and "borrowed" qualities in the physical world. Nicholson translated, "Your reality..." He explained: "i.e. 'what you deem to be reality'." (Commentary)

33. (719) borrowed: means temporary qualities, such as youthful beauty.

34. (719) (outward) proportion and rhyme: Nicholson translated, "... in what is relative and (secondary like) rhyme."

35. (720) seizes: Nicholson translated, "that which seizes (enraptures) you..."

36. (722) passing away (from forms): Nicholson translated, "the share of the (spiritual) eye is these fancies (ideas) of dying to self (faná)." The word "fanâ" is a technical sufi term which means "passing away" from, or "annihilation" of, ego's self-centered preoccupations with itself and worldly cravings, dreads, and attachments.

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679 hast bar sam`-o baSar mohr-é khodâ
dar Hujub bas Sûrat-ast-o bas Sadâ

680 ân-che ô khwâh-ad, rasân-ad ân ba-chashm
az jamâl-o az kamâl-o az karashm

w-ân-che ô khwâh-ad, rasân-ad ân ba-gôsh
az samâ`-o az bashârat w-az khorôsh

kawn por châra-st, hêch-at châra nê
tâ ke na-g'shây-ad khodây-at rôzanê

gar-che tô hast-î kanûn ghâfil az ân
waqt-é Hâjat Haq kon-ad ân-râ `ayân

goft payghâmbar ke yazdân-é majîd
az pay-é har dard darmân âfarîd

685 lêk z-ân darmân na-bîn-î rang-o bô
bahr-é dard-é khwêsh bê-farmân-é ô

chashm-râ ay châra-jô dar lâ-makân
hîn be-neh, chûn chashm-é kushta sôy-é jân

în jahân az bê-jehat paydâ shod-ast
ke ze-bê-jâyî jahân-râ jâ shod-ast

bâz gard az hast sôy-é nêstî
Tâlib-é rabb-î-wo rabbânî-st-î

jây-é dakhl-ast în `adam az way ma-ram
jây-é kharj-ast în wujûd-é pêsh-o kam

690 kârgâh-e Sun`-é Haq chûn nêstî-st
joz mu`aTTal dar jahân-é hast kî-st?
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yâd deh mâ-râ sokhon-hây-é daqîq
ke to-râ raHm âwar-ad ân ay rafîq

ham du`â az tô, ijâbat ham ze-tô
îmanî az tô, mahâbat ham ze-tô

gar khaTâ goft-êm, aSlâH-ash tô kon
muSliH-î tô, ay tô sulTân-é sokhon

kîmiyâ dâr-î ke tabdîl-ash kon-î
gar-che jôy-é khûn bow-ad, nîl-ash kon-î

695 în chon-în mînâgarî-hâ kâr-é to-st
în chon-în aksîr-hâ asrâr-é to-st

âb-râ-wa khâk-râ bar-ham zad-î
z-âb-o gel naqsh-é tan-é âdam zad-î

nisbat-ash dâd-î-wo joft-o khâl-o `âm
bâ hazâr andêsha-wo shâdî-wo gham

bâz ba`Zê-râ rahâ'yî dâda-î
z-în gham-o shâdî jodâ'yî dâda-î

borda-î az khwêsh-o paywand-o seresht
karda-î dar chashm-é ô har khwob zesht

700 har che maHsûs-ast, ô rad mê-kon-ad
w-ân-che nâ-paydâ-st, masnad mê-kon-ad

`ishq-é ô paydâ-wo ma`shûq-ash nehân
yâr bîrûn, fitna-yé ô dar jahân

în rahâ kon `ishq-hây-é Sûratê
nêst bar S½rat na bar rôy-é sitî

ân-che ma`shûq-ast, Sûrat nêst ân
khwâh `ishq-é în jahân, khwâh ân jahân

ân-che bar Sûrat tô `âshiq gashta-î
chûn berûn shod jân, che-rây-ash heshta-î?

705 Sûrat-ash bar jâ-st, în sêrî ze-chîst
`âshiq-â wâ jô ke ma`shûq-é tô kî-st?

ân-che maHsûs-ast, agar ma`shûqa-ast
`âshiq-asty har ke ô-râ Hiss hast

chûn wafâ ân `ishq afzûn mê-kon-ad
kay wafâ Sûrat degar-gûn mê-kon-ad?

partaw-é khworshêd bar dêwâr tâft
tâbesh-é `ârîyatî dêwâr yâft

bar kolûkhê del che band-î ay salîm?
wâ Talab aSlî ke tâb-ad ô muqîm

710 ay ke tô ham `âshiq-î bar `aql-é khwêsh
khwêsh bar Sûrat-parast-ân dîda bêsh

partaw-é `aql-ast ân bar Hiss-é tô
`âriyat mê-dân Zahab bar miss-é tô

chûn zar-andûd-ast khwobî dar bashar
w-ar-na chûn shod shâhid-é tô pîra khar?

chûn fereshta bûd, ham-chûn dêw shod
k-ân malâHat andar-ô `âriyya bod

andak andak mê-setân-and ân jamâl
andak andak khoshk mê-gard-ad nahâl

715 raw nu`ammir-hu nunakkis-hu be-khwân
del Talab kon, del ma-neh bar ostokhwân

k-ân jamâl-é del jamâl-é bâqiy-ast
dawlat-ash az âb-é Haywân sâqiy-ast

khwad ham ô âb-ast-o ham sâqî-wo mast
har seh yak shod, chûn Tilism-é tô shekast

ân yakî-râ tô na-dân-î az qiyâs
bandagî kon, ZâZ kam khâ, nâ-shenâs

ma`niy-é tô Surat-ast-o `âriyat
bar munâsib shâd-î-wo bar qâfiyat

720 ma`nî ân bâsh-ad ke be-s'tân-ad to-râ
bê-neyâz az naqsh gardân-ad to-râ

ma`nî ân na-b'w-ad ke kûr-o kar kon-ad
mard-râ bar naqsh `âshiq-tar kon-ad

722 kûr-râ qismat khayâl-é gham-fezâ-st
bahra-yé chashm în khayâlât-é fanâ-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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That Which Is Invisible Is So Strong and Uncontrollable

Mathnawi II: 1278-1309

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call (it to look), except (to) grass[5] and grazing.

1290 (But) when the Light of God becomes the rider on the eye of sensation, then the soul becomes desirous to (reach) God.

What does the riderless horse know (about) the signs of the road? The King[6] is needed, so that it may know the King's highway.

Go[7] to a (physical) sense (upon which) God is the rider, (because) that Light is a good companion for the sense.

The Light of God is a beautiful ornament for the light of sense.[8] This is the meaning of (the verse) "Light upon light."[9]

The light of sense pulls (man) toward the ground, (but) the Light of God takes him toward the height (of the heavens).

1295 Because perceptible things are (from) a more inferior world. The Light of God (is like) the sea and the sense is like the dew.

But the rider upon it is not visible,[10] except by good actions and speech.

The light of sensation, which is thick and heavy is concealed in the black of the eyes.[11]

Since you do not see the light of sensation with (your) eye, how can you see the light of the religious (saint) with (your) eye?

(Since) the light of sensation is hidden, despite (its) thickness, why should a light which is (so) pure not (also) be hidden?

1300 This world (is) like straw in the hands of the invisible wind; (it) has taken helplessness as (its) profession. And invisible Justice

Sometimes makes it high, sometimes low; sometimes makes it complete, sometimes broken.

Sometimes it takes it to the right, sometimes (to) the left; sometimes it makes it a rose garden, sometimes a thorn.

See (how) the pen is writing (while) the hand (is) hidden [from the paper]; (see how) the horse is turning suddenly while the rider is not seen [because of the dust].

See (how) the arrow (is) flying, (while) the bow (is) not visible; (see how) souls (are) evident[12] while the Soul of the soul is hidden.

1305 Don't break the arrow[13] [of affliction], since it is a King's arrow. It is not [intended as] a long shot; it is from the bow notch of an Aware One.

"You did not throw when you threw,"[14] said God. An act of God has priority over (our) actions.

Break your anger, don't break the arrow, (for) the eye of your anger considers milk (to be) blood.

(Instead) kiss the arrow and take (it) to the King's presence-- the blood-stained arrow (which is) wet from your blood.

1309 That which (is) visible is helpless, bound, and weak. But that which (is) invisible (is) so strong and uncontrollable!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/24/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1278) the rope: refers to the story of how Joseph was thrown into a well
by his brothers and later rescued by travelers who let down a rope and bucket (Qur'an 12:19).

2. (1279) the new world of the spirit: "the new (ever fresh and incorruptible) spiritual world" (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (1286) of no use: "The sensuous eye perceives the things of sense but is blind to 'the light of God', which resides in the oculus cordis [eye of the heart]; unless it be directed by the 'inner light', it goes astray like a horse without its rider" (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (1287) bad habits: "Here the 'horse' is the carnal soul" (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1289) grass: "The sensible world is often described as a verdant meadow" (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (1291) the King: means God, and/or-- "i.e. the Perfect Man [spiritually completed sufi master], who is a spiritual king" (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1292) Go: "i.e. 'go to a murshid [sufi guide]; for in him every sense is illumined and every faculty controlled by light from God'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1293) the light of sense: refers to the ancient Greek belief of Galen and others that the eye sees (and the other senses sense) by means of an inner light which is beamed toward the object sensed.

9. (1293) Light upon light: Qur'an 24:35. "Hence the Light of God in successive diffusion sheds beauty and purity on the lowest as well as the highest faculties of the human soul which it transforms; and this is the meaning of 'light upon light'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1296) the rider is not visible: ""The spirit's bodily vesture is likened to a cloud of dust which surrounds and conceals the galloping rider" (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1297) the black of the eyes: "The 'sensible light', though ultimately derived from the Light of God, dwells in the eye, from which it shoots forth in order to meet the sunlight. Physical vision is produced [according to the ancient theory] by the emission of these rays" (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (1304) see how souls are evident: "i.e. in respect of the qualities which they exhibit and the actions which proceed from them" (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (1305) Don't break the arrow: "The blows of tribulation should be welcomed as marks of Divine mercy and love" (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (1306) when you threw: "You did not throw when you threw, but it was God who threw" (Qur'an 8:17). "At the battle of Badr the Prophet threw a handful of gravel in the faces of the Quraysh [polytheists], who immediately fled before the Moslem onset. The Qur'an declares that the gravel was really thrown by God, 'that He might give the true believers a good proof of His favor'. Here the text is applied generally as an illustration of the doctrine that God is the source of all action in the universe" (Nicholson, Commentary)

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Hamdu li-llâh k-în rasan âwêkht-and
faZl-o raHmat-râ ba-ham âmêkht-and

tâ be-bîn-î `âlam-é jân-é jadîd
`âlam-é bas âshkâr-é nâ-padîd
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

în jahân-é nêst chûn hastân shoda
w-ân jahân-é hast bas penhân shoda

khâk bar bâd-ast-o bâzî mê-kon-ad
kazh-nomâyê, parda-sâzî mê-kon-ad

în-ke bar kâr-ast, bê-kâr-ast-o pôst
w-ân-ke penhân-ast maghz-o aSl-é ô-st

khâk ham-chûn âlatê dar dast-é bâd
bâd-râ dân `âlî-wo `âlî-nezhâd

chashm-é khâkî-râ ba-khâk oftad naZar
bâd-bîn chashmê bow-ad naw`ê degar

asp dân-ad asp-râ k-ô hast yâr
ham sowârê dân-ad aHwâl-é sowâr

chashm-é His asp-ast-o nûr-é Haq sowâr
bê-sowâra asp khwad n-ây-ad ba-kâr

pas adab kon asp-râ az khôy-é bad
w-ar-na pêsh-é shâh bâsh-ad asp rad

chasm-é asp az chashm-é shah rah-bar bow-ad
chasm-é ô bê-chashm-é shah MuZTar bow-ad

chashm-é asp-ân joz geyâh-o joz charâ
har kojâ khwân-î be-gôy-ad nay cherâ?

nûr-é Haq bar nûr-é His râkib shaw-ad
ân-gahê jân sôy-é Haq râghib shaw-ad

asp bê-râkib che dân-ad rasm-é râh?
shâh bây-ad tâ be-dân-ad shâh-râh

sôy-é Hissê raw ke nûr-ash râkib-ast
His-râ ân nûr nêkô-SâHib-ast

nûr-é His-râ nûr-é Haq tazyîn bow-ad
ma`nî-yé nûr-un `alà nûr în bow-ad

nûr-é Hissî mê-kash-ad sôy-é Sarà
nûr-é Haqq-ash mê-bar-ad sôy-é `ulà

z-ân-ke maHsûs-ât dûn-tar `âlamê-st
nûr-é Haq daryâ-wo His chûn shab-namê-st

lêk paydâ nêst ân râkib bar-ô
joz be-âtSâr-o ba-goftâr-é nekô

nûr-é Hissî k-ô ghalîZ-ast-o gerân
hast penhân dar suwâd-é dîda-gân

chûn-ke nûr-é His na-mê-bîn-î ze-chashm
chûn be-bîn-î nûr-é ân dînî ze-chashm?

nûr-é His bân în ghalîZî mukhtafî-st
chûn khafî na-b'w-ad Ziyâyê k-ân Safî-st?

în jahân chûn khas ba-dast-é bâd-é ghayb
`âjizî pêsha gereft-o dâd-é ghayb

gah boland-ash mê-kon-ad gâhê-sh past
gah dorost-ash mê-kon-ad gâhê shekast

gah yamîn-ash mê-bar-ad gâhê yasâr
gah golestân-ash kon-ad gâhê-sh khâr

dast penhân-ô qalam bîn khaT gozâr
asp dar jawlân-o nâ-paydâ sowâr

tîr parrân bîn-o nâ-paydâ kamân
jân-hâ paydâ-wo penhân jân-é jân

tîr-râ ma-sh'kan ke în tîr-é shahê-st
nêst partâwê ze-shaSt-é âghahê-st

mâ ramayta idh ramayta goft Haq
kâra-é Haq bar kâr-hâ dâr-ad sabaq

khashm-é khwad be-sh'kan tô, ma-sh'kan tîr-râ
chashm-é khashm-at khûn shomâr-ad shîr-râ

bôsa deh bar tîr-o pêsh-é shâh bar
tîr-é khûn-âlûd az khûn-é tô tar

ân-che paydâ `âjiz-o basta-wo zabûn
w-ân-che nâ-paydâ chon-ân tond-o Harûn

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Carry Something Noble

Mathnawi II: 1416-1429

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1416 The (inner) being of mankind has become (like) a jungle; be cautious toward this (inner) existence, if you are from that Breath[1] (which God breathed into Adam).

Within our individuality are a thousand wolves and pigs[2]; (there are) pious and impious, beautiful and good, ugly and bastard (qualities).

The judgment is about the (inner) nature [of a person]-- which one is more dominant: since the gold is more than the copper, it is (judged to be) gold.

Any quality which is dominant in your being is inevitably (going to appear) also in the form of your resurrection[3] (on the Day of Judgment).

1420 (For) a time, a wolf enters into humanity, (and for) a time, a Joseph with a face (as beautiful) as the moon.[4]

Virtues and hatreds go from (some people's) chests into the chests (of others) by a hidden path.

But learning, knowledge, and skill (also) go from humanity into cattle and donkeys.

The jolting horse becomes easy going and tame; the bear performs games (and dances); the goat also (is trained to give) greetings.

The desire has gone from humans into the dog, so that it becomes a shepherd, a hunter, or a guard

1425 Because of that [same] arrival,[5] a (special) quality went into the dog of the Companions (of the Cave),[6] so that it had become a seeker of God.

A (different) kind of head manifests within the (human) chest every moment: sometimes a devil,[7] then an angel, then harmless or dangerous wild animals.

There is a hidden path from that amazing jungle,[8] of which every [spiritual] lion is aware, to the snare of [saintly] chests.
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Steal the "coral" of the soul[9] from within, from within (the chests
of) the knowers (of God), O you (who are) less than a dog![10]

1429 Since you are a thief anyway,[11] (take) that exquisite "pearl"; since you are becoming a carrier (of a load) anyhow, (carry) something noble.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/25/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1416) that Breath: refers to the Qur'anic account of how God breathed into Adam of His spirit (Qur'an 15:29). "Human nature is also likened to a mountain where snakes abound (VI 1345)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (1417) wolves and pigs: does not mean "aggressors and victims," but cruel and filthy. Pigs are considered to be unclean animals in Islam and their meat is forbidden, as it is in Judaism.

3. (1419) in the form of your resurrection: means that a person who has foul or beautiful qualities predominating will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment in a form expressing such qualities. Rumi describes this in the lines immediately preceding this selection (2:1411-15).

4. (1420) as the moon: in Persian poetry the beauteous face of the beloved is often compared to the loveliness of the full moon. The beautiful face of Joseph is a similar metaphor, and refers to the episode in the Qur'an in which the wife of Joseph's Egyptian master presented Joseph to her lady friends during a banquet. They praised his looks, and were so amazed that they (accidentally) cut their hands (with knives held for cutting fruit). They said he was not a man, but an angel (Qur'an 12:31).

5. (1425) because of that arrival: Nicholson later altered his translation to "Into the dog of the Companions (of the Cave) there passed from those comers (to the Cave) a (moral) disposition, so that he had become a seeker of God" [from, ".. . there passed from those Sleepers. . . " (Nicholson, Vol. 4, Appendix. Book II).

6. (1425) Companions of the Cave: refers to the story in the Qur'an of some pious youths who hid in a cave with their dog (to escape

religious persecution). They lost track of time and thought they had slept for a day or less, when they had slept for three hundred or more years. Their number may have been between three and seven, or counting the dog, between four and eight (Qur'an 18:22). Since the dog was counted among their number in the Qur'an, Rumi here interprets that the dog shared in the piety of the youths (whereas dogs are usually viewed in Islam as filthy, like pigs. In I:1022 Rumi mentions that the dog of the Companions was helped (= rescued and favored) by God.

7. (1426) sometimes a devil: "i.e. devilish, angelic, and bestial qualities." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1427) that amazing jungle: "In this verse 'lion' signifies the holy man (shír-mard) and gnostic [= mystic knower] who is in immediate communication with the 'jungle' of the Godhead (the Divine Essence comprehending all modes of being and the Divine Mind comprising all intelligible ideas) by ways hidden from the carnal senses" (Nicholson, Commentary). Nicholson later changed his translation to, "From that marvellous Jungle, where is (dwells) the wise Lion, there is a hidden way to the breasts which ensnare (the spiritual prey)" from "that marvellous Jungle with which every lion is acquainted, there is a hidden. . . "

9. (1428) coral of the soul (marjân-é jân): "i.e. gnosis (ma'rifah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1428) less than a dog" "i.e. inferior to the dog which accompanied the Seven Sleepers" (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (1429) since you are a thief: "an allusion to the Arabic proverb idhá saraqta fa-'sriqi 'l-durrah" [if you steal, steal a pearl]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1416 bêsha'yê âm-ad wujûd-é âdamî
bar HaZar shaw z-în wujûd ar z-ân dam-î

dar wujûd-é mâ hazâr-ân gorg-o khûk
SâliH-o nâ-SâliH-o khwob-o khashûk

Hukm ân khô-râ-st k-ân ghâlib-tar-ast
chûn-ke zar bêsh az mes âm-ad, ân zar-ast

sîratê k-ân bar wujûd-at ghâlib-ast
ham bar ân taSwîr-é Hashr-at wâjib-ast
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1420 sâ`atê gorgê dar ây-ad dar bashar
sâ`atê yûsuf rokhê ham-chûn qamar

mê-raw-ad az sîna-hâ dar sîna-hâ
az rah-é penhân SalâH-o kîna-hâ

bal-ke khwad az âdamî dar gâw-o khar
mê-raw-ad dânâ'yî wo `ilm-o honar

asp-é suksuk mê-shaw-ad rahwâr-o râm
khers bâzî mê-kon-ad, boz ham salâm

raft andar sag ze-âdam-y-ân hawas
tâ shobân shod, yâ shekârî, yâ Haras

1425 dar sag-é aSHâb khôyê z-ân wufûd
raft tâ jôyây-é allâh gashta bûd

har zamân dar sîna naw`ê sar kon-ad
gâh dêw-o gah malak, gah dâm-o dad

z-ân `ajab bêsha ke har shêr âgah-ast
tâ ba-dâm-é sîna-hâ penhân rah-ast

dozdiyî kon az darûn marjân-é jân
ay kam az sag az darûn-é `ârif-ân

1429 chûn-ke dozd-î, bârê ân durr-é laTîf
chûn-ke Hâmil mê-shaw-î, bârê sharîf

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Rider and the Man Who Swallowed a Snake

Mathnawi II: 1878-1915, 1923-1926, 1930

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1878 A wise man was coming, riding on (his) horse, (while) a snake was going into the mouth of a sleeping man.[1]

The rider saw that, and acted quickly so that he might scare away the snake, (but) he found no opportunity.

1880 Since he had the aid of great intelligence, he hit the sleeper

several times with a strong iron-covered club.

(The man) took the blows of that hard mace, and fled from him until (he arrived) beneath a tree.

Many rotten apples had fallen (there), and (the rider) commanded: "Eat these, O you (who) are dangling (helplessly) in pain!"

He gave so many apples for him to eat[2] that they were falling back out of his mouth.

He was yelling, "O prince, why have you made (killing) me your intention, (when) you haven't seen (any) injustice (from me)?[3]

1885 "If you have an authentic quarrel against my life, (then) strike (your) sword immediately (and) spill my blood!

"(What) an unlucky hour when I became visible to you! Oh happy (is) the one who never saw your face!

"Without (any) crime or sin, without (doing) more or less-- (even) heretics don't consider this (kind of) ill-treatment (to be) permissible.

"Blood is leaping from my mouth (along) with (my) words. O God, retaliate against him in the end!"

He was shouting new curses every moment, (while the rider) kept beating him, (and) saying, "Run into the desert plain!"

1890 Blows of the mace (continued), and a rider (in pursuit) like the wind! (The man) was running, and again (and again), he fell on (his) face.

He was full-fed, filled with drowsiness, and weak; his feet and face were (covered with) a hundred thousand wounds.

(The rider) kept leading and releasing (him) up to night time, until vomiting overcame him, caused by (excess) bile.

Everything consumed, bad or good, came up from him: the snake, together with (everything else) that (was) eaten leaped out of him.

When he saw the snake outside of him, he fell on his face before that benevolent (man).

1895 (And) when he saw the terror of that big black ugly snake, those sufferings left him.

He said, "You are (the angel) Gabriel, himself, or (else) you are God, since you are the protecting friend of merciful kindness!

"Oh (what) a blessed hour (it was) when you saw me; I was dead (and) you gave me a new life.

"You were seeking me like mothers [searching for their children] (but) I was running away from you like donkeys.

"The donkey flees from (its) master because of (its) donkey-nature, (while) its owner (follows) in (its) tracks because of (his) good-nature;

1900 "He seeks it, not because of profit or loss, but so that a wolf or (other) wild animal may not tear it (to pieces).

"Oh (how) blessed (is) the one who sees your face, or (who) suddenly comes upon your lane!

"O you, whom the pure spirit[4] has praised! (How) many babbling and foolish (things) I said to you!

"O lord and emperor and prince! I didn't speak, (but) my ignorance said (those words). Don't hold it (against me)!

"If I had known the least bit about this situation, I never would have been capable of (such) foolish talk.

1905 "I would have said many (things in) praise (of you instead), O you of excellent qualities, if you had said one hint to me about the situation.

"But you, acting in silence, were (so) disturbed, (and) were quietly pounding my head!

"My mind became crazy (and) reason leaped out of my skull, especially (since) this head has very little brain.

"Pardon (me), O you of fine appearance and manners! What (ever) I said because of frenzy, let (it) pass!"

(The rider) answered, "If I had said (even) a hint about it, (all of) your gall[5] would have turned (into) water that instant.

1910 "If I had told you (about) the snake's qualities, the (resulting) fear would have lifted the breath of life (right) out of your soul!"

Muhammad said:[6] "If I speak truly (about) the description of the enemy which is within your souls,

"Even the gall bladders of brave men would burst; they[7] would not travel on the roads, nor would they be concerned about any work.

"Nor would endurance remain in their hearts for supplications (to God), nor would strength (remain) for fasting and ritual prayer.

"They would become as nothing, like a mouse before a cat, and (deeply) troubled, like a lamb before a wolf.

1915 "(And) no strategy or movement would remain to them. Therefore, I am supporting you without speaking."

. . . . . .

1923 (The rider said,) "You would not have had the strength for eating (the apples), nor (would you have had) a way or care to vomit.

"I kept hearing (your) curses, but I kept 'driving the donkey (forward).'[8] (And) I kept reciting in a whisper, 'O Lord, make (it) easy!'

1925 "I had no permission to speak about the cause (and yet) I had no ability to talk about leaving you.

1926 I kept reciting, every moment from (my) inward sorrow, '(O God,) guide my people, for truly they do not know!'"[9]

. . . . . .

1930 This is the form of the "hostility" of the wise ones; their poison is a joy for souls![10]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 9/16/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1878) sleeping man: "The Amír [= Prince] in this Story represents a murshid [= sufi guide], while the man who swallowed the snake is a sensualist. The nafs [=ego] is frequently symbolised by a

snake." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (1883) to eat: Nicholson later changed this, because of a misprint in his Persian text, to: "He gave him so many apples to eat" (from: "He gave the man...").

3. (1884) you haven't seen (any) injustice (from me): Nicholson later changed this, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi to: "when you have not suffered injury" (from: "What have I done to you?").

4. (1902) the pure spirit: "probably refers to the angels, who paid homage to the Perfect Man (Adam)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (1909) gall: means courage, based on ancient beliefs that courage was linked to the "fiery" quality of bile from the gall bladder. This usage exists in English, in the sense of rude fearlessness: "He had a lot of gall to do a thing like that."

6. (1911) Muhammad said: "Cf. the Hadíth: a'dá 'aduwika nafsuka 'llatí bayna janbayka, 'thy worst enemy is thy nafs [= ego] which is between thy sides.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1912) they: literally, "he" in the following couplets.

8. (1924) driving the donkey forward Nicholson translated this as an idiom: "I heard (your) abuse and went on with my work"--"Literally, 'I was driving my ass along.'" (Nicholson, footnote)

9. (1926) they do not know: "The story goes that in the battle of Uhud a stone hurled by one of the Quraysh broke the Prophet's teeth; but instead of cursing his enemies he cried, 'O God, guide my people, for verily they know not." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1930) a joy for souls: "i.e. the remedies they apply are drastic and bitter as poison, but the result is spiritual happiness." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1878 `âqilê bar asp mê-âm-ad sowâr
dar dahân-é khofta-yê mê-raft mâr

ân sowâr ân-râ be-dîd-o mê-shetâft
tâ ramân-ad mâr-râ, furSat na-yâft

1880 chûn-ke az `aql-ash farâwân bod madad
chand dabûsê qawî bar khofta zad
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bord ô-râ az zakhm-é ân dabbûs-é sakht
z-ô gorêzân tâ ba zêr-é yak derakht

sêb-é pôsîda basê bod rêkhta
goft az-în khwar, ay ba-dard âwêkhta

sêb chandân mar ô-râ dar khward dâd
k-az dahân-ash bâz bêrûn mê-fotâd

bâng mê-zad k-ay amîr âkhir che-râ
qaSd-é man kard-î tô nâ-dîda jafâ

1885 gar to-râ z-aSl-ast bâ jân-am setêz
têgh zan yak-baragê khûn-am be-rêz

shûm sâ`at ke shod-am bar tô padîd
ay khonok ân-râ ke rôy-é tô na-dîd

bê-jinâyat, bê-gonah, bê-bêsh-o kam
mulHid-ân jâyiz na-dâr-and în setam

mê-jah-ad khûn az dahân-am bâ sokhon
ay khodâ âkhir mukâfât-ash tô kon

har zamân mê-goft ô nafrîn-é naw
ô-sh mê-zad k-andar-în SaHrâ be-daw

1890 zakhm-é dabbûs-o sowâr-é hamchô bâd
mê-dawîd-o bâz dar rô mê-fotâd

mumtalî-wo khwâb-nâk-o sost bod
pâ-wo rôy-ash Sad hazâr-ân zakhm shod

tâ shabân-gah mê-kashîd-o mê-goshâd
tâ ze-Safrâ qay shodan bar way fotâd

z-ô bar âmad khwarda-hâ zesht-o nekô
mâr bâ ân khwarda bêrûn jast az-ô

chûn be-dîd az khwad berûn ân mâr-râ
sajda âward ân nekô-kardâr-râ

1895 sahm-é ân mâr-é seyâh-é zesht-é zaft
chûn be-dîd, ân dard-hâ az way be-raft

goft khwad tô jibra'îl-é raHmat-î
yâ khodây-î ke waliyy-é ni`mat-î

ay mubârak sâ`atê ke dîdî-am
morda bûd-am, jân-é naw bakhshîdî-am

tô ma-râ jôy-ân miSâl-é mâdar-ân
man gorêzân az tô mânand-é khar-ân

khar gorêz-ad az khodâwand az kharî
SâHib-ash dar pay ze-nêkô-gawharî

1900 na az pay-é sûd-o zeyân mê-jôy-ad-ash
lêk tâ gorg-ash na-darr-ad yâ dad-ash

ay khonok ân-râ ke bîn-ad rôy-é tô
yâ dar oftad nâ-gahân dar kôy-é tô

ay rawân-é pâk be-setûda to-râ
chand goft-am zhâzh-o bêhûda to-râ

ay khodâwand-o shahenshâh-o amîr
man na-goft-am, jahl-é man goft, ân ma-gîr

shamma'yê z-în Hâl agar dân-ast-am-y
goftan-é bêhûda kay tawânast-am-y?

1905 bas Sanâyat goftam-y ay khwash-khiSâl
gar ma-râ yak ramz mê-goft-î ze-Hâl

lêk khâmosh-karda mê-âshôft-î
khâmush-âna bar sar-am mê-kôft-î

shod sar-am kâlîwa, `aql az sar be-jast
khâSSa în sar-râ ke maghz-ash kam-tar-ast

`afw kon ay khôb-rôy-é khôb-kâr
ân-che goft-am az junûn andar goZâr

goft agar man goft-am-y ranzê az ân
zahra-yé tô âb gasht-y ân zamân

1910 gar tô-râ man goft-am-y awSâf-é mâr
tars az jân-at bar âward-y damâr

muSTafà farmûd agar gôy-am ba-râst
sharH-é ân doshman ke dar jân-é shomâ-st

zahra-hây-é por-del-ân ham bar dar-ad
nay raw-ad rah, nay gham-é kârê khwar-ad

na del-ash-râ tâb mân-ad dar neyâz
na tan-ash-râ quwwat-é rôza-w' namâz

hamchô môshê pêsh-é gorba lâ shaw-ad
hamchô barra pêsh-é gorg az jâ raw-ad

1915 andar-ô na Hîla mân-ad na rawesh
pas kon-am nâ-gofta-tân man parwaresh

. . . . . .

1923 mar to-râ na quwwat-é khwardan bod-y
na rah-o parwây-é qay kardan bod-y

mê-shenîd-am fuHsh-o khar mê-rând-am
rabbi yassir zêr-é lab mê-khwând-am

1925az sabab goftan ma-râ dastûr nay
tark-é tô goftan ma-râ maqdûr nay

1926 har zamân mê-goft-am az dard-é darûn
ihdi qawmî innahum lâ ya`lamûn

. . . . . .

1930 doshmanîy-é `âqil-ân z-în sân bow-ad
zahr-é îshân ibtahâj-é jân bow-ad

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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In Order to Avoid Suffering

Mathnawi II: 2456-82

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2456 When the Messenger[1] paid a visit to (his) groaning friend, he said to that sick man,

"Have you, perhaps, made a particular kind of prayer, and (therefore) eaten a (kind of) 'poison' out of ignorance?[2]

"Remember what prayer you said when you were agitated by the deceptions of (your) ego."[3]

He replied, "I have no memory (of it), but (please) hold an intention for me [in your mind], and my memory will come in a while!"

2460 (And) due to the presence of (that) light-giving Chosen One,[4] the prayer came (back) to his mind.[5]

[himmat-é payghambar-é rôshan-kada
pêsh-é khâTir âmad-ash ân gom-shoda]

A light was shining through that 'window' which is between heart and heart, (a light) which distinguishes (what is) true and false.

He said, "O Prophet, now my memory has returned (about) the prayer which I said, (like) a meddling fool.

"When I was the captive of sin (and) drowning, I was grabbing at straws.

2465 "A threat and warning was coming from you (about) severe punishment for sinners.

"I was getting agitated, and there was no help; there were strong chains (upon me) and an unbreakable lock.

"(There was) no place for patience and no way for escape; (there was) no hope of repenting and no place for rebelling.

"I was crying from grief, like Haroot and Maroot,[6] (and) I was sighing: 'O my Creator!'"

Because of the danger (of Hell-fire), Haroot and Maroot plainly chose (imprisonment in) the well of Babylon,

2470 So that they might draw the punishment of the Afterlife here (in this life). (Certainly,) they are intelligent, wise, and magician-like.

They did well (to choose that) and it was proper, (for) the suffering from smoke is easier (to bear) than from fire.

The description of the suffering of that world (in Hell) is endless, (and) the suffering of this world is easy in comparison to it.

How fortunate (is) the one who engages in a struggle[7] (against ego and) hinders and deals justice to (the passions of) the body;

In order that he may escape from the suffering of that world, he places upon himself the pain of devoted service (to God) [rather than his own desires].

2475 "I kept saying, 'O Lord, direct that punishment upon me quickly in this world,

"'So that I may be at ease in that world!' I was banging the door-ring (against the gate of Divine Mercy) with a wish like this.

"(Then) an affliction like this (then) appeared in me, and my (very) soul became restless from (all) the suffering.

"I have quit doing my zikr[8] and my (other) devotions;[9] I have become unaware of myself and (of) good and bad.

"If I had not now seen your face-- (and) how fortunate and blessed (is) your (holy) scent!--

2480 "I would have departed (this life of) bondage at once. (But) you have acted toward me (in) this kingly and sympathetic way!"

(The Prophet) said, "Hey! Don't say this prayer again! Don't dig up yourself from the roots and foundation!

2482 "O weak and gloomy ant! What strength do you have, that He should put such a huge mountain (of suffering) upon you (to endure)?"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 7/8/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2456) the Messenger: the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

2. (2457) eaten a poison out of ignorance: "i.e. 'you have spoken foolishly and irreverently and are now suffering in consequence'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2458) ego [nafs]: means the ordinary passion-directed self-obsessed mind, often deceived in its pursuit of worldly cravings.

4. (2460) Chosen One (MuSTafâ): a frequently used title of the Prophet.

5. (2460) to his mind: Following this line, Nicholson includes a (repetitious) line which is absent in the earliest manuscript and which Nicholson translated: "(From) the aspiration of the Prophet who dwells in light there came into his mind that which had been lost."

6. (2468) Haroot and Maroot (Hârût, Mârût): two fallen angels mentioned in the Qur'an (2:102) as teachers of magic in Babylon. According to Islamic legend, they sinned by having sexual relations with women and by teaching magic to mankind. They chose the punishment of being hung upside-down in a deep well, or pit, to avoid punishment on the Day of Judgment.

7. (2473) a struggle [jihâd]: This word, often translated by the Christian term, "Holy War," literally means "struggle," and includes any kind of struggle against injustice and oppression, for the sake of God. The reference here is to a saying attributed to the Prophet: "We have returned from the Lesser Warfare [al-jihâdu 'l-aSghar] to the Greater Warfare [al-jihâdu 'l-akbar]... opposing the ego [mukhâlifatu 'l-nafs]."

8. (2478) zikr: refers to the Islamic sufi practice of remembering and glorifying God by chanting (silently or out loud) Divine Names and phrases derived from the Qur'an.

9. (2478) devotions [awrâd]: means assigned daily spiritual practices, such as repeating certain Divine Names a set number of times or reading special selections of verses from the Qur'an.

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2456 goft payghâmbar mar ân bîmâr-râ
chûn `iyâdat kard yâr-é zâr-râ

ke magar naw`î du`âyê karda-î
az jahâlat zahrbâyê khwarda-î

yâd âwar che du`â mê-gofta-î
chûn ze-makr-é nafs mê-âshofta-î?

goft yâd-am nêst, illâ himmatê
dâr bâ man, yâd-am ây-ad sâ`atê

2460 az HuZûr-é nûr-bakhsh-é muStafâ
pêsh-é khâTir âm-ad ô-râ ân du`â
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

[himmat-é payghambar-é rôshan-kada
pêsh-é khâTir âmad-ash ân gom-shoda]

tâft z-ân rôzan ke az del tâ del-ast
rôshanê ke farq-é Haqq-o bâTil-ast

goft înke yâd-am âm-ad ay rasûl
ân du`â ke gofta-am man bu 'l-faZûl

chûn gereftâr-é gonah mê-âmad-am
gharqa dast andar Hashâyish mê-zad-am

2465 az tô tahdîd-o wa`îdê mê-rasîd
mujram-ân-râ az `aZâb-é bas shadîd

muZTarib mê-gasht-am-o châra na-bûd
band-é muHkam bûd-o qafl-é nâ-goshûd

nay maqâm-é Sabr-o nay râh-é gorêz
nay omîd-é tawba, nay jây-é setêz

man chô hârût-o chô mârût az Hazan
âh mê-kard-am ke ay khallâq-é man

az khâTar hârût-o mârût âshkâr
châh-é bâbil-râ be-kard-and ikhtiyâr

2470 tâ `aZâb-é âkhirat în-jâ kash-and
gorboz-and-o `âqil-io sâHir wash-and

nêk kard-and-o ba-jây-é khwêsh bûd
sahl-tar bâsh-ad ze-âtash ranj-é dûd

Had na-dâr-ad waSf-é ranj-é ân jahân
sahl bâsh-ad ranj-é dunyâ pêsh-é ân

ay khonok ân k-ô jihâdî mê-kon-ad
bar badan zajrî-wo dâdê mê-kon-ad

tâ ze-ranj-é ân jahânê wâ rah-ad
bar khwad în ranj-é `ibâdat mê-neh-ad

2475 man hamê-goft-am ke yâ rab ân `aZâb
ham dar-în `âlam be-rân bar man shetâb

tâ dar ân `âlam farâghat bâsh-ad-am
dar chon-în dar khwâst Halqa mê-zad-am

în chon-în ranjûriyê payda-m shod
jân-é man az ranj bê-ârâm shod

mânda-am az Zir-o az awrâd-é khwad
bê-khabar gasht-am ze-khwês-o nêk-o bad

gar na-mê-dîd-am kanûn man rôy-é tô
ay khajasta, way mubârak bôy-é tô

2480 mê-shod-am az band man yakbâragî
karda-y-am shâhâna în ghamkhwâragî

goft hay hay în du`â dêgar ma-kon
bar ma-kan tô khwêsh-râ az bêkh-o bon

2482 tô che Tâqat dâr-î ay môr-é nezhand
ke neh-ad bar tô chonj-ân kûh-é boland?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Deceit of Satan

Mathnawi II: 2706-2743

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2710 "He would make groans of, 'Truly, we have done wrong (to ourselves)!'[6] There's no limit to (Satan's) fraud and deceit.

"(For) there is malicious wrong in each of his sayings, (since) there are a hundred thousand magic spells hidden within him.

"In an instant, he shackles the manliness[7] of men. He excites craving in men and women.

2713 "O people-burning and calamity-seeking Satan! For what (reason)
did you awaken me?[8] Tell the truth!"

Once again, Satan repeated his cunning deceit.

(Satan) said, "Every man who is suspicious does not listen to the truth, (even if there are) a hundred signs [and proofs] with it.

2715 "If you bring proofs (to) any mind which is imagining suspicions,
its (fearful) imagination increases--

"(And) words become diseased when going into it, (just as) a war hero's sword becomes a tool for the thief.[9]

"Therefore, the (proper) answer for him is silence[10] and tranquility, (since) speaking words to a fool is craziness.

"O simple-minded man, why do you complain to God about me? Complain (instead) about the malicious wrong-doing of (your own) base and lowly ego.

"You eat [too much] halva[11] (and) boils appear [on your skin], fever takes over, (and) your (physical) nature becomes disturbed.

2720 "(And then) you curse Satan (who is) innocent, since you don't
see that the cunning deceit (is) from you.[12]

"O misguided (fool)! It's not because of Satan-- it's because of you, since you are going[13] toward the (fat sheep's) tail like a fox.

"(For) when you see (a sheep's) tail in the meadow, it is a trap.[14] Why aren't you aware of this?

"You aren't aware because the craving for the tail has kept you far from knowledge (and) has made your eyes and intellect blind.

"Your love for (worldly) things makes you blind and deaf.[15] Your dark ego is the criminal, (so) don't argue (with others).

2725 "Don't put the fault on me, (and) don't look distortedly. I'm fed up with wrong-doing, greed, and hatred.

"I did something wrong (and) I'm still repentant. I'm waiting,[16] so that my winter may change to summer.[17]

"Among people, I've become [constantly] accused; every man and woman places (the blame for) their own actions on me.

"Even though the helpless wolf[18] is hungry, it's suspected that he's (living) in [ill-gained] luxury.

"(And) when he's unable to go on the path, because of weakness, people say it's indigestion due to huge mouthfuls."

Mu'awiya's asking Satan again for the truth of (his) motive.[19]

2730 (Mu'awiya) said, "Nothing except the truth will let you escape. Justice is calling you to (admit) the truth.

"Speak the truth, so that you may escape from my clutches, (since) plotting and strategy will not settle the dust of my war (against you)."[20]

(Satan) said, "O thinker of fantasies full of suspicions, how do you know (the difference between) lies and the truth?"

(Mu'awiya) replied, "The Prophet has given an indication, (for) he has established the touchstone[21] for (distinguishing) counterfeit coin and good (coin).

"He has said, 'Deceit[22] is (the cause of) a disturbing doubt in (people's) hearts.' (And) he (also) said, 'Truth is (the cause of) a tranquil (feeling of) joy.'

2735 "The heart is not calmed by lying words. Water (together) with oil[23] never ignites a luminous flame.

"(But) there is tranquillity for the heart in truthful speech. Truths are the seeds of the trap for the heart.[24]

"Furthermore, the heart is sick (and) foul-mouthed[25] which doesn't know (the difference between) the taste of this and that.

"(But) when the heart becomes healthy (and free) from pain and illness, it will be knowledgeable about the (difference between) the flavor of lies and truth.

"When the greed of Adam increased toward the wheat,[26] it stole a certain (kind of) health from his heart.

2740 "Then, he listened to your lies and alluring flattery (so that) he was deceived and drank the poison of Death.[27]

"In that moment he didn't know a scorpion from wheat,[28] (because) discernment (of the truth) flies away from the intoxication of (greedy) desires.

"People are intoxicated with desire and greed, (and) for that reason they are made to accept your trickery.

2743 "Whoever has separated himself in (his) nature from (worldly) desires has made his eyes familiar with the secret [of reality]."[29]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 5/4/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) Mu'awiya: the sixth Caliph and successor to the Prophet Muhammad, and the founder of the Umayyad Dynasty. He forced his predecessor, Hassan (the Prophet's grandson and the son of the fourth Caliph, 'Ali) to abdicate.

2. (Heading) Satan [iblîs]: In the Qur'an, the Devil is called "Shaytan" and "Iblees."

3. (2706) has become blackened: "i.e. 'I am defiled with sin and deprived of grace.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (2708) the Prince of [the verse] "He taught (Adam) the Names,": Adam is the "Prince" of the Qur'anic verse, "And He taught Adam the Names of all things." (2:31) The sufis have interpreted this to

mean that Adam knew the Names of God (which the angels did not know). The word for "Prince" [bag] is Turkish (pronounced "bey" in Turkish), but here rhymes with "tag."

5. (2709) the starry heavens: literally, "simâk," the name of two stars. A pun on the word "fish" [samak].

6. (2710) Truly, we have done wrong (to ourselves): refers to the fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Paradise: "And their Lord called to them, 'Did I not forbid that tree to you and tell you, "Truly, Satan is an open enemy to you"?' They said, 'O our Lord! Truly, we have done wrong to ourselves. And unless You forgive us and have mercy on us, we will surely be among the lost!' (God) said, 'Get down [from Paradise], with enmity between yourselves. And there will be for you an abode and a livelihood on earth for a time.'" (Qur'an 7: 22-24)

7. (2712) manliness [mardî]: Rumi defines true manliness as having the strength to maintain the virtue of patient and self-control of one's cravings and desires.

8. (2713) awaken me: Earlier in Rumi's story, Satan awakened the Caliph Mu'awiya from a sleep which was about to cause him to miss one of the five daily ritual prayers. Mu'awiya was suspicious of Satan's motive for reminding him to do something pious and was convinced there was a devilish trick involved. At the end of the story, Satan confessed that he was trying to prevent Mu'awiya from having such heart-felt remorse (from missing a required prayer) that, "...this world would have become dark to you and without a gleam of light; (And then) from disappointment and grief tears would have flowed from your two eyes in the fashion of (water from) water-skins, (Because) every one has delight in some act of devotion and consequently cannot bear to miss it (even) for a short while. That disappointment and grief would have been (as) a hundred prayers: what is (ritual) prayer in comparison with the (spiritual) glow of humble supplication?" (II: 2770, trans. by Nicholson)

This illustrates what Rumi said prior to telling this story: "If the base and lowly ego seeks for you to earn something noble, there is a trick and deceit behind it." (I: 2603) (2706) when going into it: Nicholson translated, "When (sound and true) words enter it, they become a disease (they are corrupted and falsified)..."

9. (2716) a tool for the thief: means that the sword of a warrior (who if fighting for justice) becomes a tool in the hands of a thief for stealing and burglary.

10. (2717) the (proper) answer for him is silence: Nicholson refers here to "the proverb jawáb-i ablahán khámúshíst". [= The answer to fools is silence] (Commentary)

11. (2719) halva [Halwâ]: a sweet confection, sometimes combining honey with a paste made from almonds, pistachios, and sesame seeds. Eating too much halva is here viewed as a cause of developing a sickness which causes sores to emerge on the skin.

12. (2720) the deceit (is) from you: means, "You tricked yourself by your own greedy desires-- I didn't trick you."

13. (2721) you are going: Nicholson later corrected his translation of this line, based on the earliest manuscript, to "you are going like a fox" (from, "you are running like a fox").

14. (2722) a trap: "Commonly used as a means of entrapping wild animals." (Nicholson, Commentary). Nicholson also referred to III: 272, which he translated, "Without ambush and snare and hunter, O cunning one, how should there be a sheep's tail (laid in a trap) amidst the cornfield?" And also III: 561, which he translated, "The lure to catch the wolf is (the sheep's tail; it is) not the place (shop) where the sheep's tail came from..."

15. (2724) blind and deaf: "The Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad] is hubbuka 'l-shay'a (li-'l-shay'i) yu`mí wa-yusimm." [= Your love for (worldly) things is blinding and deafening] (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (2726) I'm waiting: "i.e. 'I am waiting for God's mercy to dispel the darkness with which His wrath has encompassed me.' Intizár-am = dar intizár-am." [= my expectancy" means here "I am in expectancy] (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (2726) so that my winter may change to summer: this is a correction in the earliest manuscript, regarding which Nicholson did not include as a correction, so that his text remains, "that my night may turn to day."

18. (2728) the helpless wolf: "Iblís [= Satan] likens himself to a wolf which, however emaciated it may be, is held responsible for all the sheep that are devoured." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (Heading) his motive: Nicholson did not correct his translation of the heading here, based on the earliest manuscript. His translation remains: "How Mu`áwiya once more pressed Iblís hard."

20. (2731) will not settle the dust of my war (against you): means, will

not end the fury of battle. Nicholson translated: "cunning will not lay the dust of my war (will not induce me to leave you in peace)."

21. (2733) touchstone: a type of stone, which demonstrates the presence of real gold when rubbed against it.

22. (2734) Deceit: Nicholson quotes a saying of the Prophet, "da' má yuríbuka ilá má lá yuríbuka, fa-inna 'l-sidqa tuma'nín-un wa-inna 'l-kidhba rayb-un" [= Leave what causes you disturbing doubt for what does not cause you doubt, for surely truth is (the cause) of tranquillity and falsehood is (the cause of) doubt] (Commentary)

23. (2735) Water (together) with oil: a metaphor for two incompatible

things. The meaning here is that oil mixed with water will never kindle the light of truth

24. (2736) the trap for the heart: means that the heart is attracted to truths in the same way that birds cannot resist the seeds in a bird-trap.

25. (2737) sick (and) foul-mouthed: refers to a type of illness, a symptom of which is that everything has an unpleasant taste.

26. (2739) the greed of Adam increased toward the wheat: refers to the Islamic tradition that the forbidden fruit was wheat, the eating of which led to the fall of Adam and Eve from Paradise. The Qur'an mentions only a forbidden tree (2: 35).

27. (2740) the poison of Death: according to the Qur'an, Satan deceived Adam and Eve by telling him, "Your Lord God has only forbidden you this tree lest you both become (like) angels, or lest you live forever" (7:20). However, it was not the "tree of eternal life" (20:120) as he claimed, but of death and evil from which they ate.

28. (2741) a scorpion from wheat: a word play between "scorpion" (kazhdom) and "wheat" (gandom).

29. (2743) familiar with the secret [of reality]: "i.e. his eye becomes 'seeing with the Light of God' and enables him to discern the reality which was hidden from him." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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nâlîdan-é mu`âwiya ba-HaZrat-é Haqq-é ta`âlà az iblîs wa naSrat khwâstan
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

2706 în HadîS-ash ham-chô dûd-ast ay allâh
dast gîr, ar na gelîm-am shod seyâh

man ba-Hujjat bar na-y-ây-am bâ bilîs
k-ô-st fitna-yé har sharîf-o har khasîs

âdamê k-ô `allama 'l-asmâ bag-ast
dar tak-é chûn barq-é în sag bê-tag-ast

az behesht andâkht-ash bar rôy-é khâk
chûn samak dar shast-é ô shod az simâk

2710 nawHa-yé innâ Zalam-nâ mê-zad-y
nêst dastân-o fusûn-ash-râ Hadê

andarûn-é har HadîS-é ô shar-ast
Sad hazâr-ân siHr dar way muZmar-ast

mardî-yé mard-ân bo-band-ad dar nafas
dar zan-o dar mard afrôz-ad hawas

ay bilîs-é khalq-sôz-é fitna-jô
bar che-y-am bêdâr kard-î? râst gô

bâz taqrîr iblîs talbîs-é khwad-râ

goft har mardê ke bâsh-ad bad-gomân
na-shenûd ô râst-râ bâ Sad neshân

2715 har darûnê ke khayâl-andêsh shod
chûn dalîl âr-î, khayâl-ash bêsh shod

chûn sokhon dar way raw-ad, `illat shaw-ad
têgh-é ghâzî dozd-râ âlat shaw-ad

pas jawâb-é ô sukût-ast-o sukûn
hast bâ ablah sokhon-goftan junûn

tô ze-man bâ Haq che nâl-î ay salîm?
tô be-nâl az sharr-é ân nafs-ê la'îm

tô khwar-î Halwâ, to-râ dunbal shaw-ad
tab be-gîr-ad, Tab`-é tô mukhtal shaw-ad

2720 bê-gonah la`nat kon-î iblîs-râ
chûn na-bîn-î az khwad ân talbîs-râ?

nêst az iblîs, az to-st ay ghawî
ke chô rôbah sôy-é donba mê-raw-î

chûn-ke dar sabza be-bîn-î donba-râ
dâm bâsh-ad în na-dân-î tô che-râ?

z-ân na-dân-î ke-t ze-dânesh dûr kard
mayl-é donba chashm-o `aql-at kûr kard

Hubbu-ka 'l-ashyâ'a yu`mî-ka yuSimm
nafsu-ka 's-sawdâ janat lâ takhtaSim

2725 tô gonah bar man na-neh, kazhmazh ma-bîn
man ze-bad bêzâr-am-o az HirS-o kîn

man badê kard-am, pashêmân-am hanûz
intiZâr-am tâ day-am gard-ad tamûz

muttaham gasht-am meyân-é khalq man
fa`l-é khwad bar man neh-ad har mard-o zan

gorg-é bê-châra agar-che gorosn-ast
muttahim bâsh-ad ke ô dar Tantana-st

az Za`îfî chûn na-tân-ad râh raft
khalq gôy-ad tukhma-ast az lôt-é zaft

bâz jostan-é mu`âwiya Haqîqat-é gharaZ-râ az iblîs

2730 goft ghayr-é râstî na-r'hân-ad-at
dâd sôy-é râstî mê-khwân-ad-at

râst gô tâ wâ râh-î az chang-é man
makr na-n'shân-ad ghubâr-é jang-é man

goft chûn dân-î dorôgh-o râst-râ
ay kheyâl-andêsh-é por andêsha-hâ?

goft payghâmbar neshânê dâda-ast
qalb-o nêkô-râ miHak be-n'hâda-ast

gofta-ast al-kiZbu rayb-un fi 'l-qulûb
goft aS-Sidqu Tumâ'nîn-un Tarûb

2735 del na-y-ârâm-ad ze-goftâr-é dorôgh
âb-o rawghan hêch na-f'rôz-ad forôgh

dar HadîS-é râst ârâm-é del-ast
râstî-hâ dâna-yé dâm-é del-ast

del magar ranjûr bâsh-ad bad-dehân
ke na-dân-ad châshanîy-é în-o ân

chûn shaw-ad az ranj-o `illat del salîm
Ta`m-é kaZb-o râst-râ bâsh-ad `alîm

HirS-é âdam chûn sôy-é gandom
fozûd az del-é âdam salîmê-râ robûd

2740 pas dorôgh-o `ishwa-at-râ gôsh kard
ghirra gasht-o zahr-é qâtil nôsh kard

kazhdom az gandom na-dân-ast ân nafas
mê-par-ad tamyîz az mast-é hawas

khalq mast-ê ârzow-and-o hawâ
z-ân paZirân-ad dastân-é to-râ

2743 har-ke khwad-râ az hawâ khô bâz kard
chashm-é khwad-râ âshnây-é râz kard

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Duckling Raised By A Hen

Mathnawi II: 3766-3787

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The story of the ducklings which (were) reared by a domestic hen.

3766 You are (from) the egg of a duck,[1] even though a domestic hen has reared you[2] under (her) wing like a nurse.

Your (true) mother was a duck of the river. (But) your nurse was

of the earth and overly attached to dry land.

The fondness for the river which is within your heart is from (your true) mother, (and) it (is) the natural quality possessed by your soul.

(But) your fondness for dry land is from this nurse. Leave the nurse, since she is a bad adviser.

3770 Leave the nurse on the dry land and urge (yourself) forward. Come into the (vast) river of spirituality,[3] like the "ducks."[4]

Even though your mother may frighten you about water, don't be afraid, and drive forward quickly toward the river.

You are a duck. You can live in (both) dry and wet (places);[5] you aren't like a domestic bird, (living) in a bad-smelling house.[6]

You are a king because of (the verse), "We have honored the sons of Adam."[7] You can put (your) feet on the dry land as well as in the ocean.

Since in (your) soul you are (blessed by the verse), "We have carried them on the ocean," push forth from [being restricted by] "We have carried them on the land."[8]

3775 The angels have no way (to reach) the land. (And) also the (different) kinds of (land) animals are unaware of the ocean.[9]

In body, (you are) an animal (and) in spirit, you are among the angels-- so you may go upon the earth as well as upon the heavens.

(And) so the one who has vision may be outwardly "a man like yourselves"[10] (yet may be) in (his) heart (the receiver) of "the inspiration has come to him."

The bodily form made of dust has fallen to the earth, (but) its spirit (is) circling above the highest heaven.[11]

We are all water-birds, young man. (And) the ocean knows our language completely.

3780 Therefore, the ocean has become (for us like) Solomon[12] (and) we (are) like the birds. In "Solomon" we have a journey (which lasts) forever.

Through Solomon,[13] put (your) feet into the ocean so that the water may make, like David, a hundred rings of mail.[14]

That Solomon is present before all, but his jealousy is a magician
who shuts our eyes[15] (from seeing this),

So that He is (right) in front of us and (yet) we are weary of Him
because of ignorance, drowsiness,[16] and arrogant indulgence.

The (loud) noise of thunder brings a headache to the thirsty man
when he doesn't know that it is dragging (rain) clouds of happiness
(to him).

3785 His eyes are kept [low] in (looking for) flowing stream[17]--
unaware of the delightful taste of heavenly water.

He has driven the horse of aspiration toward (worldly) causes, (so)
of course, he remains veiled[18] from the Causer.

3787 (But) the one who clearly sees the Causer will never set (his)
heart on the world's (physical) causes.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 7/19/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3766) You are (from) the egg of a duck: "The duck represents the Divine spirit in man, while the hen is an emblem of his carnal nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3766) even though a domestic hen has reared you: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "though a domestic foul has fostered thee as a nurse beneath her wing" (from, "has nursed thee beneath her wing"). This parable resembles the story told by Shams-i Tabriz about his own life from his "Discourses": "From the time of this supplicant's youth, a strange situation had occurred. No one understood the condition of (this) supplicant. My father (was) not (truly) aware of me. He used to say, 'First, you're not crazy. (But) I don't know what mode of behavior you have. Corrective training isn't (a remedy), nor is such and such.' I said, 'Listen to some words from me: you are in such a way with me (as) a duck's eggs placed under a hen [morgh-é khânagî], (which) fostered (them) and hatched out the ducklings. The ducklings became huge youngsters. They came with (their) mother to the bank of a stream and went into the water. Their

mother was a domestic hen, (so) she went to the edge of the stream bank, (but there was) no possibility of coming into the water. Now, O my father, I am looking at the river, (which) has become my mount, and it is my native land and (natural) condition. If you belong to me, or (if) I belong to you, (then) come into this river. And if not, go back to the domestic fowls. And by this (argument) you are (helplessly) dangling.' He said, '(If) you act like this toward a friend, how do you act toward an enemy?'" ("Maqâlât-é Shams-é Tabrîzî," p. 78, Muwahhid edition)

3. (3770) the (vast) river of spirituality: Nicholson translated, "the Sea of spiritual reality." May also be translated, more literally, as "spiritual meaning" or "spiritual significance."

4. (3770) like the "ducks": means like the mystics, dervishes, sufis.

5. (3772) living in dry and wet (places): "amphibious, i.e. belonging to both the spiritual and the material world." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (3772) in a bad-smelling house: Nicholson later corrected his translation, based on the earliest manuscript, to "whose house is ill-smelling" (from, "whose house is dug (in the ground)."

7. (3773) We have honored the sons of Adam: a verse from the Qur'an, in which God said, "And, truly, We have honored the sons of Adam, have carried them on the land and the sea, have provided them with (lawful) good things, and have favored them far above most of those We have created with a distinct excellence" (17:70). According to commentators, this refers to virtues such as abstract thought, free will, and judgment which make mankind superior to all animate beings, including the angels. Being carried on the land and the sea refers to mounted animals (such as camels, horses, donkeys) and ships, respectively. Nicholson referred to Mathnawi III: 3291 [= "Because 'We have honored' Man by (the gift of) free-will: half (of him) is honey-bee, half is snake"] and 3300 [= "Man rides on the steed of 'We have honoured (the sons of Adam)': the reins of free-will are in the hand of his intelligence"], "where free-will (ikhtiyár) is singled out as God's noblest gift to man, in virtue of which he can choose to live on land, i.e. in the flesh, or on the sea, i.e. in the spirit." (Commentary)

8. (3774) on the land: these quotes are modifications of the Qur'anic verse quoted in the previous note.

9. (3775) unaware of the ocean: means all the land-bound animals (without reference to the minority of amphibious ones). "The angels are without carnality, and the animals have no spiritual nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3777) a man like yourselves: the quotes in this line are modifications of a verse from the Qur'an in which God instructed the Prophet Muhammad to give a message to the polytheists: "Say, 'I am only a (mortal) man like yourselves. The inspiration has come to me that your God is the one and only God. So whoever expects to meet his Lord [on the Day of Judgment] should do righteous deeds and not associate any one as a partner in the worship of his Lord.'" (17:110)

11. (3778) the highest heaven: Nicholson later changed his translation, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, to "circling in this highest sphere (of Heaven" (from "in yonder highest sphere...").

12. (3780) like Solomon: "Our true home is the Universal Divine Spirit in which, though we are not conscious of it, we live and move incessantly. Solomon knew the mysteries of the birds, and such is the relation of God to us." (Nicholson, Commentary) The reference to Solomon is to his saying, in the Qur'an, that he had been taught (by God) the speech of the birds, and how men and jinns (or "genies") and birds stood in front of him in rows and ranks (Qur'an 17: 16-17).

13. (3781) Through Solomon: means by the power of the (spiritual) ocean, which Solomon symbolizes here. Nicholson wrote, "The preposition [= "by means of"], I think, is instrumental. I.e. 'by the grace of God (or possibly, "through the mediation of the Perfect Man") seek union with Him in order that His Spirit may encompass you and protect you from all "otherness"'." (Commentary)

14. (3781) a hundred rings of mail: Nicholson translated, "a hundred rings of mail (ripples)." David, the son and successor of Solomon, was taught by God the art of making coats of armor made up of small iron rings (Qur'an 21:80).

15. (3782) a magician who shuts our eyes: Nicholson translated this as referring to God: "but (His) jealousy binds (our) eyes (with spells) and enchants (us)." The literal meaning is, "but his jealousy is an eye-binder and a magician." An eye-binder is an enchanter who is able to cast a spell which puts someone to sleep, so that he cannot open his eyes.

16. (3783) drowsiness: Nicholson translated, "drowsiness (forgetfulness)."

17. (3785) flowing stream: "i.e. the fleeting world of Time."

(Nicholson, Commentary

18. (3786) he remains veiled [maHjûb mând]: Nicholson failed to correct his translation here, based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi. His uncorrected translation was, "he remains debarred."

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qiSSa-yé baT-bache-gân ke morgh-é khânagî parward-eshân

3766 tokhm-é baTT-î garche morgh-é khana-at
kard zêr-é par chô dâya tarbiyat

mâdar-é tô baTT-é ân daryâ bod-ast
dâya-at khâkî bod-o khoshkî-parast

mayl-é daryâ ke del-é tô andar-ast
ân Tabî`at jân-t-râ az mâdar-ast

mayl-é khoshkî mar to-râ z-în dâya-ast
dâya-râ be-g'Zâr k-ô bad-râya-ast

3770 dâya-râ be-g'Zâr dar khoshk-o be-rân
andar â dar baHr-é ma`nî chûn baT-ân

gar to-râ mâdar be-tarsân-ad ze-âb
tô ma-tars-o sôy-é daryâ rân shetâb

tô baT-î, bar khoshk-o bar tar zenda-î
nay chô morgh-é khâna-khâna-ganda-î

tô ze-karram-nâ banî âdam shah-î
ham ba-khoshkî, ham ba-daryâ pâ neh-î

ke Hamal-nâ hum `alà 'l-baHri ba-jân
az Hamal-na hum `alà 'l-bar pêsh rân

3775 mar malâyik-râ sôy-é bar râh nêst
jins-é Haywân ham ze-baHr âgâh nêst

tô ba-tan Haywân, ba-jân-î az malak
tâ raw-î ham bar zamîn ham bar falak

tâ ba-Zâhir mithlu-kum bâsh-ad bashar
bâ del-é yûHà ilay-hi dîda-war

qâlib-é khâkî fotâda bar zamîn
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rûH-é ô gardân bar-în charkh-é barîn

mâ hama morgh-âbiy-ân-ém ay ghulâm
baHr mê-dân-ad zabân-é mâ tamâm

3780 pas sulaymân baHr âmad mâ chô Tayr
dar sulaymân tâ abad dâr-êm sayr

bâ sulaymân pây dar daryâ be-neh
tâ chô dâwûd âb sâz-ad Sad zereh

ân sulaymân pêsh-é jumla HâZir-ast
lêk ghayrat chashm-band-o sâHir-ast

tâ ze-jahl-o khwâb-nâkî-wo fuZûl
ô ba-pêsh-é mâ-wo mâ az way malûl

teshna-râ dard-é sar âr-ad bâng-é ra`d
chûn na-dân-ad k-ô kashân-ad abr-é sa`d?

3785 chashm-é ô mând-ast dar jôy-é rawân
bê-khabar az Zawq-é âb-é âsmân

markab-é himmat sôy-é asbâb rând
az musabbib lâ-jaram maHjûb mând

3787 ân-ke bîn-ad ô musabbib-râ `ayân
kay neh-ad del bar sabab-hây-é jahân?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Mathnawi, Preface to Book II

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sake of which we act in (our) interest. But if He pours down (all) the wisdom about that (action) onto him, he will similarly be unable to move.[2] For if there is no nose ring[3] for the camel, it won't go, and if it is too big it will just lie down (and refuse to move). "And nothing exists except (that) its storehouses[4] are with Us, and We do not send it down (in created form) except according to a measure known (to Us)."[5] A clod of earth won't become a brick without water, and if there is (too) much water it also won't become a brick. "And He raised up the heavens and He set up the Balance[6] (for measuring all things)." He gives to everything [a certain amount] according to the Balance. (And this is) not without measuring and weighing-- except for those who have become transformed from [their former condition in] the realm of creation and have become (like those referred to in the verse), "And (God) gives sustenance to whom He wishes, without measure."[7] But "he who doesn't taste, doesn't know."[8]

Someone asked, "What is (it like) to be a lover?
I said, "When you become me, you'll know!"[9]

Passionate love[10] is love[11] without measure. Because of that, it has been said that in reality it is an Attribute of God, and in relation to Him, it is (only a) superficial (quality) in the servant (of God). The whole (summary) is (the verse), "He loves them" Who are (the ones referred to in the verse), "they love Him"?[12]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1926 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 8/5/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) delaying this second volume: "On the authority of Aflákí [Rumi's hagiographer] (see note on I 3990) it is generally supposed that owing to the death of the wife of Husámu'ddín [Rumi's closest disciple, to whom he dictated the Mathnawi] an interval of two years elapsed between the completion of Book I and the resumption of the work in 1263-1264." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (Heading) unable to move: "In this passage the 'postponement' is explained as an act of Divine Wisdom. God provides all the advantages for the sake of which men are impelled to act, and He bestows upon them just so much knowledge of these advantages as will produce the actions which He has decreed; otherwise they

would be unable to act at all, for His knowledge is infinite, and none but Perfect Men possess the capacity for receiving it in full measure. Apparently the poet means to imply that his powers as a medium were intermittent and subject to conditions over which he had no control. At times God veils His glory even from prophets and saints." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (Heading) nose ring: a piece of wood placed through the nostrils of a camel, in order to control it

4. (Heading) storehouses: "i.e. everything that God has decreed He keeps, as it were, in store, ready to be brought forth and actualised whenever He pleases." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (Heading) measure known to Us: from Qur'an 15:21. The terms "We" and "Us" in the Qur'an are "pronouns of majesty" and do not mean any plurality in the Divine Unity of God.

6. (Heading) the Balance: from Qur'an 55:7.

7. (Heading) without measure: from Qur'an 2:208

8. (Heading) doesn't know: an Arabic saying, which sufis interpret in the sense of mystical experience and knowledge.

9. (Heading) you'll know: "Real knowledge can only be gained through the passing away (faná) of the knower in the Known." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (Heading) passionate love (`ishq): a word often used by sufis, which means intense passionate love, as well as "love-sickness."

11. (Heading) love (muHabbat): a word which occurs in the Qur'an (20:39), and means benevolent affection and love, and is also used to mean Divine Love. "Many of the older Súfís held that the ascription of `ishq to God was not permissible." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (Heading) they love Him: refers to Qur'an 5:57: "God will soon bring forth [in your place] a people whom He loves [yuHibbu-hum] and they will love Him [yuHibbûna-hu]." The verbs for love here have the same root as the noun meaning love referred to above [maHabbat]. "Man's love of God is no more than the reflexion of God's love, which is an essential attribute of the Divine nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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bayân-é ba`Zê az Hikmat-é ta'khîr-é în mujallad-é dowom ke agar jomla-yé Hikmat-é ilâhî banda-râ ma`lûm shaw-ad dar fawâ'îd-é ân kâr banda az ân kâr ferô mân-ad wa Hikmat-é bê-pâyân-é Haqq idrâk-é ô-râ wîrân kon-ad ba-d-ân kâr na-pardâz-ad, pas Haqq-é ta`âlà shamma-yê az ân Hikmat-é bê-pâyân mihâr-é bînî-yé ô sâz-ad wa ô-râ ba-d-ân kâr kash-ad ke agar ô-râ az ân fâ'îda hêch khabar na-kon-ad hêch na-jonb-ad, z-î-râ jonbânanda az bahrah-hây-é âdamiy?ân-ast ke az bahr-é ân maSlaHat kon-êm wa agar Hikmat-é ân bar wây ferô rêz-ad ham na-tawân-ad jonbîdan chon-ân-ke agar dar bînî-yé oshtor mihâr na-bow-ad wa agar mihâr-é bozorg bow-ad ham ferô khosp-ad "wa in min shay-in illâ `inda-nâ khazâ'inu-hu wa mâ nunazzilu-hu illâ bi-qadar-in ma`lûm," khâk bê âb kolôkh na-shaw-ad wa chûn âb besyâr bâsh-ad ham kolôkh na-shaw-ad, "wa 's-samâ'a rafa`-hâ wa waZa` 'l-mîzân," ba-mîzân de-had har chêzê-râ na bê-Hisâb wa bê-mîzân illâ kasânê-râ ke az `âlam-é khalq mubdal shoda-and wa "yarzuqu man yashâ'u bi-ghayri Hisâb-in" shoda-and. wa man lam yaZuq lam yadri.

porsîd yakê ke `âshiqî chîst?
goft-am ke chô mâ shaw-î bi-dân-î

`ishq maHabbat-é bê-Hisâb-ast jehat-é ân gofta-and ke Sifat-é Haqq-ast ba-Haqîqat wa nisbat-é ô ba-banda majâz-ast "yuHibbu-hum" tamâm-ast "yuHibbûna-hu" kodâm-ast

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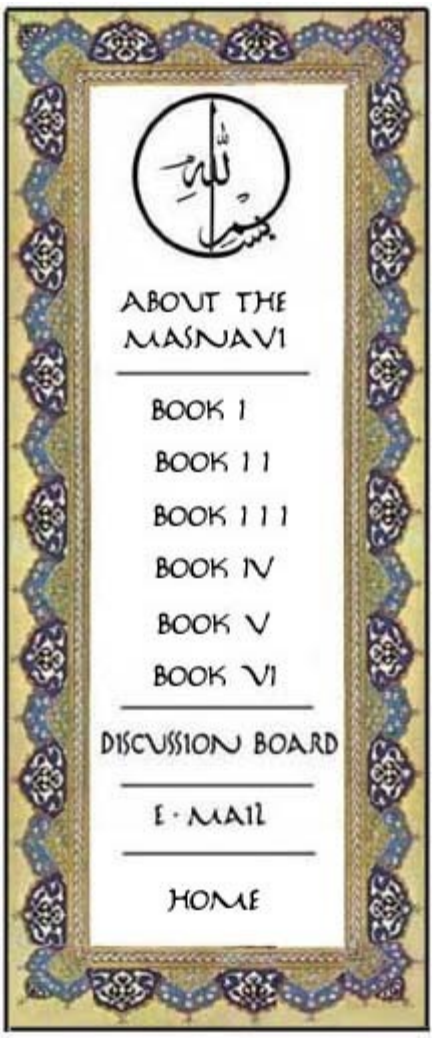

BOOK III

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Howl God Answers Prayers (11/05)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part ten) (4/01

How God Answers Prayers

Mathnawi III: 180-197

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(Concerning) the command of God Most High to Moses--upon him be peace--saying that, "In regard to (seeking an answer from) Me, ask for a mouth, a mouth by which you have not committed sin."

180 (God) said, "O Moses, seek refuge with Me by means of a mouth (by) which you did not sin."

Moses said, "I don't have that (kind of) mouth." (God) said, "Call Me by means of another mouth."

You never[1] committed a sin by means of another mouth, (so) call out "O God!" by means of another mouth.[2]

Behave in such a manner (so) that (those) mouths may bring forth prayers for you during the nights and days.

Ask for pardon from a mouth (with) which you have not sinned--and that is another mouth.[3]

185 Or, make your own mouth pure; make your spirit quick and agile.[4]

Mention (of the Name) of God is pure; when purity has arrived, impurity ties up (its) belongings (and) exits (from you).[5]

Opposites are fleeing from opposites; the night flees when the light (of dawn) blazes forth.

188 When the pure Name (of God) enters the mouth, impurity and remorseful sorrows do not remain.
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The explanation (of how) the needy supplicating of (calling out) "Allah!" is the same as God saying, "Here I am!"[6]

That one was saying "Allah!" (repeatedly) one night until (his) lips were becoming sweet from his mention[7] (of the Name of God).

190 Satan said, "O excessive talker: where, finally, is the 'Here I am' (after) all this (calling out of) 'Allah'?

"There isn't a single answer coming from before the Throne (of God), (so) how much (longer) will you call out 'Allah'[8] with a stern face?"

(The man) became broken-hearted and placed (his) head down (to rest). In a dream, he saw Khidr[9] in (a place of) greenery.

(Khidr) said, "Take care! Why did you stay back from the mention (of the Name of God)? Why did you repent of your having called to Him?"

(The man) said, "No answer of 'Here I am' is coming to me (from Him), (so) because of this I keep fearing that I am a rejected one at the Gate."

195 (Khidr) said, "(God is telling you), 'That "Allah" of yours is Our[10] "Here I am," and that neediness, (yearning) pain, and burning of yours is Our message (to you).[11]

"'Your stratagems and searchings for help were Our attraction[12] (of you to Us) and the release of these feet of yours (from bondage).[13]

197 "'Your fear and love are the lasso for Our Grace: under every "O Lord" of yours are (responses of) "Here I" (from Us).'"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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11/12/05

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](182) You never: Here, Rumi begins his commentary.

[2](182) by means of another mouth:"In other words, 'Make a better prayer [du`â] to God (by means of) the mouth of another person, so he may say, "O God, grant Mercy and Grace to that Moses!"'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation.) Although Rumi doesn't say it here, it can added that the prayer of another who is close to God would seem more likely to be beneficial--and God is the Knower [wa 'llâhu `âlim].

[3](184) that is another mouth" ...(so that) acceptance (by God) may occur for the prayer [du`â] of that mouth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[4](185) make your spirit quick and agile: "...(so that) your prayer may be answered." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[5](186) (and) exits (from you): "Then at the moment purity comes (to your mouth), it will become increased in purity." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[6](Heading) Here I am [labbayka]: Nicholson here makes a reference to I:1578, "A hundred letters and a hundred messages (come) to him from God every moment: an 'O Lord!' from him (followed by) sixty (responses of) 'Here I am' from God."

Here is Nicholson's footnote for the above verse: "according to the Hadíth: 'when the slave ('abd) says, "yá Rabb", God says, 'Labbayka, O my slave! Ask, and it will be given unto thee.'" Selfless prayer is accompanied by an immediate inward response (II 1190 seq.); nay, such prayer springs from the presence of God in the heart, and is answered before it is uttered (III 195 sqq.; cf. VI 870, 1771, 1986, 4239). (Nicholson, Commentary)

Nicholson also makes a reference to II:1189-91, "These words of mine are (full of) the meaning of 'O Lord!' The words are the trap for the words of One with Sweet Lips. How should he make a mistake [by not praying]? How should he then be silent? Since His 'Here I am' arrives with (each) 'O Lord!' It is a 'Here I am' that you are unable to hear but (which) you may taste from (your) head to (your) feet." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[7](189) mention [Zikr]: means repeating and chanting (silently or out loud) the praises of God, such as the Name of God [Allah]. This practice is recommended to the believers many times in the Qur'an. It is a practice with which Muslim mystics [sufis] have specialized.

[8](191) how much (longer) will you call out 'Allah': "In other words,

Satan was insinuating evil suggestions to that man." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[9](192) Khidr [KhiZr]: The name given to the mysterious guide of Moses (Qur'an 18:65), associated with the Prophet Elijah, and also said to have discovered the Fountain of Everlasting Life. The name "Khidr" is related to the color green, which symbolizes being "ever-fresh." In the Islamic sufi tradition, the Prophet Khidr is believed to be a spiritual guide for seekers during unexpected moments--especially for advanced seekers, before mysteriously disappearing.

[10](195) Our [mâ]: the "plural of majesty" of the One God, often used in the Qur'an.

[11](195) Our message (to you): "...is Our message to you" [ba-sôy-é tô]. (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[12](196) attraction [jaZb]: also means the attraction to God by means of ecstatic states of consciousness. Some sufi saints are so overwhelmed and helpless from such attraction that they are unable to function normally and are called "majZûb."

[13](196) and the release of these feet of yours (from bondage): "In other words, 'Those contrivances that you carried out into action on the path of arrival to Us, and the help and remedy that you were seeking for the sake of arrival to Us--the cause of all those was Our drawing you (away) from forgetfulness and ignorance; and it was the releasing of your feet for the sake of arriving to the rank of worshipful submission to and remembrance of Us.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

Here, Anqaravi refers to his commentary on II:1189-91, where he quotes the hadîth referred to in Arabic: "Just as (the Prophet)--peace be upon him--said, 'When the servant (of God) says, "O Lord!", God Most High says, "Here I am, my servant! Ask, (and) We will give."' [kamâ qâla--`alay-hi 's-salâm--iZâ qâla 'l-`abdu yâ rabbu yaqûlu 'llâhu ta`âlà labbayka `abdî sal na`aTu]

And he also commented: "The saying of 'Here I am' by God to the servant--that 'Here I am' is not something one should conclude (as accompanied) with words and sound that the servant hears with the power of the sense of hearing. This is a kind of 'Here I am' that you are unable to hear with the external ears. But you are able to taste and experience [be-chash-î] it from head to foot. In other words, you are able to enjoy it from head to foot, with all of your bodily faculties, and to gain the taste and experience [HaZZ] of it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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amr-é Haqq-é ta`âlà ba-mûsà--`alay-hi 's-salâm--ke: mar-râ ba dahânê khwâh ke ba-d-ân dahân gonâh na-karda'î

180 goft: ay mûsà ze-man mê-jû panâh
bâ dahânê ke na-kard-î tô gonâh

goft mûsà: man na-dâr-am ân dahân
goft: mâ-râ az dahân-é ghayr khwân

az dahân-é ghayr kay kard-î gonâh?
az dahân-é ghayr bar khwân k-ay ilâh

ân-chon-ân kon ke dahân-hâ mar to-râ
dar shab-o dar rôz-hâ âr-ad du`â

az dahânê ke na-kardast-î gonâh
w-ân dahân-é ghayr bâsh-ad `uZr khwâh

185 yâ dahân-é khwêshtan-râ pâk kon
rûH-é khwod-râ châbok-o châlâk kon

Zikr-é Haq pâk-ast, chûin pâkî rasîd
rakht bar band-ad, berûn ây-ad palîd

mê-gorêz-ad Zidd-hâ az Zidd-hâ
shab gorêz-ad chûn bar afrûz-ad Ziyâ

188 chûn dar ây-ad nâm-é pâk andar dahân
na palîdî mând-o na andoh-ân

bayân-é ân-ke allâh-goftan-é neyâz-mand, `aynu labbayka-goftan-é Haqq-ast

ân yakê allâh mê-gofty shabê
tâ ke shîrîn mê-shod az Zikr-ash labê

190 goft shayTân âkhir ay bisyâr-gû
în hama allâh-râ labbayka kû?

mê-na-y-ây-ad yak jawâb az pêsh-é takht
chand allâh mê-zan-î ba rôy-é sakht?
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ô shekasta-del shod-o be-n'hâd sar
dîd dar khwâb ô khaZir-râ dar khuZar

goft hîn az Zikr chûn wâ mânda'î
chûn pashîmân-î az ân ke-sh khwânda'î?

goft labbayk-am na-mê-ây-ad jawâb
z-ân hamê-tars-am ke bâsh-am 'ridd-é bâb

195 goft ân allâh-é tô labbayk-é mâ-st
w-ân neyâz-o dard-o sôz-at payk-é mâ-st

Hîla-hâ-wo châra-jôyî-hây-é tô
jaZb-é mâ bûd-o goshâd-é în pây-é tô

197 tars-o `ishq-é tô kamand-é luTf-é mâ-st
zîr-é har yâ rabb-é tô labbayk-hâ-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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All Honor Belongs to Him

Mathnawi III: 1080-81, 1114-27

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1080 (All) honor belongs to Him and (therefore) belongs to His servants (as well).[1] Recite the (story in the Qur'an) about Adam and Satan[2] (about) the signs of that (DivinePower).

1081 The explanation of [the Glory of] God does not have any end, like God (Himself). (So) hurry: close (your) mouth and turn over the page (of your views).[3]

.....

1114 For us, a "sleep" that is wakeful[4] is needed, so that by means of (spiritual) wakefulness (a person) may see dream (-like) images [of higher realities].

1115 The enemy of this sweet (wakeful) "sleep" is thoughts about the (material) world.[5] As long as a person's thinking is not "asleep," (his spiritual) "throat" is blocked.[6]

A (state of mystical) amazement[7] is needed in order to sweep (away) thoughts; (such a) bewilderment consumes (all) thoughts and memories.

Whoever is more perfect in (worldly) knowledge,[8] (the) more ahead (he is) in appearance, (but the more) backward in reality.

(As is) said (in the Qur'an), "We are returning (to God)."[9] And the return is in the (same) manner as a herd turns around and goes (back) home.[10]

When the herd has turned back after going down (to drink), the goat who was the leader ends up last.

1120 The lame goat (that was) last ends up (as) the first. (Therefore), the return has made the (formerly) frowning faces to laugh.

These people (who were the prophets and saints) never became lame (nor) gave (up) dignity and bought disgrace because of useless (talk).[11]

(Rather) these people travel in pilgrimage[12] with broken legs (because) there is a hidden path from (the state of) narrow constriction to deliverance and relief.[13]

This group (of people) have washed (their) hearts of (worldly) knowledge,[14] because this (kind of) knowledge doesn't comprehend the Way (to God).

A knowledge is needed the root of which is from that (Heavenly) direction, since every branch is the guide to its Root.

1125 Not (just) any wings can fly over the wide expanse of the ocean.[15] (Only Divinely) inspired knowledge[16] can carry (one) to the (Divine) Presence.

Then why should you teach a (kind of) knowledge to a man which he must (later) cleanse from his heart?

1127 Therefore, don't seek to be first: (instead), be "lame" on this side (and) be the leader[17] (of the flock at) the time of returning back.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Translated, 11/15/03

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1080) (All) honor [`izzat] belongs to Him and (therefore) belongs to His servants: This is a paraphrase in Persian of Qur'an 63:8, "And (all) honor belongs to God [wa li-'llâhi 'l-`izzat] and (therefore) belongs to His Prophet and to the (true) believers..."

[2](1080) about Adam and Satan: "Recite (from the Qur'an) the indications of His Power from (the story of) the Prophet Adam and Iblîs. Iblîs said, 'I am better than him' [Qur'an 7:12], therefore he became despised and worthless [7:13]. But Adam was obedient and found honor and salvation and bliss." (from the Commentary of Anqaravi, the 16th century Ottoman Turkish Mevlevi commentator on the Masnavi, translated here from a Persian translation of his work)

[3](1081) turn over the page (of your views): "i.e. 'instead of regarding the world of appearances and illusion, endeavour to see things as they really are'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[4](1114) a "sleep" that is wakeful: "See I 388 sqq" [= translated by Nicholson: "Every night Thou freest the spirits from the body's snare, and dost erase (the impressions on) the tablets (of the mind). The spirits are set free every night from this cage, (they are) done with ordinance and talk and tale. At night prisoners are unconscious of their prison, at night governors are unconscious of their power. There is no sorrow, no thought of gain or loss, no fancy of this person or that person. This is the state of the `árif (gnostic), even without sleep: God said, '(Thou wouldst deem them awake) whilst they slept.' [= Qur'an 18:18] Shy not at this. He is asleep, day and night, to the affairs of the world, like a pen in the hand of the Lord's control."

"Every Prophet and saint says, '(Just) one person wakeful "sleeping" person is needed by us.' In other words, 'We need someone who is "asleep" in regard to the world and to the realm of (material) forms, but (who) is "awake" and open-eyed in regard to the Hereafter and the realm of spiritual Reality [`âlam-é Haqîqat]. Therefore, one such person is needed in our presence so that he may see "dreams" in a state of "wakefulness."' In other words, so that he may witness the conditions of the World of Similitudes

[`âlam-é miSâl = a term used by the mystic, Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died, 1240] and the actions at the level of the Interval [barzakh--between death and the Resurrection] (while) in the state of wakefulness, and be liberated from sleep and forgetfulness (of God), and be 'dead' (to the world) prior to death. (This is) because of the verified saying (of the Prophet), 'Mankind are sleeping and when they die they will awaken.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[5](1115) thoughts about the (material) world: "Therefore, in the contents of this speech, Mawlânâ is indicating the closing of the eyes from (dwelling on) this world, the abandoning worldly thoughts, and finding repose and (spiritual) Reality as a result." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[6](1115) (his spiritual) "throat" is blocked: means that the "nourishment" of profound spiritual meanings cannot be consumed.

[7](1116) A (state of mystical) amazement [hayratê]: "Sometimes it appears like this and sometimes the contrary of it;l the business of religion is not (anything) except bewilderment. Not like that bewilderment (by) which one's back is toward Him, but like this bewildermentt: drowning,and drunkenness in the Beloved [Hayrân-o gharq-o mast-é dôst]." Masnavi I: 312-12

[8](1117) more perfect in (worldly) knowledge: "(It means) whoever is more perfect in skills involving (material) forms and actions and worldly knowledge..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[9](1118) "We are returning[râji`ûn] (to God)": "Truly, we belong to God and we are returning to God" [râji`ûn] (Qur'an 2: 156).

[10](1118) as a herd turns around and goes (back) home: "A grazing field (is) a metaphor for this world, and you may imagine that all of humanity are (like) a herd that have been sent from the Home of Reality [Haqîqat] to the desert of the world." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[11](1121) useless (talk): "Rather, these (people) were speaking about abandoning precedence in regard to material wealth, power, and glory [`izzat], and (so) they remained last after everyone. In other words, they didn't choose useless talk, lowliness, and being despised, but in the return to God they are more advanced than everyone (else). They chose to become abased, despised, poor and humble for the sake of becoming (more) honored than others [in the sight of God]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[12](1122) pilgrimage [Hajj]: "As an idiom, it is making intention to

(attain to) any matter.... And the aim of the people of the spiritual Path [ahl-é Tarîq] is for the sake of pilgrimage to the Ka`ba of (Divine) Reality [ka`ba-yé Haqîqat] and this is their circumambulation [tawâf]... And in this verse, 'Hajj' has a spiritual meaning." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[13](1122) from (the state of) narrow constriction to deliverance and relief: "anyone who has not experienced hardship [`usrat] will not know relief[yusrat]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[14](1123) "The collective group of sufis, the people of purity and the seekers of the path to God, have washed and cleansed their hearts from customary knowledge. Because this outward knowledge is unable to comprehend the path to (Divine) Reality." (Anqaravi. Commentary)

[15](1125) Not (just) any wings can fly over the wide expanse of the ocean: "In other words, the wings of the intellect and the wings of (common) knowledge of everyone are unable to fly across the expanse of the ocean of (spiritual) Reality and by that means cross and reach nearness to God [nazdîk-é Haqq]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[16](1125) (Divinely) inspired knowledge [`ilm-é ladunnî]: The knowledge gained from nearness to the Divine Presence. This is a reference to Qur'an 18:65. Nicholson explained: "i.e. the mystic's knowledge of the Divine Essence and Attributes." (Commentary)

"Anyone who is a seeker of the unveiling of this knowledge must be a seeker on the Prophetic path of religious law [shar`-é nabawiy] and the Mevlevi way [Tarîq-é mawlawî]. And in the Book of the Masnavî he may study the explanations of this (spiritual) meaning." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[17](1127) be the leader: in the next verse, Mawlânâ quotes a saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "We are the last and (yet) the first." This refers to his being the final Prophet to be sent by God as well as the pre-eminent Prophet. Nicholson explained: "i..e. the last in appearance, the first in reality." (Commentary)

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1080 `izzat ân-é ô-st-o ân-é bandag-ân'sh
z-âdam-o iblîs bar mê-khwân neshân'sh

1081 sharH-é Haq pâyân na-dâr-ad ham-chô Haq
hîn dahân bar-band-o bar-gardân waraq
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1114 khofta-yé bêdâr bây-ad pêsh-é mâ
tâ ba-bêdârî be-bîn-ad khwâb-hâ

1115 doshman-é în khwâb-é khwosh shod fikr-é khalq
tâ na-khosp-ad fikrat-ash bast-ast Halq

Hayratê bây-ad ke rûb-ad fikr-râ
khwarda Hayrat fikr-râ-wo Zikr-râ

har ke kâmil-tar bow-ad ô dar honar
ô ba-ma`nà pas, ba-Sûrat pêsh-tar

râji`ûn goft-o rujû` în sân bow-ad
ke gala wâ-gard-ad-o khâna raw-ad

chûn-ke wâ-gardîd galla az wurûd
pas fot-ad ân boz ke pêsh-âhang bûd

1120 pêsh oft-ad ân boz-é lang-é pasîn
aZHaka 'r-ruj`à wujuwa 'l-`âbisîn

az gazâfa kay shod-and în qawm-é lang
fakhr-râ dâd-and-o be-kh'rîd-and nang

pâ shekasta mê-raw-and în qaqm Haj
az Haraj râhê-st penhân tâ faraj

del ze-dânesh-hâ be-shost-and în farîq
z-ân-ke în dân-esh na-dân-ad ân Tarîq

dânshê bây-ad ke aSl-ash z-ân sar-ast
z-ân-ke har far`ê ba-aSl-ash rah-bar-ast

1125 har parê bar `arZ-é daryâ kay par-ad
tâ ladun `ilm-é ladunnî mê-bar-ad

pas che-râ `elmê be-y-amûz-î ba-mard
ke-sh be-bây-ad sîna-râ z-ân pâk kard?

1127 pas ma-jô pêshî az-în sar lang bâsh
waqt-éwâ-gashtan tô pêsh-âhang bâsh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Quarreling Over Shapes

Mathnawi III:1259-1274

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The disagreeing over the qualities and shape of the elephant[1]

1259 (An) elephant was in a dark building. (Some) people from India[2] had brought it for exhibition.

1260 Many people kept going into that dark (place) in order to see it.

Each one was stroking it (with his) hands in the dark, since seeing it with the eyes was not possible.

In the case of one person, (whose) hand landed on the trunk, he said, "This being is like a drain pipe."

For (another) one, (whose) hand reached its ear, to him it seemed like a kind of fan.

As for (another) person, (whose) hand was upon its leg, he said, "I perceived the shape of the elephant (to be) like a pillar."

1265 (And) in the case of (another) one, (who) placed (his) hand upon its back, he said, "Indeed, this elephant was like a throne."

In the same way as this, any one who reached a part (of the elephant) used his understanding (in regard to) any (particular) place he perceived (by touch).[3]

Their words were different and opposing because of the (different) viewing places.[4] One person gave it the nickname of (the bent letter) "dâl;" this (other one), (of the straight letter) "alif."

If there had been a candle in the hand of each person,[5] the disagreement would have gone out (completely) from their speech.

The eye of (physical) sense is like the palm of the hand, nothing more. (And) the palm (of the hand) has no access[6] the whole of (the elephant).[7]

1270 The eye of the Ocean is one thing and the foam (is) something else.[8] Abandon the foam and look out of the Ocean's
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eye.[9]

The movement of the (surface) foam (continues) night and day
from the Ocean.[10] You keep seeing the foam, but not the Ocean.
(How) amazing!

We are colliding against (one other) like boats. We are darkened of
eyes -- and (yet) we are in the clear (and brightly lit) water.[11]

O you (who have) gone to sleep in the boat of the body! You've
seen the water -- (but) gaze at the Water of the water.[12]

1274 The (physical) water has a (Universal) Water (as its source,
which drives it (forth). (Likewise), the spirit has a (Universal)
Spirit[13] calling it.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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(4/27/02)

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](Heading) The disagreeing over the qualities and shape of the elephant: "This apologue occurs in the Hadíqah [= by the sufi poet Sanâ'î [= of Ghazna], died 1131], Book I, 8, 10 sqq. and in the Ihyá [= by the sufi theologian Ghazâlî, died 1111], IV 7, 10 sqq. Both these [= earlier] versions are a good deal fuller than the one given here, but the chief difference is that while Saná'i and Ghazálí describe the people who handled the elephant as blind (`umyán), Rúmí says they could not see it because of the darkness of the place in which it was exhibited... Ghazálí tells the story in reply to criticism of his view that there is no 'fundamental' contradiction between the doctrines of 'jabr' (necessity) and 'kasb' (freewill).... He sums up as follows: 'Every one of these persons spoke the truth in a way, since he described the qualities of the elephant so far as his knowledge of it reached; yet the whole party failed to comprehend the real form of the elephant. Now consider this parable carefully, for it illustrates the nature of most of our (religious) controversies.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

[2](1259) people from India [hunûd]: the Arabic plural for "Hindu." In the Dari Persian of the 13th century C.E., it meant Indians (who could be Muslims). In the story, the elephant was brought for exhibition in a land where elephants were unknown.

[3](1266) any (particular) place he perceived (by touch): Nicholson translated, "Similarly, whenever any one heard (a description of the elephant), he understood (it only in respect of) the part that he had touched."

[4](1267) Their words were different and opposing because of the (different) viewing places: "It is similar to the leaders of different (Islamic) schools of law [maZâhib] and the masters of various (Islamic) sects [milal]. In other words, their viewpoint was dependent in accordance with a single fixed amount out of the entire Divine level, and they had believed that (this) fixed portion (was) the whole. Therefore, they gave a report from that same level, which was their point of view. In the same way as this, their belief and striving for an opinion became (full) of error and opposition in relation to the belief of a people with a different level.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

[5](1268) If there had been a candle in the hand of each person: here, Nicholson referred to Rumi's story about the disagreement over the grapes, Mathnawi II: 3687-88: "If a master of (the meaning of) secrets, a venerable one (with knowledge) of numerous languages, had been there, he would have given them reconciliation and peace. Then he would have said, 'By means of this one silver coin, I will grant the wishes of all of you.'"

"(It means), 'If there had been the candle of (true) witnessing and the light of (accurate) inspection in the "hand" of the hearts of every one of them, the conflict between their words would have disappeared. And every one of the leaders of the differing schools of (Islamic) law would have become a (true) follower of God. And the Divine level, which is the entire whole of qualities and degrees would have been revealed all together within themselves.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[6](1269) access [dast-ras]: literally, "hand-reaching." An idiom meaning the power to reach something.

[7](1269) the whole of (the elephant): "The eye of (the physical) sense is like the mere palm of the hand in understanding (Divine) Reality... Therefore, the partial intellect lacks the ability and capacity to understand (Divine) Realities and is helpless, like the sense of sight and the sense of touch in understanding the degree of the Whole. Therefore, the eye of the Universal Intellect is needed for the contemplation of the Ocean of (Divine) Realities." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[8](1270) The eye of the Ocean is one thing and the foam (is) something else: "'oculus cordus [= the eye of the heart], is

contrasted with (chashm-i) kaf, the eye that sees nothing beyond the sensible world. There is an untranslatable play on the double meaning of 'kaf,' 'hand' [= in Arabic] and 'foam' [= in Persian]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The eye of the ocean -- meaning an eye which is worthy of contemplating the Ocean... " (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[9](1270) Abandon the foam and look out of the Ocean's eye: "(It means), 'Look to the Ocean of (Divine) Realities out of the Ocean's eye.' In other words, 'If you wish to see the Ocean of Realities, then look with the eye which sees truth.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[10](1271) The movement of the (surface) foam (continues) night and day from the Ocean: "the ceaseless manifestations of Reality in the form of phenomena. Cf. I 1112 [= translated by Nicholson: "Reason is hidden, and (only) a world (of phenomena) is visible: our forms are the waves or a spray of it (of that hidden ocean)."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

[11](1272) We are darkened of eyes -- and (yet) we are in the clear (and brightly lit) water: here, Nicholson refers to two related passages in the Mathnawi, I: 1110, and 1120, as well as "... Nasafi's parable of the fishes who 'realised that they lived, moved, and had their being in water, but felt that they were quite ignorant of what constituted the very source of their life'..." (Commentary)

"(It means), 'We are darkened of eyes from (inability to see) this clear and bright Water which is the cause of our movement and confronting (each other).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[12](1273) the Water of the water: "the 'Water' of which every living thing is made (Qur. XXI 31), i.e. the all-pervading Essence (Dhát) and Ipseity (Huwiyyat) of God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The intended meaning of 'the Water of the water'... among the sufi masters is the Divine Essence which is 'flowing' in water and in all existent things and which drives water forth -- in the sense of the words (from the Qur'an), 'And We made all living things from water' [21:30)." (Anqaravi, Commentary

[13]1274) the spirit has a (Universal) Spirit: "Jílí [= died, ca. 1410, who followed the sufi philosophy of Ibn `Arabî] says: 'You must know that every sensible object has a created spirit which constitutes its form, and the spirit is to the form as the meaning to the word. The created spirit has a Divine Spirit which constitutes it, and that Divine Spirit is the Rúhu 'l-Quds.'" (Nicholson,

Commentary)

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ikhtilâf-kardan dar chegûnagî-wo shakl-é pîl

1259 pîl andar khâna-yé târîk bûd
`arZa-râ âwarda bûd-and-ash hunûd

az barây-é dîdan-ash mardom basê
andar ân Zulmat, hamê shod har kasê

dîdan-ash bâ chashm chûn mumkin na-bûd
andar ân târîkiy-ash kaf mê-be-sûd

ân yakê-râ kaf ba-kharTûm ôftâd
goft ham-chûn nâwa-dân-ast in nehâd

ân yakê-râ dast bar gôsh-ash rasîd
ân bar-ô chûn bâd-bîzan shod padîd

an yakê-râ kaf chûn bar pây-sh bûd
goft shakl-é pîl dîd-am chûn `amûd

ân yakê bar posht-é ô be-n'hâd dast
goft khwad în pîl chûn takhtê bod-ast

ham-chon-în har yak ba-juzwê ke rasîd
fahm-é ân mê-kard har jâ mê-shonîd

az naZar-gah goft-éshân shod mukhtalif
ân yakê dâl-ash laqab dâd în alif

dar kaf-é har kas agar sham`ê bodî
ikhtilâf az goft-éshân bêrûn shodî

chashm-é His ham-chûn kaf-é dast-ast-o bas
nêst kaf-râ bar hama-y ô dast-ras

chashm-é daryâ dîgar-ast-o kaf degar
kaf be-hel, w-az dîda-yé daryâ negar

jonbesh-é kaf-hâ ze-daryâ rôz-o shab
kaf hamê bîn-î-wo daryâ na, `ajab!

mâ chô keshtî-hâ ba-ham bar mê-zan-êm
tîra-chashm-êm-o dar âb-é rôshan-êm
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ay tô dar keshtîy-é tan rafta ba-khwâb
âb-râ dîd-î, negar dar âb-é âb

1274 âb-râ âbê-st k-ô mê-rân-ad-ash
rûH-râ rûHê-st k-ô mê-khwân-ad-ash

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part one)

Mathnawi III: 3686-3699

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The story of the king's prime minister who became suspect,
and (who) escaped from Bukhara out of fear for (his) life.
Then love drew him (back) without resistance. For the matter
of (sacrificing) life is easy for lovers.

3686 In Bukhara, the servant of the king[1] became suspect,
(and so) he became concealed from his king.

He wandered for a period of ten years, sometimes in
Khorasan, sometimes in the mountains, (and) sometimes in the
desert.[2]

(But) after ten years, due to yearning (love),[3] he
became powerless (to endure any longer) the days of
separation.

He said, "After this, the power (to endure) separation
no longer remains to me. Patience can never und
erstand (how) to settle an unruly life."[4]

3690 Because of separation, these (tracts of) earth become
unfertile; water becomes yellow, bad-smelling, and murky;[5]

The life-increasing (breezy) air becomes unhealthy[6] and
infected with plague; and fire changes to ashes[7] and
particles of fine dust.

The Paradise-like garden becomes the dwelling place of

sickness;[8] in (such a state of) weakness, its leaves become yellowed and scattered (on the ground).

Because of separation from (beloved) friends, the intelligent mind (becomes) like an archer with a broken bow.

Hell has been burning so (much) because of separation. And the elderly man has been trembling so (much) due to separation.[9]

3695 Even if I speak until the (Day of) Resurrection about separation, which resembles sparks of fire, it would be (merely) one (part) of a hundred thousand.

(And) so, don't breathe (a word) in explanation of its burning. Say no more than, "Lord protect (me)! Lord protect (me)!"

Anything by which you become happy in (this) world-- (in) the moment (of enjoyment), think about the (eventual) separation from it.

Many a person (before you) has been happy because of what you've been happy (with). Finally, it leaped away from him and became as (invisible as) the wind.

3699 It will jump away from you as well, (so) don't set your heart on it. Before (the moment) that it jumps away,[10] you should leap away from it.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 2/22/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3686) the servant of the king: the servant was the prime minister [wakîl]-- "a high official who 'managed the domestic affairs of the Court'" (Nicholson, Commentary). As for the king, he is called here by his title, literally, "the Chief of the World" [Sadr-é jahân]. Nicholson explained: "It is likely that this Story has some historical foundation, though the commentators give no details. For sadr-i jahán, a title bestowed on the rulers of Bukhárá belonging to the princely family of Burhán in the 12th and

13th centuries A.D....." (Commentary)

2. (3686) became suspect, (and so) he became concealed from his king: "The king of Bukhara had a slave who was his close friend and companion. It happened one day that an accusation was made against him and he became suspect. Then that close slave became hidden his king because of fear of his life and from fear of the king's anger. The meaning is: he fled from his own beloved and became concealed." (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century commentary on the Mathnawi) It was not uncommon for a king to elevate his favorite (and most faithful) slaves to positions of great power and wealth. In this story, the slave (elevated to the position of prime minister) symbolizes the slave of God [a phrase that means a true muslim, who surrenders faithfully to the Divine Will] in separation from his Lord. The slave also symbolizes the yearning lover who yearns to be reunited with the beloved, symbolized by the king (who in turn is a symbol of God, the King of all the worlds).

3. (3687) sometimes in the mountains, (and) sometimes in the desert: "may refer to Kuhistán-i Khurásán [= the mountainous area of Khurasan] (south of Níshápúr) and 'the great salt desert of the central Iranian plateau' by which it is surrounded." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (3688) due to yearning (love): "...from his total yearning and from intensity of the pain of separation, and from the burning of the fire of separation." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3689) Patience can never understand (how) to settle an unruly life: Nicholson translated, "how can patience allay (the lover's) state of abandonment?" "It means, quieting and stilling the unruly state of love." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (3690) water becomes yellow, bad-smelling, and murky: "If any water becomes separated from the flowing water which had been its source and it remains in (the form of) a pool..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3691) becomes unhealthy: "The meaning is that it became stinking... if it becomes separated from a wind which was its source and it becomes trapped in a foul-smelling place." "A fire, if it becomes separated from that fire which was its helper and friend, it becomes changed into ashes..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (3692) the dwelling place of sickness: "the garden which resembles Paradise becomes turned into a house of illnesses because of separation from the spring (season)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3692) its leaves become yellowed and scattered (on the ground).: "This is a metaphor for fading, annihilation, and not-being." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3694) due to separation: "Hell is separated from Divine Mercy; old age from bodily strength." (Nicholson, Commentary)

(3699) Nicholson translated, "Do you yourself escape from it before it escapes (from you)." "... and become free, so that you won't become tied to it and suffer affliction, and so that in the time of separation you won't be faced with pain and agitation, and crying and wailing." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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qiSSa-yé wakîl-é Sadr-é jahân ke muttaham shod
wa az bukhârâ gorêkht az bîm-é jân, bâz `ishq-ash
kashîd rô-kashân ke kâr-é jân sahl bâsh-ad `âshiq-ân-râ

3686 dar bukârâ banda-yé Sadr-é jahân
muttahim shod, gasht az Sadr-ash nehân

muddat-é dah sâl sar-gardân be-gasht
gah khorâsân, gah kohestân, gâh dasht

az pas-é dah sâl ô az ishtiyâq
gasht bê-Tâqat ze-ayyâm-é firâq

goft tâb-é furqat-am z-în pas na-mând
Sabr kay dân-ad khalâ`at-râ neshând?

3690 az firâq în khâk-hâ shôra bow-ad
âb zard-o ganda-wo têra shaw-ad

bâd-é jân-afzâ wakhim gard-ad wabâ
âteshê khâkestarê gard-ad habâ

bâgh-é chûn jannat shaw-ad dâru 'l-maraZ
zard-o rêzân barg-é ô andar HaraZ
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

`aql-é darrâk az firâq-é dôst-ân
ham-chô tîr-andâz-é eshkasta kamân

dôzakh az furqat chon-ân sôzân shod-ast
pîr az furqat chon-ân larzân shod-ast

gar be-gôy-am az firâq-é chûn sharâr
tâ qiyâmat yak bow-ad az Sad hazâr

pas ze-sharH-é sôz-é ô kam zan nafas
rabbi sallim, rabbi sallim gô-î-wo bas

har-che az way shâd gard-î dar jahân
az firâq-é ô be-y-andêsh ân zamân

z-ân-che gasht-î shâd, bas kas shâd shod
âkhir az way jast-o ham-chûn bâd shod

az tô ham be-j'had tô del bar way ma-neh
pêsh az ân k-ô be-j'had, az way tô be-jeh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Mary and the Angel Gabriel

Mathnawi III: 3700-3711, 3767-3788

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A beauty without a veil rose up from the earth, in the same manner as the sun rises up from the east.

Trembling occurred in Mary's limbs, since she was naked and fearful of wickedness and violence.

3705 (It was such) a (beautiful) form that, if Joseph had seen (it) clearly, he would have cut his hands in amazement like the (Egyptian) women.[6]

It grew like a rose from the earth in front of her, like a mental image which raises (its) head from the heart.

Mary became lost of self (from fear), and in being transported from herself she said, "I'll jump into the protection of God."

Because that pure-breasted one had made it (her) custom, (when) in retreat [from sin], to go toward the Unseen.

Since she viewed the world as an impermanent kingdom, she wisely made that (Divine) Presence a fortification,

3710 So that at the moment of death she would have a fortress which the enemy could not find a way to penetrate.[7]

3711 She found no better fortress than God's protection, (and) she chose a resting place near to that castle.

. . . . . .

3767 When, (in that) one moment, Mary had become (so) agitated,[8] like the fish on the ground,

The speaking of the Holy Spirit to Mary, saying, "I am the messenger of God to you. Don't be disturbed and don't take refuge from me, since this is the command (of God)."

The manifestation of (Divine) Kindness called out to her, saying, "I am the trustworthy one of the (Divine) Presence. Don't flee in fear from me.

"Don't draw (your) head back from the exalted ones of

the (Divine) Glory; don't shrink from such benevolent confidants (of God)."

3770 He was saying this, and (at the same time) a candle-wick of pure light was going from his lips continuously to the heavens.[9]

"You are escaping from my existence into non-existence[10]-- (yet) in (the world of) non-existence I am a king and possessed of a royal flag.

"My very place and dwelling is in non-existence, (and) only my (outward) form[11] is in front of the Lady.

"O Mary, observe that I am a difficult form (to understand), (since) I am (like) the new moon as well as a (mental) image in the heart.[12]

"When an image comes (and) sits down in your heart, it is with you wherever you run away (to)--

3775 "Except, (that is), a (mental) image which is a trivial incident, something absurd and false, (and) one which is like the false dawn (which) disappears.[13]

"I am like the true dawn (and) from the Light of the Lord, since no night circles around my day.

"Take care (and) don't (pray) 'There is no power (except in God),'[14] (O) my daughter of Imran,[15] since I have descended to this side from (the source of) 'There is no power.'[16]

"For me, 'There is no power' is (my very) origin and provision, (and) the light of (such) a 'There is no power' was prior to the Word (which began the creation of the universe).

"You continue to take refuge with God from me, (yet) I am the (very) picture of refuge (long) before this.[17]

3780 "I am that protection which was[18] your (past) place of escapes. You are saying, 'I take refuge!'[19]-- and (yet) I am myself that 'I take refuge.'

"There isn't a plague worse than ignorance. You are with a beloved[20] and (yet) you don't know the love-play (and ways of lovers).

"You keep thinking (your) friend (is) a stranger, (and)
you have placed the name of grief upon a joy."

Just like this date palm, which is the favor of our
friend,[21] (yet) his date palm is our gallows because we are
thieves.

(And) like this musk-scented object, which is the curl
of our (beloved) prince,[22] (yet) it is our chain because we
are devoid of reason.[23]

3785 (And) like this (Divine) grace, which resembles a Nile
(river) passing along, (yet) it becomes like blood because
we are Pharaohs.[24]

The blood keeps saying, "I am (pure) water. Take care
(and) don't spill (me)! I am (like) Joseph, (but) because of
you I am the wolf,[25] O quarrelsome man."

Can't you see that a patient friend[26] becomes like a
snake when you have become opposed to him.

3788 (Yet) the flesh and fat of his (body) has not become
different.[27] He didn't become so "evil," except from (his)
appearance (to you).[28]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) the Holy Spirit [rûHu 'l-qudus]: this is
understood to mean the angel Gabriel. Nicholson translated
"the Holy Spirit (Gabriel)."

2. (3700) speak to the form [of this world], like Mary:
Nicholson translated, "Say to the form (of created things),
like Mary." And he explained: Mary was not tempted even by
the visionary naqsh [= form] of Gabriel." (Commentary)

3. (3700) "I seek refuge from you in the Most Merciful: a
verse from the Qur'an: "And mention Mary in the Book [of the
Qur'an], when she withdrew from her family to an eastern

place. She took a screen (to seclude herself) from them. Then We sent Our spirit* [rûHa-nâ] to her, who appeared to her in the likeness of a well-formed man. She said, 'I seek refuge from you in the Merciful, if you are God-fearing.' He said, 'Truly, I am the messenger of your Lord, in order to (convey His message): "I will give (you) the gift of a pure son."'" (19:16-19)

*Our spirit: usually translated as "our angel" to avoid confusion in the Western reader with Christian doctrines about the Holy Spirit. The "spirit" of God has always been understood by Muslims to mean the angel Gabriel-- as is stated directly in the New Testament: "And... the angel Gabriel was sent from God... to a virgin... and the virgin's name was Mary, and he went in and spoke to her.... And she was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus.'" (Luke 1:26-31)

"Our spirit (means), 'Our spirit which is the same one as Gabriel.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator on the Mathnawi/Masnavi, translated here into English from a Persian translation).

4. (3701) Mary saw a very life-increasing form: "It means, 'She saw a beautiful (form).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3703 Faithful Spirit [rûHu 'l-amîn]: a title of the angel Gabriel.

6. (3705) he would have cut his hands in amazement like the (Egyptian) women: refers to the story of Joseph in the Qur'an. When Joseph was shown to a group of Egyptian women, who had been cutting fruit with knives, they were so distracted by their amazement at his beauty that they accidentally cut their hands. "And they said, 'God protect us! This is not a man; this is not other than a noble angel.'" (12:30)

7. (3710) for which the enemy could not find a way to aim (destruction): Nicholson translated, "which the Enemy would find no way to attack."

8. (3767) Mary had become (so) agitated: "(It means), 'The moment when Hazrat-i Maryam-- may God be pleased with her, became agitated from seeing Gabriel in the form of a (male)

youth and she came to be trembling like a fish fallen upon the ground.' This verse can be considered to be for the sake of the (previous) verse [= 3704]: it made Mary's limbs to tremble, since she was naked and feared wickedness and violence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3770) to the heavens: literally, "to the Two Fishes," which are the names of two stars near Arcturus. "(The meaning) is the heavens, intending the upper world." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3771) into non-existence: Nicholson explained that this is equivalent to "dar ghayb" [= into the Unseen realm of existence]. (Commentary)

11. (3772) only my (outward) form: "(It means), 'This form which I maintain in your presence, Lady, is my visionary image and a form of resemblance-- not my essential and original form.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (3773) I am (like) the new moon as well as a (mental) image in the heart: "To the outward eye Gabriel has the semblance of a 'new-moon', but that is only his súrat-i mithálí [= form of resemblance]: his real 'form' is the Divine attributes displayed by him and reflected as an image in the mirror of the mystic's heart." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), 'Since I am both the new moon from the viewpoint of the outward eye, as well as a vision within the heart, from the viewpoint that I am hidden from the outward eye.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (3776) the false dawn (which) disappears: a dim light sometimes seen above for some minutes, followed by darkness. It is distinguished from the true dawn, when the sky around the horizon begins to grow light. The time allowed for the performance of the Islamic morning prayer is between true dawn and the beginning of sunrise.

14. (3777) There is no power [lâ Hawl]: the contraction of a common Islamic prayer: "There is no power and and no strength but in God, the Most High, the Most Great" [lâ Hawla wa lâ quwwata illâ bi 'llâhi 'l-`alîyi 'l-`âZîm]. This is related to the prayer mentioned in the Qur'an (18:39): "Say, '(It is) what God has willed [mâ shâ' 'llâh] There is no power but with God!'" [lâ quwwata illâ bi 'llâh]. Nicholson translated, "Hark, do not cry Lá hawl against

me." And he explained: "i.e. 'do not take refuge with God in fear of me'. (Commentary)

15. (3777) daughter of Imran: an epithet of Mary (Qur'an 3:35), the mother of Jesus. Her father was named Imran and her mother was descended from the priestly family of Imran (Amran in the Bible), the father of Moses and Aaron (see Luke 1:5, regarding Mary's cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist).

16. (3777) from (the source of) 'There is no power: "In the second hemistich [= the second half of the couplet] lá hawl [= There is no power] signifies the eternal Divine omnipotence, which is the essence of the words lá hawla wa-lá quwwata illa bi-'lláhi and of Gabriel himself." (Nicholson, Commentary) "[This prayer is] has great effect in driving away and repelling satans, jinn [= genies], sensual thoughts, and the whispering temptations of Satan." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (3779) (long) before this: "(It means), 'In Eternity.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (3780) was [bûZ] [= bûd]: "the post-vocalic dhál is retained here on account of the rhyme." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (3780) I take refuge [a'`ûZu]: a prayer said by Mary (Qur'an 19:18). It is a prayer for seeking the protection of God against evil (see also verses 2:67; 11:47; 23:97, 98; 113:1; 114:1). A common Muslim prayer is, "I seek refuge in God from Satan, the Accursed" [a'`ûZu bi 'llâhi mina 'sh-shayTâni 'r-rajîm].

20. (3781) You are with a beloved: "Although this noble verse is addressed to Mary from the tongue of Hazrat-i Jibreel [= Gabriel]-- peace be upon him, yet the purpose of Hazrat-i Mawlànâ (Jalaluddin Rumi)-- may God sanctify his exalted grave, is wider: (it is addressed) to the (spiritual) seekers who have become connected with a perfected sufi guide [murshid-é kâmil], but don't know the customs of (mystic) lovers..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)
21. (3783) the favor of our friend: Nicholson translated,

"Such a date-palm, which is our Friend's favour--since we are robbers, His date palm is our gallows." "It means, 'Since we are not in knowledge, true understanding, and sincerity, then His date-palm is a place of punishment and

an instrument of affliction and calamity for us.'"
(Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (3784) this musk-scented object, which is the curl of our (beloved) prince: "The intended meaning of the musk-scented lock (of hair) is the noble existence of the prophets and saints." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23. (3784) it is our chain because we are devoid of reason: in Persian poetry, the beloved's hair is often compared to chains. And since crazy people were bound in chains, the lover is depicted as being chained (due to his attraction) by the chain-like locks of the beloved's hair.

24. (3785) it becomes like blood because we are Pharaohs: "Among the plagues sent upon the people of Pharaoh (Qur. VII 130) was the plague of blood, so that whenever an Egyptian would drink water, it turned to blood in his mouth." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3786) I am (like) Joseph, (but) because of you I am the wolf: Joseph was known for his handsome beauty (Qur'an 12:31). And he was the favorite of his father, Jacob. But his jealous brothers threw him down a well to get rid of him, and told their father that Joseph had been killed by a wolf (12:17).

26. (3787) a patient friend: "It means a forbearing, peaceable, and good-doing companion." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (3788) the flesh and fat of his (body) has not become different: Nicholson translated, "His flesh and fat (real nature) is unchanged."

28. (3788) He didn't become so "evil," except from (his) appearance (to you): "i.e. because you look upon him with the eye of 'self'. Cf. I 1319-1332 and the notes ad loc." [= "'Do not look on others through the medium of your evil "self", for then you will see in them only the reflexion of your own evil, and will regard them as enemies'.... Rúmí does not enter here into questions concerning the origin and true character of 'evil'... but what he says in the present passage is based on the doctrine that all so-called 'evil' is an illusion arising from the diversity of Divine attributes reflected in human nature, and that only our egoism prevents us from seeing the 'soul of goodness' everywhere. So far as evil exists in us, its source is the

unreal 'self' by which we are separated from God. Purge the heart of 'self', and evil disappears." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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paydâ shodan-é rûHu 'l-qudus ba-Sûrat-é âdamê
bar maryam ba-waqt barahnagî wa ghusl kardan
wa panâh-gereftan ba-Haqq-é ta`âlà

3700 ham-chô maryam gôy pêsh az fawt-é milk
naqsh-râ k-al-`awZu bi 'r-raHmân-é min-k

dîd maryam Sûratê bas jân-fezâ
jân-fezâyê, del-robâyê dar khalâ

pêsh-é ô bar rost az rôy-é zamîn
chûn mah-o khworshêd ân rûHu 'l-amîn

az zamîn bar rost khwobê bê-niqâb
ân-chon-ân k-az sharq rôy-ad âftâb

larza bar a`Zây-ê maryam ôftâd
k-ô barahna bûd-o tarsîd az fasâd

3705 Sûratê ke yûsuf ar dîdy `ayân
dast az Hayrat borîdy chûn zan-ân

ham-chô gol pêsh-ash be-rôyîd ân ze-gel
chûn khayâlê ke bar âr-ad sar ze-del

gasht bê-khwad maryam-o dar bê-khwadî
goft be-j'h-am dar panâh-é îzadî

z-ân-ke `âdat karda bûd ân pâk-jayb
dar hazîmat rakht bordan sôy-e ghayb

chûn jahân-râ dîd mulkê bê-qarâr
Hâzim-âna sâkht z-ân HaZrat HiSâr

3710 tâ ba-gâh-é marg HiSnê bâsh-ad-ash
ke na-yâb-ad khaSm râh-é maqSad-ash

3711 az panâh-é Haq HiSârê beh na-dîd
yôrt-gah nazdîk-é ân dez bar-gozîd

. . . . . .
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chûn-ke maryam muZTarib shod yak-zamân
ham-chon-ân-ke bar zamîn ân mâhiy-ân

goftan-é rûHu 'l-qudus maryam-râ ke man rasûl-é
Haqq-am ba-tô, âshofta ma-shaw wa penhân ma-shaw
az man ke farmân-é în-ast

bâng bar way zad namûdâr-é karam
ke amîn-é HaZrat-am az man ma-ram

az sar-afrâz-ân-é `izzat sar ma-kash
az chon-în khwash-maHramân khwad dar ma-kash

în hamê goft-o Zubâla-yé nûr-é pâk
az lab-ash mê-shod pay-â-pay bar simâk

az wujûd-am mê-gorêz-î dar `adam
dar `adam man shâh-am-o SâHib-`alam

khwad bonah-o bon-gâh-é man dar nîstî-st
yak-sowâra naqsh-é man pêsh-é setî-st

maryam-â ne-n'gar ke naqsh-é mushkil-am
ham hilâl-am, ham kheyâl andar del-am

chûn kheyâlê dar del-at âmad neshast
har ko-jâ ke mê-gorêz-î bâ tow-ast

joz khayâlê, `ârizîyê, bâTilê
k-ô bow-ad chûn SubH-é kâZib âfilê

man chô subH-é Sâdiq-am az nûr-é rab
ke na-gard-ad gerd-é rôz-am hêch shab

hîn ma-kon lâ Hawl `imrân-zâda-am
ke ze-lâ Hawl în Taraf oftâda-am

mar ma-râ aSl-o ghiZâ lâ Hawl bow-ad
nûr-é lâ hawlê ke pêsh az qawl bow-ad

tô hamê gîr-î panâh az man ba-Haq
man negârîda-yé panâh-am dar sabaq

ân panâh-am man ke makhlaS-hâ-t bûZ
tô `a'ûZ âr-î-wo man khwad ân a'`ûZ

âfatê na-b'w-ad batar az nâ-shenâkht

tô bar-é yâr-o na-dân-î `ishq-bâkht

yâr-râ aghyâr pendâr-î hamê
shâdiyê-râ nâm be-n'hâd-î ghamê

în chon-în nakhlê ke luTf-é yâr-é mâ-st
chûn-ke mâ dozd-êm nakhl-ash dâr-é mâ-st

în chon-în moshkîn ke zolf-é mîr-é mâ-st
chûn-ke bê-`aql-êm, în zanjîr-é mâ-st

3785: în chon-în luTfê chô nêlê mê-raw-ad
chûn-ke fir`awn-êm, chûn khûn mê-shaw-ad

khûn hamê gôy-ad man âb-am, hîn ma-rêz
yûsuf-am, gorg az tow-am ay por-setêz

tô na-mê-bîn-î ke yâr-é bord-bâr
chûn-ke bâ ô Zid shod-î gard-ad chô mâr

3788 laHm-é ô-wo shaHm-é ô dêgar na-shod
ô chon-ân bad joz ke az manZar na-shod

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part two)

Mathnawi III: 3789-3807

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

(And) you are in "Bukhara" (when) you are (sitting) in the presence of a (spiritual) master.[4] So don't look at Bukhara as something contemptible.[5]

(Since) other than (humble) lowliness (on your part)[6] toward the Bukhara of his heart, its difficult low and high tides[7] will not offer (you) the way (to reach it).

Oh (how spiritually) happy (is) the one whose ego[8] (is) meekly submissive! (And) what sorrow (for) the person whose (own stubborn) kicking causes (him) to fall to the ground![9]

3795 Separation from the King had made the pillars inside (his) soul (to break) into pieces.

(The prime minister) said, "I'll get up, and go back there. (And) if I've become an unbeliever, I'll believe another time.[10]

"I'll go back there (and) fall (in obeisance) in front of him, before (Bukhara's) good-thinking[11] King.

"I'll say, 'I'm throwing my life before you: make (me) live, or sever my head like a sheep![12]

"'O (beautiful full) Moon, (being) killed and dead in your presence is better than (being) king of the living (in) some other place.

3800 "'I have examined (this) more than a thousand times. Without you, I don't experience my life as pleasant (any more).

"'O object of my desire! Hum to me the sound of the Resurrection![13] O (my) camel! Kneel (down),[14] (since my) joy is complete!

"'O earth! Swallow my tears! (For my weeping) has already been sufficient. O (my) soul! Drink (from) a watering place (which is) definitely pure!

"'O my festival! You've come (back) to us,[15] (so be) welcome! O east wind! What a pleasant and refreshing breeze (you've brought)!'"[16]

He said, "O friends, farewell! I'm going to that King who is the commander and one (who) should be obeyed.

3805 "I've become roasted in the burning (fire of love),
every moment. I'm going there, (so) whatever happens, let it
happen!

"Even though he is making (his) heart (as hard as) a
rock,[17] my soul is making Bukhara its aim.

3807 "(Since) it is the dwelling place of my (dearest)
friend and the city of my king. In the lover's view, this is
(the meaning of the saying), 'love of (one's) homeland.'"[18]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 3/1/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1.(3789) Quit [this other story]: literally, "Leave the
candle of Mary burning." "i.e. 'leave the Story of Mary
unfinished.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) Rumi had interrupted
his story about the king's prime minister, following a verse
(line 3699) about jumping away from worldly desires and
seeking God's help. This led him to tell the story of how
Mary, the mother of Jesus, leaped (via prayer) into the
protection of God (when the archangel Gabriel first appeared
to her in the form of a man (Qur'an 19:17), to announce that
she would give birth to a holy son).

2. (3790) flee: Nicholson translated, "make a transition to
the (story of ..." And he explained: "The context...
indicates that in the second hemistich the poet addresses
either himself or his amanuensis [= his recording
secretary], and that guríz [= escape] is used in its
technical sense." (Commentary) However, the use of this word
here also seems to be a word play on the use of the words
(translated as) "jumping away," "leaping," "escaping" in the
preceding sections. Anqaravi (the 17th century Turkish
commentator, whose work is translated here from a Persian
translation) interprets it as meaning, "Go toward the King
(of Bukhara)-- into the presence of the Beloved," and views
it in regard to the verse, "So flee to God" (Qur'an: 51:50).

3. (3791) This "Bukhara": "i.e. the heart of the Perfect
Man [= a term used in the mystical philosophy of the sufi

master, Ibnu 'l-`Arabi (died, 1240], the source of esoteric knowledge." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The intended meaning of 'Bukhara' is a perfected spiritual master [shaykh-é kâmil], who is the source of (spiritual) knowledge and the mine of (direct) witnessing and seeing (of Reality)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (3792) a (spiritual) master [shaykh]: literally, an old man. But in sufi literature it means a sufi master or guide, a "sufi shaykh."

5. (3792) don't look at Bukhara as something contemptible: there is a word-play between "Bukhara" [bukhârâ] and "something contemptible" [ba-khwârî].

6. (3793) (Since) other than (humble) lowliness (on your part): "It means, 'The way will not be given to you to the Bukhara of his heart-- which is the beloved's city-- except with submissiveness and humility (on your part).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3793) its difficult low and high tides: "The heart of the Shaykh is compared to a sea which demands the most cautious navigation." (Nicholson, Footnote) "The intended meaning of the difficult low and high tides of the perfected spiritual master [shaykh-é kâmil]: it is the two alternating qualities and two variable states of the sea of his heart. For example, such as his attracting and repelling. Due to the power of his attraction, he draws the seeker whose deeds and conduct cause satisfaction to his heart. But he hinders and drives away the one who happens to become disliked." (Anqaravi, Commentary).

8. (3794) ego [nafs]: the base self. A technical term in sufism which refers to the sensual/bodily self, which is full of worldly cravings and ego-centered preoccupations. It resists submitting to God's Will, or to a spiritual master who could guide and train disciples to surrender more deeply to the Divine Will.

9. (3794) what sorrow (for) the person whose (own stubborn) kicking causes (him) to fall to the ground: Nicholson translated, "Alas for that one whose recalcitrance destroys (him)!" Anqaravi paraphrased: "How unfortunate (is) the state of the one whose heart palpitations reveal his destruction (or downfall)!" He defined the word translated here as "kicking" [rafs] as meaning "a blow in the chest" and explained: "In this place the intended meaning is the

bad-natured habits of the ego [nafs]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3796) I've become an unbeliever, I'll believe another time: means here, "If I've been an unfaithful lover, I'll repent and become a faithful lover again."

11. (3797) good-thinking: means, here, more than "thinking well," but one who meditates on what is good and beneficent. Nicholson translated, "kindly thinking."

12. (3798) or sever my head like a sheep: a metaphor for execution, since decapitation of a sheep would not done until it has first been killed according to Islamic law, with minimal pain and trauma (holding the animal, saying a short prayer, cutting its throat quickly with a sharp knife, letting it bleed to death in its own time, while allowing at least one leg free to kick). "I will say to that revered one: 'I am bestowing my life at your feet. Either bring forgiveness (to me) and make me live, or sever my head with the sword of anger, in the same manner that a sheep's head is severed.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (3801) Hum to me the sound of the Resurrection: "(It means), 'Sing the sound of the Resurrection and the blowing of the trumpet, so that my spirit may receive life.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (3801) O (my) camel! Kneel (down): means that the prime minister is imagining himself arriving to the king's presence. After asking to hear the sound of his king's voice, the prime minister orders his camel to kneel down, so he can climb off it, since his happiness is fulfilled. " (It means), 'O camel of my being, kneel (down).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Nicholson's interpretation is different (that it means, "let me mount, O my soul, and journey home")-- and seems less appropriate, since the minister is envisioning himself as already being home.

15. (3803) O my festival! You've come (back) to us: there is a word play between the two Arabic words, "festival" [`îd] and "you've come (back)" [`udta]. The origin of both words is the root meaning, "to come back repeatedly." In Islam, there are two festivals: one following the annual month of fasting during the daylight hours, and one following the annual pilgrimage rites in Mecca.

16. (3803) What a pleasant and refreshing breeze (you've

brought): "(It means), 'O morning breeze which has blown from the district of the beloved!'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (3806) hard as a rock: there is a word-play between "hard rock" [sang-é khârâ] and Bukhara [bukhârâ].

18. (3807) the saying), 'love of (one's) homeland': "Cf. the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad]: hubbu 'l-watani mina 'l-imán" [= love of (one's) homeland is a part of (true) faith]. (Nicholson, Commentary) "Therefore the homeland of the lover is the district of the beloved. In (the view) of the lover, complete faith is a (metaphorical) expression of the love and desire which he has for the dwelling place of the beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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`azm kardan ân wakîl az `ishq ke rujû` kon-ad ba-bukhârâ lâ-ubâlî-wâr

3789 sham`-é maryam-râ be-hel afrôkhta
ke bukhârâ mê-raw-ad ân sôkhta

3790 sakht bê-Sabr-o dar âtash-dân-é têz
raw sôy-é Sadr-é jahân, mê-kon gorêz

în bukhârâ manba`-é dânesh bow-ad
pas bukhârâ'yî-st har k-ân-esh bow-ad

pêsh-é shaykhê dar bukhârâ andar-î
tâ ba-khwârî dar bukhârâ na-n'gar-î

joz ba-khwârî dar bukhârây-é del-ash
râh na-d'h-ad jazr-o madd-é mushkil-ash

ay khonok ân-râ ke Zallat nafsu-hu
wây ân kas-râ ke yurdî rafsu-hu

3795 furqat-é Sadr-é jahân dar jân-é ô
pâra pâra karda bûd arkân-é ô

goft bar khêz-am ham ân-jâ wâ raw-am
kâfir ar gasht-am, degar rah be-g'raw-am

wâ raw-am ân-jâ be-y-oft-am pêsh-é ô
pêsh-é ân Sadr-é nekô-andêsh-é ô
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

gôy-am afkand-am ba-pêsh-at jân-é khwêsh
zenda kon yâ sar be-bor mâ-râ chô mêsh

koshta-wo morda ba-pêsh-at ay qamar
beh ke shâh-é zenda-gân-é jây-é degar

3800 âzmûd-am man hazâr-ân bâr-é bêsh
bê-tô shîrîn mê-na-bîn-am `âysh-é khwêsh

ghanni-lî yâ munyat-î laHna 'n-nushûr
ubruk-î yâ nâqat-î tamma 's-surûr

ibla`-iy yâ arZu dam`-î qad kafà
ishrab-î yâ nafsu wird-an qad Safâ

`udta yâ `îd-î ilay-nâ marHabâ
ni`ma mâ rawwaHta yâ rîHa 'S-Sabâ

goft ay yâr-ân rawân gasht-am widâ`
sôy-é ân Sadrê ke amîr-ast-o muTâ`

3805 dam ba-dam dar sôz beryân mê-shaw-am
har-che bâdâ bâd, ân-jâ mê-raw-am

gar-che del chûn sang-é khârâ mê-kon-ad
jân-é man `azm-é bukhârâ mê-konad

3807 maskin-é yâr-ast-o shahr-é shâh-é man
pêsh-é `âshiq în bow-ad Hubbu 'l-waTan

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part three)

Mathnawi III: 3812-3817, 3830-3836

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The (efforts) of his friends to prevent his returning to Bukhara, and making warnings, and his speaking about fearing nothing

3812 One advisor told him, "O unaware man! Consider the end (result), if you have the skill.

"Look ahead and behind with common sense. Don't burn yourself like a moth (attracted to a candle).[1]

"Why are you going to Bukhara? You're crazy, and suitable for chains[2] and the prison-house (for the insane).

3815 "(The king) continues to bite iron from anger because of you. (And) he continues to seek you with twenty eyes.[3]

"He keeps sharpening the knife for (killing) you. He is (like) a dog in (a time of) famine, and you (are like) a bag of flour.

3817 "Since you escaped and God gave you way (to freedom), (now) you're travelling toward prison? What's happened to you?"

. . . . . .

The lover's speaking to the adviser and criticiser, (about) fearing nothing, because of love

3830 He replied, "O adviser, be quiet! How much longer (will you continue)? Don't give (any more) advice, since (my) shackles are very difficult (to bear).[4]

"My chains and fetters[5] are more harsh than your advice. Your learned (teacher) did not understand love.[6]

"Abu Hanifa and Shafi have given no lessons (in legal conduct)[7] in the direction where love has increased (my) agony.

"Don't warn me about being killed,[8] since I'm miserably thirsty for my own blood."

For lovers, every moment is a (state of) dying. But the dying of lovers is not one kind (only).[9]

3835 (The lover) has two hundred lives from the Soul of Guidance, and he continues to sacrifice those two hundred every moment.

3836 For each one of (those) souls, he takes (back) ten (for its) value. Read from the Word of God (the verse about gaining) "ten times the like of them."[10]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.

Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 3/8/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3812) Don't burn yourself like a moth (attracted to a candle): "(It means), 'Don't burn yourself like a moth in the fire of his [= the king of Bukhara] candle. And don't destroy the foundation of your existence with your own hand.'" (translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century commentary on the Mathnawi)

2. (3814) suitable for chains: insane persons were kept in chains, to protect them from hurting others or themselves.

3. (3815) with twenty eyes: means, with numerous investigators and spies. "(It means) 'vigorously in expectancy of (capturing) you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (3830) since (my) shackles are very difficult (to bear): "(It means), 'Since (my) spiritual shackles are very tight. Since the lover's love, due to God Most High, is an urgent decree.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3831) My chains and fetters: Nicholson referred here to Rumi's previous words (in line 3820), which he translated, "Secret love had made him captive..."

6. (3831) Your learned (teacher) did not understand love: "(It means), 'since you don't know what an amazing state love is.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi also quotes here the Arabic saying, "He who does not taste does not know." [man lam yaZiq lam yadri]

7. (3832) Bu Hanifa and Shafi have given no lessons (in legal conduct): Abu Hanifa (died, 767) was the founder of the Hanafi school of Sunni Islamic law (which Rumi followed). Imam Shafi (died 820) founded the Shafi school. These schools of law ranked behaviors as positive (such as required, necessary, recommended) or negative (such as disliked, sinful, criminal). Those behaviors which were not judged as approved or disapproved (directly or through analogy by the Qur'an, the Traditions involving the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhamad, or the first generation of the Prophet's companions) were regarded as something Muslims were free to do or not do as they wished. The meaning here is that all the branches of religious knowledge have no advice to help the lover who is a captive of Love.

8. (3833) Don't warn me about being killed: "Another quality of the lover is this: that, for him, death is a gift; in the moment when it is suffering and non-existence for the learned and prudent man, for the lover it is spirit and delight." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3834) But the dying of lovers is not one kind (only): "These verses [= this one and the next] refer to the manifold variety of 'states' experienced by the mystic and his successively 'passing away' (faná) from these until he attains to union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3836) (the verse about gaining) "ten times the like of them": this verse refers to the Day of Judgment, but Rumi interprets, here, it as applying to the true lovers of God in this life. "The one who does good actions will have ten times the like of them (as a reward). But he who does evil actions will not be recompensed except (according to) the like of them. And they will not be wronged (in the least)." (Qur'an 6:160)

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mana` kardan dôstan-é ô-râ az rujû` kardan ba-bukhârâ wa tahdîd kardan wa lâ-ubâlî goftan-é ô

3812 goft ô-râ nâsiHê, ay bê-khabar
`âqibat andêsh, agar dâr-î honar

dar negar pas-râ ba-`aql-o pêsh-râ
ham-chô parwâna ma-sôzân khwêsh-ra

chûn bukhârâ mê-raw-î dêwâna-î
lâyek-é zanjîr-o zendân-khâna-î

3815 ô ze-tô âhan hamê-khây-ad ze-khashm
ô hamê-jôy-ad to-râ bâ bêst chashm

mê-kon-ad ô têz az bahr-é tô kârd
ô sag-é qaHT-ast-o tô anbân-é ârd

3817 chûn rahîd-î-wo khodây-at râh dâd
sôy-é zendân mê-raw-î, chûn-at fotâd?

. . . . . .

lâ-ubâlî goftan-é `âshiq, nâSiH wa `âZil-râ az sar-é `ishq
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

3830 goft ay nâSiH khamosh kon chand chand
pand kam deh z-ân-ke bas sakht-ast band

sakht-tar shod band-é man az pand-é tô
`ishq-râ na-sh'nâkht dânesh-mand-é tô

ân Taraf ke `ishq mê-afzûd dard
bû Hanîfa-wo shâf`î darsê na-kard

tô ma-kon tahdîd az koshstan ke man
teshna-yé zâr-am ba-khûn-é khwêshtan

`âshiq-ân-râ har zamânê mordanê-st
mordan-é ushshâq khwad yak nû` nêst

3835 ô dô Sad jân dâr-ad az jân-é hudà
w-ân dô Sad-râ mê-kon-ad har dam fidà

3836 har yakê jân-râ setân-ad dah bahâ
az nubî khwân `ashrat-an amSâla-hâ

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part four)

Mathnawi III: 3837-3859

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(And) if He wishes to walk upon my eyes, let Him walk (as He will)![5]

Speak Persian (again),[6] even though Arabic is more elegant. But there are a hundred other tongues for (describing) love.

(Yet) when the scent of the beloved is flying (everywhere),[7] all those tongues become bewildered.[8]

I will stop (talking). The Beloved has entered into speech, (so) be (all) ears! And God knows best what is right.

3845 Since the lover has repented,[9] now be afraid[10]-- since, like roving knights (on the path of Love),[11] he may teach lessons on the gallows.[12]

(But) although this lover is travelling to Bukhara,[13] he is not going for lessons or to a teacher.[14]

For the lovers (of God), the (only) teacher is the Beloved's Beauty. (And) their (only) book, lesson, and lecture is His Face.

They are silent and (yet) the shouts of their repetition (of the praises of God)[15] are going up to the Throne of their Beloved.[16]

Their (only) lesson is (spiritual) turmoil, whirling, and agitation-- not the (legalisms of the book called) "Abundances"[17] and the chapter about the "chain" (of causation).[18]

3850 The "chain" of these people[19] is the musk-scattering (chain-like) curls (of the Beloved).[20] There is the question of the "circle" (of reasoning),[21] but it (is about) the circle of the Friend.[22]

If someone asks you about the (legal) question of the (stolen) "purse,"[23] say that the treasure of God cannot be held in purses.

If talk is proceeding about a wife-requested divorce or a mutually agreed divorce, don't view it negatively, (since inward) mention of [divorce from the beloved in] Bukhara is going on.

(For) the mention of any particular thing presents a special quality, because every quality has an essential nature.[24]

You may attain mastery of (the branches of spiritual) knowledge in Bukhara.[25] (But) when you put (your) face (down) in (a state of) humble lowliness,[26] you will be free from (all) those.

3855 That man from Bukhara didn't have the sorrows and worries

of knowledge. (For) he was fixing (his) eyes on the sun (light) of (direct) vision.

Whoever has found, (while) in solitude, the way to (direct) vision won't seek a position of wealth and power by means of knowledge.[27]

When he becomes a companion with the beauty of the Soul, he will have restlessness and dissatisfaction with knowledge and knowing things.[28]

Vision is usually superior to knowledge.[29] (And) for the common people, the whole world surpasses (the next world in importance) for this reason.

3859 Since they continue to see (this) world as of primary importance, and they consider that (other) world as (nothing but) debt.[30]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3837) that beloved-faced One: Nicholson translated, "that One of friendly countenance..."

2. (3837) I will scatter (my) soul before Him (while) stamping (my dancing) feet: Nicholson translated, "...dancing (in triumph) I will strew (lavish) my soul (life) upon Him."

3. (3838) I've experienced (that) my death is in life: Nicholson translated, "I have tried it: my death is (consists) in life." And he explained: "i.e. the result of self-existence is spiritual death." (Commentary) "It means, 'In being alive with this perishing life of mine, the meaning is death. If I become freed from this transitory life, it will be everlasting for me.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) In other words, this brief life is really "death," and death will be eternal "life." (

4. (3839) in my being killed there is life upon life: "A well-known verse by Halláj [= a sufi with radical teachings, executed in 922 for allegedly saying, "I am the Truth/God"], altered for the sake of the meter." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred to similar

verses (which he translated): "To me the berry of dying has become sweet: (the text) 'nay, they are living' [= Qur'an 2:154; 3:169] has come (from God) to my account. Slay me, my trusty friends, slay me, vile as I am: verily in my being slain is my life for evermore. Verily, in my death is my life, O youth-- how long shall I be parted from my home? Until when?" (I: 3833-35) And he explained: "Here the poet definitely brings out the mystical sense of 'death' which has already been suggested by vv. 3927-3928 supra. [= "The death of deathlessness is lawful to us, the provision of unprovidedness is a bounty to us. 'Tis death outwardly but life inwardly: apparently 'tis a cutting-off (decrease), in secret (in reality) 'tis permanence (life without end)."] The Qur'ánic text may be understood as a canon against 'self-slaughter' in that sense [= since suicide is strictly forbidden in Islam], for the faná of the mystic is bestowed on him by Divine grace and is incompatible with personal initiative or self-activity of any kind." (Commentary)

5. (3841) let Him walk (as He will): Nicholson translated, "if He wished to walk upon mine eye, He would walk (upon it, and be welcome)."

6. (3842) Speak Persian (again): Rumi is speaking to himself here, since the previous three lines were in Arabic.

7. (3843) when the scent of the beloved is flying (everywhere): "(It means), becoming evident and reaches the sense of smell of the lovers" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (3843) all those tongues become bewildered: means that no one can speak any language because of bewilderment at the attractiveness of the Beloved.

9. (3845) Since the lover has repented: Nicholson referred here to I: 2205 (which he translated), "O thou whose knowledge is without knowledge of the Giver of knowledge, thy repentance is worse than thy sin." And he explained: "... self-consciousness [= ego-centered thinking] is the greatest of all sins (I 517, note). [= a reference to Rumi's words, "and being is a sin", Nicholson commented: "One who regards himself as existing and acting individually is, in effect, denying the Divine Unity."]. Hence the elect [= the sufi saints] do not repent of sinful acts as such, but only of ghaflat, i.e. forgetting God even for a moment." (Commentary)

10. (3845) now be afraid: "The commentators explain that one must beware of supposing the 'repentant' lover to have renounced the real object of his love; on the contrary, he has renounced everything except God (má siwá 'lláh). But I think the point rather

lies in the danger that, like Hallaj, he may proclaim what should be kept as an ineffable mystery." (Nicholson, Commentary) "You may make the analogy that the lover has repented of (his love for) the beloved. But the lover is repenting of making repentance and of returning to another (beloved) -- not from (his) beloved. He cares only for his beloved. And like the roving knights (on the path of Love), he is giving lessons on the gallows about being erased and annihilated (of ego)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (3845) roving knights [`ayyâr-ân] (on the path of Love): originally a term for a knight's assistant, later for a shrewd adventurer and a wandering rascal. In sufism, the term refers to someone who followed a combination the teachings of chivalry and sufism, as well as someone who concealed being a dervish beneath a non-conformist and blamable appearance. "Súfís use `ayyár, 'vagabond', in the same way as rind, i.e. a reckless devotee (sar-báz-i taríq-i mahabbah) [= soldier on the path of Love]." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The meaning is soldiers in the (sufi) path of love [Tarîq-é `ishq]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (3845) he may teach lessons on the gallows: another reference to the radical mystic, Hallaj, who was executed for allegedly proclaiming, "I am the Truth/God."

13. (3846) (But) although this lover is travelling to Bukhara: "(It means) he is travelling toward the dwelling place of the beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (3846) he is not going for lessons or to a teacher: "Because love cannot be obtained with lessons and a teacher." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (3848) their repetition (of the praises of God): "their repetition" can only mean the repeated chanting called "remembrance of God" [Zikru 'llâh], an Islamic form of prayer which is a specialty of the sufis.

16. (3848) Beloved: Nicholson translated this word here as, "Friend."

17. (3849) the (legalisms of the book called) "Abundances" [ziyâdât]: "probably a treatise on fiqh [= Islamic law] bearing that title by the Hanafite lawyer Muhammad ibnu 'l-Hasan al-Shaybání." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (3849) the chapter about the "chain" [silsilah] (of causation): "That silsilah here means some kind of logical concatenation [= linkage] would seem to be undeniable in view of the whole context and, in particular, the association of silsilah with dawr [= circle] in the

following verse. Probably it is a special form of the method of qiyás [= reasoning by analogy] developed by Abú Hanifah and his school." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (3850) these people: Nicholson translated, "these people (the lovers of God)..."

20. (3850) the musk-scattering (chain-like) curls (of the Beloved): "Súfís compare the world of phenomena to the dark chain-like ringlets of a beauty. Although from a certain point of view all phenomena veil the face of Reality from its lovers, the illumined mystic regards them as theatres (maZâhir) for the manifestation of the Divine Names and Attributes underlying them." (Nicholson, Commentary) "In the terminology of the lovers, it is an expression of the manifestation of the Divine Attributes.... for the lovers regard all of existence as the manifestation of the Divine Attributes-- and nothing exists except those." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (3850) the question of "the circle" (of reasoning): "In order to prove the necessity of an absolute self-existent Cause, Moslem theologians demonstrate the fallacy of two alternative hypotheses, technically called the 'chain' and the 'circle', either of which would render such a Cause unnecessary. The 'chain' is a series of contingent causes going backward ad infinitum; the 'circle' involves the absurdity that A depends on B, which in turn depends on A." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson added: "As an instance of legal 'arguing in a circle', Fa [= Anqaravi] mentions the case where inheritance of property depends on proof that one of two persons who were drowned at the same time expired before the other." (Commentary) Anqaravi's example involves the hypothetical case of a father and one of his sons drowning together, which would cause the laws for inheritance to be confounded. (Commentary)

22. (3850) the circle of the Friend: "God, or Divine Love, is a circle bi-kulli shay-in muhít" [= "Truly, He encompasses all things" (Qur'an 41:54)]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (3851) the (legal) question of the (stolen) "purse": involves various factors involved in judging whether to punish a thief for stealing a purse containing money from another man's sleeve (men used to carry things in their large sleeves).

24. (3853) every quality has an essential nature: Nicholson translated, "... the mention (recollection) of anything produces a particular (spiritual) effect, inasmuch as every quality has a quiddity." And he explained: "Words and expressions signify qualities, and since

the mystic knows that God is the essence of every quality, he is conscious, whenever he speaks or thinks, of experiencing some particular effect (khássiyyah) of the Divine nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3854) You may attain mastery of (the branches of spiritual) knowledge in Bukhara: "It means, "The city of Bukhara, which is the place of knowledge, it is the same city (containing) the presence of the perfected spiritual master [shaykh-é kâmil]. Therefore, O lover, you will gain outward and inward knowledge in the company and service of the perfected spiritual master.... and it is in this stage that the sincere lover is able to become free from acquiring (spiritual) knowledge, and (the possibility of) gaining (direct) vision [= contemplation of the beloved's face] appears (to him)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (3854) in (a state of) humble lowliness: means, "When you abandon pride of learning the things of the mind and become humbled and lowly [= annihilated of ego], you will be free from needing intellectual knowledge." There is a word play here between "lowliness" [ba-khwârî] and "Bukhara" (bukhârâ].

27. (3856) a position of wealth and power by means of knowledge: religious scholars who had attained the most mastery of the "religious sciences" were often tempted to accept positions of influence and power (such as becoming prominent judges). But the sincere sufi seeker, who acquires spiritual knowledge from a sufi shaykh, or master, will not be attracted to worldly advantages. Instead, he will lose the inclination to acquire further knowledge, and will yearn to contemplate the Beauty of God directly.

28. (3857) restlessness and dissatisfaction with knowledge and knowing things: Nicholson translated, "He will have a disgust of traditional learning and knowledge."

29. (3858) Vision is usually superior to knowledge: Nicholson later changed his translation to, "Vision is generally superior to knowledge" (from, "Vision is superior to knowledge"). And he explained that the word in question is adverbial. (Commentary) Anqaravi's Commentary (upon which Nicholson depended upon more than any other) states directly that this word is adverbial.

30. (3859) (nothing but) debt: most people look to this world as a place of visible gain, but think of the next world in terms of loss (of the enjoyments of this world) and of having to "pay" for their sins. "But the (spiritually) elect, in contrast to this, view this world as a dream, a fantasy, and as something quickly fading.... And they know the Hereafter to be the true coin of subsisting and lasting

existence, grace, and joy." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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3837 gar be-rêz-ad khûn-é man ân dôst-rô
pây-é kôbân jân bar afshân-am ba-rô

âzmûd-am marg-é man dar zendagî-st
chûn rah-am z-în zendagî pâyandagî-st

uqtulûn-î uqtulûn-î yâ Siqât
inna fî qatl-î Hayât-an fî Hayât

3840 yâ munîra 'l-khaddi yâ rûHa 'l-baqâ
ijtaZib rûH-î wa jud-lî bi 'l-liqâ

lî Habîb-un Hubba-hu yashwî 'l-Hashâ
law yashâ yamshî `alà `ayn-î mashà

pârsî gô gar-che tâzî khwash-tar-ast
`ishq-râ khwad Sad zabân-é dîgar-ast

bôy-é ân del-bar chô parrân mê-shaw-ad
ân zabân-hâ jumla Hayrân mê-shawad

bas kon-am del-bar dar âmad dar khiTâb
gôsh shaw, wa 'llâhu a`lâm bi 'S-Sawâb

3845 chûn-ke `âshiq tawba kard aknûn be-tars
k-ô chô `ayyâr-ân kon-ad bar dâr dars

gar-che în `âshiq bukhârâ mê-raw-ad
na ba-dars-o na ba-ostâd mê-raw-ad

`âshiq-ân-râ shod mudarris Husn-é dôst
daftar-o dars-o sabaq-eshân rôy-é ô-st

khâmush-and-o na`ra-yé takrâr-eshân
mê-raw-ad tâ `arsh-o takht-é yâr-eshân

dars-eshân âshûb-o charkh-o zalzalah
na ziyâdât-ast-o bâb-é silsilah

3850 silsila-yé în qawm ja`d-é mushk-bâr
mus'ala-yé dawr-ast, lêkin dawr-é yâr

mus'ala-yé kîs ar be-pors-ad kas to-râ
gô na-gonj-ad ganj-é Haq dar kîsa-hâ
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gar dam-é khul`-wo mubâ-râ mê-raw-ad
bad ma-bîn, Zikr-é bukhârâ mê-raw-ad

Zikr-e har chîzê deh-ad khâSîyatê
z-ân-ke dâr-ad har Sifat mâhîyatê

dar bukhârâ dar honar-hâ bâligh-î
chûn ba-khwârî rô neh-î z-ân fârigh-î

3855 ân bukhârî ghuSSa-yé dânesh na-dâsht
chashm bar khworshêd-é bînesh mê-gomâsht

har ke dar khalwat ba-bînesh yâft râh
ô ze-dânesh-hâ na-jôy-ad dast-gâh

bâ jamâl-é jân chô shod ham-kâsa'yê
bâsh-ad-ash z-akhbâr-o dânesh tâsa'yé

dîd bar dânesh bow-ad ghâlib farâ
z-ân hamê dunyâ be-charbod `âmma-râ

3859 z-ân-ke dunyâ-râ hamê bîn-and `ayn
w-ân jahânê-râ hamê dân-and dayn

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part five)

Mathnawi III: 3860-3878

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There is (worldly) candy in Samarcand,[6] but his lips found it from Bukhara, which became his religious denomination.[7]

(He said), "O Bukhara, you are the increaser of rational understanding (for others), but you have robbed [all understanding of] reason and religion from me.[8]

3865 I'm seeking the (beautiful) Full Moon,[9] (and) I'm (as thin) as the new moon[10] because of that. I'm seeking the King (of Bukhara) in this "entry way."[11]

When he saw the blackness of (the outlying districts of) Bukhara, a (luminous) whiteness[12] became visible in the blackness of his (longing) sorrow--

(So that) he fell (down) for a while, unconscious and stretched out. His rational understanding flew into the garden of (Divine) mysteries.

They put[13] rose-water on his head and face (to revive him), (but) they were ignorant of the rose-water of his love.

He had found a hidden rose-garden. The plundering raid of Love had severed him from self.[14]

3870 (But) you, (who are) cold-hearted, are not worthy of this breath (of Love);[15] even if you are a reed-flute, you're (still) not connected with the sugar[16] [lips of the beloved].

The baggage of your intellect is with you. And you are (still) rational, because you are ignorant of "the (spiritual) forces which you could not see."[17]

The entering of that lover, oblivious to danger, into Bukhara and the giving of warnings by his friends to him

He entered joyously into Bukhara, before (the palace of) his beloved and dwelling place of security,[18]

Like the drunk who flies up to the sky (in his imagination), (and) the moon embraces him and says, "Hold (me also)!"

Everyone who saw him in Bukhara said, "Don't sit (there)! Get up and escape, before becoming visible!

3875 "Because that king (who is) filled with anger is seeking you
so that he may extract a ten year (old) revenge from your life.

"By God, by God, don't enter (the pool of) your own blood! Don't
lean (and rely) on your own words and charm.

"You were the King's representative and agent; you were the
trustworthy (deputy) and master engineer [in running his
kingdom].

3878 "(Then) you acted with deceit and you ran away from
punishment. You escaped, (so) why are you again dangling (in
captivity)?"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3860) tears of blood: an idiom in Persian which means "grievous
suffering."

2. ((3860) set (his) face in the direction of Bukhara: means turned his
face in that direction in order to go there. Nicholson translated, "set
out for Bukhara." "He directed his attention to Bukhara, because it
was the dwelling place of his beloved." (translated here from a
Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century Turkish
commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi)

3. (3861) The sands of the Amoon (region) were like silk to him:
Nicholson explained that this line is a reference to a famous verse
by the Persian poet Rudaki (died, 941). And he expressed the
opinion that "Amoon" is the name of a small town called Amul,
southwest of Bukhara (an ancient Central Asian city, in present-
day Uzbekistan). (Commentary). The Jayhûn River is the Amû
Daryâ (called the "Oxus" by the Greeks), which runs southwest
and west of Bukhara.

4. (3862) from laughter, like a thrown-back rose: Nicholson
translated, "like the (full-blown) rose." In Persian poetry, blooming
roses are depicted as laughing happily. "Thrown-back" refers to the
petals being fully open and spread back, giving the appearance of
"lying on its back." "The rose 'laughs', i.e. is fragrant and lovely,
even whilst being stripped of its petals until it finds itself left 'on

thorns': similarly, the `árif [= mystic knower] rejoices in the afflictions which God bestows upon him." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (3862) rose garden [gol-estân]: in Persian poetry, this word is often intended to be pronounced "golsetân" for metrical purposes.

6. (3863) There is (worldly) candy in Samarcand: an word-play between "qand," is an Arabic-derived word meaning "sugar" and "sugar-candy," and the name of the ancient Central Asian city of Samarqand (east of Bukhara in present-day Uzbekistan). "(It means) that he found the candy of spiritual Reality, spiritual sugar and ecstatic sweetness from [thinking about] Bukhara..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3863) Bukhara, which became his religious denomination: Nicholson translated "his creed." Bukhara had been, for centuries, a center of Islamic religious knowledge and the location of numerous religious colleges. Here, instead of being viewed as a place to master the learning of a particular denomination (meaning one of the four schools of Islamic law), the name and location of "Bukhara" becomes of greater spiritual importance to the lover, since his beloved king lives there.

8. (3864) but you have robbed [all understanding of] reason and religion from me: "(It means) that by means of preoccupation with the beloved, the lover was kept far from the (encompassing) circle of the intellect and knowledge-- the extent that he had reached the (spiritual) level of bewilderment and love." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3865): the (beautiful) Full Moon: a symbol for the spiritual beauty of the beloved (the King of Bukhara in the story). "i.e. the Perfect Man" [= a term in the mystical philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi (died, 1140), meaning a saint who fully reflects the attributes of God]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (3865) (as thin) as the new moon: in Persian literature, the beloved is often described as thin and pale, due to longing for the beloved.

11. (3865) in this "entry way": literally, "row of shoes." Means the place where (dusty) shoes are placed outside the door of a mosque or house. A metaphor for the dusty regions through which the lover was travelling on his way to Bukhara. Nicholson interpreted: "I.e. 'in this low world.'" (Footnote)

12. (3866) a (luminous) whiteness: Nicholson translated, "a whiteness (a mystic illumination)."

13. (3868) They put: "The people of the vicinity." (Anqaravi, Commentary) (3869) He had found a hidden rose-garden: "In other words, he had experienced a rank of nearness to the beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (3869) severed him from self: means a mystical state of annihilation [fanâ] of normal ego consciousness.

15. (3870) you, (who are) cold-hearted, are not worthy of this breath (of Love): Nicholson translated, "Thou, frozen (in spirit), art not worthy of this (inspiring) breath (of love)..." "(It means), 'O you who are frozen, shriveled, and deadened of heart! You are not worthy of this breath mixed with love and these kinds of words. Because love is an ecstasy, (and) whoever is not a lover cannot understand the speech of the lovers.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi also quoted a verse: "Someone asked, 'What is loverhood?' I said, 'When you become me, you will know.'" (This resembles Rumi's lines in Ode 2733, lines 29050-51)

16. (3870) even if you are a reed-flute, you're (still) not connected with the sugar: Nicholson translated, "though thou art a reed (cane), thou art not associated with sugar." And he explained (in regard to I: 270, "Both reeds drank from the same water-source, (but) this one is empty and that one (full of) sugar"), "The sugar-cane is called 'nay-shakar' [= sugar reed, from which is made the sugar-cane reed flute] in Persian." Anqaravi quoted the Arabic saying, "The one who does not taste does not know" [man lam yuZiq lam yadri]. And he explained about this line: "It means: 'Even if you outwardly resemble the lovers, yet you are not connected to the sweetness of love and the sugar of (spiritual) tasting and yearning." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (3871) "the (spiritual) forces which you could not see": "Qur. IX 26, referring to the angels whom (though the enemy could not see them) God sent to reinforce the Moslems fighting at Badr [= a famous battle in which the Muslims were vastly outnumbered by the attacking polytheists]." (Nicholson, Commentary) "(It means), 'You are ignorant of the meaning of the verse about "the (spiritual) forces which you cannot see," since this love, yearning, and (spiritual) savor are also "the (spiritual) forces of God." (But) the discerning eyes of every person cannot see these spiritual forces.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (3872) before (the palace of) his beloved and dwelling place of security: Nicholson interpreted this line somewhat differently: "near his beloved and (him who was) the abode of (his) security." "'Dwelling place of security' (means): 'to the destined house of his

beloved.' And the intended meaning of (these words) among the lovers is the dwelling place of the beloved. Because it makes the lover safe from separation and from the misfortunes of sorrows, sadnesses, suffering, and disappointments.

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rô-nehâdan-é ân banda-yé `âshiq sôy-é bukhârâ

3860 rô-nehâd ân `âshiq-é khûnâba rêz
del-Tapân sôy-é bukhâra garm-o têz

rêg-é âmûn pêsh-é ô ham-chûn Harîr
âb-é jayHûn pêsh-é ô chûn âb-gîr

ân beyâbân pêsh-é ô chûn golsetân
mê-fotâd az khanda ô chûn gol-setân

dar samarqand-ast qand ammâ lab-ash
az bukhârâ yâft-o ân shod maZhab-ast

ay bukhâra `aql-afzâ bûda-î
lêk az man `aql-o dîn be-r'bûda-î

3865 badr mê-jôy-am az ân-am chûn hilâl
Sadr mê-jôy-am dar-în Saff-é ni`âl

chûn sawâd-é ân bukhârâ-râ be-dîd
dar sawâd-é gham biyâZê shod padîd

sâ`atê oftâd bê-hôsh-o darâz
`aql-é ô parrîd dar bostân-é râz

bar sar-o rôy-ash golâbî mê-zad-and
az golâb-é `ishq-é ô ghâfil bod-and

ô golestânê nehânê dîda bûd
ghârat-é `ishq-ash ze-khwad be-b'rîda bûd

3870 tô fosorda dar khwar-é în dam na'-î
bâ shakar maqrûn na'-î gar-che nay-î

rakht-é `aql-at bâ tow-ast-o `âqil-î
k-az junûd-an lam tarû-hâ ghâfil-î

dar-âmadan-é ân `âshiq-é lâ-ubâlî dar bukhârâ wa taHZîr-kardan-é dôst-ân
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ô-râ

andar âmad dar bukhârâ shâdmân
pêsh-é ma`shûq-é khwad-o dâru 'l-amân

ham-chô ân mastî ke parr-ad bar aSîr
mah kenâr-ash gîr-ad-o gôy-ad ke gîr

har ke dîd-ash dar bukhârâ, goft khêz
pêsh az paydâ shodan, ma-n'shîn, gorêz

3875 ke to-râ mê-jôy-ad ân shah khashm-gîn
tâ kash-ad az jân-é tô dah-salâh kîn

allâh allâh dar ma-y-â dar khûn-é khwêsh
takya kam kon bar dam-o afsûn-é khwêsh

shaHna-yé Sadr-é jahân bûd-î-wo râd
mu`tamad bûd-î, muhandis-ôstâd

3878 ghadr kard-î w-az jazâ be-g'rêkht-î
rasta bûd-î bâz chûn âwêkht-î?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part six)

Mathnawi III: 3884-3915

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The replying of the lover to those who blamed and warned (him)

3884 He said, "I am sick with edema and craving to drink water.[1]
The water attracts me,[2] even though I know that it will also kill
me.

3885 "No one sufferer of (such) edema will flee from the water,
even though it may checkmate and injure him two hundred times.

"Although my hands and belly are swollen, love for water will not
decrease from me.

"When I am asked about (my) inner (organs), I will say, 'If only the ocean were flowing within (me)!'[3]

"Tell the leather skin of (my) belly: 'Go, (and) be torn by the waves of water!'[4] (And) if I die, my death is good.

"Jealousy comes to me anywhere I see the water of a stream[5] (and I think), '(If only) I were (in) its place!'

3890 "(With my) hand (swollen) like a tambourine and (my) belly like a drum, I keep pounding the drum of love for the water-- like the rose.[6]

"If that Spirit of Faithfulness[7] sheds my blood, I will drink gulp after gulp of (my) blood,[8] like the earth.

"I am a drinker of blood, like the earth and like the embryo.[9] (And) this (has been) my occupation (ever) since I've been a lover.

"At night, I continue boiling on the fire,[10] like a kettle. (And) from day until evening, I'm drinking (my) blood, like the sand.

"I'm sorry that I made a plot (to escape and) fled from his angry intent.[11]

3895 "Tell (him to keep) driving his anger against my drunken soul. He is (like) the Festival of Sacrifice[12] and the lover is (like) the buffalo (sacrificed for it).

"Whether the buffalo sleeps or eats something,[13] he (continues) fostering (it) for the Festival and the sacrificing.

"Consider me (to be like) the cow of Moses (which was) a yielder of (its) life:[14] my every part (is like) a resurrection for every liberated one.[15]

"The cow of Moses was one which became a sacrifice; the smallest part of her[16] (was the cause of) life for a murdered man.

"After (receiving) its bruise, the killed man jumped up from his place-- in regard to the speech (of God in the verse), 'Strike him with a part of it.'[17]

3900 "O my generous and noble (friends)! Sacrifice this cow, if you wish to resurrect clear-sighted spirits."[18]

"I died to the mineral state and became a plant; I died to the vegetable state and reached animality;[19]

"I died to the animal state and became a man;[20] then what should I fear? -- I have never become less from dying.

"At the next charge (forward) I will die to human nature,[21] so that I may lift up (my) head and wings (and soar) among the angels.

"And I must (also) jump from the river[22] of (the state of) the angel: 'Everything perishes except His Face.'[23]

3905 "Once again I will become sacrificed from (the state of) the angel; I will become that which cannot come into the imagination.[24]

"Then I will become non-existent;[25] non-existence says to me (in tones) like an organ:[26] 'Truly, to Him is our return.'[27]

"Know (that) the consensus of the (Islamic) community regarding death is that the Water of Life is hidden in the (Land of) Darkness.[28]

"Grow, like the water-lily from the side of the river[29] -- like the sufferer of edema, greedy (for water) and seeking death.

"The water is his death, and (yet) he is the water's seeker and is drinking (it). And God knows best what is right.

3910 "Oh [how pitiful is] the cold-hearted lover (wearing) the cloak of shame, since he is fleeing in fright from the Beloved-- out of fear of (losing his) life![30]

"O disgrace (even) to women![31] See a hundred thousand souls (joyously) clapping (their) hands[32] (as they go) toward the sword of His Love!

"You've found the river, (so) pour (the contents of) the pitcher into the river. The water never flees from the river.[33]

"When the pitcher's water goes into the water of the river, it is obliterated in it and becomes the river.[34]

"His attributes are annihilated and his essence (is) enduring.[35] After this, he will not become decreased or bad-fortuned.[36]

3915 "I have hanged myself on his palm tree[337] (in) apology for this-- that I fled from him."[38]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 3/29/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3884) sick with edema and craving to drink water: a medical condition, formerly called "dropsy," in which the body swells up due to excess fluids, yet the patient continues to suffer from great thirst and seeks or demands more water.

2. (3884) The water attracts me: "(It means), 'The water of eternal Union is drawing me to itself.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (3887) If only the ocean were flowing within (me): "(It means), 'If only the ocean of the water of Union were entirely flowing within me and satisfied me! And if only this existence of mine were made to be erased and annihilated!'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (3888) Go, (and) be torn by the waves of water: "'(Go and) explode, due to (the force of) the waves of water....!' It means: 'By becoming full, more and more, with the water of Union within me.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3889) anywhere I see the water of a stream: "(It means), 'In any place that I see the water of a stream, and I cast my glance with thirst for the water of pure Union with the Beloved.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (3890) I keep pounding the drum of love for the water-- like the rose: "Because the rose derives its beauty from the water which nourishes it." (Nicholson, Footnote) "Because the rose is receiving growth from the water, and its elegance and freshness is from it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3891) That Spirit of Faithfulness: an epithet of the archangel Gabriel (Qur'an 26:193), which here is used to refer to the king of Bukhara. "I.e. my Beloved who resembles Gabriel." (Nicholson, Footnote) And Nicholson said: "i.e. the Perfect Man" [= the perfected saint of God, who reflects God's Attributes, in the mysticism of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi]. (Commentary) "(It means), 'That sweet beloved who has the (same) rank of the Trustworthy Spirit (Gabriel).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (3891) I will drink gulp after gulp of (my) blood: an idiom,

meaning enduring grievous suffering. Nicholson said that this "alludes metaphorically to faná fí 'l-Shaykh" [= mystical annihilation in the spiritual master]. (Commentary)

9. (3892) like the embryo: the embryo was viewed as a "blood-drinker," since it gains its nourishment from its mother's blood received through the umbilical cord. Nicholson referred here to Mathnawi III: 67-78.
10. (3893) I continue boiling on the fire: "(It means), 'I'm burning from the fire of love and boiling from the heat of yearning.' .... The intended meaning of this is that the lover is always burning in the fire of the afflictions (caused by love) of his beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (3894) I'm sorry that I... fled from his angry intent: "Among the lovers (of God), the beloved's anger is better and more beneficial than the beloved's kindness." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (3895) the Festival of Sacrifice [`îd-é qurbân]: one of two Islamic festivals celebrated every year by Muslims world-wide. During this festival, which follows the completion of the rites of Pilgrimage in Mecca, a sheep, goat, cow, or camel is sacrificed. Some of the meat may be eaten by the sacrificer and shared with his party, but most is to be given to the poor.

13. (3896) Whether the buffalo sleeps or eats something: "Although the mystic eats and drinks and sleeps like other people, it is not for the sake of self-gratification (hazz-i nafs): he has no object in life but self-sacrifice." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It is by the generous giving of the body and the soul in the path of the beloved; not for the pleasure of the lover's ego [HaZ-é nafs]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (3897) the cow of Moses (which was) a yielder of (its) life: refers to a story in the Qur'an (2:72-73) about how a man's murdered body was found and no guilty party was found. God ordered the cow to be killed (see Deuteronomy 21:1-7) and for part of its body to be used to strike the corpse. This resulted in a miracle: the man returned to life and declared who his killer was. Nicholson noted an error in his translation ("... the cow of Moses that gave life (to the murdered man)..." He said that the meaning should be "one that gave up its life" = madhbúbí, not 'one that gave life (to the murdered man).... The Translation... must be corrected." (Commentary)

15. (3897) my every part (is like) a resurrection for every liberated one: Nicholson translated, "each limb of me is the (means of) raising from the dead every one that is (spiritually) free." And he

explained: "i.e. he who dies to self thereby raises his unregenerate spirit from the dead and endows it with everlasting life." (Commentary)

15. (3998) smallest part of her: "It is either the tail or else the ear of the cow." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (3999) 'Strike him with a part of it': Qur'an 2:73. See previous note on line 3997.

17. (3900) Nicholson translated, "slaughter this cow (the fleshly soul)..." And he explained (regarding Mathnawi II:1436): "Allegorically interpreted, the cow is the carnal self (nafs) [= ego]. Through self-sacrifice the dead spirit is revived and endowed with mystic knowledge." (Commentary)

18. (3900) Sacrifice this cow, if you wish to resurrect clear-sighted spirits: Nicholson translated, "if you desire to raise to life the spirits (possessed) of insight." And he explained: "i.e. the powers of spiritual perception centered in the heart (qalb)." (Commentary)

"(It means), 'Kill the cow of my ego, by a voluntary death before compulsory death.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi also quoted the famous sufi master Junayd (died, 910) as saying (in Arabic): "Slaughter your egos [nafûsa-kum] with the swords of opposition, because the ego is a great veil between you and God." And he quoted the sufi Shibli (died, 846): "There is no life except in death-- meaning there is no life of the spirit except in the death of the ego."

19. (3901) and reached animality: "It means an animal which ate plants." (Anqaravi, Commentary) translation of the famous Turkish 17th century commentary by Anqaravi)

20. (3902) and became a man: "It means: 'A man eats animals, then the animal is the food for the existence of a man. (And) by this means I manifested (on) the level of a human body.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (3903) I will die to human nature: "(It means), 'With a voluntary death, I will pass from the human level' .... A lover (of God), who is endowed with ego-annihilation [fanâ] will not be satisfied by this (human) level." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (3904) jump from the river: "i.e. 'to escape'." (Nicholson, Commentary)
23. (3004) "Everything perishes except His Face": Qur'an 28:88.

24. (3005) that which cannot come into the imagination: refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has hard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal."

25. (3906) Then I will become non-existent: "i.e. 'I shall become fání fí 'lláh." [= ecstatically annihilated (of self) in God] (Nicholson, Commentary)

26. (3906) an organ: a type of pan-flute (pipes of different pitch tied together), and therefore an ancient type of "mouth organ."

27 (3906) "Truly, to Him is our return": "Truly, we belong to God, and to Him is our return." (Qur'an 2:156) These verses describe re-ascent of the spirit back to God, following its descent into matter. This not transmigration, reincarnation, or an early view of biological evolution (see Chittick, "The Sufi Path of Love," pp. 72-82). Nicholson referred here to Mathnawi I: 3165-68 (which he translated): "They cast a grain of wheat under earth, then from its earth they raised up ears of corn;/ Once more they crushed it with the mill: its value increased and it became soul-invigorating bread;/ Again they crushed the bread under their teeth: it became the mind and spirit and understanding of one endowed with reason;/ Again, when that spirit became lost in Love, it became (as that which 'rejoiceth the sowers' after the sowing." And he explained: "The soul, as a mode of Divine Being, undergoes a similar evolution: in order that its inherent potentialities may be developed and exhibited, it descends into the world of matter, where from the lowest phases of soul-life it gradually rises to the highest and, having traversed the whole circle of existence and thus attained to the utmost perfection of which it is capable, gives itself up to God and realises its essential unity with Him." (Commentary) Nicholson also referred to similar passages (Mathnawi III: 4177-4189; I: 3871-76). In regard to the latter, he translated a passage from Rumi's predecessor, the Persian sufi poet Sana'i (died, 1131) from Sana'i, "(Hadíqah, IV 149b): 'Until the animal comes forth (is freed) from its soul,/ It cannot find the way to the rank of man./ Then, when Man escapes from the rational soul,/ the transcendental soul [= rûH-é qudsî] takes its place./ When he has passed beyond the rational soul,/ He is made living by the soul of the angels.'" (Commentary)

"Then, if he can abandon human cravings with his own free will and die a chosen death, he will arrive at the stage of spirit. If he also dies to the stage of spirit and erases his existence in the Presence of God he will be abiding and will live eternally and will find everlasting bliss. Mawlana (Jalaluddin Rumi) indicated this meaning in [these] verses..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (3907) the Water of Life is hidden in the (Land of) Darkness: this is based on a Tradition in which the Prophet Muhammad told about the Prophet Al-Khadir (generally spelled, "Khidhr" or "Khizr"; the mysterious guide of Moses in Qur'an 18: 60-82), who searched for the Water of (Eternal) Life and found it in the Land of Darkness. He drank from it and became immortal. "And you will understand this after death-- that eternal life is found in darkness.." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (3908) Grow, like the water-lily from the side of the river: "It means, 'You will grow and thrive in the river of (ego) death and annihilation [fanâ] until you perceive life and the Water of (Eternal) Life in death, and you will (then) continue everlastingly.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (3910) he is fleeing in fright from the Beloved-- out of fear of (losing his) life: "He is running away from the Beloved due to fear of (losing) his life, and he fears bodily death.... He is a person who wears the garment of the lovers (of God), yet he is anxious about (his) ego perishing [fanây-é nafs]-- which is the cause of reaching to the Beloved. And he is the captive of ego and form, (so) he will not obtain the (mystical) rapture laZZat] of being erased and nonexistent (of ego) [maHw wa fanâ]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

31. (3911) O disgrace (even) to women: means, "You are a disgrace, not only to men, but to women as well-- since you are more cowardly than the most fearful of women.

32. (3911) See a hundred thousand souls (joyously) clapping (their) hands: Nicholson translates similarly, but Anqaravi understood it to mean "cutting their hands," as did the Egyptian women (who were cutting fruit) after being amazed at the beauty of Joseph. (Qur'an 12:30)

33. (3912) The water never flees from the river: "i.e. the water in the jug (the soul in the body) seeks to return to the river (Universal Soul)." (Nicholson, Commentary) "If you have found the river of eternal life and it has brought you to contemplation of the Eternal Beloved, (then) generously give (away your) animal spirit and transient life which you keep in the pitcher of the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

34. (3913) it is obliterated in it and becomes the river: "In place of his transient human qualities, Divine qualities will be obtained." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35. (3914) His attributes are annihilated and his essence (is) enduring:

"No relapse is possible after baqá [= enduringness]." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred here to a similar passage (Mathnawi III: 3669-3672, which he translated): "The speaker said, 'There is no dervish in the world; and if there be a dervish, that dervish is (really) non-existent.' He exists in respect of the survival of his essence, (but) his attributes have become non-existent in the attributes of Him (God). Like the flame of a candle in the presence of the sun, he is (really) nonexistent, (though he is) existent in (formal) calculation." "(It means) the lover who has annihilated himself in love for God. His human qualities have been completely obliterated and his essence has found permanence with the everlastingness of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary) (3914) bad-fortuned: Nicholson translated, "ill-favoured."

he will not become decreased or bad-fortuned
36. (3914) he will not become decreased or bad-fortuned: "No relapse is possible after baq· [= permanence in God] has been attained." (Nicholson, Commentary)

37. (3915) I have hanged myself on his palm tree (in) apology for this: "i.e. 'I crucify myself for the Beloved's sake.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred to a related passage (Mathnawi III: 3783), which he translated): "Such a date-palm, which is our Friend's favour-- since we are robbers, His date-palm is our gallows."

38. (3915) that I fled from him: the prime minister ends his speech here, referring to his beloved king, from whom he fled.

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jawâb-goftan-é `âshiq `âZil-ân-râ wa tahdîd-konand-agân-râ

3884 goft man mustasqiy-am âb-am kash-ad
gar-che mê-dân-am ke ham âb-am kosh-ad

3885 hêch mustasqî be-na-g'rêz-ad ze-âb
gar dô Sad bâr-ash kon-ad mât-o kharâb

gar be-y-âmas-ad ma-râ dast-o shekam
`ishq-é âb az man na-khwâh-ad gasht kam

gôy-am ân-gah ke be-pors-and az buTûn
kâshakî baHr-am rawân bûdy darûn

khîk-é eshkam gô be-dar az mawj-é âb
gar be-mîr-am, hast marg-am mustaTâb
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man ba-har jâyê ke bîn-am âb-é jô
rashk-am ây-ad, bûd-amy man jây-é ô

3890 dast chûn daff-o shekam ham-chûn dohol
Tabl-é `ishq-é âb mê-kôb-am chô gol

gar be-rêz-ad khûn-am ân rûHu 'l-amîn
jur`a-jur`a khûn kwor-am ham-chûn zamîn

chûn zamîn-o chûn janîn khûn-khwâra-am
tâ ke `âshiq gashta-am în kâra-am

shab hamê jôsh-am dar âtash ham-chô dêg
rôz tâ shab khûn-khwor-am mânand-é rêg

man pashîmân-am ke makr-angêkht-am
az murâd-é khashm-é ô be-g'rêkhtam

3895 gô be-rân bar jân-é mast-am khashm-é khwêsh
`îd-é qurbân ô-st-o `âshiq gâw-mêsh

gâw agar khosp-ad-o gar chêzê khwor-ad
bahr-é `îd-o ZabH-é ô mê-parwar-ad

gâw-é mûsà dân ma-râ jân-dâda'yê
juzw-juzw-am Hashr-é har âzâda'yê

gâw-é mûsà bûd qurbân-gashta'ê
kam-tarîn juzw-ash Hayât-é koshta'ê

bar jahîd ân koshta z-âsêb-ash ze-jâ
dar khiTâb-é iZribû-hu ba`Zi-hâ

3900 yâ kirâm-î iZbaHû haZâ 'l-baqar
in arad-tum Hashra arwâHi 'n-naZar

az jamâdî mord-am-o nâmê shod-am
w-az namâ mord-am ba-Haywân bar zad-am

mord-am az Hawânî-wo âdam shod-am
pas che tars-am, kay ze-mordan kam shod-am?

Hamla-yé degar be-mîr-am az bashar
tâ bar âr-am az malâ'ik parr-o sar

w-az malak ham bây-ad-am jastan ze jô
kullu shay-in hâlik illâ wajha-hu

3905 bâr-é dêgar az malak qurbân shaw-am
ân-che andar wahm n-ây-ad ân shaw-am

pas `adam gard-am `adam chûn arghanûn
gôy-ad-am ke 'innâ 'ilay-hi râji`ûn

marg dân ân-k ittifâq-é ummat-ast
k-âb-é Haywânî nehân dar Zulmat-ast

ham-chô nîlôfar be-rô z-în Tarf-é jô
ham-chô mustasqî HarîS-o marg-jô

marg-é ô âb-ast-o ô jôyây-é âb
mê-khwar-ad, wa 'llâhu 'a`lam bi 'S-Sawâb

3910 ay forsorda `âshiq-é nangîn-namad
k-ô ze-bîm-é jân ze-jânân mê-ram-ad

sôy-é têgh-é `ishq-ash ay nang-é zan-ân
Sad hazâr-ân jân negar dast-ak zanân

jôy dîd-î, kôza andar jôy rêz
âb-râ az jôy kay bâsh-ad gorêz?

âb-é kôza chûn dar âb-é jô shaw-ad
maHw gard-ad dar way-o jô ô shaw-ad

waSf-é ô fânî shod-o Zât-ash baqâ
z-în sapas na kam shaw-ad na bad-liqâ

3915 khwêsh-râ bar nakhl-é ô âwêkht-am
`aZr-é ân-râ ke az-ô be-g'rêkht-am

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part seven)

Mathnawi III: 3916-3921, 4377-4402

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That lover's arriving to (the presence of) his beloved,
since he had washed his hands of his own life[1]

3916 He went toward the king with moist eyes, making
(humble) prostrations (of obeisance) on his face and head,[2]
like a polo-ball.[3]

All of the people (were) waiting, (with their) heads in
the air, (to see) if (the king) would burn him or hang him.[4]

"This time (they said), (the king) will show that
detestable fool what Time (inevitably does) to someone with
bad luck.

"Like a moth, he saw the (burning) sparks as light (and)
foolishly fell in (among the embers), severed from life.

3920 But the candle of Love is not like that (ordinary)
candle,[5] (since) it is light within light within light.

3921 It is the opposite of fiery candles (in that) it
appears as fire, but is entirely delightful.

. . . . . .

4377 That man from Bukhara also rushed on (top of) the
candle,[6] (since) that suffering had become easy because of
his love.

(Those) burning sighs of his went (up) to the heavens.
(As a result), kindness entered into the heart of the King
of Bukhara.[7]

Speaking to himself at dawn, he said, "O You who are One
(only)! What is the state of that wanderer of mine?[8]

4380 "He did something sinful and We saw (it), but he was
not very aware of Our Mercy.[9]

"The sinner's mind is afraid of Us,[10] yet there are a
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hundred hopes in his fear.

"I cause the foolishly shameless person to be afraid.[11]
(There is no reason) why I should frighten the one who is
(already) afraid."

"Fire is (directed to) go to the cold pot, not to the
one which (has contents) going to the top from boiling.

"I cause those who lack fear (regarding their actions)
to be afraid by (My) knowledge,[12] (but) I remove fear from
the fearful with (My) gentle compassion.

4385 "I am a sewer of patches, (and) I place the patch in
the place (suitable for it).[13] I give every person a
(medicinal) drink (which is) appropriate."

The inner spirit of man is like the root of a tree.
(And) because of that, his leaves grow from hard wood.

The leaves (are) grown in accordance with the (quality
of the) root[14]-- in trees, souls, and minds.

(Growing) from the trees of faithfulness are wings
(reaching) up to the heavens (as in the verse), "Its root is
firmly fixed and its branches (reach) to the heavens."[15]

Since the wings (flying) up to the heavens grew from
love,[16] how could (they) not grow in the heart of the King of
Bukhara?[17]

4390 Waves were pounding in his heart (for) pardon of (the
prime minister's) sin, because there is a window from each
heart to (another) heart.

For, (most) certainly there is a window from heart to
heart; they are not separate and distant, like two
(distinct) bodies.

The clay (containers) of two lamps are not connected,
(yet) their light is mixed in (their) paths of travel.

No lover is a seeker of union when his beloved is not
his seeker (also).[18]

But, the love of the lovers makes (their) bodies (as
thin as) bowstrings.[19] (And) the love of the beloveds makes
(their bodies) pleasant and plump.[20]

4395 Know that when the lightning of love for the beloved
leaps[21] in this heart, there is (certainly) love in that
heart.
(And) when love for God becomes doubled in your heart,
undoubtedly God has love for you.

No sound of hand-clapping from one of your hands reaches
(outside) the door without (the use of) the other hand.

The one who is thirsty is wailing, "O refreshing water!"
-- (while) the water is also lamenting, "Where is that
water-drinker?"[22]

(Therefore), this thirst in our souls is the attraction
of the Water:[23] we belong to It, and It belongs to us as
well.

4400 By Divine decree and destiny, God's Wisdom made us
lovers of each other.

(And) because of that pre-ordained Command,[24] all the
parts of the world (are) joined and paired and are the
lovers of their mates.[25]

4402 (For) every part of the world is the desirer of (its)
mate-- truly, like amber and a piece of hay.[26]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 4/5/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) since he had washed his hands of his own life:
Nicholson translated, "when he washed his hands of (gave up)
his life."

2. (3916) He went... making (humble) prostrations (of
obeisance) on his face and head: means approaching in a
humble manner. Expressing humility through bows of obeisance
(out of respect and deferential courtesy) were made to
kings, and were different in form and intention than bows of
worship. Anqaravi (17th century Mathnawi commentator) quotes
an Arabic saying here: "Going with the head, not the feet."

3. (3916) like a polo-ball: Rumi often uses the polo ball (as struck by a mallet) to symbolize complete surrender of one's personal will.

4. (3617) or hang him: there is an archaic pronoun here, "wa-râ" (an abbreviation of "way-râ"), instead of the more common "ô-ra."

5. (3920) But the candle of Love is not like that (ordinary) candle: "Although outwardly it is burning and annihilating, yet inwardly it is calming and giving permanence." (Anqaravi, Commentary

6. (4377) That man from Bukhara also rushed on (top of) the candle: Rumi returns to this story, after a digression to another major story. "(It means), he pitched himself onto the candle of union with the beloved and sent (himself) into (the beloved's) lane." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (4378) kindness entered into the heart of the King of Bukhara: in explaining this verse, Anqaravi quoted an (unidentified) verse, "Although the lovers are yearning for the beloved's beauty, the beloveds are (even) more lovers of the lovers than the lovers (are of them) [`âshiq-ân har chand mushtâq-é jamâl-é del-bar-and/ del-bar-ân bar `âshiq-ân az `âshiq-ân `âshiq-tar-and]."

8. (4379) that wanderer of mine: Nicholson translated more literally here, "that wander of Ours"-- beginning the Divine speech of God in this line.

9. (4380) Our Mercy: in this line, God is talking to Himself, using the "plural of Majesty" by which the One God sometimes speaks in the Qur'an ("Us," "We," "Our"). It is common in the Mathnawi for a character who is the human beloved in a story to indirectly or directly talk as God the Beloved.

10. (4381) The sinner's mind is afraid of Us: Fear of God is nowadays very misunderstood, as is the concept of sin. Sin is an action which neglects or disobeys God's Will. Fear of God obviously includes the wish to avoid sin and any punishment for it, but it also includes reverential awe and a type of respectful love. This type of fear has long been considered to be pious, righteous, and virtuous (in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as other religions) because it helps the believer to better obey, and to be pleasing to,

God. Such pious fear is related to love for God and, especially for the mystics, since it instills a dread of causing any further separation between them, as lovers of God, and the Most Beloved.

11. (4382) I cause the foolishly shameless person to be afraid: Nicholson translated, "I frighten the impudent man who has lost the (right) way."

12. (4384) I cause those who lack fear (regarding their actions) to be afraid by (My) knowledge: "i.e. 'by My knowledge of their evil actions, and by letting them know what the ultimate results of these will be'." (Nicholson, Commentary) In other words: by letting them know (via Revelations made to prophets, warnings from pious believers and holy people, etc.) that they will eventually face Divine Justice for their sins.

"(It means), 'Anyone who feels safe regarding the fruits of his own actions and (inward) states [= such as intention and desire] and does not fear (Divine) compensation and payment.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (4385) I place the patch in the place (suitable for it): "Whether gracious or severe, the dispensations of Divine Providence correspond perfectly with what is required by the essential character (`ayn-i thábitah) [= a term (also translated as "immutable essence") used in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi (died, 1240)] of the person on whom they are bestowed." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (4387) The leaves (are) grown in accordance with the (quality of the) root: "If we look at trees, we see that the leaves and fruit of every tree are related to (the quality) of its root. If its root has been good, then its branches also will be good. (And) if it is an apple tree, apples will be obtained from it." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi also quoted a verse from the Qur'an: "Everyone acts according to his own disposition. But your Lord knows well who is best guided on the path." (17:84)

15. (4388) Its root is firmly fixed and its branches (reach) to the heavens: a verse from the Qur'an, slightly altered for metrical purposes. "Do you not see how God sets forth a parable of a good word? (It is) like a good tree whose root is firmly fixed and its branches (reach) to the heavens. It yields its fruit at all times, by permission of its Lord." (Qur'an 14:24-25)

Nicholson explained: "'The trees of faithfulness' are the elect spirits which have attained to union with God during their life on earth." And he referred to two similar passages (Mathnawi IV: 3570-74; III: 2003-08). In his explanation of the latter passage he said: "According to [= the book] '`Arā'isu 'l-Bayán,' the Qur'ánic allusion is to the Eternal Word of God revealed in His elect (i.e. the Logos), which is 'the tree of the Divine attributes, whereof the root is fixed in eternity, and its boughs in the heaven of everlastingness; it is watered by the seas of Divine favour and gives its fruit, revelation (tajallí) of the Essence and Attributes, to the spirits of those who love and know God and realise His Unity'." (Commentary)

16. (4389) Since the wings (flying) up to the heavens grew from love: "In other words, the fruits of actions and states [of inward intentions] of the tree of the lover's spirit." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (4389) how could (they) not grow in the heart of the King of Bukhara: "I.e. since the lover aspires to union with the Beloved, how should the heart of the Beloved fail to respond?" (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. ((4393) No lover is a seeker of union when his beloved is not his seeker (also): "The intended meaning is, 'The origin of the seeking and attraction which is in the lover is from the beloved. It is like this famous noble verse [regarding God's Love]: 'people whom He loves, and they will love Him'" (Qur'an 5: 57). (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. ((4394) the love of the lovers makes (their) bodies (as thin as) bowstrings: in Persian literature, the lover is often depicted as pale and sallow of face, and thin of body, due to "wasting away" because of melancholy about being separated from the beloved and a passionate longing for union.

20. ((4394) (And) the love of the beloveds makes (their bodies) pleasant and plump: the beloved, in Persian literature, is often depicted as well-fed, spoiled, and aloof. Nicholson explained about the attraction between lover and beloved in this line: "The attraction is mutual, but manifests itself in different ways." (Commentary)

21. (4395) when the lightning of love for the beloved leaps: "'When it flashes' means, when it became evident."

(Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (4398) the water is also lamenting, "Where is that water-drinker: Nicholson referred (in his Commentary) here to a similar passage (Mathnawi I: 1739-41, which he translated): "The hearts of heart-ravishers are captivated by those who have lost their hearts (to them): all loved ones are the prey of (their) lovers. Whomsoever thou didst deem to be a lover, regard (him) as the loved one, for relatively he is both this and that. If they that are thirsty seek water from the world, (yet) water too seeks in the world them that are thirsty."

23. (4399) this thirst in our souls is the attraction of the Water: "The desire and yearning that we have for meeting the beloved, as well as the attracting of that beautiful beloved to her, is like the attraction of the water." (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi also quoted a Hadîthu 'l-Qudsî (non-Qur'anic Divine saying): "The yearning to meet Me increases in those who are pious, but My yearning to meet them is greater."

24. (4401) pre-ordained Command: means what God determined prior to the creation of the universe.

25. (4401) the lovers of their mates: Nicholson translated, "Because of that fore-ordainment all the particles of the world are paired as mates and are in love with their own mate." "The relation of 'lover' and 'beloved', i.e. the correlation of opposites, which is displayed in every part of the universe, serves the Divine purpose of self-manifestation, according to the hadíth-i qudsí [= non-Qur'anic Divine saying]: 'I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known, so I created the creation in order that I might be known." (Nicholson, Commentary). Nicholson also referred to another verse in the Mathnawi (I: 3211, which he translated): "Because (every) contrary is certainly made evident by its contrary; because honey is perceived (to be sweet by contrast) with vinegar."

26. (4402) like amber and a piece of hay: amber is a translucent fossil resin from pine trees which is used in jewelry. When amber is rubbed with cloth, static electricity occurs which creates a magnetic field that can attract blades of hay (straw).

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rasîdan-é ân `âshiq ba-ma`shûq-é khwêsh chûn dast az jân-é
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khwad be-shost

3916 ham-chô gôyê sajda-kon bar rô-wo sar
jânib-é ân Sadr shod bâ chashm-é tar

jumla-yé khalq-ân muntaZir sar dar hawâ
ke-sh be-sôz-ad, yâ bar-âwêz-ad wa-râ

în zamân în aHmaq-é yak lakht-râ
ân nomây-ad ke zamân bad-bakht-râ

ham-chô parwâna sharar-râ nûr dîd
aHmaq-âna dar fotâd az jân borîd

3920 lêk sham`-é `ishq chûn ân sham` nêst
rôshan andar rôshan andar rôshanî-st

3921 ô ba-`aks-é sham`-hây-é âtashî-st
mê-nomây-ad âtash-o jumla khwashî-st

. . . . . .

mulâqât-é ân `âshiq bâ Sadr-é Jahân
The lover's meeting with the King of Bukhara

4377 ân bukhârî nêz khwad bar sham` zad
gashta bûd az `ishq-ash âsân ân kabad

âh-é sôzân-ash sôy-é gardûn shoda
dar del-é Sadr-é jahân mehr âmada

gofta bâ khwad dar saHar-gah k-ay aHad
Hâl-é ân âwâra-yé mâ chûn bow-ad?

4380 ô gonâhê kard-o mâ dîd-êm lêk
raHmat-é mâ-râ na-mê dân-ast nêk

khâTir-é mujrim ze-mâ tarsân shaw-ad
lêk Sad ômêd dar tars-ash bow-ad

man be-tarsân-am waqîH-é yâwa-râ
ân-ke tars-ad, man che tarsân-am wa-râ?

bahr-é dêg-é sard âZar mê-raw-ad
na ba-d-ân k-az jôsh az sar mê-raw-ad

âmin-ân-râ man be-tarsân-am ba-`ilm

khâyif-ân-râ tars bar dâr-am ba-Hilm

pâra-dôz-am, pâra dar mawZi` neh-am
har kasê-ra sharbat andar khwar deh-am

hast sirr-é mard chûn bêkh-é derakht
z-ân be-rôy-ad barg-hâ-sh az chûb-é sakht

dar khwar-é ân bêkh rosta barg-hâ
dar derakht-o dar nufûs-o dar nuhà

bar falak par-hâ-st ze-'shjâr-é wafâ
aSlu-hâ Sâbit wa far`u-h fî 's-samâ

chûn be-rôst az `ishq par bar âsmân
chûn na-rôy-ad dar del-é Sadr-é jahân?

mawj mê-zad dar del-ash `afw-é gonah
ke ze-har del tâ del âmad rôzanah

ke ze-del tâ del yaqîn rôzan bow-ad
na jodâ-wo dûr chûn dô tan bow-ad

mutaSSil na-b'w-ad sufâl-é dô cherâgh
nûr-eshân mamzûj bâsh-ad dar masâgh

hêch `âshiq khwad na-bâsh-ad wasl-jô
ke na ma`shûq-ash bow-ad jôyây-é ô

lêk `ishq-é `âshiq-ân tan zeh kon-ad
`ishq-é ma`shûq-ân khwash-o farbeh kon-ad

chûn dar-în del barq-é mehr-é dôst jast
andar ân del dôstî mê-dân ke hast

dar del-é tô mehr-é Haq chûn shod dô-tô
hast Haq-râ bê-gomânê mehr-é tô

hêch bâng-é kaf-zadan n-ây-ad ba-dar
az yakê dast-é tô bê-dastê degar

teshna mê-nâlad ke ay âb-é gowâr
âb ham nâl-ad ke kô ân âb-khwâr?

aZb-é âb-ast în `aTash dar jân-é mâ
mâ az ân-é ô wa ô ham ân-é mâ

Hikmat-é Haq dar qaZâ-wo dar qadar

kard mâ-râ `âshiq-ân-é ham-degar

jumla-yé ajzây-é jahân z-ân Hukm-é pêsh
joft-joft-o `âshiq-ân-é joft-é khwêsh

4402 hast har juzwê ze-`âlam joft-khwâh
râst ham-chûn kah-robâ-wo barg-é kâh

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Lover Who Braved A Frightening Shout (part one)
Mathnawi III: 4326-4344

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The explanation of the verse, "And (O Satan), [go ahead and] urge your horsemen and your foot soldiers with shouts[1] to attack (the descendents of Adam)."[2]

4326 When you make a resolution to (follow the right guidance of) religion with (sincere) effort,[3] the Devil calls out to you within (your) mind,

Saying, "Don't go by that way! O (you who are) led astray, think (about it)-- since you will become the captive of suffering and poverty.[4]

"You will be without food and sustenance; you will be severed from (your) friends; you will be despised and you will suffer (much) regret."

(So) you escape from (spiritual) certainty (and go) into confusion and error due to (your) fear of the shouts of the accursed Devil.[5]

4330 Saying, "Yes, I have tomorrow and then the day after tomorrow. I will run along the path of religion (eventually), since there is (still) time to delay in front of me."[6]

(But) again you see death on the left (side) and the right, killing (your) neighbors, so that wails (of mourning) are (loudly) raised.

Once more, due to fear for your soul, you make a resolution about (following the precepts of) religion. (So) you make yourself (to be) manly for a time.[7]

Then you fasten on the armor of (religious) knowledge and sayings of wisdom, saying, "I will not retreat (even) a bit (from doing what is right) because of any fear."

(But) once more, (the Devil) shouts at you by way of deceit, saying, "Be afraid, and turn back from the sword of poverty."

4335 Again you escape from the illuminated Way, and you throw off that armor of (religious) knowledge and ways (of conduct).[8]

You are his slave for years because of a shout. You've tossed (down your) cloak [to lie down upon][9] in darkness such as this!

Fear of the shouts of devils has shackled the people[10] and seized (their) throats,[11]

To the extent that their souls have become as hopeless about (finding) Light as (are) the spirits of the unbelievers about the people in the graves.[12]

(Although) there is (such) fear of the shouts of that accursed one,[1] how (much greater) will be the fear of the Divine shout?[1]

4340 (Although) for the noble partridge[14] there is fear of the falcon, there is no share of that fear for the fly.

For the falcon isn't a hunter of flies; nothing other than spiders seize flies.

The spider-like Devil has (the power to make) assaults against flies like you, not against partridges and eagles.[15]

The shout of devils is the (driving) shepherd of the miserable,[16] (but) the shout of the King (of the universe) is the watchful guardian of the saints,[17]

4344 So that, (just as) in the case of these two shouts of (such) distance (between them),[18] a drop from the sea of sweet (water) may not mix with the ocean of salty (water).[19]+++

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) urge... with shouts: "The verb 'ajlaba' implies shouting (jalabah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (Heading) to attack (the descendents of Adam): from a verse in the Qur'an (17:64). When God commanded the angels to bow [in obeisance-- not worship] to Adam, all submitted except Satan, who refused: "Will I bow (in obeisance) to one whom You made from clay.... (to) this one whom You have honored above me?" Satan then declared that he would lead astray all of Adam's descendants, except a few. God replied, telling Satan to go ahead and that, "Hell will be the recompense of you (all). "'Lure (as many of) those whom you can among them with your voice; urge your horsemen and your foot soldiers with shouts to attack them; share with them wealth and children (obtained by sin); and make (all kinds of) promises to them.' But Satan promises them only in order to deceive. 'Truly, in regard to My servants, you will have no (real) authority over them...'" (17:61-65).

3. (4326) When you make a resolution to (follow the right guidance of) religion with (sincere) effort: Nicholson translated, "When you earnestly resolve to be religious..." The word for making effort [ijtihâh], is related to the word "jihâd" and is a technical term in sufism for struggling, striving, and "combat" against one's ego and its cravings.

4. (4327) you will become the captive of suffering and poverty: a reference to the Qur'anic verse, "Satan threatens you with (imminent) poverty and urges you to commit shameful deeds [to avoid it]." (Qur'an 2: 268)

5. (4329) the accursed Devil: God cursed Satan for his opposition to His Will and his determination to lead astray as many descendants of Adam as he could (Qur'an 4:118).

6. (4330) since there is (still) time to delay in front of me: "In other words, 'By means of the deceptive tricks of Satan, you have delayed your aspiration and you have abandoned obedience (to God).'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century

Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

7. (4332) you make yourself (to be) manly for a time: means strongly resisting ones desires and cravings. "(It means), 'So that to a certain extent you purify yourself from the defilement of negligence and disobedience (in regard to God and acting rightly)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (4335) (religious) knowledge and ways (of conduct): Nicholson translated, "knowledge and virtue."

9. (4336) You've tossed (down your) cloak [to lie down upon]: literally, "you have thrown (down) a coarse (or, felt) garment." Means laying one's outer garment on the ground to rest upon it. Nicholson translated, "you have laid down the blanket (have lain down to rest) in such darkness as this!" And he explained: "i.e. mutamakkin shuda'i ú qarár girifta-i [= you have become residing and you have taken repose]. This seems to me a better explanation than 'you have cast off the garment of spiritual poverty and piety' (Fa) [= Anqaravi]."

"It means, 'You are (dwelling in) such darkness of egoistic craving [nafsânî] and worldly muddiness, you have forsaken and thrown off the cloak of (spiritual) poverty and piety, and you have chosen the pleasures of the ego (instead)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (4337) Fear of the shouts of devils has shackled the people: Anqaravi here quoted a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad-- "If not for the devils surrounding the hearts of the descendants of Adam, you would be able to see the kingdom of the heavens." [law lâ an ash-shayâTin..."]

11. (4337) seize (their) throats: a metaphor for the constriction felt in the throat during fear and anxiety, when it may be hard to breathe.

12. (4338) the unbelievers about the people in the graves: refers to a verse in the Qur'an. "... people on whom is the anger of God. Certainly they are hopeless about the Hereafter, just like the unbelievers are hopeless about the people in the graves." (Qur'an 60:13). Means that the unbelievers are hopeless about those buried in the graves ever coming to life again, because they do not believe in the resurrection of the dead and the hope of Paradise.
13. (4339) that accursed one: refers to Satan. See note on

line 4329.

14. (4339) the fear of the Divine shout: refers to the overwhelming noise (usually described as the sound of the trumpet played by an angel) which inaugurates the Day of Judgement at the Resurrection: "And the Trumpet will be blown, so all those the heavens and on earth will fall down unconscious, except those whom God wills (otherwise)." (Qur'an 39:68; see also 6:73, 23:101, 69:13)

Anqaravi says that, compared to the shock of the Day of Judgment, "the shout of Satan will not have (even) the amount of noise of a fly." (Commentary)

15. (4340) the noble partridge: partridges were viewed with more respect, because of their fighting spirit.

16. (4341) the (driving) shepherd of the miserable: Nicholson translated, "the drover of the damned."

17. (4342) not against partridges and eagles: "I.e. only the righteous and elect are capable of fearing God [= pious awe of God], and over them the Devil has no power." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi (Commentary) quoted the verse in which God told Satan, "Truly, you will not have any authority over My servants, except the ones who have followed you among those led astray." (Qur'an 15:42)

18. (4344) these two shouts of (such) distance (between them): "i.e. by means of Divine inspiration and Satanic suggestion." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (4344) a drop from the sea of sweet (water) may not mix with the ocean of salty (water): refers to a verse in the Qur'an. "And He is the one who has made the two seas to flow freely: that one sweet and thirst-quenching, and that one salty and bitter. And He has made a barrier between them, an obstruction which cannot be passed." (Qur'an 25:53) Refers to the separation of these two kinds of water: one is on land as rivers, lakes, underground streams (tapped by wells) and the condensation from the clouds which falls as pure rain-water; the other is separated by the shores of the land and by a "barrier" of non-salty water where rivers meet the ocean (and also where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean). These two kinds of water are interpreted as symbolizing the spiritual desires of mankind, which are pure, sweet, and fulfilling; contrasted with worldly desires, which are bitter and cause more thirst (instead of

quenching it).

"The intended meaning of the sweet river (water): the prophets-- peace be upon them, and the noble saints. And the intended meaning of the salty ocean is: the rejectors of God [kâfir-ân] and the unjust oppressors.... (And also) Divine guidance and inspiration [compared to] the leading astray and urgings of Satan." (Anqaravi, Commentary)
Nicholson referred, here, to Mathnawi I: 297, regarding which he included this explanation: "According to Sahl b. `Abdalláh al-Tustarí [= an early sufi master, died 896], 'one of the two seas is the heart (qalb), which contains diverse jewels-- faith, gnosis [= mystical knowledge], and unification; and the other is the carnal soul (nafs), wherein abide such vices as hatred, envy, unbelief, avarice, and anger'." (Commentary)

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tafsîr-é âyat-é "wa 'ajlib `alay-him bi-khayli-ka wa rijli-ka"

4326 tô chô `azm-é dîn kon-î bâ ijtihâd
dêw bâng-at bar-zan-ad andar nehâd

ke ma-raw z-ân sô, be-y-andêsh ay ghawî
ke asîr-é ranj-o darwêshî shaw-î

bê-nawâ gard-î ze-yâr-ân wâ-bor-î
khwâr gardiyy-o pashîmânî khwor-î

tô ze-bîm-é bâng-é ân dêw-é la`în
wâ gorêz-î dar Zilâlat az yaqîn

4330 ke halâ fardâ-wo pas fardâ ma-râ-st
râh-é dîn pôy-am ke muhlat pêsh-é mâ-st

marg bîn-î bâz kô az chapp-o râst
mê-kosh-ad ham-sâya-râ, tâ bâng khâst

bâz `azm-é dîn kon-î az bêm-é jân
mard sâz-î khwêshtan-râ yak zamân

pas silaH bar-band-î az `ilm-o Hikam
ke man az khawfê na-yâr-am pây kam
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bâz bângê bar-zan-ad bar tô ze-makr
ke be-tars-o bâz gard az têgh-é faqr

bâz be-g'rêz-î ze-râh-é rôshanî
ân silâH-é `ilm-o fan-râ be-f'gan-î

sâl-hâ ô-râ ba-bângê banda-î
dar chon-în Zulmat namad-afkanda-î

haybat-é bâng-é shayâTîn khalq-râ
band kard-ast-o gerefta Halq-râ

tâ chon-ân nawmêd shod jân-shân ze-nûr
ke rawân-é kâfir-ân z-ahl-é qubûr

în shokôh-é bâng-é ân mal`ûn bow-ad
haybat-é bâng-é khodâyî chûn bow-ad?

haybat-é bâz-ast bar kabg-é najîb
mar magas-râ nêst z-ân haybat naSîb

z-ân-ke na-b'w-ad bâz Sayyâd-é magas
`ankabût-ân mê magas gîr-and-o bas

`ankabût-é dêw bar chûn tô Zubâb
karr-o far dâr-ad, na bar kabg-o `uqâb

bâng-é dêw-ân galla-bân-é ashqiyâ-st
bâng-é sulTân pâsbân-é awliyâ-st

tâ na-y-âmêz-ad ba-d-în dô bâng-é dûr
qaTra'yê az baHr-é khwosh bâ baHr-é shûr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Lover Who Braved A Frightening Shout (part two)

Mathnawi III: 4345-4376

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The coming of the shout of the talisman,[1] at midnight, to the guest in the mosque.[2]

4345 Listen now to the story of that harsh (and terrifying) shout, from which that man of good-fortune did not flee.

He said, "Why should I be afraid, since this is (the sound of) the drum (announcing the start) of the Festival.[3] So may the drum (itself) be afraid, since blows have reached it!

"O drums (which are) empty and lacking heart,[4] your portion of the soul's festival[5] is the blows of the (drum) stick.

"(This) festival is (like) the Resurrection, and those who lack religion[6] (are like) the (beaten) drums.[7] (And) I (am) like the people of the Festival, laughing like the rose."[9]

Hear now, when the drum cried out, how (it) cooks the pot of good-fortune.[9]

4350 When that man of (spiritual) vision[1] heard that "drum," he said, "How should my heart be terrified of the drum of the Festival?"[11]

He said to himself, "Take care! Don't (let your) heart tremble, for (only) the souls of cowards lacking (spiritual) certainty[12] die because of [a scare like] this.[13]

"The time has come (when), like Ali the Lion,[14] I should (either) capture a kingdom or abandon (my) body."

He leaped up and shouted, "O prince! See now, I'm here! Come (toward me), if you're a man!

Immediately, that talisman burst from the sound (of his voice), (and) many (different) kinds of gold continued to pour (down from) every direction.
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4355 So much gold[15] spilled (down) that the young man was worried, (hoping) that the gold would not block the doorway because of (its being so) plentiful.

Afterwards, that (battle-) ready lion got up and was dragging the gold outside until the time of dawn.

He was burying (it) and kept returning to (more) gold with large sacks and bags another time.

That life-gambler put (away) treasures (hidden away) from those blind, fearful, (and) backward-creeping (ones).[16]

(Now the assumption that) this (is) external gold has reached the thoughts inside the heart of every blind gold-worshipper (who is far) distant (from God).

4360 Children break clay pots, apply the name of "gold" (to the pieces), and put (them to carry) in (their) robes.

If you say the name of "gold" during that game,[17] (the reality of) those (clay pieces) passes into the mind of the child.[18]

But (it is only) the minted "gold" with a Divine stamp[19] which doesn't become worthless, (but) has become eternal:

That gold from which this (material) gold found (its) glitter, lustre, brightness, and gleam;

That gold from which the heart becomes (spiritually) wealthy; it overcomes the (full) moon in luminosity.

4365 That mosque was the candle and (the brave man was) the moth; that moth-natured (man) gambled (away) himself.[20]

It burned him (on his) wings, but it made him suitable (to God);[21] that hurling of himself (into the candle flame) was very blessed.

That man of happy fortune was like Moses, who saw a fire in the direction of the tree.[22]

Since (Divine) gifts of grace were abundantly (bestowed) upon him, he imagined (it was) fire, but it was the Light (of God).[23]

O son, when you see a man of God you have the belief
about him (that he is made of) the "fire" of human (nature).

4370 (But) you are coming (to this view) from yourself, and
that (fire)[24] is (only) in you. The fire and thorns of false
opinions are (only) in this direction.

He is the "Tree of Moses" and full of light. In short,
come [to true understanding and] call (him) "light"; don't
call him "fire!"

Didn't (the experience of) the weaning of [your desires
for] this world seem (like) a (burning) fire?[25] The
(spiritual) seekers departed [toward God], and that
(weaning) was itself light (in reality).[26]

So know that the Candle of Religion is (ever) rising;[27]
it is not like the candle of flames:

This one appears (like) light, but burns (its) companion.
And that one (is) with the appearance of "fire,"
but (is like) roses[28] to (its) visitors.

4375 This one (seems) like a harmonious (companion), but
(is) a burner. And that one, at the time of union, is an
illuminator of the heart.[29]

4376 The external form of a pure, worthy, and radiant flame
is (like) light to those present (with God).[30] But it is like
fire to those far (away from God).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),8/23/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) the shout of the talisman: refers to an
object, upon which is inscribed magical spells which were
believed to give it particular supernatural powers (such as,
in this story, to scare off intruders from a treasure). "The
loud threats of the Devil are likened to a talisman that
guards the treasure of self-abandonment." (Nicholson,
Commentary)

2. (Heading) the guest in the mosque: this is the hero of this particular story about the guest in the haunted mosque. This was a mosque outside the Persian city of Rayy which was said to contain evil jinns (genies) who butchered anyone who spent the night there or contained a magic talisman which frightened overnight guests to death (III: 3922-27). A "death-seeking and fearless lover (of God)," who was satiated with life and unafraid of death, decided to test the truth of the rumors by spending a night in the mosque. The story involves dialogues between the brave man and the local people who warned him and tried to persuade him not to throw away his life. He persisted with his intention, and at midnight a dreadful voice shouted threats ("I am coming at you!") at the guest (4324-25). The section translated here is the last section of the story.

3. (4346) this is (the sound of) the drum (announcing the start) of the Festival: there are two Islamic festivals for Muslims all over the world. One celebrates the end of the annual fasting month of Ramadan [`idu 'l-fiTr], and the other celebrates the end of the annual Pilgrimage [Hajj] to Mecca [`idu 'l-aDHâ]. It was traditional for drums to be struck to announce to the people that a particular Festival had begun-- a sound heard with great joy. Since, in Islam, each day ends at sunset, the Festival day begins after the sunset of the final day of the preceding lunar month. This is determined when reliable witness have seen the thin appearance of the new moon just after sunset. Such witnesses would give their testimony to the local authorities, who would order drums to be struck to herald the start of the Festival.

4. (4347) empty and lacking heart: "(It means), 'Your inside is empty of the delight of the love and devoted worship of God.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

5. (4347) the soul's festival: Nicholson translated, "the festival of the spirit."

6. (4348) those who lack religion [bê-dîn-ân]: Nicholson translated less literally, "the irreligious." Means those without belief in God and the revelation of the prophets, who reject such faith, and are ungrateful to their Creator.

7. (4348) (are like) the (beaten) drums: means the unbelievers are like the drums who are beaten-- meaning

punished.

8. (4348) laughing like the rose: a common metaphor in Persian literature. The rose in bloom is imagined as smiling widely and laughing happily.

9. (4349) how (it) cooks the pot of good-fortune: means, how the drum sound prepares good-fortune in the form of a festival or feast of spiritual joy. Nicholson translated, "when this drum boomed, he (the guest) cooks the pot containing the broth of felicity." However, he later admitted: "The subject of 'mé-pazad' [= is cooking] may, as Fa [= Anqaravi] says, be 'báng-i duhul' [= the sound of the drum], announcing the advent of the lover's festival." (Commentary)

"The meaning is (understood) in this manner: 'Listen now, how the talisman of the drum cries out. And (see) how this fiery shout brings the agitated pot to boiling, and (how) it has made ready the food of happiness.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (4350) that man of (spiritual) vision: Nicholson translated, "that man of insight."

11. (4350) How should my heart be terrified of the drum of the Festival: "(It means), 'He said to himself, "Why should I fear the Festival drum, since the death of lovers is like a festival to them, and the shout of (the angel of death) is like the Festival drum."'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (4351) cowards lacking (spiritual) certainty [yaqîn]: Nicholson translated, "the faint-hearted who lack faith." Means those with hearts that are filled with the doubts and suspicions involved in cowardice, who lack the strength and courage which comes from certainty [yaqîn] and firm faith in the assurances of Divine protection for the souls of believers transmitted through the revelations of the prophets.

13. (4351) because of [a scare like] this: Nicholson translated, "at this (noise of the drum). Evidently refers to dying of fright at the sound of the drums sounded when soldiers were ordered to attack.

14. (4352) like Ali the Lion: literally, "like Haydar" [= lion] a title of Hazrat-i `Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin, son-in-law, and fourth successor, who was a famously

brave warrior in battles against the greater military forces of the Arab polytheists (which tried to eliminate the smaller number of Muslim monotheists).

15. (4355) So much gold [chand-ân zar]: this is what Nicholson's edition has, and differs from the edition of Tôfîq SobHânî (which has "chand în zar"). However, both are based on the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi. It is unclear which is the most faithful, or if an added correction to the manuscript explains the difference.

16. (4358) (hidden away) from those blind, fearful, (and) backward-creeping (ones): Nicholson translated, "That self-devoting one laid by (great) stores thereof, to the confusion of (in despite of) the timidity of the backsliders." Nicholson's translation makes little sense, since Rumi has already suggested that the brave youth did all his burying in the dark, prior to the (first sign of) dawn-- when all the villagers were still asleep.

"In other words, 'He hid the treasures. Therefore, with (the help of) the blindness of those fearful, backward-creeping, and frightened ones, he became the possessor of the treasures.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (4361) that game: Nicholson referred to other passages where this children's game is used as a metaphor (Mathnawi III: 2277-79; VI: 3276-78).

18. (4361) into the mind of the child: "(It means), 'In the same way you also resemble a thoughtless child, in relation to the men of God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (4362) But (it is only) the minted "gold" with a Divine stamp: "And the intended meaning of this minted gold: it is the (branches of) religious knowledge and (intuitive) realizations of (spiritual) certainty [ma`ârif-é yaqîniyya] which, in the Mint of the hearts of the prophets and saints have been struck with the stamps of the Divine Names and Attributes and manifestations." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (4365) gambled (away) himself: Nicholson translated, "gambled himself away (sacrificed himself)."

21. (4366) it made him suitable (to God): Nicholson translated, "it complied with him (granted his desire)." "The flame burned the wings of the moth, but in this way the moth made it the means of his arriving to union with it. In

other words, the fire made him (spiritually) alive with its union, despite the appearance of annihilation." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (4367) a fire in the direction of the tree: refers to the story of Moses and the Burning Bush. When Moses was travelling with his family, "he saw a 'fire' in the direction of Mt. Tûr [= Mt. Sinai]." When he reached it, he heard the voice of God speaking to him from a tree (Qur'an 28:29-30; see also 20: 10-11). Since this was a miracle, the tree was not really burning, nor was the "fire" actual fire. Nicholson referred to other related verses in the Mathnawi (II: 2883-84; IV: 3570-71).

23. (4368) he imagined (it was) fire, but it was the Light (of God): "In a similar way (as Moses thought), that one of good-fortune also imagined that the guest-luring mosque was a place of death. But in reality, for him, it was the place of good-fortune and happiness." (Anqaravi) Nicholson referred to a similar theme in Rumi's story about the child thrown into a fire (I: 786-90).

24. (4370) and that (fire): Nicholson translated, "and that (human nature)..."

25. (4372) (like) a (burning) fire: "In other words, the severing (of desires) from this world is like a burning fire in the beginning, according to a certain view." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (4372) The (spiritual) seekers departed [toward God], and that (weaning) was itself light (in reality): Nicholson translated, "The pilgrims went (on their way)..." And he explained: "When the sálik [= spiritual seeker] reaches his journey's end, he finds the real meaning and essence of mujáhadah [spiritual struggle against worldly desires and cravings] to be musháhadah [= witnessing of spiritual reality]." (Commentary)

"At the moment that the seekers departed, they found that [= the appearance of burning fire] to be light. In other words... they saw that the [initially painful experience of] being severed and cut off from the world of (material) forms was itself light.... That was the moment of surrender, when Divine Light is seen in the being of the men of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (4373) the Candle of Religion is (ever) rising:

Nicholson translated, "is always mounting (shining more and more)." And he added: "Sham`-i dín [= the Candle of Religion] also symbolises the holy as opposed to the carnal man." (Commentary)

"It means: The one endowed with heart and the Perfected Man, who is the Candle of Religion, is becoming increased every moment. But this Candle of Religion is not one of the kinds of candle flames, which are decreasing every moment." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (4374) that one (is) with the appearance of "fire," but (is like) roses: Nicholson compared this with another verse, which he translated, "But the candle of Love is not like that (external) candle: it is radiance in radiance in radiance. It is the reverse of the fiery candles: it seems to be fire, while (in reality) it is all sweetness." (III: 3920-21)

29. (4375) an illuminator of the heart: "It means, 'If someone joins company with a man possessed of (spiritual) certainty, who is the Candle of Religion, any amount of darkness of heart which that person has will become light--by means of the blessing of the company of the man of God. And he will obtain (spiritual) light and illumination." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (4376) those present (with God) [HâZir-ân]: means those who are near to God, ready to respond to the guidance of God in the moment (per the saying, "The sufi is the son of the moment"), as well as fully aware during the present moment of being in the Divine Presence.

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rasîdan-é bâng-é Tilismî nîm-shab mehmân-é masjid-râ

4345 be-sh'naw aknûn qiSSa-yé ân bâng-é sakht
ke na-raft az jâ ba-d-ân ân nêk-bakht

goft chûn tars-am? chô hast în Tabl-é `îd
tâ dohol tars-ad ke zakhm ô-râ rasîd

ay dohol-hây-é tahîy-é bê-qulûb
qism-etân az `îd-é jân shod zakhm-é chûb
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shod qiyâmat `îd-o bê-dîn-ân dohol
mâ chô ahl-é `îd, khandân ham-chô gol

be-sh'naw aknûn în dohol chûn bâng zad
dêg-é dawlat-bâ chegûna mê-paz-ad?

chûn-ke be-sh'nûd ân dohol ân mard-é dîd
goft chûn tars-ad del-am az Tabl-é `îd?

goft bâ khwad hîn ma-larzân del k-az-în
mord jân-é bad-del-ân-é bê-yaqîn

waqt-é ân âmad ke Haydar-wâr man
mulk gîr-am yâ be-pardâz-am badan

bar jahîd-o bâng bar-zad k-ay keyâ
HâZir-am înak, agar mard-î be-y-â

dar zamân be-sh'kast ze-âwâz, ân Tilism
zar hamê rêzîd har sô qism-qism

rêkht chandân zar ke tarsîd ân pesar
tâ na-gîr-ad zar ze-porîy râh-é dar

ba`d az ân bar-khâst ân shêr-é `atîd
tâ saHar-gah zar ba-bêrûn mê-kashîd

dafn mê-kard-o hamê âmad ba-zar
bâ jowâl-o tôbara bâr-é degar

ganj-hâ be-n'hâd ân jân-bâz az ân
kôriy-é tarsâniy-é wâ-pas-khazân

în zar-é Zâhir ba-khâTir âmad-ast
dar del-é har kôr-é dûr-ê zar-parast

kôdak-ân isfâl-hâ-râ be-sh'kan-and
nâm-é zar be-n'h-and-o dar dâman kon-and

andar ân bâzî chô gôy-î nâm-é zar
ân kon-ad dar khâTir-é kôdak goZar

bal zar-é maZrûb-é Zarb-é îzedî
k-ô na-gard-ad kâsid, âmad sarmadî

ân zarê k-în zar az ân zar tâb yâft
gawhar-o tâbandagî-wo âb yâft

ân zarî ke del az-ô gard-ad ghanî
ghâlib ây-ad bar qamar dar rôshanî

4365 sham` bûd ân masjid-o parwâna ô
khwêshtan dar bâkht ân parwâna-khô

par be-sôkht ô-râ walêkin sâkht-ash
bas mubârak âmad ân andâkht-ash

ham-chô mûsà bûd ân mas`ûd-bakht
k-âteshê dîd ô ba-sôy-é ân derakht

chûn `inâyat-hâ bar-ô mawfûr bûd
nâr mê-pendâsht-o khwad ân nûr bûd

mard-é Haq-râ chûn be-bîn-î ay pesar
tô gomân dâr-î bar-ô nâr-é bashar

4370 tô ze-khwad mê-ây-î-wo ân dar tow-ast
nâr-o khâr-é Zann-é bâTil în sow-ast

ô derakht-é mûsà-ast-o por-Ziyâ
nûr khwân, nâr-ash ma-khwân bârê be-y-â

na fiTâm-é în jahân nârê namûd
sâlik-ân raft-and-o ân khwad nûr bûd

pas be-dân ke sham`-é dîn bar mê-shaw-ad
în na ham-chûn sham`-é âtesh-hâ bow-ad

în nomây-ad nûr-o sôz-ad yâr-râ
w-ân ba-Sûrat nâr-o gol zuwwâr-râ

4375 în chô sâzanda walê sôzanda'yê
w-ân, gah-é wuSlat, del-afrôzanda'yê

4376 shakl-é shu`la-yé nûr-é pâk-é sâz-wâr
HâZir-ân-râ nûr-o dûr-ân-râ chô nâr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part eight)

Mathnawi III: 4601-4623

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Regarding the beloved's (power of) attraction toward the lover: since the lover doesn't know about it, doesn't hope for it, doesn't think about it in his mind, and no sign of that attraction appears in the lover except fear mixed with desperation together with continued seeking.[1]

4601 We reached to this place (in the story), that if attraction for that lover hadn't been hidden within the king of Bukhara,

(The lover) would never have been impatient because of separation, (and) he would never have come running back toward his (beloved's) dwelling.

(For) the longing of the beloveds is hidden and veiled, (but) the longing of the lover (occurs) together with two hundred drums and trumpets.[2]

By way of example, there is a story (which could be told at) this point,[3] but that man from Bukhara has become tormented from waiting.

4605 (Therefore), we've left it (out) since he is (in a state of) seeking, in order that he might see the face of his beloved before dying--

So that he may escape from death and that he may find deliverance from death. For the sight of the beloved is the Water of (Eternal) Life.[4]

(If) the sight of anyone isn't driving death away,[5] (that person) is not the (true) beloved, since (that person) doesn't have "fruits" or "leaves."[6]

The (true) case is the one,[7] O drunk yearner, in which death is delightful if it reaches you.

(Similarly), O young man, the sign of sincerity of (religious) faith (is) the (case) in which (a martyr's)
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death becomes sweet to you.

4610 (And) if your (religious) faith has not been like this,
O dear one, it isn't complete. (So) go (and) seek perfection
of (your practice of) religion.

Whoever is a lover of death in your case,[8] (and for)
whom your heart (has) no dislike,[9] he is (your true) friend.

(For) when (such) dislike is gone, that truly is not
death; it is the appearance of death (only), and is (really)
a cause of emigration.[10]

(And) when (such) dislike is gone, death becomes
beneficial; then it becomes true that "death" has been
driven away.

God is the (true) Beloved, as well as the person about
whom He said: "You belong to me and I belong to you."[11]

4615 Keep (your) ears (alert) now, since (that) lover is
arriving[12] whom Love (has) bound "with a rope of twisted
palm-leaf fibers."[13]

When (the ambassador) saw the face of the king of
Bukhara, you could say (that) the bird of (his) soul flew
from his body.[14]

His body fell down, like dry wood, (and) became cold
from the top of the head to the toes.[15]

Whatever they did (to revive him) by means of perfume or
rose-water, he did not move and did not start talking
(again).

When the king saw the face of that pallid one, he then
came down from his horse (and went) toward him.

4620 He said, The lover seeks the beloved with (passionate)
fervor, (so that) when the beloved comes, the lover has
gone."
You are the lover of God. And regarding God, when He
comes there won't be a single hair of "you" (left).[16]

Hundreds like you will vanish before that (Divine) gaze.
Perhaps, sir, you are [already] a lover of negating your
self?[17]

4623 (For) you are (but) a shadow and a lover of the sun.
(When) the sun comes, the shadow quickly becomes nothing.[18]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 4/12/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) except fear mixed with desperation together with continued seeking: Nicholson translated this part differently, "except the fear that is mingled with despair, though he still perseveres in the quest." Anqaravi paraphrased: "Some fear mixed with despair and with continued searching."

2. (4603) together with two hundred drums and trumpets: "It means, 'Having much noise, uproar and (being) conspicuous and public." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (4604) there is a story (which could be told at) this point: "The poet alludes indirectly to the long digression by which the Story of the Wakíl of Bukhárá has been interrupted. Probably the Story mentioned here but left untold is identical with the one beginning at v. 4749 infra [= the story of a youth who was madly in love with a woman] and continued in Book IV. Cf. v. 4748 and IV 120-155." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (4606) the Water of (Eternal) Life: a frequent metaphor in Rumi's poetry. Refers to a fabled spring of water said to confer immortality to the one who drinks from it.

5. (4607) (If) the sight of anyone isn't driving death away: "i.e. 'does not remove all fear of dying to self.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means, 'In regard to someone, (if) witnessing of his face doesn't drive death away...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (4607) since (that person) doesn't have "fruits" or "leaves: "It means, 'Truly, no one will find profit, satisfaction, and benefit from that beloved.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (4608) The (true) case is the one: Nicholson translated,

"The (essential) matter, O intoxicated longing lover, is
that matter in which death, if it befall thee, is sweet."
And he explained: "i.e. 'the only thing that matters is your
seeking God with entire self-devotion.'" (Nicholson,
Commentary)

8. (4611) Whoever is a lover of death in your case,*: means
that he is your true friend if he is willing to risk death
because of his love for you. Nicholson later corrected this
line, to: "Whosoever would fain die for thy sake willingly
and agreeably to thy heart's desire, he is thy true lover"
(from, "Whosoever in (this) matter of thine has become
death-loving (and desires thy death) without dislike
(without being hateful) to thy heart, he is (thy) beloved").
And he explained: "Most commentators assume that dúst means
'beloved', a view which seems to me to necessitate my
rendering of marg-dúst, 'desirous of thy death'.... My
translation, however, is unsatisfying because it fails to
preserve the natural sense of marg-dúst, 'eager to die'. I
conclude therefore that dúst in the second hemistich means
muhibb, not mahbúb..." (Commentary)

9. (4611) (and for) whom your heart (has) no dislike:
Anqaravi relates a story about `Ali (the first cousin,
son-in-law, and fourth successor of the Prophet Muhammad as
Caliph, or leader of the Muslims): "A man said to him, 'O
`Ali, I love you.' `Ali-- may God be pleased with him--
replied, 'You are telling a lie.' The man asked, 'By what
means do you know (that)?' Hazrat-i `Ali gave the answer,
'For this reason: I don't have love for you, and my heart is
giving witness of this.'" (Commentary)

10. (4612) is (really) a cause of emigration: "It has the
meaning of finding transport (or conveyance, transition)
from the transitory [fânî] world to the everlasting world."
(Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (4614) "You belong to me and I belong to you: "Cf. the
Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad] man kána li-'lláhi
kána 'lláhu lahu." [= Whoever belongs (meaning: devotes
himself) to God, God will belong to him]. (Nicholson,
Commentary) Nicholson also referred to other places where
this Hadith is mentioned (Mathnawi I: 1939 and IV: 2613) and
he commented on the first citation: "The mystical
interpretation of the hadíth... is that he who gives himself
up entirely to God in faná [= annihilation of self] is
united with Him in baqá [= continuance]." (Commentary)

12. (4615) (that) lover is arriving: means the ambassador is arriving (after having fled from the king some years before).

13. (4615) "with a rope of twisted palm-leaf fibers": part of a verse from the Qur'an (111:5). "It means that Love is drawing the lover, who was put in shackles and bonds, toward the beloved." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (4616) the bird of (his) soul flew from his body: "(It means), 'To the extent that he found delight and became drowned in (his) passion, so that for a time he became ecstatically (vanished) from himself. And his soul at that moment was drinking cup after cup of the wine of Union.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (4617) His body... became cold from the top of the head to the toes: Nicholson translated differently: "His body fell like dry wood: his vital spirit became cold from the crown of his head to his toes." He noted that the earliest manuscript has "farq-é jân" (which he interpreted as "the crown of the soul"), but that all other manuscripts had "farq-é sar" (= crown of the head). However, Gôharîn's "Terminology of the Masnavi" explains that the expression "crown of the soul to the toes" is an idiom equivalent to "crown of the head...." and is used to describe someone who has become unconscious (and perhaps close to death), unmoving, and with a blue-grey skin coloring.

16. (4621) when He comes there won't be a single hair of "you" (left): in regard to this verse, Nicholson quoted "the saying of Junayd [= an early sufi master who died in 910)]: idhá qurina 'l-muhdathu bi-'l-qadimi lam yabqa lahu athar-un." [= When the created is joined to the Eternal, no trace remains of it] (Commentary)

Regarding this verse, Anqaravi quoted a verse from the Qur'an (27:34): "When kings (forcibly) enter a country, they destroy it." And he interpreted: "The moment the true beloved enters the lover's heart, it is (equal to) the full power of all (the world's) kings, so that the heart of the lover is wrecked." (Commentary)

17. (4622) Perhaps, sir, you are [already] a lover of negating your self: Nicholson translated, in an archaic-manner: "methinks, sire, thou art in love with self-naughting." "Because union with the Beloved is not possible with the remainder of (separate) existence. Thus

for the lover to become united with the beloved, it is necessary that he be a person who becomes a lover of the annihilation [fanâ] of his own existence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (4623) (When) the sun comes, the shadow quickly becomes nothing: the word for "nothing" [lâ] is part of the Islamic creed, "There is no [lâ] divinity except God [lâ ilâha illâ 'llâh]," which has many mystical meanings for the sufis, such as: there is no separate ego-existence, but only God exists.

"(It means), 'O lover, let's say that your existence resembles a shadow. And the existence of the true beloved is like the sun. And every moment you are the follower and lover of that lord..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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jaZb-é ma`shûq `âshiq-râ min Haythu lâ ya`lamu-hu 'l-`âshiqu wa lâ yarjû-hu wa lâ yakhTuru bi-bâli-hi wa lâ yaZharu min Zalika 'l-jaZbi 'athar-un fî 'l-âshiqi illâ 'l-khawfu 'l-mamnûju bi-'l-yâ'si ma`a dawâmi 'T-Talabi

4601 âmad-ém în-jâ ke dar Sadr-é jahân
gar na-bûdy jaZb-é ân `âshiq, nehân

nâ shekêbâ kay body ô az firâq
kay dawân bâz âmady sôy-é wiSâq?

mayl-é ma`shûq-ân nehân-ast-o satîr
mayl-é `âshiq bâ dô Sad Tabl-o nafîr

yak Hikâyat hast în-jâ z-i`tibâr
lêk `âjiz shod bukhârî z-intiZâr

4605 tark-é ân kard-êm k-ô dar jost-o-jô-st
tâ ke pêsh az marg bîn-ad rôy-é dôst

tâ rah-ad az marg tâ yâb-ad najât
z-ân-ke dîd-é dôst-ast âb-é Hayât

har ke dîd-é ô na-bâsh-ad daf`-é marg
dôst na-b'w-ad ke na mêwa-st-ash na barg

kâr ân kâr-ast ay mushtâq-é mast
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k-andar ân kâr ar ras-ad marg-at khwash-ast

shod neshân-é Sidq-é îmân, ay jawân
ân-ke ây-ad khwash tô-râ marg andar ân

gar na-shod îmân-é tô ay jân chon-în
nêst kâmil, raw be-jô ikmâl-é dîn

har ke andar kâr-é tô shod marg-dôst
bar del-é tô bê-karâhat dôst ô-st

chûn karâhat raft ân khwad marg nêst
Sûrat-é marg-ast-o nuqlân-kardanê-st

chûn karâhat raft, mordan naf` shod
pas dorost ây-ad ke mordan daf` shod

dôst Haqq-ast-o kasê ke-sh goft ô
ke tow-î ân-é man-o man ân-é tô

gôsh dâr aknûn ke `âshiq mê-ras-ad
basta `ishq ô-râ bi-Habl-in min masad

chûn be-dîd ô chehra-yé Sadr-é jahân
gô'îyâ parrîd-ash az tan morgh-é jân

ham-chô chôb-é khoshk oftâd ân tan-ash
sard shod az farq-é jân tâ nâkhon-ash

har-che kard-and az bakhûr-o az gol-âb
na me-janbîd-o na âmad dar khaTâb

shâh chûn dîd ân muza`far rôy-é ô
pas forôd âmad ze-markab sôy-é ô

goft `âshiq dôst mê-jôy-ad ba-taft
chûn-ke ma`shûq âmad, ân `âshiq be-raft

`âshiq-é Haqq-î-wo Haqq ân-ast k-ô
chûn be-y-ây-ad na-b'w-ad az tô tây-é mô

Sad chô tô fânî-st pêsh-é ân naZar
`âshiq-î bar nafy-é khwad khwâja magar?

sâya'ê-wo `âshiq-î bar âftâb
shams ây-ad, sâya lâ gard-ad shetâb

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part nine)

Mathnawi III: 4664-4667, 4677-4693

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The beloved's soothing of the unconscious lover until he returned to consciousness

4664 The King of Bukhara was drawing him, out of kindness, from unconsciousness into (being able to express) clear speech.

4665 The king shouted into his ear, "O beggar, (hold) open (your) skirt![1] (For) I have brought you scatterings of gold.

"Your spirit which was trembling in separation (from) me-- why did it flee in terror when I came to protect it?

4667 "O you who have experienced (extreme) heat and cold in separation (from) me, come back to yourself from unconsciousness-- and return!"

. . . . . .

4677 (The King of Bukhara) held his hand, saying, "This one, whose breath has gone, will come (back to life) the moment I grant him breath.[2]

"When this dead body becomes living by means of Me,[3] it will be My spirit which brings (his) face toward Me.

"I will make him great and powerful by means of this spirit.[4] (And), with the spirit which I will give him, he will see My Generosity."[5]

4680 (For) the spirit of one[6] who is not an intimate friend cannot see the face of the Beloved. However, the one whose origin is from His district (can see it).

(He said),"I breath into this friend (in a manner) resembling (that of) a butcher: so that his most excellent

inward part may leave the skin."[7]

(And) he said, "O spirit (which has) fled from affliction, We have opened the door of Our Union--[8] (so) be welcome!

"O you (whose) drunkenness and loss of self (is caused by) Our Self![9] O you (whose) being (is) always (caused) by Our Being!

"Listen, (for in) this moment, I will tell you once more the ancient secrets,[10] without (the need for) lips.

4685 "Since those lips (of yours) are fleeing in terror from this Breath (of Mine),[11] it is (instead) breathed [invisibly] on the lip of a hidden "river."[12]

"In this moment, open the earless ear[13] for the sake of (being able to hear) the secret of (the verse), 'God acts as He wills.'"[14]

When he began to hear the invitation to Union, the dead man gradually began to move.

(The lover of God) is not less than the earth which, due to the amorous playfulness of the morning breeze (during Spring), dresses in green (and) raises up (its) head after extinction.[15]

(And) he is not less than sperm fluid which, due to (the Divine) speech,[16] generates (beautiful) Josephs[17] (with) faces like the sun.

4690 He is not less than a wind[18] (which), due to the command (of the Divine word) "Be!"[19] (generates), in the wombs (of birds), peacocks and sweet-voiced birds.

(And) he is not less than the rocky mountain which, due to the (miraculous) generation of a female camel,[20] gave birth to a camel foal.

Pass on from all of this. Didn't the fundamental source of non-existence give birth to a (whole) world?[21] And it will generate (in the future as well), moment by moment.

4693 (The prime minister) jumped up, trembled, and whirled (around) once or twice very joyously. (Then) he fell down in obeisance (before the king).[21]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 4/19/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4665) (hold) open (your) skirt: refers to holding up the hems of the robe, or a type of long skirt worn by men, in order to receive scatterings of gold coins. "(It means), 'I'm giving you the gold of Union. Where is the skirt of your mind and understanding [in which I can pour it]?'" (Anqaravi, a 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here from a Persian translation)

2. (4677) will come (back to life) the moment I grant him breath: Nicholson translated, "will (only) then come (to life) when I give him (spiritual) breath." Since God is speaking here, this refers to a verse which mentions how God breathed into Adam (also meaning mankind in general) of His spirit (Qur'an 15:29). "The intended meaning of 'breath' [dam] is 'the Divine Breath.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (4678) When this dead body becomes living by means of Me: "(The meaning is), 'He will become living together with life and nearness to Me.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Here, it is God speaking, not just the king-- a common device used by Rumi.

4. (4679) I will make him great and powerful by means of this spirit: Nicholson translated, "By means of this spirit I make him possessed of high estate." According to the Qur'an, God helps true believers by strengthening them with a spirit [rûH] from Him (58:22). And, similarly, he strengthened the Prophet Jesus with a holy spirit (2:87, 253). The latter is usually interpreted as the same as the Archangel Gabriel. "(It means), 'A spirit, which is worthy and deserving of a gift of favor, is the Holy Spirit-- which is the Divine Spirit and the Divine Breath.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (4679) with the spirit which I will give him, he will see My Generosity: Nicholson translated, "(only) the spirit that I give sees (experiences) My bounty."

6. (4680) (For) the spirit of one: Nicholson included this line as part of the king's speech. However, it makes more sense as Rumi's commentary, since he often interrupts stories and dialogues with interpretations and related teachings.

7. (4681) so that his most excellent inward part may leave the skin: "The Divine inspiration which strips all carnal attributes from the soul is compared to the butcher's practice of moistening with his breath the skin of a slaughtered sheep while flaying it." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson also referred to Mathnawi VI: 1551 and to a couple of verses from Rumi's Divan [= Ghazal 765, lines 8002-03]).

"It means, 'I increase his being with the savor of eternal life and the Holy Spirit, so that his subtle and fine inward part may leave (his outward) skin.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (4682) We have opened the door of Our Union: here, God is speaking with the "royal plural" of Divine Majesty, as God sometimes speaks in the Qur'an. The word "union" [waSl] often occurs in sufi poetry means nearness [qurb] to God. "Although this noble verse and the fine verses preceding it are from the tongue of the King of Bukhara, yet they are (expressions) of pure words from Holy Reality [HaZrat-é Haqîqat] in the moment of union with the lover afflicted by his separation." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (4683) O you (whose) drunkenness and loss of self (is caused by) Our Self: means spiritual ecstasy, mystical annihilation of self [bê-khwadî], as well as the state of unconsciousness in the story which resulted when the ambassador fainted. "(It means), 'Every time that We become near to you, you become the drunken lover of Us, (and) you make your superficial existence to be annihilated.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (4684) the ancient secrets [râz-hây-é kohna]: "God Most High says to His lover, 'Now I will tell you, without (need of) lips and mouth, the eternal secrets....' (meaning) inspirations of knowledge from the Divine Presence" [`alûm-é ladunî-- a reference to Qur'an 18:65]. (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (4685) Since those lips (of yours) are fleeing in terror from this Breath (of Mine): Nicholson translated, "(I tell thee silently) because those (bodily) lips are fleeing from

(are unable to apprehend) this Breath (Word)..." "'Since those bodily lips are fleeing from this Breath of Mercy,' meaning, 'they have no ability to show understanding of the secrets and truths of the Breath of Mercy.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (4685) It is (instead) breathed [invisibly] on the lip of a hidden "river": the "lip" of a river is an idiom meaning "river bank." "The secrets of this Breath... meaning the knowledge of mysteries of the Divine Blowing and the Breath of Mercy. And the human spirit is really like a river. And the heart and intellect, connected with the river of spirit, are compared to the banks and sides (of the river)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (4686) open the earless ear: "It means, 'Abandon the outward ear (and) open the ear of understanding... meaning for the sake of understanding the secrets of the Holy Absolute (Divine) Will.' .... However, most of human understanding cannot understand this meaning also." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (4686) 'God acts as He wills': Qur'an 3: 40, modified for metric purposes.

15. (4688) dresses in green (and) raises up (its) head after extinction: the word translated as "extinction" [fanâ] here is also a technical term in sufism. Therefore, this description of plants blooming in the desert after extinction also symbolizes the mystic's being revived, following annihilation of self, to a flourishing state of "enduring" [baqâ] in lasting consciousness of God.

16. (4689) he is not less than sperm fluid which, due to (the Divine) speech: "(It means), in hearing the Speech of God, meaning the sperm from hearing the Speech of (the Divine Command)'Be!' gives birth to (beautiful) Josephs..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (4689) (beautiful) Josephs: the Prophet Joseph was said to be so handsome, that he was compared to an angel (Qur'an 12:31).

18. (4690) a wind: refers to the semen of birds. "The semen of birds was believed to consist of air." (Nicholson, Footnote) "This biological theory may be derived from Aristotle's story of the vulture impregnated by the wind." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (4690) the Divine word) "Be!: a term which occurs in a number of verses in the Qur'an, such as, "And when He decrees a thing to be, he says to it, 'Be!', and it is." (2:117)

20. (4691) a female camel: "The prophet Sálih, who was sent [= by God] to the people of Thamúd, miraculously caused a she-camel big with young to come forth from a rock." (Nicholson, Footnote) This is a legendary story based on Qur'an 11:63-65. "The Thamûd people wanted a miracle from Hazrat-i Sâlih and they said, 'O Sâlih, if you are truly a prophet, make a camel emerge from this rock for us.' And a single camel emerged from the rock, (and in) that very moment it gave birth to another she-camel." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (4692) Didn't the fundamental source of non-existence give birth to a (whole) world: Nicholson translated, "the substance of non-existence." It refers to the invisible realm of non-existence [`adam] from which all existent things emerge. "(It means), 'Is it not more unusual than these unusual things, and more wonderful than these wonders [= mentioned in the previous verses], that such a very great world was generated from the fundamental source of non-existence, and is now (continuously) being generated moment by moment?'"

22. (4693) he fell down in obeisance (before the king): refers to a prostration [sujûd] of obeisance expressing deferential respect toward a king. It is different in intention and form than a prostration of worship toward God. "It means a prostration of gratitude [sajda-yé shukr] and a formal gesture done from (an attitude of) obeisance and obedience." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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nawâkhtan-é ma`shûq `âshiq-é bê-hôsh-râ tâ ba-hôsh bâzây-ad

4664 mê-kashîd az bê-hôshiy-ash dar bayân
andak-andak az karam Sadr-é jahân

4665 bâng zad dar gôsh-é ô shah k-ây gadâ
zar-niSâr âward-am-at, dâman goshâ

jân-é tô k-andar firâq-am mê-Tapîd
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chun-ke zenhâr-ash rasîd-am, chûn ramîd?

4667 ay ba-dîda dar firâq-am garm-o sard
bâ khwad â az bê-khwadî-wo bâz gard

. . . . . .

4677 dast-é ô be-g'reft k-în rafta dam-ash
ân-gahê ây-ad ke man dam bakhsh-am-ash

chûn ba-man zenda shaw-ad în morda-tan
jân-é man bâsh-ad ke rô âr-ad ba-man

man kon-am ô-râ az-în jân muHtasham
jân ke man bakhsh-am, be-bîn-ad bakhshesh-am

4680 jân-é nâ-maHram na-bîn-ad rôy-é dôst
joz ham-ân jân k-aSl-é ô az kôy-é ô-st

dar dam-am qaSSâb-wâr în dôst-râ
tâ hel-ad ân maghz-é naghz-ash pôst-râ

goft ay jân-é ramîda az balâ
waSl-é mâ-râ dar goshâd-ém, aS-Salâ

ay khwad-é mâ bê-khwadî-wo mastiy-at
ay ze-hast-é mâ hamâra hastiy-at

bâ tô bê-lab în zaman man naw ba-naw
râz-hây-é kohna gôy-am, mê-shenaw

4685 z-ân-ke ân lab-hâ az-în dam mê-ram-ad
bar lab-é jôy-é nehân bar mê-dam-ad

gôsh-ê bê-gôshî dar-în dam bar goshâ
bahr-é râz-é yaf`alu 'llâh mâ yashâ

chûn Salây-é waSl be-sh'nîdan gereft
andak-andak morda jonbîdan gereft

na kam az khâk-ast k-az `ishwa-yé Sabâ
sabz pôsh-ad, sar bar âr-ad az fanâ

kam ze-âb-ê nuTfa na-b'w-ad k-az khiTâb
yûsuf-ân zây-and rokh chûn âftâb

4690 kam ze-bâdê nêst shod az amr-é kon
dar raHim Tâwûs-o morgh-é khwash-sokhon

kam ze-kôh-é sang na-b'w-ad k-az wilâd
nâqa'yê k-ân nâqa nâqa-zâd zâd

z-în hama be-g'Zar, na ân mâya-yé `adam
`âlamê zâd-o be-zây-ad dam ba-dam

4693 bar jahîd-o bar Tapîd-o shâd-shâd
yak dô charkhê zad, sujûd andar fotâd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prime Minister of the King of Bukhara (part ten)

Mathnawi III: 4694-4702, 4708-4728

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The unconscious lover's coming to himself and turning (his) face in praise and gratitude toward the beloved

4694 (The prime minister said to the king), "O Phoenix Bird[1] of God (and) place for the soul to circle[2] (in flight)! (I am) grateful that you have come (down) from the (lofty) Qaf mountain[3] (to meet me).

4695 "O Angel of the Love's resurrection place[4] (for lovers)! O you (who are) the Love (and basis) of love! O love's heart's desire!

"I hope that the first honor[5] you will grant me (is) to place (your) ear near to my window.[6]

"Even though you (already) know my (inward) state by means of (your) purity,[7] O nourisher of (your) slave, listen to my words!

"O incomparable king! My mind has flown (away)[8] a hundred thousand times because of desire for (getting close to) your ear--

"(To) your hearing, listening, and those life-increasing smiles of yours.

4700 "(And your being able) to hear (about) my greater and lesser (concerns), (as well as) the allurements of my evil-minded soul.

"You accepted my counterfeit coins,[9] (the nature of) which was well-known to you, as if (they were) true coins--

4702 "For the sake of one (who was) rudely over-familiar and thoughtlessly bold. In your presence of your tolerant mercy, (all) gentle clemencies are (but) a speck of dust.

. . . . . .

4708 "My words are (like) the thunder, and this noise and yearning cry is desiring from the cloud that it should rain upon the earth.[10]

"I'm entangled[11] between speaking and weeping-- whether I should cry or speak. What should I do?

4710 "(For) if I say (anything), the weeping will become lost. But If I don't speak, how can I express thanks and praise?

"O king, the blood of (my) heart is falling from (my) eyes.[12] Do you see what has fallen from my eyes?"[13]

The thin and weakly man spoke these (words) and began weeping (so much) that both commoners and nobles wept for him.

So many shouts of joy rose up from his heart (that) the people of Bukhara made a circle around him.

He spoke, wept, and laughed so confusedly[14] (that) men and women, small and great (in rank), were amazed.

4715 The (entire) city also were shedding tears together with him. The men and women were mixed together as (if it were) the Resurrection.

The sky was saying to the earth (at) that moment, "If you haven't seen the Resurrection, look (now)!"

The intellect (was) astonished, saying, "What love is this, and what ecstasy?" So (it might be clear) whether separation from Him [15] (is) more amazing or union.[16]

The heavens read the letter (giving announcement) of the Resurrection[17] (and) tore (its) robe[18] (all the way) to the Milky Way.

There is alienation between Love and the two worlds (of this life and the next).[19] (For) there are seventy-two crazinesses within (Love).[20]

4720 It is very hidden, but its bewilderment is evident.[21] The souls of the spiritual kings[22] are sighing in desire for it.

Its religion[23] is different than the seventy-two sects.[24] In its presence, the thrones of kings are (nothing more than) splints (for broken bones).[25]

The musician of Love plays this (melody at) the time of the mystical concert:[26] "Being a servant (is) a shackle and being a master (is) a headache."[27]

Then what is love?[28] (It is) an ocean of non-existence.[29] (And) there, the feet of the intellect are broken.[30]

Servanthood and dominion are (well) known. (But) loverhood is hidden by these two veils.[30]

4725 If only existence had a tongue (to speak),[31] so that it might take off the veils from the existent ones (of this world)!

O breath of (worldly) existence! Whatever words you may say about it,[32] know that you have (only) bound another veil upon it.

Those words and feelings (derived from worldly existence)[33] are (adding) a difficulty in (gaining spiritual) understanding. (For) washing (away) blood with blood is impossible and absurd.[34]

4728 (But) since I am close friends with His passion-crazed (lovers), I continue to sigh forth (the secrets of Love) within the (bodily) cage.[35]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4694) Phoenix Bird [`anqâ]: an epithet referring to the king. It means a legendary bird (also called "sîmorgh") with magical abilities, associated with conferring good-fortune as well as kingship and said to live on Mt. Qâf-- a mountain imagined as surrounding the world. For sufis who wrote in Persian, this fabulous bird symbolized the transcendent wisdom of spiritual love. "The `Anqá, which is said to exist only in name (mawjúdu 'l-ism ma`dúmu 'l-jism), represents here the Perfect Man [== a term used in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240] whose spirit dwells with God, though his body is in the world." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (4694) place for the soul to circle [maTâf]: refers to the circling flight of birds of prey-- here around Mt. Qâf. Insofar as the king of Bukhara also symbolizes God, it refers to a place for circumambulating worship [Tawâf] such as around the Ka`ba in Mecca.

3. (4694) that you have come (down) from the (lofty) Qaf mountain: an expression of humility, referring to the king's lofty rank as well as his throne. "His showing favor to the Wakíl [== the prime minister] is described as 'his return from Mt Qáf', i.e. from his manifestation of the Divine Majesty and Transcendence." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (4695) Angel of the Love's resurrection place: literally, "(the angel) Israfîl's resurrection place for Love." "In Islamic belief, it will be the angel Israfîl (Seraphiel) "whose trumpet-blast at the Resurrection will give the signal for the spirits of the dead to rejoin their bodies." (Nicholson, Commentary) Here, this image is used to mean the beloved who resurrects the "dead" (meaning miserably separated and exiled) lovers.

5. (4696) honor: literally, "robe (of honor)," referring to the custom in which kings would publicly bestow robes of honor on subjects they chose to reward.

6. (4696) that you will place (your) ear near to my window: "i.e. 'my mouth', according to the commentators; but cf. the proverb, 'there is a window from heart to heart.'" (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means, 'that you may place (your) ear at the window of my mouth and may listen to my words full of burning (love).'"

7. (4697) by means of (your) purity: "(It means), 'with the sincerity and purity of your heart.'" (Anqaravi, [17th century Turkish, translated here into English from a Persian translation] Commentary)

8. (4698) My mind has flown (away): Nicholson translated, "did my wits fly away..."

9. (4700) You accepted my counterfeit coins: "(It means) 'my counterfeit and deceitful actions.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (4708) this noise and yearning cry is desiring from the cloud that it should rain upon the earth: "I.e. 'the sound of my words incites me to shed tears'." (Nicholson, Commentary) "his eyes are compared to a cloud and the tears of his eyes to raining..." (Anqaravi, Commentary

11. (4709) I'm entangled: "literally, 'I am weaving', i.e. moving to and fro like a [= weaving] shuttle." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (4710) the blood of (my) heart is falling from (my) eyes: "tears of blood" flowing from the eyes is an idiom meaning grievous suffering.

13. (4710) Do you see what has fallen from my eyes?: means, "Do you see how much I am suffering?" Nicholson translated, "see what has befallen me from mine eye!"

14. (4714) He spoke, wept, and laughed so confusedly: Nicholson translated, "(He was) speaking crazily, weeping crazily, laughing crazily..."

15. (4717) separation from Him: the word translated here as "Him" (meaning God), may also refer to the king of Bukhara-- to the lover's separation from him and then his union, or reconciliation with him.

16. (4717) more amazing or union: Nicholson translated the whole line as the speech of the intellect: "the intellect (was) bewildered, saying, 'What is love and what is ecstasy? (I know not) whether separation from Him or union with Him is the more marvellous.'" But it also appears to be what the people were thinking. Nicholson explained about this amazement: "because weeping and sobbing are normally signs of grief, not of ecstatic joy." (Commentary)

"It means: 'This lover, who was weeping and wailing in (a state of) separation, is also weeping and wailing in the same manner in (a state of) union? How can the state of separation be similar to (that of) union?'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Anqaravi asserted that the difference between the two states is that the tears are hot during separation, and cold during the time of union.

17. (4718) The heavens read the letter (giving announcement) of the Resurrection: Nicholson interprets this as a "spiritual resurrection": "the poet is describing the mystical resurrection and ascension of the spirit..." (Commentary)

18. (4718) (and) tore (its) robe: Nicholson translated, "(and was so distraught that) it rent its garment..." Refers to an ancient middle eastern custom of tearing one's garments when in an extreme state of emotion (grief or joy). The image of the heavens being torn also refers to the Day of Judgment, "The Day that We roll up the heavens like (the way) a (written) scroll (is rolled up)..." (Qur'an 21:104)

19. (4719) There is alienation between Love and the two worlds (of this life and the next): Nicholson translated more literally: "Love hath estrangement with (is a stranger to) the two worlds..." This is another way of expressing the sufi teaching that love of God is more essential than desire for Paradise and dread of Hell. This was expressed by Rabi`a al-Adawiyya (died between 752-801; as translated by A. J. Arberry): "O God, if I worship Thee for fear of Hell, burn me in Hell, and if I worship Thee in hope of Paradise, exclude me from Paradise; but if I worship Thee for Thy own sake, grudge me not Thy everlasting beauty."

"This is the sense of the saying [Hadîth]: 'And the two worlds are forbidden to the (true) lovers among the people of God' [wa humâ Harâm-an `alà ahli 'llâh] [== more probably, a saying of the sufis]. And the lovers are alienated with the two worlds, as well as from the people of the two worlds-- and they are also distant and exiled even from the schools and sects [maZhab wa mashrab-ân] (of Islamic law)." (Anqaravi, Commentary) [Note: Anqaravi is not saying that these true lovers of God do not follow the essential requirements of Islam (the five daily prayers, fasting the month of Ramadan, etc.). Rather, that such sufis feel little in common with other Muslims who are not mystics, and are misunderstood by them as well.]

20. (4719) (For) there are seventy-two crazinesses within (Love): "It means, 'They have various states and different unusual and strange behaviors regarding which the people of the two worlds [== this world and the next world] lack the ability to understand and comprehend. Therefore, the lover's relationship with the people of the world is (as someone) crazy and foreign.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (4720) It is very hidden, but its bewilderment is evident: means that (Divine) Love is invisible, but is evident by the states and behavior of the lovers of God, whose minds have become overwhelmed by bewilderment, astonishment, and confused amazement [Hayrat]. "But its bewilderment and some of its states are evident." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (4720) the spiritual kings: means the sufi teachers and dervishes who are "masters of the path." Anqaravi interpreted it as meaning the prophets and saints. (Commentary)

23. (4721) Its religion: Rumi taught that the "religion of Love" is distinct, separate, and apart from all religions-- especially in his famous line: "The sect of Love (of God) is distinct from all religions; the sect and doctrine of the lovers is God (alone.)" [Mathnawi II: 1770] He emphasized that pure love of God is what is essential in religion, and that it is distinct from the external practices of all religions. In teaching this, he did not affirm the validity of other religions, but rather affirmed that the true lovers of God everywhere are of one "sect" or "religion"-- having pure love of God as their primary religious devotion.

24. (4721) different than the seventy-two sects: refers to the number of sects which the Prophet Muhammad prophesied would eventually divide Islam. Only one sect (out of a total seventy-three) would be the most correct, true, and faithful. "The holy Prophet-- peace be upon him, and his companions and the seekers in his Way were also followers of this same sect of Love. And the holy masters of the seekers in the [sufi] path [Tarîq] of (spiritual) experience and love have (also) been (followers of this true sect of Islam). Returning to the (point): the path of the holy Prophet-- blessings and peace be upon him, was the path of love. This noble verse of our holy master [HaZrat-i mawlà-nâ [= Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi]-- may God sanctify his revered tomb, gives testimony (of this)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (4721) splints (for a broken bones) [takhta]: this word was chosen as a word-play on "throne" [takht] in the same line. "It means it is lowly and insignificant." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (4722) the mystical concert [samâ`]: Ecstatic listening, chanting, singing, moving, and eventually dancing or whirling to spiritual music and/or poetry. In this line, Rumi reveals that such gatherings often began with the chanting of a verse of mystical poetry.

27. (4722) "Being a servant (is) a shackle and being a master (is) a headache: "The lover is someone who, at his most essential, has attained to complete poverty and annihilation (of self). Therefore, in accordance with (the saying), 'The dervish neither dominates nor is dominated' [al-faqîr lâ yamlik lâ yumlak], the lover is neither a slave nor a master [== in regard to this world]. But the rank of the lover is greater and higher than these two shackles." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (4723) Then what is love: from the earliest times, sufi masters were asked basic questions such as this, about spiritual reality. And their answers, especially ones which arose spontaneously from the depth of their mystical experience and wisdom, were greatly valued.

29. (4723) an ocean of non-existence: the word "ocean" means that love is infinite. Its source in "non-existence" [`adam] means that it is a reality which originates in the Divine realm which is invisible to the world of material existence. The mystic who "tastes" this reality through experiences of annihilation [fanâ] of one's separate ego-identity, may know love directly.

30. (4723) the feet of the intellect are broken: "i.e. the intellect is unable to swim in that Sea." (Nicholson, Footnote) "The feet of the intellect are broken at the first level. In other words, the intellect and the thinking person... since they lack the capacity (for understanding) the ocean of Love, the feet of their understanding and perception became broken, And (so) they remain deprived of being (truly) acquainted with Love." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (4724) loverhood is hidden by these two veils: here, Rumi gives some explanation of the song about love mentioned in verse 4722. "To our minds, which can think only in terms

of logical correlation, the unitive state of the mystic is incomprehensible." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson also wrote (per the earlier line, III: 4452-54): The beloved one's love manifests itself in the form of lordship (rubúbiyyah), the lover's love in the form of servitude (`ubúdiyyah). When reason, always seeing double, asks in bewilderment how it is possible for opposite attributes such as 'lord" (rabb) and 'slave' (`abd) to become one, the question is answered by mystical experience. What attracts 'lover' to 'beloved' and vice versâ, and harmonises and unites them, is nothing that exists in the phenomenal world, but the 'non-existent' Essence and Reality which mystics know by the name of Love."

"At the moment the lover annihilates his own existence in the existence of the beloved, he becomes free from these two shackles, just as he finds deliverance from other bonds." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

31. (4725) If only existence had a tongue (to speak): Nicholson translated, "Would that Being had a tongue..." However, he later disagreed with this interpretation: "I have followed Fa [= Anqaravi] in supposing that hastí [= existence] signifies Real Being. There cannot be much doubt, however, that the word refers to phenomenal being, as it does in the next verse, and that a vain wish is expressed merely for the purpose of demonstrating its futility." (Commentary)

"(It means), 'If only Absolute Existence and the Being of (Divine) Reality [Haqq] had a tongue...' In other words, if the Reality of Being were to speak the Truth with the tongue of Truth, at that moment the veils would be lifted from (phenomenal) existences, which are under the control of "what is other" (than God). (Then the truth of the verse), 'Everything (that exists) will perish except His Face' [Qur'an 28:88] would become (revealed)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

32. (4726) Whatever words you may say about it: means about the secrets of Love. "It means, 'Revealing the secrets of Reality by means of external speech is the same thing as increasing the veils.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

33. (4727) Those words and feelings (derived from worldly existence): Nicholson translated, "That utterance and (that) state (of existence)..." And he explained: "I do not think hál [= state, feelings] in this context bears the mystical

sense [= ecstasy] in which it is generally contrasted with qál [= utterance, words]..." (Commentary)

34. (4727) (For) washing (away) blood with blood is impossible and absurd: "The defilements of his existence cannot become purified, except (by washing) with the water of Love..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35. (4728) I continue to sigh forth (the secrets of Love) within the (bodily) cage: "This noble verse is from the tongue of the revered master [HaZrat-é khodâwandagâr = the words of Mawlànâ Jalalaluddin Rumi, speaking about himself]. He says, 'I, who am the confidant of the secrets of the crazed lovers of the Divine Presence, and (who am) intimate friends with His true yearning lovers, am speaking, like a drunkard, real secrets day and night. So that, by way of talking about these (spiritual) meanings, I may sigh forth and reveal the secrets of Reality for the sake of the intimate ones [maHram-ân] (of God).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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bâ-khwêsh-âmadan-é `âshiq-é bê-hôsh wa rôy-âwardan ba-Sanâ wa shukr-é ma`shûq

4694 goft ay `anqây-é Haq jân-râ maTâf
shukr ke bâz âmad-î z-ân kûh-é qâf

4695 ay sarâfîl-é qiyâmat-gâh-é `ishq
ay tô `ishq-é `ishq-o, ay del-khwâh-é `ishq

awwalîn khil`at ke khwâh-î dâdan-am
gôsh khwâh-am ke neh-î bar rôzan-am

gar che mê-dân-î ba-Safwat Hâl-é man
banda-parwar, gôsh kon aqwâl-é man

Sad hazâr-ân bâr ay Sadr-é farîd
z-ârzûy-é gôsh-é tô hôsh-am parîd

ân samî`î-yé tô-w-ân iSghây-é tô
w-ân tabassum-hây-é jân-afzây-é tô

4700 ân ba-nôshîdan kam-o bêsh-é ma-râ
`ishwa-yé jân-é bad-andêsh-é ma-râ

qalb-hây-é man ke ân ma`lûm-é to-st
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bas paZîraft-î tô chûn naqd-é dorost

4702 bahr-é gostâkhîy-é shôkh-é gharra'yê
Hilm-hâ dar pêsh-é Hilm-at Zarra'yê

. . . . . .

4708 goft-é man ra`d-ast-o în bâng-o Hanîn
z-âbr khwâh-ad tâ be-bâr-ad bar zamîn

man meyân-é goft-o gerya mê-tan-am
yâ be-gery-am yâ be-gôy-am, chûn kon-am?

4710 gar be-gôy-am, fawt mê-gard-ad bukâ
w-ar na-gôy-am, chûn kon-am shukr-o Sanâ?

mê-fotad az dîda khûn-é del shah-â
bîn che oftâd-ast az dîda ma-râ?

în be-goft-o gerya dar shod ân naHîf
ke bar-ô be-g'rîst ham dûn ham sharîf

az del-ash chand-ân bar âmad hây-é hôy
Halqa kard ahl-é bukhârâ gerd-é ôy

khêra gôyân, khêra geryân, khêra khand
mard-o zan khord-o kalân Hayrân shod-and

4715 shahr ham ham-rang-é ô shod ashk-rêz
mard-o zan dar ham shoda chûn rast-khêz

âsmân mê-goft ân dam bâ zamîn
gar qiyâmat-râ na-dîd-ast-î, be-bîn

`aql Hayrân ke che `ishq-ast-o che Hâl
tâ firâq-é ô `ajab-tar yâ wiSâl?

charkh bar khwânda qiyâmat-nâma-râ
tâ majarra bar darîda jâma-râ

bâ dô `âlam `ishq-râ bêgânagî
andar-ô haftâd-o dô dêwânagî

4720 sakht penhân-ast-o paydâ Hayrat-ash
jân-é sulTân-ân-é jân dar Hasrat-ash

ghayr-é haftâd-o dô millat kêsh-é ô
takht-é shâh-ân takhta-bandê pêsh-é ô

muTrib-é `ishq în zan-ad waqt-é samâ`
bandagî band-o khodâwandî Sudâ`

pas che bâsh-ad `ishq? daryây-é `adam
dar shekasta `aql-râ ân-jâ qadam

bandagî-wo sulTanat ma`lûm shod
z-în dô parda `âshiqî maktûm shod

4725 kâshkî hastî zabânê dâshty
tâ ze-hast-ân parda-hâ bar dâshty

har-che gôy-î ay dam-é hastî az ân
parda-yé dêgar bar-ô bast-î ba-d-ân

âfat-é idrâk-é ân qâl-ast-o Hâl
khûn ba-khûn shostan muHâl-ast-o muHâl

4728 man chô bâ sawdây-yân-ash maHram-am
rôz-o shab andar qafaS dar mê-dam-am

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Visions of Daqooqi the Dervish

Mathnawi III: 1973-1975, 1982-1988, 1991-1995, 2001-2003, 2046-2055, 2064-2076, 2084-2085

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1973 That [dervish] Daqooqi, (may) the Mercy of God (be) upon
him, said, "I traveled for a time between His two horizons.[1]

"I walked (for) months and years, because of love for the Moon,[2]
unaware of the way, (and) bewildered in (the presence of) God."

1975 (Asked,) "Why are you walking barefoot over thorns and
stones?", he answered, "I am bewildered, ecstatic,[3] and amazed!"

. . . . . .

1982 He said, "One day I was going (along) like a longing (lover),
so that I might see the splendors of the Beloved[4] [reflected] in

man,

"So that I might see an ocean[5] in a drop, (and) a sun folded up in a mote (of dust).

"When I arrived by foot to the side of a shore, the day had become late[6] and (it was) the sun's time (to set).

1985 "Suddenly, I saw seven candles[7] from a distance, (and) I hurried toward them along the shore.

"The light from the flames of each candle went up beautifully to the clouds in the sky.

"I became astounded. Even (my) amazement became astonished, (and) the waves of bewilderment passed over the head of (my) intellect.

1988 "(I wondered,) 'What kind of candles (are) these (that) He has lit, from which both eyes of the people are sewn (shut and unseeing)?'

. . . . . .

1991 "Again, I saw that the seven were becoming one (and that) its light was ripping the robe[8] of the sky.

"(And) then that one (candle) became seven once again.[9] My drunkenness and amazement reached fullness.

"(There was) a connectedness between the candles, (about) which (the explanation) could not come to (my) tongue and speech.[10]

"(Because) the comprehension made by one (act) of seeing cannot be shown by the tongue (during many) years

1995 "(And) that which the comprehension of awareness sees in one moment cannot be heard by the ears (during many) years.

. . . . . .

2001 "The seven candles became seven men in appearance, (and) their light was going (up) to the blue roof (of the sky).

"In the presence of that radiance, the light of day (was like the murky) dregs (of wine);[11] due to (its) power, it was erasing (all other) lights.

2003 "Again, each man took on the shape of a tree, (and) my eyes (were) blessed (with good fortune) because of their greenness."[12]

. . . . . .

2046 He said, "I urged myself, good-fortuned (one), farther ahead (and) again the seven became entirely one tree.

"Every moment it was becoming seven (then) single,[13] (and) what I was becoming like due to (this) continuing bewilderment [cannot be described].

"After that, I saw the trees (standing) for the ritual prayer, drawn up in rows, prepared (just) like a congregation (of Muslims).[14]

"One tree (stood) in front, like the (prayer) leader, (while) the others (were) behind in the standing (position).

2050 "That standing, bowing, and prostrating of the trees[15] seemed amazing to me.

"(But at) that moment, I remembered the words of God, (who) said about the stars and trees, 'They both prostrate.'[16]

"The trees didn't have knees or waists, (so how was) this arrangement of the ritual prayer (done) like that?

"(Then) the inspiration of God came, saying, 'O illumined one, do you still have amazement about My actions?'

"After a time, those (trees) became seven men (again). (All were) sitting [after the prayer] for the sake of God, the Unique.

2055 "I kept rubbing my eyes, saying (to myself), 'Who are those seven lions, and what (need) do they have of the world?'

. . . . . .

2064 "After that they said, 'We have the desire to follow you[17] [in another ritual prayer], O holy friend.'

2065 "I said, 'Yes-- but (in) a while, (because) I have some difficulties[18] about the cycle of time,

"[And wish to wait] so that they may become solved by holy companionship. For a grape grows from the ground by companionship.

"A seed full of kernels shared solitude and companionship[19] with the dark soil by the grace [of God].

"It completely obliterated itself[20] in the earth until no shape or scent or (color) of red or yellow remained.[21]

"After that obliteration, its constriction[22] did not remain. It became expanded[23] and opened (its) wings, [and happily] urged (its) mount (forward).

2070 "Since it became devoid of self in the presence of its source, (its outward) form left (and) its (inner) reality became revealed.

"(The saints) motioned (their) heads[24] in such a way, (meaning) 'Go ahead! The command is yours.' (And) from head movements such as these, a flame in (my) heart rose up.

"When I had become attentive[25] (to the presence of God) and separated from myself[26] (after) an hour with that chosen group,

"In that same hour, (my) soul escaped from (all) hours. Because hours cause young to change (into) old."

All colors[27] arise from (the passing of) hours; the one (who escapes from hours (is) freed from (the changes of) color.

2075 (For) when you go beyond hours for an hour, likenesses do not remain (and) you become the confidant of (what is) beyond comparison.[28]

2076 The hours are not aware of (the state of) being beyond time;[29] because of that, there is no way (to) that direction for him except (through) bewilderment.

. . . . . .

2084 This speech has no end. Move quickly! Hurry, (since the time for) the ritual prayer has arrived. Go forward, Daqooqi!

2085 O incomparable one, perform the two[30] (sections of the prayer), so that Time may become decorated[31] because of you!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1973) His two horizons: between East and West. Means the known world, created and ruled by God. "(He is) Lord of the two places of sunrise and Lord of the two places of sunset." (Qur'an 55:17). Nicholson says about the "two horizons": "i.e. the spiritual and material worlds." (Commentary)

2. (1974) love for the Moon: means he only thought of reaching the presence of the beautiful beloved, like a crazy man who keeps walking in order to get closer to the moon and is oblivious of anything else.

3. (1975) ecstatic: this word literally means "without self," and is an idiom for being raptured, ecstatic, beyond one self, devoid of self, out of one's senses, crazed.

4. (1982) splendors of the Beloved: means God (and may also be translated as "splendors of the Friend"). Means the shining rays of the Attributes of God.

5. (1983) an ocean: "i.e. the Perfect Man, who is the form of Universal Reason." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (1984) the day had become late: "'Evening' may refer to the occultation [= blocking from perception] of the physical senses." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1985) seven candles: "The Seven Candles in Daqúqí's vision are interpreted as signifying (a) the seven Abdál [= high-ranking saints in the sufi hierarchy], who preside over the seven climes, and each one of whom is the spiritual representative of a prophet; (b) the seven principle Divine Names.... The symbolism used throughout this revelation of Reality is far from clear, but certain details so that the 'Seven Candles' typify an exalted class of the 'Men of the Unseen' (rijálu 'l-ghayb)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (1991) ripping the robe: means tearing the robe from the front collar downward, exposing the chest, and here is an image of the sky tearing the front of its robe in ecstasy. Refers to the ancient custom of tearing one's garments during states of overwhelming grief or joy. Dervishes used to tear the fronts of their shirts or their cloaks during ecstatic dancing (samâ`), but this did not involve public nudity (forbidden in Islam).

9. (1992) became seven once again: "The vision of the Candles, first as seven then as one, then again as seven, reveals the truth that all

prophets and saints are identical in reality, and only differ externally in so far as they are individualisations (ta'ayyunát) of the One Essence. Similarly, the Divine Names and Attributes, notwithstanding their appearance of diversity, are essentially one". (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (1993) tongue and speech: "Speech cannot express, nor hearing (i.e., oral teaching) instill, the esoteric knowledge that is gained by immediate perception." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (2002) dregs (of wine): refers to the dark sediment left over after most of the wine has been drunk from a cup.

12. (2003) greenness: the color green symbolizes blessing and good-fortune in Islamic cultures, probably because the Islamic revelation occurred in the deserts of Arabia.

13. (2047) seven (then) single: "Daqúqí describes a unitive state in which the mystic contemplates the unity of the One and the Many. See... the rubá'í [= quatrain] cited by WM [= Walí Muhammad, "Sharh-i Mathnawí," Lucknow, India, 1894]: a'yán-i hamah áyinah, Haq jalwah-gar-ast,/ yá núr-i Haq áyinah u a'yán suwar-ast./ dar chashm-i muhaqqiq kih hadídu 'l-basar-ast/ har yak zi-du ín áyinah án-i digar-ast. 'All phenomena are the mirror wherein God is displayed;/ Or the Light of God is the mirror, and phenomena the images (reflected in it)./ In the eyes of the true adept who is keen-sighted/ Each of these two mirrors is the mirror of the other.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (2048) a congregation (of Muslims): "Since the trees represent Divine Names and Attributes, they are individualisations (ta'ayyunát) of the Divine Essence, and as such may be said to worship God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (2050) prostrating of the trees: in the Islamic ritual prayer, each section consists of standing, bowing from the waist (with hands on the knees), prostrating the head and nose to the floor or ground, and sitting.

16. (2051) prostrate: refers to a passage from the Qur'an (5:3-6), "He created man, and He taught him speech and understanding. (At His command), the sun and moon follow (exactly) reckoned courses, and the stars and the trees both prostrate (before Him)." This means that the "setting" of the stars and the "bowing" of trees (as when palm trees are curved to the ground during a powerful storm) are examples of how all of creation worships God.

17. (2064) to follow you: means that the exalted saints wanted

Daqooqi to stand in front of them and lead them in another ritual prayer.

18. (2065) some difficulties: "Before complying with the request of the Abdál, Daqúqí begs them to let him associate with them for a while, so that he may attain to their spiritual freedom and become worthy to lead them in prayer." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (2067) companionship [suHbat]: a technical term in sufism, referring to the transmission of spiritual grace from the holy companionship and conversations of the spiritual guide.

20. (2068) completely obliterated itself: "The analogy of the seed suggests the passing-away (faná) of the muríd's [= the disciple's] self-existence in the universal nature of the murshid" [= the spiritual guide]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (2068) remained: Nicholson followed a variant for this verse and translated: "...so that no colour or scent or red or yellow (hue) remained to it."

22. (2069) constriction [qabZ]: a technical sufi term, meaning a spiritual state of deprivation, emptiness, and separation from harmony and joy.

23. (2069) expanded: [basT]: a technical sufi term, meaning a state of spiritual fullness, joy, and sometimes ecstasy.

24. (2071) motioned (with their) heads: Nicholson translated, "They nodded so (as thought saying," and explained, "i.e. 'they signified by nodding their heads.'" (Commentary)

25. (2072) attentive (to the presence of God): this word [murâqib] is related to "murâqabah," which is a technical sufi term referring to the spiritual practice of watchfulness and guarding against thoughts other than about God, and returning to attention to the Divine presence. Nicholson translated, "had taken part... in contemplation," and explained, "'Meditation' is a more exact rendering of muráqabah than 'contemplation.'" (Commentary)

26. (2072) separated from myself: means a state of ecstasy, following the passing away or annihilation [fanâ] of self.

27. (2074) all colors: Nicholson translated, "All changes." Means the varieties of all things in the material world, which change over time, such as the colors of leaves from the time they are new and green to when they die and become yellow and brown.

28. (2075) (what is) beyond comparison: may also be translated, "the confidant of the Incomparable"-- meaning God.

29. (2076) being beyond time: Nicholson translated "hourlessness (timelessness)," and commented: "I.e. those who are convinced of the reality of time and are subject to its limitations cannot realise a mystical experience in which all sense of time is lost. WM [= the commentary by Walí Muhammad, mentioned in an earlier note above] takes the meaning of the second hemistich to be that their attempt to apprehend 'timelessness' leads to nothing but perplexity (tahayyur) and ignorance; tahayyur, however, probably denotes here mystical 'bewilderment' as opposed to normal consciousness." (Commentary)

30. (2085) perform the two: means two sections of the ritual prayer. "According to the commentators, this refers to the morning prayer: it is called 'twofold' because it consists of two fard (obligatory) and two sunnah (customary) rak'ahs. But the poet may have in mind-- what seems more appropriate here-- the salât of two rak'ahs [= the prayer of two sections] authorised for the benefit of travellers." (Nicholson, Commentary)

31. (2085) that Time may become decorated: means by being adorned with the spiritual state of being beyond time brought by Daqooqi to the ritual prayer--- a state of profound mystical consciousness while in the deepest submission before the presence of God during the ritual prayer. The story of the visions of Daqooqi continue for quite a few pages after this section.

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1973 ân daqûqî, raHmatu 'llâhi `alayh
goft sâfartu mad-an fî khâfiqayh

sâl-o mah raft-am safar az `ishq-é mâh
bê-khabar az râh, Hayrân dar alâh

1975 pâ-barahna mê-rawî bar khâr-o sang
goft man Hayrân-am-o bê-khwesh-o dang

. . . . . .

1982 goft rôzê mê-shod-am mushtâq-wâr
tâ be-bîn-am dar bashar anwâr-é yâr

tâ be-bîn-am qulzumê dar qaTra'yê
âftâbê darj andar Zarra'yê
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chûn rasîd-am sôy-é yak sâHil ba-gâm
bûd bêgah gashta rôz-o waqt-é shâm

1985 haft sham` az dûr dîd-am nâ-gahân
andar ân sâHil, shetâbîd-am ba-d-ân

nûr-é shu`la-yé har yakê sham`ê az ân
bar shoda khôsh tâ `anân-é âsmân

khêra gasht-am, khêragî ham khêra gasht
mawj-é Hayrat `aql-râ az sar goZasht

1988 în che-gûna sham`-hâ afrôkht-ast
k-în dô dîda-yé khalq az-în-hâ dôkht-ast?

. . . . . .

1991 bâz mê-dîd-am ke mê-shod haft, yak
mê-shekâf-ad nûr-é ô jayb-é falak

bâz ân yak bâr dêgar haft shod
mastî-wo Hayrânî-yé man zaft shod

ittiSâlâtê meyân-é sham`-hâ
ke na-y-ây-ad bar zabân-o goft-é mâ

ân-ke yak dîdan kon-ad idrâk-é ân
sâl-hâ na-t'wân namûdan az zabân

1995 ân-ke yak dam bîn-ad-ash idrâk-é hôsh
sâl-hâ na-t'wân shenûdan ân ba-gôsh

. . . . . .

2001 haft sham` andar naZar shod haft mard
nûr-eshân mê-shod ba-saqf-é lazhoward

pêsh-é ân anwâr n¸r-é rôz dord
az Silâbat nûr-hâ-râ mê-setord

2003 bâz har yak mard shod shakl-é derakht
chashm-am az sabziy-é êshân nêk-bakht

. . . . . .

2046 goft rând-am pêsh-tar man nêk-bakht
bâz shod ân haft, jomla yak derakht

haft mê-shod, fard mê-shod har damê
man che sân mê-gasht-am az Hayrat hamê

ba`d az ân dîd-am derakht-ân dar namâz
Saf kashîda chûn jamâ`at karda sâz

yak derakht az pêsh mânand-é imâm
dêgar-ân andar pas-é ô dar qiyâm

2050 ân qiyâm-o ân rukû`-wo ân sujûd
az derakht-ân bas shegeft-am mê-namûd

yâd kard-am qawl-é Haq-râ ân zamân
goft an-najm-o shajar-râ yasjud-ân

în derakht-ân-râ na zânô na meyân
în che tartîb-é namâz-ast ân-chonân?

âmad ilhâm-é khodâ, k-ay bâ-forûz
mê `ajab dâr-î ze- kâr-é mâ hanôz?

ba`d-é dîrê gasht ân-hâ haft mard
jomla dar qa`da pay-é yazdân-é fard

2055 chash mê-mâl-am ke ân haft arslân
tâ kayân-and-o che dâr-and az jahân?

. . . . . .

2064 ba`d az ân goft-and mâ-râ ârzô-st
iqdadâ kardan ba-tô ay pâk-dôst

2065 goft-am ârî lêk yak sâ`at ke man
mushkilâtê dâr-am az dawr-é zaman

tâ shaw-ad ân Hal ba-SuHbat-hây-é pâk
ke ba-SuHbat rôy-ad angûrê ze-khâk

dâna-yé por maghz bâ khâk-é dozham
khalwatî-wo SuHbatî kard az karam

khwêshtan dar khâk kullî maHw kard
tâ na-mând shakl-o bô-wo sorkh-o zard

az pas-é ân maHw, qabZ-é ô na-mând
par goshâd-o basT shod, markab be-rând

2070 pêsh-é aSl-é khwêsh chûn bê-khwêsh shod

raft Sûrat jalwa-yé ma`nî-sh shod

sar chon-în kard-and hîn farmân to-râ-st
taff-é del az sar chon-în kardan be-khâst

sâ`atê bâ ân gorôh-é mujtabà
chûn murâqib gasht-am-o az khwad jodâ

ham dar ân sâ`at ze-sâ`at rast jân
z-ân-ke sâ`at pîr gardân-ad jawân

jomla talwîn-hâ ze-sâ`at khâst-ast
rast az talwîn ke az sâ`at be-rast

2075 chûn ze-sâ`at sâ`atê bêrûn shaw-î
chûn na-mân-ad, maHram-é bê-chûn shaw-î

2076 sâ`at az bê-sâ`atî âgâh nêst
z-ân-esh ân sô joz taHayyur râh nêst

. . . . . .

2084 în sokhon pâyân na-dâr-ad têz daw
hîn namâz âm-ad daqûqî pêsh raw

2085 ay yagâna hîn dô-gâna bar gozâr
tâ muzayyan gard-ad az tô rôzgâr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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How Jesus Fled From Fools

Mathnawi III: 2570-2599

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The escaping of Jesus, (may the) peace (of God) be upon him,
to the top of a mountain (to flee) from fools.

2570 Jesus, (the son) of Mary, was running away to a mountain.
You might say (that) a lion was wanting to spill his blood.

Someone ran behind (him) and said, "(May you be) well! There
isn't anyone following you, (so) why are you fleeing like a bird?"

(But) he kept running in the same manner, bound to urgency, (so)
that he didn't answer him, because of his own haste.

(The man) pressed forward following Jesus (for) one or two
(more) fields. Then he called (out) to Jesus with great seriousness,

Saying, "For the sake of God's approval, stop for a moment! --
since I have a problem in (understanding this) fleeing of yours.

2575 "O noble and generous one! Who are you running from (in)
this direction? (There's) no lion or enemy following you, and no
fear or dread."

He answered, "I am escaping from a fool. Go (away)! I'm
rescuing myself, (so) don't restrain me!"

(The man) said, "But aren't you the Messiah,[1] by whom blind
and deaf (people) become normal?"

"Yes," he replied. (The man) asked, "Aren't you the (spiritual)
king who (is) the dwelling place for mysterious spells and
incantations?[2] --

"(So that) if you recite a spell upon a (man's) corpse, he leaps up
(joyfully) like a lion (who has) brought back prey."

2580 "Yes," he answered, "I am that one." (The other) said, "O
beautiful faced one! Don't you make (living) birds out of clay?"[3]

"Yes," he replied. (The other) said, "O pure spirit! Then you can
make (happen) whatever you wish-- (so) who are you afraid of?
~~~~~~

"With evidence such as this,[4] who is there in the world who wouldn't be among your (devoted) slaves?"

Jesus said, "By the Holy Essence of God, the Originator of the body, the Creator of the soul in (its) superiority![5]

"(And in) reverence for His Holy Essence and Attributes, (for) whom the collar of the heavens is torn (in ecstasy)[6]:

2585 "(I affirm) that those incantations, as well as the greatest Name (of God),[7] which I spoke over the deaf and over the blind, were beneficial.

"I recited (the words) over the rocky mountain (and) it became split, tearing the robe (which was) upon itself (down) to the navel.

"I spoke (the words) over a dead body (and) it became alive. I said (them) over a point of nothingness (and) it became something.

"(But) I said those (words) a hundred thousand times with loving-kindness over the heart of a fool and it was not a cure.[8]

"(Instead), it became[9] a hard rock and didn't change from that habit; it became sand, from which no seed grows."

2590 (The man) said, "(Then) what is the wisdom that the Name of God was beneficial in those places, (but) here it had no superiority?[10]

"That is also (a case) of disease, and this is an affliction. (So) why was it[11] a cure for that (but) not for this?"

(Jesus) replied, "The affliction of foolish stupidity is (caused by) the overwhelming anger of God. (Normal) afflictions and blindness are not (from God's) anger-- those are tests and trials."

Trials and hardships are an affliction which [eventually] brings (Divine) Mercy. (But) ignorant foolishness brings blows and wounds.

That which is his scarring has been produced by His seal,[12] (and) no supporting hand can bring a remedy to it.

2595 (Therefore), escape from foolish people just as Jesus escaped. (For) companionship with fools has spilled so much blood!

The air steals water very gradually,[13] (and) the fool steals

religion from you also in the same way.

He steals your warmth and gives you cold (in its place), just like one who puts a rock under (your) bottom.

The escaping of Jesus is not because of (real) fear, (for) he is secure (from such). (But) is for the sake of teaching (a lesson).[14]

2599 Even if intense cold filled (all) the horizons of the world, what grief would there be for the radiant sun?

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 8/17/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2577) the Messiah: "(And) when the angels said, 'O Mary! Truly God gives you good news of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, [al-masîHu `îsà ibnu maryam] worthy of honor in this world and the Hereafter and among those (who are) nearest to God." (Qur'an 3:45)

2. (2578) mysterious spells and incantations: Nicholson translated, "in whom the spells of the Unseen World have their abode."

3. (2580) (living) birds out of clay: a reference to a verse in the Qur'an where Jesus was sent as a prophet of God to the Children of Israel with the message: "Surely, I have come to you with a (miraculous) sign from your Lord. I will make for you (something) resembling the shape of a bird and I will breathe into it so that it will become a (living) bird, by the permission of God. And I will heal the blind and the lepers, and I make the dead alive, by the permission of God." (Qur'an 3:49)

4. (2582) With evidence such as this: Nicholson translated, "With such (miraculous) evidence..."

5. (2583) the soul in (its) superiority: Nicholson translated, "the Creator of the soul in eternity," and explained, "Literally, 'in priority.'" (footnote) This refers to the teaching in the Qur'an that God created Adam as superior to the angels, which they were commanded to acknowledge (2: 31-34).

6. (2584) (for) whom the collar of the heavens is torn (in ecstasy): refers to the ancient practice of "rending one's garments" during a state of extreme devotion. In Islamic culture, public nudity is forbidden. However, dervishes used to tear their shirts or robes from the collar to the waist, while in a state of spiritual ecstasy, such as during a samâ`, or mystical concert, when spontaneous movement (and sometimes dancing and whirling) occurred while hearing mystical poetry and music.

7. (2585) the greatest Name (of God) [ism-é a`Zam]: Nicholson translated, "the Most Great Name." Although the name "Allah" is considered to be the greatest Name of God, because it contains all of the traditional Ninety-Nine (and the infinite) Names of God, it probably refers here to the sufi teaching that God allows a few of His chosen servants to know His greatest (and most secret) Name--by which he allows them to perform miracles [mu`jizât] (if they are prophets, such as Jesus) and wonders [karâmât] (if they are saints). In a similar story, Rumi tells about a fool who asked Jesus to teach him "that sublime Name [nâm-é sanî] by which you make a dead man alive" (II:142). The man wanted to revive some bones he saw in a hole. After receiving clarification from God, Jesus pronounced the Name over the bones, a lion sprung to life and killed the fool. Nicholson explained the meaning of "that sublime Name" as referring to "the Greatest name of God (ismu 'lláhi 'l-a`zamu), generally said to be Allah, wherein Huwa [= He, meaning the Divine Essence] is contained. Knowledge of the name confers miraculous powers on those who possess it, viz. prophets and heads of the hierarchy of saints, and can be communicated" [= to selected others]. (Commentary)

8. (2588) it wasn't a cure: "One of the sayings which Moslems attribute to Jesus is má `ajaztu `an ihyá'i 'l-mawtá kamá `ajaztu `an isláhi 'l-ahmaq." [= As much as I worked miracles in regard to reviving the dead, even so, I was helpless in regard to mending the fool.] (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (2589) It became: refers to the heart, mentioned in the previous line. Nicholson translated, "He became..."

10. (2590) here it had no superiority: Nicholson translated, "(while) it had no advantage (good effect) here?" And he explained: "I.e. 'in the case of the fool.'" (footnote)

11. (2591) why was it: Nicholson translated, "why did it (the Name of God)..."

12. (2594) his scarring has been produced by His seal: Means that his punishment has been sealed or stamped upon him by the Decree of

God. "Of course Rúmí does not imply that because the fool acts according to his predestined folly he is therefore excusable." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (2596) The air steals water very gradually: means through evaporation.

14. (2598) for the sake of teaching (a lesson): "...the prophet or saint, though 'united' with God and endowed with Divine knowledge, nevertheless turns to God in solitary prayer and supplication (khalwat ú namáz). It is in order that his example in this respect may be followed by those who seek salvation under his guidance." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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gorêkhtan-é `îsà-- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- farâz-é kûh az aHmaq-ân

2570 `îsà-yé maryam ba-kôhê mê-gorêkht
shêr gôy-î khûn-é ô mê-khwâst rêkht

ân yakê dar pay dawîd-o goft khayr
dar pay-at kas nêst che gorêz-î chô Tayr?

bâ shetâb ô ân-chon-ân mê-tâkht joft
k-az shetâb-é khwad jawâb-é ô na-goft

yak dô maydân dar pay-é `îsà be-rând
pas ba-jidd-é jidd `îsà-râ be-khwând

k-az pay-é marZât-é Haq yak laHZa b-êst
ke ma-ra andar gorêz-at mushkilê-st

2575 az ke în sô mê-gorêz-î ay karîm
na pay-at shêr-o na khaSm-o khawf-o bîm

goft az aHmaq gorêzân-am, be-raw
mê-rahân-am khwêsh-râ band-am ma-shaw

goft âkhir ân masîHâ na tow-î
ke shaw-ad kûr-o kar az tô mustawî?

goft ârî, goft ân shah nêst-î
ke fusûn-é ghayb-râ ma'wîst-î?

chûn be-khwân-î ân fusûn bar morda'yê
bar jah-ad chûn shêr-é Sayd-âwarda'yê
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

goft ârî, ân man-am, goft-â ke tô
na ze-gel morgh-ân kon-î ay khwob-rô

goft ârî, goft pas ay rûH-é pâk
har-che khwâh-î mê-kon-î, az kî-st bâk?

bâ chon-în burhân ke bâsh-ad dar jahân
ke na-bâsh-ad mar to-râ az bandag-ân?

goft `îsà ke ba-Zât-é pâk-é Haq
mubdi`-é tan, khâliq-é jân dar sabaq

Hurmat-é Zât-o Sifât-é pâk-é ô
ke bow-ad gardûn garîbân châk-é ô

k-ân fusûn-o ism-é a`Zam-râ ke man
bar kar-o bar kûr khwând-am shod Hasan

bar koh-é sangîn be-khwând-am shod shekâf
khirqa-râ be-drîd bar khwad tâ ba-nâf

bar tan-é morda be-khwând-am gasht Hay
bar sar-é lâ-shay be-khwând-am gasht shay

khwând-am ân-râ bar del-é aHmaq ba-wud
Sad hazâr-ân bâr-o darmânê na-shod

sang-é khârâ gasht-o z-ân khô bar na-gasht
rêg shod k-az way na-rôy-ad hêch kasht

goft Hikmat chî-st, k-ân-jâ ism-é Haq,
sûd kard, în-jâ na-bûd ân-râ sabaq?

ân ham-ân ranj-ast-o în ranjê, che-râ
ô na-shod în-râ-wo ân-râ shod dawâ

goft ranj-é aHmaqî qahr-é khodâ-st
ranj-o kûrî nêst qahr, ân ibtilâ-st

ibtilâ ranjê-st k-ân raHm âwar-ad
aHmaqî ranjê-st k-ân zakhm âwar-ad

ân-che dâgh-é ô-st mohr-é ô karda-ast
châra'yê bar way na-y-ar-ad bord-dast

z-aHmaq-ân be-g'rêz chûn `îsà gorêkht
SuHbat-é aHmaq basê khûn-hâ ke rêkht

andak andak âb-râ dozd-ad hawâ
dîn chon-în dozd-ad ham aHmaq az shomâ

garmiy-at-râ dozd-ad-o sardî deh-ad
ham-chô ân k-ô zêr-é kûn sangê neh-ad

ân gorêz-é `îsà na az bîm bow-ad
âmin-ast ô, ân pay-é ta`lîm bow-ad

2599 zamharîr ar por kon-ad âfâq-râ
che gham ân khworshêd-é bâ-ishrâq-râ?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Deliberate Slowness is from God

Mathnawi III: 3494-3516

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3494 A certain friend spoke to the Prophet (Muhammad), saying,
"In (doing) business, I'm liable to be deceived.[1]

3495 "(Because) the tricks of everyone who sells or buys are like
(the spells of) magic, and take me (away) from the road."

(The Prophet) replied, "When you are afraid of being deceived in
(doing) business, set a condition of (asking) three days for
(making) your own choice.

"Since deliberate slowness is from the Most Merciful,[2] (but) your
being hasty is from Satan, the cursed one."

If you toss a mouthful (of food) in front of a dog, he smells (first
and) then he eats (it), O deliberate one!

He smells with the nose, (and) we (who are) with wisdom also
smell it[3] by (means of) the discriminating intellect.

3500 The earth and the wheeling heavens[4] came into being by [the
command of] God with deliberate slowness (lasting) up to six
days.[5]

And if not, He was (certainly) able to bring forth a hundred[6]

earths and circling heavens, since for Him (it is only to say) "Be (and) it is."[7]

That Generous King makes a human being a complete man by small degrees, until his fortieth year--[8]

Although He was (certainly) able to make fifty people fly (into being) from non-existence in a single moment.

Jesus was able[9] to make a dead person jump up without a pause by means of a single prayer--

3505 (So) is the Creator of Jesus[10] unable to bring men (into existence) step by step[11] without delay?

This [explanation about] deliberate slowness is for your instruction: that it is necessary to seek[12] slowly without interruption.

A tiny stream (of water) which continually goes (forward) does not become filthy, nor does it become putrid.

Good fortune and joy are born from this deliberate slowness: being slow is the egg (and) good fortune (is) like the birds.

Birds never resemble the egg, O stubborn one, even though they keep appearing out of eggs.

3510 Wait until your (bodily) parts[13] hatch birds, like eggs, in the end (at the Resurrection)!

Although the snake's egg resembles a sparrow's egg in similarity, the way (to go) is far distant.[14]

Likewise, although the pear seed[15] resembles an apple seed, know the differences, O dear sir!

Leaves are the same color to the sight, (but) fruits are a different kind-- each one.

The "leaves" of (human) bodies are alike, but each soul is living with a particular income (from its produce).[16]

3515 The people in the market are going (about in) the same manner, (but) that one (is) in (a state of) delight and other (ones) are in (a state of) groaning [from regret].

3516 Similarly, in death, we are going on (in) the same manner,

(but) half (of us) are suffering loss and (another) half are (like) kings.[17]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3494) liable to be deceived: refers to the preceding line (3493), where Rumi says that if one does not know the difference between the fire of anger and the (true) light of religion, "say, 'No deception!' And don't hurry and don't urge (yourself) forward." This line refers to the account of "the advice given by the Prophet to a man who said that he seldom bought or sold without being cheated: idhhá báya`ta fa-qul lá khilábah" [= "If you do business, say, 'No deception!'"] (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3497) deliberate slowness is from the Most Merciful: "A translation of the Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet]: al-ta'anní mina 'l-Rahmán wa-'l-`ajalatu mina 'l-shaytán" [= "Deliberate slowness is from the Most Merciful, and haste is from Satan"]. (Nicholson, Commentary]

3. (3499) smell it: Nicholson translated, "He smells with the nose, we too (who are endowed) with wisdom smell it (the object submitted to us) with the purified intelligence."

4. (3500) the wheeling heavens [charkh-hâ]: means the planetary spheres, viewed as governing the seven heavens, from lowest to highest (according to ancient tradition): Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. The Persian word "charkh" is related to the Sanscrit word for wheel, "chakra."

5. (3500) up to six days: refers to the verse, "Truly, your Sustaining Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days..." (Qur'an 7:54) These are not "days" in a literal sense, since, "In the presence of your Sustaining Lord, a day is like a thousand years of your reckoning" (22:47), or, "... a day the length of which is (like) fifty-thousand years" (70:4). And these numbers are to be taken literally either, since they are metaphors in Arabic for vast amounts and huge quantities. Many kinds of sciences flourished in Islam because of minimal conflict between scientists and religious scholars.

6. (3501) a hundred: another metaphor for a vast amount.

7. (3501) "Be (and) it is: refers to the verse, "He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth, and when He commands something (to exist), He says to it, 'Be!' and it is." (Qur'an 2:117)

8. (3502) until his fortieth year: refers to the verse, "And We have commanded man to (act with) goodness toward his parents, (for) his mother carried him with difficulty (during pregnancy) and she gave birth to him in pain. And the (period of) carrying him until his weaning is thirty months-- until, when he reaches full strength and attains forty years..." (Qur'an 46:15)

9. (3504) Jesus was able: "(That is) when God will say [on the Day of Judgment], 'O Jesus, son of Mary, recall My favors to you and to your mother.... And when you brought forth the dead (to life) by My permission...'" (Qur'an 5: 113)

10. (3505) the Creator of Jesus: this expresses the Qur'anic teaching that Jesus was a Prophet of God and therefore a created being, and that Christians are wrong to believe that "God is Christ the son of Mary" (Qur'an 5:19). Per the meter in this line, Nicholson states that it is a rare instance in the Mathnawi in which a long vowel is allowed to be shortened before a consonant (referring to the second long vowel in the Arabic name for Jesus, "îsà").

11. (3505) step by step: Nicholson translated, "in manifold succession (into existence)."

12. (3506) to seek: Nicholson translated, "you must seek (God)."

13. (3510) your (bodily) parts: a reference to the Resurrection of the Dead on the Day of Judgment, when inanimate objects will testify to God about the actions of mankind: "and their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will bear witness to whatever they did" (Qur'an 36:65).

14. (3511) far distant: "this passage illustrates further the essential difference of things which superficially resemble each other, e.g. the a`málu 'l-jawárih [= the actions of the limbs] of the sincere believer and the religious hypocrite." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (3512) pear seed: refers to the small yellow fruit called a quince, although the word is also used for pears.

16. (3514) a particular income (from its produce) [ray`ê]: this word refers to the income which results from growing crops. Nicholson explained the meaning of this line: "i.e. the life of every soul

consists in the particular spiritual result which it produces." (Commentary)

17. (3516) (like) kings: literally, like King Khosraw, a legendary king of Persia. This Persian name is a word-play on the Arabic word for "suffering loss" [khusrân]. The meaning of this line is that souls will be punished or rewarded for their choices and actions during life on the Day of Judgment.

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3494 ân yakê yârê payambar-râ be-goft
ke man-am dar bay`-hâ bâ-ghabn joft

3495 makr-é har kas k-ô forôsh-ad yâ khar-ad
hamchô siHr-ast-o ze- râh-am mê-bar-ad

goft dar bay`ê ke tars-î az ghirâr
sharT kon seh rôz khwad-râ ikhtiyâr

ke ta'annî hast az raHmân yaqîn
hast ta`jîlat ze-shayTân-é la`în

pêsh-é sag chûn luqma-yé nân afkan-î
bô kon-ad, ân-gah khwar-ad ay mu`tanî

ô ba-bînî bô kon-ad mâ bâ-kherad
ham be-bôy-êm-ash ba-`aql-é muntaqad

3500 bâ ta'annî gasht mawjûd az khodâ
tâ ba-shash rôz în zamîn-o charkh-hâ

w-ar-na qâdir bûd k-ô kun fa-yakûn
Sad zamîn-o charkh âward-y berûn

âdamê-râ andak andak ân humâm
tâ chehel sâl-ash kon-ad mard-é tamâm

gar-che qâdir bûd k-andar yak-nafas
az `adam parrân kon-ad panjâh kas

`îsà qâdir bûd k-ô az yak du`â
bê-tawaqquf bar jehân-ad morda-râ

3505 khâliq-é `îsà be-na-t'wân-ad ke ô
bê-tawaqquf mardom âr-ad tô ba-tô?

în ta'annî az pay-é ta`lîm-é to-st
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ke Talab âhasta bây-ad bê-sokost

jôy-akê kôchak ke dâyim mê-raw-ad
na najis gard-ad, na ganda mê-shaw-ad

z-în ta'annî zây-ad iqbâl-o surûr
în ta'annî bayZa, dawlat chûn Tuyûr

morgh kay mân-ad ba-baZa ay `anîd?
gar-che az bayZa hamê ây-ad padîd

3510 bâsh tâ ajzây-é tô chûn bayZa-hâ
morgh-hâ zây-and andar intihâ

bayZa-yé mâr ar-che mân-ad dar shabah
bayZa-yé gonjeshg-râ, dûr-ast rah

dâna-yé âbî ba-dâna-yé sêb nêz
gar-che mân-ad, farq-hâ dân ay `azîz

barg-hâ ham-rang bâsh-ad dar naZar
mêwa-hâ har yak bow-ad naw`ê degar

barg-hây-é jism-hâ mânanda-and
lêk har jânê ba-ray`ê zenda-and

3515 khalq dar bâzâr yak-sân mê-raw-and
ân yakê dar Zawq-o dêgar dar dam-and

3516 ham-chon-ân dar marg yak-sân mê-raw-êm
nîm dar khusrân-o nîmê khosraw-êm

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Incomparable Mercy

Mathnawi III: 3632-3634

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3632 (For) His Mercy is not the mercy of Adam, since sorrow is (part of) the mixture of the mercy of Adam.

The mercy of the created is full of sadness, (but) the Mercy of God is (completely) pure of (any) sadness or anxiety.

3634 Know, O father,[1] that the Mercy of the Incomparable is like this: nothing except Its effect comes into the imagination.[2]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3634) O father: refers to the listener. Rumi uses a number of names to address the listener, such as "O son," "O master." Sometimes these are "fillers" necessary for the purposes of maintaining meter.

2. (3634) into the imagination: means that the human imagination is incapable of conceiving the real nature of Divine Mercy, other than its external effects. This is a reference to the explanation of a Qur'anic verse [32:17, "No one knows what (Heavenly) delights are kept hidden for them as a reward for their (good) deeds"] given by the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, who said, "God says, 'I have prepared for My righteous servants that which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and which the heart of man cannot conceive.'"

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3632 raHmat-ash na raHmat-é âdam bow-ad
ke mizâj-é raHm-é âdam gham bow-ad

raHmat-é makhlûq bâsh-ad ghuSSa-nâk
raHmat-é Haq az gham-o ghusSSa-st pâk

3634 raHmat-é bê-chûn chon-în dân ay pedar
n-ây-ad andar wahm az way joz aSar

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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There is No Dervish in the World

Mathnawi III: 3669-3685

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respect.[5]

(It is like when) the lover's pulse (of desire) jumps up, and lacking respect, he puts himself on the (same) level[6] of the king (on the scale).

There is no person in the world (who is) more disrespectful than he, (and yet) there is no person in secret (who is) more respectful than he.

3680 (But) O chosen one, know also (that) these two contraries of respectful and disrespectful (are) harmonious (by their) relation.

(The lover) is rude (only) if you look outwardly, since his claim of love is (one of) equality.

(Yet) if you look inwardly, where is the claim?-- (since) both he and the claim are annihilated in the presence of that Sultan.

If "Zayd" is the active agent (in the sentence), "Zayd died,"-- still, he is not the agent (in reality) because he is devoid (of existence).

He is (only) the agent in regard to the grammatical phrase, and if not, (then) he is the passive object and Death is his executioner.

3685 What (is he) an agent of?[7] For he has become so conquered[8] (that) the qualities of being an agent have become far (distant) from him.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3669) (mystical) annihilation and persistence: means, mystical "death" and "abidance." These terms ("fanâ" and "baqâ") derive from the sufi interpretation of a verse in the Qur'an: "All that is upon (the earth) will pass away [fân-in], but the Face of your Lord will abide [yabqà], full of Majesty and Glory" (55:26-27).

2. (3669) The speaker: "an eminent mystic." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (3669) There is no dervish: "i.e. the perfect faqîr, who is free from all connexion with the phenomenal world" (Nicholson, Commentary). The Persian word "darwêsh" (literally, "poor one") was a translation of the Arabic word for a sufi, "faqîr," which derives from the verse, "O men, you are poor [fuqarâ] in relation to God, and God is the Rich (al-Ghanî), the Praiseworthy" (Qur'an 35:15). So, in this respect, the true dervish does not exist because he is "poor in existence" in the presence of God, and this advanced degree of "spiritual poverty" [faqr] means that he is annihilated of self.

4. (3669) He exists: "i.e. he exists formally and externally in so far as his 'person' (dhát-i bashariyyah) [="human essence"] is concerned; but... he is really non-existent as an individual agent and only 'persists' in virtue of the Divine life and energy which constitute his whole being. Cf. v. 3914 infra: wasf-i ú fání shud ú dhát-ash baqá" [= "His (the lover's) attributes have passed away, and his essence remains"]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (3669) from neglecting courtesy and respect: "See the Story of Moses and the Shepherd (II 1720 sqq.)..." (Nicholson, Commentary) In this story, Moses overhears a simple-minded shepherd praising God with an over-familiarity which he condemns as blasphemous. Moses then hears the voice of God, which rebukes him for being so harsh toward one of His most ardent and saintly lovers.

6. (3669) on the (same) level: puts himself on the other tray of the scale, or balance, so that he of equal measure (as the king). A metaphor of becoming overly-familiar with a superior.

7. (3669) What (is he) an agent of?: Nicholson later changed his translation, to "What (power of) action (remains in him)?" (from, "What agent (is he)...?).

8. (3669) he has become so conquered: "When the lover of God has died to self, all his actions proceed immediately from God, the only Real Agent." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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mas'ala-yé fanâ wa baqây-é darwêsh

3669 goft qâyîl dar jahân darwêsh nêst
w-ar bow-ad darwêsh, ân darwêsh nêst
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3670 hast az rôy-é baqây-é Zât-é ô
nêst gashta waSf-é ô dar waSf-é hû

chûn zobâna-yé sham` pêsh-é âftâb
nêst bâsh-ad, hast bâsh-ad, dar Hisâb

hast bâsh-ad Zât-é ô, tâ tô agar
bar neh-î panba be-sôz-ad z-ân sharar

nêst bâsh-ad, rôshanê na-d'h-ad to-râ
karda bâsh-ad âftâb ô-râ fanâ

dar dô Sad man shahd yak awqiyyah khal
chôn dar afkand-î-wo dar way gasht Hal

3675 nêst bâsh-ad Ta`m-é khal chûn mê-chash-î
hast awqiyyah fazûn chûn bar kash-î

pêsh-é shêrê âhû'ê bê-hôsh shod
hastî-ash dar hast-ê ô rô-pôsh shod

în qiyâs-é nâqiS-ân bar kâr-é rab
jôshesh-é `ishq-ast na az tark-é adab

nabZ-é `âshiq bê-adab bar mê-jah-ad
khwêsh-râ dar kaffa-yé shah mê-neh-ad

bê-adab-tar nêst kas z-ô dar jahân
bâ-adab-tar nêst kas z-ô dar nehân

3680 ham ba-nisbat dân wifâq ay muntajab
în dô Zidd-é bâ-adab yâ bê-adab

bê-adab bâsh-ad chô Zâhir be-n'gar-î
ke bow-ad da`wî-é `ishq-ash ham-sarî

chûn ba-bâTin be-n'gar-î da`wê ko-jâ-st?
ô-wo da`wî pêsh-é ân sulTân fanâ-st

mâta zayd-un, zayd agar fâ'`il bow-ad
lêk fâ'`il nêst, k-o `âTil bow-ad

ô ze-rôy-é lafZ-é naHwî fâ`il-ast
w-ar-na ô maf`ûl-o mawt-ash qâtil-ast

3685 fâ'`il-é che? k-ô chon-ân maqhûr shod
fâ'`ilî-hâ jomla az way dûr shod

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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To Him is Our Return

Mathnawi III: 3901-3906

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3901 I died to the mineral state and became a plant; I died to the vegetable state and reached animality;

I died to the animal state and became a man; then what should I fear? -- I have never become less from dying.

At the next charge (forward) I will die to human nature, so that I may lift up (my) head and wings (and soar) among the angels.

And I must (also) jump from the river of (the state of) the angel: "Everything perishes except His Face."[1]

3905 Once again I will become sacrificed from (the state of) the angel; I will become that which cannot come into the imagination.[2]

3906 Then I will become non-existent; non-existence says to me (in tones) like an organ:[3] "Truly, to Him is our return."[4]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3904) "Everything perishes except His Face": Qur'an: 28:88.

2. (3905) I will become that which cannot come into the imagination; refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "What no eye has seen,what no ear has hard, and what has never passed into the heart of any mortal."

3. (3906) an organ [arghanûn]: a type of pan-flute, with multiple

reeds of different sizes.

4. (3906) "Truly, to Him is our return": Qur'an 2:156. These verses of the Mathnawi describe the descent of the spirit into matter and its re-ascent. This is not transmigration, reincarnation, or an early view of biological evolution)-- but a different metaphysical viewpoint, see William Chittick, "The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi," pp. 72-82.

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3901 az jumâdî mord-am-o nâmê shod-am
w-az namâ mord-am ba-Haywân bar zad-am

mord-am az Hawânî-wo âdam shod-am
pas che tars-am, kay ze mordan kam shod-am?

Hamla-yé degar be-mîr-am az bashar
tâ bar âr-am az malâ'ik parr-o sar

w-az malak ham bâyâd-am jastan ze jû
kullu shay-in hâlik illâ wajha-hu

3905 bâr-é dêgar az malak qurbân shaw-am
ânche andar wahm n-ây-ad ân shaw-am

3906 pas `adam gard-am `adam chûn arghanûn
gôy-ad-am ke innâ ilay-hi râji`ûn

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Pea Boiling In the Pot (part one)

Mathnawi III: 4159-4190

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The comparison of the believer's (attempts) to run away (from suffering) and his lack of patience during [Divinely sent] trials and afflictions to the agitation and restlessness of peas and other vegetables (while) in the boiling (water) of the pot, and (their attempts) to spring up so that they might leap (out).
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4159 Look at a pea in the pot, how it is leaping upward since becoming helpless from the fire.

4160 (At) the time of boiling, the pea rises up to the top of the pot every moment, bringing forth a hundred laments,

Saying, "Why are you killing me with fire? Since you bought (me),[1] why are you throwing me upside-down?"

The lady of the house[2] keeps stirring with the ladle, saying, "No! Boil willingly, and don't jump (away) from the fire maker!

"I'm not boiling (you) because you are hated by me, but so that you may obtain (a delicious) taste and savor,

"(And) so that you may become food and (then) combine with the vital spirit.[3] This (difficult) trial isn't because of contempt toward you.

4165 "You were green and fresh, drinking water in the garden. That sipping of water[4] was for the sake of this fire."[5]

(The reason) for that (is) because His Mercy has preceded (His) Severity,[6] so that, by means of Mercy, (the pea) may become worthy of being tried.[7]

His Mercy has (always) had precedence over (His) Severity so that the assets of existence may be gained.[8]

Because flesh doesn't grow without delicious savor,[9] (and) if it doesn't grow, what can love for the Beloved melt (away)?[10]

(And) if, because of that urgency, (your flesh) finds (such) severities so that you (have to) make a sacrifice of those assets (of existence),[11]

4170 Again, the Grace (of God) will come in order to apologize for (Severity), saying, "(Now) you have washed [yourself clean of the body][12] and have jumped out of the river (of suffering)."

(The lady) says, "O pea, you grazed in the springtime. (And now) suffering has become your guest, (so) keep him well--

"So that (your) guest may go back (home) expressing gratitude and may talk about your preferential (hospitality) in the presence of the King.[13]

"(And) so that, instead of blessings, the Giver of Blessings may

come to you-- (and then) all blessings will bear envy toward you.

"I am (like) Abraham, and you are (like my) son in front of the knife: lay (down your) head. 'Truly, I see (in a vision) that I should sacrifice you.'[14]

4175 "Lay (your) head in the presence of (my) severity, (with your) heart firm and tranquil, so that I may cut your throat like (that of) Ishmael.

"I will (then) cut (off your) head, but this head is a head which is free[15] from becoming cut or killed.

"But your submission is the intended goal of the Eternal. O Muslim, seeking surrender[16] (is what) is needed from you.

"O pea, keep boiling during (this) trial, so that neither existence nor self may remain[17] to you.

"Although you were laughing in that (worldly) garden, you are (actually) the rose of the garden of the spirit (and its) eye.[18]

4180 "If you became separated from the garden of water and clay (and) you have become a morsel (of food), you have entered into (the bodies of) the living ones.[19]

"Become food, (bodily) strength, and thoughts! (Before) you were milky sap;[20] (now) become a lion (hunting) in the thickets!

"By God, at first you grew from His Attributes;[21] (now) go back into His Attributes (with) quick agility!

"You came from clouds, the sun, and the heavens (and) then you became Attributes[22] and you went (back) up into the heavens.

"You came in the form of rain and sunlight. You will go (back) into the Attributes of the All-Good.

4185 "You were part of the sun, clouds, and stars. (Now) you will have become soul, actions, words, and thoughts."

The existence of animals is due to the death of plants. (Therefore), it was right (to say), "Kill me, my trustworthy companions!"[23]

Because so much is won by us after the checkmate. (Therefore), it was right (to say), "Truly, in my being killed is (my real) life."

(Your) acts, speech, and sincerity became the food of the angel, so

that by (means of) these he ascended[24] toward the heavens,

In the same way, (when) that meal became the food for man, it
went upward from being a plant and became animate.

4190 As for these words, an ample explanation will be spoken
(about) in another place.[25]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4161) Since you bought (me): Nicholson translated, "Since you bought (and approved) me..." Chittick translated, "Since your showed your appreciation for us by buying us..." ("The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi," p. 80).

2. (4162) lady of the house: "The 'housewife' represents the murshid [= the spiritual guide and master], the 'chickpea' the murîd [= the spiritual seeker and disciple], and the 'fire' the riyádat [= austerity, strict training, spiritual hardship] of the Súfî Path." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (4164) vital spirit [jân]: means the "animal soul." Rumi teaches the descent and re-ascent of the spirit back to Heaven (but this is different from theories of transmigration of souls or reincarnation). First, it manifests physically in mineral form and is eventually absorbed into plants and becomes a "plant soul." The plant form is eventually eaten by animals or humans and becomes an "animal soul," enabling physical movement. The spirit goes on to become a completed human, an angelic form, and beyond. It is for this reason that Rumi often mentions that bread becomes mind and spirit (as in I: 3167). "The corn-seed sown in the earth becomes bread, which, when eaten, assimilated, and converted into sperm, produces the man endowed with spirit (vegetable, animal, and intellectual). The soul, as a mode of Divine Being, undergoes a similar evolution: in order that its inherent potentialities may be developed and exhibited, it descends into the world of matter, where from the lowest phases of soul-life it gradually rises to the highest and, having traversed the whole circle of existence and thus attained to the utmost perfection of which it is capable, gives itself up to God and realises its essential unity with Him."

(Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (4165) that sipping of water: means the drawing of nutritious mineral-laden water which caused the plant to grow into something edible for humans.

5. (4165) for the sake of this fire: "i.e. the object of our earthly life is purification by Divine Love." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (4166) His Mercy surpasses (His) Anger: The Mercy of God is a central theme of the Islamic revelation, pervading the Qur'an ("Enter us into Your Mercy, for You are the Most Merciful of the merciful"-- 7:151). And according to a (non-Qur'anic) Divine Saying [Hadîthu 'l-qudsî], God said: "Truly My Mercy prevails over My Wrath"-- and, in another form, "My Mercy precedes My Wrath."

7. (4166) worthy of being tried: Nicholson translated, "to the end that by (God's) mercy he (the afflicted person) may suffer affliction." Chittick translated, "so that Mercy may make the creatures worthy for tribulation." The meaning is that it is the Mercy of God that the 'pea' (meaning the spiritual disciple) has been chosen to be severely tried-- which will transform it into something much better.

8. (4167) so that the assets of existence may be gained: "God first showed mercy by bringing us into existence and manifesting His attributes in us. His wrath is mercy in disguise." "God is absolute mercy: His wrath is really mercy in disguise. All pain and punishment that He inflicts upon us is for our good." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (4168) without delicious savor: Nicholson and Chittick translated, "without pleasure." The meaning is that flesh and skin do not grow unless delicious food is eaten. "Bodily life and growth and sensual appetite are necessary for the full development of the powers of the soul. Hence the superiority of the Perfect Man to the angels, who have no 'flesh' to be overcome and transmuted into spirit." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (4168) what can love for the Beloved melt (away): refers to the image of the lover who is so in love with the beloved [= God] that he becomes thin and pale from longing melancholy. "I.e. how can Divine Love manifest itself except through the mortification of the carnal nature?" (Nicholson, footnote)

11. (4169) make a sacrifice of those assets (of existence): means to die.

12. (4170) washed [yourself clean of the body]: a reference to ritual washing of the whole body [ghusl] done before prayer and done to

a corpse before burial. Here Rumi uses this term to mean the separation of the soul from the body, so that it becomes "washed" and "cleaned" from contact with the body.

13. (4172) the King: means God.

14. (4174) I should sacrifice you: From Qur'an 37:102, slightly altered for metrical purposes-- "He said, 'O my son! I see (in a vision) that I should sacrifice you. (Now) consider what is your own view.' (The son) said, 'O my father! Do what you are commanded. You will find me, God willing, among those who endure (suffering) patiently.'" Then, after Abraham laid his son on the alter for sacrifice, God told him to stop, because he had already fulfilled the vision (to that very point), and rewarded him for his obedience during this difficult trial.

15. (4176) a head which is free: for this line, Nicholson (Commentary) quoted a line from Hafiz: "`ajab ráhí-st ráh-i `ishq, k-án-já/ kasí sar bar kunad k-ash sar na-báshad." [= The way of Love is an amazing path: for there, someone takes off (his) head, yet he has no head!]

16. (4177) O Muslim, seeking surrender: a word play, since the word "muSLiM" means "one who surrenders" (to the Will of God) and the word "taSLîM" means "surrender" (to the Will of God). The word "SaLaM" means peace and security. Therefore, surrender (of self-will) leads to peace and safety in harmony with the Divine Will.

17. (4178) neither existence nor self may remain: since the pea symbolizes the sufi disciple, this means to surrender the illusory self, or ego, by means of spiritual annihilation [fanâ].

18. (4179) (its) eye: in Persian literature, flowers are depicted as "laughing with joy" when they open their petals. And the centers of flowers are depicted as "eyes"-- so that the word "narcissus" became an idiom meaning beautiful eyes. On a mystical level, Nicholson said (in commenting on I: 1406, which he translated, "Man is eye, and (all) the rest is (worthless) skin: the sight of that (eye) is (consists in) seeing the Beloved"), "That alone is the real eye which is the Beloved's eye (instrument of vision'; i.e. only the Perfect Man, in whose cosmic consciousness God sees Himself objectified, can truly be said 'to see'." (Commentary)

19. (4180) the living ones: "I.e. in the course of Man's spiritual evolution his earthly nature becomes endued with the qualities of the rational soul (nafs-i nátiqah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

20. (4181) milky sap: literally, "milk." Nicholson translated,

"(Formerly) thou wert milk (sap)..." There is a pun here, since the word for "milk" [shîr] is written the same as the word for "lion" [shêr], but pronounced differently. Nicholson commented on the meaning of "milk (sap)": "...referring to the vegetative soul (nafs-i nabátí)." And on the meaning of "lion," he wrote: "i.e. 'advance to the highest capacity of the human spirit (rúh-i insání): become a Perfect Man'." (Commentary)

21. (4182) you grew from His Attributes: means that everything in creation has its origins in the (infinite) Names of God.

22. (4183) you became Attributes: "The mystic ascending to God is invested with the Divine attributes whence the world of Nature ultimately derives its being." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (4186) my trustworthy companions: this quote, and the one in the next line, is a slight modification of verses composed by Mansur al-Hallaj (executed in 922, for allegedly proclaiming, "I am the Truth/God"): "Kill me, my trustworthy companions! Truly, in my killing is my (true) living, and my death is in my life and my life is in my death." [uqtulúní yá thiqátí inna fí qatlí hayátí/ wa-mamátí fí hayátí wa-hayátí fí mamátí-- the Arabic quoted in Nicholson's Commentary)

24. (4188) he ascended [mi`râj shod]: means that the angel had the energy to rise to the heavens by "eating" the virtuous thoughts, words, and actions of human beings.

25. (4190) in another place: "This may refer to Book V, v. 31 sqq., here the topic of self-mortification is treated at great length." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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tamSîl-é gorêkhtan-é mû'min wa bê-Sabrî-yé ô dar balâ
ba-iZTirâb wa bê-qarârî-yé nokhûd wa dêgar Hawâ'ij dar
jôsh-é dêg wa bar dawîdan tâ bêrûn jah-and

4159 be-n'gar andar nakhkhodê dar dêg chûn
mê-jah-ad bâlâ, chô shod z-âtesh zabûn

4160 har zamân nakhkhod bar ây-ad waqt-é jôsh
bar sar-é dêg-o bar âr-ad Sad khorôsh

ke che-râ âtesh ba-man dar mê-zan-î
chûn kharîd-î, chûn negûn-am mê-kon-î?
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

mê-zan-ad kaflêz kadbânû ke nê
khwash be-jôsh-o bar ma-jeh z-âtesh-konê

z-ân na-jôshân-am ke makrûh-é man-î
bal-ke tâ gîr-î tô Zawq-o châshanî

tâ ghiZî gard-î be-y-âmîz-î ba-jân
bahr-é khwârî nêst-at în imtiHân

4165 âb mê-khword-î ba-bostân sabz-o tar
bahr-é în âtesh bod-ast ân âb-khwar

raHmat-ash sâbiq bod-ast az qahr z-ân
tâ ze-raHmat gard-ad ahl-é imtiHân

raHmat-ash bar qahr az ân sâbiq shod-ast
tâ ke sarmâya-yé wujûd ây-ad ba-dast

z-ân-ke bê-laZZat na-rôy-ad laHm-o pôst
chûn na-rôy-ad, che godâz-ad `ishq-é dôst?

z-ân taqâZâ gar be-yâb-ad qahr-hâ
tâ kon-î îSâr-é ân sarmâya-râ

4170 bâz luTf ây-ad barây-é `aZr-é ô
ke be-kard-î ghusl-o bar jast-î ze-jô

gôy-ad ay nakhkhod charîd-î dar bahâr
ranj mehmân-é tô shod nêkô-sh dâr

tâ ke mehmân bâz gard-ad shukr-sâz
pêsh-é shah gôy-ad ze-iSâr-é tô bâz

tâ ba-jây-é ni`mat-at mun`im ras-ad
jumla ni`mat-hâ bar-ad bar tô Hasad

man khâlîl-am tô pesar pêsh-é bechok
sar be-nih inn-î arân-î aZbaHuk

4175 sar ba-pêsh-é qahr neh del bar qarâr
tâ be-borr-am Halq-at ismâ`îl-wâr

sar be-borr-am lêk în sar ân sarê-st
k-az borîda-gashtan-o mordan barî-st

lêk maqSûd-é azal taslîm-é to-st
ay musalmân bây-ad-at taslîm-jost

ay nakhod mê-jôsh andar ibtilâ
tâ na hastî-wo na khwad mân-ad to-râ

andar ân bostân agar khandîda-î
tô gol-é bostân-é jân-o dîda-î

gar jodâ az bâgh-é âb-o gel shod-î
luqma gasht-î, andar aHyâ âmad-î

shaw ghiZî-wo quwwat-o andêsha-hâ
shîr bûd-î, shêr shaw dar bêsha-hâ

az Sifât-ash rosta-î wa 'llâh nokhost
dar sifât-ash bâz raw châlâk-o chost

z-abr-o khworshêd-o ze-gardûn âmad-î
pas shod-î awSâf-o gardûn bar shod-î

âmad-î dar Sûrat-é bârân-o tâb
mê-raw-î andar sifât-é mustaTâb

juzw-é shêd-o abr-o anjum-hâ bod-î
nafs-o fa`l-o qawl-o fikrat-hâ shod-î

hastiy-é Haywân shod az marg-é nabât
râst âmad uqtilûn-î yâ Siqât

chûn chon-în bordê-st mâ-râ ba`d-é mât
râst âmad inna fî qatl-î Hayât

fa`l-o qawl-o Sidq shod qût-é malak
tâ ba-d-în mi`râj shod sôy-é falak

ân-chon-ân k-ân Tu`ma shod qût-é bashar
az jamâdî bar shod-o shod jân-war

în shokhon-râ tarjuma-yé pahnâ-warê
gofta ây-ad dar maqâm-é dêgarê

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Pea Boiling in the Pot (part two)

Mathnawi III: 4191-4211

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4191 (The lady continued),[1] "The caravan (of spirits) is constantly arriving from the heavens, so that it may do business (on earth and then) go back.

"So, go sweetly and agreeably with deliberate choice -- not with bitterness and hatred, like a thief.

"I keep telling you these bitter sayings so that I may wash (all) bitternesses from you.

"The frozen grape escapes[2] by means of cold water (and then) puts away coldness and iciness.

4195 "When, because of the bitterness (of suffering), (your) heart (is) filled with blood,[3] then you will go beyond all bitternesses."

The example of the believer's becoming patient when he becomes aware of the good and evil[4] (consequences) of [Divinely sent] trials and afflictions.

(The lady continued), "The dog (which) is not (trained) for hunting has no collar.[5] (And) raw and unboiled (food) is without taste."

The pea replied, "Since it is such (as you say), O my lady, I will boil willingly-- (but) really, give me help!

"You are like my architect[6] in this boiling: stir me (with) the ladle, since you stir very pleasantly.

"I am like an elephant: strike blows and (make) scars upon my head, so that I may not dream of India[7] and (its) gardens,

4200 "So that I may give myself to the boiling, (and) so that I may find release in that embrace.[8]

"Because, (when possessed of) wealth and independence, man becomes rebellious (and) becomes hostile, like the dreaming elephant.
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"(For) when the elephant sees India in a dream, it won't listen to the elephant-driver (and) becomes vicious."

How the lady of the house apologized to the pea and (explained) the wisdom in keeping the pea in (a state of) boiling.

The lady says to it,[9] "Before this, I was part of the earth, like you.

"When I drank the fiery (cup of) spiritual struggle,[10] I then became accepted and worthy.[11]

4205 "For a while, I was boiling in Time,[12] then for another period in the pot of the body.[13]

"By means of these two boilings, I became strength for the senses. I became (animal) spirit (and) then became your master and teacher.

"In the mineral state, I used to say (to myself), 'You're running (forward) so you may become knowledge and abstract qualities.'[14]

"Since I have become (animal) spirit, 'Then you should boil again, (I said to myself), another time and pass beyond animality!'"

Keep asking (help) from God, so that you don't stumble over these subtle sayings[15] and (so that) you may reach the end (of the journey).

4210 Because many have wandered astray because of the Qur'an,[16] (and) because a (whole) people have gone (and fallen) into the well because of (holding) that rope.

4211 O stubborn one! The rope is not at fault. (It is) because you lacked passionate desire for ascending to the top.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 7/13/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4191) The lady continued: This is the continuation of the story of the pea boiling in the pot, how it became agitated and demanded to know why it was being tortured. The lady of the house explained that it was not a punishment, but to make the pea sweet, and so that it could attain a higher level of existence by becoming part of a human body. According to the commentaries reviewed by Nicholson, the lady of the house represents the spiritual guide and master [murshid], the pea represents the spiritual seeker and disciple [murîd], and the fire represents strict training, austerity, and spiritual hardship [riyâzat].

2. (4194) The frozen grape escapes: Nicholson translated, "is thawed," and explained, "Literally, 'is freed,' i.e. its juice is made to flow." (footnote)

3. (4195) (your) heart (is) filled with blood: means, filled with the misery of having suffered cruelly. Nicholson translated, "When, from (having endured) bitterness (self-mortification), thy heart is filled with blood (like the grape)..."

4. (Heading) the good and evil: means when the believer (in God) realizes that the difficult trial is sent by God and that patient acceptance will lead to blessings and greater nearness to God, and that impatient rejection of the trial may lead to rejection and distance from God. Nicholson did not accept the reading in the earliest manuscript ("the good and evil of trials") and noted that all other manuscripts had "sirr ú manfa`at-i balá," which he translated as, "when he understands the inward meaning and the beneficial nature of tribulation."

5. (4196) has no collar: a metaphor of lacking spiritual training. In Islam, ownership of dogs trained for hunting is allowed; all other dogs are considered to be useless and filthy. "The dog's collar shows that he is prized and well cared for: similarly God lays the burden of spiritual tribulation on none but His elect." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (4198) like my architect: means, "You are not destroying me, but designing me to be built as something better."

7. (4199) not dream of India: means not to desire to go back to an earlier stage, in this case a vegetative one. "Here the proverb píl yád-i Hindústán kardah-ast [= The elephant is remembering India] is applied to the muríd [= the spiritual seeker and disciple] who would indulge in worldly thoughts and fall into temptation unless he were subjected to severe discipline by his murshid" [= spiritual guide and master]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (4200) in that embrace: Nicholson read the line differently and translated,"to the end that I may find a way [rahê] to that embrace (of the Beloved)." Chittick translated, "and be delivered to the embrace of the Beloved."

9. (4203) tells it [mê-gôy-ad wa-râ]: the oldest manuscript has the archaic form of the singular pronoun, usually spelled alif waw; it is similar to the archaic "wây," or "way."

10. (4204) spiritual struggle [jihâd]: this word is often mistranslated as "Holy War" (a Christian term). The word means "struggle," and in Islam means various kinds of struggle for the sake of God and the community of Muslims, only one of which is defensive warfare. The sufis emphasize the Tradition in which the Prophet Muhammad returned from a battle (with the Arab polytheists) and said, "We have returned from the Lesser Combat [jihâd al-aSghar] to the Greater Combat [jihâd al-akbar]." He defined the latter as "the struggle against the ego [nafs]" and also said, "The warrior [mujâhid] is the one who struggles against his ego for the sake of God." Nicholson translated, "After I had drunk a (cup of) fiery self-mortification..." Chittick translated, "When I tasted the fire of spiritual warfare..."

11. (4204) I then became accepted and worthy: means accepted by God and worthy of rising to the next level on the arc of ascent-- the return journey to God.

12. (4205) in Time: means the spirit's descending journey from the heavens, prior to its ascent back, starting in physical form on the mineral level.

13. (4205) the pot of the body: Means within a physical form. "This verse alludes to the 'mineral' (elemental) and 'vegetive' stages in the life-history of Man." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (4207) knowledge and abstract qualities: means that the spirit, which was in mineral, plant, and animal form is rushing ahead to acquire the qualities of intellect, reason, and wisdom. Nicholson translated, "Thou art running (to and fro in agitation) to the end that thou mayst become (endued with) knowledge and spiritual qualities."

15. (4209) so that you don't stumble over these subtle sayings: "No doubt the poet's caveat [= warning] has a special reference to the heresy of tanásukh [= the doctrine of transmigration of souls from human bodies to animals, and vice verse], which he repudiates in common with all authoritative Súfí teachers. It is incorrect to describe the ideas set forth in the preceding passage as 'a kind of

doctrine of transmigration.'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (4210) wandered astray because of the Qur'an: refers to those who approach the Holy Qur'an with the wrong attitudes and motives. "According to Qur. III 98 (wa-'tasimú bi-habli 'lláhi jamí-an), interpreted by a well-known Hadíth (al-Qur'ánu hablu 'lláhi 'l-matínu), the Qur'án is a rope to which every true believer must cling for safety; yet God lets it be the means of casting him into error and destruction perverse interpreters of the truth contained in it (Qur. II 24)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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4191 kârawân dâyîm ze-gardûn mê-ras-ad
tâ tajârat mê-kon-ad, wâ mê-raw-ad

pas be-raw shîrîn-o khwash bâ ikhtiyâr
na ba-talkhî-wo karâhat dozd-wâr

z-ân hadîS-é talkh mê-gôy-am to-râ
tâ ze-talkhî-hâ ferô shôy-am to-râ

z-âb-é sard angûr-é afsorda rah-ad
sardî-wo afsordagî bêrûn neh-ad

4195 tô ze-talkhî chûn-ke del por khûn shaw-î
pas ze-talkhî-hâ hama bêrûn raw-î

tamSîl-é Sâbir-shodan-é mû'min chûn bar sharr wa khayr-é balâ wâqif shaw-ad

sag shekârî nêst, ô-râ Tawq nêst
khâm-o nâ-jôshîda joz bê-Zawq nêst

goft nakhkhod chûn chon-în-ast ay sitî
khwash be-jôsh-am, yâriy-am deh râstî

tô dar-în jôshesh chô mi`mâr-é man-î
kafchalêz-am zan ke bas khwash mê-zan-î

hamchô pîl-am, bar sar-am zan zakhm-o dâgh
tâ be-bîn-am khwâb-é hendostân-o bâgh

4200 tâ ke khwad-râ dar deh-am dar jôsh man
tâ rahî yâb-am dar ân âghôsh man
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z-ân-ke insân dar ghinâ Tâghî shaw-ad
hamchô pîl-é khwâb-bîn yâghî shaw-ad

pîl chûn dar khwâb bîn-ad hend-râ
pîl-bân-râ na-shenûd, âr-ad daghâ

`aZr goftan-é kadbânû bâ nokhûd wa Hikmat dar
jôsh-dâshtan-é kadbânû nokhûd-râ

ân sitî gôy-ad wa-râ ke pêsh az-în
man chô tô bûd-am ze-ajzây-é zamîn

chûn be-nôshîd-am jihâd-é âZarî
pas paZîrâ gasht-am-o andar khwarî

4205 maddatê jôshîda-am andar zaman
maddatê dêgar darûn-é dêg-é tan

z-în dô jôshesh quwwat-é His-hâ shod-am
rûH gashtam pas to-râ ustâ shod-am

dar jamâdî goft-amy z-ân mê-daw-î
tâ shaw-î `ilm-o Sifât-é ma`nawî

chûn shod-am man rûH pas bâr-é degar
jôsh-é degar kon ze-Haywânî goZar

az khodâ mê-khwâh tâ z-în nokta-hâ
dar na-laghz-î-wo ras-î dar muntahâ

4210 z-ân-ke az qurân basê gomrah shod-and
z-ân rasan qawmê darûn-é chah shod-and

4211 mar rasan-râ nêst jurmê ay `anûd
chûn to-râ sawdây-é sarbâlâ na-bûd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Two Kinds of Lovers of God

Mathnawi III: 4595-4600

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4595 Therefore, the (one who is a) lover of God for (the sake of) hope and fear[1] is reading the book of imitation[2] for (the sake of) study.[3]

But the (one who is a) lover of God for the sake of God is nowhere (to be found), because he is separate from (personal) aims and motives.

Even if he is like this or like that, since he is a (true) seeker, the attraction of God[4] is pulling him toward God.

(So) if he is the lover of God for (the sake of) other than Him, so that he may forever obtain (favors) from His Goodness,[5]

Or (if) he is the lover of God for (the sake of) His Self,[6] (since) He has no equal, (and) being fearful of separation from Him[7]--

4600 The searching and seeking of both (kinds of lovers) are from that (Divine) origin, (and) this captivity of the heart is from that Beloved.[8]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4595) (the sake of) hope and fear: for hope of the rewards of Paradise and from fear of the punishments of Hell.

2. (4595) the book of imitation: Nicholson translated, "...reads studiously the book of blind conformity." Means following the external requirements for gaining Paradise and avoiding Hell--without having authentic devotion and yearning love of God within the heart.
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3. (4595) for (the sake of) study: means for the sake of studying the external rules.

4. (4597) the attraction [jaZb] of God: the word "jaZba" is a technical term in sufism. A dervish who is in a state of extreme attraction is called a "majZûb," one who is so helplessly and ecstatically "attracted" to God that he appears crazy and may hardly be able to speak sensibly. Such a dervish is incapable of maintaining the role of a spiritual teacher or guide.

5. (4598) (favors) from His Goodness: means the rewards and blissful pleasures of Paradise.

6. (4599) (for the sake of) His Self: means for pure love of God's Essential Self. This ideal of pure love of God was articulated almost five centuries before Rumi's time by the famous woman mystic, Râbi`ah al-Adawiya (died 801): "O God, if I worship You because of fear of Hell, (then) burn me in Hell. And if I worship in hope of Paradise, (then) make (it) forbidden to me. But if I worship You for Your sake (alone) [barây-é tô tô-râ mê-parast-am], (then) don't withhold Your Eternal Beauty from me!" (From `Attar's "Remembrances of the Saints"-- also translated by Arberry in "Muslim Saints and Mystics," 1966, p. 51.)

7. (4599) being fearful of separation from Him: the true lover does not fear the punishments of Hell, but only fears separation from God, the Only Beloved.

8. (4600) that Beloved: literally, "that heart-taker." An idiom for the beloved who captures the lover's heart.

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4595 pas muHibb-é Haq ba-ômêd-o ba-tars
daftar-é taqlîd mê-khwân-ad ba-dars

w-ân muHibb-é Haq ze-bahr-é Haq ko-jâ-st
ke ze-aghrâZ-o ze-`illat-hâ jodâ-st?

gar chon-în-o gar chon-ân chûn Tâlib-ast
jaZb-é Haq ô-râ sôy-é Haq jâZib-ast

gar muHibb-é Haq bow-ad li-ghayri-hi
kay yanâla dâ' im-an min khayri-hi

yâ muHibb-é Haq bow-ad la-`ayni-hi
lâ siwâ-hu khâyif-an min bayni-hi
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4600 har dô-râ în jost-o jô-hâ z-ân sarê-st
în gereftârî-yé del z-ân del-barê-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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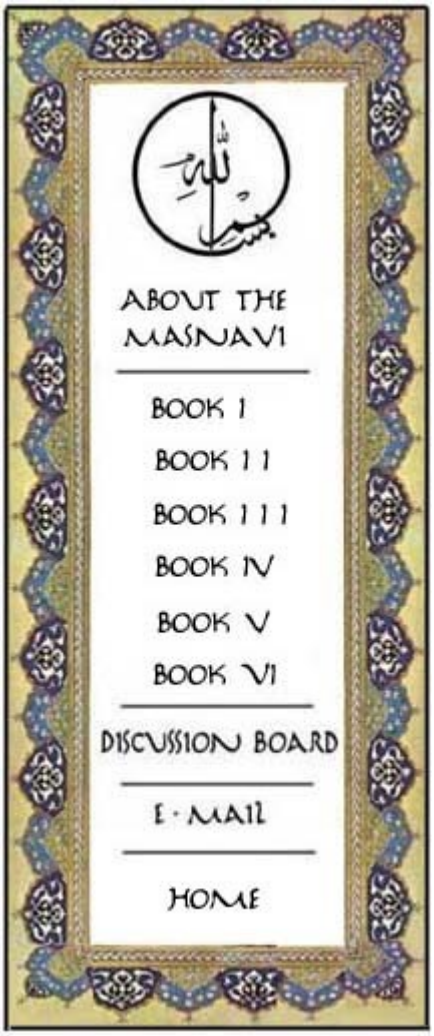

BOOK IV

TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S AND ANQARAVI'S COMMENTARIES

Solomon and Bilqis (part one) (7/01)

Solomon and Bilqis (part two) (8/01)

The Sufi Is Happy With Less (10/00)

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Moses and Pharoah (part one) (11/00)

Moses and Pharoah (part two) (11/00)

Moses and Pharoah (part three) (12/00)

Moses and Pharoah (part four) (12/00

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(7/01)

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TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S COMMENTARY

What Is The Most Difficult (1/00)

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The Painted Lion on the Flag (8/99)

Where Do You Really Live? (9/99)

Solomon and Bilqis (part one)

Mathnawi IV: 781-782, 792-811

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The sending of a threat by Solomon-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him-- to Bilqis, (Queen of Sheba): "Do not consider stubbornly persisting in polytheism![1] And don't delay [in submitting to me]!"

781 (Solomon said), "Be careful, (O) Bilqis, (and) come (in surrender)![2] Or else it will become bad (for you): your army[3] will become your enemy (and) will turn renegade.

782 Your door-keeper will tear away your door, (and) your soul will treat you with enmity with (all its) soul."

. . . . . .

792 O you (who) have shown[4] opposition to God in the deeds of (your) instruction:[5] you are in the midst of His army-- (so) be afraid!

(Every) part of your (bodily) parts (is a member of) His army in harmony (with His Will); they are submissive to you at present (but only) out of pretence.[6]

(For) if He says to (your) eyes, "Squeeze him!"-- eye pain will bring forth a hundred (feelings of) destruction for you.[7]

795 And If he says to (your) teeth, "Make something painful to appear!"-- then you will experience punishment from your teeth.

Open (a book about) medicine (and) read the chapter on diseases, so you may see the (painful) doings of the army of the body.

Since He is the Soul of the soul of everything, hostility toward the Soul of the soul is no easy (task).[8]

(Solomon continued saying), "Leave aside the armies of demons and jinns which act from (all the strength) amidst (their) souls (in giving aid) to me[9] in breaking the ranks (of the enemy).
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"From the start, O Bilqis, abandon (your) kingdom. (For) when you find (out about) me,[10] the entire kingdom will belong to you.[11]

800 "When you have come to me, you will know that without me, you are (nothing more than) a picture on the bath house (walls)."[12]

Although the image may be the depiction of a king or a wealthy man, it is (no more than) a form (and) it is without (any) experience of a spirit of its own.[13]

Its beauty (is only) for the sake of others, (and its) eyes and mouth have opened uselessly.

O you (who) have gambled yourself away in [vain] combat:[14] you have not distinguished others from your [essential] self;[15]

You stop at every form which you reach (and say), "I am this."[16] By God, you are not that.

805 (And when) you are left alone from people for a single moment,[17] you remain in distress and worry up to (your) throat.

You are never [merely] this since you are [in reality] that singular one[18] -- because you are [essentially] delightful, beautiful, and (blissfully) drunk with your self.

You are your own bird, your own prey, and your own trap; you are your own seat of honor,your own carpet, and your own roof.[19]

The essential substance[1] is what endures by itself, (but) that is (merely) a transient occurrence which is its branch.

If you are born of Adam, sit like him (and) see all (your) descendants within yourself.[21]

810 What (is) in the jar which is not in the river? (And) what (is present) in the house which is not in the city?

811 This world is (like) a jar and the heart like a river of water;[22] this world is (like) a private room and the heart

(like) a marvelous city.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) polytheism [shirk]: means associating the One True God with other divinities, as if there were multiple gods; or attributing human partners to God such as supposed incarnations of God (such as Jesus) or divinized human beings (such as Hercules and others.)

2. (781) come (in surrender): a reference to the letter which the Prophet Solomon sent to Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba: "In the name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate: Do not arrogantly exalt yourself against me, but come to me in submission [muslimîn]." (Qur'an, 27:30-31) "(It means), 'O Bilqis, become aware and come to the (true) Faith and accept Islam-- or else...'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (781) your army: "i.e. 'thy members and faculties'." "Lashkar [= army] here is a translation of the Qur'ánic junúd (XLVIII 4, etc.), i.e. the various kinds of created things which God uses as armies or auxiliaries for executing His purpose." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (792) O you (who) have shown [ay nomûda]: This is the reading in Nicholson's text. The reading in Tôfîq Subhânî's text [ay namûd] is apparently an error, since it causes the meter to be shortened.

5. (792) in the deeds of (your) instruction: means, in your deeds which you have also taught others to do. Nicholson translated, "O you that in our actions have studied to oppose God..." "It means, 'You have acted in opposition to the command of God Most High.' This is also another view of the meaning: 'O you who have established a lesson (for others) of acting in opposition to God Most High for your own sake in your actions and behavior.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (793) they are submissive to you at present (but only) out of pretence: "(It means), "(But) the moment when God Most High wills them (to be) opposed to you all the members (of your) body will change and become contrary and opposed to you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (794) will bring forth a hundred annihilations for you: Nicholson translated, "will wreak upon you a hundred vengeances."

8. (797) is no easy (task): Nicholson translated, "how is it a light matter...?"

9. (798) the armies of demons and jinns... (in giving aid) to me: God gave Solomon power to control the demons [satans] (Qur'an 21:82; 38:37-38) and jinn [genies)] (Qur'an 27:17). "I.e. 'leave them out of account: all God's armies are at my disposal.'" (Nicholson, Footnote) "(It means), 'If only one army among those becomes dominant over you, you will not have the power to fight with it.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (799) when you find (out about) me: means, "When you surrender to me and discover that I am God's chosen Prophet." Nicholson translated, "when thou gainest me..."

11. (799) the entire kingdom will belong to you: "Those who devote themselves to Solomon (the Completed Man [= the saint who reflects all the Attributes of God-- a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240]) gain both the kingdom of this world and the kingdom of God.

12. (800) you are (nothing more than) a picture on the bath house (walls): Depictions of living creatures (animals and human beings) have long been frowned on in Islam (to avoid any taint of idolatry), but they existed on bathhouse walls and in some royal palaces.

13. (801) it is without (any) experience of a spirit of its own: Nicholson translated, "it has no savour (consciousness) of its own spirit."

14. (803) O you (who) have gambled yourself away in [vain] combat: means in vain, like a picture of a soldier which is powerless to fight anything. Nicholson translated, "O you who have devoted yourself (to contending with others) in strife..." And he explained about this line and the next: "The sensual man, ignorant of his real nature, regards himself as belonging to the world of phenomena, which in his

eyes is other than God, and therefore wastes his life in the pursuit of mere forms and shadows.... G [= the oldest manuscript of the Mathnawi] reads [= instead of "dar paykâr"-- in combat, strife] dar bígár, 'idly', 'fruitlessly'." (Commentary)

15. (803) you have not distinguished others from your [essential] self: means identifying with the external appearance of others and the material world, instead of knowing that all is contained within the self. Nicholson translated, "you have not known (discriminated) others from yourself."

"Although the speech is to Bilqis [= the Queen of Sheba], yet it is directed to any seekers who consider others as different than themselves and who are constantly in combat and quarrel with others. Therefore, Mawlana (Jalaluddin Rumi) is speaking to anyone among the (spiritual) seekers: 'O you (who) have gambled yourself away in [vain] combat (with others), you have not understood the human reality [Haqîqat-é insânî]. If you could see yourself with a truth-seeing eye, you would understand that no otherness is left between you and others. Then, if you would be free from combat and quarrel, you would comprehend (the true nature of) humanity with a truth-seeing eye (and) then I would be you and you would also be me.'"

16. (804) You stop at every form which you reach (and say), "I am this": "(It means), 'This state is only your opinion and fantasy, and that condition and form disappears from you in the end and you are made sorrowful. If it happened that you were that condition and form, it would not disappear from you and you would not be made sorrowful.'"
17. (805) (And when) you are left alone from people for a single moment: "(It means), 'Because... you have been used to a certain amount of respect, honor, and attention from people and you have made (your) attachment (to this) evident...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (806) since you are [in reality] that singular one: Nicholson translated, "You are that Unique One..." And he interpreted: "This and the following verses describe the haqíqat-i insániyyah [= the reality of being human] as realised in the Perfect Man." (Commentary)

"(It means), 'But you are that singular one [awHadê] which is the intended aim of that human reality which is that which comprises all joys and is the manifestation of

all Divine attributes. That is the (human) reality which is unique and most excellent which essentially cannot be found among other (worldly) delights, pleasures, and joys.'"

19. (807) and your own roof: A picturesque way of saying that the gnostic [= mystic knower] transcends all relations of 'otherness'. He is self-sufficient: nothing exists that he cannot find in his own essence." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(It means), all things exist within your own being, but it is necessary for you to know yourself and to be the knower of the (spiritual) reality of yourself so that you may find salvation from false joys and non-essential pleasures." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (808) The essential substance [jawhar]: the essence of something, in contrast to its form. These are philosophical terms which contrast what is substantial/essential with what is derivative and "accidental" [`araZ]-- meaning whatever happens to occur externally.

"If a person is unaware of his own essential nature [jawhariyyat] and is needy and a follower (of what is external), he is under the rule of external happenings [`araZ]. But if he obtains awareness of his essential self and is free of dependence and neediness toward others, he is under the rule of essence [jawhar]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (809) (and) see all (your) descendants within yourself: Nicholson corrected his translation to, "behold all your progeny in yourself" (from, "and behold all his progeny in yourself."). He referred to Mathnawi II: 3535, which he translated, "Formerly, like Adam, I was imprisoned in grief; now East and West are filled with my spirit's progeny." And he explained, "Adam was God's Khalífah [= vice-regent], and his true sons are Perfect Men invested with the Divine Names and Attributes, which in effect comprise the totality of existence." (Commentary)

"Since Hazrat-i Adam-- peace be upon him, was aware of the Divine Names and Attributes [Qur'an 2: 31]. And he saw all his descendants within himself, prior to their manifestation, and he glimpsed their secrets and realities.... If someone sits in the (spiritual) station of the vice-regent of God and has reached the spiritual degree of (completed) Humanity [âdamiyyat], he will attain any outward or spiritual "progeny" from (within) his own being (which) will be manifested. He will see all (of these), and

will glimpse their special qualities and secrets."
(Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (811) and the heart like a river of water: Nicholson translated, "and the heart (spirit) is like the river..."
And he explained: "The universe is contained in the infinite spirit of Man."

"The intended meaning of 'river': it is the heart of that person who is most (spiritually) completed....
Therefore, one can ask, What exists in the world that is not in the (spiritually) completed human being [insân-é kâmil]?
In other words: everything that exists in the world is more so in the heart of the completed (saintly) human being....
This world is like a small jar, and in regard to meaning, the heart of the completed human is like a great river of water in relation to it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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tahdîd ferestâdan-é sulaymân-- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- pêsh-é bilqîs ke iSrâr ma-y-andêsh bar shirk wa ta'khîr ma-kon

781 hîn be-yâ bilqîs, w-ar-na bad shaw-ad
lashkar-at khaSm-at shaw-ad murtad shaw-ad

782 parda-dâr-é tô dar-at-râ bar kan-ad
jân-é tô bâ tô ba-jân khaSmî kon-ad

. . . . . .

792 ay namûda Zidd-é Haq dar fi`l-é dars
dar meyân-é lashkar-é ôy-î, be-tars

juzw-é juzw-at lashkar-é ô dar wifâq
mar to-râ aknûn muTî`-and az nifâq

gar be-gôy-ad chashm-râ k-ô-râ foshâr
dard-é chashm az tô bar âr-ad Sad damâr

795 w-ar ba-dandân gôy-ad ô be-n'mâ wabâl
pas be-bîn-î tô ze-dandân gôsh-mâl

bâz kon Tib-râ, be-khwân bâbu 'l-`ilal
tâ be-bîn-î lashkar-é to-râ `amal

chûn-ke jân-é jân-é har chêzê way-ast
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doshmanî bâ jân-é jân âsân kay-ast

khwad rahâ kon lashkar-é dêw-o parî
k-az meyân-é jân kon-and-am Saf-darî

mulk-râ be-g'Zâr bilqîs az nokhost
chûn ma-râ yâb-î hama-yé mulk ân-é to-st

khwad be-dân-î chûn bar-é man âmad-î
ke tô bê-man, naqsh-é garm-âba bod-î

naqsh agar khwad naqsh-é sulTân yâ ghanî-st
Sûrat-ast az jân-é khwad bê-châshnî-st

zînat-é ô az barây-é dêgar-ân
bâz karda bê-hoda chashm-o dahân

ay tô dar paykâr khwad-râ bâkhta
dêgar-ân-râ tô ze-khwad na-'sh'nâkhta

tô ba-har Sûrat keây-î, b-êst-î
ke man-am în, w-allâh ân tô nêst-î

yak zamân tan-hâ be-mân-î tô ze-khalq
dar gham-o andêsha mân-î tâ ba Halq

în tô kay bâsh-î? ke tô ân awHad-î
ke khwash-o zîbâ-wo sar-mast-é khwad-î

morgh-é khwêsh-î, Sayd-é khwêsh-î, dâm-é khwêsh
Sadr-é khwêsh-î, farsh-é khwêsh-î, bâm-é khwêsh

jawhar ân bâsh-ad ke qâyim bâ khwad-ast
ân `araZ bâsh-ad ke far`-é ô shod-ast

gar tô âdam-zâda-î, chûn ô neshîn
jumla-yé Zarriyyât-râ dar khwad be-bîn

chêst andar khom ke andar nahr nêst?
chêst andar khâna k-andar shahr nêst?

în jahân khomm-ast-o del chûn jôy-é âb
în jahân Hujra-st-o del shahr-é `ujâb

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Solomon and Bilqis (part two)

Mathnawi IV: 845-869

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The remainder of the story of the people of Saba, and the advice and guidance of Solomon-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him-- to the people of Bilqis (the Queen of Sheba): everyone (was guided) in accordance with his own (needs) and his (particular) problems of religion and the heart.[1] And (about Solomon's) snaring every kind of bird of secret thought[2] with a (bird-catcher's) whistle for that (particular) kind of bird and its (favorite) seeds.

845 I will tell the story of (the people of) Saba in the manner of longing love:[3] When the morning breeze[4] reached to the tulip garden,[5]

The figures in the distance met on the day of their union, (and) the children ran (back) to their home.[6]

Among the (various) peoples, the secret people of Love[7] are like a generosity surrounded by the stinginess of poor health.[8]

The (shameful) lowliness of spirits is from their bodies, (but) the magnificence of bodies is from their spirits.

O you lovers (of God)! The (wine) cup is offered (especially) to you, (so) you are immortal and eternity is given to you.

850 O you who have consoled yourselves and forgotten![9] Stand up and love (again)! That[10] is the breeze of Joseph, so draw in (the scent)![11]

(O knower of) the Solomonic (ability[12] to understand the) "speech of the birds"![13] Come (and) sing the sound of every bird which arrives.[14]

Since God has sent you to the birds, he has given you
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lessons (about) the melodies of each (kind of) bird.

Speak the language of predestination to the bird of (the sect believing in Divine) compulsion.[15] (And) speak about patience[16] to the bird of broken wing.

Keep the patient bird (in a) cheerful (mood) and free (from pain and worry). And inspire the phoenix bird[17] with descriptions of Mt. Qaf.[18]

855 Teach the pigeon about (being) wary of the falcon,[19] (and) tell the falcon about kindly patience and control (of desires).[20]

And regarding any bat which has remained stuck and helpless (in darkness),[21] make it associated and familiar with the light.

Teach peace and reconciliation to the warlike partridge,[22] (and) show the signs of the dawn to the roosters.[23]

In the same way, go from the hoopoe[24] to the eagle (and) indicate the way. And God knows best the right way.

(About) Bilqis' becoming free from (attachment to her) kingdom and (her) becoming drunk from yearning for the (true) faith. And the focus of her aspiration becoming detached, at the time of her (spiritual) emigration, from (her) entire kingdom-- except from (her) throne.

When Solomon made a single whistling sound to the birds of Saba, all of them (became) bound and fettered,

860 Except, perhaps, any bird that was lacking vitality and wings; or one which was deaf and speechless from the beginning, like a fish.

No, I've spoken in error. Because if the deaf man should lay his head in front of the inspiration of the (Divine) Grandeur,[25] it will give him hearing.

When Bilqis resolved in (her) heart and soul (to go to Solomon), she also felt regret for the past.[26]

She abandoned wealth and kingdom in the same manner as

the lovers (of God), with (their) abandonment of (concern for) reputation and disgrace.[27]

To her eyes, those delightful male slaves and servant girls (of hers) resembled rotten onions.

865 Because of love, gardens and palaces and river ways appeared (like) a heap of ashes to her eyes.

(For) love, during the time of (jealous) domination and anger, makes lovely ones (to appear) ugly to the eye.

The jealousy of love causes every emerald to appear (as no more than) a leek.[28] This is the meaning of "(There is) not."[29]

O (seeker of) refuge,[30] (the meaning of) "There is no divinity except Him"[31] is this: that the (beautiful full) moon should appear (to you as) a blackened pot.

869 No (loss of) wealth, treasures, or rich furniture were regretted by her except for (her) throne.[32]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) problems of religion and the heart: Nicholson translated, "religious and spiritual difficulties."

2. (Heading) every kind of bird of secret thought: means that Solomon was able to "capture" the secret thoughts of each person. God gave Solomon the ability to understand the speech of birds (Qur'an 27:16). Nicholson translated, "each sort of conceptual bird."

"Just as in the case of wise spiritual guides [murshid-ân-é `ârif] and knowers of languages who, in the same way, in the sense of (the saying of the Prophet), 'Speak to people according to the amount of their understanding [kalamû 'n-nâsa `alà qadri `aqûla-him].'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (845) in the manner of longing love: the following five couplets are in Arabic.

4. (845) the morning breeze [Sabâ]: a word play on the people of sabâ.

5. (845) When the morning breeze reached to the tulip garden: means when the beloved arrived to the longing lover. "I.e. when Solomon's message reached Sabá." (Nicholson, Footnote) "The intended meaning: In the same manner that the morning breeze blows upon the tulip field and bestows freshness and delicateness, the pure breath of Solomon-- peace be upon him-- also resembles the morning breeze for the people of Saba and it bestows a fresh and thriving state." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (846) toward their home: Nicholson translated, "The bodies met (experienced) the day of their union (with the spirits which dwell in them)..." And he explained: "I.e. the people of Sabá rejoiced as on the day when their spirits entered their bodies." (Footnote) "(It means) the joy of the people of Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba in the same manner as the joy of bodies from meeting spirits [= in the womb].... In the same way that children at the time of returning to their homes become happy and become joyous from the sight of their fathers and mothers." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (847) the hidden people of Love: Nicholson translated, "the community of secret Love." "The people of Love are concealed and hidden among the people." "The explanation: the lovers among the peoples resemble a generous people... (around) whose sides are a people of much stinginess and avarice." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (847) a generosity surrounded by the stinginess of poor health: Nicholson translated, "like a liberality surrounded by the meanness of (spiritual) distemper." And he explained: "The self-devotion and self-sacrifice (júd) of Súfís is contrasted with its opposite quality (lu'm) [= stinginess]. Fa [= Anqaravi], like most commentaries, reads (quite indefensibly) lawm, i.e. hostile criticism of mystics by worldly folk." (Commentary) The last line describes people who are withholding and stingy due to the misery of poor health.

9. (850) O you who have consoled yourselves and forgotten: Nicholson translated, "O ye that are forgetful." Anqaravi

understood it according the full meaning of the key word--someone who has been given a magical potion to remove and forget the sorrow of failed love: "O people whose hearts are empty of the longing-sorrow of love [gham-é `ishq], and who are happy without the love of the Beloved! Rise up and become lovers (of God)!" (Commentary)

10. (850) That: "Dháka [= That] refers to the message of Solomon, i.e. the inspiring words and influence (nafs) of the Perfect Man." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The breeze of Joseph is truly this Solomonic breath and godly blowing." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (850) the breeze of Joseph, so draw in (the scent): a frequent metaphor in Rumi's writings regarding the longing of Jacob for his missing son Joseph. He said, "Truly I smell the presence of Joseph," and when Joseph's shirt was thrown over his face he regained his sight (Qur'an 12:94, 96) and was soon re-united with his son.

12. (851) (O knower of) the Solomonic (ability: Nicholson referred to the same wording in II 3758, and added: "Here it [= the reference] seems likely that Husámu'ddín [= Rumi's closest disciple and first successor, to whom he dictated the Mathnawi] is addressed." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (851) sing the sound of every bird which arrives: "(It means), 'O godly spiritual guide [murshid]: (in regard to) every "bird" which belongs to a group of (spiritual) seekers, speak with the language of that bird, in the sense of (the saying of the Prophet, "Speak to people according to their amount of understanding"-- so that it may profit from you..." "It means, 'O spiritual guide and knower of the speech (of disciples), (you) who are the Solomon of the present time!'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (851) "speech of the birds" [mantiqu 'T-Tayr]: "And Solomon... said, 'O people! We have been taught the speech of the birds, and have been given (something) of (the goodness) of all things. This is certainly a manifest favor (from God)." (Qur'an 27:16) This phrase is also the title of a famous epic ("The Speech of the Birds") by the sufi poet Fariduddin `Attar (died 1221).

15. (853) Divine) compulsion: the Islamic school of thought which taught that there is no individual free-will, but that everything which occurs is predestined by the Divine Will. This extremist belief is also called Necessitarianism. Rumi

taught that there is both free-will and predestination, and he emphasized the virtues of personal striving. Nicholson explained that the meaning of this verse is: "i.e. 'teach Necessitarians the true doctrine of necessity (jabr-i mahmúd)' [= the best understanding about predestination]." Elsewhere, Nicholson described this: "Necessitarians who assert that Divine omnipotence... excludes the possibility of free action on the part of Man. Such a view implies separation between the creature and the Creator, the opposition of two wills, and the subjugation of the weaker. But mystics, who know God to be Love and themselves one with Him, are not 'compelled'; on the contrary they enjoy the unconstrained rapture (bí-sabrí) of self-abandonment and the perfect freedom of feeling and acting in harmony with the will of their Beloved." (Commentary)

"The intended meaning: 'Speak in praise about (Divine) compulsion to any people who have a blameworthy belief in Necessitarianism... (so that) they may reach moderation--meaning the (true Islamic) school of the people of the (Prophet Muhammad's) ways and beliefs and congregation [ahl-é sunnat wa jamâ`at =the majority belief of Sunni Islam]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (853) about patience: Nicholson translated, "of patience (quietism)." [= Quietism was a kind of mysticism taught in the Nineteenth Century, often viewed as advocating extreme passivity.] "It means, 'to those left in suffering who have been broken by the effects of poverty and misfortune, speak about being patient. And speak to them about the (Divine) reward for being patient.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (854) the phoenix bird [morgh-é `anqâ]: refers to a mythical and miraculous bird (also called sîmorgh), whose home was the mountain of Qaf, which was said to surround the entire earth.

18. (854) descriptions of Mt. Qaf: "the attributes of the Divine Essence, which is the mystic's home." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The intended meaning of the phoenix bird is the people of (spiritual) seeking, who have chosen seclusion in the corner of contentment. And the meaning of Qaf (mountain) is Divine nearness and the place of Origin and Truth. Therefore, the meaning of the verse (is): 'Speak to the seeker of the path of the phoenix about nearness to the Divine and the place of Origin and Truth. And encourage him

to that direction.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (855) the pigeon... the falcon: "The 'pigeon' and the 'falcon' may be types of the mu'min [= true believer] and the zálim [wrongdoer]; but other interpretations are possible." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The intended meaning of 'pigeon': here it is weak creatures. And the intended meaning of 'falcon': it is the rich and powerful who are ruling and holding firm to power." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (855) about kindly patience and control (of desires): Nicholson translated, "speak of forbearance and being on its guard (against acting unjustly)." "(It means), 'Speak words about gentleness and clemency and command them to avoid injustice and oppression.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)
21. (856) any bat which has remained stuck and helpless (in darkness): Nicholson translated, "the bat that is left destitute (of spiritual illumination)..." The bat was believed to be blind and ignorant of the existence of light-- and thus is, for Rumi, a symbol of spiritual blindness.

"(It means), 'In regard to those who follow the ways of the bat and are dedicated to wrongdoing, who remain without a portion of Divine lights or of spiritual illumination, make them familiar with the Divine lights and with the favors of Divine secrets.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (857) the warlike partridge: "would well describe the attitude of zealous theologians when engaged in controversy." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi referred to the verse: "And if two groups of believers quarrel, make peace between them.... Truly, the believers are a (single) brotherhood, so make peace between your two (differing) brothers. And be in reverential awe toward God, so you may receive mercy." (Qur'an 49:9-10).

23. (857) show the signs of the dawn to the roosters: "It means: 'Show the signs and effects of the dawn of Truth to those who praise and glorify God at the blessed time (prior to) dawn and ask forgiveness [istaghfâr], so that their souls may become illuminated and their hearts may become full of the lights and splendor of God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (858) the hoopoe: a type of bird. In the story of

Solomon and Bilqis, a hoopoe surveyed the kingdom of Saba (Sheba), and then returned and gave Solomon a description of it (Qur'an 27:20-26).

25. (861) in front of the inspiration of the (Divine) Grandeur: "Because, (concerning) the one whose spiritual ears are deaf, if there is acknowledgment of his own blindness; and (if) he places his head [= humbly and with neediness] in the presence of the prophets (of God), who are the locus of the inspiration [= revelation] of God, the Owner of Majesty and Grandeur; and (if) he confesses, saying, 'I lack spiritual hearing, so I am ignorant and heedless'-- God most High will give him spiritual hearing. And he will reach the level where he is able to hear the Word of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (862) she also felt regret for the past: "She felt regret for (her) past ignorance and lack of awareness (= of the One True God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (863) abandonment of (concern for) reputation and disgrace: Those who love only God, and who have abandoned all other worldly loves, have no concerns about either protecting good reputations or avoiding social condemnation and disgrace.

28. (867) (as no more than) a leek: a common vegetable, related to the onion. "(It means), 'It appears as (like) a small and unimportant leek.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (867) This is the meaning of "(There is) not": refers to a frequent verse in the Qur'an "There is not any divinity except Him [lâ ilâha illâ hû] (as in 28:88). This is a rejection that anything in creation possesses divinity or divine qualities (such as Divine Beauty, Power, Wisdom, etc.), which leads to the affirmation that only the One True God is divine and has divine qualities. It is a form of the basic creed of Islam (which occurs twice in the Qur'an, 47:19; 37:35): "There is no divinity except God" [lâ ilâha illâ 'llâh]. The meaning is rejecting worship and love of everything except God. "It means, 'In the view of the lover, they (all other beloveds) appear as lowly, contemptible, and without importance.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (868) O (seeker of) refuge: "(It means), 'O seeker of protection.... who are the seeker of a (protecting) fortress and refuge for the sake of deliverance from the punishment of God...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Nicholson

translated differently as, "O (thou who givest) protection..." And he explained: "I.e. 'thou who art rich and powerful and able to extend patronage to others." (Nicholson, Footnote) And he also wrote: "referring to one whose patronage is sought." (Commentary)

31. (868) "There is no divinity except Him" [lâ ilâh illâ hû]: shortened here for metrical purposes (from the correct form: lâ ilâha illâ huwa).

32. (869) except for (her) throne: According to Rumi's story, Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, was willing to surrender her entire kingdom (in her submission to Solomon and the One God)-- except her throne, to which she was very attached. Solomon asked someone in his court to transport it magically to Jerusalem. One of the jinn (genies) agreed, and it appeared instantly, which was a great surprise to Bilqis when she arrived to his palace (Qur'an 27:39-42). Rumi gives another explanation: the throne was not transported by the magic of a demon, but through the spiritual power of Solomon's chief minister, Asaf (IV: 904-906).

"This is the indicated meaning: the seeker, possessed with the (spiritual) state of (traveling on) 'the journey to God' [sayr ilà 'llâh], cuts attachment from all possessions and from all things except from the throne of the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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baqiyya-yé qiSSa-yé ahl-é sabâ wa naSiHat wa irshâd-é sulaymân-- `alay-hi 's-salâm, âl-é bilqîs-râ har yakê-râ andar khwor-é khwad wa mushkilât-é dîn wa del-é ô wa Sayd-kardan-é har jins-é morgh-é Zamîrê ba-Safîr-é ân jins-é morgh wa Ta`ma-yé ô

845 qiSSa gôy-am az sabâ mushtâq-wâr
chûn Sabâ âmad ba-sôy-é lâla-zâr

lâqati 'l-'ashbâHu yawma waSli-hâ
`âdati 'l-awlâdu Sawba 'aSli-hâ

ummatu 'l-`ishqi 'l-khafiyyi fî 'l-'umam
mithlu jûd-in Hawla-hu lû'mu 's-saqam

Zillatu 'l-'arwâHi min 'ashbâHi-hâ
`izzatu 'l-ashbâHi min arwâHi-hâ
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'ayyu-hâ 'l-`ushshâqu as-suqyâ la-kum
'antumu 'l-bâqûna wa 'l-buqyâ la-kum

'ayyu-hâ 's-sâlûna qûmû w-a`shiqû
Zâka rîHu yûsuf-in fa 'stansiqû

manTiqu 'T-Tayr-é sulaymânî be-y-â
bâng-é har morgê keây-ad, mê-serâ

chûn ba-morg-ân-at ferestâd-ast Haq
laHn-é har morghê be-dâst-ast-at sabaq

morgh-é jabrî-râ zabân-é jabr gô
morgh-é parr-ishkasta-râ az Sabr gô

morgh-é Sâbir-râ tô khwash dâr-o mu`âf
morgh-é `anqâ-râ be-khwân awSâf-é qâf

mar kabûtar-râ HaZar farmâ ze-bâz
bâz-râ az Hilm gô-wo iHtirâz

w-ân khufâshê-râ ke mând ô bê-nawâ
mê-kon-ash bâ nûr joft-o âshnâ

kabg-é jangî-râ be-y-âmôzân tô SulH
mar khorôs-ân-râ nomâ ashrâT-é SubH

ham-chon-ân mê-raw ze-hudhud tâ `uqâb
rah nomâ, w-allâhu 'a`lam bi' 'S-sawâb

âzâd-shodan-é bilqîs az mulk wa mast-shodan-é ô
az shawq-é îmân wa iltifât-é himmat-é ô
az hama-yé mulk munqaTi`-shodan waqt-é hijrat
illâ az takht

chûn sulaymân sôy-ê morgh-ân-é sabâ
yak Safîrê kard, bast ân jumla-râ

joz magar morghê ke bod bê-jân-o par
yâ chô mâhê gong bûd az aSl kar

nay ghalaT goft-am ke kar gar sar neh-ad
pêsh-é waHy-é kibriyâ, sam`-ash deh-ad

chûn-ke bilqîs az del-o jân `azm kard

bar zamân-é rafta ham afsôs khward

tark-é mâl-o mulk kard ô ân-chon-ân
ke ba-tark-é nâm-o nang ân `âshiq-ân

ân ghulâm-ân-o konîz-ân-é ba-nâz
pêsh-é chashm-ash ham-chô pôsîda-peyâz

865 bâgh-hâ-wo qaSr-hâ-wo âb-é rûd
pésh-é chashm az `ishq golkhan mê-namûd

`ishq dar hangâm-é istîlâ-wo khashm
zesht gardân-ad laTîf-ân-râ ba-chashm

har zumurrad-râ nomây-ad gandnâ
ghayrat-é `ishq în bow-ad ma`niyy-é lâ

lâ ilâh illâ hû în-ast ay panâh
ke nomây-ad mah to-râ dêg-é seyâh

869 hêch mâl-o hêch makhzan, hêch rakht
mê-darîgh-ash n-âm-ad illâ joz ke takht

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Sufi Is Happy With Less

Mathnawi IV: 1856-1890

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The decrease of the food (allotted) by God carried out for (the sake of) the Sufi's soul and heart

1856 When a sufi becomes sad and afflicted because of poverty, the essential substance of poverty[1] becomes his milk-nurse and food.

Because Paradise has grown from disagreeable things,[2] and (Divine) Mercy is the (allotted) portion of a helpless and broken-down one.

(But) the Mercy of God and (His) creatures does not come to the

one who breaks the heads (of others) due to pride of higher rank.

This subject doesn't have (any) end. And that young man[3] became weak and powerless by the meagerness of the order carried out for (his) bread.

1860 (But) the sufi (is) happy when his provision is lessened[4] -- (for) his black bead becomes a pearl[5] and he becomes the Ocean.[6]

Whoever is aware of that special allotment becomes worthy of nearness (to God) and (to) the place of (the issuing of Divine) Allotments.[7]

(So) when there is a decrease of that spiritual allotment, his spirit shakes and shudders because of its decrease,

(For) then he knows that a mistake (on his part) has occurred, since the jasmine field of (Divine) approval has become unsettled[8]--

Just like (the mistake of) the person (who) wrote a letter[9] to the owner of the harvest because of the reduction of the cultivated land.[10]

1865 His letter was brought to the chief of justice, (who) read the letter but did not give back a reply.

He said, "He has no pain (of loss) except for large servings of food. Therefore, silence is the best answer to a fool.

"He has no pain of separation or (longing for) union; he is the slave of the branch and never seeks the root.[11]

"He is a fool, and has died of egotism.[12] Because of his sorrow for (the loss of) the branch, (he has) no rest and leisure with the root."

Know (that) the heavens and the earth are (like) an apple[13] which appeared from the tree of the Power of God.

1870 (And) you are like a worm in the middle of the apple, and unaware of the tree and (of) a gardener.[14]

That one other worm[15] (is) also in the apple, but its spirit (is) the possessor of a flag [of honor] beyond.[16]

Its agitation breaks open the apple,[17] (and) the apple cannot bear up to that damage.[18]

Its agitation tears up the veils. Its appearance is a worm, but its (inner) reality (is) a dragon.[19]

A (spark of) fire which first leaps from the iron[20] puts out its feet very weakly.

1875 Its milk-nurse is cotton in the beginning, but finally it sends blazing flames up to the sky.

Man is bound to sleeping and eating in the beginning,[21] (but) he is eventually higher than the angels.[22]

In the protection of cotton and sulfur,[23] his flame and light rises above the stars.[24]

He makes the dark world luminous,[25] (and) he tears up iron shackles[26] with a needle.[27]

Although fire is also bodily,[28] it is not (derived) from the spirit and is not from the spiritual (world).

1880 The body hasn't any portion of that honor. (And) in the presence of the sea of the soul, the body is like a (mere) drop.

Because of the spirit, the body becomes increased of days. (And) when the spirit departs, look: how does it become?

The limit of your body is no more than one or two measures (in length), (but) your spirit is a galloper up to the heavens.

O generous and noble man! In the spirit's imagination, (the distance) to Baghdad and Samarkand (is only) half a step.

The fat of your eye[29] is (equal to) the weight of two coins, (but) the light of its spirit[30] (reaches) to the depth of the heavens.

1885 The light can see in a dream without (need of) these eyes.[31] (But) without this light, the eye would be (nothing) except ruined.

The spirit is free from care about the body's beard and moustache.[32] But the body without the spirit is (merely) a corpse and (something) repulsive.

(Since) this is the high honor of the animal spirit, go further ahead[33] (and) experience the human spirit.[34]

Pass beyond the (ordinary state of) man,[35] as well as talk and

discussion-- as far as the shore of the ocean of the spirit of Gabriel.[346]

After that, the spirit of Muhammad will bite your lips.[37] (And) Gabriel will creep back from fear of you,

1890 Saying, "If I come (further) toward you the length of (even) one bow,[38] I will be burned up in that instant."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 10/12/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1856) poverty [faqr]: refers to spiritual poverty-- an important term in sufism. It is related to the name for a sufi: "poor one" [faqeer], a name translated into Persian as "darweesh," or dervish. It refers to an absence of pride and self-centered preoccupation, called "self-worship" [nafs-parastî] in sufism. "What is with you will vanish, and what is with God will endure" (Qur'an 16:97). "O man you are poor [fuqarâ] in relation to God, and God is the Rich..." (Qur'an 35:15) Rumi said, "That poverty is not for the sake of (imposing) difficulties. Rather, (it is) on account of this: that nothing exists but God." (Mathnawi II: 3497) Nicholson later corrected his translation, to: "When a Súfí is distressed by (the outward effects of spiritual) poverty, the very essence of poverty becomes his nurse and his food" (from, "How should a Súfí be grieved on account of poverty? The very essence of poverty becomes his nurse and his food"). And he explained: "The pains of self-mortification (mujáhadah) lead the mystic to contemplation of God (mushádah)." (Commentary)

"The intended (meaning): In that state of poverty and distress of being hungry, God Most High will cause his soul to eat spiritual food and the provision of (spiritual) light.... It is never seen that someone can show mercy and act generously and charitably toward a rich and powerful person. But a helpless and broken-down man is the object of mercy and becomes the place where generosity and benevolence appear." (Anqaravi, Commentary-- translated here from the Persian trans. of the 17th century Turkish commentary)

2. (1857) Paradise has grown from disagreeable things: Nicholson referred to II: 1837, which he translated, "Paradise is compassed

about with the things we dislike (to do); the fires (of Hell) are compassed about with our lusts." He explained: "I.e. 'in order to reach Paradise we must pass through tribulation, and through our lusts we pass into Hell-fire'. The text of the Hadíth is: huffati 'l-jannatu bi-'l-makárihi wa-huffati 'l-níránu bi-'l-shahawáti" [= Paradise is surrounded by (actions) disliked and Hell Fire is surrounded by strong desires]. (Nicholson, Commentary) This means that one's reward in Paradise is a compensation for the disagreeable experiences or tasks one has patiently endured in a sincere effort to surrender one's will to God's Will.

3. (1859) that young man: refers to Rumi's story (which began prior to this section) about the slave whose attitude and service toward the king were very lacking, so the king ordered that his food allowance be reduced. The slave became angry and complained to the kitchen steward, who insisted that the king gave the order for a good reason, not out of stinginess. The slave continued to feel resentful and insulted, so he wrote a letter of complaint to the king. Nicholson explained this line: "The slave is a type of the foolish muríd [= spiritual seeker, disciple] who does not know that nuqsán-i nán [= reduction of bread] produces ziyádat-i ján." [= increase of spiritual life] (Commentary)

4. (1860) the sufi (is) happy when his provision is lessened: This refers to the spiritual pleasures and rewards which come from fasting. It also refers to following the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions, who often fasted or got by with very little food during the years of struggle in a hostile environment of polytheists-- and also seeking a similar spiritual blessings from God for patiently enduring poverty. In this regard: "It has been written in this manner that Mawlana (Jalaluddin Rumi) sometimes would stick his head into the kitchen and ask, "Is there anything of edible food in our kitchen today?" If the cook answered, "There are plentiful delicacies," he would become sad and say, "The smell of the kitchen of Pharaoh and Nimrod [= the oppressors of Moses and Abraham, respectively] is coming from our kitchen," and he would return. But if the cook said, "There isn't anything at all in the kitchen today," that venerable (spiritual master) would act cheerfully, saying, "Praise be to God! The smell of the kitchen of Muhammad and of his descendents is coming today from this kitchen of ours." He would say these things and act glad." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (1860) his black bead becomes a pearl: "Because (the sufis) know that a decrease of bodily food is the cause of plentiful spiritual food. And the connection of spiritual foods with bodily foods is the analogy of a pearl and a glass bead.... (for) a mouthful of spiritual food is like a fine pearl." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (1860) he becomes the Ocean: "i.e. he undergoes spiritual transformation and attains to union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary) "He becomes happy and joyful and his self becomes an ocean of light." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (1861) the place of (the issuing of Divine) Allotments: Nicholson translated, "he has become worthy of approach (to the Presence) and of (Him who is) the Source of (every) allowance." "(He becomes worthy) of the (spiritual) food and drink which was affirmed by the noble saying (of the Prophet): 'I passed the night with my Lord, who gave me food and drink.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1863) unsettled: Nicholson translated, "which has ruffled the jasmine-bed of (Divine) approbation."

9. (1864) the person (who) wrote a letter: refers to the foolish slave who wrote a letter complaining to the king-- "meaning a person who is the owner of the treasuries of coins, money, and grain." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (1864) because of the reduction of the cultivated land: Nicholson translated, "on account of the deficiency of his crop."

11. (1867) the root: Nicholson translated, "He hath no care at all for separation (from me) or union (with me): he is confined to the branch (the derivative); he does not seek the root (the fundamental) at all." "It means, 'In the character of that ignorant one there is no pain of distance from my presence, just as there is also no pain of love or love of union with me." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (1868) egotism [mâ-wo manî]: literally, "(preoccupation with) we and me."

13. (1869) like an apple: "It means, 'Know that the worth and value of the heavens and the earth in the presence of God resembles a single apple produced from one large tree.... just as the holy Prophet, may (God's) peace be upon him, said, "Although the world has the same value in the presence of God as the wing of a gnat..."'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) Rumi refers directly to this saying of the Prophet, as translated by Nicholson: "The whole world has (but) the value of a gnat's wing" (VI: 1640).

14. (1870) unaware of the tree and (of) a gardener: "It means that it is unaware of God Most High and of His Complete Power and it is like that worm in the middle of the apple, which has become content with something little." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (1871) That one other worm: "I.e. the prophet or saint." (Nicholson, footnote)

16. (1871) but its spirit (is) the possessor of a flag [of honor] beyond: Nicholson translated, "but its spirit is outside, bearing the banner aloft." "But the soul and heart of this (other) worm has been hidden in the midst of the apple (and) it has a fame and banner from the outside world. This means: Yes, a worm exists in the middle of this apple of the world, regarding which the intent of this (metaphor) is the prophets, peace be upon them, and the great saints.... (who) are not content with something lowly and do not remain imprisoned by the bonds of this world..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (1872) Its agitation breaks open the apple: "The world of phenomena is a prison for all except the gnostic [= mystic knower] who has burst through its barriers." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (1872) the apple cannot bear up to that damage: there is a word play between "apple" [sêb] and "damage" [âsîb].

19. (1873) its (inner) reality (is) a dragon: "The interpretation of the worm: it is among these masters of (spiritual) determination [himmat], disguised in this manner-- that they are weak, from the human point of view. And also that... outwardly, they have a 'worm' nature together with the rest of humanity..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (1874) the iron: which, when struck (like flint), produces a spark of fire to ignite cotton, or other dry tinder.

21. (1876) Man is bound to sleeping and eating in the beginning: means during the helpless stage of infancy, as well as during an ordinary life of bondage to bodily pleasures.

22. (1876) he is eventually higher than the angels: refers to the doctrine of the descent of the spirit from the heavens and its ascent back through stages: mineral, plant, animal, human and trans-angelic.

23. (1877) the protection of cotton and sulfur: these are materials for starting a fire (just as sulfur is used in matches in modern times). Nicholson explained: "i.e. the tinder (sleep and food) that keeps the vital spark in being." (Commentary)

24. (1877) above the stars: literally, above Suhâ, a star in the constellation called the Lesser Bear. The name of this star was chosen for the rhyme. "In the protection of cotton and sulfur, the

spark and light of that Perfect Man reaches to Suhaa and the lofty Throne (of God).... (And) the flame of (his) reason and understanding reaches into the seventh heaven to the star of Suhaa and the lamp of his spirit and reason reaches completion..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (1878) He makes the dark world luminous: "And he makes the dark natured world shining with the light of (mystical) knowledge [ma`rifat]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

256. (1878) iron shackles: "i.e. the carnal nature." (Nicholson, Commentary)

27. (1878) with a needle: "i.e. by slow and painful eradication." Nicholson also referred to "the saying qal`u 'l-jibál bi-'l-ibar aysaru min qal`i sifati 'l-kibr, 'it is easier to remove mountains with needles than to eradicate self-conceit.'" (Commentary) "And he tears off the bodily skackles-- which are connected to the foot of the spirit in the analogy of iron shackles-- very gradually, with a needle, from the foot of the spirit. And he releases the royal falcon from the iron-like fetters of the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (1879) Although fire is also something bodily: means that there are fiery qualities within the human body, such as passions and vitality. Nicholson wrote, "The commentators say that átash [= fire] in this verse refers to the lower (animal) soul as contrasted with the higher (rúh-i insání) [= human spirit] and translate the second hemistiche accordingly, viz.: 'it is not derived from the spirit and the spiritual.' But surely the point is that Man, though in appearance associated with the dark material world, is in reality a glorious spirit independent of the body." (Commentary) Nicholson therefore translated this verse differently: "Though the fire too is connected with the body, is it not derived from the spirit and the spiritual?"

29. (1884) The fat of your eye: Nicholson translated, "The fat (white) of thine eye." There is a word play with "the depth of the heavens" [`anân-é âsmân], which refers to what comes to the eyes from the heavens, and the extent to which the eyes can see into the depth, or heart, of the heavens (Gawharin's Glossary of the Mathnawi).

30. (1884) the light of its spirit: refers to the light believed to be inside the eyes, which enabled vision to be possible. "Rúh [= spirit] is said to be a term used by Moslem oculists [= opthamologists] for the luminosity (latáfah) residing in the pupil of the eye." (Nicholson, Commentary) "It means the subtle spirit located in the globe of the pupil of the eye." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

31. (1885) The light can see in a dream without (need of) these eyes: "It means that the light of the spirit has no dependence on the eye and the body." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

32. (1886) the body's beard and moustache: an idiom meaning the body's vanity about its form and adornments.

33. (1887) go further ahead: "I.e. 'mortify and spurn the animal soul, which bedecks itself with worldly vanities.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

34. (1887) experience the human spirit: "Go further ahead and witness the beauty and perfection of the human spirit and examine its qualities and characteristics." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

35. (1888) Pass beyond the (ordinary state of) man: "i.e. pass beyond the realm of human reason (`aql) into the domain of mystical revelation (kashf)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

36. (1888) as far as the shore of the ocean of the spirit of Gabriel: "Go further ahead, (and) drink the wine of ecstasy and bliss. Be drunk until you travel to the angelic world, where the shore of the spiritual ocean of the Holy Spirit [= Gabriel] is." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

37. (1889) the spirit of Muhammad will bite your lips: Nicholson translated, "After that, the spirit of Ahmad (Mohammed) will bite thy lip (kiss thee lovingly)..." "It means that... he will indicate to you not to reveal these secrets, or to keep them deep within yourself." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

38. (1890) the length of one bow: "These verses allude to Qur. LIII 8-10: 'then he approached and descended and was at a distance of two bow-lengths, or nearer; and He made a revelation to His servant'; and LIII 13-18: 'and verily he saw Him another time near the sidrah-tree that marks the limit. Nigh unto it is the Garden of Refuge. When a covering came over the sidrah-tree, the eye turned not aside nor did it wander. Verily he saw one of the greatest signs of His Lord.' Whether it was God or Gabriel or Mohammed who 'approached and descended' is a matter of dispute; in any case the Qur'án refers here to two visions of the Prophet which are traditionally associated with his mi`ráj or ascension to Heaven (cf. also Qur. XVII 1 and LXXXI 19 sqq.). The legend relates that when the Prophet was about to enter into the presence of God, he said to Gabriel, who had been his guide thus far, 'O my brother, why hast thou fallen behind me?' and that Gabriel replied, 'Were I to come one finger-tip nearer, surely I should be consumed.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

"But the prophets, may (God's) peace be upon them, and the great saints go further ahead with their sanctified souls, beyond the station of the (angelic) spirits and minds. And they become annihilated in the (Presence) of God and they become drowned in the Ocean of Oneness..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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nuqSân-é ijrây-é jân-o del-é Sûfî az Ta`âmu 'llâh

1856 Sûfiyê az faqr chûn dar gham shaw-ad
`ayn-é faqr-ash dâya-wo maT`am shaw-ad

z-ân-ke jannat az makârih rosta-ast
raHm qism-é `âjizê ishkasta-ast

ân-ke sar-hâ be-sh'kan-ad ô az `ulû
raHm-é Haqq-o khalq n-ây-ad sôy-é ô

în sokhon âkhir na-dâr-ad w-ân jawân
az kamî-yé ijrây-é nân shod nâ-towân

1860 shâd ân Sûfî ke rizq-ash kam shaw-ad
ân shaba-sh dur gard-ad-o ô yam shaw-ad

z-ân jirây-é khâS har k-âgâh shod
ô sazây-é qurb-o ijrî-gâh shod

z-ân jirây-é rûH chûn nuqSân shaw-ad
jân-ash az nuqSân-é ân larzân shaw-ad

pas be-dân-ad ke khaTâyê rafta-ast
ke saman-zâr-é riZâ âshofta-ast

ham-chon-ân-ke ân shakhS az nuqSân-é kesht
ruq`a sôy-é SâHib-é kherman nebesht

1865 ruq`a'ash bord-and pêsh-é mîr-é dâd
khwând ô ruq`a jawâbê wâ na-dâd

goft ô-râ nêst illâ dard-é lôt
pas jawâb-é aHmaq awlîtar sukût

nêst-ash dard-é firâq-o waSl hêch
band-é far`-ast ô, na-jôy-ad aSl hêch
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

aHmaq-ast-o morda-yé mâ-wo manî
k-az gham-é far`-ash farâgh-é aSl nî

âsmân-hâ-wo zamîn yak sêb dân
k-az derakht-é qudrat-é Haq shod `ayân

1870 tô chô kermê dar meyân-é sêb dar
w-az derakht-o bâgh-bânê bê-khabar

ân yakê kermê degar dar sêb ham
lêk jân-ash az berûn SâhHib-`alam

jonbesh-é ô wâ shekâf-ad sêb-râ
bar na-tâb-ad sêb ân âsêb-râ

bar darîda jonbesh-é ô parda-hâ
Sûrat-ash kerm-ast-o ma`nî azhdahâ

âteshê k-awwal ze-âhan mê-jahad
ô qadam bas sost bêrûn mê-nah-ad

1875 dâya-ash panba-st awwal lêk akhîr
mê-rasân-ad shu`la-hâ ô tâ aSîr

mard awwal basta-yé khwâb-o khwar-ast
âkhiru 'l-amr az malâyik bartar-ast

dar panâh-é panba-wo kibrît-hâ
shu`la-wo nûr-ash bar ây-ad bar suhâ

`âlam-é târîk rôshan mê-kon-ad
konda-é âhan ba-sôzan mê-kan-ad

gar-che âtesh nêz ham jismânî-ast
na ze-rûh-ast-o na az rûhânî-ast

1880 jism-râ na-b'w-ad az ân `iz bahra'yé
jism pêsh-é baHr-é jân chûn qaTra'yê

jism az jân rôz-afzûn mê-shaw-ad
chûn raw-ad jân, jism, bîn chûn mê-shaw-ad?

Hadd-é jism-at yak dô gaz khwad bêsh nêst
jân-é tô tâ âsmân jawlân-konê-st

tâ ba-baghdâd-o samarqand ay homâm
rûH-râ andar taSawwir nêm-é gâm

dô deram sang-ast pîh-é chashm-etân
nûr-é rûH-ash tâ `anân-é âsmân

1885 nûr bê-în chashm mê-bîn-ad ba-khwâb
chashm bê-în nûr che b'w-ad joz kharâb

jân ze-rêsh-o sablat-é tan fârigh-ast
lêk tan bê-jân bow-ad mordâr-o past

bârnâma-yé rûH-é Haywânî-st în
pêshtar raw, rûh-é insânî be-bîn

be-g'Zar az insân ham-o az qâl-o qîl
tâ lab-é daryây-é jân-é jibra'îl

ba`d az ân-at jân-é aHmad lab gaz-ad
jibra'îl az bîm-é tô wâ-pas khaz-ad

1890 gôy-ad ar ây-am ba-qadr-é yak kamân
man ba-sôy-é tô be-sôz-am dar zamân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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For the Peace of Your Soul

Mathnawi IV: 1976-1980

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1976 Whoever is sitting together[2] with friends -- (even if) he is (as) in a furnace, (he is as) in the midst of a (beautiful) garden.

(But) whoever is seated with an enemy, due to (bad) fortune,[2] -- (even if) he is in a garden, (he is) in a furnace.

Don't torment (your) friend by means of your egotism,[3] so that (your) friend doesn't become your enemy and opponent.

Do good deeds for the people for the sake of your God -- (at least) for the sake of the peace of your soul,

1980 So that you may always see (them as) friendly in (your) sight (and so that) unpleasant forms (of thought) due to hatred will not appear in your heart.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1976) sitting together: means keeping company and enjoying conversation.

[2](1977) due to (bad) fortune [dar zaman]: Nicholson translated, "in the world."

[3](1978) your egotism [mâ-wo man-at]: literally, "your we and me." Means self-centered talking about "me and us," "mine and our."

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1976 har ke bâsh-ad ham-neshîn-é dôst-ân
hast dar golkhan meyân-é bôstân

har ke bâ-doshman neshîn-ad dar zaman
hast ô dar bôstân dar gôlkhan

dôst-râ m-âzâr az mâ-wo man-at
tâ na-gard-ad dôst khaSm-o doshman-at

khayr kon bâ khalq bahr-é îzad-at
yâ barây-é râHat-é jân-é khwad-at

1980 tâ hamâra dôst bîn-î dar naZar
dar del-at n-ây-ad ze-kîn nâ-khwash Suwar

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and Pharaoh (part one)

Mathnawi IV: 2301-2309, 2340-2365

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In explanation that imagination[1] is the counterfeit of discerning reason, and is in opposition to it; it resembles it, but it is not (it). And the story of the answers of Moses-- may the peace (of God) be upon him, who was endowed with discerning reason,[2] (which he gave) to Pharaoh who was endowed with suspicious imagination.

2301 The discerning intellect is the opposite of craving desire,[3] O brave hero. That which craving desire has woven don't call it clear reason.

That which is the beggar of craving, call it imagined ideation. Fanciful opinions are the counterfeit of the true coin of clear discernments.

(But) without a touchstone,[4] (the differences between) fanciful opinion and discerning reason are not revealed. (So) quickly carry both to the touchstone.

The touchstone (is) the Qur'an, as well as the [inspired] state of the Prophets.[5] Like the touchstone, it says to counterfeit (money): "Come!

2305 "So that you may see yourself, from my rubbing (against you). Since you are not worthy of (either) my height or base."[6]

If a saw makes clear reason[7] (to be cut into) two halves, it will be smiling like gold in the fire.[8]

Suspicious imagination is particular to Pharaoh,[9] the world-burner. (Whereas) discerning reason is particular to Moses, the spirit-increaser.

Moses traveled on the Way of not-being.[10] Pharaoh said to him, "Tell who you are."

2309 He replied, "I am discerning reason, the Messenger of the
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Lord of Majesty.[11] I am the Proof of God. I am the protection from being lost and astray.

. . . . . .

2340 "Outwardly, I'm destroying your business, but I'm (actually) making a thorn into a rose garden.[12]

(In) explanation that cultivation and building are after destruction, tranquillity is after being scattered, mending is after being broken, (attainment of) desire is after lack (of fulfillment) of desire, existence is after non-existence, in addition to (all) the other opposites and pairs.

"Someone came (and) was tearing up the ground. A fool could not turn away (from the sight) and shouted,

"'For what (reason) are you destroying the ground, tearing (it) up, and scattering (it)?

"He replied, 'O fool, go (away) (and) don't move against me.[13] Know the difference (between) cultivation and destruction.

"'It will never become a rose garden or wheat field as long as it doesn't become ugly and ruined (first).

2345 "'It will never become an orchard or a planted field, leaves or fruit, as long as it's arrangement doesn't become turned upside down.'

"As long as you don't tear (open) the foul wound[14] with a surgical knife, it will never become well and will never change to excellent.

"As long as (the doctor) doesn't cleanse your bodily humors[15] by means of medicine, the disturbance (in your body) will never go (away. A cure will never come.

"(If) the tailor has cut a garment into pieces,[16] will someone hit that knowledgeable tailor,

"(And) say, 'Why did you cut this (specially) chosen satin? What can I do with a shredded (garment)?'

2350 "Every old building which is made habitable (again),

is not the old building first destroyed?

"Just the same, the carpenter, blacksmith, and butcher--[17] there is destruction prior to putting into shape with them (as well).

"By means of the destruction of myrobalan fruit[18] (by) pounding, the body's restoration (to health) is accomplished.

"As long as you don't grind wheat in the mill, our table cloth will never be decorated by it.[19]

"(And) the bread and salt (on the table cloth) made the demand[20] that I should liberate you, O fish, from the net.[21]

2355 "(So, O Pharaoh), if you accept the advice of Moses, you will escape from such a wicked (and) endless net.

"You have made yourself so much the slave of craving desire, (that) you have made a little worm (into) a dragon.[22]

"I have brought a dragon for (your) dragon, so that I may bring reformation-- breath by breath,[23]

"So that the breath of that one may be defeated by the breath of this one, (and so that) my snake may eradicate that dragon (of yours).[24]

"If you accept,[25] you will escape from two snakes. But if not, (your dragon) will bring destruction to your soul."

2360 (Pharaoh) said, "Truly you are a very masterful magician, since you have thrown duality into this place by means of trickery.[26]

"(For) you have made a single hearted people (into) two groups.[27] Magic makes cracks in rocks and mountains."

(Moses) replied, "I am (actually) drowned in the message of God. Magic is never seen together with the Name of God.[28]

"The substance of magic is disregard and denial (of God). (Whereas) the soul of Moses is the (luminous) torch of (true) religion.

"How do I resemble magicians, O shamelessly rude one?-- since the Messiah is becoming full of jealousy because of my (life-giving) breath.[29]

2365 "How do I resemble magicians, O foul one?-- since (holy) books are getting light from my soul."[30]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/16/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) imagination [wahm]:The word means thinking, imagining; conceiving a false idea; opinion, conjecture; suspicion, doubt; apprehension, anxiety. "Wahm is associated with the carnal reason (`aql-i ma`ásh)" [= reasoning for the sake of subsistence, livelihood, income]." "Wahm is opposed to `aql (the spiritual reason), as fallibility and illusion to unerring perception of the truth." "Wahm cannot apprehend the essential truth of things." (Nicholson Commentary)

"It means that it [= imagination, opinion, conjecture] is not pure reason, but is one faculty of perception. It is mixed with an appearance of reason, since it perceives a little bit of reality. And in its perception, it is not free from mistakes and blunders. And it is the enemy and opponent of discerning reason." (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century Turkish Commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi)

2. (Heading) discerning reason [`aql]: means intellect, reason, discrimination; rationality; prudence. Nicholson translated, "Reason," with a capital letter, indicating "higher intellection" approaching the highest mentation possible for the perfected, or completed, human being-- "Universal Reason." This is in contrast to "partial reason" used by the ego for worldly survival, gain, and greed. "Reason is the substance or essence, of which memory and other mental faculties are only the accidents or attributes." "`Aql refers to the spiritual reason (`aql-i ma`ád) [= ultimate reason]." (Commentary)

3. (2301) craving desire [shahwat]: Nicholson translate, "sensuality." However, in addition to meaning lust, it means "appetitive" desire for physical pleasures in general. "It means, someone who still weaving (his opinions, based) upon the desires of (his) ego and the demands of his personality, don't call him rational." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (2303) touchstone: a stone used by assayers to determine if a metal is authentic gold or not. When rubbed against genuine gold, a change of color takes place.

5. (2304) the Qur'an, as well as the [inspired] state of the Prophets: "The touchstone is the Glorious Qur'an and the spiritual state of the Prophets [= Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, Muhammad, among others mentioned in the Qur'an]-- may the peace (of God) be upon them. Because the Glorious Qur'an and the states of the prophets-- upon them be peace, (are) like a touchstone against counterfeit. They say, 'Come and connect yourself to our existence. The time of your becoming connected (will be) the time (when) you will know and perceive.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (2305) height or base: means the uppermost and lowermost part. May refer to the dimensions of the touchstone itself. Nicholson translated, "thou art not worthy of my high and lower (degrees of spirituality)." And he explained: "may signify mystical knowledge and religious faith." (Commentary) "The intended meaning of 'height' (is) the level of loftiness, which is the ranks and states of the Prophets-- peace be upon them, and the noble saints. And the intended meaning of 'base' is the level of being humble, which is the ranks and states of those (true) believers who have firmness in the stages of faith (in God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (2306) clear reason [`aql]: "i.e. the holy man inspired by Reason. The verse probably alludes to the martyrdom of Zakariyyá (father of John the Baptist), who was sawn asunder inside a tree where he was miraculously concealed." (Nicholson, Commentary) Here, Nicholson referred to a non-Qur'anic Islamic legend. "Just as the venerable (Prophet) Zakariyya [= the father of the Prophet John (the Baptist)]-- peace be upon him, during the time when he was concealed inside a tree, and the tree was cut into two halves with a saw. He never grieved or feared, but was counted among the friends (of God) and the grateful ones." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (2306) smiling like gold in the fire: Nicholson referred to IV:822, which he translated, "The gold gladly cast (itself with) hands and feet into the crucible: its vein (original nature) laughs in the face of the fire." The "smiling," of course refers to the gleam of pure gold.

9. (2307) Suspicious imagination is particular to Pharaoh: Pharaoh, who vainly imagined that he was himself God to his people (Qur'an, 79:24; Mathnawi IV: 1556-57) was very suspicious toward Moses for challenging his status and authority. "It means specifically that he is the possessor of egotism [nafsî], for he is rebellious. And he is commanding violation of the ways of justice." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (2308) the Way of not-being [Tarîq-é nêstî]: means the path of mystical annihilation of self-existence, ego-concerns, arrogance, greed, etc. Nicholson translated, "the way of non-existence (self-negation)."

11. (2309) the Messenger of the Lord of Majesty: a reference to the verse, "And Moses said, 'O Pharaoh, truly I am a messenger from the Lord of (all) the worlds.'" (Qur'an 7:104)

12. (2340) I'm (actually) making a thorn into a rose garden: "It means, 'O Pharaoh, although according to appearance I am destroying your thorny nature, your affairs, and works-- yet in regard to reality, after destroying that thorn, I am making a rose garden.' It means: 'Every harmful and foul characteristic and quality-- like a thorn to you-- which is removed, in exchange for that I will make for you a rose garden with Divine Attributes and lordly characteristics...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

Nicholson referred to I: 303-307, which he translated: "The worldly sense is the ladder to this world; the religious sense is the ladder to Heaven. Seek ye the well-being of the former sense to the physician; beg ye the well-being of the latter sense from the Beloved. The health of the former arises from the flourishing state of the body; the health of the latter arises from the ruin of the body. The spiritual way ruins the body and, after having ruined it, restores it to prosperity: Ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure builds it better (than before)."

13. (2343) don't move against me: Nicholson translated, "do not interfere with me," and he explained: "Literally, 'do not advance against me.'" (footnote). "It means, 'Don't protest against me and don't interfere with my actions...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (2346) foul wound: "It is called a boil or abscess, and a wound." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (2347) bodily humors: Nicholson translated "(corrupt) humours." "It means the corrupt humors which are evident within you." (Anqaravi, Commentary) This refers to the four "humors" or temperaments, which correspond to the four elements. They were originated in the ancient Greek school of Hippocrates and further developed by Galen, after which they became accepted medical doctrine for centuries. The temperaments and their traditional qualities are as follows: (1) sanguine (air, warm-moist, red blood, sweet); choleric (fire, hot-dry, yellow bile, salty); (3) phlegmatic (water, cold-moist, white blood, bitter); (4) melancholic (earth,

cool-dry, black bile, sour).

16. (2348) The tailor has cut a garment into pieces: Nicholson translated differently: "When a tailor cuts (the cloth for) a garment piece by piece." He also pointed out a similar passage in I: 3204-11.

17. (2351) and butcher: "And the butcher also-- as long as he doesn't slaughter an animal and doesn't cut the carcass in pieces, its meat will not become fit and proper food." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (2352) myrobalan fruit: a dried astringent fruit of an East Indian tree used nowadays mainly in tanning and in inks. Nicholson translated, "myrobalan and bastard myrobalan." He referred to I:2933, which he translated: "Unless myrobalan is pounded up with medicines, how should the medicines by themselves become health-increasing (acting as tonics)?" He also explained: "Myrobalans, especially the yellow and black varieties) were much n favour as tonics and purgatives." (Commentary)

19. (2353) our table cloth will never be decorated by it: It is the traditional custom of Middle Eastern peoples to eat sitting on the floor with food placed on a piece of cloth or leather. Moses may, or may not, have been speaking to Pharaoh in all these verses regarding these various analogies. He speaks directly to Pharaoh starting in the following verse.

20. (2354) the bread and salt (on the table cloth) made the demand: Nicholson translated, "(The obligation of gratitude for) that bread and salt (of thine) demanded..."

21. (2354) that I should liberate you, O fish, from the net: "It means: 'O Pharaoh.... I am taking this action, O rebellious one and one resembling an ignorant and forgetful fish, so that I may liberate you from the trap of calamity and grant you salvation from the Wrath of God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (2356) you have made a little worm (into) a dragon: apparently, this is a metaphor of when egotism becomes strong-- beginning as a baby snake, a large snake, and then a horrible dragon. It refers to the contest (mentioned in the Bible and the Qur'an) between Moses and Pharaoh's magicians. The magicians used sorcery and threw down their staffs, or rods, which took on the appearance of snakes. Moses used Divine power and threw down his staff, by the Command of God, which turned into a snake and devoured the snakes of the magicians.

Nicholson cited a similar passage in II: 2285-86, which he

translated, "The black serpent that was (as) a worm fallen on the road has become a dragon; (But) in thy hand, O thou with (love for) whom the soul of Moses is intoxicated, the dragon or serpent became (as) the rod (in the hand of Moses)." He also cited III: 1053-56, which he translated: "The dragon is thy sensual soul.... If it obtain the means of Pharaoh.... Then it will begin to act like Pharaoh and will waylay a hundred (such as) Moses and Aaron. That dragon, under stress of poverty, is a little worm, (but) a gnat is made a falcon by power and riches."

23. (2357) so that I may bring reformation-- breath by breath: "Moses says that he has brought a dragon (i.e. his rod, which assumed the form of a dragon) in order to subdue the dragon (i.e. the sensual nature) of Pharaoh. For dam [= breath] applied to the powerful enchantments of the nafs [= ego], cf. II 2289 seq. [which Nicholson translated, "breathe (thy) enchantment over it..."] These are overcome by the Divinely inspired prophet or saint. As the next verse shows, Fa [= Anqaravi] is wrong in taking dam-ba-dam [= breath by breath] to mean by 'degrees'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

24. (2358) my snake may eradicate that dragon (of yours): "(It means): 'Especially (so that)my snake, which is manifesting the power of God, may eradicate and suppress the dragon of your ego-- which is admitting denial and ignorance (of God). And so that you and your disposition may become delivered from its evil and harmfulness.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (2359) If you accept: Nicholson translated, "If thou submittest..." "It means: 'If you accept my invitation and the worship of God Most High and surrender to me and become (my) follower, you will find deliverance from the evil and bites of these two snakes. For the intended meaning of the two snakes is: one of the snakes is your ego [nafs] and the other one is a snake which comes into manifestation from this rod.... And if not, the dragon of your ego eventually will bring destruction for your soul, and it will defeat and torment you.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (2360) you have thrown duality into this place by means of trickery: "Pharaoh did not accept the words of venerable Moses-- peace be upon him, and told him.... 'You have cast duality and division in this place among the people by means of plotting and trickery.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (2361) two groups: Pharaoh accused Moses of dividing the Egyptian people, who had been unified by his leadership, into those loyal to Pharaoh and those loyal to Moses--such as the magicians who proclaimed faith in Moses and the God he proclaimed (and were executed): "Pharaoh said, 'Do you believe in

him before I give you permission? Certainly this is a trick which you have plotted in this city to drive out its people...'" (Qur'an 7:123).

28. (2362) Magic is never seen together with the Name of God: "Because Truth is the opposite of falseness. And those acts which are contrary to the usual, which come into manifestation by means of the name of God and (His) Lordly Attributes, are called miracles and wonders. But those imaginary forms which appear as a result of wickedness and denial and disregard (of God) are named magic." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (2364) the Messiah is becoming full of jealousy because of my (life-giving) breath: "This reference to Jesus in the course of an argument addressed by Moses to Pharaoh will not surprise any one who have observed Rúmí's contempt for chronology.... Moses, no doubt, may be supposed to represent the Súfí Perfect Man, and perhaps Rúmí was thinking of a famous Tradition (Hadíthu 'l-ghibtah) [= the saying about wishing to be like someone without feeling envy] to the effect that the prophets themselves regard God's awliyá [= saints] with feelings of benevolent envy." (Nicholson, Commentary)

30. (2365) (holy) books are getting light from my soul: "The transcendental prophetic spirit is the Light of Revelation. See Qur. XLII 52". (Nicholson, Commentary) "But We have made it [= the Divine Revelation] a Light by which We guide whoever We will of Our servants..." (Qur'an 42:52) "It means, 'O impure one, how do I resemble magicians and tricksters? Since all books become illumined from my soul and obtain life.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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dar bayân-é ân-ke wahm qalb-é `aql-ast wa setêza-yé ô-st,
ba-d-ô mând wa ô nêst wa qiSSa-yé mujâbât-é mûsà--
`alay-hi 's-salâm-- ke SâHib-é `aql bôd bâ fir`awn ke
SâHib-é wahm bûd

2301 `aql Zidd-é shahwat-ast ay pahlawân
ân-ke shahwat mê-tan-ad `aql-ash ma-khwân

wahm khwân-ash ân-ke shahwat-râ gadâ-st
wahm qalb-é naqd-é zarr-é `aql-hâ-st

bê-miHak paydâ na-gard-ad wahm-o `aql
har dô-râ sôy-é miHak kon zûd naql
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

în miHak qur'ân-o Hâl-é anbiyâ
chûn miHak mar qalb-râ gôy-ad be-yâ

tâ be-bîn-î khwêsh-râ z-âsêb-é man
ke na-î ahl-é farâz-o shêb-é man

`aql-râ gar arra'yé sâz-ad dô nîm
ham-chô zar bâsh-ad dar âtesh ô basîm

wahm mar fir`awn-é `âlam-sôz-râ
`aql mar mûsà-yé jân-afrôz-râ

raft mûsà bar Tarîq-é nêstî
goft fir`awn-ash be-gô tô kê-st-î

goft man `aql-am, rasûl-é Zû 'l-jalâl
Hujjatu 'llâh-am, amân-am az Zalâl

. . . . . .

Zâhirâ kâr-é tô wîrân mê-kon-am
lêk khârê-râ golestân mê-kon-am

bayân-é ân-ke `imârat dar wîrânî-st wa jam`îyat dar parâkandagî-st wa dorostî dar shekastagî-st wa murâd dar bê-murâdî-st wa wujûd dar `adam-ast wa `alà haZâ baqiyyatu 'l-iZdâd wa 'l-azwâj

ân yakê âmad zamîn-râ mê-shekâft
ablahê faryâd kard-o bar na-tâft

k-în zamîn-râ az che wîrân mê-kon-î
mê-shekâf-î-wo parêshân mê-kon-î?

goft ay ablah be-raw, bar man ma-rân
tô `imârat az kharâbî bâz dân

kay shaw-ad gol-zâr-o gandom-zâr în
tâ na-gard-ad zesht-o wêrân în zamîn

kay shaw-ad bostân-o kasht-o barg-o bar
tâ na-gard-ad naZm-é ô zêr-o zabar?

tâ be-na-sh'kâf-î ba-neshtar rêsh-é chaghz
kay shaw-ad nêkô-wo kay gardîd naghz?

tâ na-shôy-ad khilTa-hâ-at az dawâ
kay raw-ad shôresh, ko-jâ ây-ad shifâ?

pâra-pâra karda darzî jâma-râ
kas zan-ad ân darzî-yé `allâma-râ?

ke che-râ în aTlas-é ba-g'zîda-râ
bar darîd-î, che kon-am ba-drîda-râ?

har binây-é kohna k-âbâdân kon-and
ne ke awwal kohna-râ wêrân kon-and?

ham-chon-în najjâr-o Haddâd-o qaSâb
hast-eshân pêsh az `imârat-hâ kharâb

ân halîla-wo ân balîla kôftan
z-ân talaf gard-and ma`mûrîy-é tan

tâ na-kôb-î gandom andar âseyâ
kay shaw-ad ârâsta z-ân khwân-é mâ?

ân taqâZâ kard ân nân-o namak
ke ze-shast-at wâ rahân-am ay samak

gar paZîr-î pand-é mûsà wâ rah-î
az chon-în shast-é bad-é nâ-muntahî

bas ke khwad-râ karda-î banda-yé hawâ
kerm-akê-râ karda-î tô azhdahâ

azhdahâ-râ azhdahâ âwarda-am
tâ ba-iSlâH âwar-am man dam ba-dam

tâ dam-é ân az dam-é în be-sh'kan-ad
mâr-é man ân azhdahâ-râ bar kan-ad

gar riZâ dâd-î rahîd-î az dô mâr
war-na az jân-at bar âr-ad ân damâr

goft al-Haq sakht ostâ-jâdowî
ke dar afkand-î ba-makr în-jâ dowî

khalq-é yak-del-râ tô kard-î dô gorôh
jâdowî rakhna kon-ad dar sang-o kôh

goft hast-am garq-é payghâm-é khodâ
jâdowî ke dîd bâ nâm-é khodâ?

ghaflat-o kufr-ast mâya-yé jâdowî
mash`ala-yé dîn-ast jân-é mûsawî

man ba-jâdû-yân che mân-am ay waqîH
k-az dam-am por rashk mê-gard-ad masîH?

2365 man ba-jâdû-yân che mân-am ay junub
ke ze-jân-am nûr mê-gîr-ad kutub?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and Pharaoh (part two)

Mathnawi IV: 2366-2383

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2366 (Moses said to Pharaoh): "Certainly, you bear suspicion toward me because you are flying on the wings of (worldly) craving.[1]

"Anyone whose actions are (like those of) domesticated or wild animals has bad opinions about those who are noble.

"(And) since you are part of the world, however you are,[2] you view everything as (having) the same quality as yourself.[3]

"If you spin around, and your head spins around, your sight will see the house (as) spinning.

2370 "And if you travel in a boat riding on the sea, you will view the shore of the see (as) running (by).

"If you are distressed of heart because of (being in) a bloody battle, you will view all the world (as) distressed and disturbed.[4]

"And if you are happy as wished by (your) friends, this world will appear to you like a rose garden.

"Oh, how often has someone gone to Syria and Iraq (and) hasn't seen anything except denial (of religion) and hypocrisy.[5]

"And how often has someone gone to India and Herat,[6] (and)

hasn't seen (anything) but selling and buying.

2375 "And how often has someone gone to Turkestan[7] and China,
(and) hasn't seen anything except trickery and ambush?

"Since he has no understanding except (by means of worldly)
colors and smells, tell (him) to search all the regions (of the
world).[8]

"If a cow suddenly comes into Baghdad (and) passes from this
end to that end (of the city),

"She won't notice (anything) but a watermelon rind out of
all the pleasures, delights, and flavors (therein).

"(And if) grass or hay has fallen onto the road, it is fit
for her cow or donkey manner of traveling.[9]

2380 "His soul (will) never grow (if it hangs) dry on the nail of
(his animal) nature like stripped meat, bound to causes.[10]

"But that spacious place[11] torn (free) from (worldly) causes
and accidents is "God's earth,"[12] O excellent chief.

"Every moment it is changing like a picture. The soul sees an
ever-new world in manifestation.[13]

2383 "(But) even if it is Paradise and Heavenly rivers, it will
become ugly [in when (it appears) frozen (into only) one aspect."[14]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),11/30/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2366) the wings of (worldly) craving: Nicholson translated,
"Since thou art soaring on the wings of sensuality." "(It means),
'Since you... have become enamoured of selfish desires [hawây-é
nafs]....' It means, 'A person (such as you who) is a plotting
trickster and inclined to magicians will bear suspicion to me-- as
also (being) a magician and a trickster in opposition to you.'"
(Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous
17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi)

2. (2368) however you are: "'in whatsoever state of mind thou art'. Fa [= Anqaravi] translates the second hemistiche: 'thou deemest all (the world) to be astray in thine own fashion'; but this misses the point. The victim of illusion does not perceive that all appearances are illusory." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2368) you view everything as (having) the same quality as yourself: Nicholson translated, "thou deemest all to be of the same description as thyself, misguided man." He read the last word as "ghawî," which means "led astray," "seduced." However, he noted (in his text) that this word was altered in the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi-- which has "sawî" (meaning "the same," "equal") written above it as a correction. And Nicholson commented: "The reading sawí, 'on a par with', 'uniform with', makes good sense." (Commentary) However, he did not suggest a correction of his translation. "(It means), 'You also view everything wrongly, according to the same quality as yourself. And you have no power to see rightly and truly.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (2371) distressed and disturbed.: Nicholson translated, "If thou art narrow (oppressed)... thou deemest the whole atmosphere of the world to be narrow."

5. (2373) denial (of religion) and hypocrisy: these are Qur'anic terms, which mean denial, rejection, and disbelief in God and pretending to be a faithful and believing Muslim when one is not. "Because you yourselves are among the people of denial and hypocrisy. Therefore, wherever you travel, you won't see anything except denial and hypocrisy." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (2374) Herat: a city located presently in western Afghanistan. Nicholson translated, "India and Hirá." And his text has "Hirà" rhyming with "shirà" (buying).

7. (2375) Turkestan: the Turkish-speaking areas of Central Asia, presently located in the countries of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgistan, as well as Chechneya, Daghistan in the Caucasus and Uiguristan in western China.

8. (2376) tell (him) to search all the regions (of the world): Nicholson translated, "let him seek (through) all the climes, (he will see nothing spiritual)." "Haven't they travelled the earth, so that their hearts might understand [== the ancient view that thinking occurs in the heart] and (their) ears might hear? Truly, (their) eyes are not blind, but (it is their) hearts in (their) chests (which) are blind." (Qur'an 22:46) "It means, Tell that person who is a traveller: 'If you wander all the regions (of the world), you will not gain anything other than (worldly) colors and smells. You will not

experience essential spiritual matters.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (2379) it is fit for her cow or donkey manner of traveling: Nicholson translated, "(it is) suitable to his (such a one's) bovine or asinine disposition." And he explained: "literally, 'it is (food) suitable for his bovine or asinine way of talking a walk and seeing things'." (Commentary) "Likewise, whenever a man of bovine temperament or donkey nature travels to a city he will never have any inclination except for sensual (and greedy) eating and bodily pleasures." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (2380) bound to causes: Nicholson translated, "(Hanging) dry on the nail of (his bestial) nature, like strips of meat (exposed to the sun), his spirit, bound with (the cords of) secondary causes does not grow."

11. (2381) that spacious place: "(It means)... arrival to that spaciousness of the world of Reality [`âlam-é Haqîqat] by means of abandoning and tearing away (worldly) causes and means-- just as 'God's earth is spacious.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (2381) God's earth: Nicholson translated, "But the spacious realm where means and causes are torn to shreds (transcended) is 'the earth of God'...." The latter phrase is quoted from the Qur'an: "God's earth is spacious. Truly those who persevere with patience will receive a reward without measure." (39:10) Nicholson explained: "i.e. 'let them emigrate, if necessary, for the sake of obtaining liberty to practise their religion'. So must the mystic fly to 'God's earth', i.e. the infinite realm of Divine Unity and Transcendence." (Commentary) "Just like the spacious earth of God which the Prophets-- peace be upon them, and the noble saints travelled the plains (of). They had abandoned (worldly) causes and means, arrived to that sacred earth, and had witnessed its miracles and wonders. (This is) the inner meaning of the noble verse: 'And God's earth is spacious.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (2382) an ever-new world in manifestation: Nicholson translated, "It is ever changing, like a (fleeting) picture: the spirit beholds in clairvoyance a world (appearing) anew and anew." And he explained: "God is revealed in all His infinite variety of aspects and manifestations (tajalliyát) to the mystic who has entered the spiritual world and experienced 'a new creation' (khalq jadíd). (Commentary) The latter phrase is from the Qur'an, where God speaks in the "majestic plural": "Were We weary with the first creation? Yet they are in doubt about a new creation?" (50:15) "In the Qur'án the 'new creation' refers to the resurrection of the body at the Last Judgement, but here the words are used to describe the creation of new life in the mystic's heart..." "The world has only

the semblance of duration; in truth all phenomena are annihilated and re-created at every moment by the eternal manifestation of Divine energy." (Nicholson, Commentary) "Just as... you gain one kind of pleasure from each (piece of) fruit which you ate once. And if you eat from it again, you will find a different enjoyment than the first pleasure." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (2383) frozen (into only) one aspect: Nicholson translated, "(Everything), though it be Paradise and the rivers of Eden, becomes ugly when it is congealed (fixed permanently) in one aspect." "But if (the soul) becomes aware of the world of Reality and gains a portion of spiritual food, illuminations, and Divine delights, this natural world will appear to its eyes as old and frozen." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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2366 chûn tô bâ parr-é hawâ bar mê-par-î
lâ-jaram bar man gomân ân mê-bar-î

har ke-râ af`âl-é dâm-o dad bow-ad
bar karîm-ân-ash gomân-é bad bow-ad

chûn tô juzw-é `âlam-î har chûn bow-î
kull-râ bar waSf-é khwad bîn-î sawî

gar tô bar-gard-î-wo bar-gard-ad sar-at
khâna-râ gardanda bîn-ad manZar-at

2370 w-ar tô dar kashtî raw-î bar yam rawân
sâHil-é yam-râ hamê bîn-î dawân

gar tô bâsh-î tang-é del az malHama
tang bîn-î jumla dunyâ-râ hama

w-ar tô khwash bâsh-î ba-kâm-é dôst-ân
în jahân be-n'mây-ad-at chûn gol-estân

ay basâ kas rafta tâ shâm-o `irâq
ô na-dîda hêch joz kufr-o nifâq

way basâ kas rafta tâ hend-o harî
ô na-dîda joz magar bay`-o sharî

2375 way basâ kas rafta torkestân-o chîn
ô na-dîda hêch joz makr-o kamîn

chûn na-dâr-ad madraké joz rang-o bô
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jumla-yé aqlîm-hâ-râ gô be-jô

gâw dar baghdâd ây-ad nâgahân
be-g'Zar-ad ô z-în sar-ân tâ ân sar-ân

az hama `aysh-o khwashî-hâ-wo maza
ô na-bîn-ad joz ke qishr-é kharboza

kah bow-ad oftâda bar rah yâ Hashîsh
lâyiq-é sayrân-é gâwî yâ kharî-sh

2380 khoshk bar mêkh-é Tabî`at chûn qadîd
basta-yé asbâb jân-ash lâ-yazîd

w-ân faZây-é kharq-é asbâb-o `ilal
hast arZu 'llâh, ay Sadr-é ajal

har zamân mubdal shaw-ad chûn naqsh jân
naw ba-naw bîn-ad jahânê dar `ayân

2383 gar bow-ad fardûs-o anhâr-é behesht
chûn fasorda-yé yak Sifat shod, gasht zesht

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and Pharaoh (part three)

Mathnawi IV: 2384-2405, 2415-2417, 2423-2429

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The explanation that every human sense of perception has different perceptions of which the understandings of the other senses are unaware-- just as every master artisan is ignorant of the trade of another master artisan. And its ignorance of that which is not its task does not prove that those (different) perceptions do not exist. Although because of the circumstances, it is denying those (perceptions), yet we don't wish at this point (for) its denial here (to mean anything) except ignorance.[1]

2384 (Moses said to Pharaoh), "The circumference of your view of the world[2] is your perception. Your impure senses are the veil (hiding) the pure ones.[3]

2385 Wash (your) senses for a time with the water of contemplation.[4] Know that this is like the clothes-washing of the sufis.[5]

"When you become cleansed, the spirit of the pure ones will tear away the veil[6] (and) will contact you.

"Even if the world is (all) light and (beautiful) forms, (only) the eyes would be aware of that beauty.

"(If) you close your eye (and) bring (your) ear forward so that you may show it the curls and cheeks of a (beautiful) idol,[7]

"(Your) ear will say, 'I can't be pleased with a form, (but) if the form makes a noise, I can hear (it);

2390 "'I am knowing, but (only) in my own area of knowledge. My skill is nothing more than (hearing) a word or a shout.'

"(And if you say), 'Come, quickly (O) nose (and) see this beautiful one.'-- the nose is not suitable for this desired object.

"(Your nose will say), 'If there is musk and rose-water I can smell it. This is my skill, understanding, and knowledge.

"'I will never see the face of that silver-legged (beauty). Take care, (and) don't order what can't be done.'

"Again, the crooked sense can't see other than (what is) crooked,[8] whether crawling crookedly before Him or crawling straight.[9]

2395 "Know for certain, O helpful master,[1] (that) the squinting eye[11] is (far) removed from (being able) to see Oneness.

"You who are a Pharaoh,[12] (are) entirely fraudulent and hypocritical. (Therefore), you don't know (any) difference between me and yourself.

"Don't look at me through yourself, O crooked gambler, so that you may not see the single as two-fold.

"(Instead), look at me through me for a time,[13] so that you may see an open region beyond (worldly) existence,[14]

"(So that) you may escape from distress, shame, and [concern about] reputation, (and so that) you may experience love within

love. And peace be upon you!"

2400 "Then, when you are freed from the body[15] you will know (how it is possible for your) ear and nose to become an eye."[16]

That king with a sweet tongue[17] has said every hair of the mystic knowers[18] becomes an eye.

The eye certainly had no eye (to see with) in the beginning, (for) it was in the womb and an embryo (that was just a piece) of flesh.

Don't consider the (white) fat (of the eye[19] to be) the cause of seeing, O son. (For) otherwise no one could see images and forms in a dream.

The jinn and the demon[20] see images, (yet) there is no fat in the place of vision of either.[21]

2405 (In the beginning) there was no connection, in itself, between light and the fat (of the eye),[22] (since) the (Most) Loving Creator gave its connection.[23]

. . . . . .

2415 If the Nile (River) had not had that light and vision, how did it choose an Egyptian from an Israelite?[24]

If the rocky mountain was not possessed of vision, then how did it become a friend to David?[25]

2417 (And) if the earth had not had a spiritual eye, how did it swallow Qaroon[26] that way?

. . . . . .

2423 (Moses said to Pharaoh), "My being sent to you, (O) prince, is a proof that the Sender was aware

"That a remedy such as this is appropriate for easing[27] [the hardship of your having] such an infected sore.[28]

2425 "Before this, you had seen dreams (showing) that God was going to choose me.[29]

"(And that) I, (having) taken the staff and the Light in (my) hand,[30] would break your arrogant horn.

"(It was) for this (that) the Lord of Religion was showing
you various horrible dreams,

"Fit for your bad conscience and extreme rebelliousness-- so
that you might understand that He is the Knower of (what is)
suitable for you.

2429 "(And) so that you might understand that He is (All) Wise
and Aware, and the Healer of diseases resistant to medicine."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) except ignorance: Nicholson translated, "Although it virtually denies them, yet here in this place we only mean by its 'denial' its ignorance." And he explained: "Every physical sense has percepts peculiar to itself, in which its pleasure consists; and because it is ignorant of the percepts of the other senses, it 'virtually denies them', just as legalists deny the percepts of 'the sixth sense which mystics call "reason" or "light" or "the heart", etc.' [= quoted from Al-Ghazali]. But this denial is not founded on reality. Each sense is potentially capable of enjoying the percepts of all the rest and, when purified by gnosis [= mystical knowledge] and spiritualised, actually does so (see II 3236-3241 and the notes ad loc.)." (Commentary)

2. (2384) The circumference of your view of the world: Nicholson translated, "the measure of thy vision of the world." And he explained: "i.e. 'the extent to which you see into the truth of things.'" (Commentary) "(It means), 'The circumference and measure of seeing the world is in accordance with the amount of your perception.... If your perception is meager, you will see this world also as slight and small.'" (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi)

3. (2384) Your impure senses are the veil (hiding) the pure ones: Nicholson translated, "thy impure senses are the veil (which prevents thee from having sight) of the pure (holy men)." "The intended meaning of 'pure ones' is the (pious) people of God..... (It means), 'That which is between you and those pure ones is a veil.

And the barrier to your perception is love of those impure senses of yours.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (2385) contemplation [`ayân]: Nicholson translated, "clairvoyance." "(It means), 'O rebellious person, for a while wash your senses with the water of witnessing [shuhûd] and contemplation [`ayân].... (so that) each one may become illuminated by the light of certainty and clarity [`ayân] and be washed and pure.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (2385) this is like the clothes-washing of the sufis: "i.e. inward purification. Cf. Qur. LXXIV 4: wa-thiyábaka fa-tahhir' [= "And purify your garments"] of where Baydáwí [= a famous commentator on the Qur'an] paraphrases: 'purge thyself of evil dispositions and vile actions'. The word is frequently applied to Súfís in this sense, e.g. jáma-shúyí kuníd Súfí-wár [= "Wash (your) clothes in the sufi manner'] (Díwán, Tab. 23, 6, marg.). [= Ghazal 1137, line 12537: jâma-shôyî kon-ém Sûfî-wâr-- "we are washing our clothes like the sufis"] There is a fine description of the saint as a 'launderer' at V 200 sqq. [= Book Five of the Mathnawi]." (Nicholson, Commentary) "In the 'Nafahaat' [= by the sufi Persian poet Jâmî` (died, 1492)] is related about Shaykh Abu 'l-Hasan Kharaqânî [= died, 1034], '(Who) said, "I saw the Prophet in a dream. He told me, 'O Abu 'l-Hasan, cleanse "your garments" from stains with the help of God in every moment.'" Therefore, I understood that the meaning of "garments" was the qualities of my own ego [nafs].'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) It was always understood by authorities on the Arabic language that the word "sufi" derives from the Arabic word "Sûf," which means "wool" (pious ascetics had long worn woolen garments). However, there was an irresistible association among Sufis (including Rumi) with the word "Sâf," which means "purity."

6. (2386) will tear away the veil [parda bar kan-ad]: Nicholson translated, "will tear off the veil and attach itself to thee." However, Anqaravi read it as "will raise the veil." (Commentary) And Nicholson later wrote, "Bar kunad [= will raise] is perhaps the better reading here." (Commentary) "(It means), 'If you become cleansed from being inwardly stained and from spiritual impurities, the veils will be raised from (your) spiritual eyes.... The spirits of the pure ones will become close to you, and you will be able to witness the sight of those holy spirits." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (2388) a (beautiful) idol: an idiom meaning a beautiful beloved--so attractive as to be almost worthy of "worship." Nicholson translated, "an adorable beauty."

8. (2394) the crooked sense can't see other than (what is) crooked:

Nicholson translated, "... the crooked (perverted) sense hath naught but crooked (perverse) perceptions..."

9. (2394) whether crawling crookedly before Him or crawling straight: Means, even if it is for a time going moving directly toward God, it will continue to see crookedly. Nicholson translated, "(so) go crookedly into His presence or go straight, as thou wilt (it matters not)." And he explained: "Comparison with II 3763-3765 [= which Nicholson translated the last line as: "'And (even by) thy hopping lamely and limply in that direction, thou wilt be freed from all lameness and limpness."] suggests that the meaning of the second hemistich may be: '(rectify your false perceptions, and then) draw nigh unto God, no matter whether your progress be easy or difficult.' I think it more likely, however, that the verse means: 'So long as your perceptions are false, you will see double: choose, then, whether (at the Resurrection) you will come into God's presence as a mushrik [= a polytheist: one who "associates" the One True God together with other imagined divinities] or as a muwahhid [= one who declares that God is One only]. '" (Commentary)

10. (2395) O helpful master [ay khwâja-yé mu`în]: "Nicholson translated, "O Khwája who aidest (the true Religon)." And he explained: "This may refer to Mu`inu'ddín, the Parwána of Rúm, who is said to have been one of the poet's disciples." (Footnote). Nicholson's speculation about this led him to state: "The probable reference to Mu`ínu'ddín raises a question as to the authenticity of the reading." And he then quoted a variant from another 13th century manuscript. (Commentary) However, Nicholson's translation, portraying such a positive meaning, is unsuitable as an address to Pharaoh in the context of the story. Anqaravi commented on this phrase and at one point translated, "O sir, [ay khwâja] who are a searcher for the truth...." (Commentary)

11. (2395) the squinting eye: means an eye with poor vision, or cross-eyed vision-- which causes someone to see double. It means that a double-seeing person cannot see what is single-- in this case, the Divine Unity.

12. (2396) You who are a Pharaoh: "Here the speaker is the 'Moses' of whom the Moslem saint is a type." (Nicholson, footnote) "Basically, the intended meaning of 'Moses'-- peace be upon him, is the perfected spiritual guide [murshid-é kâmil] with a Moses (like) nature in every age, (and) who has qualities corresponding to the heart of a Moses. And the intended meaning of 'Pharaoh' is those with a Pharaoh (like) nature who have been transgressing (the just bounds of) the path of God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (2398) Look at me through me for a time: "It means, 'If you wish to see my self (as I am) and (my) lofty (spiritual) rank, it is necessary that you should look at me for a while with a light of certainty which may be gained from me..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (2398) an open region beyond (worldly) existence: Nicholson translated, "that thou mayst behold a spacious region beyond (phenomenal) existence." And he explained: "Through faná fi'l-Shaykh [= mystical annihilation in the spiritual consciousness of the sufi master]... the muríd [= disciple] attains to vision of the Truth." (Commentary)

15. (2400) when you are freed from the body: means when you are no longer identified and overly attached to the body, you will be freed from the restrictions of the senses. "(It means), 'And you find deliverance from the needs of the body.... and the craving demands of the body and its chains..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (2400) for your ear and nose to become an eye: this is known scientifically today as synthesis, the ability (of rare persons) to see colors when hearing sounds (and other sensory combinations). Here, Rumi may also mean that when the spiritual senses are activated, various kinds of knowledge can be gained which are as certain as direct seeing.

17. (2401) That king with a sweet tongue: Here, Rumi begins commenting (more directly) in his own voice. Nicholson stated in a footnote that the "king" probably refers to the Persian sufi poet, Sanâ`î (died, 1131). However, he later changed his mind: "Fa [= Anqaravi] says that probably Saná'í or `Attár is meant; but I have very little doubt that this is a description of Báyazíd-i Bistámí [= d. 875], 'the prince of gnostics' (sultánu 'l-`árifín). The commentary in the Cawnpore edition of the Mathnawí (A.H. 1317) [= 1899] attributes to him the saying, lá yasíru 'l-rajulu mina 'l-`árifín hattá yasíra kullu sha`ir-in minhu `ayn-an názirat-an, 'No man becomes a gnostic [= mystic knower] until every hair of him becomes a seeing eye.' Delete note I in the Translation, p. 405." Nicholson also referred to I: 1406 [which he translated as, "Man is eye, and (all) the rest is (worthless) skin: the sight of that (eye) is (consists in) seeing the Beloved"], regarding which he explained: "Man is man in virtue of the inward eye with which he is potentially capable of contemplating Reality and becoming 'the eye of the eternal Light' (II 18)." (Commentary)

18. (2401) the mystic knowers [`arif-ân]: Nicholson translated, "gnostics." "(It refers) to a person who knows God and is the possessor of (spiritual) insight [baSîrat]. And (spiritual) insight is a

light which is flowing in all the essential faculties and is the perceiver and knower, in every part, of that (area)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (2403) the (white) fat of the eye: Nicholson translated, "the fat (the white of the eye)..." "According to Aristotle... the white of the eye in sanguineous [= warm-blooded] animals is fat and oily in order that the moisture of the eye may be a proof against freezing." "Moslem oculists [= opthamologists] generally adopted the theory of Galen and other Greeks that vision is produced by rays of light emitted from the eyes.... Rúmí says (I 1126) that the light of the eye is derived from the light of the heart." "The 'sensible light', though ultimately derived from the Light of God, dwells in the eye, from which it shoots forth in order to meet the sunlight. Physical vision is produced by the emission of these rays." (Commentary)

20. (2304) The jinn and the demon [parî-wo dêw]: The jinn, or genies, are an invisible class of creatures. The Qur'an seems to speak of the jinn as a parallel creation with humanity, since "the jinn and mankind" is a pairing of words which occurs in a number of places. The Qur'an speaks of some jinn as true and faithful believers in God, others as tricksters or evil demons (the Persian word "dêv" or "dîv" is related to the English word "devil"). The Arabic word "jinn" was translated into Persian by the old "parî," which had meant "fairy."

21. (2404) there is no fat in the place of vision of either: means there is no physical flesh which might be the cause of vision of such non-physical creatures.

22. (2405) there was, in itself, no connection between light and the fat (of the eye): Nicholson referred to VI: 1019-1020, which he translated: "Even as He hath caused the light to flow from the fountain of your eye without stint or abatement: It has no source of supply either in the fat (the white of the eye) or in the coating (retina); (but) the Beloved made (these) a veil (for Himself) when bringing (the light) into existence."

23. (2405) (since) the (Most) Loving Creator gave its connection: "God, Most Blessed and Exalted, gave light to the white part (of the eyes) and created seeing." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (2415) how was it able to choose an Egyptian from an Israelite: refers to one of the plagues sent by God upon the Egyptians (Qur'an 7:133; in the Bible: Exodus) in which the Nile River appeared to Egyptians as blood and to the Israelites as pure water.

25. (4216) The mountain... then how did it become a friend to David?:

refers to a verse in the Qur'an relating to the Prophet David's praising God (as in the Psalms), which God inspired him with: "And truly We gave David grace: 'O mountains, sing back the praises of God with him! And (you) birds (also)!" (34:10; see also 21:79) Nicholson referred to III: 4268-70, which he translated: "The face of David shone with His glory: the mountains sang plaintively after him. The mountain became an accompanist to David: both the minstrels (were) drunken in love for a King. Came the (Divine) command, 'O ye mountains, repeat (the praise of God': both joined their voices and kept the tune together."

26. (2417) (And)... the earth... how did it swallow Qaroon: refers to Qârûn, a wealthy man who rebelled against Moses" (Qur'an 28:81; 29:39; see the story of Korah in the Bible: Numbers 16).

27. (2424) for easing [maysûr]: Nicholson translated, "for the purpose of success (in curing it)." "It means, 'O Pharaoh, know this: that this staff in my hand and this likeness of a dragon is like a bitter remedy. And your denial and rebellion (toward God) are like a wound not accepting healing.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (2424) such an infected sore: Nicholson translated, "such a desperate malady." "It is said (to mean) a wound not accepting healing. Here, the intended meaning is the spiritual sickness of Pharaoh, such as the illnesses of denial and rebelliousness (toward God), arrogance and pride-- which as had been firmly manifested in him." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (2425) you had seen dreams (showing) that God was going to choose me: Nicholson translated, "Heretofore thou hadst seen visions (warning thee) that God would choose me out (to go to thee)..." "It means, 'Before my appearance, you had seen dreams that God Most High would choose me and would dominate over you and show you to be contemptible and lowly.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

30. (2426) I, (having) taken the staff and the Light in (my) hand: refers to a verse in the Qur'an which mentions Moses' staff together with the miracle of the white hand of Moses: "Then he threw his staff, (and) it was a snake, clearly (seen). And he drew out his hand, (and) it was (shining) white to all observers." (7:107-108; see also 26:32-33; 27:12; see Exodus, iv). "The commentators say that núr [= light] refers to 'the white hand' (yad-i baydá) of Moses." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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bayân-é ân-ke har Hiss-é
mudrikî-râ az âdamî nêz
mudrakâtê
degar-ast ke az mudrakât-é ân Hiss-é
degar bê-khabar-ast, chon-ân-ke har pêsha-
war-é ostâd, a`jamî-yé
kâr-é ân ostâd-é degar
pêsha-war-ast wa bê-khabarî-yé ô
az ân-ke waZîfa-yé ô nêst
dalîl na-kon-ad ke ân mudrakât nêst,
agar-che ba-Hukm-é Hâl-é munkir bow-ad

ân-râ ammâ az munkirî-
yé ô în-jâ joz bê-khabarî na-mê-
khwâh-êm dar-în maqâm

2384 chanbara-yé dîd-é jahân idrâk-é to-st

2384 chanbara-yé dîd-é jahân idrâk-é to-st
parda-yé pâk-ân His-é nâ-pâk-é to-st

2385 maddatê His-râ be-shô z-âb-é `ayân
în chon-în dân jâma-shôy-é Sûfiy-ân

chûn shod-î tô pâk, parda bar kan-ad
jân-é pâk-ân khwêsh bar tô mê-zan-ad

jumla-yé `âlam gar bow-ad nûr-o Suwar
chashm-râ bâsh-ad az ân khôbî khabar

chashm bast-î, gôsh mê-âr-î ba-pêsh
tâ nomây-î zolf-o rokhsâra-yé botê-sh

gôsh goy-ad man ba-Sûrat na-g'raw-am
Sûrat ar bângê zan-ad, man be-sh'naw-am

2390 âlim-am man, lêk andar fann-é khwêsh
fann-é man joz Harf-o Sawtê nêst bêsh

hîn be-yâ bînî, be-bîn în khôb-râ
nêst dar khwar bînî în maTlûb-râ

gar bow-ad moshk-o golâbî bô bar-am
fann-é man în-ast-o `ilm-o makhbar-am

kay be-bîn-am man rokh-é ân sîm-sâq?
hîn ma-kon taklîf-é mâ laysa yuTâq

bâz Hiss-é kazh na-bîn-ad ghayr-é kazh
khwâh kazh-gazh pêsh-é ô yâ râst-gazh

2395 chashm-é aHwal az yakî-dîdan yaqîn
dân ke ma`zûl-ast ay khwâja-yé mu`în

tô ke fir`awnê, hama makrî-wo zarq
mar ma-râ az khwad na-mê-dân-î tô farq

ma-n'gar az khwad dar man ay kazh-bâz, tô
tâ yakî tô-râ na-bîn-î tô dô-tô

be-n'gar andar man ze-man yak sâ`atê
tâ warây-é kawn bîn-î sâHatê

wâ-rah-î az tangî-wo az nang-o nâm
`ishq andar `ishq bîn-î wa `s-salâm

2400 pas be-dân-î chûn-ke rast-î az badan
gôsh-o bînî chashm mê-dân-ad shodan

râst goft-ast ân shah-é shîrîn-zabân
chashm gard-ad mô ba môy-é `ârif-ân

chashm-râ chashê na-bûd awwal yaqîn
dar raHim bûd ô janîn-é gôshtîn

`illat-é dîdan ma-dân pîh ay pesar
w-ar-na khwâb andar, na-dîdy kas Suwar

ân parî-wo déw mê-bîn-ad shabîh
nêst andar dîda-gâh-é har dô pîh

2405 nûr-râ bâ pîh khwad nisbat na-bûd
nisbat-ash bakhshêd khalâq-é wadûd

. . . . . .

2415 gar na-bûdy nîl-râ ân nûr-o dîd
az che qibTê-râ ze-sibTê mê-gozîd?

gar na kûh-o sang bâ-dîdâr shod
pas che-râ dâwûd-râ ô yâr shod?

2417 în zamîn-râ gar na-bûdy chashm-é jân
az che qârûn-râ forô khward ân-chon-ân?

. . . . . .

2423 în ferestâdan ma-râ pêsh-é tô mîr
hast burhânê ke bod mursil khabîr

k-în chon-în dârû chon-în nâsûr-râ
hast dar khwor az pay-é maysûr-râ

2425 wâqi`âtê dîda bûd-î pêsh az-în
ke khodâ khwâh-ad ma-râ kardan gozîn

man `aSâ-wo nûr be-g'refta ba-dast
shâkh-é gostâkh-é to-râ khwâh-am shekast

wâqi`ât-é sahm-gîn az bahr-é în
gûna gûna mê-namûd-at rabb-é dîn

dar khwar-é sirr-é bad-o Taghyân-é tô
tâ be-dân-î k-ô-st dar-khwar-dân-é tô

2429 tâ be-dân-î k-ô Hakîm-ast-o khabîr
muSliH-é amrâZ-é darmân-nâ-paZîr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Moses and Pharaoh (part four)

Mathnawi IV: 2467- 2489

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2467 (Moses said to Pharaoh), "Take care, (and) be aware--
if you need a (protected) heart.[1] Since something is born to
you by way of every action (you do).[2]

"And if you have more (spiritual) determination than this,
(and) the task goes beyond (the level of) observation-- [3]

In explanation that the earthen human body, like iron of
excellent quality, can become a mirror. So that Heaven, Hell,
the Resurrection, and [spiritual realities] besides those may
manifest visibly to the sight in the (present) world as well
[as the next]-- (and) not (merely) by way of imagination.[4]

"Then even if you are dark-shaped like iron-- make
(yourself) polished, polished, polished.[5]

2470 "So that your heart may become a mirror full of forms
and images, (and so that) a beautiful silver-breasted (form may
appear)[6] within it (in) every direction.

"Even if the iron is dark and lacking brightness, polishing
cleansed the darkness from it.

"The iron experienced the polishing, which beautified (its)
face[7] so that forms and images were visible in it.

"If the earthen body is coarse and dark, polish it.
Because it is accepting of (being) polished.[8]

"(And) so that forms from the Unseen (world) may show
(their) faces, (and so that) the reflections of the maidens
of Paradise[9] and the angels may leap into it.

2475 "God has given the polishing of Reason[10] to you for
that (very task), so that by means of it the page of the heart[11]
may become shining.

"You've shackled the polisher and have freed the hands of
craving desire,[12] O prayerless man.[13]

"(But) if shackles are placed on craving desire, the hands
of the polisher will be freed.[14]

"All (hidden) forms would be sent into a piece of iron
which becomes the mirror for the Unseen (world)--.

"(Yet) you've made (it) dark and have given rust to (your)
nature. This is (the meaning of the verse), "they strive to
spread corruption on earth."[15]

2480 "You've acted like this until the present, (but) now
don't do it. You've made the water murky, (so) don't increase
(the darkness).

"Don't stir (it) up so that the water may become clear and
(so that) you may see the moon and stars circling[16] in it.

"Because man is like the water of a river;[17] if it becomes
muddy, you can't see its bottom.

"The river's bottom is full of jewels and full of pearls.
Take care, (and) don't make (it) muddy. For it is
(naturally) pure and free.[18]

"The soul of man is similar to the air; when it becomes
mixed with dust, it becomes a veil (over) the sky.

2485 "(Then) it becomes an obstacle to the sight of the
sun.[19] (But) when its dust has gone, it becomes pure and clear.

"Despite (your) complete darkness, God was showing you
visions (of warning)[20] so that you might travel the road of
salvation."

(How) with the help of the Unseen, Moses-- may the peace (of
God) be upon him, related the secrets of Pharaoh and his visions so
that he might accept faith in the All-Knowingness of God, or take
that view.

"By means of His Power, He was revealing through the dark
iron (of your nature) some visions which would eventually
manifest.

"So that you might not do that injustice and evil. (But)
you kept seeing those (visions) and becoming worse.

2489 "He was showing you ugly forms (in) your dreams, from
which you were fleeing. (Yet) those were (actually) your own
form."[21]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),12/21/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2467) if you need a (protected) heart: refers to the sufi
practice of watching and guarding the heart from thoughts
about other than God, and from intentions other than those
pleasing to God. As the Prophet Muhammad said, "Actions are
judged by intentions." Nicholson translated, "if thou
wouldst have a (pure) heart." Later, he changed his
translation: "Translate: 'if thou hast need of the

(understanding) heart.' This is gained by means of muráqabah [= the sufi term for contemplation], i.e. knowing that God oversees us and keeping Him constantly before our eyes." (Commentary)

2. (2467) Since something is born to you by way of every action (you do): just prior to this verse, Rumi had said (as translated by Nicholson): "If thou wilt be observant and vigilant, thou wilt see at every moment the response to thy actions. When thou art observant and dost grasp the cord (of apprehension), thou needest not the coming of the Resurrection (to reveal the ultimate effects.... When thy heart has been blackened and darkened by wickedness, understand!" (2460-62, 2464)

3. (2468) beyond (the level of) observation: Nicholson translated, "beyond (the spiritual rank of) the observer." And he explained: "I.e. 'if thou aspire to mystical contemplation of God (mushádah), an experience reserved for adepts'" [= sufi masters]. (Commentary)

"It means, 'If you are watching the rewards and retributions of every action, and you definitely know that the compensation for every (good or bad) action and deed will (eventually) come to you, your (spiritual) aspiration will become greater. And your spirit will advance to this (higher) rank from the level of observation... and you will progress to the rank of contemplation (of God).... And if your (spiritual) determination again becomes greater, you will reach the stage of the truth of certainty. And (then) you will cause the reality of every action to appear (to your vision) in this world. And you will know, in this world, everything which will manifest in the Hereafter." (Translated here from a Persian translation of the famous 17th century Turkish commentary by Anqaravi)

4. (Heading) not (merely) by way of imagination: "(It means), it will not appear visible to the heart like the imaginary forms which are seen in sleep or like the fantasies and imagined things (seen) at the time of wakefulness." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (2469) polished [Sayqalî]: refers to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "Truly for everything there is a polishing [Siqâlat], and the polishing for the heart is the remembrance of God [Zikru 'llâh]." Related to this is a verse in the Qur'an: "that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts" (83:14). Mirrors used to be made of iron,

which was subject to rust. The "rust" of the heart's mirror is the result of sins, selfish behavior, and ego-centered thinking. Rumi said, "Do you know why your mirror does not twinkle? Because the rust is not separated from its face." (I: 34) "(For the sufis) have made polished hearts by (means of) recollection and meditation, so that the mirror of the heart may receive virgin images." (I: 3154) Nicholson referred to I: 3484-86, which he translated, "But they have burnished their breasts (and made them) pure from greed and cupidity and avarice and hatreds. That purity of the mirror is, beyond doubt, the heart which receives images innumerable. That Moses (the perfect saint) holds in his bosom the formless infinite form of the Unseen (reflected) from the mirror of his heart."

"It means, 'Polish your earthen body with disciplined austerity [riyâZat], the remembrance of God [Zikru 'llâh] and pure actions." (Anqaravi, Commentary)
6. (2470) a beautiful silver-breasted (form may appear): "it means, at the time when your heart becomes purified and polished, beautiful images from the unperceived (spiritual) world and lovely forms will be reflected in it.... Every Divine creation will be like a silver-breasted beauty, and every Divine manifestation will be like the fragrant appearance of a (lovely) beloved.... Then you will see the forms of the Unseen world and you will contemplate the realities of existent beings in (your heart). And you will find deliverance from the stage of blindness and ignorance." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (2472) The iron experienced the polishing which beautified (its) face: literally, "The iron saw the polishing and (it) [= the polishing] made (its) face beautiful." Nicholson translated, "The iron saw (suffered) the polishing and made its face fair." And he explained: "Fa [= Anqaravi] takes sayqalí [= polishing] in the sense of saqqál [= polisher] and translates the first hemistich of v. 2472: 'the polisher saw the iron and beautified its surface.'" (Commentary)

"In this verse, it means the master of polishing. He saw the tarnish of the iron, gave it polishing, and gave a shine to the iron. He achieved such a purification that all forms were able to be seen in it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (2473) Because it is accepting of (being) polished: Nicholson translated, "for it is receptive to the polishing instrument." "(It means), 'O seeker of purity, polish (your heart) with the polishing of the remembrance of God [Zikru

'llâh] and submit to the master of polishing [= a sufi master], so that with his guidance and training your coarse and dark body may find polishing and become illumined...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (2474) the maidens of Paradise [Hûrî]: Nicholson translated, "the reflexion of houri and angel..." These are the maidens or virgins of Paradise, mentioned in the Qur'an (44:54; 52:20).

10. (2475) Reason [`aql]: this word means much more than rational or logical thinking here. It means the highest faculty of the intellect, the cleares
t discernment of truth
from falsehood, and the direct perception of the realities underlying appearances. It is linked to "Universal Reason" by its luminosity of perception.

11. (2475) the page of the heart: Nicholson translated, "the leaf (surface) of the heart." The word also means the "leaves" of a book, meaning page.

12. (2476) craving desire [hawâ]: Nicholson translated, "sensuality." Means selfish, ego-centered, worldly desires which Rumi has compared elsewhere to flames which produce black smoke-- opposed to the light of the pure Intellect.

13. (2476) prayerless man [bê-namâz]: a term of contempt. Means someone who doesn't do the obligatory five daily prayers (or does them only when present with other who do the prayers, in order to avoid condemnation).

14. (2477) if shackles are placed on craving desire: "Meaning, craving desire in the body of man is like an unjust prime minister [wazîr]. And discerning reason is like a just prime minister..... If sensual desires are bound by the religious [shar`î] restrictions (of Islamic law) and a seeker holds firmly to the 'rope of God' [Qur'an, 3:103], the hands of the discerning intellect will certainly be freed." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (2479) "they strive to spread corruption on earth": Qur'an 5:36. "(It means), 'O captive of ego and desire, you have darkened your heart'.... If one person's inward nature becomes dark from the effects of sin and wrongdoing, and it becomes full of sinful and blameworthy qualities, this is the meaning of striving on the surface of the earth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (2481) circling [Tawâf]: this word is usually used to mean the circling, or circumambulating, around the Ka'ba (the temple dedicated to pure monotheism in Mecca, Arabia).

17. (2482) Because man is like the water of a river: "The discerning intellect and the spirit are like water. The bodily demands and craving desires are like earth. Any time that the bodily demands and craving desires become dominant over the discerning intellect and the spirit, the water of Reason and the water of spirit become darkened." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (2483) For it is (naturally) pure and free: "(It means), 'Don't muddy it, since that river water is completely pure from darkness in its essential nature-- meaning utterly free..... And the water of the spirit is full of spiritual jewels and pearls of Divine secrets. Therefore, be aware and observant, and don't darken the water of the spirit with the earth of the body and bodily demands.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (2485) it becomes an obstacle to the sight of the sun: "It becomes a veil for the sun of Truth and an obstacle to contemplating the sun of Truth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (2486) God was showing you visions (of warning): Rumi returns more directly here to the speech of Moses directed to Pharaoh. "If God-- blessed and exalted is He, intends good for His [erring] servant, He reprimands him by giving signs through fearful dreams. Just as (the Prophet) said-- may the peace (of God) be upon him, 'If God wills some good to a servant, He admonishes him in his dreams.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (2489) those were (actually) your own form: "It means, 'Those shameful images which you saw in the world of sleep, and which you hated, all of those were the qualities of your wicked ego [nafs].'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

Nicholson referred to some other verses of the Mathnawi, which he translated: "Oh, many an iniquity [= wickedness, gross injustice] that you see in others is your own nature (reflected) in them, O reader!" (I:1319) "And if you see an ugly face (in that mirror), 'tis you..." (IV: 2142)

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hîn murâqib bâsh gar del bây-ad-at
k-az pay-é har fa`l chêzê zây-ad-at

w-ar az-în afzûn to-râ himmat bow-ad
az murâqib kâr bâlâ-tar raw-ad

bayân-é ân-ke tan-é khâkî-yé âdamî ham-chûn âhan-é
nîkô-jawhar qâbil-é âyena shodan-ast ta dar ô ham
dar dunyâ behesht-o dôzakh-o qiyâmat-o ghayr-é ân
mu`âyana be-nomây-ad na bar Tarîq-é kheyâl

pas chô âhan gar che tîra-haykalê
Sayqalî kon, Sayqalî kon, Sayqalî

tâ del-at âyena gard-ad por-Suwar
andar-ô har sô malîHê sîm-bar

âhan ar-che tîra-wo bê-nûr bow-ad
Sayqalî ân tîra-gî az way zedûd

Sayqalî dîd âhan-o khwash kard rô
tâ ke Sûrat-hâ tawân dîd andar-ô

gar tan-é khâkî ghalîZ-o tîra-ast
Sayqal-ash kon, z-ân-ke Sayqal-gîra-ast

tâ dar-ô ashkâl-é ghaybî rô deh-ad
`aks-é Hûrî-wo malak dar way jah-ad

Sayqal-é `aql-at ba-d-ân dâd-ast Haq
ke ba-d-ô rôshan shaw-ad del-râ waraq

Sayqalî-râ basta-î ay bê-namâz
w-ân hawâ-râ karda-î dô-dast bâz

gar hawâ-râ band be-n'hâda shaw-ad
Sayqalî-râ dast be-gh'shâda shaw-ad

âhanê k-âyîna-yé ghaybî bod-y
jumla-yé Surat-hâ dar-ô mursal shody

tîra kard-î, zang dâd-î dar nehâd
în bow-ad yas`awna fî 'l-`arZi 'l-fasâd

tâ kanûn kard-î chon-în, aknûn ma-kon
tîra kard-î âb-râ, afzûn ma-kon

bar ma-shôrân tâ shaw-ad în âb Sâf
w-andar-ô bîn mâh-o akhtar dar Tawâf

z-ân-ke mardom hast ham-chûn âb-é jô
chûn shaw-ad tîra, na-bîn-î qa`r-é ô

qa`r-é jô por gawhar-ast-o por ze-dur
hîn ma-kon tîra ke hast ô, Sâf-é Hur

jân-é mardom hast mânand-é hawâ
chûn ba-gard âmêkht, shod parda-yé samâ

2485 mâni` ây-ad ô ze-dîd-é âftâb
chûn-ke gard-ash raft, shod Sâfî-wo nâb

bâ kamâl-é tîra-gî Haq wâqi`ât
mê-namûd-at tâ raw-î râh-é najât

bâz-goftan-é mûsà-- `alay-hi 's-salâm, asrâr-é
fir`awn-râ wa wâqi`ât-é ô-râ Zahra 'l-ghayb
tâ ba-khabîrî-yé Haqq îmân âward yâ gomân
bar-ad

z-âhan-é tîra ba-qudrat mê-namûd
wâqi`âtê ke dar âkhir khwâst bûd

tâ kon-î kam-tar tô ân Zulm-o badî
ân hamê-dîd-î-wo battar mê-shod-î

2489 naqsh-hây-é zesht khwâb-at mê-namûd
mê-ramîd-î z-ân-o ân naqsh-é tô bûd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Peace with God

Mathnawi IV: 2569-2571

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2571 ân-ke dar jang-at chon-ân mulkê deh-ad
be-n'gar andar SulH khwân-at chûn neh-ad?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Pharoaoh and His Wife's Advice (part one)

Mathnawi IV: 2595-2625

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2595 In this manner, Moses was mentioning (to Pharaoh)[1] the (Divine) favor [he would receive from accepting true faith], saying, "The pure (wine) of your good-fortune will [then] not change to dregs."

(Pharaoh) replied, "You've done well and you've spoken well, but (wait) so that I may consult with a good friend.

The consulting of Pharaoh with (his wife) Asiya[2] about accepting faith (in God) with Moses

He repeated these words to Asiya, (and) she said, "Scatter (your) soul upon this (opportunity),[3] O black-hearted one,

"(For) there are so many kind favors in the background of these words (of Moses).[4] Perceive (it) quickly, O king of good qualities![5]

"The time for planting has come. (And) what a planting full of benefit and gain!" She said this, wept, and became ardently inflamed.[6]

2600 (Then) she jumped up from (her) place and said, "May greatness be yours! O mere bald man, a sun has become your crown.[7]

"A cap will cover the disgrace of the bald man-- especially if the cap is the sun and the moon.

"Also, when you heard these (words of Moses) in that gathering,

why didn't you say, 'Yes!' and (offer) a hundred approvals and praises?

"If these words had gone into the ear of the sun, it would have descended upside-down in hope of this (opportunity).[8]

"Don't you know anything (about) what the promise is and the gift? (It is as if) God is inquiring kindly about Satan![9]

2605 "When that Generous One called you back with such kindness, how did your heart remain in (its) place?[19] How strange!

"(And how) was your heart not torn,[11] so that there would have been a (full) share (of blessings) for you in both this world and the next because of your (torn) heart?

"A heart which is torn up from (desiring) a share of (the blessings of) God enjoys the fruits of this world and the next, like the martyrs.[12]

"There is also (a certain) wisdom[13] (in this) negligence and this blindness (toward the Divine), so that one may endure (in this world)[14] -- but why to this extent?

"(And) there is (a certain) wisdom and blessing (in) negligence (toward the Divine), so that assets may not suddenly fly from (one's) hand[15]--

2610 "Yet not so much (negligence) that it becomes a festering wound[16] (and) becomes poison for the soul and mind of one who is (already) sick.[17]

"But who can find such markets as this, where you may buy an (entire) rose garden with a single rose?[18]

"(And where you may buy) a hundred groves of trees in exchange for a (single) seed? (Or where) a hundred mines (of gold) may come to you in exchange for a (single) particle?

"The giving of (that) particle is (the first part of the saying), '(Whoever) belongs to God'-- so that (the second part of) 'God belongs to him' may be obtained.

"Because this weak and impermanent (human) he-ness became existent from the permanent He-ness of the Lord.[20]

2615 "(But) when the transient he-ness has (completely) submits itself to Him, it becomes lasting forever and never dies.[21]

"Just like a drop (of water which is) fearful of wind and soil--
since it may become annihilated and destroyed by both of these--

"When it has jumped into the ocean, which was its source, it
escaped from the corrupting (influence) of the sun, wind, and
earth.[22]

"(Then) its outwardness has become lost in the ocean, but its
essence (remains) protected, permanent, and good.[23]

"Hurry, O drop! Give yourself (away) without regret, so that you
may win the ocean for the price of a (single) drop.

2620 "Hurry, O drop! Give yourself this noble dignity: in the
hands of the Ocean become safe[24] from perishing.

"But who should come into possession of such good-fortune? (For)
an ocean has become the urgent solicitor for a drop.

"For God's sake, quickly sell and buy! Give (away) a drop (and)
win an ocean full of pearls.

"For God's sake, don't make any delay, because these words (of
Moses) came from the Ocean of Kindness.

"(Ordinary) kindness becomes confused and lost in this (Divine)
Kindness[25]-- that something most lowly[26] might go upon the
Seventh Heaven.[27]

2625 "Hurry, since an amazing falcon has fallen (as a gift) to you;
no seeker will find (one such as) this in (his) search."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),7/12/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2595) Moses was mentioning to Pharaoh: refers to the main story,
in which Moses explained to Pharaoh that the door to repentance is
always open, and about the excellent rewards he could receive
from God by becoming a true believer.

2. (2596) (his wife) Asiya: according to Islam, the three women

possessed of perfect faith and virtue were Mary, the mother of Jesus; FâTima, the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad; and âsiya, the wife of Pharaoh. Pharaoh's wife is mentioned twice in the Qur'an, very favorably: "And God made the wife of Pharaoh as an example of those who believe.... And (also) Mary..." (66:11-12; see also 28:9). "Asiyah, the wife of Pharaoh.... is not mentioned by name in the Qur'an, though reference is made to here in two passages, which depict here as an Israelite, true to her faith and praying for deliverance from her husband and all his works." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2597) Scatter (your) soul upon this (opportunity): Nicholson translated, "Offer up thy soul to this..." And he explained: "Literally, 'strew thy soul (as an offering) upon this.'" (Footnote)

4. (2598) in the background of these words (of Moses): Nicholson translated, "At the back of this speech (of Moses)." And he explained: "i.e. 'hidden beneath.'" (Footnote) "The word 'matn' [= background] has the meaning of 'capacity' and 'room.' And the intended meaning [here] is the sense of the back (part) of the words." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

5. (2598) O king of good qualities: "This epithet makes a flattering appeal to Pharaoh's better self." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (2599) ardently inflamed: Nicholson translated, "hot (in urging him)."

7. (2600) a sun has become your crown: "i.e. 'the glorious crown of Faith, which Moses offers you, will cover your multitude of sins.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (2603) it would have descended upside-down in hope of this (opportunity): "It means), 'If it had understood, it would have descended from its (high) rank and become a disciple and servant of that holy man.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (2604) (It is as if) God is inquiring kindly [iftiqâd] about Satan: Nicholson translated, "God is showing solicitude [= the state of being concerned] for Iblís" [= a name of Satan]. And he explained: "In the second hemistich it is implied that Pharaoh represents the Devil." (Commentary) "(It means), 'The invitation of Moses-- upon whom be peace-- to you (when he said), "O Pharaoh" to obedience and worship (of God) is just as if God Most High were to call to Satan out of compassion and kindness.'"

10. (2605) how did your heart remain in (its) place: literally, "how did

your gall bladder remain in place?" Nicholson translated, "how thy heart remained unmoved." (It means), 'How amazing that your gall bladder and your soul remained intact.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (2606) (And how) was your heart not torn: "(It means), '(How) did your gall bladder not burst...?'" (Anqaravi)

12. (2607) like the martyrs: a reference to the verse, "And those who have forsaken their homes in the path of (serving) God, then are killed or die, God will provide them with an excellent provision." (Qur'an 22:58)

13. (2608) There is also (a certain) wisdom: "Worldliness has its uses: one cannot always be contemplating God, but why ignore Him entirely?" (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred to Mathnawi I:2066-70, which he translated," Forgetfulness (of God), O beloved, is the pillar (prop) of this world: (spiritual) intelligence is a bane to this world. Intelligence belongs to that (other) world, and when it prevails, this world is overthrown.... If the trickle from the Unseen should become greater, in this world neither virtue nor vice will be left."

14. (2608) so that one may endure (in this world): Nicholson translated, "True, (this) heedlessness and this blindness is (a manifestation of) Divine Wisdom, in order that he (the heedless man) may endure..." "(It means), 'Being forgetful of God and being blind in some manner to the real state is the substance of wisdom and utter prudence for this sake: that human existence may continue to remain for some moments [in certain situations] during the effects of moderate inattentiveness...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (2609) so that assets may not suddenly fly from (one's) hand: Nicholson translated, "True, heedlessness is (a manifestation of) Divine Wisdom and Bounty, in order that (his) stock-in-trade may not suddenly fly out of (his) hand." And he explained: "i.e. existence (wujúd) regarded as capital without which the acquisition of spiritual perfection (kasb-i kamál) would be impossible." (Commentary) "(It means), 'So that the supply of right guidance may not immediately fly from your hand.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (2610) a festering wound: Nicholson translated, "an incurable sore." Anqaravi interpreted: "becomes unreceptive to healing."

17. (2610) one who is (already) sick: "i.e. one already suffering from ghaflat [= negligence, heedlessness]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (2611) where you may buy an (entire) rose garden with a single rose: Nicholson referred here to Mathnawi I: 2709, which he translated, "... by the grace of 'God hath purchased (from the believers their lives and wealth in return for Paradise).'" [= Qur'an 9:111] And he commented: "...the price to be paid for union with God is world-abandonment and self-sacrifice." (Commentary) "The intended meaning is attesting and uttering the 'words of witnessing' [= that there is no divinity but God and Moses-- in the time of Pharaoh-- is His messenger], for this is price of the rose garden of Paradise." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (2613) (Whoever) belongs to God: a saying of the Prophet Muhammad. Nicholson referred to his comments on Mathnawi I: 1939: "The mystical interpretation of the hadíth man kána lilláhi kána 'llâhu lahu [= Whoever belongs to God, God belongs to him] is that he who gives himself up entirely to God in faná [= passing away of self] is united with Him in baqá [= everlastingness]." (Commentary)

20. (2614) became existent from the permanent He-ness of the Lord: "In the view of the people of verification [= the sufis] the Divine He-ness [huwiyyat] is flowing within everything. And the existence of every person is continuing by means of the Divine Being. And the Everlastingness of God is the maintainer of the continuance and existence of every existent thing." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (2615) it becomes lasting forever and never dies: "Our huwiyyah [= he-ness] is only a fleeting reflexion, a finite mode of the infinite, all-pervading Divine Huwiyyah: by dying to our individual selves we find the Universal Self which is the essence and source of our being." (Nicholson, Commentary) "Because the one who has become lasting with God, and his heart and spirit have been made living through Divine Love [`ishq-é ilâhî], will never die." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (2617) it has escaped from the corrupting (influence) of the sun, wind, and earth: "Faná fi'lláh [= annihilation of self in God] secures the spirit against corruption by hawá-yi nafsání [= egoistic cravings] and khák-i jismání [= bodily dirt]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (2618) its essence (remains) protected, permanent, and good: "If someone, by means of his will and choice, becomes liberated from the level of 'wind' and 'earth' and returns to the ocean of Reality-- which is his origin-- that moment he will become freed from the burning and severity of the sun of Truth [khworshêd-é Haqîqat], from the attracting and absorbing (power) of egotistical cravings,

and from harm. Then he will perceive the rank of those people, in regard to the reality of whose (situation) it has been said, 'No fear will be upon them, nor shall they grieve' [= Qur'an 10: 62]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (2620) safe [âmin]: this is the term here, according to Dr. Tawfîq Subhânî's edition of the earliest text of the Mathnawi. However, Nicholson's text, based on the same has it spelled differently [îman].

25. (2624) (Ordinary) kindness becomes confused and lost in this (Divine) Kindness: Nicholson translated, "(All other) grace is lost (vanishes away) in (comparison with) this grace..."

26. (2624) something most lowly: Nicholson translated, "one of the lowest..."

27. (2624) the Seventh Heaven: the heaven, or orbit, ruled by Saturn, considered the highest of the seven heavenly spherical zones. "Therefore, if a person becomes the follower of a Prophet of God and acknowledges his (spiritual) perfection, the rank of such a person will be higher than the Seventh Heaven." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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2595 ham-chon-în mûsà karâmat mê-shomord
ke na-gard-ad Sâf-é iqbâl-é tô dord

goft aHsant-o nekô goft-î wa-lêk
tâ kon-am man mashwarat bâ yâr-é nêk

mashwarat kardan fir`awn bâ aysiya dar îmân âwardan
ba-mûsà-- `alay-hi 's-salâm

bâz goft ô în sokhon bâ aysiya
goft jân-afshân bar-în ay del-seya

bas `inâyat-hâ-st matn-é în maqâl
zûd dar-yâb ay shah-é nêk--khiSâl

waqt-é kasht âmad, zehî por sûd kasht
în be-goft-o gerya kard-o garm gasht

2600 bar jahîd az jâ-wo goftâ bakhkha la-k
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âftâbê tâj gasht-at ay kalak

`ayb-é kal-râ khwad be-pôshân-ad kolâh
khâSa chûn bâsh-ad kolah khworshêd-o mâh

ham dar ân majlis ke be-sh'nîd-î tô în
chûn na-goft-î ârî-wo Sad âferîn?

în sokhon dar gôsh-é khworshêd ar shody
sar-negûn bar bôy-é în zêr âmady

hêch mê-dân-î che wa`da-st-o che dâd
mê-kon-ad iblîs-râ Haqq iftiqâd?

2605: chûn ba-d-în luTf ân karîm-at bâz khwând
ay `ajab chûn zahra-at bar jây mând?

zahra-at na-d'rîd tâ z-ân zahra-at
bûdy andar har dô `âlam bahra-at

zahra-yê k-az bahra-yé Haq bar der-ad
chûn shahîd-ân az dô `âlam bar khwor-ad

ghâfilî ham Hikmat-ast-o în `amà
tâ be-mân-ad lêk tâ în Had cherâ?

ghâfilî ham Hikmat-ast-o ni`mat-ast
tâ na-parr-ad zûd sarmâya ze-dast

2610 lêk ney chand-ân-ke nâsûrê shaw-ad
zahr-é jân-o `aql-é ranjûrê shaw-ad

khwad ke yâb-ad în chon-în bâzâr-râ
ke ba-yak gol mê-khar-î golzâr-râ

dâna'yê-râ Sad derakht-estân `awaZ
Habba'yê-râ âmad-at Sad kân `awaZ

kâna li-llâh dâdan-é ân Habba-ast
tâ ke kâna 'llâhu la-h ây-ad ba-dast

z-ân-ke în hûy-é Za`îf-é bê-qarâr
hast shod z-ân hûy-é rabb-é pâydâr

2615 hûy-é fânî chûn-ke khwad fâ ô sepord
gasht bâqî dâyim-o hargez na-mord

ham-chô qaTra-yé khâyif az bâd-o ze-khâk

ke fanâ gard-ad ba-d-în har dô halâk

chûn ba-aSl-é khwad ke daryâ bûd jast
az taf-é khworshêd-o bâd-o khâk rast

Zâhir-ash gom gasht dar daryâ wa-lêk
Zât-é ô ma`Sûm-o pâ-bar-jâ wa nêk

hîn be-deh ay qaTra khwad-râ bê-nadam
tâ be-yâb-î dar bahây-é qaTra yam

2620 hîn be-deh ay qatra khwad-râ în sharaf
dar kaf-é daryâ shaw âmin az talaf

khwad ke-râ ây-ad chon-în dawlat ba-dast?
qaTra-râ bahrê taqâZâ-gar shod-ast

allâh allâh zûd be-f'rôsh-o be-khar
qaTra'yê deh, baHr-é por gawhar be-bar

allâh allâh hêch ta'khîrê ma-kon
ke ze-baHr-é luTf âmad în sokhon

luTf andar luTf-é în gom mê-shaw-ad
k-asfalê bar charkh-é haftom mê-shaw-ad

2625 hîn ke yak bâzê fotâd-at bû 'l-`ajab
hêch Tâlib în na-yâb-ad dar Talab

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Pharaoh and His Wife's Advice (part two)

Mathnawi IV: 2626-2656

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2626 (Pharaoh) said, "O veiled and pious one,[1] I will speak with Haman.[2] The king requires the prime minister's advice."

(Asiya) replied, "Don't tell this secret to Haman! What does a blind feeble old person know about a (royal hunting) falcon?"[3]

The story of the king's falcon and the feeble old woman

(If) you give a white falcon to a feeble old (woman),[4]
she will cut its claws for sake of (its) "betterment."[5]

The blind feeble woman[6] will blindly cut the claws which
are the very basis of (its) work of hunting,

2630 Saying, "O prince! Where has your mother been, so that
your talons are long like this?"

She (then) cut its claws, beak, and wings. (And) the
foul old woman does this (during) a moment of affection.

When she gives it pasta,[7] it won't eat (it). (So) she
gets angry (and) tears up (her) affections (toward it),

(Saying), "I cooked such (delicious) pasta for you,
(and) you are displaying pride and great insolence (in
refusing it)?

"You are suitable for that very suffering and affliction
[I found you in]. Comfort and good-fortune will never be
suitable for you.

2635 (Then) she gives it the pasta broth,[8] saying, "Take
this, if you don't want to eat (any) of the paste."[9]

(But) the falcon's nature won't take the pasta broth
(either), (and so) the old woman frowns and her anger lasts
longer.[10]

Out of anger, the woman pours the hot broth onto its
head (so that) the top of its head becomes bald.

Tears pour down from its eyes from the burning (heat),
(and) it remembers the kindness of the heart-illuminating
king [it flew away from].[1]

(Tears continue to pour down) from those two delightful
eyes [usually] possessed of amorous playfulness (and) which
have a thousand perfections from (that) royal face.

2640 Its eyes which "did not swerve"[12] became full of wounds
(caused) by the crow;[13] (its) good eyes (became filled) with

pain and searing injuries[14] from (the (glance of) the evil eye.[15]

(Its) eyes (have vision) of (such) oceanic wideness that both this world and the next appear (to it as) a (mere) thread of hair in comparison to its immensity.

Even if a thousand revolving heavens went into its eyes they would wander in confusion, like a (mere) fountain in the presence of the sea.

(In regard to) the eyes (which) have passed beyond (the limits of) the (physical) senses[16] (and) have obtained "kisses" from seeing the Unperceived (Realm),[17]

I can't find a single ear that I may tell a subtle remark about those beautiful eyes.

2645 (If) the water (reflecting) the glorious praiseworthiness (of those eyes) should drip (down),[18] (the archangel) Gabriel would seize a drop of it,

So that he could rub (it) onto his "feathers and beak"-- if that [saintly] person prone to practicing goodness[19] gives his permission.

The falcon says, "Even if the anger of (that) feeble old (woman) has been inflamed, (still) it has not burned up my dignity, radiant glow, knowledge, and patience.

"The falcon of my spirit will (continue to) weave anew a hundred forms.[20] The blow strikes upon the camel, not on (the Prophet) Salih.[21]

(The Prophet) Salih, From a single majestic breath which Salih brings forth, the back (side) of the mountain[22] will give birth to a hundred such camels.[23]

2650 (My) heart is saying,[24] "(Be) silent and maintain caution,[25] or else the (Divine) jealousy will tear up the vertical and horizontal threads (of existence)."

(Yet) His jealousy has hundreds of hidden mildnesses, or else it would burn up hundreds of worlds at once.

Kingly arrogance conquered (within) Pharaoh (any) room for advice, so that he uprooted his heart from attachment to (his wife's) counsel,

(Saying), "I will consult with the opinion of [my prime minister] Haman,[26] since he is the support of (my) kingdom and the axis of (royal) power."

The Chosen (Prophet Muhammad) had the Lord's faithful witness, (Abu Bakr)[27] for a counselor, (but) Abu Jahl had Abu Lahab for a counselor.[28]

2655 The root of (his) general nature[29] drew him in such a (strong) way that the advice (of his wife) became unpleasant to him.

2656 (For similar) kind flies with a hundred wings toward (similar) kind (and) tears off (any) fetters for its fantasied (object of desire).[30]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2626) veiled and pious one [satîr]: means piously covered, concealed. Nicholson translated, "O veiled (modest) one." The term also means one who hides another's faults.

2. (2626) Haman: Pharaoh's "wazîr," or prime minister and main counselor on matters of State.

3. (2627) What does a blind feeble old person know about a (royal hunting) falcon: Pharaoh's wife had been urging him to follow her advice and accept the blessings promised by Moses for submitting to the One God. Then she said: "Hurry, since an amazing falcon has fallen (as a gift) to you; no seeker will find (one such as) this in (his) search." (line 2625)

"It means: Haman is symbolized by a feeble old blind person, and the secret is related to (true) faith and worship, which is like a lofty flying falcon." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

4. (2628) (If) you give a white falcon to a feeble old

(woman): "This apologue on the folly of imparting mystical truth to the vulgar [= common ignorant people] begins with a passage that corresponds almost exactly to the opening verses of the Story of the King who found his falcon in the house of a decrepit old woman" [= II: 323-349]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (2628) she will cut its claws for sake of (its) "betterment": "And she believes that this action of hers is good, because she supposes that by cutting the falcon's claws she has done a (good) service and favor to it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (2629) The blind feeble woman: "The intended meaning of the blind old woman in this explanation: the base ego [nafs] and craving desire, as well as the followers of the base ego and the people of craving desire. And the meaning of the falcon: (true) faith, as well as those people who are worthy of submission [islâm] (to God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (2632) pasta [totmâj]: Nicholson's translation has a transliteration of the Persian word, "tutmáj," with a footnote defining it as "A stew made of meat and pastry." (Footnote) However, another dictionary defines it as "thin slices of pasta, vermicelli." The latter makes more sense, that it would be food that is the opposite of meat. Nicholson explained the symbolism: "Here tutmáj signifies intellectual speculation and exoteric knowledge." (Commentary)

8. (2635) (Then) she gives it the pasta broth: "i.e. according to Fa [= Anqaravi, the commentator], 'the carnal man regales the mystic with maxims of worldly wisdom'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (2635) the paste [faTîr]: "Said to mean unleavened bread, which is the intended meaning of the pasta of totmâj." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (2636) her anger lasts longer: "Any time a (spiritual) lover who has the disposition of a (noble) falcon does not take the advice and counsel-- which resemble pasta broth-- of worldly people and does not accept their words, they will become angry, annoyed and enraged." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (2638) (and) it remembers the kindness of the heart-illuminating king [it flew away from]: "The intended meaning of 'falcon' in this passage is the human spirit, or the Prophets-- peace be upon them, or the noble saints.

Either (interpretation) is permissible. The intended meaning of 'king' is God Most High. And the intended meaning of 'feeble old person' is the '(ugly) old woman' of the World. It is also allowable if (the meaning of) the people [bound to the materialistic values] of the World is also assumed. Hazrat-i Mawlana [= Rumi]-- may God sanctify his lofty secret, has made the feeble old person a metaphor for Haman [= Pharaoh's chief political adviser], and the falcon a metaphor for Hazrat-i Músá [= Moses]-- peace be upon him and his secret." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (2640) Its eyes which "did not swerve": refers to the account of Prophet Muhammad's miraculous ascension [mi`râj] to Heaven (during his lifetime): "(His) eyes did not swerve [mâ zâgha 'l-baSar] nor stray. For certainly he saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord." (Qur'an 53: 17-18).

13. (2640) the crow: symbolic of a base, evil person who lead others astray-- as well as bad fortune. The crow (as well as the owl) are the opposite of the king's falcon, which symbolizes noble character and good fortune. There is a pun between the Persian word "crow" [zâgh] and the Qur'anic Arabic word "swerve" [zâgha].

14. (2640) searing injuries: means that the falcon's eyes are hurt by the glance of the "evil eye" as if wounded by a hot branding iron.

15. (2640) the evil eye: contrasts with the "good eyes" of the noble [= saintly] falcon. Refers to the ancient folk belief that a person can become subject to illness and harm from the magic of an evil gaze. It also refers, in the Qur'an, to the eyes of the envious unbelievers, who would "almost trip you up with their (evil) eyes" (68:51) and to the "evil of the envious who practices envy" (113:5).

16. (2643) (In regard to) the eyes (which) have passed beyond (the limits of) the (physical) senses: Nicholson referred here to Mathnawi I :1406 (which he translated, "Man is eye, and (all) the rest is (worthless) skin: the sight of that (eye) is (consists in) seeing the Beloved." And he explained: "Man is man in virtue of the inward eye with which he is potentially capable of contemplating Reality and becoming 'the eye of the Eternal Light' [= Mathnawi II: 18]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (2643) have obtained "kisses" from seeing the Unperceived (Realm): Nicholson translated, "and won kisses

from vision of the Unseen..." "The first (allowable) meaning is as a metaphor of delight and enjoyment.... The second meaning is being kissed. In other words.... it sees the world of spiritual meaning by means of seeing the Unperceived (spiritual) realm (and) it obtains kisses from the holy spirits and pure souls." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (2645) (If) the water (reflecting) the glorious praiseworthiness (of those eyes) should drip (down): Nicholson translated, " (If) the lauded and august water were to trickle (from that eye)." And he explained: "i.e. the `ilm-i ladunní [= knowledge from the Divine Presence, a reference to Qur'an 18:65] of the Perfect Man [= the perfected saint who reflects the Attributes of God, a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240]. It has been said that 'the tears of God's lovers are dearer to Him than the praise of the Cherubim'." (Nicholson, Commentary) Anqaravi quotes this saying in Arabic: "The sighs of those who are loved (by God) and the weeping of those who pray for forgiveness [al-mustaghfarîn] are more loved by God than the praise of the closest angels." (Commentary)

19. (2646) that [saintly] person prone to practicing goodness: "I.e. the Perfect Man (prophet or saint) who is the owner of the illumined eye." (Nicholson, Footnote)

20. (2648) The falcon of my spirit will (continue to) weave anew a hundred forms: "i.e. no earthly afflictions can touch the spirit of the saint or prevent it from displaying Divine attributes." (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (2648) (the Prophet) Salih: in the Qur'an, the Prophet Salih ordered the people of Thamud to allow a certain camel to be watered (as a test of the rights of the poor to water their animals) and not to harm it. But they harmed it and suffered Divine punishment (26:155-58; 7:73). Nicholson also referred to a related passage (Mathnawi I: 2509-2557), which he translated: "His (the prophet's or saint's) spirit is like Sálih, and his body is the she-camel: the spirit is in union (with God), the body in want (distress). The Sálih-spirit is not susceptible to afflictions: the blows fall on the camel (body), not on the essence (spirit)." (I: 2515-16)

22. (2649) the back (side) of the mountain: Nicholson translated, "the back (womb) of the mountain."

23. (2649) will give birth to a hundred such camels: "If the

saint's body is hurt, God restores the loss a hundredfold." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred to Mathnawi III: 1705-45 for more on this particular theme. "It means, 'Those camels which had arrived from the inside of the mountain [= were conceived], due to the (sighing) prayer of Hazrat-i Salih-- peace be upon him, would be found to have been born." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (2650) (My) heart is saying, "(Be) silent and maintain caution: Rumi is speaking to himself here. "Rúmí means that he is forbidden to reveal the mystery of the Perfect Man's 'union' with God." [= see note on line 2645, above] (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson referred to Mathnawi I: 1733 and IV: 2767 on this theme.

25. (2650) the (Divine) jealousy will tear up the vertical and horizontal threads (of existence): Nicholson translated, "otherwise, the (Divine) jealousy will end the warp and woof (of thy existence)."

"(It means), 'Be silent about the unveiling of (Divine) mysteries. If you are not silent, the Divine jealousy will tear up the warp and woof of the entire veil [protecting this world from the Divine Light]. And it will tear the covering and rip away any veil which covers the face of (Divine) Reality. At that moment it will be necessary for the secret of every person to become apparent and this is not allowed [= prior to the Day of Judgment].'.... It is possible for the second half of the verse to mean: 'The Divine Jealousy will tear up and erase your existence and body,' but the first interpretation is better." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (2653): I will consult with the opinion of [my prime minister] Haman: Rumi continues the story, describing how Haman appealed to Pharaoh's arrogance and convinced him that the words of Moses, a mere slave, were impudent and insulting to a great king as he, etc.

27. (2654) the Lord's faithful witness [Siddîq], (Abu Bakr): Abu Bakr was the Prophet's closest companion and first successor. He was known as Abu Bakr Siddíq, "Abu Bakr the sincere, or faithful witness."

28. (2654) Abu Jahl had Abu Lahab for a counselor: two notorious enemies of the Prophet. They were leaders of the pagan polytheists who worked to destroy the new monotheist Muslims.

29. (2655) The root of (his) general nature: Nicholson translated, "The homogeneity rooted in his nature." And he explained: "Literally, 'the root (innate disposition) of homogeneity.'" (Footnote)

30. (2656) for its fantasied (object of desire): Nicholson translated: "Congener flies to congener with a hundred wings and rives (all) bounds asunder in the fancy (desire) for him (who is the congenial)." The attraction of similar kinds for each other is a frequent metaphor in Rumi's teaching. Anqaravi quotes the Arabic saying: "Similar kind is inclined toward similar kind" [al-jinsu ilà 'l-jinsi yamayl]. (Commentary)

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2626 goft bâ hâmân be-gôy-am ay satîr
shâh-râ lâzim bow-ad râ'y-é wazîr

goft bâ hâmân ma-gô în râz-râ
kôr-é kam-pîrê che dân-ad bâz-râ?

qiSSa-yé bâz-é pâdshâh wa kam-pîr-zan

bâz-é espêdê ba-kam-pîrê deh-î
ô be-borr-ad nâkhon-ash bahr-é behî

nâkhon-é ke aSl-é kâr-ast-o shekâr
kôr-kam-pîrê be-borr-ad kôr-wâr

2630 ke ko-jâ bûd-ast mâdar ke to-râ
nâkhon-ân z-în sân darâz-ast ay keyâ?

nâkhon-o minqâr-o parr-ash-râ borîd
waqt-é mehr în mê-kon-ad zâl-é palîd

chûn-ke totmâj-ash deh-ad ô kam khwar-ad
khashm gîr-ad, mehr-hâ-râ bar dar-ad

ke chon-în totmâj pokht-am bahr-é tô
tô takabbur mê-nomây-î-wo `utuw?

tô sazây-î dar ham-ân ranj-o balâ
ni`mat-o iqbâl kay sâz-ad to-râ?
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âb-é totmâj-ash deh-ad k-în-râ be-gîr
gar na-mê-khwâh-î ke nôsh-î z-ân faTîr

âb-é totmâj-ash na-gîr-ad Tab`-é bâz
zâl be-t'ranj-ad, shaw-ad khashm-ash darâz

az ghaZb shorbây-é sôzân bar sar-ash
zan forô rêz-ad, shaw-ad kal mighfar-ash

ashk az ân chashm-ash ferô rêz-ad ze-sôz
yâd âr-ad luTf-é shâh-é del-forôz

z-ân dô chashm-é nâzanîn-é bâ-dalâl
ke ze-chehra-yé shâh dâr-ad Sad kamâl

chashm-é mâ zâgha-sh shoda por zakhm-é zâgh
chashm-é nêk az chashm-é bad bâ-dard-o dâgh

chashm-é daryâ-basTatî k-az basT-é ô
har dô `âlam mê-nomây-ad târ-é mô

gar hazâr-ân charkh dar chashm-ash raw-ad
ham-chô chashma pêsh-é qulzum gom shaw-ad

chashm-é be-g'Zashta az-în maHsûs-hâ
yafta az ghayb-bînî bôsa-hâ

khwad na-mê-yâb-am yakê gôshê ke man
nukta'yê gôy-am az ân chashm-é Hasan

mê-chekîd ân âb-é maHmûd-é jalîl
mê-robôdy qaTra-ash-râ jibra'îl

tâ be-mâl-ad dar par-o manqâr-é khwêsh
gar deh-ad dastûriy-ash ân khwob-kêsh

bâz gôy-ad khashm-é kam-pîr ar forôkht
farr-o nûr-o `ilm-o Sabr-am-râ na-sôkht

bâz-é jân-am bâz Sad Sûrat tan-ad
zakhm bar nâqa, na bar Sâlih zan-ad

SâliH az yak-dam ke âr-ad bâ shokôh
Sad chon-ân nâqa be-zây-ad matn-é kôh

del hamê-gôy-ad khamôsh-o hôsh-dâr
w-ar-na derrânîd ghayrat pûd-o târ

ghayrat-ash-râ hast Sad Hilm-é nehân
w-ar-na sôzîdy ba-yak dam Sad jahân

nakhwat-é shâhî gereft-ash jây-é pand
tâ del-é khwad-râ ze-band-é pand kan-ad

ke kon-am bâ rây-é hâmân mashwarat
k-ô-st posht-é mulk-o quTb-é maqdurat

muSTafà-râ rây-zan Siddîq-é rab
rây-zan bû jahl-râ shod bû lahab

2655 `irq-é jinsiyyat chon-ân-ash jaZb kard
k-ân naSîHat-hâ ba-pêsh-ash gasht sard

2656 jins sôy-é jins Sad parra par-ad
bar kheyâl-ash band-hâ-râ bar der-ad

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What Is The Most Difficult?

Mathnawi IV: 113-119

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anger, his ugly anger has passed beyond even (that of) a fierce animal.[2]

What hope does he have for (Divine) mercy, unless that ignorant man repents[3] of that (ugly) quality.

Although the world is helpless without them,[4] these words are a (way of) throwing (them) into confusion and error.[5]

119 The world also cannot be without excrement, but excrement is (certainly) not "clear-flowing water."[6]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (116) policeman: Refers to a story about a policeman, just prior to this section, in which a lover, who was searching for his beloved for seven years, fled from the night-patrol officers by climbing over a wall, and found himself alone in a garden with his beloved. Rumi then says, "...Though it is the nature of that policeman, O God, that he always desires the people to be afflicted.... He (the policeman) was poison to all (others), but to him (he was) the antidote: the policeman was the means of uniting that longing lover (with the object of his desire). Hence there is no absolute evil in the world: evil is relative. Know this (truth) also.... This policeman became a (source of) profit in respect of another, but he became reprobate in respect of himself. The mercy appertaining to the Faith was cut off from him; the hate inherent in the Devil enfolded him. He became a factory of anger and hatred: know that hate is the root of error and infidelity." (Mathnawi IV: 59, 64-65, 110-112, translated by Nicholson).

"`Awán or 'assistant' was a name given to any member of the government police force (shurtab or ma`únah), which acted under the orders of a special officer.... Among them were many reformed criminals, and they had a reputation for injustice, violence, and brutality; `awán is commonly used as equivalent to zálim." [= "oppressor"] (Nicholson, Commentary, p. 102)

2. (116) fierce animal [sabu`]: named this because beasts of prey were generally believed to give birth seven months after mating.

3. (117) repents: literally, "turns back from." An idiom meaning restraint and repentance.

4. (118) helpless without them: means without policemen.

5. (118) into confusion and error: Nicholson translated, "... this statement is a (means of) casting (those who hear it) into error." The meaning here is unclear, but seems to mean that, unless such people repent, their furious anger will continue to throw them into confusion and error-- thus making them the objects of Divine anger.

6. (119) clear-flowing water: "Say: 'Can you see (that) if your stream disappeared (underground) some morning, who (but God) could give you clear-flowing water?'" (Qur'an 67:30) Such water also symbolizes Divine blessings-- the opposite of God's anger.

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sû'âl kardan az `îsà, `alay-hi 's-salâm, ke dar wujûd az hama-yé Sa`b-hâ Sa`b-tar chîst?

113 goft `îsà-râ yakê hoshyâr-sar
chîst dar hastî ze-jomla Sa`b-tar?

goft-ash ay jân, Sa`b-tar khashm-é khodâ
ke az ân dôzakh hamê larz-ad chô mâ

115 goft az-în khashm-é khodâ che b'w-ad amân?
goft tark-é khashm-é khwêsh andar zamân

pas `awân ke ma`dan-é în khashm gasht
khashm-é zesht-ash az sabu` ham dar goZasht

che omêd-ast-ash ba-raHmat joz magar
bâz gard-ad z-ân Sifat ân bê-honar

gar-che `âlam-râ az-êshân châra nêst
în sokhon andar Zalâl afkandanê-st

119 châra na-b'w-ad ham jahân-râ az chamîn
lêk na-b'w-ad ân chamîn mâ 'i ma`în

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Music of Paradise

Mathnawi IV: 731-744

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731 However, his intention[1] of (hearing) the shout of the viol[2] was, as (in the case of) yearning (mystic lovers), the imagined (voice) of the Speech (of God).[3]

(Since) the shrill cry of the reed-pipe and the threatening (sound) of the drum are a bit similar to the (angelic) trumpet for the (Resurrection)[4] of all of (mankind).

Therefore, the wise (philosophers) have said (that) we have received these melodies[5] from the circling (movements) of the heavenly spheres,

(And that) these (tunes) which people are singing with (their) throats and lutes are the (same) sounds (made) by the revolutions of the heavenly spheres.[6]

735 (But true) believers[7] say that Heavenly influences caused any ugly voice to become beautiful,[8]

(Because) all of us have been parts of Adam (and) we have (all) heard those melodies (before) in Paradise.

Even though (our bodies made of) water and clay have cast some doubt [about this truth] upon us, something of those (melodies) comes (back) to our memories--

Yet because it is mixed with earthly sorrows, these shrill and deep (tones) can never give the (same) joy.

When water is mixed with urine and dung,[9] its composition becomes bitter and harshly pungent (of smell) from the mixture.

740 (But if) there is a small amount of water in (a man's) body, assume it (to be) urine-- it (can still) put out a fire.

(So) even though the water has become polluted it's (watery) nature remains, for by (means of) its nature, it extinguishes the fire of (burning) sorrow.
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Therefore, the mystical concert[10] has become the food and nourishment of the lovers (of God), since the gathering of the (entire) mind [focused on God] is in it.[11]

The mind's thoughts (then) obtain a certain strength [of concentration] and, moreover, they become (mental) images[12] from (hearing) the cries and whistling [of the reed-flute].

744 By means of melodies, the fire of love becomes sharp and intense-- just as in the case of the fire [of ecstasy] of the [man who was a] scatterer of walnuts.[13]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (731) his intention: refers to Ibrahim the son of Adham, the king of Khorasan (in Central Asia), who abandoned his kingdom in order to become a sufi. Here, Rumi wishes "to show that Ibráhím ibn Adham, with all the kingdom of Balkh at his command, was nevertheless an unworldly prince. Although, like other monarchs, he had his body-guard and court-minstrels, no motive of self-interest or self-indulgence could be imputed to him. His justice secured him against attack; and if he was not insensible to the pleasures of music, for him they were only a means of bringing the spirit into harmony with its own proper world." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (731) the viol [rabâb]: a Middle Eastern stringed musical instrument with a long neck, played with a bow.

3. (731) the Speech (of God): Nicholson translated, "But his object in (listening to) the sound of the rebeck was, like (that of) ardent lovers (of God), (to bring into his mind) the phantasy of that (Divine) allocution." Nicholson explained: "i.e., according to most commentators, the proclamation of Divine omnipotence (a-lastu bi-Rabbikum, Qur. VII 171) [= when God questioned the souls of mankind prior to the creation, "Am I not your Lord?"-- Qur'an 7: 172] to which all human souls responded in eternity.... But the next verse and vv. 839-843 infra [= "All the dead spirits took wing: the dead put forth their heads from the grave, (which is) the body. They gave the good news to one another, saying 'Hark! Lo, a voice

is coming from Heaven.' At (the sound of) that voice (men's) religions wax great; the leaves and boughs of the heart become green. Like the blast of the trumpet (on Judgment-Day) that breath from Solomon delivered the dead from the tombs."-- trans. by Nicholson] imply that khitáb [= speech, allocution] also refers to the Voice of God (Kalám-i Haqq), heard in the mystic's heart, as the trumpet of spiritual resurrection." This is the aim of listening to the "audition," or mystical concert [samâ`], of the sufis-- to imagine that one is hearing the Voice of God, the Only Beloved, and to yearn to return to the soul's original homeland in the Divine Presence. Sometimes, such mystical listening would induce a spiritual state of consciousness which inspired the dervishes to move, dance, or whirl.

4. (732) the (angelic) trumpet for the (Resurrection): usually conceived as the trumpet sounded by the Isrâfîl, the Angel of Death which announces the start of the Resurrection of the Dead on the Day of Judgment. Nicholson, in his Commentary, refers to related verses from the Mathnawi: "... like Isráfíl (Seraphiel) whose voice will cunningly bring the souls of the dead into their bodies.... One day Isráfíl will make a shrill sound and will give life to him that has been rotten for a hundred years." (I: 1916, 1918; translated by Nicholson) The meaning here is that pious sufis also listened to spiritual music while imagining, in a state of fear and trembling, that the Day of Judgment was arriving.

5. (733) we received these melodies: means especially the melodies which have a spiritual impact upon listeners are the ones which have their origin in the heavenly spheres.

6. (734) sounds (made) by the revolutions of the heavenly spheres: "the well-known Pythagorean [= an ancient Greek] conception of 'the music of the spheres' assumes that the courses of the heavenly bodies and the distances between them are determined according to the laws and relations of musical harmony. Starting from this hypothesis, Moslem philosophers developed the fantastic theory to which Rúmí alludes to." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson also quotes from the Rasá'ilu Ikhwáni 'l-Safá: "Pythagoras, it is said, invented the science of music, having derived it from celestial harmonies which his pure nature and subtle intelligence enabled him to hear." He also explained: "The Mevlevi samá` [= whirling prayer ceremony, accompanied by music], though its emotional origin is not in doubt, has been explained philosophically as a representation of the planets which love-desire impels to circle round the First Mover" [= God]."

7. (735) believers: true believers, in contrast to philosophers (who believe that beautiful music comes from the circling of the sun,

moon, and planets), believe that such music has its origin the melodies which human souls heard in Paradise before the fall of Adam.

8. (735) caused any ugly voice to become beautiful: "Súfís hold that in the state of pre-existence all human souls were with Adam in Paradise (see I 1241, note), where cacophony [= discordant, inharmonious sound] is unknown." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (739) When water is combined with urine and dung: as when animals urinate into a pool of water.

10. (742) the mystical concert [samâ`]: Means the recitation of mystical poetry or the singing or playing of musical melodies which may induce states of spiritual awareness in the sufi listener, who may spontaneously begin to move, dance, or whirl to the poetry or music.

11. (742) the gathering of the (entire) mind [focussed on God]: Nicholson explained, "... i.e. the idea of concentrating every thought, feeling, and faculty on the Beloved." (Commentary)

12. (743) mental images: means here spiritual forms of beauty, inspired by the music reminiscent of that heard by pre-existent souls in Paradise. Perhaps Rumi also is referring the the beautiful and inspired poetic images he conceived while whirling to spiritual music-- as he often did, when composing odes and quatrains.

13. (744) scatterer of walnuts: refers to the following story of a thirsty man who could not reach a pool of water, which was in a deep place. He climbed up a tree and tossed in walnuts one by one "in order that he might hear the sound made by the walnuts falling on the water, which thrilled him with joy as (though it were) sweet music" (from the heading preceding the story). The same story occurs in another place in the Mathnawi: "... the noise of the water made him drunken as (though it were) wine.... hearing the noise of the water, which to thirsty men is (melodious) as a rebeck [= viol]. The noise... like the noise of (the trumpet of) Isráfíl: by this (noise) life has been transferred (restored) to one (that was) dead; Or (it is) like the noise of thunder in days of spring-- from it (the thunder) the garden obtains so many (lovely) ornaments" (II: 1194-95, 1199-1201, translated by Nicholson).

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731 lêk bod maqSûd-ash az bâng-é rabâb
ham-chô mushtâq-ân khayâl-é ân khiTâb
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nâla-yé sornâ-wo tahdîd-é dohol
chêz-akê mân-ad ba-d-ân nâqûr-é kul

pas Hakîm-ân gofta-and în laHn-hâ
az dawâr-é charkh be-g'reft-êm mâ

bâng-é gardesh-hây-é charkh-ast în ke khalq
mê-sarây-and-ash ba-Tunbûr-o ba-Halq

735 mû'min-ân gôy-and k-âSâr-é behesht
naghz gardânîd har âwâz-é zesht

mâ hama ajzây-é âdam bûda-êm
dar behesht ân laHn-hâ be-sh'nûda-êm

gar-che bar mâ rêkht âb-o gel shakê
yâd-emân âmad az ân-hâ chêz-akê

lêk chûn âmêkht bâ khâk-é kurab
kay deh-and în zêr-o în bam ân Tarab?

âb chûn âmêkht bâ bawl-o komêz
gasht ze-âmêz-esh mazâj-ash talkh-o têz

740 chêz-akê az âb hast-ash dar jasad
bawl gîr-ash, âteshê-râ mê-kosh-ad

gar najes shod âb, în Tab`-ash be-mând
k-âtesh-é gham-râ ba-Tab`-é khwad neshând

pas ghiZây-é `âshiq-ân âmad samâ`
ke dar-ô bâsh-ad khayâl-é ijtimâ`

quwwatê gîr-ad khayâlât-ê Zamîr
balke Sûrat gard-ad az bâng-o Safîr

744 âtesh-é `ishq az nawâ-hâ gasht têz
ân-chon-ân ke âtash-é ân jawz-rêz

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Gardens Within the Heart

Mathnawi IV: 1358-1372

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The story of the sufi who was meditating in the midst of a garden, (with his) head upon a knee. His friends said,[1] "Raise (your) head up and delight in looking at the garden! (Smell) the sweet herbs, (hear) the birds, and (enjoy) 'the signs of the Mercy of God' Most High!"

1358 A sufi (was sitting) in a garden for the sake of (receiving spiritual) joy;[2] he had placed (his) face upon a knee in the sufi manner.[3]

Then he went down deeply into himself. (However), an intrusive meddler became disgusted by his appearance of being asleep.

1360 (So he said), "For what (reason) are you sleeping? Just look at the vines! Notice these trees, the green plants, and the signs [of God]!

"Hear the command of God, who said, 'Look!'[4] Turn (your) face toward the signs of Mercy."

(The sufi) replied, "His signs are in the heart, O man of changeable desires. That (which is) external is nothing more (than) the sign of the signs."

The (real) gardens and meadows (are) within the soul's original nature. (And) its reflection on the outside, is like (the reflection) in a flowing stream:

It is (only) the apparition of the garden in the water, which undulates due to the subtle (movements) of the water.

1365 The (real) gardens and fruits are within the heart, (and only) the reflection of their graceful beauty is upon the material world.[5]

If it were not for the reflection of that joyous Cypress,[6] then God would not have called it a place of deception.[7]
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This deception is that-- in other words, this apparition (which) exists by means of the reflection of the hearts and spirits of (holy) men.[8]

(And) all the deceived ones have come to (view) this reflection in the belief that this is the place of Paradise.

They are (actually) running away from the origins of the gardens, (and) are acting with foolish amusement over an illusion.

1370 (But) when their dream of forgetfulness comes to an end,[9] they see correctly, yet what advantage is that seeing (to them then)?

Then lamentation and sighs occur in the graveyard. (And) because of this mistake (of theirs), (they groan) "Oh, what regret!"[10] until the Resurrection.

1372 Oh (how) happy (is) the one who died before death[11]-- meaning, that he got scent of the origin of this "vineyard!"[12]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) His friends said: "This apologue resembles a story of Rábi`ah: 'One day in spring she entered the house and bowed her head (in meditation). The serving-woman said, 'O mistress, come out and behold what God hath made.' Rábi`ah answered, 'Do thou come in and behold the Maker: shaghalaní mushádatu 'l-Sáni` `an mutála`ati 'l-mawtihá" [= "The contemplation of the Maker preoccupies me, so that I do not care to look upon what He has made."-- trans. by Arberry] (Nicholson, Commentary) Râbi`ah was a famous woman sufi, who lived during the eighth century, C.E. [= Common Era].

2. (1358) joy [goshâda]: literally, "opening." Nicholson translated, "for the sake of (mystical) revelation."

3. (1358) face upon a knee in the sufi manner: refers to the standard sufi practice of sitting with forehead on a raised knee during spiritual meditation [murâqiba]. This posture allows both alertness and relaxation of the body for the purpose of single-minded

concentration. It can include meditating on a verse of the Qur'an, contemplating the face of one's spiritual master, and guarding the heart from unworthy thoughts or from thoughts about anything other than God.

4. (1361) Look!: the first word in a verse of the Qur'an-- "Then look at the signs of God's Mercy, how He revives the earth after its death. Truly, that same One will revive the dead (on the Day of Resurrection), for He has power over all things." (30:50)

5. (1365 the material world: literally, "(body of) water and clay." Means the beauty of the physical world, as well as the human body (which God made out of water and clay-- Qur'an 25:54; 38:71).

6. (1366) that joyous Cypress: "The heart of the saint." (Nicholson, footnote) Nicholson also explained, "The straightness and symmetry of the cypress correspond to the perfect rectitude (istiqámat) and equipoise (i`tidál) of the heart in which all realities are revealed." "Everything good and beautiful derives from these qualities from the Divine goodness and beauty reflected in the heart of the Perfect Man." (Commentary)

7. (1366) a place of deception: "And what is the life of this world, but a pleasant deception [ghurûr]?" (Qur'an 57:20)

8. (1367) of (holy) men: see note above about the heart of the "Perfect Man"-- the saint who has attained "spiritual completion" and who reflects the qualities of God.

9. (1370) comes to an end: means at the time of physical death.

10. (1371) Oh, what regret!: from Qur'an 339:56

11. (1372) died before death: refers to the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "Die before you die." This means to die to attachments to the world and to act as if one is in the presence of God. The sufis interpret this as "mystical death" resulting from "annihilation" or "passing away" [fanâ] of the transient and "remaining" [baqâ] in the presence of God, the Eternal.

12. (1372) the origin of this "vineyard": refers to what was said earlier about how "the origins of the gardens" are "the reflection of the hearts and spirits of (holy) men."

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qissa-yé Sûfî ke dar meyân-é golestân sar ba-zânû murâqib
bûd. yâr-ân-ash goft-and sar bar âwar tafarruj kon bar golestân
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wa riyâhîn wa morgh-ân wa âSâr-é raHmati 'llâhi ta`âlà

1358 Sûfiyé dar bâgh az bahr-é goshâd
Sûfiyâna rôy bar zânû nehâd

pas forô raft ô ba-khwad andar noghôl
shod malûl az Sûrat-é khwâb-ash faZûl

1360 ke che khosp-î, âkhir andar raz negar
în derakht-ân bîn-o âSâr-o khuZar

amr-é Haq be-sh'naw ke goft-ast unZurû
sôy-é în âSâr-é raHmat âr rû

goft âSâr-ash del-ast ay bû 'l-hawas
ân borûn âSâr-é âSâr-ast-o bas

bâgh-hâ-wo sabza-hâ dar `ayn-é jân
bar borûn `aks-ash chô dar âb-é rawân

ân kheyâl-é bâgh bâsh-ad andar âb
ke kon-ad az luTf-é âb ân iZTirâb

1365 bâgh-hâ-wo mêwa-hâ andar del-ast
`aks-é luTf-é ân bar-în âb-o gel-ast

gar na-bûdy `aks-é ân sarw-é surûr
pas na-khwândy îzad-ash dâru 'l-ghurûr

în ghurûr ân-ast ya`nî în kheyâl
hast az `aks-é del-o jân-é rijâl

jumla maghrûr-ân bar-în `aks âmada
bar gomânê k-în bow-ad jannat-kada

mê-gorêz-and az uSûl-é bâgh-hâ
bar kheyâlê mê-kon-and ân lâgh-hâ

1370 chûn-ke khwâb-é ghaflat ây-ad-shân ba-sar
râst bîn-and-o che sûd-ast ân naZar?

pas ba-gôrestân gherêw oftâd-o âh
tâ qiyâmat z-în ghalaT wâ Hasratâh

1372 ay khunuk ân-râ ke pêsh az marg mord
ya`nî ô az aSl-é în raz bôy bord

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Saint Is A Mirror

Mathnawi IV: 2102-2153

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The story of "Glory be to me! How great is my rank!"[1]-- the saying of Abu Yazid (Bistami), may God sanctify his spirit. And the criticism of (his) disciples. And the answer to this (which he gave) to them-- not by way of the tongue's speech but by way of (direct) seeing.

2102 Bayazid,[2] the great dervish,[3] came to (his) disciples (and) said, "Look! I am God!"

That master of the (mystical) branches of knowledge spoke like a drunkard, (saying), "There is no divinity except me, so worship me!"[4]

When that ecstatic state was over with, they said to him at dawn, "You spoke such (words) as these, and it isn't right!"

2105 (Bayazid) said, "This time, if I am involved (in such talk), strike at me (with your) knives at that (very) moment.

"(For) God (is) pure and free from (having) a body, but I have a body. (So) if I speak like this (again), (then) killing me is necessary."

When that (spiritually) freed man made the command, each disciple equipped (himself with) a knife.

(Bayazid) became (spiritually) drunk (once) again from that full (wine) jug,[5] (and) those commands of his went (far) from (his) mind.

A dessert arrived (and) his intellect became a wandering outcast. The dawn arrived (and) his candle became (overwhelmed) and helpless.

2110 The intellect is like a governmental official: when the (mighty) king arrives, the helpless official crawls into a corner.

The intellect is (like) the shadow of God, (and) God (like) the sun. What power does the shadow have to bear (the Light of) the Sun of Him?

If a genie[6] becomes predominant over a man, human qualities become missing from the man.

Whatever he says, the genie is speaking (the words). Someone from this side is speaking by means of someone from that (other) side.[7]

If a genie has this (much) influence and control, how (much greater) is the Creator of that genie!

2115 His "he-ness" has left (and) he has himself become the genie. The Turk became an Arabic-speaker[8] without (being taught by) Divine inspiration.

(Then), when he returns to himself, he doesn't know a single word (of Arabic). If a genie has this (kind of) nature and quality,

Then the Lord of a genie and a man can never have any less (power) than a genie!

If a drunkard[9] drinks the blood of a male lion, you'd say, "He didn't act, (but) the wine did (it)."

And if he perfects (his) speech by (using) the finest gold, you'd say, "The wine has said those (eloquent) words."

2120 (Since) a (quantity of) wine has this disturbance and agitation, does the Light of God not have that excellence and power?--

(So) that it may make you completely empty of "you," (so that) you may become lowly and He may exalt the words[10] (spoken by your mouth)!

Even though the Qur'an is (spoken) from the lips of the Prophet, whoever says that God did not speak it, he is a denier.[11]

When the phoenix bird[12] of no-selfness flew (aloft), Bayazid began (to speak) those (kind of) words (again).

The flash flood of (mystical) bewilderment seized (his) intellect, (so that) he spoke more forcefully than he had in the beginning.

2125 (He said), "There is nothing in my robe except God,[13] (so) how much (longer) will you search on the earth and upon the heavens?"

The disciples became completely crazed (and) were thrusting (their) knives into his holy body.

Each one was tirelessly stabbing his spiritual master, like the heretics of Gerdakuh.[14]

Anyone who (tried to) puncture the Master with a knife was, in the opposite manner, tearing open his own body.

(There) was not a single mark on the body of that master of (mystical) sciences, yet those disciples (were) wounded and drowned in a whirlpool of blood.

2130 Any who brought a blow toward the (Master's) throat saw his own throat cut and died groaning.

And the one who struck a blow into the (Master's) chest, his own chest was split open and he became forever dead.

But the one who was aware of that master of intimacy,[15] (and his) heart did not give him (permission) to strike a heavy blow,

(His) half-knowledge bound his hand (and) he won (back his) life, except that he wounded himself.

It became daylight, and (the number of) those disciples was decreased. (Many) wails (of grief) arose from their homes.[16]

2135 Thousands of men and women came before him, saying, "O you, within whose robe this world and the next[17] are wrapped!

"If this body of yours were the body of a human,[18] it would have been lost (to you) because of the daggers, like an (ordinary) human body."

Someone with a self fought against someone without a self, (but) the one with a self thrust a thorn into his own eye.

O you (who) strike against the selfless ones with (your) sword, be aware! (For) you will strike that (blow) against your own body.

Because the selfless one is annihilated[19] (and) he is safe; he is in (a state of) permanent safety.[20]

2140 (For) his form (has) vanished and he has became a mirror.[21]
In that place, (there is) nothing besides the image of another face.

If you spit (at it),[22] you do (that) toward your own face, and if you beat against the mirror, you beat against yourself.

And if you see an ugly face (there), you are also that.[23] And if you see (the image of) Jesus or Mary,[24] you are (that).

(The spiritual master) is not this or that; he is simple.[25] He has put your own image in front of you.

When (this) speech reached this place, it shut (its) lips. (And) when the pen reached this place, it shattered against itself.[26]

2145 Close (your) lips.[27] Even though eloquence has given (you) help, don't breathe (a word). And God is the best knower of the right path.

You are on the edge of the roof,[28] O you (who are) continually drunk![29] Either sit down or come below.[30] And (may) the peace (of God be upon you)!

Any time that you become joyful,[31] know (that) that moment of (spiritual) happiness (is like being on) the edge of the roof.

Be on guard at the moment of joy;[32] hide it like a treasure (and) don't reveal (it),

So that misfortune may not reach (your state) of loving intimacy.
(So) go very timidly into that hidden place of [possible] ambush.

2150 The soul's dread of the disappearance (of happiness) during the time of joy is the (sign of) moving away from the invisible edge of the roof.

If you don't see the secret edge of the roof, (your) spirit sees (it) since it is shaking (with fear).

Every sudden punishment which has occurred has been on the edge of the turret of joy.[33]

2153 There is no falling (down) except (from) the edge of the roof.
(Be) warned by (what happened to) the people of Noah and the people of Lot.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.

Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 6/15/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) my rank: A famous, and very controversial, ecstatic saying attributed to the famous sufi master, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, who died in 875. It was considered blasphemous, but defended by the sufis as something said in an uncontrollable state of spiritual ecstasy, spoken by God through him-- not said by him, since God had annihilated his selfhood during that moment.

2. (2102) Bayazid: another form of the name of Abu Yazid-- Bayazid al-Bistami.

3. (2102) dervish: literally, "faqeer," which is a sufi technical term meaning someone on the path of "spiritual poverty" [faqr]. This is related to the sufi interpretation of the Qur'anic verse: "O man, you are poor (fuqarâ) in relation to God, and God is the Rich, the Praiseworthy" (35:15). These terms were later translated into Persian as "a poor one" [darwísh] and "poverty" [darwêshî].

4. (2103) so worship me: a verse of the Qur'an (with an extra syllable added for the meter): "There is no divinity except Me, so worship Me (only)!" (21:25). Nicholson added: "[Abú Nasr] Sarráj refers to this text in support of his plea that when Báyazíd said 'subhání' [= Glory be to me] he was only quoting and reciting God's description of Himself." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (2108) (wine) jug: refers to "spiritual wine," which produces spiritual "drunkenness" or spiritual/mystical states of consciousness, including ecstasy.

6. (2112) genie: literally, "fairy" [parî]. This Persian word was incorrectly adopted to translate the Arabic word "jinn." A class of invisible creatures, which are parallel in some way to humanity, but are usually invisible. In Arabic, someone "possessed by a jinn" is called "majnûn"-- meaning "crazy" or speaking strange words which the possessing jinn is saying. Nicholson referred here to the "analogy drawn here between an ecstatic saint and a man or woman possessed by a Jinní..." (Commentary)

7. (2113) that (other) side: means the invisible side of existence, where genies and supernatural beings live.

8. (2115) an Arabic-speaker: "The Jinní, of course, speaks his own

language, i.e. Arabic." (Nicholson, Commentary) It is the genie who speaks his own language (of Arabic) through the possessed man. This is in contrast to the story of a miraculous transformation of an illiterate Kurd, who said a prayer which was granted, so that the next morning he was able to discourse eloquently on the Qur'an in Arabic, saying, "In the evening I was a Kurd, and in the morning I was an Arab"-- quoted in Mathnawi, Preface to Book I].

9. (2118) a drunkard [shîr-gîr]: literally, "milk-seizer." An idiom meaning a wine-drinker. This is a word play on "lion-capturer" [shér-gîr].

10. (2121) He may exalt the words: "i.e. when the saint is 'naughted' (fání), God causes the eternal 'kalám Alláh' [= Word of God] to manifest itself and become articulate on his tongue." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (2122) a denier [kâfir]: this word is often mistranslated as "infidel." Here it means someone who rejects, denies, and disbelieves that God is able to send Revelation to mankind in human language through His chosen prophets (such as Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad).

12. (2123) the phoenix-bird [homây]: a miraculous bird, which flies constantly, never needing to touch the ground.

13. (2125) nothing in my robe except God: "The saying 'laysa fí 'l-jubbati (or 'fí jubbatí') siwá 'lláh' is also attributed to Abú Sa'íd ibn Abí 'l-Khayr..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (2127) the heretics of Gerdakuh: refers to the "extreme Shi'ite" Ismaili sect, who were at one time called the "Assassins." According to legends about them, they were so brainwashed by drugs and extremist religious doctrine, that they were convinced of going immediately to Paradise if they carried out terrorist acts ordered by their spiritual chief. They were said to prefer to die after assassinating their assigned object (usually a high ranking government official), and that they viewed it as a disgrace to return alive. Nicholson states that the Assassins referred to here were from a fortress "near Dámaghán in the Qúmis province..." (Commentary)

15. (2132) master of (spiritual) intimacy [qirân]: This word means "conjunction," and therefore intimacy as well as an astrological conjunction of fortunate planets. Nicholson translated, "(spiritual) emperor of high-fortune."

16. (2134) from their homes: meaning from the families of the

deceased disciples.

17. (2135) this world and the next: literally, "the two worlds." Means this life and the Hereafter.

18. (2136) the body of a human: Nicholson stated, "This may be an allusion to the saint's 'immaterial body' (jism latíf)." (Commentary) He then refers to Rumi's heading just prior to Book III: 1610, which he translated: "Explaining that the body is as a garment to the spirit, and that this (bodily) hand is the sleeve of the spirit's hand, and that this (bodily) foot is the shoe of the spirit's foot."

19. (2139) annihilated [faniy]: means passed away from self (and thus continual ego-centered preoccupation) in God. This is a technical sufi term related to the better known word "fanâ."

20. (2139) safety: means safe from returning again to the state of forgetfulness of God and egoistic "self-worship."

21. (2140) a mirror: "The Perfect Man is the mirror of Truth, in which the real forms of all things are reflected, good as good and evil as evil." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (2141) spit (at it): "I.e. 'if you hate the saints, it is only because they bring before you the image of your hateful self'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (2142) And if you see an ugly face (there), you are also that: "In this passage (if I have rightly understood its meaning) Rúmí, speaking as a murshid [= spiritual master/guide], warns all concerned that states of rapture and ecstasy are precarious and must be jealously guarded from the vulgar." (Nicholson, Commentary)

24. (2142) Jesus or Mary: means, "If you are a man of purity, you will see the image of a face similar to that of Jesus; if you are a woman of purity, a face similar to that of Mary, the mother of Jesus."

25. (2143) simple: Nicholson translated, "he is simple (pure and free from attributes of self)".

26. (2144) it shattered against itself: This line is similar to Rumi's famous line near the beginning of the Mathnawi: "When the pen was hurrying to write (an explanation of Love), it shattered against itself when it reached Love (directly)." (I:114)

27. (2145) Close (your) lips: Nicholson translated this as if Rumi were speaking to himself: "Close thy lips (O my soul)..."

28. (2146) the edge of the roof: "In this passage (if I have rightly understood its meaning) Rúmí, speaking as a murshid [= a spiritual guide], warns all concerned that states of rapture and ecstasy are precarious and must be jealously guarded from the vulgar." (Nicholson, Commentary)

29. (2146) O you (who are) continually drunk: Nicholson translated, "O you who are drunken with the wine (of love)..."

30. (2146) or come below: "The 'intoxicated' mystic who has not yet reached perfection stands in great peril: either let him subside into absolute quiet and passivity or else return to self-consciousness and sober reason, lest he offend and alienate his beloved by disclosing the mystery of 'union' (sirru 'l-rubúbiyyah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

31. (2147) you become joyful: Nicholson translated, "Every moment when you enjoy (union with the Beloved)..."

32. (2148) Be on guard at the moment of joy: Nicholson translated, "Be trembling for (fear of losing) the delightful moment..."

33. (2152) the turret of joy: an idiom meaning the height of happiness. A turret is a niched defensive tower upon a wall. The meaning here is that an unexpected fall into misfortune often happens after a peak experience of happiness, because of having a wrong attitude. "Possession of spiritual joy depends on the dread of losing it through any act of irreverence or disobedience. Fear of God ensures felicity both in this world and hereafter. The peoples of Noah and Lot were destroyed at the moment when they spurned the Divine gift that was in their grasp." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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qiSSa-yé subHân-î mâ a`Zama sha'n-î goftan-é Abû Yazîd-- qaddasu 'llâhu sirr-hu-- wa i`tirâZ-é murîd-ân wa jawâb-é în mar îshân-râ na ba-Tarîq-é goft-é zabân balke az râh-é `ayân

2102 bâ murîd-ân ân faqîr-é muHtasham
bâyazîd âmad ke nak yazdân man-am

goft mastâna `ayân ân Zû funûn
lâ ilâha ill' anâ hâ f-a`budûn

chûn goZasht ân Hâl goft-and-ash SabâH
tô chon-în goft-î-wo în na-b'w-ad SalâH
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

goft în bâr ar kon-am man mashgala
kârd-hâ bar man zanîd ân dam hala

Haq munazzah az tan-o man bâ-tan-am
chûn chon-în gôy-am, be-bâyad koshtan-am

chûn waSiyyat kard ân âzâd-mard
har murîdê kârdê âmâda kard

mast gasht ô bâz az ân saghrâq-é zaft
ân waSiyyat-hâ-sh az khâtir be-raft

nuql âmad, `aql-é ô âwâra shod
SubH âmad, sham`-é ô bê-châra shod

`aql chûn shaHna-ast, chûn sulTân rasîd
shaHna-yé bê-châra dar konjê khazîd

`aql sâya-yé Haq bow-ad, Haqq âftâb
sâya-râ bâ âftâb-é ô che tâb?

chûn parî ghâlib shaw-ad bar âdamê
gom shaw-ad az mard waSf-é mardomî

har-che gôy-ad ân parî gofta bow-ad
z-în sarê, z-ân, ân sarê gofta bow-ad

chûn parî-râ în dam-o qânûn bow-ad
kerdegâr-é ân parî khwad chûn bow-ad?

ô-yé ô rafta, parî khwad ô shoda
tork-é bê-ilhâm tâzî-gô shoda

chûn ba-khwad ây-ad na-dân-ad yak lughat
chûn parî-râ hast în Zât-o Sifat

pas khodâwand-é parîy-ô âdamê
az parî kay bâsh-ad-ash âkhir kamê?

shîr-gîr ar khûn-é narra-shêr khward
tô be-gôy-î ô na-kard, ân bâda kard

w-ar sokhon pardâz-ad az zarr-é kahon
tô be-gôy-î bâda goft-ast ân sokhon

bâdayê-râ mê-bow-ad în sharr-o shûr
nûr-é Haq-râ nêst ân farhang-o zûr?

ke to-râ az tô ba-kul khâlî kon-ad
tô shaw-î past, ô sokhon `âlî kon-ad?

gar-che qur'ân az lab-é payghâmbar-ast
har ke goy-ad Haq na-goft ô kâfir-ast

chûn homây-é bê-khwadî parwâz
kard ân sokhon-râ bâyazîd âghâz kard

`aql-râ sayl-é taHayyur dar robûd
z-ân qawî-tar goft k-awwal gofta bûd

nêst andar jubba-am illâ khodâ
chand joy-î bar zamîn-o bar samâ?

ân murîd-ân jumla dêwâna shod-and
kârd-hâ dar jism-é pâk-ash mê-zad-and

har yakê chûn mulHid-ân-é gerda-kûh
kârd mê-zad pîr-é khwad-râ bê-setûh

har ke andar shaykh têghê mê-khalîd
bâz-gôna az tan-é khwad mê-darîd

yak aSar na bar tan-é ân Zû funûn
w-ân murîd-ân khasta-wo gharq-âb-é khûn

2130 har ke ô sôy-é golô-y-ash zakhm bord
Halq-é khwad bo-brîda dîd-o zâr mord

w-ân-ke ô-râ zakhm andar sîna zad
sîna-ash be-sh'kâft-o shod morda-yé abad

w-ân-ke âgah bûd az ân SâHib-qirân
del na-dâd-ash ke zan-ad zakhm-é gerân

nêm-dânesh dast-é ô-râ basta kard
jân bo-bord illâ ke khwad-râ khasta kard

rôz gasht-o ân murîd-ân kâsta
nawHa-hâ az khâna-shân bar khâsta

2135 pêsh-é ô âmad hazâr-ân mard-o zan
k-ay dô `âlam darj-é dar yak pîrahan

în tan-é tô gar tan-é mardom bod-y
chûn tan-é mardom ze-khanjar gom shod-y?

bâ-khwadê bâ bê-khwadê dô-châr zad
bâ-khwad andar dîda-yé khwad khâr zad

ay zada bar bê-khwad-ân tô Zû 'l-faqâr
bar tan-é khwad mê-zan-î ân, hôsh dâr

z-ân-ke bê-khwad fâniy-ast-o âmin-ast
tâ abad dar âminî ô sâkin-ast

naqsh-é ô fânîy-wo ô shod âyena
ghayr-é naqsh-é rôy-é ghayr ân-jâyê na

gar kon-î tof, sôy-é rôy-é khwad kon-î
w-ar zan-î bar âyena, bar khwad zan-î

w-ar be-bîn-î rôy-é zesht, ân ham tow-î
w-ar be-bîn-î `îsà-wo maryam tow-î

ô na în-ast-o na ân, ô sâda-ast
naqsh-é tô dar pêsh-é tô be-n'hâda-ast

chûn rasîd în-jâ sokhon lab dar bo-bast
chûn rasîd în-jâ qalam dar-ham shekast

lab bo-band ar che faSâHat dast dâd
dam ma-zan, wa 'llâhu a`lam bi-r-rashâd

bar kanâr-é bâm-î, ay mast-é mudâm
past be-n'shîn, yâ ferôd â wa 's-salâm

har zamânê ke shod-î tô kâm-rân
ân dam-é khwosh-râ kanâr-é bâm dân

bar zamân-é khwosh herâsân bâsh tô
ham-chô ganj-ash khufya kon na fâsh tô

tâ na-y-ây-ad bar walâ nâgah balâ
tars tarsân raw dar ân makman halâ

tars-é jân dar waqt-é shâdî az zawâl
z-ân kanâr-é bâm-é ghayb-ast irtiHâl

gar na-mê-bîn-î kanâr-é bâm-é râz
rûH mê-bîn-ad ke hast-ash ihtizâz

har nakâlê nâgahân k-ân âmad-ast
bar kanâr-é kongora-yé shâdî bod-ast

2153 joz kanâr-é bâm khwad na-b'w-ad saqûT
i`tibâr az qawm-é nûH-o qawm-é lûT

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Mirror of the Heart

Mathnawi IV: 2460-2486

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2460 If you are watchful and awake, you may see the response[1] to your actions (in) every moment.

(For) if you are observant and take hold of the rope,[2] you won't need the Resurrection to come [in order to see where the end is].

The one who knows for certain (the meaning of) a hidden sign has no need to be told openly (about it).

These misfortunes are coming to you from (your own) stupidity, since you have not understood the subtle significance and indications.

When (your) heart has become black and dark from wrongdoing, understand (that) one should not become impudent and stubborn here.

2465 For otherwise, that darkness itself will become an arrow, (and) the punishment for (your) stubbornness will reach you.

And if the arrow doesn't come, it is from (Divine) Mercy-- it is not because of (His) not seeing (your) corruption.

Take care (and) be watchful, if you need an (aware) heart,[3] since something is born to you as the result of every action.

And if you have more determination than this, the work may go (even) higher than (the stage of) observation.[4]

Then, even if you are dark in appearance, like iron, make (yourself) polished, polished, polished![5]

2470 So that your heart may become a mirror full of images, (and

so that) within it (there may be) an attractive silver-breasted[6] beauty (in) every part.

Even though the iron is dark and without (any) light, polishing cleaned the darkness from it.

The iron experienced the polishing and (how its) face was made lovely,[7] so that images could be seen in it.

If (your) earthy body is unrefined and dark, polish it, since it is receptive to polishing,

So that the forms of hidden (things)[8] may appear in it, (and so that) the reflections of the virgins of Paradise[9] and the angels may leap into it.

2475 God has given you the polishing (quality) of the intellect for that (purpose), (so) that the pages of the heart[10] may become shining by (means of) it.

You put the polisher [of the intellect] in chains, O neglecter of prayer,[11] and you have set free the two hands of craving and desire (instead).

(But) if (your) desires become placed in chains, the hands of the polisher will become loosened and freed.

(If) a piece of iron were to be a mirror for hidden things, all the forms [in existence] would be let loose in it.

(But) you have made (your heart) dark (and) have given rust to (your) disposition. This is (the meaning of the verse), "They strive to spread corruption on earth."[12]

2480 You have done such as this up to the present time; now, don't do it (any more). You have made the water dark; don't increase (it).

Don't stir (it) up, so that the water may become clear-- and (so that) you may see the moon and the stars circling[13] within it!

Because mankind is like the water of the stream: you can't see its bottom if it becomes dark (and muddy).

The bottom of the stream is full of jewels and pearls. Be careful (and) don't darken it, for it is (naturally) pure and free.

The souls of mankind are like the air: if it becomes mixed with dust, it becomes a (dark) veil for the sky,

2485 (And) it becomes an obstacle to seeing the sun; (but) if its dust goes (away), it becomes clear and pure.

2486 In spite of (your state of) complete darkness, God is showing you visions,[14] so that you may travel on the road of salvation.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 10/28/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2460) the response: may also be translated, "the answer," "the reply." It means the response of Divine Justice.

2. (2461) take hold of the rope: so that you can see where the rope leads to-- meaning that you can see the recompense of your actions before the Day of Judgment occurs.

3. (2467) if you need an (aware) heart: Nicholson later corrected his translation to: "if you have need of the (understanding) heart" (from, "if thou wouldst have a (pure) heart"). Nicholson also explained: "This is gained by means of muráqabah [= watchful observation], i.e. knowing that God oversees us and keeping Him constantly before our eyes." (Commentary)

4. (2468) observation: "I.e. 'if thou aspire to mystical contemplation of God (mushâhadah), an experience reserved for adepts.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (2469) polished: a reference to the Traditional saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "saqqálatu 'l-qulúb dhikru 'lláhi" (quoted in Nicholson, Commentary)-- "There is a polish for everything, and the polish for the heart is the remembrance of God."

6. (2470) silver-breasted: an idiom meaning a beautiful and pure young woman. Here it symbolizes beautiful and pure spiritual qualities within the heart and soul.

7. (2472) (its) face was made lovely: "Fa [= the Turkish commentator Anqaravi] takes sayqalí in the sense of saqqâl and translates the first hemistich of v. 2472: 'the polisher saw the iron and beautified its surface.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (2474) hidden (things): means dimensions of reality nor ordinarily perceived by human beings, such as advanced ideas and wisdom, and things from the realm of supernatural beings (such as genies and angels), as well as other kinds of heavenly realities.

9. (2474) virgins of Paradise: the "hourees," or beautiful pure maidens promised to faithful believers as a reward in Paradise (Qur'an, 44:54; 52: 20), and which symbolize Heavenly bliss.

10. (2475) pages of the heart: Nicholson translated, "the leaf (the surface) of the heart." This word means a leaf of a tree, of paper, of a book or scroll, as well as a sheet of metal. In other words, the image here is of a thin outer layer of the heart which shines when polished.

11. (2476) neglecter of prayer: literally, "lacking, without, destitute of, the ritual prayer." Means someone who fails or neglects to do the required five daily Islamic prayers. And here, it means someone who fails to seek strength from God (by surrendering to His Will, symbolized by prostrating one's forehead to the ground) in order to control worldly desires and, instead, gives strength to cravings and desires (by surrendering to them instead).

12. (2479) corruption on earth: from Qur'an 5:36.

13. (2481) circling: this word [Tawâf] is usually used to mean the ritual circumambulations around the Ka'ba in Mecca. So it refers to how the whole creation worship God (a theme in the Qur'an).

14. (2486) visions: this word (literally, "occurrences, events; misfortunes, calamaties") is a technical sufi word for spiritual experiences, and has to mean "visions" here because of its use in the story immediately following. It may also related to "indications" in the earlier verses.

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2460 gar murâqib bâsh-î-wo bêdâr tô
bîn-î har dam pâsokh-é kardâr tô

chûn murâqib bâsh-î-wo gîr-î rasan
Hâjat-at n-ây-ad qiyâmat âmadan

ân-ke ramzê-râ be-dân-ad ô SaHîH
Hâjat-ash n-ây-ad ke gôyand-ash SarîH

în balâ az kûdanî ây-ad to-râ
ke na-kard-î fahm nukta-wo ramz-hâ
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

az badî chûn del seyâh-o têra shod
fahm kon, în-jâ na-shây-ad khêra shod

w-ar-na khwad tîrê shaw-ad ân têragî
dar ras-ad dar tô jazây-é khêragî

w-ar na-y-ây-ad tîr az bakhshâyesh-ast
na pay-é nâ-dîdan-é âlâyesh-ast

hîn murâqib bâsh gar del bây-ad-at
k-az pay-é har fa`l chêzê zâyad-at

w-ar az-în afzûn to-râ himmat bow-ad
az murâqib kâr bâlâ-tar raw-ad

pas chô âhan gar che têra-haykal-î
Sayqalî kon, Sayqalî kon, Sayqalî

tâ del-at âyîna gard-ad por Suwar
andar-ô har sô malîHê sîmbar

âhan ar-che têra-wo bê-nûr bûd
Sayqalî ân têragî az way zedûd

Sayqalî dîd âhan-o khôsh kard rô
tâ ke Sûrat-hâ tawân dîd andar-ô

gar tan-é khâkî ghalîZ-o têra-ast
Sayqal-ash kon, z-ân-ke sayqal-gîra-ast

tâ dar-ô ashkâl-é ghaybî rô deh-ad
`aks-é Hûrî-wo malak dar way jahad

tâ dar-ô ashkâl-é ghaybî rô deh-ad
`aks-é Hûrî-wo malak dar way jahad

Sayqal-é `aql-at ba-d-ân dâd-ast Haq
ke ba-d-ô rôshan shaw-ad del-râ waraq

Sayqalî-râ basta-î ay bê-namâz
w-ân hawâ-râ karda-î dô dast bâz

gar hawâ-râ band be-nehâda shaw-ad
Sayqalî-râ dast be-goshâda shaw-ad

âhanê k-âyîna-yé ghaybî bod-y
jomla Sûrat-hâ dar-ô mursal shod-y

têra kard-î, zang dâd-î dar nehâd
în bow-ad yas`awna fî 'l-arZi 'l-fasâd

2480 tâ konûn kard-î chon-în, aknûn ma-kon
têra kard-î âb-râ, afzûn ma-kon

bar ma-shûrân tâ shaw-ad în âb Sâf
w-andar-ô bîn mâh-o akhtar dar Tawâf

z-ân-ke mardom hast ham-chûn âb-é jô
chûn shaw-ad têra, na-bîn-î qa`r-é ô

qa`r-é jô por gawhar-ast-o por ze-dur
hîn ma-kon têra ke hast ô, Sâf-é Hur

jân-é mardom hast mânand-é hawâ
chûn ba-gard âmêkht, shod parda-yé samâ

2485 mâni` ây-ad ô ze-dîd-é âftâb
chûn-ke gard-ash raft, shod Sâfî-wo nâb

2486 bâ kamâl-é têragî Haq wâq`i-ât
mê-namûd-at tâ raw-î râh-é najât

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Painted Lion on the Flag

Mathnawi IV: 3051-3058

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3051 The playful movements of the (painted) lion on the flag[1] are an informer of (the existence of) hidden winds.

(For) if there weren't the movements of those winds, the lifeless lion would never jump into the air.

(And) because of that, you may know if the breeze is the east wind or the west wind; this (movement) is the declaration of that hidden (movement).

The (human) body resembles the lion on the flag: thoughts make it move, moment by moment.

3055 The thought which comes from the east is (gentle like) the

east wind,[2] and the one which (is) from the west is (harsh like) the plague-filled west wind.

The "east" of this wind of your thought is different,[3] (and) the "west" of this wind of your thought is from that (other) side.

The moon is inanimate and (so) is its place of sunrise, (but) the heart's sunrise is the Soul of the soul of the soul.[4]

3058 The daytime sun is (merely) the shell and reflection of the rising of a [Universal] sun[5] which illuminates the inward [dimension].

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 8/19/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3051) lion on the flag: this passage is very similar to that in Book I: 603-605: "We (are) all lions, but lions (painted) on a flag; their charge (forward) is (only) because of the wind, moment by moment. (And) their charge (forward) is visible, but the wind isn't visible. May that which is invisible never be lost (to us)! Our wind (which moves us) and our existence is (part) of Your gift; our being is entirely from Your bringing (us) into being."

2. (3055) the east wind: "The 'east-wind' is fikr-i rúhání [spiritual thoughts], the 'west-wind' fikr-i nafsání [ego-driven thoughts].

3. (3056) is different: "i.e. different from the physical east." (Nicholson, footnote)

4. (3057) the Soul of the soul of the soul: "The Universal Spirit which reveals itself in all its glory to the heart of the Perfect Man." (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (3058) a [Universal] sun: Nicholson makes a reference to Book I, 119: "But there is nothing in the world (so) extraordinary as the sun, (yet) the spiritual sun (is) everlasting, for it has no yesterday." Also to I, 1127: "Again, the light of the light of the heart is the Light of God, which is pure and distinct from the light of the intellect and the senses."

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3051 hast bâzî-hây-é ân shêr-é `alam
mukhbirê az bâd-hây-é muktatam

gar na-bûdy junbesh-é ân bâd-hâ
shêr-é morda kay be-jasty dar hawâ?

z-ân shenâsî bâd-râ gar ân Sabâ-st
yâ dabûr-ast în bayân-é ân khafâ-st

în badan mânand-é ân shêr-é `alam
fikr mê-jonbân-ad ô-râ dam ba-dam

3055 fikr k-ân az mashriq ây-ad ân Sabâ-st
w-ân-ke az maghrib dabûr-é bâ-wabâ-st

mashriq-é în bâd-é fikr-at dêgar-ast
maghrib-é în bâd-é fikr-at z-ân sar-ast

mah jumâd-ast-o bow-ad sharq-ash jumâd
jân-é jân-é jân bow-ad sharq-é fû'âd

3058 sharq-é khworshêdê ke shod bâTin for–z
qishr-o `aks-é ân bow-ad khorshêd-é rôz

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Where Do You Really Live?

Mathnawi IV: 3628-3636

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3628 A man who is (living for) years in a certain city (finds that)
the moment when (his) eyes go into a [kind of] sleep,[1]

He sees a different city full of good and evil, (and the recollection
of) his own city never comes (back) to his memory

3630 So that he thinks [correctly], "I have been (a resident) of that
place [all my life], (so) this new city is not my own, and I am a
captive in this place."

No, he "knows" [differently] like this: that he has always been in

this "same" city (as his) origin and habitual (life).

How (is it) surprising if the (recollections of) the spirit (about) its dwellings, which were its residence and birth place before,

Do not come (back) to (its) memory? For this world, like a dream, is covering over [those recollections] as the clouds (cover over) the stars.

Especially (since the spirit) has tread upon (so many) cities such as these[2] (before so that) the dust has not been swept from its understanding.

3635 (And) it hasn't made fervent efforts so that (its) heart might become pure and see past situations,

3636 (So that) its heart might stick out (its) head from the hole of the mystery (and) see the beginning and the end with open eyes.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1930 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 9/2/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3628) sleep: "The nafs [= ego], though it may repent by fits and starts, soon falls back into its habitual unconsciousness of God (khwáb-i ghaflat) [= sleep of negligence, forgetfulness]. This leads up to a passage-- one of the finest in the Mathnawí-- which recalls the familiar lines: 'Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;/ The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,/ Hath had elsewhere its setting/ And cometh from afar.' So long as Man is unaware of the world of Reality whence he came, his state resembles that of a dreamer, who cannot possibly escape from the illusion that his dream-world is permanent and real." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (3634) cities such as these: "The 'cities' are the planes of being or phases of experience through which the soul must pass in its journeys from and to God before it can attain to gnosis." (Nicholson, Commentary) These past "cities" are not to be understood as referring to reincarnation. Nicholson points out (regarding the following lines, IV: 3637-3655 ["First he came into the clime of inorganic things and... he passed into the vegetable state....And... he passed... into the animal state.... Again, the Creator, whom thou knowest, was leading him (Man) from the

animal (state) towards humanity.... He hath no remembrance of his former intelligences (souls); from this (human) intelligence also there is a migration to be made by him...."]: "As it happens, the question whether Rúmí believes in transmigration of souls (tanásukh) is answered shortly and conclusively by the poet himself (V 2594): "andar-ín ummat na-bud maskh-i badan, lík maskh-i dil buvad ay dhú 'l-fiTan" ["In this community there has never been metamorphosis of the body, but there is metamorphosis of the spirit, O man endowed with perception"]. Here he lines up not only with orthodox Moslems but with philosophers like Avicenna, and all reputable Súfís."
(Nicholson, Commentary)

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3628 sâl-hâ mardê ke dar shahrê bow-ad
yak zamân ke chashm dar khwâbê raw-ad

shahr-é dêgar bîn-ad ô por nêk-o bad
hêch dar yâd-ash na-y-ây-ad shahr-é khwad

3630 ke man ân jâ bûda-am, în shahr-é naw
nêst ân-é man, dar-în-jâ-am geraw

bal chon-ân dân-ad ke khwad paywasta ô
ham dar-în shahr-ash bod-ast ibdâ`-wo khô

che `ajab gar rûH mawaTin-hây--é khwêsh
ke bod-ast-ash maskan-o mîlâd pêsh

mê-na-yâr-ad yâd k-în dunyâ chô khwâb
mê forô pôsh-ad chô akhtar-râ saHâb

khâSa chand-în shahr-hâ-râ kôfta
gard-hâ az dark-é ô nâ-rôfta

3635 ijtihâd-é garm nâ-karda, ke tâ
del shaw-ad Sâf-o be-bîn-ad mâ-jarâ

3636 sar berûn âr-ad del-ash az buksh-é râz
awwal-o âkhir be-bîn-ad chashm-bâz

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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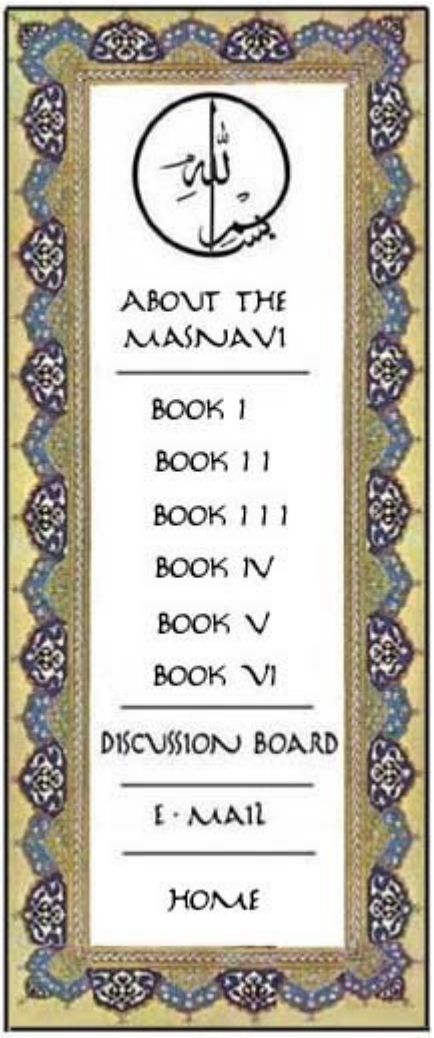

BOOK V

TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S AND ANQARAVI'S COMMENTARIES	TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S COMMENTARY
	The Virtues of Water (6/00)
What God Wills (part one) (1/01)	
What God Wills (part two) (1/01)	The Hunter and the Hunted (7/99)
The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part one) (9/01)	The Obedience of the Angel of Death (12/99)
The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part two) (9/01)	The Thief's Excuse (3/00)
The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part three) (9/01)	How Ayaz Interceded for the Nobles of the Court of King Mahmood (12/99)
The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part four) (9/01)	

What God Wills (part one)

Mathnawi V: 3111-3130

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The meaning of (the saying of the Prophet Muhammad), "What God willed occurred."[1] In other words, the will (is) His will and approval.[2] (So) seek His approval, (and) don't be distressed by the anger and rejection of others. Although the word "kâna" [meaning, "occurred"] is the past (tense),[3] yet with the Action of God there is no past or future. For, with God there is no morning and no evening.

3111 The saying of the (Prophet Muhammad, God's) servant, "Whatever God wills occurs" is not (intended) for (the interpretation), "Be lazy about it."[4]

But rather it is (meant as) urging to sincere devotion and effort, meaning, "Be prepared for (doing) greater service [to God]."

If they say, "O generous man, whatever you will, the matter is your business (to do) according to (your) wish,"[5]

(Then) unexpectedly, if you are lazy (and fail to act), it is allowable.[6] Because what you will (to do) and what you say (you want to do) will be (as you wish).

3115 (But) when they say (to you), "Whatever God wills occurs, (and) the authority is His Authority, absolutely (and) eternally,"

Then why aren't you circling around Him like a (devoted) slave (with the power of) a hundred men in continual activity?

If they say (to you), "Whatever the prime minister[7] wishes (must be obeyed), (and) the will (to command) is his, in the pomp and dominion (of his position),"

Will you become (like) a hundred men, quickly circling around him (in devoted service) so that he may scatter favors and generosity upon your head?
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Or will you run away from the prime minister and his palace? This is not seeking his help.

3120 Contrarily, you've been lazy in regard to this saying (about what God wills); you've been turned backwards (in your) understanding and thoughts.

(If) the command belongs to such and such a master, take care! What is (its meaning)? The meaning (is), "Don't sit (in service to anyone) except him.

"Circle (devotedly) around the master, since the command is his. For he kills enemies and saves the lives of friends.[8]

"Whatever he wills, you will surely obtain the same. Choose service to him (and) don't go astray."

(The meaning is) not, "Since he is the commanding authority, don't circle around him (in attendance) so that you may (end up) becoming black of reputation and yellow of face[9] [in his eyes]."

3125 The interpretation (of the saying which) is true (is) that which makes you fervent, full of hope, active, and modest (of manners).[10]

But if it makes you weak and slow, know that this (is) the truth: it is changing (the meaning of the saying) and is not the (right) interpretation.

This (saying) has come (to us) for the sake of fervent action, (and) so that He may grab the (reaching) hands of those who are hopeless.[11]

Ask the meaning of the Qur'an from the Qur'an and nowhere else.[12] And (also) from someone who has set fire to (his worldly) cravings,[13]

(Who) has become a sacrifice to the Qur'an and (is) humble, so that the Qur'an has become the very nature of his spirit.[14]

3130 (For) any oil which has become completely sacrificed to the rose, whether you smell the oil or the rose (it is the same).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with

gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),1/4/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) "What God willed occurred": "This noble explanation is a commentary on the saying [Hadîth-- of the Prophet Muhammad], 'What God willed, occurred and what He did not will, will not occur [mâ shâ' 'llahu kâna wa mâ lam yashâ'u lam yakun]'" (Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous 17th Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi) Faruzanfar ("Ahâdîthu 'l-Mathnawi," p. 174) traced a similar saying (narrated by Zayd ibn Thâbit) in the "Mustadrak" of al-Hakim: "What He willed was, and what He did not will, will not be" [mâ shi'ta kâna wa mâ lam tashâ' lam yakun]

2. (Heading) the will (is) His will and approval: means that God commands what He wills and He approves and rewards those who obey His commands. (This contrasts, in Islamic theology, to God's absolute Will, which cannot be disobeyed.) Nicholson stated that there are words missing here, so that the meaning should be, "the will (is) His will and the approval is His approval." (Commentary)

3. (Heading) Although the word "kâna" [meaning, "occurred"] is the past (tense). Rumi makes the grammatical point that in Arabic, this verb is not always limited to past events. (See, for example, Qur'an 2:114-- "they have no right to enter"; 3:79-- "It is not [conceivable] that a man... should say...") Therefore, it can mean in the present tense, "What God wills occurs." That is to say, that a person should strive and submit to God's Will, for then what God wills comes to be, and the person will be rewarded for pleasing God.

4. (3111) Be lazy about it: Nicholson translated, "be lazy (inactive) in that (matter)." And he explained "in that (matter)" to mean: "I.e. in the matter of serving God." (Footnote) Anqaravi understands Rumi to be criticizing the fatalists, or Necessitarians, who believed that the verses in the Qur'an about Divine predestination mean that human beings do not have real free will or responsibility: "(It means), 'O fatalist, what this one said-- "Whatever God Most High wills, will become that; and anything which God Most High does not will, that will not have occurred"-- does not have the meaning, in regard to that work and action which God Most High has commanded: "Be lazy." Concerning "what God wills occurred," the speech of this one is not to be understood with the meaning: "In agreeing to the work and actions which God Most High has commanded, to (then) become lazy." Or that, "The servant (of God) has no free will and power to accept the command of God."

(Or), "If God willed his obedience, he would have accomplished it."'" (Commentary)

5. (3113) according to (your) wish: Nicholson translated, "that what you wish (will come to pass, and that) you have full power to act according to your desire."

6. (3114) if you are lazy (and fail to act), it is allowable: Nicholson translated, "if you are neglectful (in serving God), 'tis permissible." "Truly, if they talk like this and give free will completely to you, it is permissible then for you to act lazy slothful in service to God. Because whatever you will, you command and say, (and) it becomes that very thing." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3117): prime minister [wazîr]: means the vizier appointed by a king to run the daily affairs of the kingdom-- a position of great power.

8. (3122) saves the lives of friends: "Because that master kills enemies and rescues the lives of friends from sorrow and suffering." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3124) black of reputation and yellow of face (in his eyes): Nicholson translated, "do not move round him (do not frequent his court), so that you may fall into his black books and be disgraced."

10. (3125) modest (of attitude): Nicholson translated, "reverent."

11. (3127) those who are hopeless: Nicholson translated, "in order to make (men) ardent (in serving God), that He may take the hands of those who have lost hope (and deliver them)."

12. (3128) Ask the meaning of the Qur'an from the Qur'an and nowhere else: Nicholson referred to another verse in the Mathnawi (which he translated): "Thou hast interpreted (and altered the meaning of) the virgin (uncorrupted) Word: interpret (alter) thyself, not the (Divine) Book. Thou interpretest the Qur'án according to thy desire: by thee the sublime meaning is degraded and perverted." (I: 1080-81)

13. (3128) And (also) from someone who has set fire to (his worldly) cravings: "And also ask the meaning of the Qur'an and its interpretation from someone who has killed his own (selfish) desires and cravings and who has obtained firmness and stability in (his) actions. Because God Most High has said: 'No one knows its hidden meanings except God and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge' [Qur'an 3:7] (Anqaravi, Commentary) [The majority of commentators on the Qur'an do not read this passage in this way,

as to allow certain knowers to be able to understand the hidden meanings of the Qur'an (as "except God and those who..."), but read it separated, as: "No one knows ... except God. And those who are firmly rooted in knowledge say, 'We believe in it; it is all from our Lord.'"]

14. (3129) the Qur'an has become the very nature of his spirit: "Just as the spirit who has gone deeply into the meaning and secrets of the Qur'an, and has obtained permeation with the Qur'an-- certainly from that spirit the meaning and secrets of the essence of the Qur'an come into appearance." (Anqaravi,Commentary)

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ma`niy-é "mâ shâ'a 'llâhu kâna" ya`nî khwâst khwâst-é ô wa riZâ, riZây-é ô jôy-îd, az khashm-é dêgar-ân wa radd-é dêgar-ân del-tang ma-bâsh-îd, ân kâna agar-che lafZ-é mâZî-st lîkin dar fa`l-é khodâ mâZî wa mustaqbal na-bâsh-ad ke laysa `inda 'llâhi Sabâh-un wa lâ masâ'-un

3111 qawl-é banda, aysh shâ'a 'llâhu kân
bahr-é ân na-b'w-ad ke tanbal kon dar ân

bal-ke taHrîZ-ast bar ikhlâS-o jid
ke dar ân khidmat-fozûn shaw musta`id

gar be-gôy-and ân-che mê-khwâh-î tô râd
kâr kâr-é to-st bar Hasb-é murâd

ân-gah-ân tanbal kon-î jâyiz bow-ad
k-ân-che khwâh-î-w-ânche gôy-î ân shaw-ad

3115 chûn be-gôy-and 'aysh shâ'a 'llâhu kân
Hukm Hukm-é ô-st muTlaq, jâwidân

pas che-râ Sad marda andar wird-é ô
bar na-gard-î banda-gâna gerd-é ô?

gar be-gôy-and ân-che mê-khwâh-ad wazîr
khwâst ân-é ô-st andar dâr-o gîr

gerd-é ô gardân shaw-î Sad marda zûd
tâ be-rêz-ad bar sar-at iHsân-o jûd

yâ gorêz-î az wazîr-o qaSr-é ô
în na-bâsh-ad jost-o jôy-é naSr-é ô
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3120 bâz-gûna z-în sokhon kâhil shod-î
mun`akis idrâk-o khâTir âmad-î

amr amr-é ân fulân khwâja-st hîn
chî-st? ya`nî bâ joz ô kam-tar neshîn

gerd-é khwâja gard, chûn amr ân-é ô-st
k-ô kosh-ad doshman, rahân-ad jân-é dôst

har-che ô khwâh-ad ham-ân yâb-î yaqîn
yâwa kam raw, khidmat-é ô bar gozîn

ney chô Hâkim ô-st, gerd-é ô ma-gard
tâ shaw-î nâma-seyâh-o rôy-zard

3125 Haq bow-ad tâ'wîl k-ân garm-at kon-ad
por-omêd-o chost-o bâ-sharm-at kon-ad

w-ar kon-ad sost-at, haqîqat în be-dân
hast tabdîl-o na tâ'wîl-ast ân

în barây-é garm-kardan âmad-ast
tâ be-gîr-ad nâ-omêd-ân-râ dô-dast

ma`niy-é qur'ân ze-qur'ân pors-o bas
w-az kasê k-âtesh zad-ast andar hawas

pêsh-é qur'ân gasht qurbânê-wo past
tâ ke `ayn-é rûH-é ô qur'ân shod-ast

3130 rawghanê k-ô shod fidây-é gol ba-kul
khwâh rawghan bôy kon, khwâh-î to gol

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What God Wills (part two)

Mathnawi V: 3131-3164

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And as with (the saying of the Prophet Muhammad), "Truly, the Pen has dried."[1] It means that the Pen has dried and wrote: "Obedience (to God) and rebellion are not equal; honesty and theft are not equal." The Pen has dried (and wrote): "Gratitude (toward God) and ingratitude are not equal." The Pen has dried (and wrote): "For God does not allow the reward of those who do good to be lost." [2]

3130 Just as the explanation of (the saying of the Prophet Muhammad), "The Pen has dried," (is that it) is for the sake of urging the most important work [in life].[3]

So the Pen wrote that for every action there is an effect and recompense[4] suitable to it.

(If) you go and act crookedly, crookedness will come to you-- the Pen has dried (concerning that). (But if) you act honestly, (Heavenly) joy will appear to you.[5]

(If) you act unjustly, you are unfortunate (in the Hereafter)[6] -- the Pen has dried (and wrote that).

(And if) you act justly, you will enjoy good fortune[7]-- the Pen has dried (concerning that).

3135 If (someone) steals, his hand has gone-- the Pen has dried (and wrote that).[8] (If) he drinks wine, he became drunk-- the Pen has dried (concerning that).[9]

Do you hold it to be suitable, (or) could it be right, that God should become like a person dismissed (from a position of authority) [who is asked] about a prior command,

(And) say, "The matter has gone out of My control, (so) don't come before Me in this manner (and) don't bother (Me) like this"?
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No, rather the meaning is: "The Pen has dried (in regard to the distinction) that justice and injustice are not the same thing to Me.[10]

"I have established the difference between good and bad (actions); I have also established (the difference) between bad and worse (actions)."

3140 Even if there is within you an atom's increase of courteous respect[11] compared to your friend, the Lord's Wisdom will know,[12]

(And) will give you the (reward for the) amount of that atom's increase; (the increase of) the atom will step forth[13] (on the Day of Judgment) like (the size of) a mountain.[14]

Any king for whom, in the presence of his throne, there is no distinction between a trustworthy person and one who seeks injustice,

(Or between) one who trembles from fear of his disapproval and one who mocks (him) because of [envying] his wealth (and kingdom),[15]

(So that) both are one to him (and) there is no distinction-- he is not a (real) king. (May) dark soil be put) on his head!

3145 Even if your effort is an atom greater,[16] it will be weighed in God's Scales.

(Yet) you constantly agonize (your) soul in the presence of these (worldly) kings, (but) they (are) unaware of (the distinction between) treachery and the light (of truthfulness).[17]

The words of a slanderer who speaks badly about you (to the king) will cause your years of service to be lost.

(But) the speech of slanderers will not find a dwelling-place in the presence of a King who is All-Hearing and All-Seeing.[18]

(Therefore), because of Him, all the slanderers become despairing. (But) they come to us and

increase (their bad) advice.[19]

3150 They speak very unjustly about the King to us,
saying, "Go (away)! The Pen has dried (concerning your
fate). (So) don't act (so) faithfully.[20]

Can this be the meaning of "the Pen has dried"--
that injustices are the same thing as (acts of)
faithfulness and devotion?[21]

No, rather injustice (will be paid) equally for
injustice-- the Pen has dried (concerning that). And
those (acts of) faithfulness (will be paid) equally for
faithfulness-- the Pen has dried (and wrote that).

(Although) there may be (Divine) forgiveness
(for sinners), yet (for him) there is no magnificent hope[22]
that the servant (of God) may become illumined of face
from (practicing) pious reverence.[23]

Even if a thief is forgiven (and) he wins his life (back),
he'll never become (the king's) prime minister or
treasurer.

3155 Come, O godly Trustworthy one of the Faith,[24] for
every crown and (royal) banner has appeared because
of trustworthiness.

If the son of the Sultan becomes a rebellious traitor
toward him, his head will be removed from (his) body
because of this.

And if a Hindu slave shows faithfulness (to a
king), good-fortune will incline toward him,[25] (saying),
"(May his life be) long and enduring!"

Why (compare) a slave? If a dog is faithful
(keeping guard) at a door, there are a hundred approvals
concerning him in the heart of the master (of the
house).

(And) if he gives a kiss on the dog's mouth
because of this, if it is a lion (instead of a dog) what a
(celebration of) victory he will give him!

3160 (There is) an exception, perhaps: a thief who does
acts of service (in repentance to God),[265] whose sincerity
tears out the roots of (his former) lack of kindness--

Such as Fuzayl, a highway robber,[27] who was
honest and just, since he raced toward repentance (with
the strength of) ten men.

(And) such as the magicians who made Pharaoh's
face blackened (of reputation) from (their) patience (in
suffering) and devotion (to God).[28]

They gave (their) hands and feet for a
punishable offence.

That [quality of repentance] can't be (reached
even) with a hundred years of worship and service (to
God).

3164 You, who have been serving (God) for fifty years,
have never offered sincerity like this!

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),1/11/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) "Truly, the Pen has dried": refers to what God
has "written" = ordained will happen-- which Rumi interprets
allows for human free will. "Bukhárí [= the most respected
collection of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad]
gives two Hadíths: 'qad jaffa'l-qalam bi-má anta láq-in' and
'jaffa 'l-qalamu `alá `ilmi 'lláhi.'" [= Truly, the Pen has dried
concerning what is fitting for you; The Pen has dried
according to the knowledge of God] (Nicholson, Commentary)
"'O fatalist [jabr" = a believer in total predestination]... the
meaning of compulsion also doesn't come from this saying. Rather,
this noble saying has been spoken for the sake of encouraging and
urging to obedience and worship of God Most High, and it has
been told for the sake of avoiding disobedience and bad actions.'"
(Translated here from a Persian translation of Anqaravi's famous
17th century Turkish commentary on the Mathnawi/Masnavi)

2. (Heading) "For God does not allow the reward of those
who do good to be lost": Qur'an 9:120.

3. (3131) for the sake of urging the most important work

[in life]: "It means, 'O fatalist, don't hold the opinion that the saying "Truly the Pen has dried concerning what is fitting for you" has been said for the sake of (your) becoming weak in obedience to God and abandoning His commands. Rather, these words are for the sake of encouraging and urging the doing of what is (most) important and necessary." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (3132) recompense [jazâ]: means a payment of reward or punishment. "The sufi shaykhs [= masters] say, 'The Tablet (of Destiny is) erased or fixed,' (meaning) that God Most High erases whatever He wishes on that Tablet, or whatever He wishes to confirm. If a servant acts wrongly, it will be written on that Tablet. And if he changes his mind about those wrong actions and does good actions, in application of the noble verse, 'Truly those good things remove the bad ones' [Qur'an 11: 114]-- the good actions of that one will erase the bad actions previously written, and the good actions will be fixed (in place on the Tablet) in place of those." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (3133) (Heavenly) joy will appear to you: Nicholson translated, "The Pen has dried (after writing) that if you do wrong (in this world) you will suffer wrong (in the next), and that if you act rightly (here) the result will be your felicity (there)."

6. (3134) unfortunate [mudbir] (in the Hereafter): Nicholson translated, "damned."

7. (3134) you will enjoy good fortune: Nicholson translated more literally here, "you will eat the fruit (of blessedness)."

8. (3135) his hand has gone-- the Pen has dried (and wrote that): means his stealing hand is punished by being amputated. "I.e. his right hand is cut off. Cf. Qur'án V, 42)." (Nicholson, Footnote)

"And regarding the male thief or the female thief, cut off their hands as a compensation for what they have earned as a warning from God (for their crime). And God is All-Mighty, Wise. But whoever repents after his crime and makes amends, God will turn to him in forgiveness. Truly, God is Most-Forgiving, Merciful." (Qur'an 5:41-42) This punishment is usually carried out for repeated theft only, and is not enforced during periods of extreme hunger and famine among the people. Making amends means to return the stolen articles prior to

arrest. The punishment is severe because the rights of the community to be protected from theft are established in Islam as primary (in contrast, in this case, to modern Western views about the rights of the individual to be protected from being marked for life because of theft).

9. (3135) he became drunk-- the Pen has dried (concerning that): refers to the punishment on the Day of Judgment, since drinking wine (and therefore all alcoholic drinks) is forbidden in Islam (Qur'an 5:93), as well as to the punishment for public drunkenness. "If someone does not drink wine and doesn't become drunk, the Pen will not write the penalty for drunkenness for his sake." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3138) justice and injustice are not the same thing to Me: "Is one who was a believer like the one who was an impious wrongdoer? They are not equal." (Qur'an 32:18)

11. (3140) courteous respect [adab]: means good manners, due reverence, self-discipline, self-control. In sufism, it means the mode of conduct, reverence, and discipline of dervishes toward God, toward their shaykh [= spiritual master, guide], toward each other, and toward other people in general.

12. (3140) the Lord's Wisdom [faZl-é rabb] will know: Nicholson translated, "the grace of the Lord will know." "It means, 'O one who is holding on to the (hem of the) robe of Fatalism [jabr] and are lazy in doing good works! As an example: if you have an amount (of good) on the sufi path [Tarîqat] and the way of the Law [sharî`at], and there is within you an increased amount of (just) a single atom of reverent respect, Divine Wisdom and Generosity will know it and will not allow (the reward of) it to be lost.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)
13. (3141) (the increase of) the atom will step forth: "For the one who has done an atom's weight of good will see it." (Qur'an 99:7)

14. (3141) like (the size of) a mountain: "And this noble saying (of the Prophet Muhammad) also confirms this meaning: 'He-- may God bless him and give him peace-- said, "The one who has given (even) half a date (to the needy) in acquiring goodness on the path of God-- since God will not accept other than goodness-- certainly God will accept that (good action). Then He will make it grow large for the owner (of that good action), just as you make a young donkey or colt big (by feeding it) so it will become as big as a mountain."'" (Anqaravi, Commentary) This

tradition is included in Faruzanfar, "Al-HadîS-é Masnavî," p. 176.

15. (3143) and one who mocks (him) because of [envying] his wealth (and kingdom): Nicholson translated, "and him who intrigues against his fortune (empire)..." "(It means)... one who mocks his good fortune and wealth (of kingdom) and opposes his command." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (3145) Even if your effort is an atom greater: Nicholson translated, "If your (devotional) labour exceed (that of another) by a single mote..." "Truly God will not allow the reward to be lost of those who do good." (Qur'an 9: 120)

17. (3146) the light (of truthfulness): Nicholson translated, "You continually work yourself to death in the service of these (worldly) kings, (yet) they are ignorant of (the difference between) treachery and honesty." And he explained about his rendering of "work yourself to death": "Literally, 'you give up the ghost (in the death-agony).'" (Footnote)
18. (3148) a King who is All-Hearing and All-Seeing: "Truly, He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (Qur'an 17: 1; and other places)

19. (3149) increase their (bad) advice [pand]: Nicholson translated, "increase (our) bondage." Nicholson read "bondage" [band] here, but noted that the earliest manuscript has "pand."

20. (3150) (So) don't act (so) faithfully: means, "Don't bother to exert yourself to devotional acts to please God, since your fate has already been unchangeably fixed."

21. (3151) that injustices are the same thing as (acts of) faithfulness and devotion? "Shall We treat those who believe and do good works the same way as those who spread corruption on the earth? Should We treat those who are piously reverent the same way as those who are sinful?" (Qur'an 38:28) Rumi has word-plays between "faithfulness and devotion" [wafâ], "injustices" [jafâ-hâ], and "has dried" [jaffa].

22. (3153) there is no magnificent hope: means that a sinner might end up receiving the forgiveness of God on the Day of Judgment, but he shouldn't expect to be among the chosen saints in Paradise. "Though God may pardon the sinner, His supreme favours are enjoyed by those alone who serve Him with entire devotion and self-abandonment. " (Nicholson,

Commentary) In regard to God's supreme favors, Nicholson referred to a famous (non-Qur'anic) Divine saying [Hadîthu 'l-qudsî]: "God said, 'My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties [farâ'iD] I have imposed upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with voluntary works of devotion [nawâfil] so that I shall love him. When I love him I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks.'" Nicholson added: "While in qurb-i fará'id [= nearness through obligatory acts of worship] the mystic is fání [= annihilated in God] and God acts through him...., in qurb-i nawáfil [nearness through voluntary acts of worship] he is báqí [enduring in God] and acts through God." (Commentary)

23. (3153) pious reverence [taqwâ]: often translated as "fear of God," this Qur'anic term means reverential awe of God. It leads to pious attitudes and actions, because the worshipper loves God so much that he or she dreads doing anything which might increase separation from the Only Beloved.

24. (3155) O godly Trustworthy one of the Faith [Amînu 'ddîn] "WM [= the commentary of a Muslim from India, 1864] says that Am'nu'ddín is a title of Husámu'dd'n [= Rumi's disciple to whom he dictated the verses of the Mathnawi]; but I think Rúmí is apostrophising [= personifying] 'the faithful servant', i.e. the Perfect Man in general, as 'the Vizier and Keeper of the King's treasury.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

25. (3157) good-fortune will incline toward him: Nicholson translated, "sovereignty will applaud him..." Slavery in Islamic cultures was different than in European-dominated ones. Slaves were able to buy their freedom, and the favorite slaves of kings were sometimes rewarded with positions of great power and wealth.

26. (3160) Except, perhaps, a thief who does acts of service (in repentance to God): Nicholson translated, "(Robbers get nothing but pardon), except, to be sure, the robber who performs acts of service (to God)..."

27. (3161) Such as Fuzayl, a highway robber: "Fudayl ibn `Iyád, a celebrated Súfí of Khurásán, who died in A.H. 187" [= 803] (Nicholson, Footnote) "Before his conversion to Súfism, he is said to have been a highwayman." (Nicholson, Commentary) "The story of his repentance is this [=quoted from `Attar's "Memoirs of the Saints"].... Early on, he was in love with a woman. And he brought her everything gained

from robbery. He was climbing over walls, in the (late) evenings and (early) mornings, weeping out of love for that woman. One night a caravan was passing, and in the middle of the caravan someone was reciting the Qur'an. This (verse) came to the ear of Fuzayl: 'Hasn't the time come for the believers, that their hearts should be humbled in the remembrance of God?" (57:16)

28. (3162) from (their) patience (in suffering) and devotion (to God): refers to the story of Pharaoh's magicians, who after being defeated by Moses, dared to defy Pharaoh (and his claim to divinity) by repenting and declaring their faith in "the Lord of the worlds, the Lord of Moses and Aaron" and who were executed (by having their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and crucified) for this (Qur'an 7: 119-126).

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wa ham-chon-în tâ'wîl-é "qad jaffa 'l-qalam," ya`nî jaffa 'l-qalamu wa kataba lâ yastawî 'T-Tâ`atu wa 'l-ma`Siyah, lâ yastawî 'l-amânatu wa 's-sariqah, jaffa 'l-qalamu an lâ yastawî 'sh-shukru wa 'l-kufrân, jaffa 'l-qalamu "anna 'llâha lâ yuZî`u ajra 'l-muHsinîn

3131ham-chon-în tâ'wîl-é qad jaffa 'l-qalam
bahr-é taHrîZ-ast bar shughl-é aham

pas qalam be-n'wesht ke har kâr-râ
lâyiq-é ân hast tâ'Sîr-o jazâ

kazh raw-î jaffa 'l-qalam kazh ây-ad-at
râstî âr-î sa`âdât zâyad-at

Zulm âr-î mudbir-î, jaffa 'l-qalam
`adl âr-î, bar -khwar-î jaffa 'l-qalam

3135chûn be-dozd-ad, dast shod, jaffa 'l-qalam
khwar-ad bâda, mast shod, jaffa 'l-qalam

tô rawâ dâr-î, rawâ bâsh-ad ke haq
ham-chô ma`zûl ây-ad az Hukm-é sabaq?

ke ze-dast-é man berûn raft-ast kâr
pêsh-é man chand-în ma-y-â, chand-în ma-zâr?

bal-ke ma`nî ân bow-ad jaffa 'l-qalam
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nêst yak-sân pêsh-é man `adl-o setam

farq be-n'hâd-am meyân-é khayr-o shar
farq be-n'hâd-am ze-bad ham az batar

3140Zarra'yê gar dar tô afzûnî adab
bâsh-ad az yâr-at, be-dân-ad faZl-é rab

qadr-é ân Zarra to-râ afzûn deh-ad
Zarra chûn kûhê qadam bêrûn neh-ad

pâd-shâhê ke ba-pêsh-é takht-é ô
farq na-b'w-ad az amîn-o Zulm-jô

ân-ke mê-larz-ad ze-bîm-é radd-é ô
w-ân-ke Ta`na mê-zan-ad dar jadd-é ô

farq na-b'w-ad, har dô yak bâsh-ad bar-ash
shâh na-b'w-ad, khâk-é tîra bar sar-ash

3145Zara'yê gar jahd-é tô afzûn bow-ad
dar tarâzûy-é khodâ mawzûn bow-ad

pêsh-é în shâh-ân hamâra jân kan-î
bê-khabar îshân z-ghadr-o rôshanî

goft-é ghammâzê ke bad-gôy-ad to-râ
Zâyi` âr-ad khidmat-at-râ sâl-hâ

pêsh-é shâhê ke samî`-ast-o baSîr
goft-é ghammâz-ân na-bâsh-ad jây gîr

jumla-yé ghammâz-ân az-ô âyis shaw-and
sôy-é mâ ây-and-o afzây-and pand

3150bas jafâ gôy-and shah-râ pêsh-é mâ
ke be-raw, jaffa 'l-qalam, kam kon wafâ

ma`niy-é jaffa 'l-qalam kay ân bow-ad
ke jafâ-hâ bâ wafâ yak-sân bow-ad?

bal jafâ-râ ham jafâ, jaffa 'l-qalam
w-ân wafâ-râ ham wafâ, jaffa 'l-qalam

`afw bâsh-ad, lêk kû farr-é omêd
ke bow-ad banda ze-taqwà rô-sapêd?

dozd-râ gar `afw bâsh-ad, jân bar-ad

kay wazîr-o khâzan-é makhzan shaw-ad?

3155ay amînu 'ddîn-é rabbânî, be-y-â
k-az amânat rost har tâj-o lawâ

pûr-é sulTân gar bar-ô khâyin shaw-ad
ân sar-ash az tan ba-d-ân bâ-yin shaw-ad

w-ar gulâmê hendowî âr-ad wafâ
dawlat ô-râ mê-zan-ad Tâla baqâ

che ghulâm, ar bar darê sag bâ-wafâ-st
dar del-é sâlâr ô-râ Sad riZâ-st

z-în chô sag-râ bôsa bar pûz-ash deh-ad
gar bow-ad shêrê che pêrôz-ash kon-ad?

3160joz magar dozdê ke khidmat-hâ kon-ad
Sidq-é ô bîkh-é jafâ-râ bar kan-ad

chûn fuZayl-é rah-zanê, k-ô râst bâkht
z-ân-ke dah marda ba-sôy-é tawba tâkht

w-ân-chon-ân-ke sâHir-ân fir`awn-râ
rô-seyah kard-and az Sabr-o wafâ

dast-o pâ dâd-and dar jurm-é qawad
ân ba-Sad sâla `ibâdat kay shaw-ad?

3164tô ke panja sâl khidmat karda-î
kay chon-în Sidqî ba-dast âwarda-î

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part one)

Mathnawi V: 3439-3479

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The story of the prince[1] who told (his) slave, "Bring wine!" The slave went and fetched a jug of wine. There was an ascetic (whom he encountered) on the way (back who) commanded (him to do) what is right, threw a rock, and broke the jug. The prince heard (about it) and made the punishment of the ascetic his aim. And this resolution (of his) was made during the age of the religion of Jesus[2]-- (may the) peace (of God) be upon him-- when wine had not yet been forbidden (to believers).[3] However, the ascetic was feeling aversion (toward the impure effects of wine) and was hindering (others) from the enjoyment of (worldly) comforts.

3439 There was a happy-hearted prince, one (who was) addicted to wine, (and who was) the (sheltering) cave of every drunkard and destitute person.

3440 He was someone (who was) kind and compassionate, comforting to the poor, just, a jewel (of generosity), gold-bestowing, (and) ocean-hearted.

(And he was) a king of men, the commander of the believers,[4] a guardian of the (religious) way, a knower of (spiritual) secrets, and discerning (of the sorrows) of friends.

It was the age of Jesus and the days of the Messiah.[5] (The prince was) the beloved of the people, not in the least cruel, and (was) charming.

One night, a guest came to him suddenly-- another prince, one of his rank, (and) someone of (the same) good religious doctrine.

Wine was necessary for them, (in order to put their) feelings into (good) order.[6] (During) that time, wine was allowed and legally sanctioned (by religion).[7]

3445 (However), there was no wine (present) for them and (the prince) said (to one of his retinue), "O slave, go,
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fill the jug, (and) bring us wine

"From a certain monk, since he has excellent wine-- so
that the soul may find freedom from (concerns about) nobles
or commoners."

A (single) gulp[8] from the goblet of the monk [chosen by
God][9] produces that (state) which (only) thousands of jars
and wine-cellars could make.

In that (Christian monk's) wine was a hidden ferment[10]--
just as (spiritual) dominion is (hidden) in the cloak (of a
Muslim dervish).[11]

Don't view (just) the tattered and torn (dervish) cloak,
since they have blackened the external part of the gold.[12]

3450 (The dervish) becomes (publicly) rejected for the sake
of (avoiding) the evil eye.[13] And (similarly) the exterior of
the ruby is stained by smoke.[14]

Treasure and jewels are never (placed) in the middle of
a house. Treasures are always (hidden) in ruins.[15]

Since the treasure of (the spiritual worth of) Adam was
buried in a "ruin," the clay (of his external body) became a
blind-fold for (Satan) the Accursed.[16]

(Satan) was looking (contemptuously) at the clay (body
of Adam) as very weak and feeble.[17] (But) the soul (of Adam)
kept saying, "My clay (body) is, to you, (like) a wall
[which bars your vision]."

The (prince's) slave took two jugs and ran willingly.
In a (short) time he arrived at the monastery of the monks.[18]

3455 He gave gold (coins) and bought wine like gold. He gave
stones and bought jewels in return.

(It was) a wine which would leap to the top of kings'
heads,[19] (and which) would place a golden crown upon the head
of the cupbearer.[20]

(It was a wine by which) discord and agitation (are)
provoked (and by which) slaves and kings (are) mixed
(together).

(By it) bones (have) gone (and have) become entirely

soul; that (very) moment, a throne and a (wooden) board (have) become similar.[21]

(During) the time of sobriety, (men) are like water and oil (in their differences); (but during) the time of drunkenness they are (harmonious) like the soul in the body.[22]

3460 (They have) become like thick soup;[23] there is no difference there. (And) there isn't any difference which is not drowned there.

The slave was carrying wine (of a quality) such as this to the palace of that prince of good reputation,

(When) an ascetic came in front of him, one (who had) experienced (much) sorrow and longing (for God), one inclined to (inward) agitation,[24] someone (who had) writhed in trials and afflictions.

(His) body had been melted by the fires of (his) heart, (and) the house (of his heart) was cleared of (everything) except God.

The punishment of merciless afflictions (had tormented him with) scars upon scars-- many thousands.

3465 Every hour found his heart (making) efforts [against worldly thoughts and desires];[25] day and night sticking to the struggle.

(For many) years and months (he had) mingled with blood and dust, (and on that) midnight his patience and restraint had escaped.

The ascetic asked, "What is that inside the jugs?" (The slave) said, "Wine." He asked (again), "To whom does it belong?"

(The slave) said, "It (is) the property of most excellent prince so-and-so." (The ascetic) asked, "Is this the occupation of the (spiritual) seeker?

"(To be) a seeker of God and then gratifying (sensual) desires and drinking! (To drink) the wine of Satan and then (become) half-understanding!"

3470 Your understanding is faded and withered in the same

way as this, (even) without wine, so that the discerning minds (of others) must be joined to that (dim) understanding of yours.

So, O one (who has) become the prey of the trap of intoxication, like a bird, what will be (the quality of) your awareness at the time of wine-intoxication?

The story of Ziya-yi Dalq,[26] who was very tall, and his brother, Taj of Balkh, the Shaykh of Islam,[27] (who) was extremely short of stature. And this Shaykh of Islam had (feelings of) scorn and disdain in regard to his brother Ziya. (When) Ziya came to (hear) his lecture-- and all the prominent leaders of (the city of) Balkh[28] were present for his instruction-- Ziya made a bow (toward his brother) and went on (walking toward a row to sit). (In response), the Shaykh of Islam made a feeble and careless (gesture of) half-rising.[29] (Ziya) said, "Yes, you are terribly 'tall,' (so) rip off[30] a part (of your height)!"

Ziya-yi Dalq was (possessed of) pleasing inspiration.[31] (And) he was the brother of Taj, the Shaykh of Islam.

Taj, the Shaykh of Islam of the region of the kingdom of Balkh, was short of stature and small as a baby bird.

Even though he was learned, distinguished, and a master of (Islamic) branches of learning, Ziya was greater in sharpness of wit.

3475 He was very short, (but) Ziya (was) extremely tall. (As a result), the Shaykh of Islam had a hundred conceits and proud ways of acting.

(And) he would be scornful and disdainful in regard to this brother Ziya, (who) was also a preacher-- (and) possessed of right guidance (from God).[32]

On the day of (the Friday) congregation,[33] Ziya came inside. The hall (of the mosque) was full of (Islamic) judges and (men known for being) just and virtuous.

The Shaykh of Islam, due to total pride and vanity, (made) such (an inconsiderate gesture of) half-rising for (greeting his) brother,

3479 (That Ziya) told him: "You are extremely 'tall,'[34] (so)
rip off a bit of that (tall) cypress-like stature of yours
for the sake of (gaining a Divine) reward!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) The story of the prince: "This story illustrates v. 3438 [= translated by Nicholson: "How should thy lofty spirit be satisfied with every loyalty? How should thy pureness choose (to accept) every sincerity?"] The Amír [= prince] is a type of those in whom self-will is dominant and who prefer sensual enjoyment (safá ú dhawq-i majází) [= enjoyment and taste of what is superficial and worldly] to the delights of spiritual knowledge and experience (safá ú dhawq-i haqíqí) [= enjoyment of the taste of spiritual reality]. Some passages suggest a different interpretation, and owing to the ambiguity of the term 'wine' as a symbol for both kinds of pleasure it is easy to see in the Amír a God-intoxicated mystic scorning the narrow rule of asceticism and piety; but his furious behaviour (v. 3490 sqq.) indicates the general part he is meant to play in the story." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (Heading) during the age of the religion of Jesus: "I.e. in the early Christian era." (Nicholson, Footnote)

3. (Heading) when wine had not yet been forbidden (to believers): means before the revelation of Islam, which has never been considered a "new religion," but the final revelation for humanity which contains the essence of the past messages and revelations of the prophets of the past (from Noah and Abraham to Moses and Jesus), as well as requirements and prohibitions suitable for the age preceding the Day of Judgment. Among new prohibitions was the forbidding of making, selling, and drinking wine. The earliest Muslims were first forbidden to join in the ritual prayer when intoxicated with wine. In the revelation of the Qur'an, wine and gambling were first described as having some benefits and great sin, "And the sins are greater than the benefits." (2:219) Later, Muslims were ordered to strictly avoid wine (as well as gambling and divination of

the future) as evils urged by Satan (5:93). (Islamic law has always allowed Christians and Jews to make and consume wine, to practice their religion, and to enforce their own religious laws.) The forbidding of "wine" is understood to include all alcoholic beverages (and, by analogy, all intoxicating drugs-- which were unknown to the early Muslims). Sufis seek to taste something of the spiritual "wine of Paradise" in this life: "rivers of wine delightful to those who drink it" (Qur'an 47:15), "wherein is no headache, nor are they made drunk thereby" (37:47).

4. (3441) the commander of the believers [amîru 'l-mû'minîn]: normally a term for the leader of all the Muslims, the Khalifa (Caliph). Here it means a local ruler of the believers, one who commands the right and forbids the wrong.

5. (3442) the age of Jesus and the days of the Messiah: see first Heading note ("during the age of the religion of Jesus").

6. (3444) (in order to put their) feelings into (good) order: Nicholson translated, "in order to enjoy themselves." And he explained: "Literally, 'to harmonise their state of mind.'" (Footnote) "It means, for the sake of harmonizing their (mental and emotional) states and producing joy." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator on the Mathnawi, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

7. (3444) (During) that time, wine was allowed and legally sanctioned (by religion): see second Heading note ("when wine had not yet been forbidden (to believers)").

8. (3447) A (single) gulp: Here, Rumi comments on the preceding lines. "It is said (to mean) a (single) wine-cup with two handles [dastî]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3447) from the goblet of the monk [chosen by God]: "i.e. the Wine of Divine Love." (Nicholson, Commentary) "(The term), 'monk': described as someone who chose seclusion in the religion of (the Prophet) Jesus and who was occupied with the worship of God. Although these words have been said in regard to the elderly monk, the religion of Hazrat-i `Isà [= Jesus], and the prince, yet the intended (meaning) is the sincere lovers of God who have broken off (contact) from mankind in the Muhammadan religion [dîn-é muHammadî] and are abandoners of (the concerns and pleasures

of) the world. A single draught of the wine of love from the cup of their heart gives such a (spiritual) drunkenness that thousands of jugs and barrels (which) are full of wine..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3448) a hidden ferment: Nicholson translated, "a hidden (spiritual) substance."

11. (3448) the cloak (of a Muslim dervish): "Dervishes (ahl-i `abá) [possessors of (woolen) cloaks] are often contrasted with worldly folk (ahl-i qabá) [= possessors of (worldly) shirts]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (3449) they have blackened the external part of the gold: "I.e. the black woolen cloak worn by the dervish conceals his spiritual worth like the black pigment with which gold is disguised." (Nicholson, Footnote)

13. (3450) (The dervish) becomes (publicly) rejected for the sake of (avoiding) the evil eye: According to ancient folk belief, a person can become subject to illness and harm from the magic of an evil gaze. It also refers, in the Qur'an, to the eyes of the envious unbelievers, who would "almost trip you up with their (evil) eyes" (68:51) and to the "evil of the envious who practices envy" (113:5). There has been a type of sufi, called Malâmâtî (= "blameworthy") who regarded having a reputation for piety as spiritually dangerous (because it tends to strengthen one's pride and vanity). They viewed the negative effects of such public admiration to be as spiritually dangerous to the soul-- and therefore worse than the effects of the "evil eye" on one's health and worldly good-fortune. They deliberately attracted public blame by giving the impression of being impious, while keeping their asceticism, daily prayers, and piety secret.

"Because those (dervishes) are, in meaning, like gold: for the sake of protecting their existence from the evil of thieves and deceivers, they make their exterior 'black' ... so that no one may know that that (nature of theirs) is gold and (so that they) may not fetter them with (their worldly) desires." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (3450) is stained by smoke: similarly, rubies were blackened with soot as a protective disguise.

15. (3451) Treasures are always (hidden) in ruins: a frequent theme of Rumi's.

16. (3452) a blind-fold for (Satan) the Accursed: means an eye-covering, such as is used for animals used to turn a mill. This line refers to the blindness of Satan, who refused God's order for all the angels to bow in obeisance to Adam (Qur'an 2:34). Satan refused, asserted that he was made of a more sublime substance ("fire"), whereas Adam was made of lowly clay, and therefore, "I am better than him." (38:76). However, Adam had revealed that God had taught him the "names of all things" (interpreted by the sufis as the Names of God), which even the angels did not know (2:31-33). Because of this disobedience of a direct order from his Creator, Satan was told, "Truly, My curse will be upon you until the Day of Judgment" (38:78). Therefore, Satan is sometimes called "the Accursed one" in Islamic literature.

"It means, 'Most of the (saintly) people of religion and the companions of (spiritual) certainty take care to hide themselves from the eyes of people. They have made their outer forms (appear) "wrecked and ruined" so that they may protect the treasury of their (spiritual) secrets and lights from unworthy groups (of people).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (3453) (Satan) was looking (contemptuously) at the clay (body of Adam) as very weak and feeble: "(God) said, 'O Iblis, what prevented you from bowing (in obeisance) to the one I created with My hands? Are you (too) proud? Or are you (in your view) among the exalted ones?' (Iblis) said,' I am better than him. You created me from fire and You created him from clay.'" (Qur'an 38:75)

18 (3454) the monks: Nicholson explained that the word for "monk" [rohbân] here is a Persianized form of the Arabic term [râhib] for a Christian monk.

19 (3456) a wine which would leap to the top of kings' heads: describes the state of drunkenness, in which wine seems to "rush" upwards to the brain.

20. (3456) which) would place a golden crown upon the head of the cupbearer: the cupbearer [saqi] was often an attractive young man or boy, whose charms would be rewarded by gifts from drunken guests. Here, Rumi humorously depicts kings as so intoxicated that the power of the wine "displaces" their crowns (perhaps symbolizing intelligence and wisdom) and causes them to drunkenly put their crowns upon the heads of their favorite wine-serving slaves.

21. (3458) a throne and a (wooden) board (have) become similar: there is a word-play between "throne" [takht] and

"board" [takhta], with an additional play on the fact that both words are "similar" in spelling.

"And the seeker in that (spiritual) stage sees the throne of kings and the board of dervishes as similar..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (3459) (but during) the time of drunkenness they are (harmonious) like the soul in the body: "(It means), 'But in the moment when they have become drunk with the wine of Love, they are united like a single soul in one body.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

23. (3460) thick soup [harîsa]: a soup made of boiled wheat and meat pounded together and mixed with butter, cinnamon, and other aromatic herbs.

24. (3462) one inclined to (inward) agitation: Nicholson translated literally, "whose brain was dry." "... an inwardly agitated [shôrida-darûn], austerity-enduring, inner darkness-suffering ascetic whose brain had become dry from the effects of yearning." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

25. (3465) (making) efforts [against worldly thoughts and desires]: the Arabic word here [jihâd] has been mistranslated by the Christian term, "Holy War." It means striving for the sake of God (and warfare in defense or against oppression is only one form if it). In sufism, this word usually means struggling against the ego [nafs] and its constant self-centered preoccupations with worldly concerns and desires-- which distract the sufi from contemplating God alone and being attuned to His Will.

26. (Heading) Ziya-yi Dalq: this name may indicate that he was a dervish, since it can be interpreted to mean "the (inner) light [Ziyâ] of the (ragged dervish) cloak [dalq]." It may be a name chosen by Rumi in regard to line 3449 about the spiritual qualities within the dervish cloak, in contrast to its ragged appearance. The name of his brother is "crown" [tâj], a name relating to high rank.

27. (Heading) the Shaykh of Islam: the position of highest rank among Islamic scholars and preachers, often appointed by the king.

28. (Heading) Balkh: an ancient city (now in present day Afghanistan), a center of Islamic learning for centuries. It was also the region where Rumi was born and raised (which

scholars now believe was in a town about 70 miles away on the other side of the Amu Darya River, in present day Tajikistan). Rumi's father was said to have preached in the city of Balkh.

29. (Heading) made a feeble and careless (gesture of) half-rising: Nicholson translated, "half rose (from his seat) in a negligent manner..." This story illustrates the preceding lines (3470-71) in that the Shaykhu 'l-Islam was intoxicated by vanity and arrogance, so that the quality of his understanding and awareness was poor.

30. (Heading) rip off: literally, "steal."

31. (3472) (possessed of) pleasing inspiration: Nicholson translated, "a man of goodly inspiration." Means that he would be inspired (by God) to say and do things that were delightful, pleasing, charming, etc. because he was gifted with a witty sense of humor (line 3474).

32. (3476) (who) was also a preacher-- (and) possessed of right guidance (from God): Nicholson translated, "was a preacher in the way of salvation." And he explained: "Literally, '(endowed by God) with right guidance.'" (Footnote)

33. (3477) the day of (the Friday) congregation: the day when Muslim men are required to attend congregational prayers at noon-time, usually in mosques. (Women are legally allowed to attend, but are generally discouraged.) This holy day of the week in Islam is different from the Sabbath in Judaism and Christianity: after hearing a sermon and doing the prayer together, the congregation disperses and all return to their daily jobs and activities.

34. (3479) You are extremely 'tall': "A sarcastic reference to his brother's full-length display of hauteur [= arrogant haughtiness]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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Hikâyat-é ân amîr ke ghulâm-râ goft ke may be-y-âr. ghulâm raft wa sabôy-é may âward dar râh zâhidê bûd, amr-é ma`rûf kard zad sangê wa sabô-râ be-shekast. amîr be-shenîd wa qaSd-é gôsh-mâl-é zâhid kard wa în qaSd dar `ahd-é dîn-é `îsà-- `alay-hi 's-salâm-- bûd ke hanôz may Harâm na-shoda bûd wa lêkin zâhid taqazzuzê mê-kard wa az tana``um mana` mê-kard.
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3439 bûd amîrê, khwash-delê, may-bâra'ê
kahf-é har makhmûr-o har bê-châra'yê

3440 mushfiqê, miskîn-nawâzê, `âdilê
jawharê, zar-bakhsheshê, daryâ-delê

shâh-é mard-ân-o amîru 'l-mû'minîn
râh-bân-o râz-dân-o dôst-bîn

dawr-é `îsà bûd-o ayyâm-é masîH
khalq-del-dâr-o kam-âzâr-o malîH

âmad-ash mehmân ba-nâgâhân shabê
ham amîrê, jins-é ô, khwash-maZhabê

bâda mê-bâyest-eshân dar naZm-é Hâl
bâda bûd ân waqt mâ'Zûn-o Halâl

3445 bâda-shân kam bûd-o goftâ ay ghulâm
raw, sabô por kon, ba-mâ âwar mudâm

az fulân râhib ke dâr-ad khamr-é khâS
tâ ze-khâSS-o `âmm yâb-ad jân khalâS

jur`a'yê z-ân jâm-é râhib ân kon-ad
ke hazâr-ân jarra-wo khumdân kon-ad

andar ân may mâya-yé penhâniy-ast
ân-chon-ân-k andar `abâ sulTâniy-ast

tô ba-dalq-é pâra-pâra kam negar
ke seyah kard-and az bêrûn-é zar

3450 az barây-é chashm-é bad mardûd shod
w-az berûn ân la`l dûd-âlûd shod

ganj-o gawhar kay meyân-é khâna-hâ-st?
ganj-hâ paywasta dar wêrâna-hâ-st

ganj-é âdam chûn ba-wêrân bod dafîn
gasht Tîn-ash chashm-band-é ân la`în

ô naZar mê-kard dar Tîn sost-sost
jân hamê goft-ash ke Tîn-am sadd-é to-st

dô sabô be-s-tad ghulâm-o khwash-dawîd

dar zamân dar dayr-é rohbân-ân rasîd

3455 zar be-dâd-o bâda-yé chûn zar kharîd
sang dâd-o dar `iwaZ gawhar kharîd

bâda'yê k-ân bar sar-é shâh-ân jah-ad
tâj-é zar bar târak-é sâqî neh-ad

fitna-hâ-wo shôr-hâ angêkhta
bandag-ân-o khosrow-ân âmêkhta

ostokhwân-hâ rafta jumla jân shoda
takht-o takhta ân zamân yak-sân shoda

waqt-é hoshyârê chô âb-o rôghan-and
waqt-é mastî ham-chô jân andar tan-and

3460 chûn harîsa gashta, ân-jâ farq nêst
nêst farqê k-andar ân-jâ garq nêst

în chon-în bâda hamê bord ân ghulâm
sôy-é qaSr-é ân amîr-é nêk-nâm

pêsh-ash âmad zâhidê gham-dîda'yê
khoshk-maghzê dar balâ pêchîda'yê

tan z-âtesh-hây-é del be-g'dâkhta
khâna az ghayr-é khodâ pardâkhta

gôsh-mâl-é miHnat-é bê-zînhâr
dâgh-hâ bar dâgh-ha, chand-în hazâr

3465 dîda har sâ`at del-ash dar ijtihâd
rôz-o shab chafsîda ô bar ijtihâd

sâl-o mah dar khûn-o khâk âmêkhta
Sabr-o Hilm-ash nêm-shab be-g'rêkhta

goft zâhid dar sabô-hâ chîst ân?
goft bâda, goft ân-é kî-st ân?

goft ân-é ân fulân mîr-é ajal
goft Tâlib-râ chon-în bâsh-ad `amal?

tâlib-é yazdân-o ân-gah `aysh-o nôsh
bâda-yé shayTân-o ân-gah nêm-hôsh?

3470 hôsh-é tô bê-may chon-în pazhmorda'ast

hôsh-hâ bây-ad bar ân hôsh-é tô bast

tâ che bâsh-ad hôsh-é tô hangâm-é sukr
ay chô morghê gashta Sayd-é dâm-é sukr?

Hikâyat-é Ziyâ'i dalq ke sakht darâz bûd wa barâdar-ash shaykh-é islâm tâj-é balkh ba-ghâyat kôtâh-é bâlâ bûd wa în shaykh-é islâm az barâdar-ash Ziyâ nang dâshty. Ziyâ dar âmad ba-dars-é ô wa hama-yé Sudûr-é balkh HâZir ba-dars-é ô, Ziyâ khidmatê kard wa be-goZashat, shaykh-é islâm ô-râ nêm-qiyâmê kard sar-sarî, goft ârî sakht darâz-î pâra'yê dar dozd

ân Ziyâ'-yé dalq khwash-ilhâm bûd
dâdar-é ân tâj-é shaykh-islâm bûd

tâj-é shaykh-islâm-é dâru 'l-mulk-é balkh
bûd kôtah-qadd-o kôchak ham-chô farkh

gar-che fâzil bûd-o faHl-o Zû-funûn
în Ziya andar Zarâfat bod fuzûn

3475 ô basê kôtah, Ziyâ bê-Had darâz
bûd shaykh-islâm-râ Sad kibr-o nâz

z-în barâdar `âr-o nang-ash âmady
ân Ziya ham wâ`izê bod bâ-hudî

rôz-é maHfil andar âmad ân Ziyâ
bâr-gah por qâZiy-ân-o aSfiyâ

kard shaykh-islâm az kibr-é tamâm
în barâdar-râ chon-în niSfu 'l-qiyâm

3479 goft ô-râ bas darâz-î bahr-é muzd
andakê z-ân qadd-é sarw-at ham be-dozd

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part two)

Mathnawi V: 3480- 3506

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3480 (The ascetic continued), " O enemy of (spiritual) knowledge![1] Where, then, is (your) understanding or intelligence so that you may consume wine [in the right way]?[2]

"(If) your face is very good-looking, paint some purple dye (on it),[3] (otherwise) purple dye on an (ugly) Ethiopian would be ridiculous.[4]

"O you (who have been) led astray! No (spiritual) light has ever reached you, so that you might (us it to) be a seeker of darkness and unconsciousness.[5]

"It is customary to seek shade during the day time,[6] (but) you have been the seeker of shade during cloudy nights.

"Although (wine) has been legally permitted[7] for the nourishment of the common people, it has been forbidden for the seekers of the Beloved.

3485 "For the lovers (of God), 'wine' is the blood of (their own) hearts.[8] Their eyes are (concentrated) upon the Way and upon the Goal.

"On such a road as this (through) the frightful desert, there are a hundred eclipses for the road-guide of wisdom.

"(If) you hurl dust into the eyes of the road-guides, you will cause the caravan to go astray and perish.

"Truly, bread (made) of barley is forbidden and grievous for the ego,[9] (so) put (only) bread (made) of (plain-tasting) bran in front (of it).

"Keep the enemy of the Way to God (in a) despised and inferior (position). Don't place the thief on the pulpit, (but) hold him (in public scorn) on the gallows.[10]

3490 "You should approve of the cutting off of the hand of
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the thief.[11] (But if) you are not in a position to amputate (it), (then) you should tie up his hand.

"(For) if you don't tie up his hand, he will tie up yours; if you don't break his leg, he will break your leg.

"You are giving the enemy wine and sugar-cane (candy)--(but) for the sake of what? Say (to him instead), 'Eat dust and smile bitterly!'"

He threw a rock at the jug and broke (it). (The slave) cast the jug aside and leaped away from the ascetic.

He went before the prince, (who) asked him, "Where (is) the wine?" (The slave) told what had happened, bit by bit, to him.

The going of the prince, disturbed by anger, to punish[12] the ascetic

3495 The prince became like fire (in his fury) (and) sprang right up. He said, "Show (me) where the house of the ascetic is,

"So that I may pound his head with this heavy club--that head of his, of a misinformed ignoramus with a whore for a mother!

"What does he know about decreeing what is lawful? He's a (vile and) doggish[13] seeker of fame and reputation,

"So that he may make a position for himself by means of this hypocrisy,[14] (and) so that he may make himself visible (to the public) by means of some (action).

"Since he doesn't have (any) skill except this: that he acts (like) a hypocrite to this one and that one.

3500 "If he is crazy and digging for trouble, (a whip made from) an ox's penis[15] is the remedy for a crazy (man),

"So that Satan may go out his head.[16] Without the donkey-driver's blows, the donkey will never go (forward)."

The prince sprang out (from his palace), with an (iron-covered) club in (his) hand; he came at midnight to

the ascetic, half-drunk.[17]

Due to his fury, he wanted to kill the ascetic. (But)
the ascetic was hidden under (a pile of) wool.

The ascetic had heard about that (anger) of the prince,
(and) he was concealed under the wool of (some) rope-makers.

3505 (The ascetic) said (to himself), "(Only) the mirror
which makes a hard face is able to talk about the ugliness
of man to his face.

3506 "An iron face is needed, like a mirror,[18] so that it may
tell you, "Look at your ugly face!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3480) O enemy of (spiritual) knowledge: this line is a continuation of the last verse spoken by the ascetic to the prince's slave (in line 3469): "(To be) a seeker of God and then gratifying (sensual) desires and drinking! (To drink) the wine of Satan and then (become) half-understanding!"

2. (3480) Where, then, is your understanding or intelligence so that you may consume wine [in the right way]: Anqaravi explained that, during the Christian era preceding the advent of Islam, moderate wine-drinking was allowed, as long as it did not lead to drunkenness and immoral behavior. Nicholson referred here to similar verses (which he translated), "... that stupid fellow also became drunken and merry. Of course, in consequence of (drunken) glee he became loquacious [= talkative]: the intoxicated man neglected (to observe) respect and began to rave. Not on every occasion does selflessness (intoxication) work mischief, (but) wine makes the unmannerly person more so. If he (the wine-drinker) be intelligent, he becomes decorous (displays goodly qualities when beside himself); and if he be evil-natured, he becomes worse. But since the majority are evil and reprobate, wine has been forbidden to all." (Mathnawi IV: 2154-2158)

3. (3481) paint some purple dye (on it): a blackish-blue color, made from the indigo plant, which was rubbed on the faces of children to protect them from the envious "evil eye" of others (by making them less attractive)-- a superstitious fear that such envious gazes could cast evil spells and cause illness, accidents, or death. Nicholson missed the meaning here in his translation: "put some indigo on it (as an ornament)..."

4. (3481) purple dye on an (ugly) Ethiopian would be ridiculous: means the case of the face of a child of African descent, who was ugly, there would be no need to add a dark purple dye as a protection from envy.

5. (3482) so that you might (us it to) be a seeker of darkness and unconsciousness: "The intended meaning of 'light': it is the inner light, which is gained plentifully with the perfection of austerities [riyâZat], efforts, and worship. The intended meaning of 'unconsciousness': negligence and forgetfulness. And the intended meaning of 'darkness': (worldly) desires. And the intended meaning of 'shade' is enjoyment and comfort." (Anqaravi, Commentary) It means that the person who seeks such "darkness" of being unconscious via alcohol is making himself even more "dark."

6. (3483) It is customary to seek shade during the day time: "To seek the shade, i.e. refreshment and enjoyment, is permissible only to those who possess the inner light. The sálik (= spiritual seeker] must never relax his efforts (mujáhadah) until the goal (mushâbadah) is reached." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (3484) Although (wine) has been legally permitted: these words were spoken during the Christian era which preceded the Islamic revelation (when wine was made unlawful for Muslims). "In the religion of Hazrat-i `Isà [= Jesus]-- peace be upon him-- wine was (religious) legal for the common people as (a source of) food and nourishment. But on condition that it was an amount consumed which did not lead beyond the bounds of reason and did not draw toward immorality and disturbance. With this condition, the monks of that (Christian) religion and the seekers of God refrained from consuming (wine) and had made it forbidden to themselves." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (3485) 'wine' is the blood of (their own) hearts: means that the lovers of God become "drunk" with the passion of their longing love nearness (called "union" by sufi poets)

to the Beloved.

9. (3488) bread (made) of barley is forbidden and grievous for the ego: Nicholson translated, "injurious to the carnal soul." It means, "Don't spoil and fatten the ego by giving it the pleasurable experiences it desires, for this will only give it more power over you." "Certainly, barley bread is forbidden for the sake of the ego [nafs] and brings ruin. Because when the 'stomach' of the 'commanding self' [nafs-é amâra] is filled and becomes comfortable, it becomes increasingly insolent and rebellious. Therefore, it is necessary to put (only plain-tasting) bran bread in front of the 'commanding self' so that it does not become strong, insolent, and rebellious." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (3489) hold (him in public scorn) on the gallows: criminals convicted for (repeated) theft were not hung to death on gallows, but had their hands amputated in public. Here, Rumi uses the word "gallows" [dâr] as a pun on the word "hold": "hold (him) on the gallows" [bar dâr dâr].

11. (3490) You should approve of the cutting off of the hand of the thief: means here, the power of ego. "And if you are unable to break the feet of the desires and demands of the ego, ego will sever the feet of your reason and spirit." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

Per the Islamic punishment, the Qur'an states: "And in regard to the male thief or woman thief, amputate his or her hand as a payment for what they have earned, as an example and warning from God (of what should be avoided). And God is All-Mighty, Wise. But whoever repents after his wrongdoing and reforms, surely God will turn to him (in forgiveness). Truly, God is Forgiving, Merciful." (5:41-42). The harsh punishment for theft, commanded by the Qur'an, is carried out only in cases of repeated theft (and is suspended during times of famine). In Islam, the rights of the community to be protected from theft take precedence over any consideration of rights of the individual thief. (In Western countries, however, convicted thieves are so "absolved," after paying for their crimes, that the people living in community-- except for law enforcement-- have no warning that there is a convicted thief living among them who may rob again. This emphasis on individual rights has begun to change, however, in a few places in the case of registered child molesters.)

12. (Heading) to punish: literally "rubbing the ears," a

punishment meted out to children (abrading the ear of the child with the thumb and fingers), used as an idiom meaning "punishment."

13. (3497) (vile and) doggish: means shameless, foul, contemptible-- the well-known behavior of stray dogs in other cultures (not raised as pets or hunting dogs).

14. (3497) hypocrisy [sâlûs]: literally "trinitarianism." Christian ascetics were considered to be hypocritically devout because, while outwardly religions, they blasphemed God by believing that He was three persons-- a violation of the pure monotheism revealed to all of the Prophets, including Jesus, who never spoke about the "Trinity" or taught that he himself was part of the One Deity (see Qur'an 5:76). A similar word, "hypocrite" [tasallus], occurs in the next line.

15. (3500) (a whip made from) an ox's penis: refers to a castrated bull's penis. Nicholson translated, "an ox-hide whip," and translated the literal meaning into Latin." (Footnote) "The intended meaning of 'ox's penis': a whip or lash." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (3501) So that Satan may go out his head: based on the ancient belief that mental illness was caused by being possessed by a demon, which could be driven out by making its dwelling place (the body of the human victim) painfully unpleasant.

17. (3502) half-drunk: means half-intoxicated from anger.

18. (3506) An iron face is needed, like a mirror: in past centuries, mirrors were made of polished iron. "None but the prophet or saint, whose heart is as pure, bright, and hard as a steel mirror, can fearlessly confront the ungodly princes of this world and show them to themselves in their real deformity." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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3480 pas to-râ khwad hôsh kô, yâ `aql kô
tâ khwor-î may, ay tô dânesh-râ `adû?

rô-t bas zîbâ-st, nîlê ham be-kash
ZuHka bâsh-ad nîl bar rôy-é Habash

dar tô nûrê kay dar âmad ay ghawî
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tâ tô bê-hôshiyy-o Zulmat-jô shaw-î?

sâya dar rôz-ast jostan qâ`ida
dar shab-é abrî tô sâya-jô shoda

gar Halâl âmad pay-é qût-é `awâm
Tâlib-ân-é dôst-râ âmad Harâm

`âshiq-ân-râ bâda khûn-é del bow-ad
chashm-eshân bar râh-o bar manzil bow-ad

dar chôn-în râh-é bayâbân-é makhûf
în qalâwûz-é kherad bâ Sad kasûf

khâk dar chashm-é qalâwûz-ân zan-î
kârwân-râ hâlik-o gom-rah kon-î

nân-é jaw Haqqâ Harâm-ast-o fesôs
nafs-râ dar pêsh neh nân-é sabôs

doshman-é râh-é khodâ-râ khwâr dâr
dozd-râ minbar ma-neh, bar dâr dâr

dozd-râ tô dast-be-b'rîdan pasand
az borîdan `âjiz-î, dast-ash be-band

gar na-band-î dast-é ô, dast-é tô bast
gar tô pây-ash na-sh'kan-î, pây-at shekast

tô `adû-râ may deh-î-wo nay-shakar
bahr-é che? gô zahr-khand-o khâk khwar

zad ze-ghayrat bar sabô sang-o shekast
ô sabô andâkht w-az zâhid be-jast

raft pêsh-é mîr-o goft-ash bâda kô?
mâ-jarâ-râ goft yak-yak pêsh?é ô

raftan-é amîr-é khashm-âlûd barây-é gôsh-mâl-é zâhid

mîr chûn atesh shod, bar jast râst
goft be-n'mâ khâna-yé zâhid ko-jâ-st

tâ ba-d-în gorz-é gerân kôb-am sar-ash
ân sar-é bê-dânesh-é mâdar-ghar-ash

ô che dân-ad amr-é ma`rûf az sagî
Tâlib-é ma`rûfiy-ast-o shohragî

tâ ba-d-în sâlûs khwad-râ jâ kon-ad
tâ ba-chêzê khwêshtan paydâ kon-ad

k-ô na-dâr-ad khwad honar illâ ham-ân
ke tasallus mê-kon-ad bâ în-o ân

3500 ô agar dêwâna-ast-o fitna-kâw
dârôy-é dêwâna bâsh-ad kêr-é gâw

tâ ke shayTân az sar-ash bêrûn raw-ad
bê-lat-é khar-bandag-ân khar chûn raw-ad?

mîr bêrûn jast dabbûsê ba-dast
nêm-shab âmad ba-zâhid, nêm-mast

khwâst koshtan mard-é zâhid-râ ze-khashm
mard-é zâhid gasht penhân zêr-é pashm

mard-é zâhid mê-shenîd az mîr ân
zêre-é pashm-é ân rasan-tâb-ân nehân

3505 goft dar rô goftan-é zeshtiy-é mard
âyena tân-ad ke rô-râ sakht kard

3506 rôy bây-ad âyena-wâr âhanîn
tâ-t gôy-ad rôy-é zesht-é khwad be-bîn

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part three)

Mathnawi V: 3507-3522, 3528-3534, 3549-3562

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The story of Dalqak's check-mating the Sayyid, the King of Termez[1]

3507 The king was playing chess with Dalqak. (When Dalqak) checkmated him, the king's anger quickly burst forth.

(Dalqak) said, "King's mate, king's mate!"[2] And that proud king took the chess pieces (and) hurled (them) at his head, one by one,

Saying, "Take (them all)! Now, 'king's mate' for you, O cuckold!"[3] Dalqak endured patiently and said (only), "Pardon (me)!"

3510 The prince (of Termez) ordered another time of playing. (Dalqak) was trembling, like a naked man from intense cold.

He played another time and the king was mated (again). (When) it was the moment and (customary) time for saying, "King's mate, king's mate,"

Dalqak sprang up and went into a corner. Out of fear, he ran (and) threw six rugs on top of himself.

He lay down, hidden under pillows and under six rugs, so that he might be saved from the blows of the king.

The king said, "Hey, hey! What did you do? What is this? (Dalqak) answered, "King's mate, king's mate! King's' mate, king's mate, O chosen king!

3515 "O (you who are) possessed of anger covered with fire, one can never tell you the truth except under blankets.

"O you (who are) mated (by me) and I (who am) mated by the king's blows, I am saying, 'King's mate, king's mate,' underneath your furnishings!"

When the district became full of the prince's shouting,[4]
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(the noise of his) kicking (the ascetic's door), and (his angry) grabbing and seizing,[5]

The people quickly sprung (into the street) from left and right, saying, "O (honored) leader, it's the moment for forgiveness and agreement.

"His brain is dry and his (ability to) reason, at this time, is less than the (level of) reasoning and understanding of children.

3520 "Asceticism and old age have become weakness (added) upon weakness (of mind), and there has been no (spiritual) breakthroughs in his asceticism.[6]

"He has experienced (much) suffering, (but) hasn't found (any) treasure from the Friend;[7] he has performed works (of devotion), (but) hasn't seen (any) reward for (his) labor.

3522 "Either those labors of his lacked the essential thing,[8] or the time for his reward has not come because of the Decree (of God).

. . . . . .

3528 "Vision of the Beloved is far beyond his (present) road, since his desire is leadership; he's not seeking the end (of the road).[9]

"For a time he (is) in (a state of) complaining to God, saying, 'The portion (You have decreed) for me has been (nothing but) suffering from this business (of asceticism).'[10]

3530 (And) for a time he (is) in (a state of) quarreling with his own fate, saying, 'Everyone (else is) flying, but my wings have been severed.'"[11]

Whoever is confined in (the prison of) scent and color,[12] even if he is (engaged) in asceticism, his (inner) nature is (miserably) constricted.

As long as he doesn't come out from this contemptible camel's dwelling,[13] his (spiritual) nature[14] will never become happy or his chest expanded (from ecstasy).

Ascetics (dwelling) in solitude should never be given a knife or sword prior to (the attainment of spiritual) expansion.

3534 Because they would tear (open their) stomach from the torment of the griefs and sorrows of (their) unattained wishes.

. . . . . .

3549 (The people continued), "O prince, forgive (the ascetic's) stubborn severity. Look upon his misery and bad fortune,

3550 "So that God may also act forgiving in regard to your faults (and) flood your mistakes with (His) Forgiveness.

"You (too) have broken many jugs because of carelessness (and) have attached (your) heart to the hope of forgiveness.

"Forgive, so that you may find forgiveness in recompense, (for) the (Divine) Judgment will split a hair in (exacting) punishment."[15]

The prince's answering those intercessors and neighbors (on behalf) of the ascetic, saying, "Why did he act (so) insolently, and why did he break my (wine) jug? In this matter, I won't accept intercession, since I have sworn that I will give (him) his punishment."

The prince said, "Who is he, that he should hurl a rock at my (wine) jug (and) break the jug?[16]

"When the lion makes (his) way through my district, he passes by with great fear and with a hundred cautions.

3555 "Why did he disturb the heart of my slave (and) shame me in front of my guests?

"He spilled a drink which is better than his (own) blood. (And) he has run away from me this (very) moment, just like women.

"But he will never bring (his) life (safely) from my hand. Suppose he flies up high, like a bird,

"I will shoot the arrow of my anger at his wings (and) I will rip out his worthless feathers and wings."

"(And) if he goes into (a place of) terrible rocks (to escape) from my efforts (to kill him), I will drag him out from the heart of the rocks right away.

3560 "I will drive a blow upon his body that will be an example to (no good) little pimps![17]

"Hypocrisy with (the tolerance of) everyone (and) with me as well?[18] I will administer justice to him, and a hundred like him, this (very) moment."

3562 His blood-thirsty anger had become unruly, (and) a fire (of wrath) was coming out of his mouth.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) Dalqak's check-mating the Sayyid, the King of Termez: Rumi has told another brief story about Dalqak and the Sayyid-i Ajal (Mathnawi, II: 2333-37), and the context of both stories suggests that he may be a court jester.

2. (3508) King's mate, king's mate [shah-shah]: literally, "King, king!" There is word play here with saying these words to an a actual king (which adds to the latter's annoyance). The word for "mate" [mât, literally, "he died" in Arabic] means that the king is checked from further movement and must "die" by the attack of the victorious king's army. And the word for "check mate" [shâh-mât] literally mean, "The king has died." The Persian word for "chess" [shatrang] derives from the ancient Sanskrit word, "chatur-anga" -- the "four components" of an army: elephants, horses, chariots, and infantry. Persian chess included the king, the vizier or chief minister (the "queen" in European chess), elephants ("bishops"), horses ("knights"), rooks ("rokh" -- tower or castle), and foot-soldiers (pawns).

3. (3509) O cuckold: an insult, meaning a husband who has been "cuckolded" by another man who has committing adultery with his wife; or a husband who pimps his wife to other men for money.

4. (3516) When the district became full of the prince's shouting: Here, Rumi returns to the main story.

5. (3517) grabbing and seizing: "(It means), seizing and confiscating (property)." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator on the Mathnawi, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

6. (3520) no (spiritual) breakthroughs in his asceticism: Nicholson translated, "no (spiritual) revelation..." And he explained: "Literally, 'opening' (by way of ecstasy, illumination, vision, etc.)." (Footnote) "(It means), 'Because, after much renunciation of the world, due to being ignorant and unaware of the secret and meaning of asceticism, dry asceticism has not opened any doors (= of spiritual expansion and joy) for him." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (3521) the Friend [yâr]: means God. May also be translated, "the Beloved."

8. (3522) Either those labors of his lacked the essential thing: means that he lacked the right attitude, knowledge, or inspiration. Nicholson interpreted the word "essential" [gawhar] as meaning "gawhar-i ikhlás" [= essential sincerity, fidelity]. (Commentary)

9. (3528) the end (of the road): a pun on two meanings of the word "head" [sar]-- "leadership" (to be the head, or chief}; "end" (the "head," or uppermost part of the road from the starting point.

10. (3529) from this business (of asceticism): Nicholson translated, "from this calculation (of mine)..." "It means, 'In accordance with the estimation and conclusion that I have made [= of how much asceticism would be needed to reach the goal], my portion and measure of this is that from (all) this) austerity and miserable poverty that I have borne...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (3530) Everyone (else is) flying, but my wings have been severed: "Cf. the saying of Yahyá ibn Mu'ádh al-Rází: al-záhidu sayyár-un wa-'l-`árifu tayyár-un [= The ascetic is a traveller, but the mystic knower is a flyer]." The gnostic [= mystic knower] reaches his goal 'at the first step'; he is majdhúb [= (Divinely) attracted], whereas the ascetic's progress is slow and painful..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (3531) confined in (the prison of) scent and color: "i.e. the illusions of self-consciousness." (Nicholson, Commentary) Here, Rumi makes some comments.

13. (3532) this contemptible camel's dwelling: [în nangîn mukâkh]: means the "narrow jail cell" of the human body and the material world. Nicholson translated "this narrow resting-place," and he explained: "Literally, a place where camels lie down (at night)." (Footnote) He read "tangîn" [= "narrow"] (as did Anqaravi). However, the edition of Tôfiq Sobhanî (of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, also edited by Nicholson) has the much more common Persian word "nangîn" [= contemptible, ugly, shameful]. Nicholson did make a further comment on this question in the variants section of the Persian text of his edition: "The reading of G [= the "Konya manuscript"] may possibly be 'nangîn.'"

14. (3532) his (spiritual) nature [khôy-ash]: Nicholson translated, "his spirit," and explained: "Literally, 'disposition.'" (Footnote)

15. (3552) the (Divine) Judgment will split a hair in (exacting) punishment: "The one who does good actions will have ten times the like of them (as a reward). But he who does evil actions will not be recompensed except (according to) the like of them. And they will not be wronged (in the least)." (Qur'an 6:160) Nicholson translated, "the (Divine) decree splits hairs (is exceedingly scrupulous) in (giving every one his) deserts."

Anqaravi referred to a verse of the Qur'an which describes the righteous as: "Those who spend (the sake of God), whether in (times of) prosperity or hardship, who restrain anger, and pardon men. And God loves those who do good (to others)." (3:134) "Therefore, the people of the ascetic's neighborhood, in accordance with this noble verse, spoke to the prince, saying..." And he also referred to the saying of the Prophet: "The Merciful (God) is merciful to those who are merciful" [ar-raHmûna yarhamu-hum ar-raHmân]. (Commentary)

16. (3553) Who is he, that he should hurl a rock at my (wine) jug (and) break the jug: "This verse... expresses the indignation with which hedonists regard any attempt to deprive them of freedom to enjoy themselves as they please." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (3560) little pimps: "It is said of someone who is a cuckold, shameless, and lacking jealousy (= toward another man who engages in adultery with his wife)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (3561) Hypocrisy with (the tolerance of) everyone (and) with me as well: Nicholson translated, "Hypocrisy to all and even to me!"

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Hikâyat-é mât-kardan-é dalqak, sayyid shâh-é termeZ-râ

3507 shâh bâ dalqak hamê shaTranj bâkht
mât kard-ash zûd khashm-é shah be-tâkht

goft shah-shah w-ân shah-é kibr âwar-ash
yak-yak az shaTranj mê-zad bar sar-ash

ke be-gîr înak shah-at, ay qaltabân
Sabr kard ân dalqak-o goft al-'amân

3510 dast-é dêgar bâkhtan farmûd mîr
ô chon-ân larzân ke `aur az zamharîr

bâkht dast-é dîgar-o shah mât shod
waqt-é shah-shah-goftan-o mîqât shod

bar-jahîd ân dalqak-o dar konj raft
shash namad bar khwad fakand az bîm taft

zêr-é bâlesh-hâ-wo zêr-é shash namad
khoft penhân tâ ze-zakhm-é shah rah-ad

goft shah, hay hay che kard-î chîst în?
goft shah-shah, shah-shah, ay shâh-é gozîn

3515 kay tawân Haq goft joz zêr-é liHâf
bâ tô ay khashm-âwar-é âtesh-sijâf?

ay tô mât-o man ze-zakhm-é shâh mât
mê-zan-am shah-shah ba-zêr-é rakht-hâ-t

chûn maHalla por shod az hayhây-é mîr
w-az lakad bar dar zadan w-az dâr-o gîr
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khalq bêrûn jast zûd az chapp-o râst
k-ay muqaddam waqt-é `afw-ast-o riZâst

maghz-é ô khoshk-ast-o `aql-ash în zamân
kam-tar-ast az `aql-o fahm-é kôdak-ân

3520 zuhd-o pîrî Za`f bar Za`f âmada
w-andar ân zuhd-ash goshâdî nâ-shoda

ranj dîda, ganj nâ-dîda ze-yâr
kâr-hâ karda, na-dîda mozd-é kâr

3522 yâ na-bûd ân kâr-é ô-râ khwad gohar
yâ na-y-âmad waqt-é pâdâsh az qadar

. . . . . .

3528 z-ân rah-ash dûr-ast tâ dîdâr-é dôst
k-ô na-jôy-ad sar, ra'îsiy-ash ârzô-st

sâ`atê ô bâ khodâ andar `itâb
ke naSîb-am ranj âmad z-în Hisâb

3530 sâ`atê bâ bakht-é khwad andar jidâl
ke hama parrân-o mâ be-b'rîda bâl

har ke maHbûs-ast andar bô-wo rang
gar-che dar zuhd-ast, bâsh-ad khô-sh tang

tâ berûn na-ây-ad az-în nangîn munâkh
kay shaw-ad khôy-ash khwash-o Sadr-ash farâkh?

zâhid-ân-râ dar khalâ pêsh az goshâd
kârd-o ostorra na-shây-ad hêch dâd

3534 k-az Zajar khwad-râ be-darrân-ad shekam
ghuSSa-yé ân bê-murâdî-hâ-wo gham

. . . . . .

3549 `afw kon ay mîr bar sakhtîy-é ô
dar negar dar dard-o bad-bakhtîy-é ô

3550 Tâ ze-jurm-at ham khodâ `afwî kon-ad
zallat-at-râ maghfirat dar âgan-ad

tô ze-ghaflat bas sabô be-sh'kasta-î
dar omêd-é `afw del dar basta-î

`afw kon tâ `afw yâb-î dar jazâ
mê-shekâf-ad mô qadar andar sazâ

jawâb-goftan-é amîr mar ân shafî`-ân-râ wa ham-sâyag-ân-é zâhid-râ ke gostâkhî cherâ kard wa sabôy-é mâ-râ cherâ shekast? man dar în bâb shifâ`at qabûl na-khwâh-am kard ke sôgand khworda-am ke sazây-é ô-râ be-deh-am

mîr goft ô kî-st k-ô sangê zan-ad
bar sabôy-é mâ, sâbo-râ be-sh'kan-ad?

chûn goZar sâz-ad ze-kôy-am shêr-é nar
tars-tarsân be-g'Zar-ad bâ Sad HaZar

3555 banda-yé mâ-râ cherâ âzord del
kard mâ-râ pêsh-é mehmân-ân khajil?

sharbatê ke beh ze-khûn-é ô-st rêkht
în zamân ham-chûn zan-ân az mâ gorêkht

lêk jân az dast-é man ô kay bar-ad?
gîr ham-chûn morgh bâlâ bar par-ad

tîr-é qahr-é khwêsh bar parr-ash zan-am
parr-o bâl-é mordarêg-ash bar kan-am

gar raw-ad dar sang-é sakht az kôshesh-am
az del-é sang-ash konûn bêrûn kash-am

3560 man be-rân-am bar tan-é ô Zarbatê
ke bôw-ad qawwâdak-ân-râ `ibratê

bâ hama sâlûs bâ mâ nêz ham?
dâd-é ô-wo Sad chô ô în dam deh-am

3562 khashm khûn-khwâr-ash shoda bod sar-kashê
az dahân-ash mê-bar-âmad âteshê

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Prince and the Christian Ascetic (part four)
Mathnawi V: 3563-3590

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The kissing of the prince's hands and feet and petitioning (for his mercy) a second time by the intercessors and neighbors of the ascetic

3563 From the moment (of hearing) his (angry) shouts, they kissed his hands and feet a few times,

Saying, "O prince, it's not suitable for you to drag revenge (into the situation), (for) although the wine has gone, you are delightful without wine.[1]

3565 "Wine takes (its) chief substance from your kindness, (and) the goodness of water suffers regret from (not having) your benevolence.

"Act in a kingly manner, O compassionate one. Forgive him, O generous one, the son of a generous man who was the son of a generous man!

"Every wine (is) the slave of these (attractive) cheeks and stature[2] (of yours). (And) all drunkards are envious toward you.

"You aren't in need of any rose (colored) wine. Abandon (its) rose color, (since) you are (yourself) the rose (cheeked) quality (of wine).

"O you (whose) Venus-like face (is as radiant as) the morning (sun),[3] O you (toward whom all) rose (cheeked) qualities are beggars for your (lovely) color,

3570 "The wine which bubbles invisibly inside the jar is agitated like that because of yearning for your face.[4]

"O you (who are) the entire ocean, what will you do with (some) dew? And, you (who are) the entire existence, why do you seek non-existence?[5]

"O you (who are) the shining (full) moon, what will you
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do with (some) dust?-- O you, before whose face the moon (becomes) sallow and pale of face!

"You (who) are handsome and charming[6] and the mine of every goodness, why should you take upon yourself an obligation to wine?

"The crown of (the verse) 'We have honored [the sons of Adam]'[7] is upon your head. (And) the chain necklace of (the verse) 'We have given you'[8] (is) hanging upon your chest.

3575 "Mankind is the substance and the revolving (spheres are) his incidental (qualities).[9]

"O you (in regard to whom) reason, deliberations, and understanding (are) your slaves, why do you sell yourself (so) cheaply as this?[1]

"(Since) service toward you is an indispensable duty for all existence, how should a substance seek help from an incidental quality?

"You are seeking knowledge from books?[11] O ridiculous man! You are seeking savor from sweet paste?[12] Oh, (how) absurd!

"You are the ocean of knowledge hidden in a dewdrop; you are the world hidden in a body three cubits long.[13]

3580 "What is (the benefit of) wine, music, and sexual intercourse so that you should seek pleasure and benefit from them?

"(It would be absurd if) the sun wished to borrow (light) from a (gleaming speck of) dust or (if) a Venus desired a cup (of wine) from a goblet.[14]

"You are the soul without (need of) anything intoxicating (which has) become confined by an intoxicating substance.[15] (And) you are the sun imprisoned by an eclipse.[16] This is the pity for you!"

The prince's answering them again

The prince said, "No, no! I'm (definitely) the companion for that (physical) wine -- I'm not satisfied with the savor

of this (heavenly) delight (that you describe).[17]

"I crave such (wine) so that I may keep turning
crookedly, like the jasmine (vine), (sometimes) like this,
sometimes like that.

3585 "And (so that after having) escaped from all fears and
hopes, I may keep shifting in every direction, like (the
leaves of) the willow tree--

"Swerving left and right like the willow branch which
(performs) various dances by (the influence of) the wind."

The one who has been used to the joy of (spiritual)
"wine" will never choose this happiness (of physical
wine)[18]-- never.[19]

Due to that, the prophets went beyond (seeking) this
(worldly) joy since they were molded into (shape by) the joy
of (the presence of) God.[20]

Since their spirits experienced that joy, these
(worldly) joys appeared to them (like child's) play.

3590 When anyone has become the lover of a living beloved,[21]
he will never embrace a dead (one).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),9/27/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3564) you are delightful without wine: "The
intercessors remind the Amír [= prince] that he is really
independent of 'wine', i.e. worldly goods and pleasures,
since the human soul in its essential nature, i.e. the
Perfect Man [= a term in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu
'l-`Arabi, died 1245, meaning a saint who reflects all the
Attributes of God], is the final cause of creation and
infinitely superior to all things that were brought into
existence for its sake." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"And they also said (to the prince), 'You must not escape
from that pure happiness which you have within the bounds of

your own essence and take savor and enjoyment from the wine of external existence-- which is incidental and borrowed.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (3566) cheeks and stature: there is a word play between "stature" [qadd] and "cheeks" [khad].

3. (3569) the morning (sun) [aZ-Zuhà]: the name of a chapter in the Qur'an, from the opening line: "By the brightness of the morning." (93:1)

4. (3570) because of yearning for your face: Anqaravi quoted a (non-Qur'anic) Divines saying [Hadîthu 'l-qudsî] in which God said: "O son of Adam, I created you for My sake and I created everything else for your sake" [yâ ibu 'âdam khalaqtu-ka li-ajl-î wa khalaqtu 'l-ashyâ'i li-ajl-ak]. (Commentary)

5. (3571) why do you seek non-existence: "i.e. unreality." (Nicholson, Commentary) This is "non-existence" in a negative sense-- in contrast to the positive sense of the word (meaning "mystical passing away and annihilation of self"). "It means, "O Man and O Prince of the World... O chosen one of (both) existence and placelessness: all of existence is an expression for your sake. And things are (as) nothing in relation to you. And, instead of becoming the seeker of the truth of yourself, why do you desire (worldly) things which are on the level of (unreal) non-existence? Why are you the seeker of forms and appearances which are like a mirage?'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (3573) You (who) are handsome and charming: in Tôfîq Sobhânî's edition of the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi, this line appears after "The crown of (the verse) 'We have honored [the sons of Adam]'..." However, this appears to be an error, since Nicholson's text (based on the same manuscript) and Anqaravi's (based on early manuscripts) text have it prior.

7. (3574) 'We have honored [the sons of Adam]': Qur'an 17:70. Here, the One God speaks in the "royal plural" tense-- a verse interpreted by the sufis to mean honored above all creation, including the angels, who did not know the "names" [= the Names of God, according to the sufi interpretation], which Adam knew, but the angels did not (Qur'an 2: 31-33).

8. (3574) 'We have given you': "Truly, We have given you abundance." (Qur'an 108: 1) "... which the commentators [= of the Qur'an] gloss by [= interpret as meaning] al-khayr al-kathír [= abundance of goodness]. According to Najmu'ddín al-Kubrá [= a famous sufi master, died 1221], it signifies 'the wine of gnosis (ma'rifah) [= intuitive-mystical knowledge] in the cup of love (mahabbah)'." (Nicholson, Commentary) This verse was originally addressed by God (in the "royal We" tense) to the Prophet Muhammad. "Although (the words) 'We have given you' are addressed to Hazrat-i Muhammad-- may the peace (of God) be upon him-- yet, since the Reality of humanity [Haqîqat-é insânî] is the same as the Reality of Muhammad [Haqiqat-é muHammadî], if someone has found the Reality of Muhammad, he has found his own Reality." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (3575) primary aim [`araZ]... incidental (qualities) [gharaZ]: Nicholson translated, "Man is the substance, and the celestial sphere is his accident." He explained the "celestial sphere" means "the world" [Footnote]. These two terms, which rhyme, refer to the philosophical difference between the essential substance of something and its "accidental" or external aspects which happen to manifest. Here, it means that the saintly man or woman is the primary end of creation, and the planets, stars, and the rest of the creation are secondary aspects.

10. (3576) why do you sell yourself (so) cheaply as this: Nicholson referred to another verse of the Mathnawi (which he translated), "Man has sold himself cheaply: he was satin, he has sewn himself on (be come attached) to a tattered cloak." (III: 1001) And he explained that "a tattered cloak means "the body and the carnal nature." (Commentary)

11. (3578) You are seeking knowledge from books?: "In the beginning of this world, no books or pages were in existence. And the (kinds of) true knowledge came into manifestation in books and pages from the Reality of humanity [Haqîqat-é insânî]. Because some of (such) knowledge became a revelation [waHî] to the hearts of the great prophets, and manifested by means of their tongues. And also some of (such) knowledge became an inspiration [ilhâm] to the hearts of the noble saints and is found flowing from their tongues. And some (of it) also has been found and manifested by philosophers [Hukumâ wa `âqil-ân] by means of austerities. And some (of it) also (has manifested) by religious scholars [`ulamâ] through all their reasoning,

deducing, and piety. Therefore, if someone occupies himself with purification of the heart and recognizes himself and his Reality, and knows his Reality as that which he has experienced, he will acquire knowledge (from within) which is his own kingdom. Then, when knowledge has been taken (from within), it is not from books or volumes.

12. (3578) sweet paste [Halwâ]: refers to halva, a sweet confection, sometimes combining honey, almonds, pistachios, and sesame seeds.

13. (3579) three cubits [gaz] long: a linear measurement, similar to the ancient cubit, which was from 17-21 inches in length.

14. (3581) (if) a Venus desired a cup (of wine) from a goblet: because Venus is the planet which, according to astrology, is the cause of festive joy.

15. (3582) You are the soul without (need of) anything intoxicating (which has) become confined by an intoxicating substance: This seems to be the appropriate interpretation, since the word "kayf" means any intoxicating substance, including wine, but usually refers to hashish. And "bê-kayfî" means "without anything intoxicating." However, Nicholson translated this line differently as, "Thou art the unconditioned spirit imprisoned in conditionality..." He understood the word "kayf" to mean "kayfiyat," which means quality (in other words: "You are the soul beyond qualities confined by quality"). Anqaravi made a similar interpretation: "quantity and form" [kayfiyat wa kamiyyat]. (Commentary)

16. (3582) an eclipse: literally, a "knot." Refers to one of the "Dragon's Tail" in astrology, one of two places where the moon's path crosses the ecliptic (the other is called the "Dragon's Head." These are the only two places where the sun can become eclipsed by the moon. Nicholson translated, "the descending node" and explained: "I.e. eclipsed." (Footnote)

17. (3583) I'm not satisfied with the savor of this (heavenly) delight (that you describe): "i.e. mystical rapture and ecstasy." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (3587) The one who has been used to the joy of (spiritual) "wine" will never choose this happiness (of physical wine): "(It means), 'Be aware, O master, (that)

anyone who has gotten used to the joy of (spiritual) "wine," will not accept this bodily joy [= pleasure from alcoholic wine]. For that reason, the noble prophets kept away from this enjoyment (of wine) since they were molded by that Eternal joy.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (3587) Never [kay]: literally, "when?" This second use of this word in the second half of the verse was later corrected in the earliest manuscript to "hay," meaning, "Oh," "Alas" (and the text which Anqaravi followed has this as well). Nicholson translated: "He that is accustomed to the joy of (spiritual) wine, how should he be satisfied with this delight, Khwája, eh?"

20. (3588) they were molded into (shape by) the joy of (the presence of) God: Nicholson translated, "... they were steeped in the Divine delight." "It means, 'The true lovers (of God) who have forgotten bodily and animal pleasures and desires, and who have sipped the 'wine of God' [bâda-yé Haqq], are saying to those persons who like bodily and animal happiness: "O ignorant ones who are unaware of the taste of the wine of (Divine) Unity and are deprived of the wine of verification [of Divine realities]..."'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (3590) living beloved: literally, "idol," a metaphor in Persian literature meaning a beloved so beautiful as to be almost worthy of worship.

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dowom bâr dast-o pây-é amîr-râ bôsîdan wa lâba-kardan-é shafî`-ân wa hamsâyag-ân-é zâhid

3563 ân shafî`-ân az dam-é hay-hâ-yé ô
chand bôsîdand-é dast-o pây-é ô

kây amîr az tô na-shâyad kîn-kash-î
gar be-shod bâda, tô bê-bâda khwash-î

3565 bâda sar-mâya ze-luTf-é tô bar-ad
luTf-é âb az luTf-é tô Hasrat khwar-ad

pâdshâhî kon be-bakhsh-ash ay raHîm
ay karîm ibnu 'l-karîm ibnu 'l-karîm

har sharâbê banda-yé în qadd-o khad
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jumla mast-ân-râ bow-ad bar tô Hasad

hêch muHtâj-é may-é gol-gûn na-î
tark kon gol-gûna, tô gol-gûna-i

ay rokh-é chûn zuhra-at shamsu 'Z-ZuHà
ay gadây-é rang-é tô gol-gûna-hâ

bâda k-ândar kunb mê-jôsh-ad nehân
z-ishtiyâq-é rôy-é tô jôsh-ad chon-ân

ay hama daryâ, che khwâh-î kard, nam
w-ay hama hast-î, che mê-jôy-î `adam?

ay mah-é tâbân che khwâh-î kard gard?
ay ke mah dar pêsh-é rôy-at rôy zard

tô khwash-o khwob-î-wo kân-ê har khwash-î
tô cherâ khwad minnat-é bâda kash-î

tâj-é karramnâ-st bar farq-é sar-at
tâwq-é 'a`Taynâka âwêz-é bar-at

jawhar-ast insân-o charkh ô-râ `araZ
jumla far`-o pâya-and-o ô gharaZ

ay ghulâm-at `aql-o tadbîrât-o hôsh
chûn chon-în-î khwêsh-râ arzân forôsh?

khidmat-at bar jumla-yé hastî muftaraZ
jawharê chûn najda khwâh-ad az `araZ?

`ilm jôy-î az kutub-hâ ay fosôs
Zawq jôy-î tô ze-Halwâ ay fosôs

baHr-é `ilm-î, dar namê penhân shoda
dar se gaz tan `âlam-î penhân shoda

may che bâsh-ad yâ samâ`-wo yâ jimâ`
tâ be-jôy-î z-ô nishâT-o intifâ`

âftâb az Zarra'yé shod wâm-khwâh
zuhra'ê az khumra'yê shod jâm-khwâh

jân-é bê-kayfî-î shoda maHbûs-é kayf
âftâb-î Habs-é `uqda, în-at Hayf

bâz jawâb-goftan-é ân amîr îshân-râ

goft na na, man Harîf-é ân may-am
man ba-Zawq-é în khwashî qâni` ne-y-am

man chon-ân khwâh-am ke ham-chûn yâsmîn
kazh hamê gard-am chon-ân gâhê chon-în

3585 wâ-rahîda az hama khawf-o omêd
kazh hamê gard-am ba-har sô ham-chô bêd

ham-chô shâkh-é bîd gardân chapp-o râst
ke ze-bâd-ash gôna-gôna raqS-hâ-st

ân-ke khô kard-ast bâ shâdîy-é may
în khwashî-râ kay pasand-ad khwâja kay?

anbiyâ z-ân z-în khwashî bêrûn shod-and
ke sereshta dar khwashîy-é Haq bod-and

z-ân-ke jân-shân ân khwashî-râ dîda bûd
în khwashî-hâ pêsh-eshân bâzi namûd

3590 bâ bot-é zenda kasê chûn gasht yâr
morda-râ chûn dar kash-ad andar kenâr?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Virtues of Water

Mathnawi V: 199-235

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200 When water battled (impurity) and became dirty,[2] so that it became such that the senses refused (to accept) it,

God brought it back to the Ocean of Rightness, so that the Water[3] of the water might wash it (clean), from (Divine) Generosity.

The following year it came (back), dragging (its long clean) robe. "Hey, where were you?" [said the Earth]. "In the ocean of the good and sweet ones.

"I went from this place (in a) dirty (condition), (then) I became pure. I took (back) a robe of honor[4] (and) came (once more) to the earth.

"Look! Come to me, O impure ones, since my nature has taken (something) from the manner of God.

205 "I will accept all your foulness, (and) will give purity like (that of) an angel to the demon.

"(And) when I become polluted, I'll go back to that (heavenly) place: I'll go to the Origin of the origin of pure things.

"I'll tear the dirty garment off (my) head there, (and) He will give me a pure robe of honor once again.

"This is His work, and my work is the same. (And) the Adorner of the world is "the Lord and Sustainer of the Universe!"[5]

If these impurities of our had not existed, the water would never have had this exaltation.

210 It stole pouches of gold from someone[6] (and then) runs in each direction, saying, "Look here! Where is a penniless person?"

Either it scatters (gold)[7] upon some grown plant, or it washes the face of some unwashed face.[8]

Or it takes a ship upon its head,[9] like a porter-- (a ship) helpless in the seas.

A hundred thousand remedies (are) hidden in it,[10] because every remedy grows from it in this way.

The soul of every pearl (and) the heart of every grain[11] goes into the river (for healing) as (into) a drugstore.

215 There is nourishment from it for the orphans of the earth, (and)

there is movement from it for the dried-up ones who are chained and bound.

When its measured amount no longer remains, it becomes murky; it becomes fatigued, like us, on the earth.

How the water, after becoming murky, asks help from God, may His Grandeur be glorified

It (then) raises up a wailing cry from within (itself): "O God! That which You gave (me) I've given (away), and (now) I remain a (poor) beggar.

"I scattered the (entire) stock upon (both) pure and the impure. O King, (You are) the Giver of (all) assets: 'Are there any more?'"[12]

(God) said to the cloud, "Take (the water) to the place of delight. (And) you also, O sun, draw up (the water) to the heights."

220 (God) drives it (along) various pathways so that He may bring it to the limitless ocean.

But the aim of (mentioning) this water is (to symbolize) the spirit of the saints,[13] for it is something for washing (away) your muddy (stains).

When it becomes murky from washing[14] the people of the earth, it turns back to the Giver of Purity to the heavens.

(Then), dragging (its) robe (of honor), it brings back lessons from that (lofty) direction-- about the holy purities of (God), the All-Encompassing.

From being mixed with the people, it obtains a weak condition.[15] (And so) it seeks (to make) that journey (again, saying), "Revive us, O Bilal!

225 "O melodious and sweet-toned Bilal,[16] go up into the minaret (and) pound the drum of departure for a journey!"[17]

While the body (is) in the standing (position of the prayer),[18] the spirit has gone on a journey. (And) at the time of (its) return, it says (the greeting of) "Peace (be upon you)!"[19] for this reason.

It frees all from (having to do) the ritual washing with sand,[20] and seekers of the prayer direction[21] from choosing an intention.[22]

This parable is like an intermediary within (this) speech, (because) an intermediary is a condition (needed) for the common people's understanding.

(For) without an intermediary no one can ever go into the fire--except a salamander,[23] who has escaped from (the need for a) connector.

230 It's necessary for you to have the intermediary of the hot bath so that your (bodily) nature may benefit from the fire.

Since you can't go (directly) into the fire, like Abraham,[24] the hot bath is your Prophet (and) the water (is) your guide.

(True) fullness is from God, yet the people preoccupied with soil[25] will never reach satisfaction without the intermediary of bread.

(True) gracefulness is from God,[26] yet the people the body won't find subtle beauty without the (lovely) veil of the garden.

If the intermediary of the body were to cease, he would find the light of the moon (shining) from (his) chest without (any) veil, like Moses.[27]

235 The virtues of water are also witnesses that its inner (nature) is full of the Grace of God.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (199) from the starry heavens [simâk]: literally, "the Two Fishes," meaning two stars, one of which is Arcturus. This word was chosen (rather than "from the clouds" or "sky") for the rhyme.

2. (200) and become dirty: Nicholson translated, "When the water had done battle (in its task of ablution)..." This is because the immediate meaning of this passage has to do with the ritual ablutions required before the Islamic prayers can be performed. The hands, face, arms, and feet are washed with clean water. This is done with prayer, with the intention that impurities, both outward and inward, may be removed. On a deeper level,

Nicholson explains: "The water is a type of the saintly spirit which, when it is soiled through contact with human sin, renews its purity by union with God." (Footnote)

3. (201) the Water: "i.e. God, from whom the saints derive their power to purify the soul." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (203) a robe of honor: given as a reward to subjects by kings. It consisted, at the least, of a robe, a turban, and a waist sash.

5. (208) the Lord and Sustainer of the Universe: "Praise be to God, the Lord and Sustainer of the Universe" [literally, "of (all) the worlds"] (Qur'an I: 2)

6. (210) from someone: "I.e. it received the treasure of Divine grace." (Nicholson, footnote)

7. (211) it scatters (gold): Nicholson translated, "Either it sheds (the treasure)..." He explained: "I.e. it endows the vegetable soul with capacity for spiritual progress." (Footnote) This means that the plant is graced with the opportunity to be eaten by an animal, so as to become part of the next higher level, animality.

8. (211) it washes the face of some unwashed face: may refer to the ritual ablutions made with water, required before the Islamic prayers. See note above.

9. (212) it takes a ship upon its head: "I.e. it uplifts those who are struggling with doubt and despair and bears them onward to salvation." (Nicholson, footnote)

10. (213) A hundred thousand remedies (are) hidden in it: "As water is the source of all material life (Qur. XXI 31[= "And We have made every living thing from water"]), so the holy 'water" contains and produces from itself every cure for spiritual maladies." (Nicholson, Commentary)

11. (214) every pearl (and) the heart of every grain: "Durr [= pearl] and dánah [= grain] may signify the enlightened and ignorant respectively." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (218) "Are there any more?": from Qur'an 50:30.

13. (221) the spirits of the saints: means those holy souls who (whether living or departed) remain in a state of nearness to God, and have special powers of intercession, by the permission of God.

14. (222) washing [ghusl]: this word was added on the margin of the

earliest manuscript as a correction to the original word, "ghadr"-- treachery, villainy. Nicholson translated using the latter: "When it is stained dark by (washing) the treason of the inhabitants of the earth..."

15. (224) a weak condition [i`tilâl]: In Tawfîq Subhânî's edition of the earliest manuscript there appears to be a typographical error ("i`tidâl"-- moderation, equilibrium) which makes no sense in the context of the verse. Nicholson's text, also based on the earliest manuscript has "i`tilâl," which makes complete sense.

16. (225) Bilal [bilâl]: a favorite companion of the Prophet Muhammad. Formerly a black slave owned by a cruel pagan Arab master, he was the first Muslim to recite the call to prayer, by which all Muslims within hearing distance perform the prayers five times a day (God is Most Great! I bear witness that there is no divinity but God! I bear witness that Muhammad is the Prophet of God! Come to the prayer! Come to (spiritual) happiness! God is Most Great! There is no divinity but God!). According to a tradition, the Prophet selected Bilal for this task, because of the latter's pleasant voice, and used to say when the time for prayers approached, "O Bilal, revive us (with the call to prayer)!" Nicholson explains this as meaning: "i.e. 'relieve us from the cares of this world by chanting the adhán (call to prayer'." (Commentary)

17. (225) the drum of departure for a journey: refers to the Islamic ritual prayer, which can allow the spirit to make a similar journey from this world into Heaven as was made by the Prophet during his Ascension [mi`râj].

18. (226) the standing (position of the prayer): refers to the start of the prayer, when the praying person stands and makes the intention to enter into the sacred time of prayer. From then on, the focus is on being in the presence of God, and this state cannot be interrupted by the distractions of this world until the prayer is completed. "On the mystical significance of qiyám [= the standing posture], and the other postures of the salát [= the ritual prayer], see III 2140-2166..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

19. (226) Peace (be upon you): These are the words which are said to end being in the sacred time of prayer, after which one can move about and interact with other people as usual.

20. (227) the ritual washing with sand: if no water is available for the ritual washing, Muslims may use clean sand (or pat a clean rock, if no sand is available).

21. (227) the prayer direction [qibla]: the direction toward which all

Muslims pray-- toward Mecca, where the temple dedicated to pure monotheism, called the Ka`ba, is located.

22. (227 choosing an intention: means that if water is available, no intention of searching for nearby water is needed (after which sand could be substituted). In the earliest manuscript, it is written on the margin that this line should follow line 223 (rather than line 226, where it is situated). Nicholson noted that "corrections made in the two oldest MSS. suggest that it would be more apropos there." (Commentary)

23. (229) a salamander: "The salamander, which (according to Moslem naturalists) 'usually lives in the fire', serves as a symbol for the mystic whose perception of reality is intuitive." (Nicholson, Commentary) Thus, the salamander was believed to have the miraculous ability to be "at home" in fire, and needed no intermediary or connecting link.

24. (231) into the fire, like Abraham: The Prophet Abraham was thrown into fiery furnace for opposing polytheism, but God protected him by commanding, "O fire, be coolness and a (place of) safety for Abraham" (Qur'an 21:69).

25. (232) the people (preoccupied) with soil: means those who are overly interested in material concerns. Bread is connected to the soil, from being made from grain.

26. (233) (True) gracefulness is from God: Nicholson referred here to Rumi's story of the sufi who contemplated the beauty of the garden within his own heart (Mathnawi IV, starting at line 1358).

27. (234) like Moses: On the same occasion when God commanded Moses to throw down his staff, which miraculously became a snake, He also commanded him to press his hand into his side, and his hand emerged shining white (Qur'an 7:108; 20: 22; 27: 12; 28: 32)-- symbolizing the gift of prophecy. Here, Rumi interprets that it was the luminous whiteness within the chest of Moses, which caused his hand to become white.

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199 âb bahr-é în be-bârîd az simâk
tâ palîd-ân-râ kon-ad az khubS pâk

pâk kardan-é âb hama-yé palîdî-hâ-râ wa bâz pâk kardan
khodây-é ta`âlà âb-râ az palîdî, lâ-jaram quddûs âmad Haqq
ta`âlà
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

200 âb chûn paygâr kard-o shod najis
tâ chon-ân shod k-âb-râ rad kard His

Haq bo-bord-ash bâz dar baHr-é Sawâb
tâ be-shost-ash az karam ân âb-ê âb

sâl-é dêgar âmad ô dâman-kashân
hay ko-jâ bûd-î? ba-daryây-é khwash-ân

man najis z-în-jâ shod-am, pâk âmad-am
be-s'tad-am khil`at sôy-é khâk âmad-am

hîn be-y-ây-îd ay palîd-ân sôy-é man
ke gereft az khôy-é yazdân khôy-é man

205 dar paZîr-am jumla-yé zeshtî-t-râ
chûn malak pâkî deh-am `ifrît-râ

chûn shaw-am âlûda, bâz ân-jâ raw-am
sôy-é aSl-é aSl-é pâkî-hâ raw-am

dalaq-é cherkîn bar kan-am ân-jâ ze-sar
khil`at-é pâk-am deh-ad bâr-ê degar

kâr-é ô în-ast-o kâr-é man ham-în
`âlam-ârây-ast rabbu 'l-`âlamîn

gar na-bûdy în palîdî-hây-é mâ
kay body în bâr-nâma âb-râ?

210 kîsa-hây-é zar be-dozdîd az kasê
me-raw-ad har sô ke hîn, kô muflisê?

yâ be-rêz-ad bar geyâh-é rosta-yê
yâ be-shôy-ad rôy-é rô-nâ-shosta-yê

yâ be-gîr-ad bar sar ô, hammâl-wâr
kashtiy-é bê-dast-o pâ-râ dar biHâr

Sad hazâr-ân dârô andar way nehân
z-ân-ke har dârô be-rôy-ad z-ô chon-ân

jân-é har dorrê, del-é har dâna-yê
mê-raw-ad dar jô chô dârô-khâna-yê

215 z-ô yatîm-ân-é zamîn-râ parwaresh
basta-gân-é khoshk-râ az way rawesh

chûn na-mân-ad mâya-ash, têra shaw-ad
ham-chô mâ andar zamîn khêra shaw-ad

ist`ânat âb az Haqq-- jalla jalâlu-hu-- ba`d az têra shodan

nâla az bâTin bar âr-ad k-ay khodâ
ân-che dâr-î, dâd-am-o mând-am gadâ

rêkht-am sarmâya bar pâk-o palîd
ay shah-é sarmâya-deh hal min mazîd?

abr-râ gôy-ad bo-bar jây-é khwash-ash
ham tô khworshîd-â ba-bâlâ bar kash-ash

220 râh-hây-é mukhtalif mê-rând-ash
tâ rasân-ad sôy-é baHr-é bê-Had-ash

khwad gharaZ z-în âb jân-é awliyâ-st
k-ô ghasûl-é têragî-hây-é shomâ-st

chûn shaw-ad têra ze-ghusl-é ahl-é farsh
bâz gard-ad sôy-é pâkî-bakhsh-é `arsh

bâz âr-ad z-ân Taraf dâman-kashân
az Tahârât-é muHîT ô dars-eshân

z-ikhtilâT-é khalq yâb-ad i`tilâl
ân safar jôy-ad ke ariH-nâ yâ bilâl

225 ay bilâl-é khwash-nawây-é khwash-Sahîl
mîZana bar raw, be-zan Tabl-é raHîl

jân safar raft-o badan andar qiyâm
waqt-é rij`at z-în sabab gôy-ad salâm

az tayammum wâ rahân-ad jomla-râ
w-az taHarri Tâlib-ân-é qibla-râ

în mathal chûn wâsiTa-st andar kalâm
wâsiTa sharT-ast bahr-é fahm-é `âm

andar âtesh kay raw-ad bê-wâsiTa
joz samandar, k-ô rahîd az râbiTa?

230 wâsiTa-yé Hammâm bây-ad mar to-râ
tâ ze-âtesh khwash kon-î tô Tab`-râ

chûn na-tân-î shod dar âtesh chûn khalîl
gasht Hammâm-at rasûl, âb-at dalîl

sêrî az Haqq-ast lêk ahl-é Taba`
kay ras-ad bê-wâsiTa-yé nân dar shiba`?

luTf az Haqq-ast, lêkin ahl-é tan
dar na-yâb-ad luTf bê-parda-yé chaman

chûn na-mân-ad wâsiTa-yé tan bê-Hijâb
ham-chô mûsà nûr-é mah yâb-ad ze-jayb

235 în honar-hâ âb-râ ham shâhid-ast
k-andarûn-ash por ze-luTf-é îzad-ast

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Hunter and the Hunted

Mathnawi V: 723-760

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723 He is so drowned in his own passion (for hunting, that) he is unaware of his own pursuer and hunter.

If grass is devouring some water and air, an animal's stomach is grazing (close) behind.

725 That grass is (both) the eater and the eaten, just as anything that exists-- other than God.

Since He is (described in the verse as) "And He feeds you and is not fed,"[1] God is neither eater or eaten, (like living) flesh and skin.

The eater and the eaten are never safe from some (other) eater, which is waiting quietly in ambush.

The security of the eaten ones is attractive for bereavement (to follow). Go (for security) to that Court, for He "is not fed"!

For every mental image, there is some (other) mental image consuming (it); for (every) thought, there is another thought

grazing on (it).

730 You aren't able to escape from a mental image, or to sleep so that you can jump outside of it.

Thoughts are the bees, and that sleep of yours (is) the water (in which you try to escape); when you wake up, the bees come back.

Many mental "bees" fly in, to draw (you) this way and take (you) that way.

These mental images are the least of those which devour, and the Owner of Majesty[2] knows (well the power of) the others!

Take care! Escape from the crowd of rough devourers,[3] to (refuge in) Him who said, "I am your Protector."[4]

735 Or (flee) to the one who has obtained (from God the power of) protection, if you are unable to hurry (directly) to that Protector.

Don't pledge (your) hand (to any), except to the hand of the (sufi) Elder,[5] (for) God has become the "Hand-Holder"[6] for his hand.

The (sufi) Elder (is) your (guiding) intellect, (which) has been made habitually childish from being the neighbor of the ego, which is within the veil [of selfish passions].

Join (that) perfected intellect to (your weak) intellect, so that (your) mind may turn back from that harmful nature.

When you put your hand in his hand, then you will jump outside the grasp of the devourers.

740 (And) your hand will become (part of) the "People of the Pledge,"[7] since "The Hand of God is over their hands."[8]

When you have given your hand to the sufi Elder's hand-- the wise Elder who is knowing and honorable,

Since he is (like) the prophet of his time,[9] O disciple, so that the light of the Prophet becomes visible (in him),

By this you will have been present at Hudaybiya and a fellow companion to the Companions of the Pledge.[10]

Then you will have become (like one) of the Ten of Good News,[11] (and) you will have become purified like pure gold.

745 (And this is) so that (your) association may become right,
because a man is joined to someone he has made friends with;

He is with him (in) this world and the next-- and this is (the
meaning of) the saying of sweet-natured Ahmad,[12]

(Who) said, "A man is with the one whom he loves,"[13] (meaning
that) the heart is not separate from its desired object.

Sit less (often) wherever there is a trap and bait. O you who
suppose others to be weak: go (and) look (carefully) at those who
take others to be weak.

O assumer of the weakness of the weak, know this: (that) there is
also a hand above (your) hand, O young man!

750 You are weak, and (yet) you assume weakness (in others)--
how amazing! You are both the prey and the hunter in pursuit!

Don't be (like those mentioned in the verse who have) "a barrier[14]
in front and behind them," so that you will not see (your) enemy,
and (yet your) enemy (will be) obvious.

The greed of hunting is negligence of being the prey; he (thinks he)
is winning a (sweet-) heart, but he is lacking a heart!

Don't be less than a bird in seeking, (since even) a sparrow sees
"in front (and) behind."

(Because) when it comes next to the seed, it turns (its) head and
face forward and behind (at that) moment.

755 Thinking, "I wonder (if) there is a hunter in front or behind
me?-- so that I should draw back from this morsel because of fear
of him."

You should see behind (you in) the stories (in the Qur'an) about the
wrongdoers; you should (also) look in front (of you) at the deaths
of (your) friends and neighbors,

For He brought destruction upon them without (need of) an
instrument, and He is connected to you in every situation.

God punished (them) without (need) of a hand or mace: so know
that God is the Justice-Maker without hands.

The one who would say [in public], "If God exists, where (is
He)?"-- he was on the (torture) rack[15] confessing, "He [exists]!"

760 The one who said, "This ("existence") is strange and remote," was shedding tears and continually calling out: "O (You who are) Near!"[16]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 7/30/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (726) is not fed: part of a verse in the Qur'an (6:14, modified for metrical purposes): "Say: 'Shall I take a protector besides God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and He that feeds and is not fed?"

2. (733) Owner of Majesty [Zu 'l-jalâl]: one of the "Ninety-Nine Names of God" in sufism. "And the Face of your Sustaining Lord will last (for ever): the Owner of Majesty and Honor" (Qur'ân 55:27, 78).

3. (734) rough devourers: "i.e. our vile passions and the sins to which they impel us." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (734) Protector [HafiZ]: another of the "Ninety-Nine Names of God": "Truly, my sustaining Lord is the Protector [HafiZ] over everything" (Qur'an 11:57; 34:21).

5. (736) Elder [pîr]: means the sufi shaykh, master, guide, spiritual director

6. (736) hand-holder [dast-gîr]: an idiom meaning one who comes to aid and protect. Refers to the sufi initiation, or "pledge of allegiance" [bay`at], in which a spiritual seeker becomes a disciple by taking the hand of the sufi guide. This ritual is itself based on a Qur'anic verse about a famous pledge given to the Prophet Muhammad by his followers at a place called Hudaybiya: "Certainly, those who swear allegiance to you are swearing allegiance to God, (and) the Hand of God is over their hands" (Q. 48:10).

7. (740) the People of the Pledge; the Hand of God: see previous note.

8. (740) "The Hand of God is over their hands": see note on line 736.

9. (742) the prophet of his time: refers to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, "The shaykh among my people is like a prophet among his people." (Translated from the Arabic in Nicholson's Commentary)

10. (743) Companions of the Pledge: see previous note on line 740.

11. (744) the Ten of Good News: "The Prophet is said to have promised ten of his Companions, including Abú Bakr, `Umar, `Uthmán, and `Alí, that they would enter Paradise." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (746) Ahmad: a contracted form of the name of the Prophet Muhammad

13. (747) whom he loves: "It is related that someone came to the Prophet and questioned him concerning the time of the Resurrection. The Prophet asked what provision he had made for it. 'Not very many prayers and fasts', he replied; 'but I love Allah and His Prophet.' 'A man', said Mohammad, 'is with him whom he loves'" [= in the world to come] (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (751) a barrier: refers to Qur'an 36:9 (altered for metrical purposes): "And We have put a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them so that they cannot see."

15. (759) on the torture rack: refers to the crime of blasphemy in public, in this case, denying the existence of God.

16. (760) Near: another of the "Ninety-Nine Names of God": "O my people, worship God: you have no divinity other than Him. He produced you from the earth and made you dwell in it. So ask forgiveness from Him, and turn to Him (in repentance). Truly my Sustaining Lord is Near [Qarîb], Responsive" (Qur'an 11:61; see also 34:50; 2:186).

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723 ô chonân gharq-ast dar sawdây-é khwad
ghâfil-ast az Tâlib-o jôyây-é khwad

gar Hashîsh âb-o hawâyê mê-khwar-ad
ma`da-yé Haywân-sh dar pay mê char-ad

725 âkil-o mâ'kûl âm-ad ân geyâh
ham-chon-în har hastîyê ghayr-é illâh
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wa h'wa yuT`im-kum wa lâ yuT`am chô ô-st
nêst Haq mâ'kûl-o âkil, laHm-o pôst

âkil-o mâ'kûl kay îman bow-ad
z-âkilê k-ândar kamîn sâkin bow-ad?

amn-é mâ' kûl-ân jaZûb-é mâtam-ast
raw ba-d-ân dargâh k-ô lâ yuT`am-ast

har khayâlê-râ khayâlê mê-khwar-ad
fikr ân fikr-é degar-râ mê char-ad

730 tô na-tân-î k-az khayâlê wâ rah-î
yâ be-khosp-î ke az ân bêrûn jah-î

fikr zanbûr-ast-o ân khwâb-é tô âb
chûn shaw-î bêdâr bâz ây-ad Zubâb

chand zanbûr-é khayâlê dar par-ad
mê-kash-ad în sô-wo ân sô mê-bar-ad

kam-tarîn-é âkil-ân-ast în khayâl
w-ân degar-hâ-râ shenâs-ad Zu 'l-jalâl

hîn gorîz az jawq-é âkkâl-é ghalîZ
sôy-é ô ke goft mâ' êm-at HafîZ

735 yâ ba-sôy-é ân-ke ô ân HifZ yâft
gar na-tân-î sôy-é ân HâfiZ shetâft

dast-râ ma-s'pâr joz dar dast-é pîr
Haq shod-ast ân dast-é ô-râ dastgîr

pîr `aql-at kôdakî-khô karda-ast
az jiwâr-é nafs k-andar parda-ast

`aql-é kâmil-râ qarîn kon bâ kherad
tâ ke bâz ây-ad kherad z-an khôy-é bad

chûn-ke dast-é khwad ba-dast-é ô neh-î
pas ze-dast-é âkil-ân bêrûn jah-î

740 dast-é tô az ahl-é ân bay`at shaw-ad
ke yadu 'llâh fawqa aydî-him bow-ad

chûn be-dâd-î dast-é khwad dar dast-é pîr
pîr-é Hikmat ke `alîm-ast-o khaTîr

k-ô nabiyy-é waqt-é khwêsh-ast ay murîd
tâ az-ô nûr-é nabî ây-ad padîd

dar Hudaybiyya shod-î HâZir ba-d-în
w-ân SaHâba-yé bay`atî-râ ham-qarîn

pas ze-dah yâr-é mubashshar âmad-î
ham-chô zarr-é dah-dahî khâliS shod-î

745 tâ ma`îyyat râst ây-ad, z-ânke mard
bâ kasê joft-ast k-ô-râ dôst kard

în jahân-o ân jahân bâ ô bow-ad
w-în HadîS-é aHmad-é khwash-khô bow-ad

goft al-mar'u ma`a maHbûbi-hi
lâ yufakku 'l-qalbu min maTlûbi-hi

har ko-jâ dâm-ast-o dâna, kam neshîn
raw zabûn-gîrâ, zabûn-gîr-ân be-bîn

ay zabûn-gîr-é zabûn-ân în be-dân
dast ham bâlây-é dast-ast ay jawân

750 tô zabûn-î wo zabûn-gîr, ay `ajab
ham tô Sayd-o Sayd-gîr andar Talab

bayna aydî khalfa-hum sadd-an ma-bâsh
ke na-bîn-î khaSm-râ w-ân khaSm fâsh

HirS-é Sayyâdî ze-Saydî mughfil-ast
del-bariyê mê-kon-ad, ô bê-del-ast

tô kam az morghê ma-bâsh andar nashîd
bayna aydî khalf `uSfûrê be-dîd

chûn ba-nazd-é dâna ây-ad pêsh-o pas
chand gardân-ad sar-o rô ân nafas

755 k-ây `ajab pêsh-o pas-am Sayyâd hast
tâ kash-am az bîm-é ô z-în loqma dast?

tô be-bîn pas QaSSa-yé fujjâr-râ
pêsh be-n'gar marg-é yâr-o jâr-râ

ke halâkat dâd-ashân bê-âlatê
ô qarîn-é to-st dar har Hâlatê

Haq shekanja kard-o gorz-o dast nêst
pas be-dân bê-dast Haq dâwar-konî-st

ânke mê-gofty agar Haq hast, kô?
dar shekanja-yê ô muqir mê-shod ke hû

760 ânke mê-goft în ba`îd-ast-o `ajîb
askh mê-rand-o hamê goft ay qarîb

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Obedience of the Angel of Death

Mathnawi V:1675-1676, 1683-1713

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1675 [The angel Azrael[1] said to the Earth,] "Don't consider
(making any further) plea to me, and don't make another plea
except to that Compassionate and Justice-Giving King.[2]

1676 "I am the slave of the (Divine) Command; I will not cause the
abandoning (of) His Command, which raises dust from the ocean.[3]

. . . . . .

1683 "Don't seek mercy, foolishly, from the spear[4]-- (but) seek (it)
from the King, since that (spear) is in His hand.

"How could you make (such) a plea to the spear or sword?-- since
it is (merely) a captive in the hand of that Exalted One.

1685 "He is (like) Azar[5] in workmanship, and I am (like) the idol:
whatever object He makes of me, I become that.

"If He makes me (into) a cup, I become a cup. And if He makes
me (into) a dagger, I become a dagger.

"If He makes me (into) a fountain, I give water. And if He makes
me (into) fire, I give heat.

"If He makes me (into) rain, I give harvest stacks, And if he makes
me (into) a small arrow, I spring into the body [of someone's

enemy].

"If He makes me (into) a snake, I spew poison. And if He makes me (into) a friend, I perform service.

1690 "I am like a pen in between "Two Fingers" (of the Merciful).[6] I am not mediocre[7] in the row of obedience[8] (to Him)."

Azrael[9] diverted the Earth by (these) words, and grabbed a handful (of clay) from the old Earth.

Magician-like, he seized (clay) from the world (while) the Earth was preoccupied by (his) speech, like those (who are) enraptured.

He took the unwilling clay to God, so that the runaway (was brought back) to school.

God said: "By My Glorious Knowledge,[10] I will make you the executioner[11] of these creatures."

1695 (Azrael) said, "O Lord, the creatures will take me (to be their) enemy when I squeeze the creatures' throats at (the time of) death.

O Supreme Lord, do You consider it suitable that You should make me hated and (like) an enemy in appearance?"

(God) said, "I will produce certain causes (which are) clearly visible, among (which are) fever, dysentery, delirium, and spear (wounds).

"Since I will turn their gaze (away) from you to the diseases and the various causes (of death)."[12]

(Azrael) said, "O Lord, there are also (those of Your) servants who can tear (apart such) causes, O Almighty."

1700 (The vision of) their eye passes through causes, (and) by the Grace of the Lord, it has passed beyond veils.

It has found the collyrium of Unity[13] from the eye doctor of (spiritual) states (and is) freed from disease and being sickly.

They don't look at fever, dysentery, and tuberculosis (since) they don't give these causes a way into (their) hearts.[14]

Since there is a remedy for every one of these diseases-- (but) if

the remedy is not accepted, that is the act of Destiny.[15]

Know for certain (that) every disease has a remedy, (such) as the remedy for the suffering of cold (is) a fur garment.

1705 (But) if God Wills that a man should freeze (to death), coldness passes through even a hundred fur garments,

(And) puts a trembling into his being which will not become better with clothing or from the nest (of his warm home).

(For) when Destiny comes, the physician becomes ignorant (about providing a cure) and the medicine also becomes lost in (delivering) benefit.

The seeing intelligence (of the mystic) never becomes veiled from these causes (which are) a veil for catching fools.

The eye sees the root (of the cause) when it is perfected, (but) when a man is cross-eyed, he sees (only) the branch [of the effects].

1710 God said,[16] "The one who is aware (only of) the root and origin will never see you in the middle.

"(For) although you have hidden yourself from (the eyes of) the common (people), before the bright-seeing[17] (mystics) you are also a veil."

And regarding those for (whom) the moment of death is (sweet as) sugar, their gaze will never be drunk with the changing conditions (of life).

1713 To them, bodily death is not bitter since they are going from a dungeon and a prison to a green meadow.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 12/30/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1675) The angel Azrael: This is part of a story which began prior to this section, in which God commanded the angel Gabriel to take a handful of clay from the Earth, in order to create the body of Adam (starting at line 5: 1556), but he was unable to do so when

the Earth pleaded for mercy (from the tribulations sent by God which would occur if human beings were to be created to live on Earth). God then sent the angel Michael, and then Israfil (Seraphiel), but they also could not resist the Earth's pleas for mercy. Finally, God sent the angel Azrael, the angel of firm resolution [`azm] and strong mind [Hazm] and the "Captain of the (Divine) Decree" (5: 1651).

2. (1675) that Merciful and Justice-Giving King: refers to God, who is called "Compassionate" [raHîm] in the Qur'an, and also "Just" (although the term for this here is Persian)

3. (1676) dust from the ocean: perhaps refers to a cloud of dust seeming to arise from the ocean (but actually from a far away land).

4. (1683) Don't seek mercy, foolishly, from the spear: Just prior to this verse is a long heading introducing this section: "Explaining that when injury befalls you from a creature of God, he in reality is like an instrument. The gnostic [`ârif] is he that refers (all action) to God, not to the instrument; and if he refer it to the instrument formally, he does so not in ignorance but for a purpose. Thus [the famous sufi, died, 875] Abú Yazid, may God sanctify his spirit, said, 'During all these years I have never spoken to any creature or heard any creature speak to me; but people fancy that I am speaking and listening to them, because they do not see the Most Great Speaker, of whom they in relation to me are (only) the echo.' The intelligent hearer pays no heed to the echo. There is a well-known [Arabic] proverb to this effect, (namely), 'The wall said to the nail, "Why are you splitting me?" The nail replied, "Look at him who is hitting me!"'" (translated by Nicholson)

5. (1685) Azar: "Azar, the father of Abraham (Qur. VI 74), is described as an idolater and maker of idols." (Nicholson, Commentary) "And when Abraham said to his father Azar, 'Do you take idols for gods? Truly, I see (that) you and your people have clearly gone astray.'" (Qur'an 6: 74)

6. (1690) "Two Fingers" (of the Merciful): "refers to the Tradition qalbu 'l-mu'mini bayna isba`ayni min asâbi`i 'l-Rahmán, 'the true believer's heart is between two fingers of the Merciful God'. The 'two fingers' are the Divine attributes of Majesty (Jalál) and Beauty (Jamál). According as God reveals Himself in one or other of these aspects, the mystic's heart contracts with grief (qabd) or expands with joy (bast)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (1690) mediocre: Nicholson translated, "I am not a waverer" and explained, "Literally, 'betwixt and between.'" (footnote)

8. (1690) in the row of obedience: means in the ranks of obedient servants or soldiers, as well as in the rows of worshippers in the Islamic ritual prayer, obeying the Divine command to worship.

9. (1691) Azrael: see footnote on line 1675.

10. (1694) By My Glorious Knowledge: Nicholson translated correctly, "(I swear) by My resplendent knowledge," because God sometimes speaks in the Qur'an in this manner, with oaths and adjurations such as: "By the Glorious Day,... Did He not find you (to be) an orphan and (then) gave you shelter? (Qur'an 93:1, 6).

11. (1694) the executioner: this story explains how God appointed Azrael, after he proved his firmness, to become the angel of death for future mankind.

12. (1698) the various causes (of death): literally, "three-fold causes." "I.e. according to the commentators, 'physical, mental, and spiritual'; but the word seems to be used here in the sense of 'manifold.'" (Nicholson, footnote)

13. (1701) the collyrium of Unity: means that by the healing medicine of witnessing Divine Unity, their eyes are no longer suffering from double vision, which limits human vision to seeing only duality. Collyrium is a medicinal powder, made from the dust of certain stones, especially those containing antimony. It was used as an eye wash to heal disorders of the eye which hindered good eyesight. It is often a metaphor for improved discrimination, insight, and judgment. Nicholson translated, "the collyrium of Unity from the oculist of ecstasy," and explained: "I.e., mystical experience (hál) has made them clairvoyant, so that they contemplate the One Causer (musabbib) and pay no regard to secondary causes (asbáb)." (Commentary)

14. (1702) a way into (their) hearts: in Islamic psychophysiology, the heart is more often viewed as the "mind," and not the brain. Thus, this means "a way into (their) minds."

15. (1703) Destiny [qaZâ]: literally, "decree (of God)." Refers to the Will of God and what He has "written" that must take place. The Qur'an teaches both Destiny and individual power to act responsibly. Rumi does not teach a passive fatalism, but teaches active striving for good deeds and intense yearning prayer (see Mathnawi I: 618-38, 938-947, 1480-1493, for example).

16. (1710) God (then) said: Rumi's heading to this section is: "The (Divine) answer, (namely), 'One who does not regard causes and

diseases and sword-wounds will likewise pay no regard to thy action, O Azrael, for thou too art a (secondary) cause, although thou art more concealed than those (other) causes.' And maybe it (the real nature of Azrael) is not concealed from the sick (dying) man, for He (God) is nigher [= "closer"] to him than ye are, but ye do not see." Nicholson added the footnote: "Qur'án LVI, 84, where the text has 'We are nigher.'" And Nicholson also added: "Qur. LVI 84, where the text has wa-nahnu aqrabu [= "We are nearer"]. God is nearer to a dying man than his next of kin who keep watch at the bedside." (Commentary)

17. (1711) bright-seeing: assumes the ancient psychophysiological belief that the eye sees by means of an inner light-- which here is especially luminous, by the Grace of God, in the case of the mystics.

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1675 lâba ma'ndêsh-o ma-kon lâba degar
joz ba-d-ân shâh-é raHîm-é dâdgar

1676 banda-yé farmân-am, na-y-âr-am tark-kard
amr-é ô k-az baHr angêzîd gard

. . . . . .

1683 aHmaq-âna az sinân raHmat ma-jô
z-ân shahê jô k-ân bow-ad dar dast-é ô

bâ sinân-o têgh lâba chûn kon-î
k-ô asîr âmad ba-dast-ê ân sanî?

1685 ô ba-San`at âzar-ast-o man Sanam
âlatê k-ô sâz-ad-am, man ân shaw-am

gar ma-râ sâghar kon-ad, sâghar shaw-am
w-ar ma-râ khanjar kon-ad, khanjar shaw-am

gar ma-râ chashma kon-ad, âbê deh-am
w-ar ma-râ âtesh kon-ad, tâbê deh-am

gar ma-râ bârân kon-ad, kherman deh-am
w-ar ma-râ nâw-ak kon-ad, dar tan jah-am

gar ma-râ mârê kon-ad, zahr afkan-am
w-ar ma-râ yârê kon-ad, khidmat kon-am

1690 man chô kelk-am dar meyân iSba`ayn
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nêst-am dar Saff-é Tâ`at bayn bayn

khâk-râ mashghûl kard ô dar sokhon
yak kafê be-r'bûd az ân khâk-é kohon

sâHir-âna dar robûd az khâk-dân
khâk mashghûl-é sokhon chûn bê-khwad-ân

bord tâ Haq turbat-é bê-rây-râ
tâ ba-maktab ân gorêzân-pây-râ

goft yazdân ke ba-`ilm-é rôshan-am
ke tô-râ jallâd-é în khalq-ân kon-am

1695 goft yazdân ke ba-`ilm-é rôshan-am
ke tô-râ jallâd-é în khalq-ân kon-am

tô rawâ dâr-î, khodâwand-é sanî
ke ma-râ mubthûZ-o doshman-rô kon-î?

goft asbâbê padîd âr-am `ayân
az tab-ô qûlanj-o sar-sâm-o sinân

goft asbâbê padîd âr-am `ayân
az tab-ô qûlanj-o sar-sâm-o sinân

goft yâ rab banda-gân hast-and nêz
ke sabab-hâ-râ be-darr-and ay `azîz

1700 chashm-eshân bâsh-ad goZâra az sabab
dar goZashta az Hujub az faZl-¥rab

sorma-yé tawHîd az kaHHâl-é Hâl
yâfta, rasta ze-`illat-o i`tilâl

na-n'gar-and andar tab-o qûlanj-o sel
râh na-d'h-and în sabab-hâ-râ ba-del

z-ân-ke har yak z-în maraZ-hâ-râ dawâ-st
chûn dawâ na-p'zîr-ad, ân fa`l-é qaZâ-st

har maraZ dâr-ad dawâ, mê-dân yaqîn
chûn dawây-é ranj-é sarmâ, pôstîn

1705 chûn khodâ khwâh-ad ke mardê be-f'sor-ad
sardî az Sad pôstîn ham be-g'Zar-ad

dar wujûd-ash larza'yê be-n'h-ad ke ân

na ba-jâma beh shaw-ad na az âsheyân

chûn qaZâ ây-ad Tabîb ablah shaw-ad
w-ân dawâ dar naf` ham gom-rah shaw-ad

kay shaw-ad maHjûb idrâk-é baSîr
z-în sabab-hây-é Hijâb-é gôl-gîr?

aSl-bîn-ad dîda, chûn akmal bow-ad
far` bîn-ad, chun-ke mard aHwal bow-ad

1710 goft yazdân ân-ke bâsh-ad aSl-dân
pas to-râ kay bîn-ad ô andar meyân?

gar-che khwêsh az `âma penhân karda'î
pêsh-é rôshan-dîd-agân ham parda'î

w-ân-ke êshân-râ shakar bâsh-ad ajal
chûn naZar-eshân mast bâsh-ad dar diwâl?

1713 talkh na-b'w-ad pêsh-é êshân marg-é tan
chûn raw-and az châh-o zendân dar chaman

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Thief's Excuse

Mathnawi V: 3077-3110

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3077 Someone was climbing the top of a tree (and) was violently scattering the fruits, as thieves (do).

The owner of the orchard came and said, "O vile and lowly (man)! Where is any shame on your part from [being seen by] God? What are you doing?

He answered, "If God's servant eats dates which God made (as) a gift for him from God's orchard,

3080 Why are you blaming (him) as the common people (do)? (Such) stinginess[1] at the table of God, the Most Rich!"

(The owner) said, "O Aybak,[2] bring that rope (over here), so that I may give an answer to (this) good man!"[3]

He then bound him to the tree in that moment, and was beating him on his back and legs with a hard stick.

(The thief) said, "At last, have some shame from [being seen by] God! You are killing this innocent (person) very lamentably!"

(The owner) replied, "By means of God's stick, this servant of His is giving the back of another servant a good beating!

3085 "(It is) the stick of God, and the back and sides [of your body] belong to Him (as well). I am (but) His slave and the instrument of His command!"

(The thief) said, "I have repented of Fatalism,[4] O (brave) knight. There is free-will, free will, free will!"[5]

His Free Will made (our free) choices to exist, (and) His Free Will is like a horseman (hidden) beneath the dust.[6]

His Free Will makes our (ability to have) choice, (and His) Command has become the basis for any choice (of ours).[7]

In regard to power, every creature has some dominion over forms which lack choice,[8]

3090 So that it drags (away) the prey which lacks any choice. (And) so that he may take Zayd (away)[9] (after) having he grabbed (his) ear.

But (it is) the Action of the Eternal One, without (need of) any instrument, (which) makes his (superior power of) choice a lasso for him.[10]

His Free Will makes him "shackles"[11] for (capturing) Zayd; without (need of) dog or snare, God makes him his prey.

The carpenter (certainly) is the commander of a piece of wood, and the artist is (also) the commander of (the image he is creating of) a good-looking one.

The blacksmith has a charge over the iron, (and) the builder has a dominion over (his) tools.

3095 This is unusual: because all this choice (is) prostrating like a slave to His Free Will.[12]

(And) your power of struggle over inanimate objects[13] has never denied any inanimate object of those [inanimate qualities].

(Likewise), His power over (our free) choices (is) such that He does not deny[14] any particular (human) choice of [some of] that (power).

You may say (that) His Will (is expressed) in a perfect manner, since it is not connected with (absolute) compulsion or [allowing absolute freedom to fall into] error.[15]

Since you said, "My unbelief is His wish," know that it is also your own wish.[16]

3100 Because without your wish (and choice), your unbelief itself is non-existent. (And) unbelief, without wanting it, is a contradictory statement.

(Giving) a command to a powerless and crippled person is shameful and blamable, (and getting) angry (is) worse-- especially from [being seen by] the Lord of Mercy.[17]

If the ox won't take the yoke, he is whipped. (Certainly), no ox ever became downcast and miserable[18] [from being beaten] because he won't fly.

Since the ox isn't excused for being proud (and stubborn), for what (reason) is the owner of the ox [allowed to be] helplessly weak and excused?[19]

Since you aren't injured, don't bind (your) head (with a bandage): you have (power of) choice, (so) don't make a fool of yourself.[20]

3105 Strive to obtain freshness from God's cup [of grace], (for) in that moment you will become without self and without (need of) choice.

In that moment all (power of) choice will belong to that Wine (and) you will become completely excused, like a drunkard.[21]

(Then), whoever you beat is beaten by the Wine [of God], (and) whatever you sweep is swept by the Wine![22]

(For) the drunkard will never act without justice and rightness[23] when he has drank from the Wine of God's cup.

The magicians[24] told Pharaoh, "Stop! (Because) the drunkard has

no care for (his) hands or feet.

3110 "(For) our (real) hands and feet are the Wine of the One
(God), (and) the outward hands are only a worthless shadow."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3080) stinginess [bukhl]: considered one of the worst behaviors for Muslims, who are supposed to be generous to all guests (the traditional rule is to offer food and lodging to any guest, whether a friend or an enemy, for three days). On the other hand, stealing is punished, and a Muslim who steals repeatedly (unless due to starvation during a famine) is subject to severe punishment.

2. (3081) Aybak: the name of the orchard owner's servant or helper.

3. (3081) to (this) good man [bu 'l-Hasan]: literally, "to the Father of Hasan." Since the name Hasan means "good," this is an ironic or mocking nickname given to the thief.

4. (3086) Fatalism [jabr]: literally, "compulsion." The extreme theological doctrine of Absolute Fate or Necessitarianism (Jabariyyah), which denies that human beings have any free will and that asserts that human actions are completely predetermined. Thus, according to this doctrine, human beings have no true responsibility for their actions, because all events and actions (including the future placement of souls in Heaven or Hell) are the sole decision of God. This view was asserted by the thief.

5. (3086) free will [ikhtiyâr]: literally, "choice." The belief that human beings are free to choose their actions and are therefore responsible. Rumi condemns Fatalism and Necessitarianism and strongly emphasizes the importance of free will, responsibility, and the need to strive. However, he does not teach the extreme theological doctrine of Free Will (Qadariyyah), according to which human beings are absolutely free and the complete creators of their actions.

Rumi also told this story in his "Fi-hi Mâ Fi-hi," chapter 40 (translated by Arberry as "Discourses of Rumi," 1961; translated by Thackston as "Signs of the Unseen," 1994), where the orchard

owner confronts the thief for stealing apricots from a tree saying, "Do you not fear God?" [az khodâ na-mê-tars-î]. In Rumi's heading, just prior to this line he said (translated by Nicholson): "Another Story in answer to the Necessitarian, confirming (Man's) power of choice and the validity of the (Divine) commands and prohibitions, and showing that the Necessitarian's excuse is not accepted in any religious sect or in any religion and that it does not save him from being duly punished for the (sinful) actions which he has committed, just as the Necessitarian Iblís [= Satan] was not saved (from punishment) by saying (to God), 'Because Thou hast made me to err.' [Qur'an 15:39] And the little indicates the much."

6. (3087) beneath the dust: this is a metaphor for hidden power, since the cloud of dust produced by the running horse hides the horse and the rider from being seen at a distance.

7. (3088) any choice (of ours): Nicholson translated, "His command is based on (is exercised in virtue of) a power of choice (in us)."

8. (3089) forms which lack choice: for example, grass is powerless before a cow and a mouse is powerless before a cat. Nicholson explained: "i.e. either lacking volition or temporarily deprived of power to exercise it." (Footnote)

9. (3090) takes Zayd away: an image of punishment for someone ("Zayd" is a generic man's name used like "Tom" or "John Smith"). Seizing by the ear was a punishment given to children by adults.

10. (3091) a lasso for him: Nicholson originally translated, "a noose for him (to catch Zayd)," and explained: "I.e. his free-will is derived from, and subordinate to, the will and action of God." (Footnote)

11. (3092) makes him "shackles": means that God gives him the ability to be the "shackles" or "fetters" for binding the man named Zayd, which is superior power of choice or personal free will (likened to a lasso in the previous line). Nicholson explained in his Commentary: "God creates human free-will and uses it as the means through which His eternal will is manifested and executed. Although the general sense of these verses cannot be misunderstood, their interpretation is difficult owing to the ambiguity of the pronouns, and I do not think that the translation given represents exactly the meaning intended by the poet." Nicholson then gave a correction of his lines (in which he makes a different interpretation: that God makes the captor "His prey"): "But (it is) the action of the Lord (that), without instrumentality, makes his (the free agent's) free-will a noose for him (the free

agent). His (God's) free-will makes Zayd (the object of his choice) a fetter for him (the chooser): (thus) God makes him (the chooser) His prey without (the help of) dog or snare." [From: "... without (using) any instrument, makes his free-will a noose for him (to catch Zayd). His (God's) free-will makes him a fetter for Zayd: God mak
es him (Zayd's captor) His prey without (the help of) dog or snare."]

12. (3095) prostrating like a slave to His Free Will: refers to the posture of the humble worshipper who is prostrate [sâjid] with head and hands on the ground before Almighty God in the Islamic ritual prayer.

13. (3096) your power of struggle over inanimate objects: as the carpenter and blacksmith struggle to impose their power over wood and iron, respectively.

14. (3097) He does not deny: Nicholson translated, "His (God's) power over (our) acts of free-will does not deprive any act of free-will of that (quality)."

15. (3098) error: means that the Divine Will does not exercise too much or too little control over human actions. For if absolute compulsion was ordained, there would be no freedom of choice at all, and if absolute freedom was allowed, there would be too little influence of Divine Guidance to help human beings avoid falling into error and sin. Nicholson translated, "Declare that His (God's) will is (exercised) in a complete manner, (but) without there being (involved in it) the attribution (to Him) of compulsion (jabr) and (responsibility for) error (disobedience to His commands)."

16. (3099) it is also your own wish: Rumi here overturns the cynical statement of the person who disbelieves in God (and therefore rejects any responsibility for his actions before God), who says, "God made me an unbeliever, so how can you expect me to act differently?"

17. (3101) the Lord of Mercy: Nicholson translated, "and anger (on account of his disobedience) is worse, especially from the Merciful Lord."

18. (3102) downcast and miserable: Nicholson added, "Literally, 'made abject or sick and sorry (by blows)." (Footnote) (In this line Rumi uses two ancient Indo-European words: ox or bull [gâw] and yoke [yôgh]-- the latter corresponds to the Sanscrit word "yoga".)

19. (3103) helplessly weak and excused: means that the owner of the

ox will not be excused by God for not exercising his free will. Nicholson translated, "wherefore is the owner of the ox (to be held) excusable and infirm?" And he explained in a footnote: "I.e. incapacitated." He also referred to Rumi's earlier verse (line 2970), which he translated: "God hath said, 'There is nothing intolerable (laid) upon the blind' [Qur'an 48:17]: how should the Lord who bestows relief lay upon any one what is intolerable?"

20. (3104) don't make a fool of yourself: literally, "Don't laugh at your moustache." An idiom for making fun of someone's foolish pride.

21. (3106) like a drunkard: as a drunkard may be excused (and not ordered to be whipped) by a judge for being unable to make responsible decisions for his actions.

22. (3107) is swept by the Wine: means that all of existence is experienced as being helplessly drunk from the ecstasy and bliss of God's infinite grace and love.

23. (3108) the drunkard will never act without justice and rightness: means that his actions will be guided and protected by God. Nicholson referred here to Rumi's lines (I: 1463-64), which he translated: "The word 'compulsion' (jabr) made me impatient (uncontrollable) for love's sake, while it confined in (the prison of) compulsion him who is not a lover. This is union with God, and it is not compulsion: this is the shining forth of the moon, this is not a cloud." Nicholson explained: "But mystics, who know God to be Love and themselves one with Him, are not 'compelled'; on the contrary they enjoy the unconstrained rapture (bê-sabrî) of self-abandonment and the perfect freedom of feeling and acting in harmony with the will of their Beloved."

24. (3109) the magicians: refers to the defiance of Pharaoh's magicians, whom he ordered to defeat Moses in a contest. When they saw that Moses defeated them, not by magic, but by the power of God, they said, "We believe in the Lord of (all) the worlds, the Sustaining Lord of Moses and Aaron." (Qur'an 7:121-122) Then, when Pharaoh threatened to crucify them after cutting off their hands and feet, they replied, "Truly, we will be returned to our Lord. And you take revenge on us only because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they came to us. O our Lord! Pour out enduring patience upon us and make us die as surrenderers [muslimîn] (to Your Will)!" (7:125-126)

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3077 ân yakê mê-raft bâlây-é derakht
mê-fashând ân mêwa-râ dozdâna sakht
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SâHib-é bâgh âmad-o goft ay danî
az khodâ sharmê-t kô, che mê-kon-î?

goft az bâgh-é khodâ banda-yé khodâ
gar khwar-ad khormâ ke Haq kard-ash `aTâ

3080 `âmiy-âna che malâmat mê-kon-î
bukhl bar khwân-é khodâwand-é ghanî?

goft ay aybak be-âwar ân rasan
tâ be-gôy-am man jawâb-é bu 'l-Hasan

pas bo-bast-ash sakht ân dam bar derakht
mê-zad ô bar posht-o sâq-ash chôb-é sakht

goft âkhir az khodâ sharmê be-dâr
mê-kosh-î în bê-gonah-râ zâr zâr

goft az chôb-é khodâ în banda-ash
mê-zan-ad bar posht-é dêgar banda khwash

3085 chôb-é Haqq-o posht-o pahlô ân-é ô
man gulâm-o âlat-é farmân-é ô

goft tawba kard-am az jabr ay `ayâr
ikhtiyâr-ast, ikhtiyâr-ast, ikhtiyâr

ikhtiyârât, ikhtiyâr-ash hast kard
ikhtiyâr-ash chûn sowârê zêr-é gard

ikhtiyâr-ash ikhtiyâr-é mâ kon-ad
amr shod bar ikhtiyârê mustanad

Hâkimê bar Sûrat-é bê-ikhtiyâr
hast har makhlûq-râ dar iqtidâr

3090 tâ kash-ad bê-ikhtiyârê Sayd-râ
tâ bar-ad be-g'refta gôsh ô zayd-râ

lêk bê-hêch âlatê Sun`-é Samad
ikhtiyâr-ash-râ kamand-é ô kon-ad

ikhtiyâr-ash zayd-râ qayd-ash kon-ad
bê-sag-o bê-dâm, Haq Sayd-ash kon-ad

ân dorôgar Hâkim-é chôbê bow-ad
w-ân muSawwir Hâkim-é khôbê bow-ad

hast âhan-gar bar âhan qayyimê
hast bannâ ham bar âlat Hâkimê

3095 nâdir în bâsh-ad ke chand-în ikhtiyâr
sâjid andar ikhtiyâr-ash banda-wâr

qudrat-é tô bar jumâdât az nabard
kay jumâdê-râ az ân-hâ nafî kard?

qudrat-ash bar ikhtiyârât ân chon-ân
nafî na-k'n-ad ikhtiyârê-râ az ân

khwâst-ash mê-gôy bar wajh-é kamâl
ke na-bâsh-ad nisbat-é jabr-o Zalâl

chûn-ke goft-î kufr-é man khwâst-é way-ast
khwâst-é khwad-râ nêz ham mê-dân ke hast

3100 z-ân-ke bê-khwâh-é tô khwad kufr-é tô nêst
kufr-é bê-khwâh-ash tanâquZ goftanê-st

amr `âjiz-râ qabîhH-ast-o Zamîm
khashm battar, khâSa az Rabb-é raHîm

gâw gar yôghê na-gîr-ad, mê-zan-and
hêch gawê ke na-parr-ad, shod nezhand?

gâw chûn maZûr na-b'w-ad dar fuZûl
sâHib-é gâw az che ma`Zûr-ast-o dûl?

chûn na-î ranjûr, sar-râ bar ma-band
ikhtiyâr-ast hast, bar sablat ma-khand

3105 jahd kon k-az jâm-é Haq yâb-î nawî
bê-khwad-o bê-ikhtiyâr ân-gah shaw-î

ân-gah ân may-râ bow-ad kul ikhtiyâr
tô shaw-î ma`Zûr-é muTlaq mast-wâr

har-che kôb-î, kofta-yé may bâsh-ad ân
har-che rôb-î, rofta-yé may bâsh-ad ân

kay kon-ad ân mast joz `adl-o Sawâb
ke ze-jâm-é Haq kashîd-ast ô sharâb?

jâdow-ân fir`awn-râ goft-and b-îst
mast-râ parwây-é dast-o pây nêst

3110 dast-o pây-é mâ may-é ân wâHid-ast
dast-é Zâhir sâyah-ast-o kâsid-ast

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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How Ayaz Interceded for the Nobles of the Court of King Mahmood

Mathnawi V: 4085, 4088-4119

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4085 The king[1] made a sign to the old executioner, (meaning):
"Send these detestable misers[2] far from my seat of honor."

. . . . . .

4088 Then (that) causer of love, Ayaz,[3] jumped up (and) hurried to
the throne of the powerful king.

He made a bow[4] and tensed his throat, (saying), "O great king,
by whom the heavens are amazed;

4090 "O phoenix bird,[5] by whom (all) phoenixes have (good)
fortune and (by whom) every generous person has generosity;

"O noble one, (by) whom the noble deeds of the world became
obliterated and hidden in the presence of your abundant generosity;

"O lovely one, whom the red rose saw (and) tore (its) shirt because
of shame--[6]

"By your forgiveness, forgiveness (itself (is) satisfied. Because of
your pardon, the foxes[7] are victorious over the lion.

"Except for your pardon, who has (any) support? Who acts with
fearless insolence in spite of your command?

4095 "The disregard and rude boldness of these offenders is from
the abundance of your overlooking (such actions),[8] O abode of
pardon!"

Disregard and negligence continue to appear because of insolence,

since (only) a respectful attitude may take away disease from the eye.[9]

The sinful negligence and forgetfulness learned (by someone) may become burned (away) by the fire of respect and reverence.

Reverence and awe [of God][10] will give him wakefulness[11] and sharp understanding, (and) negligence and forgetfulness will jump out from his heart.

People do not fall asleep at the time of a raid, so that no one may rob their cloaks.

4100 Since sleep flees because of the fear of (losing a) cloak, the sleep of forgetfulness will never be (compatible) with the fear of (being cut in) the throat.[12]

The verse, "Do not punish (us) if we forget"[13] is evidence that forgetfulness is, in a way, also sinful.

Because he failed to act with complete reverence-- otherwise, forgetfulness would not have brought war [to defeat him].

Even though (this) forgetfulness was necessary and unavoidable, by cultivating the cause (of it), he was free to choose.

Then he showed contempt toward (acts of) reverence, so that forgetfulness, negligence, and error were born.

4105 (It is) like a drunkard[14] who commits crimes, (and then) says, "I was excused because of (what happened to) myself."

(Then someone) says to him, "But the cause, O evil-doer, was from you in escaping that free choice.

"Your lack of self-awareness did not come by itself, you called (for) it; your free choice didn't go (away) by itself, you drove it (away).

"If a drunkenness had come (to you) without your effort, the Cupbearer of the Spirit[15] would have defended your agreement (with God),[16]

"(And) he would have been your supporter and petitioner for (your) pardon. I am the admirer of the mistake of the drunkard of God!"[17]

4110 (Ayaz said), "The forgivenesses of the entire world[18] (are

only) a particle (of dust and) the reflection of your pardon, O you from whom (is) every portion of happiness.

"The forgivenesses (of the entire world all) speak in praise of your pardon, (saying) "'O mankind, show caution!"[19] (For) it has "no equal!"'[20]

"Grant them (their) lives and also do not drive them (away) from yourself, (for) they are your (own) sweet wish, O you (who) drive (your) every wish (to success).

"Be merciful to him who looked at your face.[21] How will he bear bitter separation from you?

"You are speaking about separation and severance. Do whatever you wish, but do not (order) this!

4115 "A hundred thousand bitter deaths twisted sixty times have no resemblance to being separated from your face.

"Keep the bitterness of severance far away from males and from females, O you who are called on for help by wrongdoers!

"To die in hope of union with you is sweet, (but) the bitterness of severance from you is more than (the pain from) fire."

The pagan[22] is saying in the midst of Hell, "What sorrow would there be (for me) if He looked at me (with forgiveness)?"

4119 Because that look makes all sufferings (to become) sweet; it is the blood-price[23] for (the loss of) the hands and feet of the magicians (of Pharaoh).[24]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 12/9/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4085) The king: refers Mahmood of Ghazna. There are a number of stories in the Mathnawi about this king and his favorite slave, Ayaz, in which Ayaz symbolizes a sufi dervish saint and the king symbolizes Almighty God. Ayaz was made the king's vizier (or prime minister). In Islamic cultures, it was common for favorite slaves to be given positions of power and influence. "In the

allegorical interpretation of this Story the King is God, Ayáz the Perfect Man who intercedes for sinners on the Day of Judgement, and the 'ancient executioner' the Angel of Divine punishment (malaku 'l-`adháb)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (4085) these detestable misers: earlier in the story, the king tested some of the nobles of his court by ordering them to smash a precious pearl, which they refused to do. But the king's favorite slave, Ayaz, smashed the pearl without hesitation. The king then wanted to punish the nobles for showing contempt toward the act of respect which he expected from them.

3. (4088) (that) causer of love, Ayaz: literally, "increaser of love." Ayaz symbolizes the lover of God, who by his saintly humility and purity of devotion, evokes love and forgiveness from the Beloved, and Source of Love, God Most High.

4. (4089) he made a bow: a prostration [sajda] of obeisance and respect made to kings. It was understood by the Muslims of the time to be different from the prostration of worship (of God only) in the ritual prayer.

5. (4090) phoenix bird [homâ]: a metaphor for the cause of good fortune. In pre-Islamic Iran, fortune was conceived as a bird with magical powers which flew about the world. If its shadow fell upon a man, this meant that he would become a king, or at least very fortunate.

6. (4092) because of shame: because the rose felt ashamed of being in the presence of someone who was far more beautiful. The red rose "tore his shirt," refers to the ancient custom of "rending one's garments" during a state of extreme emotions.

7. (4093) the foxes: In Persian literature, foxes are portrayed as the lowly followers of the mighty lion, who sends them to scout for game or to accompany him as his "royal" retinue. There is a story in the Mathnawi of how a fox was able to trick a lion (V: 2870-2877).

8. (4095) your overlooking (such actions): "Cf. II 336 [= "The King's grace makes the soul sin-seeking, because the King makes every foul thing fair"-- translated by Nicholson] and the note ad loc." [= Nicholson quotes from the sufi master Qushayri: "God let them fall into sin when He called Himself forgiving (`afuww)."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (4096) disease from the eye: "I.e. will enable the spiritual eye to see clearly." (Nicholson, footnote)

10. (4098) reverence and awe (of God): this word [haybat], means fear, respect, reverence, awe. "To those who are (willing to be) guided, He increases their guidance and gives them pious fear." (Qur'an 47:17). The term "fear of God" [taqwâ] in Islam does not mean "fear" in the usual sense, but a kind of fear that is an aspect of love. The believer and mystic fears to displease God in any way, out of devout reverence, loving devotion, and awe of the Divine Majesty of God. And due to the longing for nearness and "union," the mystic is especially careful to avoid anything which might lead to separation from God, the Only Beloved. The fear of God is stressed again and again in the Qur'an as a great virtue that leads the believer to act in ways which are pleasing to God.

11. (4098) wakefulness: means awakening from the "sleep" of self-centered preoccupation to the awareness of the overwhelming Reality of God. Muslim saints and mystics are called the "awakened ones" [bêdâr-ân] because they have become "awake" [yaqZân, in Arabic] to God's Presence and Lordship and because they are able to "see" Divine realities which are hidden to those who are "asleep" to God. Rumi says: "Whoever is awake (to the material world) is more asleep (to the spiritual world); his 'wakefulness' is worse than his sleep. When our souls are not awake to God, wakefulness is like our prison bars" -- Mathnawi I: 409-410)

12. (4100) (being cut in) the throat: "I.e. fear of spiritual perdition" [= final spiritual ruin in Hell]. (Nicholson, footnote)

13. (4101) if we forget: a modification (for metrical purposes) of the verse, "(O Lord), do not punish (us) if we forget or (unintentionally) fall into error." --Qur'an 2: 286

14. (4085) like a drunkard: "As a rule, Moslem jurists disallow the plea that an intoxicated person is irresponsible (ma`dhûr) for any crime or offence he may commit." (Nicholson, Commentary)

15. (4108) the Cupbearer of the Spirit [sâqî-yé jân]: refers to spiritual intercession, perhaps by an angel, saint, or the Prophet Muhammad.

16. (4108) the mistake of the drunkard of God: "The case of a 'God-intoxicated' man is quite different." (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (4109) your agreement (with God): means the agreement of a Muslim [literally, "a surrenderer"] to obey the Will of God-- in other words, not to sin. The meaning here is that the wrong actions produced by being overcome by spiritual drunkeness would have

been pardoned.

18. (4110) The forgivenesses of the entire world: Ayaz again intercedes with the king to beg for mercy, which has the additional meaning of the saint's intercession with God. "Though nominally addressed to Sultan Mahmúd, these verses describe and invoke the Divine Mercy which transcends Wrath." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson here referred to the Divine saying (hadîthu 'l-qudSî-- a non-Qur'anic tradition): "Truly My Mercy prevails over My Wrath." And in another form: "My Mercy precedes My Wrath." Rumi says, "His Mercy has preceded (His) Anger so that, by means of Mercy, (mankind) may become fit for being proved. His Mercy has been foremost over (His) Anger, so that the assets of existence may come to hand (for them). For without enjoyment, flesh and skin do not grow; (and) if (they) do grow, what can love for the Beloved consume?!" (Mathnawi III: 4166-4168)

19. (4111) be cautious [ittaqû]: "O mankind, show pious caution toward your Sustaining Lord" (Qur'an 22:1). Since these words are really addressed to God, this verse is abbreviated here to mean here, "O people, be cautious about comparing the King's generosity to the generosity of any other." See note above on "reverence and awe (of God."

20. (4111) it has no equal [nêst kufw-ash]: similarly, Rumi has adapted this from the famous verse, "And there is no [wa lam yakun] one like [kufuw-an] Him" (Qur'an 112:4).

21. (4113) him who looked at your face: "i.e. formerly enjoyed thy favor." (Nicholson, Commentary)

22. (4118) the pagan (gabr): literally, "Zoroastrian," meaning dualist (one who believes that there are two divinities, for good and evil). A term in Persian literature which came to mean any who denies that there is One God who created and rules the universe-- especially dualists, polytheists, and idol-worshippers.

23. (4119) blood-price: the compensation paid to someone who is injured mistakenly, or paid to the family of someone who is killed mistakenly. In Persian poetry it is often used metaphorically in the context of a lover's willingness to be "killed" by his beloved. In sufism, this willingness to lose one's life for the beloved is a symbol for "mystical death."

24. (4119) the magicians (of Pharaoh): After Moses defeated Pharaoh's magicians by means of the power of God manifested through his staff, the magicians "fell down in prostration, saying: 'We believe in the Sustaining Lord of (all) the worlds, the Lord of Moses and

Aaron.' (Then) Pharaoh said, 'Do you believe in him [Moses] before I give you permission?.... Surely I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides...'" The magicians replied, "We are sent back to our Lord.... O our Lord! Give us patience and take us as submitters to Your Will" (Qur'an 7:120-126)

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4185 kard ishârat shah ba-jallâd-é kohon
ke ze-Sadr-am în khas-ân-râ dûr kon

. . . . . .

4188 pas ayâz-é mehr-afzâ bar jahîd
pêsh-é takht-é ân ologh-sulTân dawîd

sajda'yê kard-o golôy-é khwad gereft
k-ây qobâdê k-az tô charkh âr-ad shegeft

4190 ay homâyê ke homây-ân farrakhî
az tô dâr-and-o sakhâwat har sakhî

ay karîmê ke karam-hây-é jahân
maHw gard-ad pêsh-é îSâr-at nehân

ay latîfê ke gol-é sorkh-at be-dîd
az khajâlat pêrahan-râ bar darîd

az ghafûrîy-é tô ghufrân chashm-sêr
rôbah-ân bar shêr az `afw-ê tô chêr

joz ke `afw-é tô ke-râ dâr-ad sanad
har-ke bâ amr-é tô bê-bâkî kon-ad?

4195 ghaflat-o gostâkhî-yê în mujrim-ân
az wufûr-é `afw-é to-st ay `afwalân

dâ'îmâ ghaflat ze-gostâkhî dam-ad
ke bar-ad ta`Zîm az dîda ramad

ghaflat-o nisyân-é bad âmôkhta
z-âtesh-é ta`Zîm gard-ad sôkhta

haybat-ash bîdârî-wo fiTnat deh-ad
sahw-o nisyân az del-ash bêrûn jah-ad

waqt-é ghârat khwâb n-ây-ad khalq-râ
tâ be-na-r'bây-ad kasê z-ô dalq-râ
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khwâb chûn dar mê-ram-ad az bîm-é dalq
khwâb-é nisyân kay bow-ad bâ bîm-é Halq

lâ tû' akhiZ in nasî-nâ shod gowâh
ke bow-ad nisyân ba-wajhê ham gonâh

z-ân-ke istikmâl-ê ta`Zîm ô na-kard
w-ar-na nisyân dar na-y-âward-y nabard

gar-che nisyân lâ-bud-o nâ-châr bow-ad
dar sabab warzîdan ô mukhtâr bow-ad

ke tahâwun kard dar ta`Zîm-hâ
tâ ke nisyân zâd yâ sahw-o khaTâ

hamchô mastê k-ô jinâyat-hâ kon-ad
gôy-ad ô ma`Zûr bûd-am man ze-khwad

gôy-ad-ash lêken sabab ay zasht-kâr
az tô bod dar raftan-é ân ikhtiyâr

bê-khwadî n-âmad ba-khwad, to-sh khwând-î
ikhtiyâr-at khwad na-shod, to-sh rând-î

gar rasîd-y mastî-yê bê jahd-é tô
HafZ kard-y sâqî-yé jân ahd-é tô

posht-dâr-at bûd-y ô-wo `uZr-khwâh
man gulâm-é zallat-é mast-é ilâh

`afw-hây-é jomla `âlam Zarra'yê
`aks-é `afw-at ay ze-tô har bahra'yê

`afw-hâ gofta Sanây-é `afw-é tô
nêst kufw-ash, ayyu-hâ 'n-nâs ittaqû

jân-eshân bakhsh-o ze-khwad-shân ham ma-rân
kâm-é shîrîn-é tow-and, ay kâm-rân

raHm kon bar way ke rôy-é tô be-dîd
furqat-é talkh-é tô chûn khwâh-ad kashîd?

az firâq-o hajr mê-gôy-î sokhon
har-che khwâh-î kon-o lêken în ma-kon

Sad hazâr-ân marg-ê talkh-é shaSt-tô
nêst mânand-é firâq-é rôy-é tô

talkî-yé hajr az Zukûr-o az inâS
dûr dâr ay mujrim-ân-râ mustaghâS

bar omêd-é waSl-é tô mordan khwash-ast
talkhiy-é hajr-é tô fawq-é âtesh-ast

gabr mê-gôy-ad meyân-é ân saqar
che gham-am bûd-y, gar-am kard-y naZar?

4219 k-ân naZar shîrîn konanda-yé ranj-hâ-st
sâHir-ân-râ khûn-bahây-é dast-o pâ-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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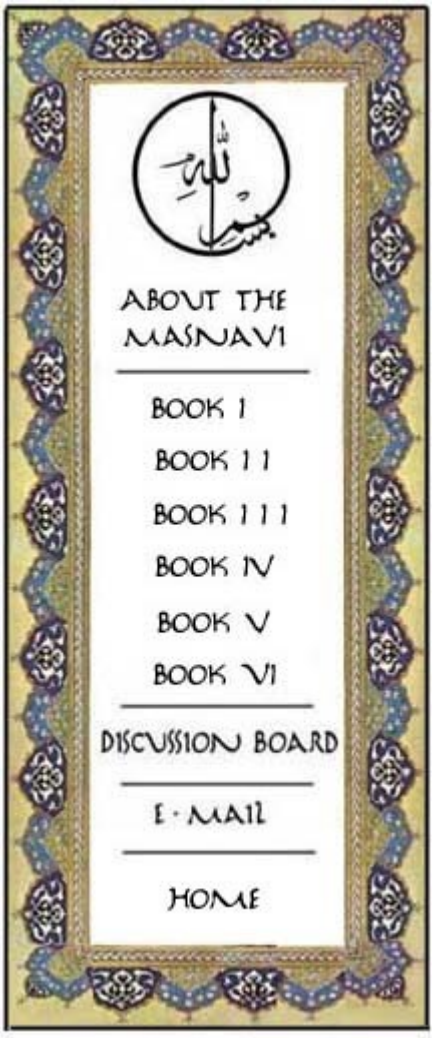

BOOK VI

TRANSLATIONS WITH NICHOLSON'S AND ANQARAVI'S COMMENTARIES

The Source of Our War and Peace (5/02)

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The High Station of Man (part two) (5/01)

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How To Know Another (7/01)

The Source of Our War and Peace

Mathnawi VI: 45-58

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is contrary against another in (its) effect .

Since I am highway-robbing myself[3] every moment, how can I act harmoniously with another person?

Look at the waves of armies of my states -- each one in anger and enmity toward another one.

(So) observe a great battle such as this within yourself (as well). Therefore, why are you occupied with battle against others?

55 Or perhaps [you are helpless and hoping] God may buy you back[4] from (remaining in) this war (and) bring you to the single-colored world of peace.[5]

That World isn't (anything) other than eternal and flourishing, since it isn't intermixed with opposites.

This mutual destruction reaches (every) opposite from (its corresponding) opposite. (But) when there isn't (any) opposite, there is (nothing) except eternity.

58 The One (Who is) without equal has forbidden contraries from Paradise, saying, "There will be no sun nor its opposite, extreme cold, (therein)."[6]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 5/30/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](45) between the two fingers of God: "refers to the Tradition [= Hadîth, or saying of the Prophet Muhammad] qalbu 'l-mu'mini bayna iSba'ayni min aSábi`i 'l-RaHmán, 'the true believer's heart is between two fingers of the Merciful God'. The 'two fingers' are the Divine attributes of Majesty (Jalál) and Beauty (Jamál). According as God reveals Himself in one or other of these aspects, the mystic's heart contracts with grief (qabD) or expands with joy (basT)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

Anqaravi quotes a different form of the Hadîth: "Truly, the hearts of the sons of Adam are between the two fingers among the fingers of the Most Merciful, who turns them however He wills" [yuqallibu-hâ kayfa yashâ']. And he explained: "The commentators

have explained 'the two fingers' as the Severity [qahr] and Kindness [luTf] (of God). (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

[2](51) My own states are opposed to one another: "(It means), for example, 'My happiness is contrary to sorrow and the state of my health is contrary to the state of being sick...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[3](52) Since I am highway-robbing myself: "(It means), 'Every moment I am the robber and enemy of myself. . . and I have not become the master of attending to [what occurs in my own] heart . . . '" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[4](55) God may buy you back: "(It means), 'Or perhaps God Most High will grant you deliverance from this warfare.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[5](55) (and) bring you to the single-colored world of peace: "In other words, 'By means of your own efforts alone you have not become effective in becoming free from this battle. Perhaps God Most High may cause you to be freed from this battle and take you to the peaceful world of unicolority.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[6](58) There will be no sun nor its opposite, extreme cold, (therein): refers to a verse in the Qur'an about the Garden of Paradise, "They will not see therein any sun (with extreme heat) nor extreme cold." (Qur'an 76:13)

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45 jang-é mâ-wo SulH-é mâ dar nûr-é `ayn
nêst az mâ, hast bayna 'iSba`ayn

jang-é Tab`î, jang-é fa`lî, jang-é qawl
dar meyân-é juzw-hâ Harbî-st hawl

în jahân z-în jang qâyim mê-bow-ad
dar `anâSir dar negar tâ Hal shaw-ad

châr `unSar châr ostûn-é qawî-st
ke ba-d-êshân saqf-é dunyâ mustawî-st

har sotûnê ashkananda-yé ân degar
oston-é âb askkananda-yé ân sharar

50 pas binây-é khalq bar iZdâd bûd
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

lâ-jaram mâ jang-iy-êm az Zarr-o sûd

hast aHwâl-am khilâf-é ham-degar
har yakê bâ-ham mukhâlif dar aSar

chûn-ke har dam râh-é khwad-râ mê-zan-am
bâ degar kas sâz-garî chûn kon-am

mawj-é lashkar-hâ-yé aHwâl-am be-bîn
har yakê bâ dêgarê dar jang-o kîn

me-negar dar khwad chon-în jang-é gerân
pas che mashghûl-î ba-jang-é dêgar-ân?

55 yâ magar z-în jang Haqq-at wâ-khar-ad
dar jahân-é SulH-é yak-rang-at bar-ad

ân jahân joz bâqî-wo âbâd nêst
z-ân-ke ân tarkîb az iZdâd nêst

în tafânî az Zidây-ad Zidd-râ
chûn na-bâsh-ad Zidd, na-b'w-ad joz baqâ

58 nafiy-é Zid kard az behesht ân bê-naZîr
ke na-bâsh-ad shams-o Zidd-ash zamharîr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The High Station of Man (part one)

Mathnawi VI: 129-140

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The inquiry of a questioner about a bird which was (assumed to be) seated on top of the walls of a city: "Is its head more excellent, venerable, noble, and honored-- or its tail?" And the preacher's giving a reply to the questioner (in accordance) with the extent of his understanding.[1]

129 One day a questioner said to a preacher: "O (you who are) the most sublime speaker of the pulpit,[2]

130 "There is one question of mine. Tell (me) the answer to
my question in this gathering, O (you who are) endowed with
pure intelligence![3]

"A bird sat on the fortified walls (of a city).
Regarding its head and tail, which of these is better?"

"(The preacher) replied, "If its face is toward the city
and (its) tail toward the (outer) countryside,[4] know that
its face (is) better than its tail.

"But if (its) tail is toward the city (and) its face
toward the (outer) countryside, (then) be the dust on that
(bird's) tail and leap away from its face."[5]

The bird flies to (its) nest with (its) wings. (But) the
wings of mankind, O people, are (spiritual) aspiration.[6]

135 (In regard to) a lover (of God) who has become tainted
by good and evil, don't look at (his) good and evil (but)
see (his spiritual) aspiration.[7]

Even though a (royal) falcon is (pure) white and without
equal, it is contemptible if its prey is a (lowly) mouse.[8]

But if there is an (ugly) owl, and its longing (is)
toward the King, it (possessed of) the falcon's head[9]-- (so)
don't look at the hood.[10]

Mankind, with the (physical) stature of a (mere) basin
(for kneading) dough[11] has increased [in its spiritual
aspiration] beyond the (seven) heavens and the ether.[12]

The heavens never heard (the Divine words), "We have
honored (the children of Adam)"[13] which this humanity (so)
full of sorrow has heard.

140 Did anyone [else] offer beauty, intelligence, meaningful
words, and desire to the heavens and the earth?[14]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),5/17/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) (in accordance) with the extent of his understanding: refers to a saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "Speak to people in accordance with the amount of their understanding" [kallimi 'n-nâsa `alà qadri `uqûli-him].
2. (129) O (you who are) the most sublime speaker of the pulpit: "It means, 'You are the preacher who is the best of the preachers in admonishing and explaining clearly. And you make every question understood by the listener with an excellent explanation.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (130) O (you who are) endowed with pure intelligence: Nicholson translated, "O possessor of the marrow (of wisdom)." "It means, 'O possessor of intelligence and wisdom.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (132) toward the (outer) countryside: Nicholson translated, "to the country." Apparently the reference is to the villages outside of the protective walls of a city. For Rumi, village life symbolizes sensuality and ignorance while city life symbolizes spiritual advancement and refinement.

Nicholson referred to Rumi's lines (which he translated), "Do not go to the country [deh]: the country makes a fool of a man, it makes the intellect void of light and splendour. O chosen one, hear the Prophet's saying: 'To dwell in the country is the grave of the intellect' If any one stay in the country a single day and evening, his intellect will not be fully restored for a month. For a (whole) month foolishness will abide with him: what but these things should he reap from the parched herbage of the country? And he that stays a month in the country, ignorance and blindness will be his (lot) for a long time. What is 'the country'? The Shaykh [= spiritual master] that has not been united (with God), but has become addicted to conventionality and argument. Compared with the town, (which is) Universal Reason, these senses (of ours) are like asses (going round and round) in an ass-mill with their eyes bandaged." (III: 517-523) Nicholson quoted (in Arabic) this saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: "al-tawattun fí 'l-qurá qabr-un li-'l-nuhá" [= The habitual living in villages is the grave of intelligence]. (Commentary)

5. (133) (then) be the dust on that (bird's) tail and leap away from its face: "i.e. 'follow devotedly any one who in

spirit (reality) is travelling towards the Truth, though in the body (superficially) he is turned the opposite way'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"In this speech, the intended meaning of 'tail' is the body, and the intended meaning of 'face' is resolved aim and aspiration. If you see that someone's intention and aspiration (is) away from worldly people and toward the 'city of Truth,' and you have witnessed that his inclination and love (is) for the people on the path of spiritual realization [aSHâb-é Tarîqat-é ma`rifat], his purpose and determination are more noble and excellent than his body.... But if his attention is toward the world and toward worldly people, his body is more noble and excellent than his aim and aspiration." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (134) the wings of mankind, O people, are (spiritual) aspiration: Nicholson referred to similar verses (which he translated), "Do not regard thy ugly or beauteous form; regard Love and the object of thy search. Do not regard the fact that thou art despicable or infirm; look upon thy aspiration, O noble one. In whatsoever state thou be, keep searching; O thou with dry lip, always be seeking the water." (III: 1437-1439)

"In a similar way that the bird flies with wings and feathers, mankind possessed of desire also flies with the wings and feathers of aspiration and intention. And... they arrive to the nest of Origin and the station of Union." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (135) (but) see (his spiritual) aspiration: As the Prophet Muhammad said, "Truly, the actions (of a person) are (judged by God) according to the intentions [an-niyyat]." Just prior to this section, Rumi had said (as translated by Nicholson), "Yet all these (evil) qualities of theirs may become good: evil does not remain when it turns to seeking good. If egoism is foul smelling like semen, (yet) when it attains unto the spirit (spirituality) it gains light. Every mineral that sets its face towards (aspires to evolve into) the plant (the vegetative state)-- life grows from the tree of its fortune. Every plant that turns its face towards the (animal) spirit drinks, like [= the mysterious prophet] Khizr, from the fountain of [= Eternal] Life. Once more, when the (animal) spirit sets its face towards the (Divine) beloved, it lays down its baggage (and passes) into the life without end." (VI: 124-128)

"(It means), 'Any lover whose aspiration is directed toward the Presence of God, one cannot maintain an opinion (about his) worth and value-- for his sake. (For) if his intention is lofty, but his (outward) form is soiled with good and bad, he will not be made to attain a lowly rank of harm and loss (as) his (final) dwelling." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (136) it is contemptible if its prey is a (lowly) mouse: The meaning is that a trained royal falcon of the king should bring back a worthy prey for the king. "It means, 'If someone is like an incomparable white falcon and (is) the accepted and beloved one of the king of the world; and if his quarry and prey is a contemptible mouse of the world and the worldly realm; necessarily, he is also lowly and contemptible.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (137) it (possessed of) the falcon's head: Nicholson translated, "it is (noble as) the falcon's head." "But if his form and dwelling is lowly and contemptible, yet his aspiration is lofty and noble, he is... a person of high worth." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (137) don't look at the hood: "I.e. the bodily form which masks its spiritual nature." (Nicholson, Footnote)

11. (138) a (mere) basin (for kneading) dough: Nicholson translated, "a kneading-trough (scooped in a log)." "The intended meaning of the expression (is)... a wooden tray specially designed for dough, the depth of which is more than (that) of a tray." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (138) beyond the (seven) heavens and the ether: Nicholson translated, "Man... has surpassed (in glory) the heavens and the aether (the empyrean)." According to ancient astronomy, beyond earth, water, air, and fire was a substance called ether which extended to the highest heavens, filling all space in between.

13. (139) (the Divine words), "We have honored (the children of Adam)": refers to a verse from the Qur'an in which God speaks in the "plural of majesty": "And We have surely honored the children of Adam. And We have caused them to be carried (on transport) on the earth and sea, given them provision of pure and good things, and have greatly favored them above most of what We have created" (17:70). This describes the original state of mankind before the Fall into forgetfulness of God and of spiritual realities. This verse

is also understood to allude to the human qualities (such as reason, judgment between good and evil, and yearning and aspiration) which animals lack and which make mankind (potentially) superior to the angels.

"According to this meaning, it becomes known that (in regard to) being large and possessed of magnificent form and shape, (Man) lacks weight and value. But he is (worthy) in view of intelligence, spiritual realization [ma`rifat], knowledge, and virtue of character [Husn-é sîrat]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (140) to the heavens and the earth: Nicholson translated, "Did any one offer to earth and sky (his) beauty and reason and eloquence and fond affection?" These refer to human qualities which the rest of creation lack. It is also a reference to the verse: "Certainly We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains but they refused to bear it, being afraid of it. But mankind bore it. Truly, he tends to be unjust and foolish." (Qur'an 33:72). The Trust [al-amânat] is generally interpreted to mean intelligence, free-will, and (especially) the responsibility to choose between good and evil.

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sû'âl-é sâyil az morghê ke bar sar-é rabaZ-é shahrê neshasta bâsh-ad sar-é ô fâZl-tar-ast wa `azîz-tar wa sharîf-tar wa mukarram-tar yâ dom-é ô? wa jawâb-dâdan-é wâ`iZ sâyil-râ ba-qadr-é fahm-é ô

129 wâ`iZê-râ goft rôzê sâyilê
k-ay tô munbar-râ sanî-tar qâyil-î

130 yak sû'al-ast-am, be-gô ay Zû lubâb
andar-în majlis sû'âl-am-râ jawâb

bar sar-é bârû yakê morghê neshast
az sar-o az dom kodâm-în-ash beh-ast?

goft agar rôy-ash ba-shahr-o dom ba-deh
rôy-é ô az domm-é ô mê-dân ke beh

w-ar sôy-é shahr-ast dom, rôy-ash ba-deh
khâk-é ân dom bâsh-o az rôy-ash be-jeh

morgh bâ par mê-par-ad tâ âshyân
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

parr-é mardom himmat-ast, ay mardom-ân

135 `âshiqê k-âlûd shod dar khayr-o shar
khayr-o shar ma-n'gar, tô dar himmat negar

bâz agar bâsh-ad sapîd-o bê-naZîr
chûn-ke Sayd-ash môsh bâsh-ad, shod Haqîr

w-ar bow-ad choghdê-wo mayl-é ô ba-shâh
ô sar-é bâz-ast, ma-n'gar dar kolâh

âdamî bar qadd-é yak Tasht-é khamîr
bar fozûd az âsmân-o az aSîr

hêch karram-nâ shenîd în âsmân
ke shenîd în âdamîy-é por-gham-ân

140 bar zamîn-o charkh `arZa kard kas
khôbî-wo `aql-o `ibârât-o hawas?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The High Station of Man (part two)

Mathnawi VI: 145, 148-162

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145 (If) you won't say [what painted forms lack], I will tell (you) clearly: reason, sense, prudent planning, and soul.

. . . . . .

148 What is soul? (It is) being aware of (the difference between) good and evil, happiness with virtue and benevolence, and weeping because of harm and loss.

Since the (quality of) inwardness is the secret and essence of the soul,[1] whoever is more aware is more possessed of soul.[2]

150 Awareness is (due to) the influence of the spirit: whoever has more of this belongs to God.[3]

Since there are awarenesses beyond this (bodily) nature,[4] these (sensual) souls (of ours) are (like) solid minerals in that (Divine) arena.

The first soul is the manifestation of the (outward) Court (of God),[5] (whereas) the Soul of the soul is the very manifestation of God.[6]

The angels were the whole intelligence and spirit [in the creation]; (but then) a new spirit came[7] (for) which they were its body.[8]

When they inclined to that spirit (of Adam), due to (their) good fortune, they became servants for that spirit, like the body.[9]

155 (But) because Satan[10] had drawn (his) head away[11] from (that) spirit,[12] he did not become one with (that) spirit-- for he was (like) a dead limb.

Since he was not (one) with it, he did not become a (devoted) sacrifice for it.[13] A broken hand isn't submissive to the spirit.[14]

(However), even if its "limb" is broken, the spirit is not defective,[15] since (the limb) is in its power[16] [in that) it can bring (it back) into being.[17]

There is another secret. (But) where is another ear (suitable to hear it)?[18] Where is a parrot ready for that sugar?[19]

For special parrots there is a (kind of) sugar (which is) deep and profound. (But) the eyelids of common parrots (are) closed from (the sight of) that (flavorful) food.[20]

160 A dervish (only) in appearance will never taste of that pure (sustenance), (for) it is spiritual meaning, not (the external) meters (of poetry).[21]

Sugar was not withheld from the donkey of Jesus,[22] but the donkey was choosing straw by (its) nature.

162 (For) if sugar had provoked joy for the donkey, he would have poured a large weight of sugar in front of (his) donkey.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of

Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),5/24/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (149) Since the (quality of) inwardness is the secret and essence of the soul: Nicholson translated, "Since consciousness is the inmost nature and essence of the soul..." The term Nicholson translated as "consciousness" [makhbar] also means knowledge derived from evidence, inwardness, interior, and the real inner state. According to a glossary of terms in the Mathnawi (Gôharîn's "Lughât wa Ta`bîrât-é Masnavî", volume 8, p. 256, where he cites this line) it means, "Something inward, the opposite of outward." The term Nicholson translated as "inmost nature" [sir = sirr], also means "secret" and "inmost consciousness."

"(The term) 'makhbar' has the meaning of the knowledge of a thing [khubrat], and 'khubrat' is said (to mean) knowledge and awareness. It means, 'Since the secret and essence of the soul is knowledge and awareness, whoever is more awake and vigilant [mutanabbih] and aware is more possessed of soul-- just like someone whose spirit is strong and knowledgeable. (Since) the influence of the spirit is (shown) by awareness, whoever is not aware lacks the influence of the spirit." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

2. (149) whoever is more aware is more possessed of soul: Nicholson translated, "the more aware one is the more spiritual he is." 3. (150) belongs to God [allâhî]: Nicholson translated, "a man of God."

4. (151) there are awarenesses beyond this (bodily) nature: "It means, 'There are greater (realms of) knowledge and secrets beyond the awareness and knowledge which are (discernible) in this (bodily) nature." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (152) The first soul is the manifestation of the (outward) Court (of God): "I.e. the unregenerate soul belongs to the phenomenal world." (Nicholson, Footnote) "i.e. the rudimentary ('animal' or 'intelligential') soul that has not yet attained to real knowledge of God (ma`rifah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (152) the Soul of the soul is the very manifestation of God: Nicholson translated, "the Soul of the soul is verily the theatre of (Himself)." And he explained: "I.e. the soul of the perfect man is the mirror of the Divine Essence." (Footnote) "i.e. the transcendental 'prophetic' soul, which is the mirror of God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The intended meaning of 'the first soul' is a soul which has no knowledge or awareness. And the intended meaning of 'the soul of the soul' is the knowing and aware soul. A soul which lacks knowledge and awareness is the place for the manifestation of God Most High. In other words, it remains in the station of worship and service (to God). But the soul of the soul is a human being who has knowledge and spiritual realization [`irfân]; who has become the manifestation and mirror of the Names of God; who is the gathering place of all (Divine) attributes; and who has become His representative [khalîfa]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (153) a new spirit came: "The spirit of Adam." (Nicholson, Footnote) "i.e. the spirit of Adam. All powers in heaven and earth are subject to the Perfect Man [= a term used in the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi (died, 1240), which means the saint who reflects all the Names of God]: their relation to him is that of body to its spirit.... Pure though the angels were, they paid homage to the Divine glory revealed in Adam." (Nicholson, Commentary)

Nicholson later changed his translation of this line, to "...(but) there came a new Spirit of which they were the body" (from, "...(till) there came a new Spirit...").

8. (153) (for) which they were its body: "I.e. to which they [= the angels] were subordinate." (Nicholson, Footnote)

9. (154) they became servants for that spirit, like the body: Nicholson translated, "they became subservient to that Spirit, as the body (is subservient to the spirit dwelling in it)." This is a sufi interpretation of the Qur'anic story of how the angels were commanded by God to bow to Adam (in obeisance, not worship) after God told Adam to tell the angels "the names of everything," which He had taught him--which the angels did not know. But Iblîs (meaning Satan) "refused and was arrogant, and he was among the rejectors (of true faith)." (Qur'an 2:30-34) According to the sufi interpretation, these "names" were the Names of God. And according to the Ibnu 'l-`Arabi school of sufism, which both Nicholson and Anqaravi use (often excessively) to

interpret Rumi, the angels manifest only some of the Names, but the Perfect Man (or completed Saint of God) contains all of them. Ibnu 'l-`Arabi (died, 1240) wrote that in relation to the macrocosmic "Great Man" [al-insânu 'l-kabîr], angels are as the "faculties" or "powers" [quwwat] for it (FuSûsu l-Hakîm, chapter on Adam). Rumi refers to the story of Adam and the angels in a number of places (such as I:2647-2669).

"It means that those angels, who bowed (in obeisance) to Hazrat-i Adam, were entirely intelligence and spirit, but they had no knowledge or spiritual insight [ma`rifat] [= of specifics]. Then after that new spirit... came, those angels... became (as) the rank of the body for that new spirit." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (155) Satan: literally, "balîs." This is a contraction of "Iblis," one of the names of Satan (together with "Shaytân") in the Qur'an.

11. (155) had drawn (his) head away: an idiom meaning "to turn away," based on how a horse turns to a new direction when the rider draws its head to face that way.

12. (155) from (that) spirit: Nicholson translated, "from the Spirit..."

13. (156) he did not become a (devoted) sacrifice for it: Nicholson translated, "since he had it not, he did not become devoted to it." Offering oneself as a sacrifice or ransom for someone is an idiom expressing devotion and faithfulness.

14. (156) A broken hand isn't submissive to the spirit: "Satan [Iblîs] also was like a broken hand or dead limb, from the perspective that he did not receive life from the Divine Spirit [rûH-é ilâhî = Adam, into whom God breathed of His spirit (Qur'an 15:29)]. But the angels, which were like living limbs, received the influence of the pure things of the Divine Spirit and found new life." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (157) the spirit is not defective: "The intended meaning of 'spirit' in this place is Hazrat-i Adam. And the intended meaning of 'limb' is Satan [Iblîs]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (157) in its power [ba-dast-é ô]: literally, "in his hand." An idiom meaning in his control, power. This is a play on "broken hand" [dast-é be-sh'kasta] in the previous

line.

17. (157) it can bring (it back) into being: Nicholson translated, "it can bring it to life." And he explained: "The Perfect man, acting as God's Khalífah [= representative (Qur'an 2:30)], can re-unite with himself those who are severed from him by infidelity and sin: cf. Qur. XXXII 13: wa-law shi'ná la-átayná kulla nafs-in hudáhá [= "And if We had willed, We could have given every soul its right guidance"]..." (Commentary)

"Likewise, (since Man) is His representative [khalîfa], he is also capable. Regarding Satan, who is like a broken limb, he could make him living, honest and true, and rightly guided by means of his (Divinely given) will and power-- (as) by those words of God to his Prophet [= Muhammad]: 'and truly you guide (them) to the Straight Path' [Qur'an 42:52]." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (158) where is another ear (suitable to hear it): "(It means), 'Because that secret may be heard (only) by the "ear of the soul." And it may be understood by means of (spiritual) "savor" [Zawq] and (spiritual) ecstasy.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

19 (158) Where is a parrot ready for that sugar: Nicholson translated, "Where is a parrot capable of (eating) that sugar?" The sugar-eating parrot is a common image in Rumi's poetry. Sugar was used as a reward to train parrots to talk. In his poetry, birds often symbolize the spirit. Here he is saying that it is a rare person who is able to "taste" the spiritual delights of this mystical secret.

"(It means), 'Where is that "parrot" who is worthy and capable (of consuming) the sugar of deep spiritual meaning [ma`nâ]?'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (159) the eyelids of common parrots (are) closed from (the sight of) that (flavorful) food: "That sugar of deep meaning, which the elect of the elect of the knowers (of God) are tasting, the parrots with bound eyes cannot see and are not able to gain the (spiritual) pleasure and delight of it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (160) not (the external) meters (of poetry): literally, "not fa`ûlun fâ`ilât." These are metrical sections of poetry. Rumi is speaking of what is inward, such as the

inner meaning of spiritual verses-- in contrast to their outward form of meter and rhyme. "And absolutely, that secret and deep meaning will not be understood by reciting poetry and verses, by understanding the meaning of those verses, and using those phrases. The (necessary) condition for gaining the spiritual delight of that pure meaning is being a real dervish [darwêsh-é ma`nawî] and obtaining (spiritual) capacity." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

22. (161) the donkey of Jesus: Nicholson referred to his note on Mathnawi II: 1859, "Jesus mounted on the ass (cf. St Matthew xxi) represents the connexion of the spirit (rúh) with the carnal soul (nafs)." (Commentary)

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145 tô na-gôy-î, man be-gôy-am dar bayân
`aql-o Hiss-o dark-o tadbîr-ast-o jân

. . . . . .

148 jân che bâsh-ad bâ-khabar az khayr-o shar
shâd bâ iHsân-o geryân az Zarar

chûn sir-o mâhiyyat-é jân makhbar-ast
har ke ô âgâh-tar bâ-jân-tar-ast

150 rûH-râ ta'Sîr âghâhî bow-ad
har ke-râ în bêsh allâhî bow-ad

chûn khabar-hâ hast bêrûn z-în nehâd
bâsh-ad în jân-hâ dar ân maydân jamâd

jân-é awwal maZhar-é dargâh shod
jân-é jân khwad maZhar-é allâh shod

ân malâyik jumla `aql-o jân bod-and
jân-é naw âmad ke jism-é ân bod-and

az sa`âdat chûn ba ân jân bar zad-and
ham-chô tan ân rûH-râ khâdim shod-and

155 ân balîs az jân az ân sar borda bûd
yak na-shod bâ jân ke `uZw-é morda bûd

chûn na-bûd-ash ân, fidây-é ân na-shod
dast-é be-sh'kasta muTî`-é jân na-shod
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

jân na-shod nâqiS gar ân `uZw-ash shekast
k-ân ba-dast-é ô-st, tawân-ad kard hast

sirr-é dêgar hast kû gôsh-é degar
Tûtiyê kû musta`idd-é ân shakar?

TûTiy-ân-é khâS-râ qandê-st zharf
TûTiy-ân-é `âm az ân khwor basta Tarf

160 kay chash-ad darwêsh-é Sûrat z-ân zakât?
ma`niy-ast ân, na fa`ûlun fâ`ilât

az khar-é `îsà darêgh-ash nêst qand
lêk khar âmad ba-khilqat kah pasand

162 qand khar-râ gar Tarab angêkhty
pêsh-é khar qinTâr-shakkar rêkhty

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The High Station of Man (part three)

Mathnawi VI: 163-182

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163 (This is) the meaning of (the verse), "We will set a seal on their mouths."[1] (And) this understanding is important for the wayfarer (on the spiritual path),

So that by (following) the path of the Seal of the Prophets,[2] the heavy restraints might perhaps be raised from his lips.[3]

165 Any seals which the prophets (of the past) left have been taken off by the religion of Muhammad.[4]

The locks (which) had remained unopened were opened up by the hand of (the verse), "Truly We have opened (for you)."[5]

(Muhammad) is the intercessor for this world and the next world[6]-- (in) this world for[7] religion, and there for the Gardens (of Paradise).[8]

(In) this world,[9] he says (the prayer), "May You show them the way!" And in that world he says, "May you show them the moon!"[10]

It was his custom in (public) appearance and in secret (to pray), "Guide my people, for they do not know (the way)."[11]

170 The gates of both (this world and the next) are opened by means of his (interceding) words.[12] (And) his prayer is answered in both worlds.

(It is) for this reason (that) he has been the Seal (of the Prophets): that, in regard to great generosity, there are no (people) like him-- and there never will be.

When a master excels in an art or craft, do you not say, "The art is sealed on account of you"?[13]

(O Muhammad), in the opening of seals, you are the Seal.[14] (And) in the world of givers of the spirit,[15] you are a Hatim (of generosity).[16]

The intended meaning[17] (here) is (that) the indications (given by) Muhammad (are) entirely a wide opening [of Divine wisdom] within an opening within an opening.[18]

175 (May) a hundred thousand praises (be) upon his soul (and) on the arrival and cycle of his sons![19]

Those good-fortuned sons of his successors[20] are born from the original root of his soul and heart.

Whether they are from Baghdad, Herat, or Rayy,[21] they are his descendents without [need of] mixture of water and clay.[22]

Wherever the (grafted) rose branch grows, it is the same rose (bush);[23] wherever the jar of wine ferments, it is (from) the same (batch of) wine.

Even if the sun raises (its) head from the West,[24] it is the (same) identical sun, not something else.

180 O (our) Creator, keep the collectors of (people's) faults blind to these (profound) words[25] with Your Veiling![26]

God said (in response to my prayer),[27] "I have bound the

eyes of the bat of evil qualities from (being able to see)
the incomparable sun.

182 "(And) the stars of that sun are also hidden from the
covered and damaged eyes of the bat."[28]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),5/31/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (163) "We will set a seal on their mouths": "Qur. XXXVI
65, where these words refer to infidels unable to deny their
guilt on the Day of Judgement. Rúmí, however, is thinking of
hearts that are closed against reception of the Truth in the
present life." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (164) Seal of the Prophets: the Prophet Muhammad was
called by God the Seal of the Prophets [khâtamu 'n-nabiyîn]
in the Qur'an (33:40). This means that he was the last of
the series of Prophets (such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and
Jesus) prior to the Day of Judgment.

3. (164) the heavy restraints might perhaps be raised from
his lips: "(It means), 'Perhaps the heavy locks may be
lifted from their mouths, the lips of their souls may become
opened, they may eat the morsels of (spiritual) knowledge
and (mystical) understanding [`irfân], and they may fill
themselves with the foods of (spiritual) faith and
certainty.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th Century Turkish
commentator, translated here into English from a Persian
translation)

4. (165) the religion of Muhammad [dîn-é aHmadî]:
literally, the "Ahmadi religion." The name "Ahmad" is a
contraction of "Muhammad" and always refers to the Prophet
Muhammad. The terms "Muhammadan faith" and
"Muhammadans" (which parallel "Christianity" and "Christians")
were originated by Western authors and are offensive to Muslims
(because it implies worship of Muhammad). They use the
Qur'anic terms "Islam" ("submission to God") for the
religion and "Muslims" (surrenderers to the Will of God")
for themselves (and not "Moslems," a spelling that tends to
be pronounced by Westerners as "Mozlems"-- which is too

close to the Arabic word "muZlim" which means "dark," "disastrous"). Also, Islam was never understood by Muslims to be a new religion, "founded" or started by Muhammad-- but rather (as the Qur'an states) as a clarification of the essentials of the same Revelation given to the prophets of the past (such as Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus).

5. (166) "Truly We have opened (for you)": Qur'an 48:1, "Truly we have opened for you (O Muhammad) a clear victory." The historical significance of this verse is that it referred to the important Treaty of Hudaybiya, in which the polytheistic Arab tribes gave formal recognition to the Muslims as viable power. It opened the way to the conquest of Mecca two years later, to the spread of Islam throughout Arabia soon afterwards, and to the rest of the world. "And the spiritual 'opening' (is) the unveiling of (branches of spiritual) knowledge, mystical understanding [`irfân] and hidden secrets, and is like the 'opening' of the spiritual world." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (167) (Muhammad) is the intercessor for this world and the next world: refers to the belief of Muslims that the Prophet may intercede on their behalf with God (and with His permission). For example, as in the verse, "The Prophet... is a mercy to those among you who believe" (Qur'an 9:61). And the Prophet often made the intercessionary prayer, "O God guide my people, for truly they do not know (the right way)" [allâhumma ihdi qawm-î fa-inna-hum lâ ya`lamûn]. The belief that the Prophet will intercede for Muslims on the Day of Judgment is general, but the belief that he may intercede for believers in this world by their resorting to his spirit as a means [tawassul] is nowadays considered controversial. There are verses in the Qur'an which refer to intercession [shifâ`at] and "means of nearness" [tawassul) to God. For example, "O you who believe! Be conscious of God and seek a means of nearness to Him..." (Qur'an 5:38). "No one will possess (the power of) intercession (on the Last Day) except the one who has made a covenant with the Most Merciful" (Qur'an 19:87).

7. (167) for [zî]: Anqaravi explained that this word is a contraction of "zây" and "has the meaning of 'toward' [jânib]." (Commentary)

8. (167) (in) this world for religion and there for the Gardens (of Paradise): Nicholson translated, "in this world (for guidance) to the (true) religion, and yonder (for entrance) to Paradise."

9. (168) (In) this world: "For ín jahân = dar ín jahân [= "this world" equals "in this world"], cf. III 3468." (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (168) in that world he says, "May you show them the moon: "And in that world he says, 'O God, reveal to this people (of mine) the (full) moon of Your Beauty, so that they may see Your Beauty, which is like a shining moon, and so that they may contemplate You (directly).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (169) Guide my people, for they do not know (the way): see note on line 167.

12. (170) by means of his (interceding) words: Nicholson translated more literally, "By his breath (powerful intercession)..." "It means, 'By the problem-solving breath [or words] of that chief of the prophets, the doors of (true) religion [dîn] and virtue [diyânat] in this world, and the doors of (Divine) mercy and forgiveness and Paradise in the next world may be opened.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (172) The art is sealed on account of you: "I.e. ' has been brought by thee to the highest possible perfection." (Nicholson, Footnote) "It means by the analogy: if a master, perfect in (his) craft has gained superiority and precedence over all other masters..."

14. (173) you are the Seal: means the foremost of the Prophets (as well as the last Prophet) sent by God. See note on line 164.

15. (173) in the world of givers of the spirit: Nicholson translated, "the givers of spiritual life." And he explained: "The prophets and saints." (Footnote)

16. (173) a Hatim (of generosity): "i.e. the most bounteous. The generosity of Hátim of Tayy is proverbial." (Nicholson, Footnote) "In this passage... it has the meaning of (great) generosity and beneficence." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (174) The intended meaning: [al-murâd]: "= al-hasil, 'to sum up'. Cf. I 659, II 3690." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (174) a wide opening [of Divine wisdom] within an opening within an opening: Nicholson translated, "revelation within revelation within revelation." The term here

[goshâd], literally means opening, wide, spacious; happiness; victory. But here it corresponds to an Arabic phrase, the "opening of the breast" which is interpreted to mean being illuminated with the vastness of wisdom (as in Qur'an 94:1; 6:126).

19. (175) and cycle of his sons: "(It means), 'And on the times (and generations) of his revered and excellent sons.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

20. (176) Those good-fortuned sons of his successors: Nicholson translated, "those fortunate Caliph-born sons of his." The word he translated as "Caliph" [khalîfa] literally means "successor." Generally it is used to refer to the primary ruler of the Islamic world, but here it has a more spiritual meaning: "These verses refer to the Moslem saints, the Faithful par excellence, who are spiritual children of the Prophet, according to the Hadíth ana min Núri 'lláhi wa-'l-mu'minnúna minní." [= I am from the Light of God, and the true believers are from me]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The intended meaning of 'Caliph-born sons' is the 'sons' of the most noble Messenger-- may the blessings and peace of God be upon him, such as the sons of Abu Bakr and the sons of his sons; the sons of `Umar and the sons of his sons; the sons of `Uthmân and the sons of his sons; and the sons of `Alî from Fâtima [= the Prophet's daughter] and the rest of his sons..." (Anqaravi, Commentary) The above are called the "Rightly Guided Caliphs" in Sunni Islam, who were the first five successors of the Prophet. Anqaravi also quoted a saying of the Prophet (transmitted by the early sufi master, Hasan al-Basra): "'The mercy of God is upon my successors.' They said, 'From among your successors, O Prophet?' He said, peace be upon him, 'Those who love my way of conduct [sunnat] and know the servants of God.'"

"Therefore, in consequence of this noble saying, any saint is his [= the Prophet's] successor, and any learned scholar also who revives the Prophet's way of conduct... In the same way, the noble saying, 'Salman [= Salmân the Persian, a close companion of the Prophet] is from us, the people of (my) family [ahlu 'l-bayt]' attests to the same meaning." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

21. (177) Baghdad, Herat, or Rayy: various ancient and prominent cities in the Islamic world. Baghdad is in present-day Iraq, Herat is in western Afghanistan, and Rayy is just south of Tehran in Iran.

22. (177) they are his descendents without [need of] mixture of water and clay: "water and clay" is an idiom meaning the human body. The meaning here is without the need of being physically descended from the Prophet.

23. (178) Wherever the (grafted) rose branch grows, it is the same rose (bush): Nicholson translated, "Wherever the rose-bough blossoms, 'tis still the (same) wine." And he explained, regarding this line and the next, "Metaphors illustrating the essential unity of prophets and awliyá [= saints] with the Núr-i Muhammadí [= Muhammadan Light], which first manifested itself in Adam. See II 909, note." [= "i.e. the Spiritual Light of Mohammad = Universal Reason (the Logos), the first thing to be created. This is the Light by which all prophets, beginning with Adam, and all the Moslem saints are inspired."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

"It means, 'The rose branch of spiritual reality [ma`nà] from the pure tree of the spirit of that holy (Prophet)-- peace be upon him, in any era when it manifests, in any place where it grows, it is the same rose, and its scent is the same scent of that rose of spiritual reality.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

24. (179) Even if the sun raises (its) head from the West: this also refers to a prophecy of the Prophet Muhammad, that one of the signs preceding the coming of the Day of Judgment will be the rising of the sun in the West.

25. (180) with Your Veiling: Nicholson translated, "Thy veiling grace." The word for "veiling" [sattârîy] is based on one of the attributes of God, the One Who Veils [as-Sattâr].

26. (180) these (profound) words: Nicholson translated, "this (mystic) utterance." Anqaravi said that the term translated as "words" [dam], "in this place has the meaning of speech [kalâm]." (Commentary)

27. (181) God said (in response) to my prayer: Nicholson translated,"God said (in answer to my prayer)..." "It means, 'When I prayed to the Presence of God: "O Creator, cover the eyes of the fault-collectors with Your (power of) veiling and make them blind," God Most High accepted my prayer and said: "The eyes of the bat..."'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

28. (182) the covered and damaged eyes of the bat: Nicholson

translated, "the glances of the infirm and feeble bat." Although it is now known that the eyes of bats do have some ability to see, it is proverbial, also in English, that someone is "blind as a bat." Likewise, they have also been associated in European culture with darkness and evil. Here, they symbolize ignorant wrong-doers who are incapable of seeing pious and saintly persons and of understanding their spiritual wisdom.

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163 ma`niy-é nakhtim `alà afwâhi-him
în shenâs, în-ast rah-raw-râ muhim

tâ ze-râh-é khâtim-é payghâmbar-ân
bûk bar khêz-ad ze-lab khatm-é gerân

165 khatm-hâyê k-ânbiyâ be-g'Zâsht-and
ân ba-dîn-é aHmadî bar dâsht-and

qufl-hây-é nâ-goshâda mânda bûd
az kaf-é innâ fataH-nâ bar goshûd

ô shafî`-ast în jahân-o ân jahân
în jahân zî dîn-o ân-jâ zî jinân

în jahân gôy-ad ke tô rah-shân nomâ
w-ân jahân gôy-ad ke tô mah-shân nomâ

pêsha-ash andar Zuhûr-o dar kumûn
iHdi qawm-î inna-hum lâ ya`lamûn

170 bâz gashta az dam-é ô har dô bâb
dar dô `âlam da`wat-é ô mustajâb

bahr-é în khâtim shod-ast ô ke ba-jûd
miSl-é ô na b'w-ad-o na khwâh-and bûd

chûn-ke dar San`at bar-ad ostâd dast
na tô gôy-î khatm-é San`at bar tow-ast?

dar goshâd-é khatm-hâ tô khâtim-î
dar jahân-é rûH-bakhsh-ân Hâtim-î

hast ishârât-é muHammad, al-murâd
kul goshâd andar goshâd andar goshâd

175 Sad hazâr-ân âfarîn bar jân-é ô
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bar qudûm-o dawr?é farzand-ân-é ô

ân khalîfa-zâda-gân-é muqbil-ash
zâda-and az `unSar-é jân-o del-ash

gar ze-baghdâd-o harî yâ az ray-and
bê-mizâj-é âb-o gel, nasl-é way-and

shâkh-é gol har-jâ ke rôy-ad, ham gol-ast
khomm-é mul har-jâ ke jôsh-ad, ham mul-ast

gar ze-maghrib bar-zan-ad khworshêd sar
`ayn-é khworshêd-ast na chêz-e degar

180 `ayb-chîn-ân-râ az-în dam kûr dâr
ham ba-sattârîy-é khwad ay kardgâr

goft Haq chashm-é khufâsh-é bad-khiSâl
basta-am man z-âftâb-é bê-miSâl

182 az naZar-hây-é khufâsh-é kamm-o kâst
anjum-é ân shams nêz andar khafâ-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Affliction of Free Will (part one)

Mathnawi VI: 200-209

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200 O You (who are) the Helper of the one who seeks help! (I
am in need of) help--From the two branches of vile and
impure choices.[1]

I have become so check-mated by the deception and
schemes of the (craving) heart that I remain (far) from
(even having the power for) complaint.[2]

Who am I?[3] The revolving Heaven, with hundreds of duties and burdens

(to perform),[4] escaped from this ambush[5]-- namely, free-will,
Saying, "O Generous and Patient Lord! Give me safety
from the two branches of choice!

"The attraction of the one-way 'Straight Path'[6] (is)
better than the two ways of wavering hesitation,[7] O Most
Generous One.

205 "Even though You are the destination of both these ways, yet
this duality has itself become (miserably) uprooting for the soul.[8]

"Even though there is no intention except (to reach) You from both
these two ways, yet the battle (therein) is never like the banquet."[9]

Listen to the explanation of this from God in the
Qur'an-- the verses, "They feared and shunned the carrying
of it."[10]

This wavering hesitation in the heart is like a battle[11] (involving
the question), "Whether this or whether that situation is better for
me."

209 In hesitation, fear (of worsening) and hope of
betterment[12] are clashing against each other in attack and
retreat.[13]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of
Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with
gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),6/7/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (200) from these two branches of vile and impure choices:
Nicholson translated, "help (me to escape) from this pillory of
wicked acts of free-will." The term "two branches" [dô-shâkha]
means forked into two branches, as well as an idiom for a "pillory"
and "yoke" for restraining punished persons in public view. Here,
the both meanings are appropriate: since free will often involves
two choices, the state of indecision can restrain one from action,
and both choices can seem agonizingly worrisome to the mind. "(It
means), 'Help us from these two kinds of impure choices.... Save
us from being hesitating and double minded in the midst of two
choices.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish
commentator, translated here into English from a Persian
translation)

Just prior to this passage, in the Heading for the section, Rumi told
of how people's concern with their reputations leads to foolish

indecision and avoidance of right action. And he told a brief story illustrating this (translated by Nicholson): "...as (for example) the (flock of) sheep stood in the way of a certain effeminate person, and he durst not pass, so he asked the shepherd, 'Will these sheep of yours bite me, I wonder?' 'If you are a man,' he replied, 'and the root of manhood is in you, they all are devoted to you; but if you are effeminate, each of them is a dragon to (destroy) you.' There is another (kind of) effeminate person who, when he sees the sheep, immediately turns back and does not dare to ask (the shepherd); for he is afraid that, if he asks, the sheep will fall upon him and bite him."

2. (201) I remain (far) from (even having the power for) complaint: "It means... 'I have become so checkmated, and I have remained stunned and confused and helpless to such an extent that no power for lamenting and complaining is left to me.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (202) Who am I: "It means, 'I, weak human being that I am, how should I complain and shout for help about the double-branch of choice? Insofar as the lofty revolving Heaven, which is so powerful and great..'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (202) The revolving Heaven, with hundreds of duties and burdens (to perform): refers to how the Heavens are occupied with vast labors of service and worship rendered to God. More specifically, this may include the astrological power of the "stars" (meaning the planets and constellations) to regulate and oversee the destinies of the creatures of this world. According to Islamic cosmology, the stars only mediate the Divine Will of God and have no free -will of their own to alter or change what God has ordained.

5. (202) escaped from this ambush: "literally, 'on account of this ambush', i.e. the terrible dangers involved in the power to choose good or evil. This and the following verses allude to the amánah [= the Trust]... which implies free-will and moral responsibility." (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (204) the one-way "Straight Path": these words occur in several places in the Qur'an (such as in the famous Islamic prayer, recited many times daily by all Muslims, in 1:6-- "Guide us [O Lord] on the Straight Path"). For example: "And God guides whom He wills to the straight path" (2:213)-- which implies (especially in regard to this line of Rumi's) that once guided to the Straight Path, there is no divergence.

7. (204) (is) better than the two ways of wavering hesitation: "According to the saying (of the Prophet), 'The one who loves the

life of this world suffers loss in the Hereafter and the one who loves the Hereafter suffers loss in this world.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (205) (miserably) uprooting for the soul: Nicholson translated, "agonising to the spirit." "These verses [= this line and the next] are the speech of the magnificent heavens." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (206) the battle (therein) is never like the banquet: "(It means) [that the Heavens said, regarding the consequences of free will], 'Bliss (in Paradise) does not resemble Hell and the people of Hell do not obtain the delightful experience of the people of Paradise.... Therefore, being single-hearted and single-purposed [= on the Straight Path] is better than being hesitating and ambivalent.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (207) "They feared and shunned the carrying of it: from Qur'an, 33:27, altered for metrical purposes: "We offered the Trust [al-amânat] to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and they were afraid of it. But man undertook to bear it. Truly he is (prone to be) unjust, foolish." (Qur'an 33:72) This verse is usually understood as involving the offer of free will. Once man accepted free will, he was subject to Divine punishment for his injustice and foolishness. "Heaven and earth refused the 'trust' (of free-will which God offered to them, but Man accepted it." (Nicholson, Footnote)

11. (208) This wavering hesitation in the heart is like a battle: Nicholson referred to Mathnawi I: 1456-58 (translated by him): "Whosoever in perplexity is sorely troubled, God has spoken the riddle into his ear,/ That He may imprison him in two (doubtful) thoughts, (namely), 'Shall I do what he told (me) or the contrary thereof?' From (the decree of) God also, one side obtains the preponderance, and from that (Divine) quarter he chooses one of the two (alternatives)." And his commentary on this passage was: "All nature hears, understands, and implicitly obeys the Divine Word. Man alone hesitates between obedience and disobedience, and he is free to choose, though God has decreed and creates both his vacillation and his final choice." (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (209) fear (of worsening) and hope of betterment: Nicholson translated, "the fear (of failure) and the hope of success."

13. (209) attack and retreat: the Arab method of fighting.

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200 al-ghiyâS ay tô ghiyâSu 'l-mustaghîS
z-în dô-shâkha-yé ikhtiyârât-é khabîs

man ze-dastân-o makr-é del chon-ân
mât gasht-am ke be-mând-am az foghân

man ke bâsh-am charkh bâ Sad kâr-o bâr
z-în kamîn be-g'rêkht ya`nî ikhtiyâr

k-ây khodâwand-é karîm-o bord-bâr
deh amân-am z-în dô-shâkha-yé ikhtiyâr

jaZb-é yak râh-ha-yê Sirâtu 'l-mustaqîm
beh ze-dô râh-é taraddud, ay karîm

205 z-în dô rah gar-che hama maqSad tow-î
lêk khwad jân-kandan âmad în dowî

z-în dô rah gar-che ba-joz tô `azm nêst
lêk hargez razm ham-chûn bazm nêst

dar nubî be-sh'naw bayân-ash az khodâ
âyat-é ashfaqna 'an yaHmilna-hâ

în taraddud hast dar del chûn waghâ
k-în bow-ad beh yâ ke ân Hâl-é ma-râ

209 dar taraddud mê-zan-ad bar ham-degar
khawf-o ômêd-é behî dar karr-o far

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Affliction of Free Will (part two)

Mathnawi VI: 210-223

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An intimate prayer and a seeking protection with God from the turmoil[1] of free will and from the turmoil of the (various) causes (involved) in free will. Since the Heavens and the Earth were fearful and terrified of free will[2] and

the causes (involved) in free will. But the human being became passionately fond of desiring free will and the (various) causes (involved) in his free will. So for example, (if) he is sick, he views himself as lacking in free will (and then) wants health, which is the cause of free will so that his (power of) choice may be increased. And he (also) wants a high (public) position so that his free will may be (further) strengthened. And excess of free will and the (various) causes (involved) in free will was the (cause of) the descent of the Anger of God upon the peoples of the past.[3] (For) no one ever saw Pharaoh lacking in wealth and plenty.[4]

210 This advancing and receding (tide) first came to me[5] from You; otherwise, this ocean would have been still and quiet,[6] O Most Glorious.

(But) from Your Kindness, make me free of wavering (in indecision)-- also from the (same) place that You gave me this (troubling) hesitation,

You are making me afflicted with trials. Ah, the Source of Help [is You alone]! By Your trials, males (become as weak) as females.

These trials (will last) until when? O Lord, do not make (this continue). Give me a (single) way and don't make (me travel) ten ways.[7]

I am (like) a camel, a thin and gaunt one, and sore of back-- because of free will, which (is) like a pack saddle.

215 Sometimes (the load of) the litter[8] gets heavy on this side; sometimes the pack load gets drawn (to) that side.

Throw away the uneven load from me, so that I may see the meadow of the pious holy ones!

(And so that) I may graze from the garden of (Divine) Generosity, like the Companions of the Cave, not "awake" (to this world): "but they were asleep."[9]

I will be sleeping on (my) right or on (my) left (side); I won't be turned, except like a ball[10] without personal choice--

In the same way as with Your changing[11] (me) to the right

side or to the left side,[12] O Lord of the (Day of) Judgment.

220 (For) hundreds of thousands of years I was flying to
(one) place (or another),[13] like the motes of the air,
without personal choice.[14]

Although that state and condition has been forgotten by
me, (yet) my memory (of that) traveling exists in sleep,

(For then) I'm escaping from this four-fold (world) of
four branches[15] (and) I'm leaping away from this (physical)
resting spot[16] into the wide pasture of the soul.

223 (And then), O Eternal (Lord), I'm tasting the milk of
those past days of mine from the nurse of sleep.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
© Ibrahim Gamard (translation, footnotes, & transliteration)
First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),6/14/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) turmoil [fitna]: a Qur'anic term, difficult to translate, that can mean: trial, affliction, temptation, oppression, discord, sedition, disturbance, disruption. Nicholson translated, "temptation." But "turmoil" would seem to fit better with the "wavering hesitation" caused by the double branch of free will (in line 204).

2. (Heading) the Heavens and the Earth were fearful and terrified of free will: "We offered the Trust [al-amânat] to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and they were afraid of it. But man undertook to bear it. Truly he is (prone to be) unjust, foolish." (Qur'an 33:72) See note on line 207.

3. (Heading) excess of free will... was the (cause of) the descent of the Anger of God upon the peoples of the past: There are numerous stories in the Qur'an of how past nations were blessed with material prosperity, but due to their increased arrogance, injustice, and forgetfulness and ingratitude toward God for providing such blessings, they were destroyed. And it is mentioned how the ruins of their cities can still be seen by those who wish to ponder the lesson of this.

4. (Heading) no one ever saw Pharaoh lacking in wealth and plenty: "Therefore, (Pharaoh) went astray with all this excessive free will and (plentiful) means of acting freely, until he made the arrogant claim of (Divine) Lordship [= Qur'an 79:24; 28:38] and the descent of Divine anger occurred." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

5. (210) This advancing and receding (tide) first came to me: Nicholson translated, "From Thee first came this ebb and flow within me." Refers to the torment caused by the wavering hesitation of free will.

6. (210) this ocean would have been still and quiet: Nicholson translated, "this sea (of mine) was still." Refers to the peaceful state of being directed purely by the Divine Will, free of the surging clashes of personal choice.

Anqaravi had a different interpretation: "(It means), 'Otherwise, this inward ocean of mine was still, and there would never be seeking desire within my heart, but You are the Changer of hearts [muqallibu 'l-qulûb]...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (213) don't make (me travel) ten ways: "(It means), '(Give us) a straight path [Tarîq-é mustaqîmê].... don't make us sometimes astray and sometimes in guidance, or for a time aspiring for this world and sometimes for the Hereafter.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

This line is very similar to Rumi's interpretation of the rejection of free will by the heavens and the earth (in lines 202-204): "Who am I? The revolving Heaven, with hundreds of duties and burdens (to perform), escaped from this ambush--namely, free-will,/ Saying, "O Generous and Patient Lord! Give me safety from the two branches of choice!/ "The attraction of the one-way 'Straight Path' (is) better than the two ways of wavering hesitation,O Most Generous One."

8. (215) the litter: a wooden or cloth covered frame used to carry a woman on a camel, the top of which was either domed or open.

9. (217) "but they were asleep": refers to the story of the People of the Cave, who by a miracle, slept for three

hundred or more years: "And you would have considered them awake, yet they were asleep. And We turned them [nuqallibu-hum] about to (their) right and left (sides)" (Qur'an 18:18). "Najmu'ddín Kubrá [= famous sufi master, died 1221] expounds this verse as follows: "'And thou wouldst have deemed them to be awake" because of the light (of saintship) which thou sawest on their faces, "though they were asleep," signifying that they had died (faná) to their existence and had been made everlasting (ibqá) with the life of God, "and We were causing them to turn" between being naughted (ifná) and being made everlasting (ibqá) and ascending from a lower station to a higher..."' (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (218) except like a ball: means like a ball which is hit by a polo mallet. This is a frequent image in Rumi's poetry.

11. (219) changing [taqlîb]: this refers to the words spoken by God (in the majestic plural), "We turned them" [nuqallibu-hum] (Qur'an 18:18). Sometimes in prayers, God is addressed as "the Turner/Transformer of hearts" [muqallibu 'l-qulûb] (based on the verse, "... when hearts [al-qulûb] and eyes will be turned/transformed [tataqallab]," Qur'an 24:37). Related to this is the saying of the Prophet: "The heart [al-qalb] is between the two fingers of the Most Merciful; He makes it turn as He wills." This quotes contain two different meanings based on the same Arabic triliteral consonants: the verb, "to turn/transform/change" [qalaba] and the noun, "heart/hearts" [qalb/qulûb].

12. (219) to the right side or to the left side: "(It means), 'I also wish that I may be free of personal choice in the cave of your Security. And that in whatever manner You will, You may turn me--sometimes toward the spiritual and sometimes toward the bodily, sometimes to this world and sometimes to the Hereafter.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (220) (For) hundreds of thousands of years I was flying to (one) place (or another): "i.e. in eternity (azal) before the material world came into existence. Cf. Díwán...: dil goft: ba-kâr-khânah búdam tá khána-i áb u gil pazídan.* az khana-i sun` mí-parídam tá khána-i sun` áfarídan." [= Ghazal 1919, lines 20208-09: (My) heart said, "I was in the (Divine) work-shop until I flew (to) the (bodily) house of water and clay;/ I was flying from the house of creation to the house of making (personal) actions."
*Nicholson's text is inferior here ("until I was cooked in the house of water and clay")] (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (220) like the motes of the air, without personal choice: refers to the descent of the soul from the heavens, going through mineral and vegetable stages before reaching the animal and then human level. "(It means), before entering to this visible world and becoming captive to this vile and base bodily ego [nafs-é la'îm]." (Anqaravi, Commentary

15. (222) this four-fold (world) of four branches: literally, "this four-pegged (world) of four branches." Nicholson translated, "this four branched cross." This has, unfortunately, non-relevant Christian-sounding implications, as does his explanation: "an allusion to the four elements which compose the prison-house where the soul is crucified." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (222) this (physical) resting spot: literally, a place where a camel kneels down. Nicholson translated, "this confined halting-place."

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munâjât wa panâh-jostan ba-Haqq az fitna-yé ikhtiyâr wa az fitna-yé asbâb-é ikhtiyâr ke samâwât w-arZîn az ikhtiyâr wa az asbâb-é ikhtiyâr shekûhîd-and wa tarsîd-and wa khalqat-é âdamî mûla` oftâd bar Talab-é ikhtiyâr wa asbâb-é ikhtiyâr-é khwêsh, chonân-ke bêmâr bâsh-ad, khwad-râ ikhtiyâr kam bîn-ad SiHat khwâh-ad ke sabab-é ikhtiyâr-ast tâ ikhtiyâr-ash be-y-afzây-ad wa munSib khwâh-ad tâ ikhtiyâr-ash be-y-afzây-ad, wa mahbiT-é qahr-é Haqq dar umam-é mâZiya farT-é ikhtiyâr wa asbâb-é ikhtiyâr bûda-ast, hargez fir`awn-é bê-nawâ kas na-dîda-ast

210 awwal-am în jazr-o madd az tô rasîd
w-ar-na sâkin bûd în baHr, ay majîd

ham az ân-jâ k-în taraddud dâd-iy-am
bê-taraddud kon ma-râ ham az karam

ibtilâ-am mê-kon-î, âh al-ghiyâS
ay Zukûr az ibtilâ-at chûn inâS

tâ ba-kay în ibtilâ, yâ rab ma-kon
maZhabê-am bakhsh-wo dah maZhab ma-kon

oshtorê-am lâgharê-wo posht-rêsh
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z-ikhtiyâr-é ham-chô pâlân shakl-é khwêsh

215 în kazhâwa gah shaw-ad în sô gerân
ân kazhâwa gah shaw-ad ân sô kashân

be-f'gan az man Himl-é nâ-hamwâr-râ
tâ be-bîn-am rawZa-yé abrâr-râ

ham-chô ân aSHâb-é kahf az bâgh-é jûd
mê-char-am ayqâZ nay, bal hum ruqûd

khofta bâsh-am bar yamîn yâ bar yasâr
bar na-gard-am, joz chô gô bê-ikhtiyâr

ham ba-taqlîb-é tô tâ Zâta 'l-yamîn
yâ sôy-é Zâta 'sh-shimâl, ay rabb-é dîn

220 Sad hazâr-ân sâl bûd-am dar maTâr
ham-chô Zarrât-é hawâ bê-ikhtiyâr

gar farâmûsh-am shod-ast ân waqt-o Hâl
yâdgâr-am hast dar khwâb irtiHâl

mê-rah-am z-în châr-mêkh-é châr-shâkh
mê-jah-am dar masraH-é jân z-în munâkh

223 shîr-é ân ayyâm-é mâZî-hây-é khwad
mê-chash-am az dâya-yé khwâb, ay Samad

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Affliction of Free Will (part three)

Mathnawi VI: 224-233

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(For) all know that this existence is a snare (and) that the thinking and remembering of personal choice is (like) Hell.

They are escaping from self-ness into self-oblivion, either by drunkenness or by being occupied (with work or diversions), O rightly guided one.

You draw back the self, (O God), from that non-existence[3] because it has gone into freedom from sobriety[4] without (Your) permission.[5]

It is not (allowed) for (either) the jinn[6] or mankind to "pass beyond" the confinement of "the regions" of physical duration.[7]

230 There is no penetrating the lofty heavens (and) surmounting (them), except by the authority of (Divine) guidance.

(And) there is no (Divine) guidance except by a power that protects the souls of the pious from the guards (in charge) of the shooting stars.[8]

(Since) there is never a way for anyone to the Court of (Divine) Grandeur until he becomes annihilated (of self).

233 What is the ascension to the heavens?[9] This non-existence (of self). The sect and religion of the lovers (of God) is non-existence (of self).[10]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),6/21/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (224) their place of (dozing) drunkenness: means the state of sleep, long conceived (such as by Plato) as a time when the soul obtains blissful relief from being trapped within the body and its daily suffering. "(It means), 'In the world of sleep every action which I do, I accomplish without free will.... I wish that in this (waking) place I may also be without free will, so that I may always act (in harmony) with Your will and choice.'" (Anqaravi, the famous

17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (225) the disgrace of wine (drinking) and flute playing: refers to the shameful reputation of those who gathered together to drink wine (strictly forbidden in Islam) and playing musical instruments (frowned on in Islam) in order to enhance the state of drunkenness and loss of normal self-control. Here, Rumi is commenting on the common desire to escape normal human consciousness into the bliss of wine-drunkenness and passing out.

"(It means), 'All the people of the world are escaping from the shackles of existence and the trap of free will toward drunkenness and loss of (conscious) choice. And they place the dishonor of wine drinking and flute playing upon themselves. And among mankind, they are content with these blamed and forbidden states, so that they may escape for a time from sobriety, and so they may obtain the pleasure of selflessness and choicelessness.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (228) non-existence [nêstî]: "i.e. `adam-i ikhtiyár [= absence of free-will] artificially induced. Such nístí [= non-being], unlike that which God bestows on His elect [= the saints and mystics], is invariably followed by a relapse into self-consciousness. The context shows that the subject [= "the soul"] of wá mí-kashí [= "You draw back"] cannot be any one who refrains from using wine, etc., as a means of escape from himself, though some commentators explain the verse in this way." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (228) freedom from sobriety: Nicholson translated, "unconsciousness."

5. (228) without (Your) permission: means that it is the Will of God for us to be tried and tested in this life, and therefore escape from ordinary sober awareness (via sleep, drunkenness, etc.) can only be brief. Permission for more extended periods of escape is, however, granted by God--especially in regard to the spiritual states experienced by the saints and mystics.

"It means: 'Sometimes you act without self (awareness) or deliberate choice, and become unconscious by means of hashish, wine, flute-playing, and similar means for a time. But then you draw back yourself from that (state of) non-existence to the level of self-ness [bâ-khwodî] and sobriety. Because the ego [nafs] went to the world of

unconsciousness without the permission of God.... Therefore, since there was no Divine permission, no one will ever be strong (enough) to become liberated [by those means] from self-ness and from the shackles of existence.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (229) the jinn: a parallel creation to humanity, except the jinn (or genies) are said to have been created out of a completely different substance ("fire") than humanity (made out of "clay"). The jinn are said to be able to appear in any form they wish; some are true believers, many are mischievous, and some are evil.

7. (229) to "pass beyond" the confinement of "the regions" of physical duration: refers to the verse, "O community of Jinn and mankind, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass! (But) you will not able to pass through without the authority (of God)." (Qur'an 55:33)

"Baydáwí [= a commentator on the Qur'an, died 1286] explains tanfudhú [= pass beyond] as 'fleeing from God and His destiny (qadá)' or 'exploring heaven and earth in order to know what is therein; but this knowledge cannot be gained save by Divinely appointed means...' Rúmí's meaning agrees better with the interpretation given by Najmu'ddín al-Kubrá [died, 1221]: 'O faculties celestial and mundane, if ye are able to disperse and return to the heaven of spirituality and the earth of corporeality, then disperse! But ye cannot, save by Our authority and decree'; or 'if ye are able to attain unto the sciences of the higher and lower worlds without the authority of mystic inspiration (al-wárid), then strive to do so; but ye will never succeed till the power of the wárid descends upon you.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

8. (231) the guards (in charge) of the shooting stars: "i.e. saves (the devout) spirit) from being repelled when it seeks union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary) The reference is to the angels who guard the heavens, and who drive back any jinn (or genies) that attempt to eavesdrop by means of shooting stars (Qur'an 72:8; 15: 17-18; 67:5). This also includes (according to Qur'an translator Muhammad Asad's commentary) "psychic penetration" of the heavens, so that the fortune-telling of clairvoyant humans (sometimes by having allies among the jinn) are bound to be unreliable, as are astrological predictions.

9. (233) What is the ascension to the heavens: Nicholson

translated, "What is the means of ascension to Heaven?" The term for "ascension" [mi`râj] here is the same as for the famous Ascension into the heavens of the Prophet Muhammad.

10. (233) The sect and religion of the lovers (of God) is non-existence (of self): "It means, 'What is the means for ascension and (going up) the ladder of the heavens of spiritual reality? It is completely passing from this false existence and drinking the wine of no-self-ness. The sect and religion of the lovers is also the erasing and annihilating of themselves, as well as becoming pure and free from self-centeredness and self-conceit and self-willfulness...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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224 jumla `âlam z-ikhtiyâr-o hast-é khwad
mê gorêz-ad dar sar-é sarmast-é khwad

225 tâ damê az hôshyârî wâ rah-and
nang-é khamr-o zamr bar khwad mê-neh-and

jumla dânasta ke în hastî fakh-ast
fikr-o Zikr-é ikhtiyârî dôzakh-ast

mê-gorêz-and az khwadî dar bê-khwadî
yâ ba-mastî yâ ba-shughl, ay muhtadî

nafs-râ z-ân nêstî wâ mê-kash-î
z-ân-ke bê-farmân shod andar bê-hoshî

laysa li 'l-jinni wa lâ li 'l-'insi 'an
yanfuZû min Habsi 'aqTâri 'z-zaman

230 lâ nufûZ illâ bi-sulTâni 'l-hudà
min tanâwîfi 's-samâwâti 'l-`ulà

lâ hudà illâ bi-sulTân-in yaqî
min Hirâsi 'sh-shuhbi rûHa 'l-mutaqî

hêch kas-râ tâ na-gard-ad ô fanâ
nêst rah dar bâr-gâh-é kibriyâ

233 chîst mi`râj-é falak? în nêstî
`âshiq-ân-râ maZhab-o dîn nêstî

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)
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The Affliction of Free Will (part four)

Mathnawi VI: 234-248

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234 (Humble) fur garments and sandals became Ayaz's prayer niche,[1] due to (his) submissive neediness in the path of Love (of God).

235 Although he was, himself, the beloved of the king (and) was elegant and attractive (both) outwardly and inwardly--

(Since) he had become free of any pride, hypocrisy, and hatred (and since) his face had become a mirror for the king's beauty--

The conclusion of his situation was praised[2] (only) because he became distant from his own self-existence;

For that reason, the firmness of Ayaz was stronger because he would [successfully] control (his) desires due to fear of arrogance.[3]

(For) he was refined and good. And he had come (and fatally) struck the neck of pride and ego.[4]

240 He continued doing those artifices,[5] either for the teaching (others)[6] or for the sake of some wisdom far distant from fear.

Or (else) the sight of his (peasant's) sandals was pleasing (to him), because existence (of self) is an iron plate against the breeze of not existing.[7]

(And) so that the crypt[8] (of self-annihilation), which is (built) upon non-existence might be opened,[9] so that he might obtain that breeze of (spiritual) delight and life.

(For) the property, wealth, and silk (clothing) of the halting-place (of this world) are a chain on the light-traveling soul.

The soul saw the chain of gold and was deceived. (As a

result), it stayed in the hole of a well (distant) from the (open) plain.[10]

245 (The world's) appearance (is like) Paradise, (but) with the reality of (being) a Hell; it's image is a (beautiful) rose-cheeked one, but (it is really) a large snake full of poison.

Even though Hell-fire cannot give harm to the (true) believer,[11] yet it is better that he pass on from that place.

Even though Hell keeps (its) punishment far from him, yet Paradise (is) better for him in any case.

248 O (you who are) lacking (discernment),[12] (have) fear of the (beautiful) rose-cheeked one who becomes (like) a Hell at the time of companionship.[13]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),6/28/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (234) (Humble) fur garments and sandals became Ayaz's prayer niche: refers to Rumi's story of Ayaz, the favorite slave of King Mahmood, whom he elevated to a high position of power within his court. To avoid pride and remain humble (before the king, who symbolizes God in the story), Ayaz kept his rough clothing which he would view every day in a private (and locked) chamber (Mathnawi V:1856-2115).

2. (237) praised [maHmûd]: a play on the name of King Mahmood. "In this passage, the intended meaning of 'Ayâz' is those sanctified persons [awliyâ] who have reached the degree of belovedness. Although any sweetheart may become the beloved of the King of Reality; and he may be fine and beautiful, outwardly and inwardly; yet (in the case of) a saint who is without hypocrisy and hatred, the soul of his face has become the mirror for the Beauty of the Sultan of Truth. And the Sultan of Truth, with the signs of His Attributes has (also) manifested in the mirror of his face. Because that saint has become distant from self-existence and has become the beloved of God. And the end of his situation became entirely good and praiseworthy." (Anqaravi,

the famous 17th century commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (238) due to fear of arrogance: Nicholson later corrected his translation to, "The steadfastness of Ayáz was too firm for him to take (those) precautions in fear of arrogance" (from, "The steadfastness of Ayáz was all the firmer forasmuch as he was taking (those) precautions in fear of arrogance"). And he explained: "i.e. since he was a Perfect Man, utterly selfless, it would be absurd to suppose that he was afraid of egoism: his motive, as explained in the verses immediately following, was something quite different." (Commentary)

4. (239) he had come (and fatally) struck the neck of pride and ego: means he had "killed" his ego [nafs]. This is one metaphor for the complete submission of ego. Another is the metaphor of refinement through stages of purification of the "bodily soul." The Prophet Muhammad said that his nafs had become his servant.

"Therefore, Ayaz was lofty in his present (spiritual) rank. So for what (reason) did he perform these various actions and needy devotions. The answer is given (in the next verse)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (240) those artifices: means tricking his ego into feeling humble, and doing this in such a way that it aroused the suspicion of the other people in the king's court.

6. (240) for the teaching (others): "It means, Ayaz was using these stratagems so that he might teach others not to be captive to self-centeredness and arrogance." (Anqaravi, Commentary) In the end, the other people in the king's court were taught a lesson, because they falsely projected their own bad qualities onto him by suspecting him of amassing treasures in his locked compartment (which when unlocked, contained only the humble garments he wore when he first came to the palace).

7. (241) not existing: "I.e. pride is an obstacle to self-abandonment." (Nicholson, Footnote)

8. (242) crypt [dakhma]: originally this term meant the Zoroastrian "tower of silence," where corpses are left in the open air to disintegrate (via the elements, vultures, etc.). "Dakhmah is used (I 1928) in the sense of gúr-i tan [= tomb of the body].... Dakhmah inevitably suggests decay and

corruption, and vv. 243-248 [= the next six lines] favour the idea that dakhmah k-án bar nístí-st [= "which is (built) upon non-existence"] is a poetical image of dunyá-yi fání [= the transient material world]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"(The meaning of) dakhma: Although it is said to (mean) a house which is built upon a grave, yet it is also said to (mean) a house which is built upon a buried treasure. In this (latter) explanation is the intended meaning of buried treasure. And the meaning of buried treasure is also true existence [wujûd-é Haqqânî] and Divine secrets.... Ayaz was going every day to see (his humble) fur jacket and sandals, and he was longing for them, so that buried treasure might be opened for him. (And) that buried treasure is non-existence (of self)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (242) might be opened: "i.e. 'in order that the body in which the soul is entombed might open', referring to the mystical resurrection (I 2036, note)" [= "In the Qur'án the 'new creation' [= 50:15] refers to the resurrection of the body at the Last Judgment, but here the words are used to describe the creation of new life in the mystic's heart by 'rain from the Unseen' (bárán-i ghayb), i.e. by the influence of Divine grace (fayd)."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (244) a well (distant) from the (open) plain: Nicholson translated, "a dungeon (far) from the open country." "Therefore (the soul) became far from the spiritual world and from traveling in the open plain of Truth. His soul remained in the hole of a well." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (246) Hell-fire cannot give harm to the (true) believer: "Cf. the Traditions that on the Day of Resurrection hell will say to the Faithful, 'Cross (the bridge Sirát), O true believer, for thy light hath put out my flames'; and that when the Faithful enter Paradise they will say to God, 'Didst not Thou promise us that we should come to Hell-fire (on our way)?' whereupon God will answer, 'Yes; but it was extinguished when ye passed by.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

12. (248) O (you who are) lacking (discernment): Nicholson translated, "O ye deficient (in understanding). "It means, 'O ones (who are) deficient of intelligence...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (248) at the time of companionship: Nicholson translated, "at the time of intercourse." He meant "social intercourse"-- or communication between individuals.

"Outwardly the world is (like) an attractive form and sweetheart, and an ornament like a rose-cheeked beauty. But its inward (quality) at the time of conversation [suHbat] and companionship is ugly, glum, and demonic." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

This line leads to Rumi's next story, about a Hindu slave who was in love with a rich Muslim's daughter, and how he was tricked into losing his love for her when he ended up with a very unpleasant companion, instead of her, on his supposed wedding night.

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234 pôstîn-o châroq âmad az neyâz
dar Tarîq-é `ishq miHrâb-é ayâz

235 gar-che ô khwad shâh-râ maHbûb bûd
Zâhir-o BâTin laTîf-o khwûb bûd

gashta bê-kibr-o riyâ-wo kîna'yê
Husn-é sulTân-râ rokh-ash âyîna'yê

chûn-ke az hastîy-é khwad ô dûr shod
muntahây-é kâr-é ô maHmûd bod

z-ân qawî-tar bûd tamkîn-é ayâz
ke ze-khawf-é kibr kardy iHtarâz

ô muhaZZab gashta bûd-o âmada
kibr-râ-wo nafs-râ gardan zada

240 yâ pay-é ta`lîm mê-kard ân Hiyal
yâ barây-é Hikmatê dûr az wajal

yâ ke dîd-é châroq-ash z-ân shod pasand
k-az nasîm-é nîstî, hastî-st band

tâ goshây-ad dakhma k-ân bar nêstî-st
tâ be-yâb-ad ân nasîm-é `aysh-o zîst

mulk-o mâl-o aTlas-é în marHala
hast bar jân-é sabok-raw silsila

silsila-yé zarrîn be-dîd-o gharra gasht
mând dar sôrâkh-é châhê jân ze-dasht

245 Sûrat-ash jannat, ba-ma`niy-é dôzakhê
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af`àyê por zahr-o naqsh-ash gol-rokhê

gar-che mû'min-râ saqar na-d'had Zarar
lêk ham behtar bow-ad z-ân-jâ goZar

gar-che dôzakh dûr dâr-ad z-ô nakâl
lêk jannat beh wa-râ fî kulli Hâl

248 al-HaZar ay nâqiS-ân z-în gol-rokhê
ke ba gâh-é SuHbat âmad dôzakhê

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Peace Within the Heart

Mathnawi VI: 823

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823 How can we search for (true) knowledge? By abandoning (false) knowledge.[1] How can we seek (true) peace? By abandoning (false) peace.[2]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](823) By abandoning (false) knowledge: Nicholson translated, "Whence shall we seek (true) knowledge? From renouncing (our false) knowledge." Here, Rumi speaks in paradox: seek knowledge by abandoning knowledge. It can also be interpreted to mean seeking "(inner) knowledge" or "knowledge (of spiritual realities)" by renouncing "(your) knowledge," "(outward) knowledge," or "knowledge (acquired by the mind)."

"(It means), 'Where can we seek the knowing of Reality and the becoming a knower of Divine Knowledge?' The answer: 'By abandoning that which we ourselves know and by travelling the road of the passing away [fanâ = mystical transcendence of ego

and the limits of self-centered consciousness]." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation) it could have been "(inner) knowledge" or "knowledge (of spiritual realities)"versus "(outward) knowledge" or "knowledge (acquired by the intellect)"]

[2](823) By abandoning (false) peace: Nicholson translated, "Whence shall we seek (true) peace? From renouncing peace (with our carnal selves)."

"Similarly, in regard to true peace, (the seeker) also must desire to abandon egotistic and sensual peace. A person is continually at peace with his ego, Satan, people of egotism, and the followers of devils. (So) he is unable to know what true peace is, and he is not able to make peace with the holy presence of God, the prophets -- peace be upon them, and the saints." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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823 az ko-jâ jôy-êm `ilm? az tark-é `ilm
az ko-jâ jôy-êm silm? az tark-é silm

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Shop of the Mathnawi

Mathnawi VI: 1522-1528

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1522 So sever the head of (your) selfness,[1] O sword of Ali.[2]
Become self-less-- a dervish-like annihilated one.[3]

(And) when you become self-less, everything you do (will be an example of the verse) You did not throw when you threw[4] (and) you will be secure [from self-will].

The responsibility is (then) with God, not with the appointed trustee.[5] The details of it are in plain view in (the books of) religious law.[6]

1525 Certainly, every shop (has) a different merchandise. O son, the Mathnawi is the shop for (spiritual) poverty.[7]

There is good leather in the shoemakers shop. If you see wood
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(there), its (just) the mold for (making) shoes.

Raw silk and dark-colored (fabric) are (to be found) in the presence of cloth sellers. If iron is (there), its for the sake of measuring (cloth).

1528 Our Mathnawi is the shop of Unity. Anything you see (therein) other than the Oneness (of God), (know that) it is an idol.[8]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),10/5/00

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1522) sever the head of (your) selfness: see Rumi's verse in his Divan (as translated by Arberry, "Mystical Poems of Rumi," No. 168, p. 140): "You are drunk, drunk and happy, I am drunk and happy, without a head [bê-sar]; you are a lover with laughing lips, I am laughing without any mouth." (Ghazal 1372)

2. (1522) O sword of Ali: literally, O Zû l-faqâr-- the name of the sword of Ali, the cousin, son-in-law, and fourth successor (Caliph) of the Prophet Muhammad. Nicholson explained that this sword means qáti`-i sar-i nafs [= the cutter of the head of self-ness, or ego]. (Commentary) Nicholson also referred to Mathnawi I: 132-133, which he translated: ... Time is a cutting sword. The Súfí is the son of the (present) time, O comrade: it is not the rule of the Way to say To-morrow. And he explained: Waqt [= Time] is used here in one of its technical senses, viz. the moment of immediate experience of being under Divine control (tasríf), and this moment is compared to a sharp sword because it cuts the root of the future and the past and obliterates care of yesterday and to-morrow from the heart (Kashf, Eng. 362). [= Hujwiris Kashf al-Mahjûb, translated by Nicholson, p. 362] (Commentary)

3. (1522) a dervish-like annihilated one: Nicholson translated, become a selfless naughted one like the dervish. It means: In the same way that the dervish is without self and without (personal) existence, you should also become without existence, annihilated [fânî], and without self. And you should deny and remove the demanding (quality) of your ego [nafs] from yourself. (Anqaravi, Commentary-- translated here from the Persian trans. of the 17th century Turkish commentary)

4. (1523) You did not throw when you threw: quoted from the Qur'an (8:17), slightly modified for versification. Nicholson explained: At the battle of Badr the Prophet threw a handful of gravel in the faces of the Quraysh [polytheists], who immediately fled before the Moslem onset. The Qurán declares that the gravel was really thrown by God, that He might give the true believers a good proof of His favour. He added that in the Mathnawi this image is sometimes applied generally as an illustration of the doctrine that God is the source of all action in the universe, while in other passages it refers to the mystical union of the prophet or saint whose hand is the Hand of God. (Commentary) If you become without self and you annihilate the demanding (quality) of the ego and you make every action in agreement with the command of God, you will be secure in bringing about (the condition of) you did not throw when you threw.... It means, if you become annihilated and without (self-) existence, every action which you do, the doer of that action will be, in reality, the Lord God. And your existence will become the instrument of the Lord God. You will become the manifestation of the understanding of the verse, And you did not throw when you threw, but it was God who threw. (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (1524) not with the appointed trustee: The selfless mystic is amínu lláh [= safe in God]: all claims against him are paid from the Divine Treasury. (Nicholson, Commentary) Because the appointed trustee is Gods instrument and the deputy of the Divine. In reality, whatever (action) occurs on the part of the appointed trustee has been manifested by the Lord God." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (1524) religious law [fiqh]: means that the details are explained in Islamic jurisprudence about why the believer who faithfully carries out the commands of God (as set forth in the Qur'an and sayings and doings of the Prophet) is secure from blame for his actions.

7. (1525) (spiritual) poverty [faqr]: an important term in sufism, related to the word for a sufi poor one [faqîr-- translated into Persian as darvîsh]. It refers to an absence of ostentation, pride, self-worship, and self-centered preoccupation. What is with you will vanish and what is with God will endure [bâq] (Qur'an 16:97). O man, you are poor [fuqarâ] in relation to God, and God is the Rich, the Praiseworthy (Qur'an 35:15). Since the preceding verses have touched on questions of law (fiqh), it is natural for the poet to remind his hearers that the essence of the Mathnawí is pure mysticism (asrár-i tawhíd [= the secrets of (Divine) Oneness], although, like many other books devoted to a particular subject, it includes matter that is merely accessory and incidental to its main purpose. (Nicholson, Commentary) The shop of legal questions is

(in) the books of secondary matters. And the seekers of the questions about (spiritual) poverty and annihilation [fanâ] are the dervishes [fuqarâ]. This noble book [= the Mathnawi] is the essential explanation of (spiritual) poverty and annihilation (of self) and yearning [khwâhân]. The knowledge of (spiritual) poverty and annihilation may be found in this shop of the Mathnawi. (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1528) it is an idol: I.e. a means of attraction. (Nicholson, footnote). The meaning is that it leads the reader astray from worshiping the One True God. It means, In its essence, our Mathnawi [= our (book of) rhymed couplets] is the shop of the secrets of Absolute Unity; it is also the shop of (Divinely) inspired areas of knowledge [`ulûm-é ladunî] and the sciences of (spiritual) certainty. Whatever you see in this noble book besides the secrets of the Oneness of Reality and descriptions of Divine Unity.... resembles an idol..... And otherwise, talk about (anything) other than the knowledge Oneness (such as) stories, parables, and metaphors in this noble book would not have been mentioned. But every (kind) of knowledge and topic, other than the knowledge of Absolute Unity, has come (into this book) for the sake of this: that a group of people who are inclined to those (spiritual) sciences may submit to them day and night. (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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1522 pas khwadî-râ sar bo-borr, ay Zû l-faqâr
bê-khwadî shaw, fâniyê darwêsh-wâr

chûn shod-î bê-khwad har ân-che tô kon-î
mâ ramayta iZ ramaytî âmin-î

ân Zimân bar Haq bow-ad na bar amîn
hast tafSîl-ash ba-fiqh andar mubîn

1525 har dukânê râst sawdâyê degar
maSnawî dukkân-é faqr-ast ay pesar

dar dukân-é kafsh-gar charm-ast khûb
qâlib-é kafsh-ast agar bîn-î to, chûb

pêsh-é bazzâz-ân qaz-o adkan bow-ad
bahr-é gaz bâsh-ad agar âhan bow-ad

1528 maSnawîy-é mâ dukân-é waHdat-ast
ghayr-é wâhid har-che bîn-î ân bot-ast

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)
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Two Kinds of Endurance

Mathnawi VI: 1758-1779

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O sir (who are also) blaming and scolding because of (your) misfortune, poverty, suffering, and afflictions:

Without doubt, this forsaking of (worldly) desires is giving (you) bitter hardship. But is the bitterness of (being) far from God better?[7]

Although struggle (against cravings)[8] and fasting is difficult and hard, still, these are better than (being) distant from the One who Tests (people with hardship).[9]

1770 Suffering can never remain for a moment when the Lord of Kind Favors says to you, "How are you, O my suffering (servant)?"

And even if He doesn't say (this), because you lack the understanding and skill for (sensing) it,[10] yet your (inward) savor of joy is (proof of) His asking (about you).[11]

Those delightful beautiful ones, who are spiritual doctors,[12] are inclined toward the sickly with questions (about their condition).

And if they act cautiously due to (concerns about anyone's) embarrassment or reputation, they prepare some (kind of) remedy and send a message (about it).

And if not, that (provision of care) is contemplated within their hearts.[13] (For) no beloved is unaware of a (devoted) lover.[14]

1775 O you (who are) seeking unusual stories: read also the tale of those who play the game of love.[15]

You've boiled (so) much during this long period of time. (And yet), O dried meat, you haven't even become half-boiled.[16]

You've seen (examples of) the administration of (Divine) Justice and Judgment (during) a (whole) lifetime-- and (even) then you are more increased (in your ignorance)[17] than those who are blind.

Whoever has performed service as His student becomes a master. But you have gone backwards, O quarrelsome blind man![18]

1779 As it is, there isn't (any profit from) the experience

of (being advised by) your parents.[19] Likewise, there isn't (any profit from) the lessons (given) by night and day[20] to you.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com),8/30/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1758) O you who have crushed manly generosity in a single moment: Nicholson translated, "finished with generosity once and for all." And he explained: "Literally, 'folded up.'" (Footnote) "(It means), 'O you who have completely trampled upon manly generosity.'" (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (1759) in this miserable 'pasture': Nicholson translated less literally, "in this abode of misery." And he explained: "Literally, 'pasture.'" (Footnote) He also noted that, although "G [= the earliest manuscript of the Mathnawi] writes chará (= charídan) [= pasture, from the verb "to pasture, to graze"], but chirá [= why] (Fa) [= Anqaravi] is possible: 'how long (and) for what purpose?'" (Commentary) In other words, it could also be translated, "How long will I be (stuck) in this misery? (And) why? [cherâ]"

3. (1760) threadbare [`ûr]: literally, "naked." An idiom meaning extreme poverty. Nicholson translated, "destitute." "(It means), 'Although I'm poor and empty-handed...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

4. (1761) living expenses and clothing are required: "(It means), '...are obligatory for the husband." In Islam, the husband is responsible for providing food, clothing, and protection to his wife (plus a dowry at the time of marriage).

"It means, 'It is the right of the wife upon the husband, and that which is obligatory for the husband (to provide), O beloved. But it is only living expenses and clothing.' The intended meaning of 'clothing' is something which hinders (feeling) cold [and covers nakedness]. And the meaning of 'living expenses' is the cost of food so as to be

able to avert hunger. Therefore, 'The same amount by which hunger no longer continues and (by which) the effects of cold are not left upon you is sufficient for you. And I'm ensuring both of these for your sake. Therefore, whatever my required duty is, I'm carrying it out. And that which is necessary for you is sufficient and adequate with this amount.'" (Anqaravi)

5. (1762) (her) upper garment: a type of woman's long shirt, or a shift (a straight and loose-fitting dress).

6. (1766) or divorce: she would be far more miserable, as an impoverished woman (and beggar), trying to survive without her husband's support. "(It means), 'If separation from me is (more) bitter and unpleasant to you, then be satisfied with this (amount of) provision, be patient with discomfort and hardship, and be content and enduring.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (1768) But is the bitterness of (being) far from God better: "But the bitter hardship of being far from God lasts forever. Therefore, enduring the bitterness of that (worldly discomfort) is better than enduring the bitterness of separation from (God) in both ways. Just as has been said (by an anonymous Persian poet): 'Without You, O tranquillity of my soul, life is difficult (to endure); without (the delight of) looking at Your Beauty, happiness is difficult (to endure).' [bê-tô, ay ârâm-é jân-am, zendagânî mushkil-ast; bê-tamâshây-é jamâl-at, shâdmânî mushkil-ast]" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (1769) struggle (against cravings): although the word here [jihâd], is often mistranslated using the Christian term, "Holy War," it means any kind of struggle for the sake of God (of which defensive military combat or battling against extreme oppression is only one kind). Among the sufis, the term usually means struggling against the self-centered desires and cravings of the ego [nafs]. Nicholson translated, "fighting (against the flesh)." "(It means), 'Although struggling against the ego [bâ-nafs muhâhida-kardan], keeping the fast [= of Ramadan], and being patient with difficult responsibilities is hard...'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

9. (1769) the One who Tests (people with hardship) [mumtaHin]: an Attribute of God (the word is related to "afflictions" [miHan], in line 1767), meaning that all afflictions are sent by God as tests and trials of human

beings-- especially those who have distanced themselves from Him by insisting on the gratification of their own self-centered desires and refusing to submit patiently to the Divine Will.

10. (1771) because you lack the understanding and skill for (sensing) it: "It means, 'You are unable to find and know the (apparent) reason of (His) not asking. But that (inward) pleasure of yours is itself (His) asking.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

11. (1771) yet your (inward) savor of joy is (proof of) His asking (about you): Nicholson translated, "yet thy inward feeling (of supplication) is (equivalent to His) inquiring (after thee)." It means that if you experience an inward feeling of subtle pleasure, this is the same as God's addressing you with loving-kindness. Nicholson referred to Rumi's lines (translated by him): "At every moment (there come) to him from God a hundred missives, a hundred couriers: from him one (cry of) 'O my Lord!' and from God a hundred (cries of) Labbayka' ('Here am I')." (Mathnawi I: 1578) He explained this, and gave further citations of the theme: "Selfless prayer is accompanied by an immediate inward response (II 1190 sqq.); nay, such prayer springs from the presence of God in the heart and is answered before it is uttered (III 195 sqq.; cf. VI 870, 1771, 1986, 4239)." (Commentary)

Of the above citations, the most well-known is the story of the man who was praying, "Allah! Allah!" until Satan convinced him it was useless, for no "Here I am" would ever be said to him from the Throne of God. The man became broken-hearted, but had a dream in which Khidr (the mysterious guide of the sufis) gave him a message from God: "That 'Allah!' of yours is My 'I am here for you' [labbayka]. And that neediness, (yearning) pain, and burning of yours is My message (to you." (Mathnawi III: 189-195)

12. (1772) spiritual doctors: literally, "doctors of the heart." Refers to the saints of God-- sufi masters and guides, who are blessed by God with spiritual beauty.

13. (1774) And if not, that (provision of care) is contemplated within their hearts: "Even if they are unable to go (physically) with questions about the conditions of their sick lovers [= spiritual disciples], still, they accomplish a mental [= psychic] asking about that sick lover within their thoughts and imagination at a distance."

(Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (1774) no beloved is unaware of a (devoted) lover: Nicholson translated, "no beloved is unaware (forgetful) of his lover." Means that God is never unaware of His lovers, and sends them spiritual relief and remedy via His saints, who are the physicians of the spiritual problems of the heart. The latter (both living and departed from the physical world, according to the sufis) are made aware by God of such suffering spiritual seekers and send them help, either directly, indirectly, psychically, or by praying for them.

"The poor in spirit who suffer for God's sake are loved and cared for by His saints." Nicholson referred to Rumi's story of how God inspired the Prophet Muhammad to visit a Muslim slave named Hilâl, who was very sick, and also neglected by his master (VI: 1150-1185).

15. (1775) read also the tale of those who play the game of love: "(It means), '... so you may know that every beloved certainly has been aware of his heart-sick (lover).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (1776) half-boiled: literally, "Turk-boiled." "Literally, 'meat boiled by Turcomans [= Tatars] (and eaten half-raw).'" (Nicholson, Footnote) Nicholson referred to another use of this metaphor, which he translated: ...a half-raw (imperfect) explanation of it, (like) the Turcomans' ill-boiled meat..." (III: 3749).
"(It means), 'Those lovers who risk all for love were boiling in the pot of love, became completely cooked, and eventually found (spiritual) perfection., But you... (who are) like dried meat have not passed from (the state of) rawness.'" The word translated as "cooked" [pokhta] is a sufi technical term meaning spiritually matured; the word "rawness" (or " being uncooked") means being spiritually immature-- still a beginner on the Path.

17. (1777) you are more increased (in your ignorance): Nicholson translated, "thou art more ignorant..." And he explained, "Literally, 'greater upstarts,' i.e. more uninitiated and uninformed." (Footnote)

18. (1778) But you have gone backwards, O quarrelsome blind man [kôr-é ludd]: Nicholson translated, "blind fool." "(It means), 'But what is strange in this (case) is that, O more foolish than a fool, you have gone backwards every day and

decreased (in your progress).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (1779) there isn't (any profit from) the experience of (being advised by) your parents: Nicholson translated, "Verily thou hast learned nothing from thy parents." And he explained: "I.e. 'You complain of tribulation and ignore God's loving-kindness shown in the fond care and affection of your parents and countless other blessings bestowed on you every day and night'." (Commentary)

20. (1779) the lessons (given) by night and day: "(It means) contrary conditions... like night and day... grief and happiness, poverty and wealth.... Just like when the night of the (life of this) world has passed, the day of the Hereafter will arrive. Necessarily, during the 'day' of the Hereafter, the truths of everything and the thoughts and secrets of every one will become visible. Therefore, various kinds of lessons should be gained from (the example of) day and night." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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Hikâyat dar taqrîr-é ân-ke Sabr dar ranj-é kâr sahl-tar
az Sabr dar firâq-é yâr bow-ad

1758 ân yakê zan shôy-é khwad-râ goft hay
ay maruwwat-râ ba-yak rah karda Tay

hêch tîmâr-am na-mê-dâr-î cherâ
tâ ba-kay bâsh-am dar-în khwâriy-é charâ?

1760 goft shô man nafqa châra mê-kon-am
gar-che `ûr-am dast-o payê mê-zan-am

nafqa-wo kiswah-st wâjib, ay Sanam
az man-at în har dô hast-o nêst kam

âstin-é pêrahan be-n'mûd zan
bas dorosht-o por-wasakh bod pêrahan

goft az sakhtî tan-am-râ mê-khwor-ad
kas kasê-râ kiswah z-în sân âwar-ad?

goft ay zan yak sû'âl-at mê-kon-am
mard-é darwêsh-am, ham-în âmad fan-am

1765 în dorosht-ast-o ghalîZ-o nâ-pasand
lêk be-'ndêsh ay zan-é andêsha-mand
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în dorosht-o zesh-tar yâ khwad Talâq
în to-râ makrûh-tar yâ khwad firâq?

ham-chon-ân ay khwâja-yé tashnî`-zan
az balâ-wo faqr-o az ranj-o miHan

lâ-shak în tark-é hawâ talkhî-deh-ast
lêk az talkhîy-é bu`d-é Haq beh-ast

gar jihâd-o Sawm sakht-ast-o khashin
lêk în beh-tar ze-bu`d-é mumtaHin

1770 ranj kay mân-ad damê ke Zû 'l-minan
gôy-ad-at chûn-î tô, ay ranjûr-é man?

w-ar na-gôy-ad, ke-t na ân fahm-o fan-ast
lêk ân Zawq-é tô porsesh-kardan-ast

ân malîH-ân ke Tabîb-ân-é del-and
sôy-é ranjûr-ân ba-porsesh mâyil-and

w-ar HaZar az nang-o az nâmî kon-and
châra'yé sâz-and-o payghâmê kon-and

w-ar-na dar del-shân bow-ad ân muftakar
nêst ma`shûqê ze-`âshiq bê-khabar

1775 ay tô jôyây-é nawâdir dâstân
ham fosâna-yé `ishq-bâz-ân-râ be-khwân

bas be-jôshîd-î dar în `ahd-é madîd
tork-jôsh-î ham na-gasht-î ay qadîd

dîda-î `umrê tô dâd-o dâwarî
w-ân-gah az nâ-dîd-agân nâshî-tar-î

har-ke shâgerdî-sh kard, ostâd shod
tô sepas-tar rafta-î, ay kôr-é lud

1779 khwad na-b'w-ad az wâlidayn-at ikhtibâr
ham na-b'w-ad-at `ibrat az layl-o nahâr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Peace and War As Manifested by Divine Attributes

Mathnawi VI:1847-1848, 1851-1852

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1847 This Creator (of ours) is the One Who Brings Low and the One Who Elevates.[1] No action arises without these two (Divine Attributes).

1848 Observe the lowliness of the earth and the loftiness of the heavens: (the heavens') revolution would not exist without these two (qualities), O so-and-so.

. . . . . .

1851 (Due to) the lowly and elevated (qualities) of this mixed (physical) constitution (of ours), sometimes (there is) health, (and) sometimes sickness with (painful) groans and cries.

1852 Know that all the conditions of the world (exist) in the same way, (such as) famine and drought, peace and war -- because of (Divine) test and trial.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 5/23/02

Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](1847) One Who Brings Low and the One Who Elevates: "The Creator is the Abaser [khâfiZ] and Exalter [râfi`] (and) these two names are among His "Most Beautiful Names" [Qur'an 7:180; 17:110; 59:24; 20:8]. That Eternal King is such that He is always the Contractor [qâbiZ] and the Expander [bâsiT], as well as the Abaser and the Exalter." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

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1847 khâfiZ-ast-o râfi`-ast în kard-gâr
bê az-în dô bar-na-y-ây-ad hêch kâr

1848 khafZ-é arZî bîn-o raf`-é âsmân
bê az-în dô nêst dawran-sh, ay folân

. . . . . .

1851 khafZ-o raf`-é în mazâj-é muntazij
gâh SiHHat, gâh ranjûriy-é muZij

1852 ham-chon-în dân jumla-yé aHwâl-é jahân
qaHT-o jadb-o SulH-o jang az iftitân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Speaking About Divine Oneness Leads to Duality

Mathnawi VI:2034-2037

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2034 That (Divine) Oneness is (far) from the direction of (verbal) description and circumstance, (since nothing) except duality[1] enters the arena of talking.

2035 Either drink this duality,[2] like a squinting man (who sees double), or close (your) mouth and become very quiet.[3]

Or (be) sometimes quiet and sometimes speaking,[4] by turn, (and) pound the drum[5] in the manner of a squinting man--and peace (be upon you)!

2037 (But) if you see a (spiritual) confidant,[6] (then) speak the soul's secret. (Likewise, if) you see a rose, cry out (and sing) like the nightingales.[7]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard, 6/1/03 (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

[1](2034) except duality: "If an asserter of unity says, 'I am describing God Most High with the quality of Unity' (and) at that time begins

speaking, necessarily he is imagining and indicating [something separate because] of duality." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)
"'The reality of tawhíd [= Divine Unity] is silence outwardly and inwardly' (Ibnu 'l-`Arabí) [= the sufi genius who died in 1240, in his "FutûHât al-Makiyya"]. Any verbal profession involves the existence of a muwahhid [= somebody who makes an assertion of unity] and a muwahhad [= something described as singular], i.e. virtually a denial of Unity..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

[2](2035) either drink this duality: "Either listen to speech connected to Unity--which is caused by duality, like those who see double..." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[3](2035) become very quiet: "in the manner of a knower (of Reality)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[4](2036) sometimes speaking: "Then if, for the sake of teaching students, speaking words is necessary... when you utter any amount of speech about Unity, it isn't devoid of the delusion of being a duality. And those who have remained in duality are unable to (truly) understand what Unity is, and they can't comprehend this subtle point." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[5](2036) pound the drum: "If you happen to be among double-seeing people, speak in the manner of squinting people and pound the drum in the manner of those (polytheists) who associate (God with) partners. That (is also) the moment when those who possess 'hidden polytheism' [= worship of the idol of ego] come near you and surround you." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[6](2037) a (spiritual) confidant: "But if you see someone (who is) an intimate companion of the secret of Reality and a confidant of [direct] knowledge of (Divine) Unity, speak the soul's secret to him and unveil the mystery of the treasure of (Divine) Oneness for his sake. One should not search for the treasure of Reality like that dervish [= in the story where these verses occur] in the desert [who went to look for the famous sufi shaykh, Abû Hasan Kharraqânî], since the essential meaning and purpose of everything which exists is (known) in the midst of the soul." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

[7](2037) like the nightingales: refers to the metaphor of the nightingale, which symbolizes the sufi lover of God, which sings out of passionate love for the rose, which symbolizes God, the Beautiful Beloved. "If you see a close companion like a rose, sing loudly like the nightingales, because he is a mirror for you and you have explained by words and speech his own essence and

attributes. (So) whatever he says to you and whatever you say to him is suitable and permissible." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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2034 ân yakiyê z-ân sôy-é waSf-ast-o Hâl
joz dû'î n-ây-ad ba maydân-é maqâl

2035 yâ chô aHwal în dû'î-râ nûsh kon
yâ dahân bar dûz-o khûsh khâmûsh kon

yâ ba-nawbat, gah sukût-o gah kalâm
aHwalâna Tabl mê-zan, wa 's-salâm

2037 chûn be-bîn-î maHramê, gû sirr-é jân
gol be-bîn-î, na`ra zan chûn bolbol-ân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Mouse and the Frog (part one)

Mathnawi VI: 2632-2639, 2665-2685

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The story of the attachment of a mouse and a frog:[2] both BR> of their feet were tied (together)with a long string, the crow BR> carryied the frog up (into the air), the frog was dangled BR> (from above), and his lamenting and regretted the BR> attachment with (one) other than (his own) kind and not BR> making (attachment) with his own kind.

2632 By destiny,[2] a mouse and a loyal frog had become acquainted (with each other) on the bank of a river.

Both individuals were bound (together) by a fixed time (of meeting), (and) they were coming to a certain corner every morning.

`They were playing (the game of) "backgammon of the heart"[3] with each other (and) they cleansed (their) hearts of (any) evil thoughts (about each other).

2635 From the (daily) encounter, the hearts of both (became) expanded (with happiness), (and they were) story-tellers and
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listeners to each other--

Tellers of secrets with the tongue and without the
tongue (and) knowers of the interpretation of (the saying of
the Prophet), "The gathering together (of the believers) is
a Mercy (from God)."[4]

When that joyous (mouse) would associate with that happy
(frog), a story (the length) of "five years"[5] would come to
mind for him.

The surging of speech from the heart is a sign of
(close) friendship, (whereas) the blockage of speech is due
to a lack of friendship.

2639 The heart which has seen the beloved will never stay
sour. (And) a nightingale (which) has seen the rose will
never stay silent.[6]

. . . . . .

The mouse planned with the frog, saying, "I am unable to
come to you in the water at the time of (my) need (for
contact). There should be a bond of union between us so that
I will be able to inform you when I come to the river bank
and you will be able to inform me when you come to the
hole (leading to) the mouse's house," and so on.

2665 This topic [about the flow of speech][7] has no end. The
mouse said to the frog one day, "O lamp of understanding!

"(Some) times I wish that I could speak secrets to you,
(but) you are roving (around) in the water.

"I'm on the river bank shouting for you (but) you don't
hear the lamenting cries of lovers, (since you're) in the
water.

"O fearless one! At the appointed time, I don't (ever)
become satiated from talking with you."

The ritual prayer is (appointed) five times (a day),[8]
(but) the guide for the lovers (of God) is (the verse),
"(Those who are) continually in their prayer."[9]

2670 The wine-sickness[10] which is in those heads gets no
soothing with five (times of prayer), nor (with) five

hundred thousand (times).

"Visit once a week"[11] is not the daily allowance of the lovers (of God), (for) the souls of the sincere and true (lovers) are extremely thirsty (and always craving more).[12]

"Visit once a week" is not the daily allowance of the fish, because they don't have spiritual friendship without the ocean.[13]

The water of this ocean,[14] which is (in) a vast place, is but a single gulp to the wine-sickness of (those) fish.[15]

One moment of separation (is) like a year for the lover, (and even) continuous union for a year (is like) a (brief) day dream to him.[16]

2675 Love[17] is (continually) craving to drink,[18] (and is) seeking an (equally) thirsty (lover); this one and that one (are) following in each other's tracks, like day and night.[19]

Day is the lover of the night and (its state) is agitated and desperate. (And) if you look, the night is (even) more in love with it.[20]

They are not (resting) from seeking for a moment, nor are they (resting) for a single instant from following each other.

This one (has) grabbed the foot of that one (and) that one (has grabbed) the ear of this one. This one is (made) amazed and faint by that one (and) that one is (made) crazed and unconscious[21] by this one.

The lover is all and everything within the beloved's heart. Wamiq is always in the heart of (his beloved) Azra.[22]

2680 (And) there is nothing in the heart of the lover except the beloved; there is no divider or separator within their midst.

Both of these bells[23] are on a single camel-- so how can (the saying) "Visit once a week" fill (the needs of) these two?

No one has ever made a "visit once a week" to himself, nor was anyone ever friends with himself periodically.

That Oneness (is) not (that) which the intellect can understand; the understanding of this depends upon the (spiritual) death of a man.[24]

And if the understanding of this (Oneness) were possible for the intellect, there would have been no reason for the requirement[25] of harsh severity toward the ego-mind.[26]

2685 The King of the mind[27] would never say (in the Qur'an), without necessity, "Slay yourselves (since that will be better for you)"[28] -- with such (Infinite) Mercy that He has.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 10/25/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) The story of the attachment of a mouse and a frog: "This allegory of the soul and its 'bad companion' (see vv. 2735-2737 infra) [which Nicholson translated: "The body is like a string (tied) on the foot of the soul, drawing it (down) from Heaven to earth. When the frog-like soul escapes from the mouse-like body into the water, (which is) the sleep of unconsciousness, it enters into a happy state; (But) the mouse-like body pulls it back with that string: how much bitterness does the soul taste from this pulling!"] is founded on the so-called Aesopian fable to which Dante alludes (Inferno, XXIII 4-6). 'A frog having offered to carry a mouse across a piece of water, tied it to its leg; but when they got half-way, the frog treacherously dived and the mouse was drowned. Suddenly a kite swooped down and devoured both of them'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (2632) By destiny: Nicholson translated idiomatically, "As it happened..." "(It means), 'By the Divine Decree." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (2634) They were playing (the game of) "backgammon of the heart": Nicholson translated, "they played heart-and-soul with one another..." And he explained: ""Literally, "played the backgammon of the heart." (Footnote)

4. (2636) "The gathering together (of the believers) is a Mercy (from God)": a saying of the Prophet Muhammad [al-jamâ`ah raHmah]. " Nicholson translated (here and in I: 3017), "A united party is a (Divine) Mercy." However, he suggested that, "'Union' is perhaps a better rendering of jamá`at in this Hadíth." (Commentary)

"If it is asked how the mouse and frog knew the interpretation (of the saying, 'Gathering together is a Mercy (from God),' and how they were (able to) tell secrets to each other, the answer is: The intended meaning of the mouse is the follower of (external) forms, because he is the greedy possessor of the mouse's character and nature. The intended meaning of the frog is the follower of the (sufi) path [Tarîqat] and the posessor of goodness, obedience and worship of God, and (spiritual) knowledge and mystical knowledge [ma`rifat]-- because he is a dweller in the river way and has these acquaintances. Any time that a follower of (external) forms becomes attached to a follower of goodness and the (sufi) path and develop friendship, (harmful) situations are never evaded in this manner." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (2537) a story (the length) of "five years": an idiom meaning a very lengthy story, so long it would take five years to tell.

6. (2539) a nightingale (which) has seen the rose will never stay silent: a common metaphor in Persian literature, in which the nightingale is viewed as the lover who sings songs of longing love to his beloved, the rose.

7. (2665) This topic [about the flow of speech]: refers to Rumi's comments (just prior) about the surging of speech from the heart, especially from the hearts of the Prophets.

8. (2669) The ritual prayer is (appointed) five times (a day): "And keep up the ritual prayer at the two ends of the day and during the approaches of the night." (Qur'an 11:114) This is a general prescription, and the specific times were taught by the Prophet Muhammad: between the first light of dawn until just before sunrise; just after the sun passes noon until shadows of things are doubled; after the shadows of things are doubled until the sun first starts to disappear; just after the sunset until the disappearance of the twilight; after the disappearance of the twilight until the first light of dawn (but preferably done about an hour

and a half after sunset or prior to midnight). The Persian word, "namâz," is used here which is a translation of the Arabic term, "Salât." It consists of a set of ritual positions (done either alone or, preferably, in a group): standing, bowing with hands on the knees, prostration of one's forehead and nose to the ground/floor, and sitting.

9. (2669) "(Those who are) continually in their prayer": "Except those who pray (devotedly) [muSallîn]-- those who are continually at their prayer [Salâti-him]." (Qur'an 70:22-23). Rumi altered the words slightly for metrical purposes. "Cf. the Hadíth al-insánu fí salát-in má dáma yantaziru 'l-saláta [= A man is continuing in the (ritual) prayer who waits (eagerly) for the (next) prayer]; but of course Rúmí interprets 'continuing in (the ritual) prayer' as dawám-i dhikr ú musháhadah" [= continuous remembrance and contemplation (of God)]. (Nicholson, Commentary) "A lover (of God) whose behavior, while expecting the appointed times of the ritual prayer (to begin), is contemplating the Beloved and who finds complete delight and pleasure in prayer-- such a lover is continuously in the state of the ritual prayer. Just as the Prophet-- may the blessings and peace of God be upon him-- said, 'A man is continuing in the (ritual) prayer who waits (eagerly) for the (next) prayer.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

"The (general) believers have been satisfied and content with the performance of ritual prayers five times during the appointed times (every day), imploring God (for favors). But the lovers (of God) are always in the ritual prayer [namâz] and have continual (engagement) in the ritual prayer-- since God Most High has said: 'And they are watchful guardians over (the faithful performance of) their ritual prayers'." (Qur'an 6:92; 23:9; 70:34) (Anqaravi, Commentary)

10. (2770) wine-sickness [khumâr]: this refers to the various effects of drinking wine: including agitated intoxication, drowsy languor, headache, stomach disturbances, and thirst. "Nicholson translated, "The wine-headache that is in those heads..." Here it means restless and incessant spiritual yearning for God, the only Beloved.

11. (2671) Visit once a week: "The Hadíth [= saying of the Prophet Muhammad], zur ghibb-an tazdad hubb-an [= Visit once a week (so that) you may increase love], implying that 'absence makes the heart grow fonder', is a maxim for the worldly-wise." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Therefore the Tradition, "Visit once a week" is for the sake of the people of a (worldly) temperament, since people with a (normal) constitution become (easily) bored with anything they experience. But the people of Love increase their love, little by little, with any amount (of time) they encounter their Beloved and (with) any amount (of time) they speak to Him." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (2671) extremely thirsty (and always craving more): refers to a type of edema (the old-fashioned term was "dropsy"), a medical condition in which the patient frequently craves and/or begs for more water to relieve a thirst which is not satisfied (and liquids must be restricted so that the edema, or bloatedness of the belly is not increased further).

"For the comparison of the `áshiq [= lover] to a man suffering from dropsy, see III 3884 sqq. The mystical doctrine enunciated here has been set forth in the Story of the Wakíl of Bukhárá: see especially III 4389-4399, 4442-444, with the notes ad loc., and III 4597-4600." (Nicholson Commentary)

13. (2672) they don't have spiritual friendship without the ocean: Nicholson translated less literally, "they feel no spiritual joy without the Sea."

14. (2673) ocean: "The meaning of "ocean" here: it is the ocean of worship [Tâ`at] and love [maHabbat] (of God).

15. (2673) is only a single gulp for the wine-sickness of (those) fish: Nicholson translated, "Notwithstanding the crop-sickness of the fishes, the water of this Sea, which is a tremendous place, is but a single draught (too little to satisfy them)." Nicholson referred to his comments on Mathnawi I: 17 ("Anyone other than a fish became satiated by water"): "Infinite Divine grace is to the gnostic [= mystic knower] what water is to the fish, but his thirst can never be quenched." (Commentary)

16. (2674) continuous union for a year (is like) a (brief) day dream to him: "A union which declines and fades is like an mental fantasy and day dream for the lover. The lover wants continuous and lasting union." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

17. (2675) Love: Nicholson interpreted the word "Love" [`ishq] here as meaning the beloved [ma`shûq]. "It means: In

reality, Love is very thirsty for the lover and is in search of the lover and, like day and night, Love and the lover are following one another." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

18. (2675) is (continually) craving to drink [mustasqî-st]: there is evidently a typographical error in Tôfîq SubHânî's edition of the earliest manuscript of the Masnavi (he has "mustaqî-st" in contrast to Nicholson's edition).

19. (2675) following in each other's tracks, like day and night: this is a metaphor which occurs a number of times in the Qur'an. "O God... You make the night to enter into the day and You make the day to enter into the night." (3:26)

Nicholson also referred to Mathnawi III: 4417-19, which he translated: "Likewise night and day are in mutual embrace: (they are) different in appearance, but (are really) in agreement. Day and night, outwardly, are two contraries and enemies, but they both attend on one truth--Each desiring the other, like kinsfolk, for the sake of perfecting their action and work."

20. (2676) (even) more in love with it: Anqaravi quotes a Persian verse: "Although the lovers are yearning for the beauty of the beloved, the beloveds are (even) more in love with the lovers than the lovers (are with them)." [`âshiq-ân har-chand mushtâq-é jamâl-é del-bar-and/ del-bar-ân bar `âshiq-ân az `âshiq-ân `âshiq-tar-and] (Commentary)

21. (2678) (made) amazed and faint... (made) crazed and unconscious: a word play between "amazed/faint" [madhûsh] and "crazed/unconscious" [bê-hôsh].

22. (2679) Wamiq is always in the heart of (his beloved) Azra: "Wámiq is the hero and `Adhrá the heroine of a love-romance by `Unsurí, of which only a few verses have been preserved." (Nicholson, Commentary)

23. (2681) Both of these bells: i.e. 'lover' and 'beloved' are really nothing but names for different aspects of the One Essence (Love).

24. (2683) the understanding of this depends upon the (spiritual) death of a man: Nicholson translated, "the apprehension of this (oneness) depends on a man's dying (to self)."

25. (2684) the requirement: means a requirement, in general,

to discipline the selfish desires of the ego. More specifically, it means that it is a requirement for the mystics to annihilate their own egos in order to experience transcendent spiritual reality. In other words, the mind has to cease thinking in order for transcence of the mind to begin at the first stages. "Although killing one's [bodily] self is not required of the servant (of God)... it is known that putting an end to the desires and cravings of the self [nafs] and killing it in the Path to the Divine [Tarîq-é ilâhî]-- and prior to the arrival of (bodily) death-- is required of the servant (of God)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

26. (2684) harsh severity toward the ego-mind [nafs]: "combat" against the craving ego-mind is obligatory for sufis. Because of the cravings of the base self, man often chooses to go astray, and by it Satan leads man astray as well. According to a tradition [Hadîth] of the Prophet Muhammad, after returning with his army, following a battle against the polytheists (who sought to annihilate all the Muslim monotheists), he announced: "We have come from the Lesser Struggle [jiHâdu 'l-aSghar] to the Greater Struggle [jiHâdu 'l-akbar]," meaning the struggle against the base self and its selfish passions. The Prophet also said, "Your worst enemy is your (base) self which is between your two sides."

27. (2685) The King of the mind: means the Creator of the human mind and intellect. Nicholson translated, "King of intellect."

28. (2685) "Slay yourselves (since that will be better for you)": this is a sufi interpretation of a verse which relates how Moses was ordered by God to tell those of his followers who worshipped the golden calf to kill themselves as a punishment for their infidelity. "O my people! Truly you have harmed yourselves by taking the calf (as a god besides God), so turn in repentance toward your Sustaining Lord and kill your selves [anfusa-kum]. That will be better for you in the presence of your Creator." (2:54) Although this is clearly a reference to the mass slaughter commanded by Moses in Exodus 32: 27-28), the account is milder in the Qur'an. And due to the fact that there is a prior command to repent, it has been understood by some commentators as metaphorical. Therefore, it has been translated as "mortify yourselves" (Muhammad Asad) and "kill your passions" (Muhammad Ali). The sufis take this verse by itself and interpret it as a command to kill the ego-self which dominates the human mind and will.

"Slaying of the base self [nafs] and passing away from (attachment) to 'me and us' is the means to understanding this Unity." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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Hikâyat-é ta`alluq-é mûsh bâ chaghz wa bastan-é pay-é har dô ba-reshta-yé darâz wa bar kashîdan-é zâgh mûsh-râ wa mu`allaq-shodan chaghz wa nâlîdan wa pashîmânî-yé ô az ta`alluq bâ ghayr-é jins wa bâ jins-é khwad nâ-sâkhtan

2632 az qaZâ mûshê-wo chaghzê bâ-wafâ
bar lab-é jô gashta bûd-and âshnâ

har dô tan marbûT-é mîqâtê shod-and
har SabâHê gôsha'yê mê-âmad-and

nard-é del bâ ham-degar mê-bâkht-and
az wasâwis sîna mê-pardâkht-and

2635 har dô-râ del az talâqî muttasi`
ham-degar-râ qiSSa-khwân-o mustami`

râz-gôyân bâ-zabân-o bê-zabân
al-jamâ`ah raHmah-râ tâ'wîl-dân

ân ashir chûn joft-é ân shâd âmady
panj sâla qiSSa-ash yâd âmady

jôsh-é nuTq az del neshân-é dôstî-st
bastagîy-é nuTq az bê-ulfatî-st

2639 del ke del-bar dîd, kay mân-ad torosh
bolbolê gol dîd, kay mân-ad khamosh?

. . . . . .

tadbîr-kardan-é mûsh ba-chaghz ke man na-mê-tawân-am bar-é tô âmadan ba-waqt-é Hâjat dar âb, miyân-é mâ wuSlatê bây-ad ke chûn man bar lab-é jô ây-am to-râ tawân-am khabar-kardan wa tô chûn bar sar-é sôrâkh-é mûsh-khâna ây-î ma-râ tawân-î khabar-kardan, ilà âkhirah

2665 în sokhon pây-ân na-dâr-ad, goft mûsh
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chaghz-râ rôzê ke ay miSbâH-é hôsh

waqt-hâ khwâh-am ke gôy-am bâ tô râz
tô darûn-é âb dâr-î tork-tâz

bar lab-é jô man to-râ na`ra-zanân
na-sh'naw-î dar âb nâla-yé `âshiq-ân

man ba-d-în waqt-é mu`ayyan ay delêr
mê-na-gard-am az muHâkât-é tô sêr

panj waqt âmad namâz-o rah-namûn
`âshiq-ân-râ fî Salât-in dâ'imûn

2670 na ba-panj ârâm gîr-ad ân khumâr
ke dar ân sar-hâ-st, nê pânSad hazâr

nêst zur ghibb-an waZîfa-yé `âshiq-ân
sakht mustasqî-st jân-é Sâdiq-ân

nêst zur ghibb-an waZîfa-yé mâhiy-ân
z-ân-ke bê-daryâ na-dâr-and uns-é jân

âb-é în daryâ ke Hâyil-buq`a'yê-st
bâ khumâr-é mâhiy-ân khwad jur`a'ê-st

yak-dam-é hijrân bar-é `âshiq chô sâl
waSl-é sâlê mutaSSil pêsh-ash khayâl

2675 `ashq mustasqî-st, mustasqî-Talab
dar pay-é ham în-o ân chûn rôz-o shab

rôz bar shab `âshiq-ast-o muZTar-ast
chûn be-bîn-î shab bar-ô `âshiq-tar-ast

nêst-eshân az jost-jô yak laHZa'ê-st
az pay-é ham-shân yakê damê-st nêst

în gerefta pây-é ân, ân gôsh-é în
în bar ân madhûsh-o ân bê-hôsh-é în

dar del-é ma`shûq jumla `âshiq-ast
dar del-é `aZrâ hamêsha wâmiq-ast

2680 dar del-é `âshiq ba-joz ma`shûq nêst
dar meyân-shân fâriq-o fârûq nêst

bar yakê oshtor bow-ad în dô darâ

pas che zur ghibb-an be-gonj-ad în dô-râ?

hêch kas bâ-khwêsh zur ghibb-an namûd
hêch kas bâ-khwad ba-nawbat yâr bûd?

ân yakîyê na ke `aql-ash fahm kard
fahm-é în mûqûf shod bar marg-é mard

w-ar ba-`aql idrâk-é în mumkin body
qahr-é nafs az bahr-é che wâjib shody?

2685 bâ chon-ân raHmat ke dâr-ad shâh-é hosh
bê-Zarûrat chûn be-gôy-ad nafs kosh?

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Mathnawi VI: 2686-2713

The Mouse and the Frog (part two)

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2690 "For me there are a hundred thousand intense desires to drink within (my) belly.[1] (And) every intense desire for drink (is) connected with (a feeling of) insatiable appetite.[2]

"O prince, you are independent of (any) need (to pay attention) to my sorrows. (But) look upon this poor one and offer the required charity for (your high) rank.[3]

"This ill-mannered poor one is unworthy (of your grace), but your widespread kindness is greater than that (unworthiness).

"Your widespread kindness is not (in need of) seeking authorization. (For) the sun continues to shine upon excrement:[4]

"There is never any loss to its light because of it. And the dung becomes fuel because of (its resulting) dryness--

2695 "So that (when) dung goes into the bath-stove, it becomes light and shines upon the door and walls of a bath house.

"It was an impurity; now it has become a decoration,[5] since the sun recited that spell upon it.[6]

"The sun also makes the belly of the earth warm, until the earth absorbs (any) remaining excrements.

"They become parts of earthy (matter), and vegetation grows from it. In the same way, God erases sin and corruption.[7]

"He does this to excrement, which is the worst (of substances), (so) that He can make it (into) plants and narcissus and jonquil (flowers).

2700 "Since (you can see) what God gives in (regard to) reward and benefit to the jonquil (which is) pious in (its) faithfulness.

"If He gives such a robe (of honor) to the vile and corrupt things, what will He give the pure and righteous in (His) place of observation?[8]

"God gives them what "no eye has seen"[9] (and) which cannot be received by the tongue or in speech.

"Who are we in regard to this?[10] O my friend! Come make my day shining by means of (your) good character.

"Don't look at my ugliness or repulsiveness[11]-- since I am full of poison[12] like the mountain snake.

2705 "Oh (see) that I am ugly and all my qualities (are) ugly. (But) since He planted me (to become) a thorn, I can never be a rose.

"(So) give the spring-time beauty of the rose to the thorn, (and) give the elegant beauty of the peacock to this snake!

"In the perfection of ugliness, I am (at) the utmost limit, (whereas) your kindness is at the utmost limit in virtue and skill.

"O (you who are) the envy of the straight (and tall) cypress tree! Relieve the need (desired) by this one accomplished (in ugliness) from that one accomplished (in kindness)!

"When I die, your kindness[13] will weep for the sake of (wishing) benevolence-- even though it is free of (any) need (to do so).

2710 "It will sit at the edge of my grave (for a) long (time) (and) tears will spring from its gentle eyes.

"It will mourn over my being deprived (of attractiveness) (and) it will close (its) eyes from (the sight of) my being oppressed (by ugliness).

"(But) grant a few of those kindnesses now (and) put in my ear a ring[14] (made) of those (gentle) words!

2713 "That which you will say to the dust of my (grave)-- scatter it (at this time)[15] upon my awareness (so) full of grief!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2690) belly: literally, "liver." Illness of the liver was believed to cause "dropsy," or insatiable thirst (now called a type of edema).

2. (2690) (a feeling of) insatiable appetite: "(It means) an illness in which the sick person does not feel satisfied with eating any amount (of food)." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (2691) offer the required charity for (your high) rank: the word used here is "zakât," one of the Five Pillars of Islam-- and therefore a requirement (Qur'an 2:177, 277; 5:58). Once a year, those who have property and/or cash are required to pay a small percentage (about 2.5%) to the poor. This is considered as a "purification" of one's earnings, an expression of gratitude to God for the bounties received, and a blessing to the giver as well as the receiver.

Nicholson interpreted "charity to the poor" as a metaphor, per his comment on another line in the Masnavi (I: 1795, which he translated, "Pay the tithe on Thy fair face, O Beauteous One..."): "i.e. bestow on me who am a beggar to Thy sovereign beauty the alms of Thy grace and love: tell how my soul is purged of all but Thee'." (Commentary)

4. (2693) the sun continues to shine upon excrement: "(It means), any faults, defects can never reach the pure light (of the sun); injury and loss can't enter it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (2696) It was an impurity; now it has become a decoration: "Therefore, the (spiritual) training of those cherished ones (of spiritual mastery), who are (like) the Sun of Spiritual Reality, can make individuals of evil nature and foul conduct worthy of the light of the fire of love. Then they discover (their) worthiness of that (light caused) by their being burned in the bathstove of austerity, so that they are the 'decorations and ornaments of the bath' of created beings.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (2696) since the sun recited that spell upon it: Nicholson translated, "since the sun chanted that spell (exerted that powerful influence) upon it."

7. (2698) God erases sin and corruption [yamHû 'l-'ilâhu 's-sayyi'ât]: this Arabic phrase contains Qur'anic words. "God erases [yamHû 'llâh] what He Wills..." (13:39) "It means, 'Just as dung becomes a piece of earth, and from it pure and clean vegetation grows from it, God Most High also changes the bad qualities of His servants into good qualities-- as He said: 'For (in regard to) them, God will change their sins [sâyyi'ât-ihim] into good. And God is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Compassionate.'" [= Qur'an 25: 70] (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (2701) (His) place of observation [raSâd]: "i.e. in the `álamu 'l-ghayb [= Unseen World], where God observes all the actions of His creatures: cf. Qur. LXXXIX 13." [= "Truly, your Lord is in a place of observation (mirSâd)."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (2702) what "no eye has seen": from a (non-Qur'anic) "Divine saying" [hadîthu 'l-qudsî], "I have prepared for My righteous servants that which no eye has seen and no ear has heard, and which has not been imagined by the human heart." Nicholson transliterated it (a`dadtu li-`ibádí 'l-sálihina má lá `ayn-un ra'at wa-lá udhun-un sami`at wa-lá khatara `alá qalbi bashar-in) and pointed out the similarity to I Corinthians 2:9 [which combines Isaiah 64:3 ("No ear has heard, no eye has seen") and Jeremiah 3:16 ("neither shall it come to mind")] (Commentary) This is similar to a verse in the Qur'an: "So no one can know what (blissful) delight of the eyes is kept hidden for them [in Paradise] as a reward for what (good deeds) they have done." (32:17)

10. (2703) Who are we in regard to this: "It means, 'We are not worthy of all this grace and goodness (of Yours), and we are (as) nothing (in Your Presence).'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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12. (2704) full of poison: some types of frogs have powerful toxins in their skins.

13. (2709) your kindness: "The intended meaning of 'kindness' is the manifestation of Divine Grace, meaning the saints and the (mystic) knowers [`âlim-ân]. And if its meaning is addressed to someone lofty and noble, his kindness has resembled (Divine) mercy toward a human being." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

14. (2712) put in my ear a ring: slaves wore rings in their ears to make their status known. The meaning here is, "Make me the slave of of your kindness" (or, if interpreted as a prayer to God, "the slave of Your Kindness").

15. (2713) scatter it (at this time): "Here the mouse is represented as a sinner acknowledging his utter depravity and fixing all his hopes on the boundlessness of Divine grace. Cf. V 1835 sqq." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"Therefore, in this speech the intended meaning (is) concerning the believer-- that believer of bad (practice of) religion and ugly behavior who has (many) sins and disobediences (toward God), and confesses his offenses and presents his neediness, in the manner of an intimate prayer, to the (Heavenly) Court of God Most High: 'O Most Merciful of the merciful, Most Generous of the generous, and Sustaining Lord of (all) the worlds! The additional double-measure of Mercy and words of (Divine) Kindness which You will utter after my death, and the benevolent and generous things You will do for my sake after my being buried-- scatter a little of those mercies, favors, and kindnesses (right) now upon me (who am so) full of sorrow!-- so that my soul may find some tranquility and I may become revived and living by means of Your Goodness and Generosity.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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mubâligha-kardan-é mûsh dar lâba wa zârî wa wuSlat-jostan az chaghz-é abî

2686 goft k-ây yâr-é `azîz-é mehr-kâr
man na-dâr-am bê-rokh-at yak-dam qarâr

rôz nûr-o maksab-o tâb-am tow-î
shab qarâr-o salwat-o khwâb-am tow-î

az murûwat bâsh-ad ar shâd-am kon-î
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waqt-o bê-waqt az karam yâd-am kon-î

dar shab-ân-rôzî waZîfa-yé châsht-gâh
râtiba kard-î wiSâl, ay nêk-khwâh

pânSad istisqâ-st-am andar jegar
bâ har istisqâ qarîn-é jû` 'ul-baqar

bê-neyâz-î az gham-é man, ay amîr
deh zakât-é jâh-o be-n'gar dar faqîr

în faqîr-é bê-adab nâ-dar-khwar-ast
lêk luTf-é `âm-é tô z-ân bar-tar-ast

în faqîr-é bê-adab nâ-dar-khwar-ast
lêk luTf-é `âm-é tô z-ân bar-tar-ast

mê-na-jôy-ad luTf-é `âm-é tô sanad
âftâbê bar HadaS-hâ mê-zan-ad

nûr-é ô-râ z-ân zeyânê nâ-boda
w-ân HadaS az khoshkiyê hîzam shoda

tâ HadaS dar golkhanê shod nûr yâft
dar dar-o dêwâr-é Hammâmê be-tâft

bûd âlâyesh, shod ârâyesh konûn
chûn bar-ô bar-khwân-ad khworshêd ân fosûn

shams ham ma`da-yé zamîn-râ garm kard
tâ zamîn bâqî HadaS-hâ-râ be-khward

juzw-é khâkî gasht-o rost az way nabât
hâkaZâ yamHû 'l-'ilâhu 's-sayyi'ât

bâ HadaS ke bat-tarîn-ast în kon-ad
k-esh nabât-o narges-o nasrîn kon-ad

tâ ba-nasrîn-é manâsik dar wafâ
Haq che bakhsh-ad dar jazâ-wo dar `aTâ

chûn khabîS-ân-râ chôn-în khul`at deh-ad
Tayyibîn-râ tâ che bakhsh-ad dar raSad?

ân deh-ad Haq-shân ke lâ `ayn-un ra'at
ke na-gonj-ad dar zabân-o dar lughat

mâ kay-êm în-râ? be-yâ ay yâr-é man

rôz-é man rôshan kon az khulq-é Hasan

ma-n'gar andar zeshtî-wo makrûhiy-am
ke ze por-zahrî chô mâr-é kôhiy-am

2705 ay ke man zesht-o khiSâl-am jumla zesht
chûn shaw-am gol? chûn ma-râ ô khâr-kesht

naw-bahâr-é Husn-é gol deh khâr-râ
zînat-é Tâwûs deh în mâr-râ

dar kamâl-é zeshtiy-am man muntahà
luTf-é tô dar faZl-o dar fan muntahà

Hâjat-é în muntahî z-ân muntahî
tô bar âr, ay Hasrat-é sarw-é sahî

chûn be-mîr-am faZl-é tô khwâh-ad gerîst
az karam, gar-che ze-hâjat ô barî-st

2710 bar sar-é gôr-am basê khwâh-ad neshast
khwâh-ad az chashm-é laTîf-ash ashk jast

nawHa khwâh-ad kard bar maHrûmiy-am
chashm khwâh-ad bast az maZlûmiy-am

andakê z-ân luTf-hâ aknûn be-kon
Halqa'yê dar gôsh-é man kon z-ân sokhon

2713 ân-ke khwâh-î goft tô bâ khâk-é man
bar feshân bar madrak-é gham-nâk-é man

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Mathnawi VI: 2686-2713

The Mouse and the Frog (part two)

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The mouse insistied (upon), in (a state of) supplication
and humility, and sought a bond of union with the
water-frog

2686 (The mouse) said, "O dear and kind-acting friend, I have no rest for a moment without (seeing) your face.

"You are my light, means of livelihood, and strength (during) the day. (And during) the night, you are my tranquility, contentment, and sleep.

"If you would make me happy, it would be due to (your) manly generosity: (if) you would remember me at the (appointed) times and (also at) the not (appointed) times, (it would be) from (your) nobility.

"O well-wishing (friend)! You have rationed union in friendship (only for) the morning's stipend during the (whole) night and day.

2690 "For me there are a hundred thousand intense desires to drink within (my) belly.[1] (And) every intense desire for drink (is) connected with (a feeling of) insatiable appetite.[2]

"O prince, you are independent of (any) need (to pay attention) to my sorrows. (But) look upon this poor one and offer the required charity for (your high) rank.[3]

"This ill-mannered poor one is unworthy (of your grace), but your widespread kindness is greater than that (unworthiness).

"Your widespread kindness is not (in need of) seeking authorization. (For) the sun continues to shine upon excrement:[4]

"There is never any loss to its light because of it. And the dung becomes fuel because of (its resulting) dryness--

2695 "So that (when) dung goes into the bath-stove, it becomes light and shines upon the door and walls of a bath house.

"It was an impurity; now it has become a decoration,[5] since the sun recited that spell upon it.[6]

"The sun also makes the belly of the earth warm, until the earth absorbs (any) remaining excrements.

"They become parts of earthy (matter), and vegetation

grows from it. In the same way, God erases sin and corruption.[7]

"He does this to excrement, which is the worst (of substances), (so) that He can make it (into) plants and narcissus and jonquil (flowers).

2700 "Since (you can see) what God gives in (regard to) reward and benefit to the jonquil (which is) pious in (its) faithfulness.

"If He gives such a robe (of honor) to the vile and corrupt things, what will He give the pure and righteous in (His) place of observation?[8]

"God gives them what "no eye has seen"[9] (and) which cannot be received by the tongue or in speech.

"Who are we in regard to this?[10] O my friend! Come make my day shining by means of (your) good character.

"Don't look at my ugliness or repulsiveness[11]-- since I am full of poison[12] like the mountain snake.

2705 "Oh (see) that I am ugly and all my qualities (are) ugly. (But) since He planted me (to become) a thorn, I can never be a rose.

"(So) give the spring-time beauty of the rose to the thorn, (and) give the elegant beauty of the peacock to this snake!

"In the perfection of ugliness, I am (at) the utmost limit, (whereas) your kindness is at the utmost limit in virtue and skill.

"O (you who are) the envy of the straight (and tall) cypress tree! Relieve the need (desired) by this one accomplished (in ugliness) from that one accomplished (in kindness)!

"When I die, your kindness[13] will weep for the sake of (wishing) benevolence-- even though it is free of (any) need (to do so).

2710 "It will sit at the edge of my grave (for a) long (time) (and) tears will spring from its gentle eyes.

"It will mourn over my being deprived (of attractiveness) (and) it will close (its) eyes from (the sight of) my being oppressed (by ugliness).

"(But) grant a few of those kindnesses now (and) put in my ear a ring[14] (made) of those (gentle) words!

2713 "That which you will say to the dust of my (grave)-- scatter it (at this time)[15] upon my awareness (so) full of grief!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/1/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2690) belly: literally, "liver." Illness of the liver was believed to cause "dropsy," or insatiable thirst (now called a type of edema).

2. (2690) (a feeling of) insatiable appetite: "(It means) an illness in which the sick person does not feel satisfied with eating any amount (of food)." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (2691) offer the required charity for (your high) rank: the word used here is "zakât," one of the Five Pillars of Islam-- and therefore a requirement (Qur'an 2:177, 277; 5:58). Once a year, those who have property and/or cash are required to pay a small percentage (about 2.5%) to the poor. This is considered as a "purification" of one's earnings, an expression of gratitude to God for the bounties received, and a blessing to the giver as well as the receiver.

Nicholson interpreted "charity to the poor" as a metaphor, per his comment on another line in the Masnavi (I: 1795, which he translated, "Pay the tithe on Thy fair face, O Beauteous One..."): "i.e. bestow on me who am a beggar to Thy sovereign beauty the alms of Thy grace and love: tell how my soul is purged of all but Thee'." (Commentary)

4. (2693) the sun continues to shine upon excrement: "(It means), any faults, defects can never reach the pure light

(of the sun); injury and loss can't enter it." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

5. (2696) It was an impurity; now it has become a decoration: "Therefore, the (spiritual) training of those cherished ones (of spiritual mastery), who are (like) the Sun of Spiritual Reality, can make individuals of evil nature and foul conduct worthy of the light of the fire of love. Then they discover (their) worthiness of that (light caused) by their being burned in the bathstove of austerity, so that they are the 'decorations and ornaments of the bath' of created beings.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (2696) since the sun recited that spell upon it: Nicholson translated, "since the sun chanted that spell (exerted that powerful influence) upon it."

7. (2698) God erases sin and corruption [yamHû 'l-'ilâhu 's-sayyi'ât]: this Arabic phrase contains Qur'anic words. "God erases [yamHû 'llâh] what He Wills..." (13:39) "It means, 'Just as dung becomes a piece of earth, and from it pure and clean vegetation grows from it, God Most High also changes the bad qualities of His servants into good qualities-- as He said: 'For (in regard to) them, God will change their sins [sâyyi'ât-ihim] into good. And God is the Most-Forgiving, the Most-Compassionate.'" [= Qur'an 25: 70] (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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so that my soul may find some tranquility and I may become revived and living by means of Your Goodness and Generosity.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

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shab qarâr-o salwat-o khwâb-am tow-î

az murûwat bâsh-ad ar shâd-am kon-î
waqt-o bê-waqt az karam yâd-am kon-î

dar shab-ân-rôzî waZîfa-yé châsht-gâh
râtiba kard-î wiSâl, ay nêk-khwâh

2690 pânSad istisqâ-st-am andar jegar
bâ har istisqâ qarîn-é jû` 'ul-baqar

bê-neyâz-î az gham-é man, ay amîr
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mê-na-jôy-ad luTf-é `âm-é tô sanad
âftâbê bar HadaS-hâ mê-zan-ad

nûr-é ô-râ z-ân zeyânê nâ-boda
w-ân HadaS az khoshkiyê hîzam shoda

2695 tâ HadaS dar golkhanê shod nûr yâft
dar dar-o dêwâr-é Hammâmê be-tâft

bûd âlâyesh, shod ârâyesh konûn
chûn bar-ô bar-khwân-ad khworshêd ân fosûn

shams ham ma`da-yé zamîn-râ garm kard
tâ zamîn bâqî HadaS-hâ-râ be-khward
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juzw-é khâkî gasht-o rost az way nabât
hâkaZâ yamHû 'l-'ilâhu 's-sayyi'ât

bâ HadaS ke bat-tarîn-ast în kon-ad
k-esh nabât-o narges-o nasrîn kon-ad

2700 tâ ba-nasrîn-é manâsik dar wafâ
Haq che bakhsh-ad dar jazâ-wo dar `aTâ

chûn khabîS-ân-râ chôn-în khul`at deh-ad
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ân deh-ad Haq-shân ke lâ `ayn-un ra'at
ke na-gonj-ad dar zabân-o dar lughat

mâ kay-êm în-râ? be-yâ ay yâr-é man
rôz-é man rôshan kon az khulq-é Hasan

ma-n'gar andar zeshtî-wo makrûhiy-am
ke ze por-zahrî chô mâr-é kôhiy-am

2705 ay ke man zesht-o khiSâl-am jumla zesht
chûn shaw-am gol? chûn ma-râ ô khâr-kesht

naw-bahâr-é Husn-é gol deh khâr-râ
zînat-é Tâwûs deh în mâr-râ

dar kamâl-é zeshtiy-am man muntahà
luTf-é tô dar faZl-o dar fan muntahà

Hâjat-é în muntahî z-ân muntahî
tô bar âr, ay Hasrat-é sarw-é sahî

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Halqa'yê dar gôsh-é man kon z-ân sokhon

2713 ân-ke khwâh-î goft tô bâ khâk-é man
bar feshân bar madrak-é gham-nâk-é man

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Mouse and the Frog (part three)

Mathnawi VI: 2714-2725

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The mouse plead with the frog, saying, "Don't consider excuses, and don't start delaying the accomplishment of my wsh. For, "There are misfortunes in procrastination" and, "The sufi is the son of the (present) moment."[1] And a (young) son doesn't hold back (his) hand from (the hem of his) father's robe. And the sufi's kind father-- who is the (present) Moment-- doesn't make him needful in (regard to) looking toward tomorrow. (Rather), unlike common people, he keeps him so immersed in (observing) the garden of his quick judgment of accounts.[2] (The sufi) is not waiting for the future. He is a (presently flowing) river not (involving) time.[3] For, "With God, there is no morning and no evening"[4]-- there is no past, future, beginningless time, or endless time[5] there. (There), Adam is not before (in time) or the Antichrist[6] later (in time). Because these conventions (of thought) are (within) the (narrow) limits of the partial intellect[7] and the animal soul.[8] These conventions are not (existent) in the world of No-Place and No-Time.[9] Therefore, he is the son of a particular (present) moment, which is not to be understood as (something coming) from it-- (but) only (as) the negation of the distinction of (different) times. Similarly, (saying) "God is One"[10] is understood as the negation of any duality, not (as communicating) the reality of (Divine) Oneness.

2714 A (wealthy) gentleman (known for) silver-scattering (generosity) said to a sufi, "My soul is a carpet for your (blessed) feet![11]

2715 "O my king, do you wish for one silver coin today or three silver coins tomorrow morning?"

"He anwered, "I am more content with half a silver coin (received) yesterday than this (offer) today or (an offer of) a hundred silver coins tomorrow."[12]

(The mouse said), "A slap of immediate payment is better than a gift (which is) postponed. Now I have placed the back of (my) neck in front of you,[13] (so) give (me) the ready coin!

"Especially (better is) the slap which is from your hand, since the back of the neck as well as its slap are (ecstatically) drunk with you.[14]

"Hurry! Come (forward), O soul of (my) soul and (soul of) a hundred words! Happily take advantage of (offering) the ready cash of this moment.[15]

2720 "Don't steal that face of (yours lovely as) the (full) moon from night travelers. (And) don't draw your head from [casting its reflection upon] this river,[16] O flowing water--[17]

"So that the river bank may smile because of the flowing water[18] (and so that) every bank of the river may raise up jasmine flowers."

When you look at the river bank (full) of (ecstatically) drunk vegetation, then you may know from a distance that water exists there.

The Creator said, "Their marks (are upon their) faces"[19] -- since the green meadow is the tale-bearer of the (presence of) rain.

If it rains (at) night, no one ever sees (it) since every person and breath[20] is in (a deep) sleep.

2725 (Yet) the freshness of every lovely flower garden is proof of the rain hidden (by the night).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 11/8/01

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (Heading) "The sufi is the son of the (present) moment": Nicholson referred to his note on VI: 2406, "Here the

Moslem, speaking as a true Súfí, upholds immediate exerience (waqt) [= (the present) time] against procrastination..."
And also to his note on I: 133, "The Súfí is 'the son of the moment', i.e. subject to an dependent on the dominant state, mood, or emotion of the 'moment.' Cf. III 1426 sqq., VI 2714

2. (Heading). The former passage describes one who has not yet attained, the latter [= this very passage here] an adept who lives in the eternal Now. Shiblí [= an early sufi, died 846] said, 'A thousand past years multiplied by a thousand years to come are present (naqd) to thee in this 'moment' (waqt) in which thou art. Try not to be deceived by appearances.'"
And in regard to I: 132, he explained: "Waqt [= Time] is used here in one of its technical senses, viz. the moment of immediate experience of being under Divine control (tasríf), and this moment is compared to a sharp sword because 'it cuts the root of the future and the past and obliterates care of yesterday and to-morrow from the heart' (Kashf, Eng. 369 [= Nicholson's translation of Hujwiri's "Kashf-al-Mahjûb]), or because it comes irresistibly to execute the Divine decree." (Nicholson, Commentary)

"The sufi, like a small child who doesn't remove (his) hand from (the hem of) the robe of (his) father, he has strongly grabbed on the (present) Moment and will never remove his hand from (the present) Moment (and) will not look at the past or the future. Since (his) father is (so) loving-kind, the sufi has no need to be expectant towar tomorrow." (Anqaravi, the 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

3. (Heading): in (observing) the garden of his quick judgment of accounts: Nicholson translated, "in (contemplation of) the garden of his (the father's) swift (immediate) reckoning." And he added: "The phrase dar gulzár-i saríʻu 'l-hisábi-yi khwísh [= the above] in combination with nahrí [= a River] suggests that Rúmí may have had in mind Qur. LIV 54-55: inna 'l-muttaqína fí jannát-in wa-nahar-in fí maqʻadi sidq-in `inda malík-in muqtadir-in." [= Qur'an 54:34-35, "Truly, those who have pious fear and awe (of God) will be among Gardens and Rivers in the seat of Truth in the presence of an All-Powerful King."]

4. (Heading) He is a (presently flowing) river not (involving) time: "'River' symbolises the indivisible continuity of the spiritual world, where all things 'co-exist in an eternal Now'."(Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (Heading) With God, there is no morning and no evening: Nichoilson referred here to his note on I: 2201, "In the higher planes of mystical experience all relations, including those of time and space, are found to be unreal." (Commentary)

"It means, 'The sufi is a person who isn't looking to the past or (expecing) the future, like the common people. Instead, he is shining and holy and tranquil in nearness to God. And there is no night or day, past or future time, in nearness to God.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

6. (Heading) there is no... beginningless time, or endless time [azal wa abad]: these are two technical terms used in sufism. "Azal: that which has no beginning, but has an end. Abad: it is said that it has a beginning but has no end." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (Heading) the Antichrist [dajjal]: According to sayings [ahâdîth] attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, among the signs of the coming of the Day of Judgment will be the return of the Prophet Jesus (not Muhammad, interestingly). Jesus (who was taken bodily into Heaven) will descend to earth, kill the "one-eyed Antichrist," and die a natural death.

"On that level, there is no Adam preceding and no Antichrist following. In other words, Adam (who was) the father of humanity-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him--preceded all human beings. And the Antichrist, at the end of time, will come at the moment of the overthrowing of humanity [= on the Day of Resurrection of all who have died since the first man]. But 'before' or 'afterward' have no importance on that level-- for these are only the custom within the realm of the partial intellect and the animal soul." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (Heading) the partial intellect [`aql-é juzw]: means the limited mind of man, which is a particularization of the Universal Intellect [`aql-é kull].

9. (Heading) the animal soul (rûH-é Haywânî): the base emotions and desires which human beings share with animals, such as gross greed, lust, and vioilent rage.

10. (Heading) "God is One" [allâhu wâhid-un]: this is not a quote from the Qur'an, but is similar to the recurring

words, "For God is One God" [allâhu ilâh-un wâHid-un] (as in 4:171).

11. (2714) My soul is a carpet for your (blessed) feet: "In other words, 'My spirit is the carpet-path and way for you, O my king.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (2716) I am more content with half a silver coin (received) yesterday than this (offer) today or (an offer of) a hundred silver coins tomorrow: "The intended meaning: That which has been given yesterday is more substantial cash than someting promised." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (2717) in front of you: Nicholson translated, "A slap (given) in cash (immediately) is better than a donation (paid) on credit (hereafter): lo, I put the nape of my neck before thee..."

14. (2718) the back of the neck as well as its slap are (ecstatically) drunk with you: "This is regarded as metaphorical. It is attributed to the drunkenness of the companions of a drunken person." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

15. (2719) Happily take advantage of (offering) the ready cash of this moment: Nicholson translated, "gladly take the oportunity of (seizing) the cash of this (present) moment.)

16. (2720) (And) don't draw (your head) from [casting its reflection upon] this river: Nicholson translated, "do not withdraw thyself from this river-bed..."
17. (2720) O flowing water (âb-é rawân): a pun with "night travellers" [shab-raw-ân].

18. (2721) So that the river bank may smile because of the flowing water: the image of "smiling" and "laughing" of roses and other flowers symbolizes blossoming in Persian literature. Nicholson translated, "in order that the river-bank may laugh (may be made to blossom)..."

19. (2723) "Their marks (are upon their) faces": "Their marks are upon their faces of the traces of (their) prostrations." (Qur'an 48:29) Refers to skin changes on the foreheads of those who prostrate often in humble prayer to God. Nicholson pointed out two other lines from the Mathnawi which refer to this verse: VI: 2565, V: 2082 (Commentary).

20. (2724) every person and breath [har nafs-o nafas]: a word-play between "person" [nafs] and "breath" [nafas].

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lâba-kardan-é mûsh mar chaghz-râ ke bahâna ma-y-andêsh wa
dar nasî'at ma-y-andâz injâH-é în Hâjat-é ma-râ ke "fî
't-ta'khîri âfât' "wa 'S-Sûfîyu ibnu 'l-waqt," wa ibn dast
az dâman-é pedar bâz na-dâr-ad wa ab-é mushfiq-é Sûfî ke
waqt-ast ô-râ ba-negaresh ba-fardâ muHtâj na-gardân-ad,
chandân-ash mustaghriq dâr-ad dar gol-zâr-é sarî`u
'l-Hisâbî-yé khwêsh na chûn `awâm, muntaZir-é mustaqbil
na-bâsh-ad, nahrê bâsh-ad na dahrî ke "lâ SabâH `inda 'llâhi
wa lâ masâ'", mâZî wa mustaqbil wa azal wa abad ân-jâ
na-bâsh-ad, âdam sâbiq wa dajjâl masbûq na-bâsh-ad ke în
rasûm dar KhaTT'a `aql-é juzwî-st wa rûH-é Haywânî, dar
`âlam-é lâ-makân wa lâ zamân în rasûm na-bâsh-ad pas ô ibn-é
waqtê-st ke lâ yufhamu min-hu illâ nafiyu tafriqati
'l-'azminat, chon-ân-ke az "allâhu wâHid-un" fahm shaw-ad
nafiy-é dô'iyê nay Haqîqat-é wâHidî

2714 Sûfiyê-râ goft khwâja-yé sîm-pâsh
ay qadam-hây-é to-râ jân-am firâsh

2715 yak diram khwâh-î tô emrôz, ay shah-am
yâ ke fardâ châsht-gâhî se diram?

goft dî nêm-é diram, râZî-tar-am
z-ân-ke emrôz în-o fardâ Sad diram

sîliy-é naqd az `aTây-é nisya beh
nak qafâ pêsh-at kashîd-am, naqd deh

khâSa ân sîlî ke az dast-é tow-ast
ke qafâ-wo sîliy-ash mast-é tow-ast

hîn be-y-â ay jân-é jân-wo Sad jahân
khwash ghanîmat dâr naqd-é în zamân

2720 dar ma-dozd ân rôy-é mah az shab-raw-ân
sar ma-kash z-în jôy, ay âb-é rawân

tâ lab-é jô khand-ad az âb-é ma`în
lab-lab-é jô sar bar âr-ad yâsmîn

chûn be-bîn-î bar lab-é jô sabza mast
pas be-dân az dûr k-ân-jâ âb hast
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goft sîmâhum wujûh-un kerdegâr
ke bow-ad ghammâz-é bârân sabza-zâr

gar be-bâr-ad shab, na-bîn-ad hêch kas
ke bow-ad dar khwâb har nafs-o nafas

2725 tâzagîy-é har gol-setân-é ["golestân"-é] jamîl
hast bar bârân-é penhânî dalîl

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Mouse and the Frog (part four)

Mathnawi VI: 2726-2744, 2759-2763

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2726 (The mouse said), "O my brother, I am of the earth (and) you are of the water-- but you are the king of mercy and generosity.

"Act in such a way from (bestowing) favors and distributing (gifts so) that I may arrive at (the honor of offering you) service morning and evening.

"I keep calling you with (all my) soul at the bank of the river, (but) I don't find the mercy of an answer (from you).

"Coming into the water is barred for me, since my form has grown from (the) earthiness (of land-bound creatures).[1]

2730 "Either use the assistance of a messenger or a sign (of some sort) so that it may make you aware of my shouting."

Those two friends (were) engaged in debate about this matter, (and by) the end of the discussion an agreement was made,

That they should acquire a long string so that the secret (of desiring contact) could be revealed by the pulling of the string.

(The mouse said), "One end must be tied to the foot of this servant (who is bent) double (in humility), (and) its

other (end tied) to your foot--

"So that we two individuals may become (bound) together
by this ap
paratus (and so that) we may be intermixed like
the soul with the body."

2735 The body is like a string (fastened) to the soul's foot
(which) keeps dragging it to the earth from the heavens.

(When) the frog of the soul has escaped from the mouse
of the body into the water of the sleep of being unaware (of
the physical world), it reaches (a state of) happiness--

(However), the mouse of the body drags it back by means
of the string, (and) the soul tastes (so) much bitterness
from that dragging.[2]

(For) if there wasn't (such) dragging from the
rotten-brained mouse,[3] the frog would have (continual)
enjoyments in the water.

"When you rise up from the sleep (of death on) the Day
(of Resurrection), you will hear the rest of it[4] from the
Light-Bestowing Sun.[5]

2740 (The mouse said), "(Make) a knot upon my leg (with) one
end of the string (and) make a knot from the other end upon
(your) foot,

"So that I can pull (you) to this dry land. Now, the end
of the string (of my plan) has become visible to you."

"This (kind of) talk became bitter to the heart of the
frog,[6] (who was) saying (to himself), "This vile (so-and-so)
will bring me into an entanglement."[7]

When any (feeling of) aversion enter into the heart of a
good man,[8] it is not empty of some instruction.

2744 Know (that) that intuitive discernment[9] (is) the
(expression of an) attribute of God, not imagination (and
that) the light of (your) heart has understood (something)
from the Universal Tablet.[10]

. . . . . .

2759 It isn't amazing that a blind man has fallen into the well, (but) the wonder of wonders[11] is the falling (into the well) of the clear seer of the way.

2760 The Divine Decree has (many) different changes of direction; its magic spell[12] is [the verse], "God acts as He Wills."[13]

The heart both knows (about) its craftiness[14] and also doesn't know. (As a result), its iron becomes (soft as) wax for the seal (of Destiny).

You could say that the heart might be saying (to itself), "Since the inclination (of Destiny)[15] has gone in this (direction), whatever is to occur, tell it to be (as it will)!"

2763 (And) because of this it (attitude) makes itself inattentive and careless[16] (and) it binds (its own) soul with the restrictive rope.[17]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2729) my form has grown from (the) earthiness (of land-bound creatures): "In this commentary, the intended meaning of the mouse: people who are impure, soiled, and (centered on) bodily (desires). And the intended meaning of the frog: it is (symbolizing) the holy illuminated ones, who are (living) amidst the water of spiritual life [âb-é Hayât-é ma`nawî]. those who are earthen and bodily have no power to enter the ocean of spirituality. (But) if they wish, they may have a link and connection between a spiritual friend [= spiritual master] and themselves. So that, any time that spiritual friend wishes, he may draw away those earthy and bodily (qualities) by means of the connection with his own (spiritual) level, and expel (them) by his (spiritual) station." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

2. (2737) the soul tastes (so) much bitterness from that dragging: "These verses [= 2735-37] explain the inner meaning of the fable. The 'mouse' is an emblem of the bodily

nature, to which the spirit is tied by the 'string' of phantasy (khayál) and the carnal reason (`aql-i juzví) [= the partial intellect]: cf. the notes on I 400-401." [= "Although the spirit is not saddled with body during sleep, only death releases it permanently. God 'taketh the souls unto Himself' (yatawaffá 'l-anfusa) at death and also in sleep; those taken in sleep 'He lets go again (yursilu) till an appointed term' (Qur. XXXIX 43). The comparison of the released spirit to an unsaddled horse left in free enjoyment of its pasture-ground, but tethered so that it cannot escape, is drawn from nomad life." (Nicholson, Commentary)

3. (2738) the rotten-brained mouse: Nicholson translated, "the scatter-brained mouse." And he explained: "Literally, 'having a putrid kernel,' an epithet applied to one who talks idly and boastfully." (Footnote)

4. (2739) the rest of it: means the remainder of descriptions about the heavenly delights of not being bound to earthly existence.

5. (2739) from the Light-Bestowing Sun: means God, "the Light of the heavens and the earth" (Qur'an 24:35)

6. (2742) This (kind of) talk became bitter to the heart of the frog: "And the meaning of this matter is that holy companions have (a natural) aversion to people of bad nature and immoral character." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

7. (2742) an entanglement [`uqdat]: a word play on "knot" in line 2740.

8. (2743) the heart of a good man: "i.e. the holy man." (Nicholson, Commentary)

9. (2744) intuitive discernment [firâsat]: Nicholson referred to his note on Mathnawi I: 1331: "Referring to the Hadíth: ittaqú firásata 'l-mu'mini fa-innahu yanzuru bi-núr Alláhi,' Beware of the clairvoyance of the true believer, for verily he sees by the Light of God.'.... It is intuition of things unseen (mu`áyanatu 'l-ghayb), which depends on faith (ímán) and is increased by strength of faith." He also said, regarding I: 32: "... the poet declares that the source of all spiritual perception is the 'inner light'. Cf. a saying ascribed to Mohammed, 'Beware of the discernment (firásah) of the true believer, for he sees by the Light of Allah'..." (Commentary)

10. (2744) the Universal Tablet [lûH-é kull]: "No, but this is a glorious Qur'an, (written) upon a Preserved Tablet [lawH-in maHfûZ]." Qur'an 85:21-22. Metaphorically, this means that the Revelation of the Qur'an is protected against corruption. Various beliefs later developed that it means a Heavenly Tablet upon which all the Decrees of God are written.

Nicholson referred to other examples of Rumi's mystical understanding of this Qur'anic term-- IV: 1851,1960-68, and his comments on I: 1063-65: "...lawh-i mahf™z [= the Universal Tablet].... depicts the inspired sage whose heart, in virtue of the transcendental knowledge inscribed on it, is a copy of the heavenly Lawh-i Mahf™z on which all things are recorded from eternity to everlasting. When the seeker becomes 'a fountain of Divine wisdom', he has no more to learn from reason and intellect: he leaves them behind and passes on, as the Prophet parted from Gabriel when the supreme moment was at hand..." (Commentary

11. (2759) the wonder of wonders: Nicholson translated, "is beyond all wonder." And he explained: "Literally, 'is the father of wonder." (Nicholson, Commentary)

Nicholson referred to his note on the story of the Hoopoe (I: 1214-61): "... how the hoopoe, most keen-sighted of birds, fell into a trap... is told more fully in... Jawámi`u 'l-Hik¥yát [= Collection of Stories], Anec. 1922. The latter version runs as follows: 'A hoopoe saw a lad laying a trap and asked what he was doing. He replied, "I have laid a trap for a hoopoe." "How can you catch me?" said the hoopoe, "since I know and see it." Then he flew away and perched on a tree and forgot all about it. The lad covered the trap with earth, on which he sprinkled some grain, and went off and hid himself. Presently the hoopoe approached, and seeing the bait but not the trap, was tempted to eat. As soon as the trap closed on his neck, the lad ran up, crying, "Didn't you tell me that I could never catch you?" "Yes," replied the hoopoe; "but 'tis an old saying that when the destined event comes to pass, the eye is made blind (idhá já 'a 'l-qadá `amiya 'l-basar)."'" (Commentary)

12. (2760 its magic spell [chashm-band]: Nicholson translated, "eye-binding spell." It means the fascinating eyes of an attractive or powerful person who casts a "spell" of personal influence on another person.

13. (2760) "God acts as He Wills": Qur'an 3:40.

14. (2761) its craftiness: Nicholson translated, "its (Destiny's) artfulness."

15. (2762) Since the inclination (of Destiny): literally, "Since its inclination" -- meaning Destiny, or the Divine Decree.

16. (2763) because of this (attitude) it makes itself inattentive and careless: Nicholson translated differently, "Accordingly it makes itself heedless of this (happening)..."

17. (2763) the restrictive rope: means a rope used to tie up uncooperative camels (by binding the neck and legs together). Nicholson explained that this has a metaphoric meaning: "I.e. submits to the inevitable." (Footnote)

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2726 ay akh-î, man khâkiy-am, tô âbiy-î
lêk shâh-é raHmat-o wahhâbiy-î

ân-chon-ân kon az `aTâ-wo az qisam
ke gah-o bê-gah ba-khidmat mê-ras-am

bar lab-é jô man ba-jân mê khwân-am-at
mê-na-bîn-am az ijâbat marHamat

âmadan dar âb bar man basta shod
z-ân-ke tarkîb-am ze-khâkî rosta shod

2730 yâ rasûlê yâ neshânê kon madad
tâ to-râ az bâng-é man âgah kon-ad

baHS karda-nd andar-în kâr ân dô yâr
âkhir-é ân baHS ân âmad qarâr

ke ba-dast âr-and yak reshta-yé darâz
tâ ze-jaZb-é reshta gard-ad kashf-é râz

yak sarê bar pây-é în banda-yé dô-tô
bast bây-ad, dêgar-ash bar pây-é tô

tâ ba-hamây-êm z-în fan-é mâ dô tan
andar âmêz-êm chûn jân bâ badan

2735 hast tan chûn rêsmân bar pây-é jân
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

mê-kashân-ad bar zamîn-ash z-âsmân

chaghz-é jân dar âb-é khwâb-é bê-hoshî
rasta az mûsh-é tan, ây-ad dar khwoshî

mûsh-é tan z-ân rêsmân bâz-ash kash-ad
chand talkhî z-în kashesh jân mê-chash-ad

gar na-bûdy jaZb-é mûsh?é ganda-maghz
`aysh-hâ kardy darûn-é âb chaghz

bâqiy-ash chûn rôz bar-khêz-î ze-khwâb
be-sh'naw-î az nûr-bakhsh-é âftâb

2740 yak sar-é reshta gereh bar pây-é man
z-ân sar-é dêgar tô pâ bar `uqda zan

tâ tawân-am man dar în khoshkî kashîd
mar to-râ nak shod sar-é reshta padîd

talkh âmad bar del-é chaghz în HadîS
ke ma-râ dar `uqdat ârad în khabîS

har karâhat dar del-é mard-é behî
chûn dar ây-ad az fanê na-b'w-ad tahî

2744 waSf-é Haq dân ân firâsat-râ na wahm
nûr-é del az lûH-é kul kard-ast fahm

. . . . . .

2759 în `ajab na-b'w-ad ke kôr oftad ba-châh
bû 'l-`ajab oftâdan-é bînây-é râh

2760 în qaZâ-râ gûna-gûn taSrîf-hâ-st
chashm-band-ash yaf`alu 'llâh mâ yashâ-st

ham be-dân-ad, ham na-dân-ad del fan-ash
mûm gard-ad bahr-é ân muhr âhan-ash

gôy-î-iy del gôy-ady ke mâyl-é ô
chûn dar-în shod, har che oftad, bâsh gô

2763 khwêsh-râ z-în ham maghaffal mê-kon-ad
dar `iqâl-ash jân mu`aqqal mê-kon-ad

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Mouse and the Frog (part five)

Mathnawi VI: 2941-2973

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Returning to the story of the mouse (and how he) sought the frog along the river bank and pulled the end of to string so that the frog would become aware of his seeking him

2941 That one formed[1] by love continues to pull the string in hope of being joined together (in friendship) with the frog of right conduct.[2]

He keeps twisting the string of (his) heart,[3] saying, "I've brought the end of the string to (my) paw.

"Since the end of the string (first) appeared to me,[4] (my) heart and soul have become like a (thin) thread[5] in (this expectant) observation.

But all of a sudden the crow of separation[6] appeared, (seized) upon the mouse (as its) prey, and carried it off from that place.

2945 When the mouse, (taken) by the crow, went up into the air, the frog (was) also dragged from the bottom of the river.

(Not only was) the mouse in the crow's beak, but the frog was also hanging in the air, (with its) foot (caught) in the winding of the string.

The people were saying, "By what manner of trick and deception did the crow make the water-frog (its) prey?

"How did it go into the water and how did it snatch it? The water-frog has never been the crow's quarry."

The frog said (to himself), "This is the deserved punishment of someone who, like people without honor, has become joined to someone (of) vile (character).

2950 Oh (what) misery because of a friend (who is) not similar in kind![7] Oh (what) misery! O noble ones, seek a good companion (instead).

(Human) intelligence[8] groans (in lamentation) because of the (animal) self (so) full of bad qualities[9]-- like (the case of) an bad nose upon a beautiful face.

Intelligence was telling (the frog), "Truly, being similar in kind is (found) by (traveling) the way to spiritual Reality[10]-- not by means of (bodily) 'water and clay.'"[11]

Take care! Don't be a worshipper of form, and don't say this [is desirable]. Don't search for the secret of being similar in kind in (material) form.[12]

Form is like a mineral and like a rock; a mineral substance has no awareness of being similar in kind.

2955 The soul (is) like an ant, and the body (is) like a grain of wheat: the ant) carries it (from one) side to (another) side every moment.

The ant knows that, "Those grains taken as a pledge[13] will become transformed and of the same nature as me."[14]

(While) one ant seizes a barley seed from the road, another ant takes a (grain of) wheat and runs[15] (with it).

The barley seed doesn't run toward a (grain of) wheat. However, the ant comes toward (a fellow) ant. But of course!

The traveling of the barley seed toward the (grain of) wheat is the following (of one external event by another). Notice that it is the ant which is returning to one of its own kind.

2960 Don't say, "Why did the (grain of) wheat go toward the barley seed?" Place the (gaze of your) eye upon the disputing (customer),[16] not upon the deposit.

(Just as) a black ant (goes) on top of a (piece of) black felt: the ant (is) hidden, (but) the seed is visible in front of (its) path.

The discriminating mind says to the eyes, "Look well![17] A seed never travels without a seed-carrier."

For this reason, the dog came to the Companions (of the Cave).[18] (External) forms are (like) the seeds and the and (is like) the heart.[19]

(And) because of that, Jesus goes (up) to the pure and holy ones in the Heavens.[20] (Although) the cages were of different kinds, the chickens (were) of the same kind.[21]

2965 The cage is perceptible, but the chicken (within) it is hidden.[22] The cage never goes (anywhere) without a cage-carrier.

Oh (how) happy and blessed (is) an eye which has the (discerning) intellect[23] as it's leader (and) which is (fore-) seeing the outcome[24] and (is) upright and cool[25] (in its judgment).

Bring (forth) from the (discerning) intellect the difference (between what is) ugly and foul and (what is) beautiful and pure-- not from an eye which speaks (only) of (the difference between) black and white.

The (physical) eye has been deceived by (the attraction of) green vegetation on (top of) a pile of dung.[26] (But) the (discerning) intellect says, "Rub it against my touchstone."[27]

The eye (which) sees (only the object of) desire is the bird's misfortune, (but) the (discerning) intellect (which) sees the trap is the bird's place of refuge.

2970 (However) there has been another trap which the intellect has not discovered-- (therefore), the inspiration [given to the prophets which] sees the unperceived has hurried to this direction from that (heavenly) direction.[28]

By means of the intellect, you may know (how) to distinguish (between what is) similar in kind and (what is) not similar.[29] One should not run toward (outward) forms.

The similarity of kind between you and me[30] is not in (regard to) form. Jesus came into human (form), (yet) was similar in kind with the angel.[31]

2973 The Heavenly Bird[32] carried him, just as the crow (carried up) the frog, above the blue castle (of the heavens).

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2941) formed [sereshta]: a word-play with "string" [reshta].

2. (2941) of right conduct [bâ-rashad]: can also means "possessed of right guidance and protection from error"-- but this is not its meaning here, because the word was chosen here for the rhyme.

3. (2942) He keeps twisting the string of (his) heart: "It is a symbol of maintaining the attachment between them, observing the mind, and not severing the attachment of the heart." (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish Mevlevi commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

4. (2942) Since the end of the string (first) appeared to me: Nicholson translated, "ever since the end of the string (the prospect of success)... showed itself..."

5. (2943) like a (thin) thread: Nicholson translated, "as (frail as) a thread." An idiom meaning brought to a weakened state-- as when a lover becomes thin and pale from melancholy yearning for a beloved.

6. (2944) the crow of separation: "i.e. Death, which seizes and destroys the soul that is attached to the body. Cf. I 706-709 and the notes ad loc." [= "The walnuts (bodies) were broken, and those which had the kernel had, after being slain, a spirit pure and fair. Slaughter and death which befalls the bodily frame is like breaking pomegranates and apples:/ That which is sweet becomes pomegranate-syrup, and that which is rotten is naught but noise:/ That which has reality is made manifest (after death), and that which is rotten is put to shame. Go, strive after reality, O worshipper of form, inasmuch as reality is the wing on form's body." "'The walnut that possesses the kernel' is the body of the true Unitarian (muwahhid). When the walnut-shell is broken, its contents are revealed; similarly, when death

shatters the body of the muwahhid, his spirit is found to be pure and immortal, since it is illuminated with gnosis [= mystical knowledge], faith, and love and has realised its essential oneness with God; otherwise the spirit is good-for-nothing."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

Anqaravi explained that the "crow of separation" is a crow with (mixed) white and black wings, and is said to be the bird which the Prophet Noah sent to look for dry land (toward the end of the Flood) and which did not return [= separated] to his boat. (Commentary)

7. (2950) Oh (what) misery because of a friend (who is) not similar in kind: Anqaravi quoted, here, a verse from the Qur'an: "And [on] the Day (of Judgment), the wrong-doer will bite his hands, saying, 'Oh, if I had only taken a path with the Messenger (of God) [= Muhammad]! Sorrow for me! If I had only not taken so-and-so as a friend! He certainly led me astray from the Reminder (of God) [= the Revelation of the Qur'an] after it came to me. And Satan is (always) a deserter toward mankind!" (25:27-29)

8. (2951) (Human) intelligence [`aql]: this means intellect, reason, discrimination in the highest sense as a human faculty which is greatly superior to the "animal soul" full of worldly desires, cravings, and passions. Nicholson usually translates this word in its positive sense as "Reason." In other contexts, Rumi uses this term in a negative sense, as limiting the possibility of direct mystical-intuitive perception of Divine realities.

9. (2951) full of bad qualities [por `uyûb]: Nicholson has this spelling in his Persian text, but he translated it as "vicious," which is spelled differently [`ayûb = "blameworthy"].

10. (2952) being similar in kind is (found) by (traveling) the way to spiritual Reality: Nicholson translated, "congeniality is spiritual in origin..." And he explained: "Literally, 'is by way of spiritual nature.'" (Footnote) It means that the human spirit can find true similarity of kind by seeking "companionship" with spiritual Reality, which is of the same "substance"-- not by seeking greater companionship with the material world.

11. (2952) not by means of (bodily) 'water and clay': Nicholson translated, "is not (derived) from water and clay (the outward form)." The term "water and clay" is an idiom

referring to the body of Adam, created by God from physical substances, and thus to the human body and the material world in general.

12. (2953) Don't search for the secret of being similar in kind in (material) form: "Similarly, although many individuals are apparently Mevlevis [= the sufi order of the "Whirling Dervishes," which has preserved Rumi's teachings over the centuries] and wear the Mevlevi tall hat [kolâh] and its cloak [khirqa], someone who looks at them outwardly will certainly say, 'These are of the same kind as the Mevlevi dervishes.' However, the followers and companions of the Mevlevi Way [Tarîq-é mawlawiyya] never give importance to the (outward) appearance. And in regard to someone they meet, who is Mevlevi in appearance, they do not (automatically) say, 'This person is also Mevlevi.' Rather, they do not regard his conduct. If he is familiar with Mevlana (Jalaluddin Rumi) in his heart and spirit and has respect for the [departed] spirits of the Mevlevi [bâ arwâh-é mawlawiyya ta`âruf dashta bâshad], they call him Mevlevi.... Because, for the mystic knower, the saying, 'Similar kind inclines towards similar kind' is a great scale and touchstone (for measuring the truth)." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

13. (2956) Those grains taken as a pledge: Nicholson translated, "the grains of which it has taken charge." And he explained: "Literally, 'received in pawn.'" (Footnote)

14. (2956) will become transformed and of the same nature as me: Nicholson translated less literally as, "will be changed and become homogeneous with it." And he explained: "I.e. they will be eaten and assimilated." (Footnote)

15. (2957) takes... and runs [be-g'reft-o daw]: "... the archaic construction, in which the second verb drops its termination, so that only the stem remains..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (2960) Place the (gaze of your) eye upon the disputing (customer): Nicholson translated, "Fix your eye on the holder, not on that which he holds in pawn."

17. (2962) The discriminating mind says to the eyes, "Look well!: Nicholson corrected his translation, to "Reason says to the eye, 'Look well!'" (from, "(But) Reason says, 'Look well to your eye...'"). (Commentary)

18. (2963) the dog came to the Companions (of the Cave): refers to the story in the 18th chapter [sûrah] of the Qur'an. Some pious young men fled religious persecution and hid in a cave, fell asleep, and (by the Will of God) woke up to find that many years had passed. Their dog (traditionally known as Qitmîr) was sleeping with them (18:17). "Similarly, the dog's form had no resemblance to the (human) forms of the Companions of the Cave and was not of the same kind. But in regard to the inward (level), the dog did have similarity of kind and resemblance to them. According to this view, the dog's heart showed fondness and love (toward them) and was their follower." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

19. (2963) (like) the heart: Nicholson translated, "while the heart (spirit) is (like) the ant."

20. (2964) (And) because of that, Jesus goes (up) to the pure and holy ones in the Heavens:

21. (2964) (Although) the cages were of different kinds, the young birds (were) of the same kind: Rumi often uses birds to symbolize spirits, such as spirits which are joyfully released from the cage of the body. Nicholson translated, "the young birds (spirits)..."

Nicholson referred here to Mathnawi III: 3951-56, which he translated, "Death an migration from this (earthly) abode has become as sweet to me as leaving the cage and flying (is sweet) to the (captive) bird-- / The cage that is in the very midst of the garden, (so that) the bird beholds the rose-beds and the trees, ' (While) outside, round the cage, a multitude of birds is sweetly chanting tales of liberty:/ At (the sight of) that verdant place neither (desire for) food remains to the bird in the cage, nor patience and rest,/ (But) it puts out its head through every hold, that perchance it may tear off this fetter from its leg. Since its heart and soul are (already) outside like this, how will it be when you open the cage?"

22. (2965) The cage is perceptible, but the young bird (in) it is hidden: means a covered cage.

23. (2967) the (discerning) intellect [`aql]: the perceptive and reasoning mind, in its best sense.

24. (2967) (fore-) seeing the outcome: this is a frequent teaching of Rumi in the Mathnawi-- that most people lack foresight because they desire what they crave in the moment

and end up suffering, like the bird that gets caught in a trap baited with seeds.

25. (2966) an eye which... (is) upright and cool: Nicholson translated, "wise and cool." And he explained: "Rajul-un qaríru 'l-`ayn [= a man refreshed/cooled of eye] is explained as meaning 'a man whose eye sees that for which it has longed and becomes at rest' (Lane, s.v.)." (Commentary) Anqaravi commented, "Habar [= wise, upright]: has the meaning of a 'knower.' Qarîr [= cool]: has the meaning of 'illumined.'" (Commentary)

26. (2968) by (the attraction of) green vegetation on (top of) a pile of dung [ba-khaZrây-é diman]: Nicholson referred to Mathnawi II: 1017, which he translated, "It is (said) in the Hadíth (Traditions of the Prophet): 'Know, sire, that glorification (of God) from hypocrisy is like the verdure on a midden.'" And he transliterated this Hadîth: "iyyákum wa-khadrá'a 'l-diman."

"Whenever the external eye sees green vegetation upon a dung hill, it is pleased and says, 'What fine green vegetation this is!' The intellect says to it, 'No, that which you are seeing isn't (fine). If you want to know the difference between that and other green vegetation, test it against my touchstone-- so that you may be able to distinguish between that and other green plants. The (attractive) greenery which you have seen on the dung hill is (growing in) a filthy and impure place. So go to a pure piece of ground.'.... 'Green vegetation on a pile of dung" [khaZrây-é diman] is said (to mean) an attractive woman who is extremely beautiful but has a malignant and immoral nature." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

27. (2968) touchstone: a type of stone, which when a piece of it is rubbed against true gold, it undergoes a chemical change of color. Touchstones were used by assayers in order to certify authentic gold.

28. (2970) (therefore), the inspiration [given to the prophets which] sees the unperceived has hurried to this direction from that (heavenly) direction: Nicholson translated, "hence the inspiration which beholds the unseen sped in this direction." And he explained: "I.e. the prophets were sent to inform us." (Footnote) He further commented: "Reason, though it can discern good and evil in the world of forms, falls into 'another trap' (see I 115, note [= "The discursive reason (`aql-i ma`ásh), which

maintains a distinction between the subject and object of thought, cannot possibly comprehend or describe the nature of mystical union. This is a mystery that Love reveals to the lover by immediate experience..."]), from which the only means of escape is the knowledge of God's absolute unity as revealed to His prophets and saints." (Commentary)

"But the great prophets-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon them-- see the traps of the unseen world and are aware of the harmful consequences of this world. When Divine inspiration has reached them (and) they have seen such causes of the traps of the unseen world, they have given us information about the (differences between) good and evil and (between) gain and loss which they have known." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

29. (2971) what is) similar in kind and (what is) not similar: Nicholson translated, "congener and non-congener." It means what is similar in kind to the human spirit, which is the spiritual realm-- in contrast to the worldly, physical, material, and bodily realm.

30. (2972) The similarity of kind between you and me: Nicholson translated, "My being your congener..." And he explained that the insertion of the Arabic words "to you and me" [-lî wa lak] occurs in Qur'an 28:9: "And Pharaoh's wife said, '(This infant) is a refreshing coolness of the eye to you and me [qurratu `ayn-in-lî wa lak]' here occurs in words addressed by Pharaoh's wife... occur in Qur. XXVIII 8: '(the infant Moses is) a joy to the and to me: kill him not.'" (Commentary)

31. (2972) was similar in kind with the angel: Nicholson translated, "was (really) homogeneous with the angels."

32. (2973) The Heavenly Bird [morgh-é gardûnî]: Nicholson translated, "The celestial Bird (Gabriel)." "It is Gabriel [jibrâ'îl]. And the meaning of nîlî-HiSâr [= the blue castle] is the blue-colored sky. Gabriel-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him, who was also an intermediary similar in kind (to Jesus), carried Hazrat-i Jesus-- (may) the peace (of God) be upon him-- above the blue sky and bore him to the Fourth Heaven [= the "Heaven of the Sun" in Islamic cosmology]." (Anqaravi, Commentary) This refers to the bodily ascension of Jesus, when God rescued him from those who tried to kill him and who falsely accused him of the blasphemy of claiming to be God or the son of God (Qu'ran 4:157; 3:55).

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rujû`-kardan ba-qiSSa-yé tâlab-kardan-é ân mûsh ân chaghz-râ
lab-lab-é jô wa kashîdan-é sar-é reshta tâ chaghz-râ dar âb
khabar shaw-ad az talab-é ô

2941 ân sereshta-yé `ishq reshta mê-kash-ad
bar omêd-é waSl-é chaghz-é bâ-rashad

mê-tan-ad bar reshta-yé del dam ba-dam
ke sar-é reshta ba-dast âwarda-am

ham-chô târê shod del-o jân dar shuhûd
tâ sar-é reshta ba-man rôyê namûd

khwâd ghurâbu 'l-bayn âmad nâ-gahân
bar shêkâr-é mûsh-o bord-ash z-ân makân

2945 chûn bar âmad bar hawâ mûsh az ghurâb
munsaHib shod chaghz nêz az qa`r-é âb

mûsh dar manqâr-é zâgh-o chaghz ham
dar hawâ âwêkhta pâ dar ratam

khalq mê-goft-and zâgh az makr-o kayd
chaghz-é âbê-râ che-gûna kard Sayd?

chûn shod andar âb-o chûn-ash dar robûd
chaghz-é âbê kay shekâr-é zâgh bûd?

chaghz goftâ în sazây-é ân kasê
k-ô chô bê-âb-ân shaw-ad joft-é khasê

2950 ay feghân az yâr-é nâ-jins ay feghân
ham-nêshîn-é nêk jôy-îd ay meh-ân

`aql-râ afghân ze-nafs-é por `uyûb
ham-chô bîniy-é badê bar rôy-é khûb

`aql mê-goft-ash ke jinsîyat yaqîn
az rah-é ma`nî-st, nay az âb-o Tîn

hîn ma-shaw Sûrat-parast-o în ma-gô
sirr-é jinsîyat ba-sûrat dar ma-jô

Sûrat âmad chûn jamâd-o chûn Hajar
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

nêst jamâd-râ ze-jinsîyat khabar

jân chô môr-o tan chô dâna-yé gandomê
mê-kashân-ad sô ba-sôy-ash har damê

môr dân-ad k-ân Hubûb-é murtahan
mustaHîl-o jins-é man khwâh-ad shodan

ân yakê môrê gereft az râh, jaw
môr-é dêgar gandomê be-g'reft-o daw

jâw sôy-é gandom na-mê-tâz-ad, walê
môr sôy-é môr mê-âyad, balê

raftan-é jaw sôy-é gandom tâbi`-ast
môr-râ bîn ke ba-jins-ash râji`-ast

tô ma-gô gandom che-râ shod sôy-é jaw?
chashm-râ bar khaSm neh, nay bar geraw

môr-é aswad bar sar-é libd-é seyâh
môr penhân, dâna paydâ pêsh-é râh

`aql gôy-ad chashm-râ nêkô negar
dâna hargez kay raw-ad bê-dâna-bar?

z-în sabab âmad sôy-é aSHâb kalb
hast Sûrat-hâ Hubûb-o môr qalb

z-ân shaw-ad `îsà sôy-é pâk-ân-é charkh
bod qafaS-hâ mukhtalif, yak jins farkh

în qafas paydâ-wo ân farkh-ash nehân
bê-qafaS-kash kay qafaS bâsh-ad rawân?

ay khonok chashmê ke `aql-ast-ash amîr
`âqibat-bîn bâsh-ad-o Habr-o qarîr

farq-é zesht-o naghz az `aql âwar-îd
nay ze-chashmê k-az seyah-goft-o sepîd

chashm ghirra shod ba-khaZrây-é diman
`aql gôy-ad bar miHakk-é mâ-sh zan

âfat-é morg-ast chashm-é kâm-bîn
makhlaS-é morg-ast `aql-é dâm-bîn

dâm-é dêgar bod ke `aql-ash dar na-yâft

waHy-é ghâyib-bîn ba-d-în sô z-ân shetâft

jins-o nâ-jins az kherad dân-î shenâkht
sôy-é Surat-hâ na-shây-ad zûd tâkht

nêst jinsîyat ba-Sûrat-lî wa-lak
`îsà âmad dar bashar jins-é malak

2973 bar kashîd-ash fawq-é în nîlî-HiSâr
morgh-é gardûnî cho chaghz-ash zâgh-wâr

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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How To Know Another

Mathnawi VI: 4900-4916

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4900 (One brother) said, "I can know a man in a moment by (the movements of his) mouth.[1] And I can know him in three days if he doesn't talk."

And the other (brother) said, "I can know him if he talks. And if he doesn't talk, I involve him in conversation."[2]

(The questioner) said,[3] "(But) if he has (previously) heard (about) this strategy, he will close (his) lips and go into silence."

Parable

Just like the mother (who) said to (her) son, "If an apparition comes to you during the night,[4]

"Or if you see an ugly apparition (coming out) from a lurking place[5] in a graveyard or scary place,

4905 "Keep (your) heart strong and charge at it, (and) it will turn (its) face away[6] from you at once [and depart].

4905b "Because (if) anyone goes fearlessly in its direction,

that demon-like apparition will quickly flee."[7]

The child said, "That demon-like[8] apparition-- if its mother says these (same) words (of advice) to it,

"(If) I charge (toward it), it will fall upon my neck by (its) mother's orders [and bite me]. So what can I do then?

"You keep teaching me, 'Stand firm!' (But) that horrible apparition also has a mother."

Regarding the jinn and mankind,[9] the instructor is the One God;[10] even if he is a (mere) beggar, he is victorious over kings by means of Him.[11]

4910 So that whichever side that Gentle One is (on),[12] go (there)! (And), by God, you will also be on that side.

(The questioner continued and) said, "If that noble man is aware of (your) stratagem (and) does not enter into speech according to (your) plot,

"How can you know his secret (character)? Speak the truth! [The third brother] answered,[13] "I sit silently in front of him.

"I make patience (my) ladder toward the (upper) levels, so that I may ascend to the top of the roof of relief.[14]

"And if, in his presence, some eloquent words should surge from my heart[15] (concerning what is) beyond worldly happiness and grief,

4915 "I know that he has sent it to me from a consciousness as (bright as the star) Canopus (rising) in Yemen.[16]

4916 "(Then), the speech in my heart is (coming) from the place of good fortune,[17] because there is a window from (one) heart to (another) heart."[18]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (4900) by (the movements of his) mouth: Nicholson translated, "by his mouth (speech)." "It means, 'My laziness and slowness in knowing a person is to the extent that, if the person speaks I know him instantly by his speech and (the movements of the parts of) his mouth whether that man is sincere or lying, ignorant or knowledgeable.'" (Anqaravi, the famous 17th century Turkish commentator, translated here into English from a Persian translation)

2. (4901) I involve him in conversation: "It means, 'I will draw speech from him. However it happens, I will (then) become aware of (the worth of) his mind by a single word which he speaks.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

3. (4902) (The questioner) said: refers to Rumi's final (and uncompleted) story in the Mathnawi in which a Muslim judge [qâZî] has to decide the inheritance of three brothers. According to their deceased father's will, the laziest of the three is to inherit everything. Here, the brothers begin to give competitive answers.

4. (4903) If an apparition comes to you during the night: this is a correction written opposite the original wording in the earliest manuscript. Nicholson translated the uncorrected line as follows: "The case is like that of the mother who said to her child, 'If a ghost come to you in the night" [ân-chon-ân-ke goft mâdar bachcha-râ/ gar kheyâlê âyad-at dar shab farâ]. Nicholson also translated "apparition" [kheyâl] as "bogle" (meaning "bogeyman" or "hobgoblin").

5. (4904) Or if you see an ugly apparition (coming out) from a lurking place: this is the correction of the second half of this line, added opposite the original wording in the earliest manuscript. Nicholson translated the uncorrected second half as follows: "... you behold a black bogle full of rage" [tô kheyâlê bîn-î aswad por ze-kîn].

6. (4905) it will turn (its) face away: an idiom meaning to go in some new direction, just as a rider turns the head of the horse he is riding to the direction he wishes the horse to go.

7. (4905b) that demon-like apparition will quickly flee: this verse was added in the margin in the earliest manuscript. Nicholson did not translate it, but noted that one of his editions of the Mathnawi included it, as well as

Anqaravi's commentary. "(It means), 'Because a demon-like apparition will run away from a human (who is) strong of heart and has made a charge (against it); but it will rush against anyone who is afraid of it.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

8. (4906) demon-like: the word translated here as "demon" [dêw], actually refers to a jinn (genie), and here means an ugly, scary, evil jinn. See the note for line 4909.

9. (4909) the jinn and mankind: Nicholson translated over-literally "(the race of) devils", since the Persian word "dêw" (related to the English word "devil") was used to translate the Qur'anic word "jinn" (= genie). There are several places in the Qur'an in which the phrase "the jinn and mankind" occurs, such as the famous verse, where God says: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they may worship and serve Me." (Qur'an 1:56; see also 55:33, 114:6)

10. (4909) is the One God: this line is the correction added next to the original wording in the earliest manuscripts. Nicholson translated the uncorrected line as follows: "The instructor of (the race of) devils and of mankind is the One (God): through Him the enemy prevails (even) if he is in small force." [dêw-o mardom-râ mulaqqin ân yakî-st/ ghâlib az way gard-ad ar khaSm andakî-st].

"It means, 'In reality, God Most High is the teacher and instructor to the types of jinn and members of the jinn race, as well as to the types of humans and to anyone who is a member of the human race. And if the enemy is less (in size), by God's permission, Will, and Power, that (enemy) side will become victorious and find an opportunity [to defeat the stronger force]. Otherwise, it would not be possible for the enemy to have victory, whether being greater or lesser (in power).'" (Anqaravi)

11. (4909) even if he is a (mere) beggar, he prevails over kings by means of Him: Nicholson (following Anqaravi), in his Commentary, referenced this to the Qur'anic verse: "How often a small (army) has conquered a large one, by the permission of God." (2:249)

"God Most High can give help to any group (He wills). You also be part of such a people so that God Most High has given them help. And (regarding) any side which He gives help and aid, you also be a part of that group of people--even if you are (all) weak of mind, meagre, weak and

helpless." (Anqaravi, Commentary)

12. (4910) whichever side that Gentle One is (on): Nicholson translated, "On whichever side that Gracious One [ân yawâsh] may be." In his Commentary, he stated that this was the rare case of Rumi's use of a Turkish word [yavâsh].

13. (4912) [The third brother] answered: the text is not clear whether this is the second brother still answering, or the third. But it can be presumed that this is the third brother, because two brothers have already answered how they would know a man if he either talked or was silent. The judge then focuses more on how to know a silent person. And the wisest answer of the three-- as well as the laziest-- was to sit in silence before the silent man and observe the mirror of one's own mind.

14. (4913) so that I may ascend to the top of the roof of relief: this is the correction of the second half of this line, added opposite the original wording in the earliest manuscript. Nicholson translated the uncorrected second half as follows: ".. to climb upwards: patience is the key to success" [tâ bar ây-am Sabru miftâHu 'l-faraj].

15. (4914) And if, in his presence, some eloquent words should surge from my heart: "In any case, with the blessing of patience [barakât-é Sabr] and endurance... I become rooted, for the sake of awareness. I become receptive to him, like a mirror, concerning his inward mind. And with complete attention, I notice his inward (state). And I make myself a polished mirror for (glimpsing) him.'" (Anqaravi, Commentary)

16. (4915) from a consciousness as (bright as the star) Canopus (rising) in Yemen: "This parable of a manoevre that fails because the adversary has been forewarned is applicable to the case of a murîd [= spiritual disciple] who desires to receive spiritual communication from his murshid [= spiritual master]." (Nicholson, Commentary)

There is a prose version of these verses in Rumi's "Discourses" (Fîh-i Mâ Fî-hi), Discourse 10: "If you want to know a man, draw him into conversation (so that) you may know him from his words. But (what) if he is an imposter* and someone has told him that a man may be known by (his) speech, and (so) he guards and holds (his) speech, intending that he may not be found out? This (situation) is like the story about the child in the wilderness who said to (his)

mother, 'A black terrifying thing resembling a demon's face appears to me in the dark night, and I'm greatly afraid.' (His) mother said, 'Do not fear. When you see that appearance, bravely charge at it. (Then) it will become clear that it is an imaginary image.' He said, 'O mother, if the black thing's mother has advised the same as this, what can I do then? (And) if she has advised him, saying, 'Don't speak any words, so that you won't become visible [to humans],'-- how can I recognize him (then)?' She said, 'Be silent in his presence, present yourself to him, and be patient. It may be that some words may spring from his mouth. And if they do not spring (forth), it may be that some words may spring from your (own) tongue, without your desire (for it). Or within your (own) mind some word or thought may raise (its) head, (so) you may know his (inward) state by means of that thought or word. Because you have (then) become influenced by him, (and) that is his reflection and his (inward) states which have appeared in your interior.'"

*an imposter [Tarrâr]: Nicholson translated this prose story (in his Commentary), but rendered this term as "devotee." He explained: "the term tarrár, like `ayyár [= types of "sufi vagabonds," "reckless devotees"], is used of a Malámatí [= seekers of blame, as a way to hide their piety] or hidden saint." He also translated it by adding a spiritual interpretation: "... or some mystic thought may come into your mind in consequence of the impression made on you by him." This story has also been translated by A. J. Arberry ("Discourses of Rumi," 1961, p. 52) and W. M. Thackston, Jr. ("Signs of the Unseen: The Discourses of Jalaluddin Rumi," 1994, p. 42).

17. (4916) place of good fortune [maymâna]: literally, the right hand side, the right flank of an army. It is also an idiom meaning good fortune. "In this passage the intended meaning of "maymâna" is the blessed and good-fortuned heart of that (other) silent person (who was avoiding speech)." (Anqaravi, Commentary) This word is also a play on "Yemen" (in the previous line).

18. (4916) there is a window from (one) heart to (another) heart: this is the very last line in the Mathnawi. Rumi must have been too ill to complete his lengthy ongoing story about the "Three Princes," of which this uncompleted story about three brothers was a small part.

Anqaravi thought that the occurrence of the word

"silence" [khâmosh] (in line 4912) was a fitting way for the Mathnawi to end, and pointed out that Rumi often used this as a pen name [takhallaS] to end many of the final lines of the ghazals, or odes, in his Dîvân. As an example, Anqaravi quoted the following (second to last) verse (of Ghazal 75): "(Be) silent, for silence is better than drinking honey. Quit hints and allusions, in the burning up of (all) words and phrases" [khâmôsh ke khâmôshî behtar z-`asal-nôshî/ dar sôz-é `ibârat-râ be-g'Zâr ishârat-râ].

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4900 goft dân-am mard-râ dar Hîn ze-pôz
w-ar na-gôy-ad, dân-am-ash andar seh rôz

w-ân degar goft ar be-gôy-ad dân-am-ash
w-ar na-gôy-ad, dar sokhon pêchân-am-ash

goft agar în makr be-sh'nîda bow-ad
lab be-band-ad, dar khamôshê dar raw-ad

maSal

ân-chon-ân-ke goft mâdar bâ posar
gar kheyâlê âyad-at dar shab ba-sar

yâ ba-gôrestân-o jây-é sahm-gîn
tô kheyâlê zesht bîn-î az kamîn

4905 del qawî dâr-wo be-kon Hamla bar-ô
ô be-gardân-ad ze-tô dar hâl rô

4905b z-ân-ke bê-tarsî ba-sôy-ash har ke raft
ân kheyâl-é dêw-wash be-g'rêkht taft

goft kôdak ân kheyâl-é dêw-wash
gar ba-d-ô în gofta bâsh-ad mâdar-ash

hamla âr-am, oft-ad andar gardan-am
z-amr-é mâdar, pas man ân-gah chûn kon-am?

tô hamê âmôziy-am ke chost îst
ân kheyâl-é zesht-râ ham mâdarê-st

dêw-o mardom-râ mulaqqin yak khodâ-st
ghâlib ây-ad bar shah-ân z-ô gar gadâ-st
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4910 tâ kodamîn sôy bâsh-ad ân yawâsh
allâh allâh, raw tô ham z-ân sôy bâsh

goft agar az makr n-ây-ad dar kalâm
Hîla-râ dânasta bâsh-ad ân humâm

sirr-é ô-râ chûn shenâs-î râst gô
goft man khâmosh neshîn-am pêsh-é ô

Sabr-râ sullam kon-am sôy-é daraj
tâ bar ây-am bar sar-é bâm-é faraj

w-ar be-jôsh-ad dar HuZûr-ash az del-am
manTiqê bêrûn az-în shâdî-wo gham

4915 man be-dân-am k-ô ferestâd ân ba-man
az Zamîr-é chun suhayl andar yaman

4916 dar del-é man ân sokhon z-ân maymana-st
z-ân-ke az del jânib-é del rôzana-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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What Is the Soul?

Mathnawi VI: 148-154

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148 What is the soul? (It is being) aware of good and evil; (it is) joy at possessing goodness and weeping from [causing] harm.

Since awareness of experience is the core and substance of the soul, whoever is more aware is more possessed of soul!

150 Awareness is the effect of the spirit; whoever has much (of) this, is worthy of God.

Since awarenesses exist beyond this (bodily) nature, these souls are (like) inanimate objects in that arena.

The first soul[1] is the manifestation of the (Divine) Court, (whereas) the soul of the soul[2] is itself the manifestation of God.

The angels were all (the) mind and spirit [in creation]. (Then) a new spirit[3] came, for which they were the body.[4]

154 When they appeared before that spirit[5] (of Adam), by good fortune, they became its servant, like [the faculties of] the body.[6]

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (152) the first soul: "I.e. the unregenerate [= spiritually unreformed] soul belongs to the phenomenal [= material] world." (Nicholson, footnote) "i.e. the rudimentary ('animal' or intelligential') soul that has not yet attained to real knowledge of God (ma`rifah)." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (152) the soul of the soul: "I.e. the soul of the perfect Man is the mirror of the Divine Essence" (Nicholson, footnote

3. (153) a new spirit: "i.e. the spirit of Adam. All powers in heaven and earth are subject to the Perfect Man [= a "completed" saint who reflects all the Attributes of God, according to the sufi philosophy of Ibnu 'l-`Arabi, died 1240]: their relation to him is that of body to its spirit. Pure though the angels were, they paid homage to the Divine glory revealed in Adam." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (153) the body: "I.e. to which they were subordinate." (Nicholson, footnote)

5. (154) appeared before that spirit: refers to the command of God for the angels to bow down in obeisance to Adam [Qur'an 2:34] after Adam demonstrated knowledge of names of things (interpreted by the sufis as the Names of God) which the angels did not know (2:31-33).

6. (154) like [the faculties of] the body: According to current sufi teachings during Rumi's time (as in the school of Ibnu 'l-`Arabî), the angels are the spiritual faculties of Macrocosmic Man. Man was originally created to be the vice-regent of God on earth, prior to the Fall, and it has long been the aspiration of sufis to become the "Perfect (or Complete) Man," so as to reflect the Names of God as humanity was originally intended to.

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148 jân che bâsh-ad bâ-khabar az khayr-o shar
shâd bâ iHsân-o geryân az Zarar

chûn sir-o mâhiyyat-é jân makhbar-ast
har ke ô âgâh-tar bâ jân tar-ast

150 rûH-râ ta'Sîr âgâhî bow-ad
har ke-râ în bêsh allâhî bow-ad

chûn khabar-hâ hast bêrûn z-în nehâd
bâsh-ad în jân-hâ dar ân maydân jamâd

jân-e awwal maZhar-é dargâh shod
jân-é jân khwad maZhar-é allâh shod

ân malâ'ik jomla `aql-o jân bod-and
jân-é naw âm-ad ke jism-é ân bod-and

154 az sa`âdat chûn bar ân jân bar zad-and
ham-chô tan ân rûH-râ khâdim shod-and

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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The Wisdom of Negation

Mathnawi VI: 703-722

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703 In front of the drunken Turk,[1] the musician began [to mention]
the secrets of [the verse], "Am I not"[2] within the veil of a song:[3]

"Are You are (like) the moon or an idol? I don't know. What do
You want from me? I don't know.

705 "(And) what (kind of) service should I perform for You?
Should I be silent or make allusions to You? I don't know.

"It's amazing that You aren't separate from me, (but) where am I
(and) where are You? I don't know.

"How do You draw me? (For) sometimes You pull me to (Your)
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chest (and) sometimes into blood (and suffering). I don't know."

He opened (his) lips in this way with (the words), "I don't know." He made a song of "I don't know, I don't know."

When (the rhyme of) "I don't know" went beyond the limits [of his tolerance], our Turk (was) shocked (and) became displeased by the (musician's) enthusiastic song.

710 The Turk jumped up and drew (forth) a battle club, so that he might reach the musician's head with it.

(But) a captain grabbed the club with (his) hand (and) said, "No! Killing the musician at this time is bad."

(The Turk) said, "This repetition of his, without limit and number, has pounded my spirit,[4] (so) I will pound his head!

"O pimp, (if) you don't know, (then) don't talk crap.[5] And if you know, take aim and strike.[6]

"O fool (pleased with yourself), talk about what you know, (and) don't drag on (and on, saying) 'I don't know, I don't know.'

715 "(If) I ask, 'Where are you from?' O conceited pretender, you will say 'Not from Balkh and not from Herat,

"'Not from Baghdad, not from Mosul, and not from Teraz.' You will drag out a long way in saying a 'no' and (then another) 'no.'

"But (only) say, 'I am from such a place' (and) open the way [to understanding]. (For) carrying on a long way is stupid here.[6]

"Or (if) I ask, 'What did you eat for breakfast?', you will say, 'Not wine and not roast meat,

"'Not strips of dried meat, not soup-bread, and not lentils.' (But) only say what you ate, and no more.

720 "What is (all) this lengthy word-chewing for?" The musician answered, "It is because my purpose is hidden.

"In the presence of your negation, affirmation[7] flees in fear. I negated (everything)[8] so that you might scent [the reality of] affirmation.

722 "I bring this (musical) instrument (of mine) into song with [the theme of] negation. When you die, Death will tell (you) the secret

(of it)."

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (703) the drunken Turk: These lines occur at the end of Rumi's story about how a drunken Turkish prince sent for a musician to sing for him, as a way to distract him from the headache of a hangover. The second poem which the musician sang ended with a rhyme of "I don't know": "I don't know whether You are [more like] a rose, a lily, a cypress tree, or a moon. (And) I don't know what You want from this bewildered and agitated one (who is) love-sick."

2. (703) the secrets of "Am I not": refers to "...the proclamation of Divine omnipotence... to which all human souls responded in eternity." (Nicholson, Commentary) This is also called the "Day of Alast," when the primordial covenant was made between God and the souls of all mankind prior to the creation: "And when your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam, from their loins, their seed, and made them testify concerning themselves, 'Am I not [a-lastu] your Lord [bi-rabbi-kum]?' They said, 'But of course! We do testify!'" (Qur'an 7:172) A major goal of the sufis has been to "remember" within the soul the awareness of God which has been forgotten by nearly all of humanity since the "Day of Alast."

3. (703) under the veil of a song: Just prior to this line, Rumi said (translated by Nicholson): "To utter words (concerning Him) is to shut the window (through which He reveals Himself): the very act of expression is the concealment (of Him). Sing, like nightingales, in the presence of the Rose, in order that you may divert them* from the scent of the Rose, So that their ears will be engaged in (listening to) the song and their attention will not fly to the face of the Rose. Before this Sun, which is exceedingly radiant, every guide is in reality a highway robber."*
[*divert them: "The lovers of God." (Nicholson, footnote)]
[*a highway robber: "I.e. all the proofs of God's existence and nature are so many stumbling blocks on the Way to Him." (Nicholson, Footnote)]

4. (712) my spirit: literally, "nature," "disposition."

5. (713) don't talk crap: Nicholson translated, "...(if) you don't know, don't talk nonsense..." He added that "don't talk nonsense" is "literally, 'don't eat dung.'" (Footnote)

6. (713) And if you know, take aim and strike: Nicholson translated, "and if you do know, play (a tune) to the purpose."

7. (717) is stupid here: "Nicholson translated, "... in this case it is folly to elaborate the point at issue." He explained that "to elaborate the point at issue" means "pruning and trimming the problem', i.e. eliminating false ideas about it in detail instead of declaring its true nature at once." (Commentary)

8. (721) affirmation: Refers to the Islamic principle of affirming of the reality of God after negating all else, as in the testament of faith: "There is no divinity except (the One) God" [lâ ilâha illâ 'llâh]. Closely related to this is the sufi teaching that "annihilation" [fanâ] of all illusions is necessary so that what is permanent [baqâ] may be known.

9. (721) I negated (everything): "There the mutrib [= the musician] speaks as a murshid [= spiritual guide] exhorting his disciples to follow the path of self-negation (faná) in order that they may attain to the reality of union with God." (Nicholson, Commentary)

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muTrib âghâzîd pêsh-é tork-é mast
dar Hijâb-é naghma asrâr?é alast

man na-dân-am ke tô mâh-î yâ waSan
man na-dân-am ta che mê-khwâh-î ze-man?

mê-na-dân-am ke che khidmat âr-am-at
tan zan-am yâ dar `ibârat âr-am-at?

în `ajab ke nêst-î az man jodâ
mê-na-dân-am man ko-jâ-am, tô ko-jâ?

mê-na-dân-am ke ma-râ chûn mê-kash-î
gâh dar bar, gâh dar khûn mê-kash-î?

ham-chon-în lab dar na-dân-am bâz kard
mê-na-dân-am, mê-na-dân-am sâz kard

chûn ze-Had shod, mê-na-dân-am az shegeft
tork-ê mâ-râ z-în Harâra del gereft
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bar jahîd ân tork-o dabôwsê kashîd
tâ `alay-hâ, bar sar-é muTrib rasîd

gorz-râ be-g'reft sar-hangê ba-dast
goft na, muTrib-koshî în dam bad-ast

goft în takrâr-é bê-Hadd-o mar-ash
kôft Tab`-am-râ, be-kôb-am man sar-ash

qaltabân-â mê-na-dân-î goh ma-khwar
w-ar hamê dân-î be-zan, maqSûd bar

ân be-gô ay gêj ke mê-dân-î-ash
mê-na-dân-am, mê-na-dân-am dar ma-kash

man be-pors-am k-az ko-jây-î hay morî?
tô be-gôy-î na ze-balkh-o na az herî

na ze-baghdâd-o na mawSil, na Terâz
dar kash-î dar nayê-wo nay râh-é darâz

khwad be-gô man az ko-jây-am bâz rah
hast tanqîH-é manâT în-jâ balah

yâ be-porsîd-am che khword-î nâshtâb?
tô be-gôy-î na sharâb-o na kabâb

na qadîd-o na Sarîd-o na `adas
ân-che khword-î ân be-gô tan-hâ-wa bas

în sokhon-khâyê darâz az bahr-é chêst?
goft muTrib z-ân-ke maqSûd-am khafî-st

mê-ramad iSbât pêsh az nafy-é tô
nafî kard-am, tâ bar-î z-iSbât bô

dar nawâ âr-am ba-nafy în sâz-râ
chôn be-mîr-î, marg gôy-ad râz-râ

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Not Every Male Is A True Man

Mathnawi VI: 1430-1449

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1430 In sum, masculinity[1] doesn't match every male. Take care (and) fear [the company of] the ignorant, if you are a wise man.

Don't listen to the friendly affection of the sweet-spoken ignorant man, because it is (deadly) like old poison.[2]

He speaks to you (like a mother, saying), "(O) mother's dear one!' (and) '(O) light of (my) eyes!"[3] (But) nothing is increased for you [by these words] except sorrow and regret.

That (foolish) mother speaks loudly to (your) father: "My child has become much too thin because of (going to) school.

"If you had produced him by another wife,[4] you would have acted with less injustice and cruelty[5] toward him."

1435 (But he replies), "If this child of mine were from another besides you, that woman also[6] would have spoken this vain talk."

Take care, (and) jump (away) from this (kind) of mother and her endearments. The slaps of (your) father are better[7] than her sweet desserts.

The mother (here) is the base ego. And the father is the virtue-restoring (faculty of) reason: its beginning is narrow confinement, but (its) end is a hundred spacious openings.[8]

O Giver of intelligent understandings and Protector of those who cry for help! No one can will (anything) unless You will (it)!

The seeking is from You, as well as the benefit [of what is found]. Who are we, (since) You are the First (and) You are the Last![9]

1440 May You [alone] speak, may You [alone] listen, and may You [alone] be! (For) we are entirely nothing, (despite) all these adornments[10] (of ours).
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(And) because of this entrusting of (our) power [to You], increase (our) longing [for You] during the prostrations (of prayer)! Don't send (us) the laziness and the reduction (of our inward fire because) of predestination!

(Now) predestination[11] is the wings and feathers of the (spiritually) complete; it is also the prison and chains of those who are lazy.

Know that predestination is like the water of the Nile: (it is pure) water for the believer and blood for the unbeliever.[12]

Wings take falcons to the king, but they (also) take crows to the graveyard.[13]

1445 (But) now turn back to the description of non-existence,[14] for it is like a kind of antidote,[15] yet you think it (is) poison.

Hurry up (and) go, O fellow-servant, like the Hindu boy-- (and) don't be afraid of the (King) Mahmood of non-existence.[16]

(But) be afraid of an existence[17] in which you are now, (because) that imaginary phantom of yours[18] is nothing and you are (also) nothing.

A nothing has become the lover of some (other) nothing! (But) a nothing has never robbed [the heart of] some (other) nothing.[19]

1449 When these vain fantasies have gone out from (your) midst, your misunderstandings will become clear.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1430) masculinity: Nicholson referred here to a comment he made on another line (I: 90), that true men [mard-ân] have self-control; whoever does not, as Rumi said, "is no man." He also referred to where Rumi says, "It is (true) manliness and the nature of prophethood to abandon anger and lust and greed" (V: 4026, translated by Nicholson)

Just prior to this (lines 1424-1429), Rumi had said the following

(most of which was translated by Nicholson into Latin, first translated into English by Afzal Iqbal, "The Life and Work of Rumi," 1956, p. 310): "If an ignorant man appears sympathetic and cordial to you, in the end he will hurt you out of ignorance. He is (like) a hermaphrodite [khunSà] (and) has two organs [dô âlat]; the function of both is obvious, without doubt. He keeps (his) penis [Zakar] hidden from women so that he can make himself (seem like) a sister to them. (And) he hides (his) vagina [sholla] with (his) hand from men so that he can make himself (seem like) the (same) gender as men. (But) God said, 'Because of that hidden vagina [kos-é maktûm] of his, We will make a slit [shollayê] on his nose [khurTûm],* so that Our seeing ones may not become deceived by the skill of that (deceitful) flirt.'"
[*"We will make a slit on his nose" (literally, "a vagina on his trunk" [sholla'yê sâz-êm bar khurTûm-é ó]): a reference to the Qur'anic verse: "Soon We will brand him on the snout" (68:16). The word "snout" is the trunk of an elephant or the nose of a beast of prey and is an idiom meaning the ugly nose of a man. Commentators of the Qur'an have said that this verse as a whole, has the meaning of earning permanent disgrace. Nicholson added that this verse was also believed to be a prophecy which was later fulfilled against an enemy of the Prophet Muhammad, who "in fact, had his nose slashed while fighting in the ranks of the Quraysh at Badr and bore this conspicuous mark of ignominy [= disgrace] for the rest of his life." (Commentary)]

2. (1431) old poison: Nicholson translated, "like old (virulent) poison."

3. (1432) light of (my) eyes: lit., "shining eye." An idiom meaning happiness. The ignorant man here speaks like a foolish mother, with whom Rumi compares him.

4. (1434) another wife: up to five are allowed in Islam, unless the bride has a marriage contract which stipulates that she is to be the only wife.

5. (1434) injustice and cruelty: means by making him go to school.

6. (1435) that woman also: the husband's exasperation with his wife is expressed here. Rumi's criticism is not of wives in general, but of ignorant men (symbolized here by very foolish wives) who are not "real men" of self-control, self-discipline, and virtue.

7. (1436) The slaps of (your) father are better: means, "The discipline given to you by your father is better than the indulgences given to you by your mother-- which will cause you to fail to learn self-control over your ego and thereby end up becoming unmanly."

8. (1437) a hundred spacious openings: Nicholson translated, "a hundred expansions (of the spirit)."

9. (1439) the First, the Last: "He is the First and the Last [huwa 'l-awwalu wa 'l-âkhir], the Outward and the Inward, and He is the Knower of everything" (Qur'an, 57:3).

10. (1440) adornments [tarâsh]: literally, shaving, carving. An idiom meaning elegant appearance, decoration. Nicholson translated this as "hewing," and explained it as meaning "effort and exertion" (footnote).

11. (1442) predestination [jabr]: the meaning here is that for the spiritually complete [kâmil-ân-- a word related to the sufi term "insânu 'l-kâmil," the completed or perfected human being], their attitude toward compulsion of the Divine Will is to surrender so completely that God may see, hear, and act through them-- which is the function of sainthood. Whereas for ordinary and ego-driven people, their attitude often leads to a passive and lazy fatalism. In the Mathnawi, Rumi strongly advocates making efforts and striving to reach closer to God, and rejects passive fatalism. "For the distinction between jabr-i mahmúd [= praiseworthy predestination] and jabr-i madhmúm [= blamable predestination], see I: 470-471, 637-641, 1068-1075, 1463, and the notes ad loc." (Nicholson, Commentary) Nicholson's notes describe the heretical interpretation, called necessitarianism, according to which human beings have no power at all over their actions and no power to fulfil the commandments of God. He refers to Rumi's verse which says that the prophets do not accept free will in regard to the works of this world, but do in regard to the next world-- whereas unbelieving worldly people have the opposite attitude. "Elsewhere (IV 401 sqq., V 3095 sqq.) Rúmí asserts that although the power to choose good and reject evil is not annulled by Divine omnipotence, complete freedom belongs only to the Perfect Men whose self-will has been extinguished and submerged in the will of the Beloved." (Commentary)

12. (1443) blood for the unbeliever: refers to one of the plagues sent by God to the Egyptians, who would not release the children of Israel. This plague is mentioned in a list of the plagues in the Qur'an (7:130, regarding the story from Exodus 7:17-25, well-known to the Arabs in the time of the Prophet Muhammad). See also Mathnawi IV: 3430-3456.

13. (1444) crows to the graveyard: common images in Persian literature. The trained falcon symbolizes the saintly soul which longs to return to the (gloved) hand of the king-- meaning to return

to God. The crow (as well as the owl) symbolizes lowly people who desire base material pleasures.

14. (1445) non-existence [`adam]: the spiritual realm which transcends material existence and separate ego-identity.

15. (1445) a kind of antidote [pâzahr, from "pâd-zahr," poison-protecting]: refers to the powder from the bezoar stone, or a type of sweet treacle, believed to be an antidote against poison.

16. (1446) the (King) Mahmood of non-existence: refers to Rumi's story just prior to this section, about how the Muslim king, Mahmood of Ghazna (now in Afghanistan), had invaded India and placed a Hindu boy on his throne, preferred him over all his officers, and called him "son." The boy wept from joy at the king's noble generosity, and explained that his mother used to frighten him into obedience by saying, "May you fall into the hands of the lion Mahmood" (if you don't obey me)! Rumi interpreted: "(Spiritual) poverty is your Mahmúd, O man without affluence: your (sensual) nature is always making you afraid of it. If you come to know the mercifulness of this noble Mahmúd, you will cry joyously, 'May the end be praised (mahmúd)!' Poverty is your Mahmúd, O craven-hearted one: do not listen to this mother, namely, your misguiding nature. When you become a prey to poverty, you will certainly shed tears (of delight), like the Hindú boy, on the Day of Judgement. Although the body is (like) a mother in fostering (the spirit), yet it is more inimical to you than a hundred enemies." (VI: 1400-1404, translated by Nicholson)

17. (1447) be afraid of an existence: an unreal existence based on the ego's fantasies about the material world.

18. (1447) that imaginary phantom of yours: "I.e. the illusion of your existence." (Nicholson, footnote)

19. (1448) some (other) nothing: Nicholson later changed his translation to, "a mere nothing has waylaid (captivated) a mere nothing" (from, has any naught ever waylaid (and attacked) any other naught?" He also explained his change of interpretation: "Hích ní = lá shay'." (Commentary)

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1430 HâSil ân-k az har Zakar n-ây-ad narî
hîn ze-jâhil tars agar dân-sh-war-î

dôstî-yé jâhil-é shîrîn-sokhon
kam shenô, k-ân hast chûn samm-é kahon
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

jân-é mâdar, chashm-é rôshan gôy-ad-at
joz gham-o Hasrat az ân n-afzôy-ad-at

mar pedar-râ gôy-ad ân mâdar jihâr
ke ze-maktab bachcha-am shod bas nizâr

az zan-é degar gar-ash âward-î'iy
bar way în jawr-o jafâ kam kard-î'iy

1435 az joz-é tô gar bod-y în bachcha-am
în foshâr ân zan be-goft-y nêz ham

hîn be-jeh z-în mâdar-o tibây-é ô
saylê-yé bâbâ beh az Halwây-é ô

hast mâdar nafs-o bâbâ `aql-é râd
awwal-ash tangîy-o âkhir Sad goshâd

ay dehanda-yé `aql-hâ faryâd-ras
tâ na-khwâh-î tô, na-khwâh-ad hêch kas

ham Talab az to-st-o ham ân nêkô'î
mâ key-êm awwal tow-î, âkhir tô-î

1440 ham be-gô tô, ham tô be-sh'naw ham tô bâsh
mâ hama lâsh-êm bâ chand-în tarâsh

z-în Hawâla, raghbat afzâ dar sujûd
kâhiliy-é jabr ma-frest-o khumûd

jabr bâ-shad parr-o bâl-é kâmil-ân
jabr ham zendân-o band-é kâhil-ân

hamchô âb-é nîl dân în jabr-râ
âb mû'min-râ-wo khûn mar gabr-râ

bâl bâz-ân-râ sôy-é sulTân bar-ad
bâl zâgh-ân-râ ba-gûrestân bar-ad

1445 bâz gard aknûn tô dar sharH-é `adam
ke chô pâzahr-ast-o pendâr-î-sh sam

hamchô hendô-bachcha hîn, ay khwâja-tâsh
raw ze-maHmûd-é `adam tarsân ma-bâsh

az wujûdê tars k-aknûn dar way-î
ân khayâl-at lâshî-o tô lâshiy-î

lâshiyê bar lâshiyê `âshiq shod-ast
hêch nayê mar hêch nayê-râ rah zad-ast

1449 chûn berûn shod în khayâlât az meyân
gasht nâ-ma`qûl-é tô bar tô `ayân

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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Remember God's Blessings

Mathnawi VI: 1794-1829

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1794 In short, right now you should ask from each part of you--
(for) these speechless parts have a hundred tongues--[1]

1795 (About its) memory of the blessings and favors of the
Provider[2] of the world which have been hidden in the pages of
time.

You are actively seeking stories day and night, (yet) every part of
you is telling you stories.[3]

Since every part of you has grown up out of non-existence, how
many joys and sorrows they have experienced!

For no part will grow without enjoyment. Rather, (such) a part
becomes thin and weak from every (painful) contortion.[4]

The part remains, but the enjoyment has gone from (its) memory.
Rather, it didn't go (but) became hidden from the five (senses) and
the seven (heavens).[5]

1800 (It is like) summer, during which cotton is born. (Afterwards)
the cotton remains (but) the summer has gone from memory.

Or (it is) the likeness of ice, which is born from winter. The ice
(remains) in front of us,[6] (but) the (memory of) winter is hidden.

The ice is a memorial of those difficulties (during winter).
(Likewise), these fruits during (the first month of) winter (are) a
memorial of summer.

Likewise, young man, every part of you in your body is telling the story of a particular (Divine) favor.

Just as a woman who has twenty children, each one is the narrator of a state of happiness.[7]

1805 Being pregnant isn't (possible) without (originating) from amorous playfulness and ecstasy. The orchard can never bring forth (fruit) without a spring-season:

The "pregnant" ones and their "children"[8] on (their) "laps" are the proof of the (orchard's) love-play with the spring-season.

Every tree among suckling infants (is) pregnant from a hidden king, like Mary.[9]

Even though the fiery heat is hidden in the (boiling) water, a hundred thousand (bubbles of) foam are surging upon it.

Although the fire weaves (heat) very secretly, the foam is pointing (to its presence) with "ten fingers."

1810 Similarly, the parts of those (ecstatically) drunk with union (are) pregnant from the analogies (produced by spiritual) states and speech.[10]

In the presence of the beauty of the ecstatic state, (their) mouths remain open (from bewilderment), (and their) eyes have become absent from worldly forms.

Those "sons"[11] are not from being born out of the four (elements). Therefore, (they) are not visible to these (physical) eyes.

Those "sons" are born from (mystical) illumination.[12]
Therefore, they are concealed by a pure veil.

We said "born," but in reality it is not (something) born-- and this word isn't (used here) except for the sake of guidance.

1815 Hurry up (and) be silent, so that the King of "Say!"[13] may speak. Don't (try to) sell (such) a nightingale[14] to this kind of rose.[15]

This talkative rose (is) full of boiling and shouting. O nightingale, abandon (your own) tongue (and) be (all) ears!

Both kinds of analogies[16] of pure (mental) images are fair and just witnesses to the mystery of union.[17]

(And) both kinds of subtle and pleasing beauty (are) witnesses to the (spiritual) conception and gathering together[18] of that which s past.

Just as ice, in the renewed July summer,[19] is telling the story of winter every moment,

1820 (And is recalling) the memory of those frigid winds and intense cold during those difficult times and days.

(Or) just as fruit in the winter season is telling the story of the kindness of God (during summer)

(And) the story of the time of the smiles of the sun and the touching and deflowering[20] of those brides of the orchard.

The ecstatic state has gone, but your part remained as a memorial; either ask it (for the memory)[21] or bring back the memory yourself.

When sorrow holds you down, if you are quick, you should seek (to question) that moment which caused hopelessness.

1825 (And) you should say to it, "O sorrow which denies the (daily) condition of the allotment of generous favors[22] from the [realm of] Perfection:

"Although the spring-season and (its) cheerful freshness are not (present) in every moment for you, (still) your body (is) like a heap of roses. What is it (to you), a corn stack?

(Your) body is a heap of roses, (and) your thoughts are like rose water. (Yet) the rose water has become the denier of the rose-- (and) this (should be) amazing to you."

Hay (is) withheld from those who have the disposition of ungrateful apes. (But there are festive) scatterings of sunshine and (rain-bearing) clouds upon those who have the disposition of prophets.

1829 That quarrelling of the ungrateful denier is the custom of an ape. (But) that thankfulness and gratitude is the roadway of a prophet.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)

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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (1794) these speechless parts have a hundred tongues: The Qur'an states that the members of the body will "testify" on the Day of Resurrection about the good and bad deeds they were made to perform: "On the Day (when) their own tongues, hands, and feet will witness against them about what they did." (Qur'an 24: 24)

2. (1795) the blessings and favors of the Provider: "The seven heavens and the earth and (all) that is therein glorify Him, and there is not a thing but celebrates His praise, but you do not understand their praise." (Qur'an 27:43) The "Provider" [razzâq] is one of the "Ninety-Nine Names of God" in the Islamic tradition: "Truly God is the Provider [ar-razzâq] of Sustenance, the Lord of Power, the Strong." Qur'an 51: 58)

3. (1796) telling you stories: Nicholson translated, "is telling thee the story (of His bounties)."

4. (1798) every (painful) contortion: Nicholson translated, "at every spasm (of pain) the part (affected) becomes thin (dwindles)."

5. (1799) the five (senses) and the seven (heavens): Nicholson translated, "and the seven (members of the body)." However, he translated III: 2121 as, "I sing thy praise outside of the five (senses) and the seven (heavens."

6. (1801) The ice (remains) in front of us: perhaps refers to the snow and ice which lingers for a number of months on the (visible) tops of mountains after winter has passed. However, Nicholson refers to the use of ice as a refrigerant in hot weather (Commentary).

7. (1804) a state of happiness: Nicholson translated, "... each (child) is telling of a (past) delight."

8. (1806) The "pregnant" ones and their "children": Nicholson translated, "The pregnant (trees) and the children..." and he explained: "I. e. the leaves and fruit." (Footnote)

9. (1807) like Mary: refers to the miraculous pregnancy of Mary, the mother of the Prophet Jesus, who became pregnant while a virgin when the angel Gabriel (called the Spirit or the Holy Spirit in the Qur'an) came to her. "And mention Mary in the Book (of the Qur'an) when she withdrew from her family to a place (facing) east. She placed a screen (to seclude herself) from them. Then We

sent Our Spirit to her, and it appeared to her in the likeness of a well-proportioned man." (Qur'an 19:16-17)

10. (1810) pregnant from the analogies (produced by spiritual) states and speech: Nicholson translated, "pregnant with the (ideal) forms of (ecstatic) feelings and words." This refers to the ecstasy produced from listening to mystical poetry, which expresses symbolic mental images to describe mystical states such as union. These analogies and symbols are, in turn, created during spiritual ecstatic states [Hâl] and by the efforts to describe such experiences in words.
11. (1812) these "sons": Nicholson translated, "Those (spiritual) progenies..." He explained them as meaning "mystical 'states' and ecstatic expressions (shathiyyát), contrasted with the mawálid-i thalathah [= the three offspring of nature: mineral, vegetable, and animal] of the sensible world." (Commentary)

12. (1813 (mystical) illumination: Nicholson translated," These progenies are born of (Divine) illumination..."

13. (1815) the King of "Say!": "I.e. God who speaks through the prophets and saints." (Nicholson, footnote). In the Qur'an, God often commands the Prophet (and therefore all Muslims) to speak particular words of revelation. The most famous example is the Chapter of Unity: "Say [qul]: 'He is God, the Only One, the Eternal. He does not beget, nor is He begotten. And there is no one comparable to Him.'" (Qur'an 112:1-4)

14. (1815) Don't (try to) sell a nightingale: Nicholson translated, "... do not play the nightingale" and explained: "Literally, 'do not sell (offer for sale and display) the quality (song) of the nightingale."

15. (1815) this kind of rose: means don't speak and display yourself in the presence of the inspired saint, who is speaking the words of God from an ecstatic state.

16. (1817) both kinds of analogies: refers to line 1810, "the analogies (produced by spiritual) states and speech."

17. (1817) the mystery of union: something beyond the ability of words and
thoughts to understand. Therefore, it is beyond doctrines created by the mind, such as unification [ittiHâd] with God, nor the union of a chosen soul with the Creator ("shirk," for God has no partner), nor the union of the Creator with the soul of a individual ("Hulûl," meaning an indwelling or incarnation of God in human form). Although sufi poets often speak of "union,' it is best conceived of as a spiritual state of nearness to God, likened to union.

18. (1818) (spiritual) conception and gathering together: means spiritual birth and development. Nicholson translated, "(spiritual) pregnancies and growing big (with child)..." and he explained "growing big (with child)" as meaning, "Literally, '(the process of) raising to life" (footnote). Since the word "Hashr" usually means the gathering of souls resurrected on the Day of Judgment, Nicholson later offered a different explanation in his Commentary: "i.e. past impregnations (by Divine grace) and (spiritual) resurrections (revelations of Reality). This may refer to the experience of the souls of the blest in pre-existence (rúz-i Alast)" [= the Day of "Am I not" (your Lord?)"-- when God made a covenant, prior to the creation, with the souls of all of future mankind, mentioned in Qur'an 7:172]

19. (1819) the renewed July summer: Nicholson translated, "... in the brilliant (month of Tamúz..." and added, "Literally, 'made new,' 'renovated.'" (footnote) And he explained further: "an epithet applicable to a new garment, depicts the change from winter frost and gloom to fine bright summer weather. (Commentary)

20. (1822) the touching and deflowering [lams-o Tams]: Although the word "Tams" means "obliteration" and "effacement" and could refer to orgasm (the next line begins, "The ecstatic state has gone..."), Nicholson read it as "lams-o TamS," meaning "the (sensual) touching and (first) sexual intercourse (with a virgin)." Thus he translated, "when the sun was smiling and embracing the brides of the orchard," and he explained in Latin, "Literally, 'contactu et coitu fruebatur.'" (Footnote) So he understood the phrase as meaning "lams-o TamS" but spelled it "lams-o Tams" for the rhyme (with "shams," the sun).

21. (1823) ask it (for the memory): apparently, this refers to lines 1794-99, where Rumi asks the listener to ask the parts or sections of the body, mind, and heart about the memories they keep hidden.

22. (1825) generous favors: "I.e. 'when overtaken by affliction, do not lose faith and hope but call yourself to account: how can you, whose whole being bears witness to the bounties God has heaped on you, have any thought of ingratitude towards Him?'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

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1794 bârî aknûn tô ze-har juzw-at be-pors
Sad zabân dâr-and în ajzây-é khurs

1795 Zikr-é ni`mat-hây-é razzâq-é jahân
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ke nehân shod ân dar âwrâq-é zamân

rôz-o shab afsâna-jôyân-î tô chost
juzw juzw-é tô fasâna-gôy-é to-st

juzw juzw-at tâ be-rost-ast az `adam
chand shâdî dîda-and-o chand gham

z-ân-ke bê-laZZat na-rôy-ad hêch juzw
bal-ke lâghar gard-ad az har pêch juzw

juzw mând-o ân khwashî az yâd raft
bal na-raft ân, khufya shod az panj-o haft

1800 ham-chô tâbestân ke az way panbe zâd
mând panba, raft tâbestân ze-yâd

yâ miSâl-é yakh ke zây-ad az shitâ
shod shitâ penhân-o ân yakh pêsh-é mâ

hast ân yakh z-ân Su`ûbat yâdgâr
yâdgâr-é Sayf dar day în Simâr

ham-chon-ân har juzw-é juzw-at ay fatî
dar tan-at afsâna-gôy-é ni`matê

chûn zanê ke bîst farzand-ash bow-ad
har yakê Hâkîy-é Hâl-é khwash bow-ad

1805 Haml na-b'w-ad bê z-mastiyy-o ze-lâgh
bê-bahârê kay shaw-ad zâyanda bâgh?

Hâmil-ân-o bachcha-gân-shân bar kenâr
shod dalîl-é `ishq-bâzî bâ bahâr

har derakhtê dar raZâ`-é kôdak-ân
ham-chô maryam Hâmil az shâhê nehân

gar-che dar âb âteshî pôshîda shod
Sad hazâr-ân kaf bar-ô jôshîda shod

gar-che âtesh sakht penhân mê-tan-ad
kaf ba-dah angosht ishârat mê-kon-ad

1810 ham-chon-în ajzây-é mast-ân-é wiSâl
Hâmil az tamSâl-hây-é Hâl-o qâl

dar jamâl-é Hâl wâ mânda dah-ân

chashm ghâyib gashta az naqsh-é jahân

ân mawâlîd az zeh-é în châr nêst
lâ-jaram manZûr-é în abSâr nêst

ân mawâlîd az tajallî zâda-and
lâ-jaram mastûr-é parda-yé sâda-and

zâda goft-êm-o Haqîqat zâd nêst
w-în `ibârat joz pay-é irshâd nêst

hîn khamosh kon tâ be-gôy-ad shâh-é qul
bolbolê ma-f'rôsh bâ în jins-é gol

în gol-é gôyâ-st por jôsh-o khorôsh
bolbolâ tark-é zabân kon, bâsh gôsh

har dô gûn tamSâl-é pâkîza-miSâl
shâhid-é `adl-and bar sirr-é wiSâl

har dô gûn Husn-é laTîf-é murtaZà
shâhid-é aHbâl-o Hashr-é mâ maZà

ham-chô yakh k-andar tamûz-é mustajad
har dam afsâna-yé zamestân mê-kon-ad

Zikr-é ân aryâH-é sard-o zamharîr
andar ân azmân-o ayyâm-é `asîr

ham-chô ân mêwa ke dar waqt-é shitâ
mê-kon-ad afsâna-yé luTf-é kodâ

qiSSa-yé dawr-é tabassum-hây-é shams
w-ân `arûs-ân-é chaman-râ lams-o Tams

Hâl raft-o mând juzw-at yâdgâr
yâ az-ô wâ pors, yâ khwad yâd âr

chûn ferô gîr-ad gham-at gar chostiy-î
z-ân dam-é nawmêd-kon wâ jostiy-î

goft-î-ash ay ghaSSa-yé munkir ba-Hâl
râtiba-yé in`âm-hâ-râ z-ân kamâl

gar ba-har dam ne-t bahâr-o khurramî-st
ham-chô châsh-é gol tan-at anbâr chî-st

châsh-é gol tan, fikr-é tô ham-chûn gol-âb

munkar-é gol shod gol-âb, în-at `ujâb

az kapî-khôy-ân-é kufr-ân kah darêgh
bar nabî-khôy-ân niSâr-é mehr-o mêgh

1829 ân lajâj-é kufr qânûn-é kapî-st
w-ân sepâs-o shukr minhâj-é nabî-st

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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King Mahmood and the Night Thieves

Mathnawi VI: 2816-59, 2906-21

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2816 One night, when King Mahmood was returning [from wandering the city] alone, he met a group of thieves.[1]

They then asked him, "Who are you, O man of good faith?"[2] The king answered, "I'm one and the same as you."

One (of them) said, "O gang (of those) practiced in deception! So that each one of you can tell (us) about his own (special) learning,

"Let him talk in the night with (his) companions (about) what talent he has in his nature."

2820 One (of them) said, "O gang of (those) selling deceit! My specialty is in (my) ears,

"So that I know what a dog is saying with (its) bark." The group said to him, "(This is worth less) than two cents out of a hundred bucks!"[3]

Another one said, "O gang of (those) worshipping gold! My entire specialty is in (my) eyes.

"Whoever I see at night in the caravan (of the world),[4] I know him by day without a doubt."

One said, "My specialty is in (my) arms, since I can make tunnels (through walls)[5] with the strength of (my) hands."

2825 One said, "My specialty is in my nose. My job is detecting

the smell in (different kinds of) earth.

"The secret of 'Men are mines'[6] has been handed (to me)-- about why the Prophet has said it.

"By means of the earth of (a man's) body, I know how much good money is in it and what (type of) mine it has.

"(For) in one mine, gold beyond calculation (is) contained. But (in the case of) another one, its income is less than the expense.

"Like (the famous lover) Majnoon,[7] I sniff the earth (and) discover the ground of (my beloved) Laylà without (any) error.

2830 "I smell, (and then) I know from each shirt if it is (owned by) a Joseph[8] or a devil.

"(And) like the Prophet, who took (in) the scent from Yemen,[9] this nose of mine has gotten a portion of that (ability),

"So that (I know) which ground is the neighbor of gold, or which ground is empty and worthless."

One (thief) said, "Look! (my) specialty (is) in my hand. I can throw a rope ladder to the height of a mountain,

"Like Muhammad, whose spirit threw a lasso, so that his lasso took him up to the heavens.[10]

2835 "(And) God (also) said to him, 'O lasso-thrower toward the (Heavenly) Temple![11] Know (that) that is from Me: "you did not throw when you threw!"'"[12]

Then they asked the king, saying, "O reliable one! In what is your specialty?"

He answered, "My specialty is in my beard, since I can rescue criminals from punishments;

"When they give criminals to the executioner, they are rescued from them if my beard moves.

If I make my beard to shake in mercy,[13] they wrap up (and finish all) the killing and trouble."

2840 The group said to him, "You are our Pole (star),[14] for you will be the deliverance for us on a day of misery!"

After that, they all went out together;[15] they went toward the palace of that fortunate king.

When a dog made a bark off to the right, (one of the thieves) said, "It is saying, 'The Sultan is with you.'"

Another one smelled the ground from a hill (and) said, "This (scent) is from the house of a widow."

Then, the master of the lasso threw a rope ladder so that they (all) went to (the top of) a high wall.

2845 When he smelled the earth in another place, he said, "It is the ground for the treasury of a unique king."

The tunnel maker tunneled (and) reached the treasury. Everyone hauled (away) some things from the treasury.

The gang[16] took much gold, gold-brocaded cloth, and plump pearls and hid (them) quickly.

The king saw specifically their dwelling places, dress, names, shelters, and paths (of departure).

He stole himself (away) from them (and) returned. The (next) day, he talked (about his) adventures in the royal court.

2850 Furious officers then rode (out) in order to catch and tie (up) the thieves.

They came toward the royal court (with their) hands bound, and they were trembling from fear of (losing) their lives.

When they stood before the king's throne, the king (as handsome) as the (full) moon was the companion of their (previous) night.

The (thief) who could cast his glance on anyone at night, (and) could (then) see him during the day (and) recognize him without doubt,

Saw the king upon the throne and said, "This one was with us last night, (our fellow) night wanderer and companion--

2855 "The one whose great specialty is in his beard. Our capture is also because of his investigation."

His eye was the knower of the king.[17] Therefore, he opened up

(his) lips about (this) knowledge to (his) followers

(And) said, "The king was (for us like the verse), 'And He is with you.'[18] He was seeing our actions and hearing our secrets.

"My eye took the way (and) recognized the king (in) the night. (Then) it played (the game of) love all night with his moon-like face.

2859 "I will ask (mercy) from him for my people, since he will not turn away (his) face from (his) knower."

. . . . . .

2906 He brought (his) face to the king like a thirsty man to a cloud, the one who was owned by the (luminous) Full-Moon[19] on the Night of Power.[20]

Since his tongue and soul were owned by Him,[21] --(and) the one who belongs to Him may be a bold speaker--

He said, "We have become like the soul, bound to the clay (of the body), (and) You are the Sun of the soul[22] during the Day of Judgment.[23]

"O king of hidden journeys, the time has come for you to generously shake a certain beard for a good purpose.

2910 "Each one (of us) demonstrated his specialty, (but) all those talents have (only) increased (our) bad luck.

"Those talents have bound our necks, (and) we are hanging (our) heads and (brought) low because of those high positions.

"Those talents (are like) 'a rope of twisted strands around our necks,'[24] (and) there is no help from those arts (of deception) on the day of death."

[Nothing helped the thieves] except the particular specialty of that excellent perceiver whose eyes recognized the Sultan at night.

All those (other) talents were ghouls on the road,[25] except for a certain eye which was aware of the king.

2915 (And on) the day of (judgment at) court, the king became ashamed of [denying the request of] him whose gaze at night was upon the king's face.

And (even) the dog (who is) aware of the King of Love[26]-- must himself be given the honored title of "Dog of the Cave."[27]

The specialty in the ears is also good, since by a dog's bark, he (who has it) becomes aware of the (presence of) the Lion.[28]

When a dog is awake at night like a guard, he is not unaware[29] of the night-risings of kings.[30]

Take care not to have contempt toward those of bad reputation;[31] one should assign (one's) intelligence to (try to understand) their secrets.[32]

2920 Whoever at one time became (a person) of bad reputation shouldn't seek a (better) name[33] and (therefore) become half-cooked.[34]

2921 (For there is) much gold which has been made (to look like) polished black (iron) so that it may be safe from plunder and loss.

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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First published on "Sunlight" (yahoogroups.com), 9/30/99

Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (2816) a group of thieves: "This Story, illustrating the topic of the last four verses ["From Thy infinite bounty there came an (inward) eye to the falcon-soul that was flying for Thy sake./ From Thee its nose gained (the inward sense of) smell, and its ear the (inward) hearing: to each sense was allotted a portion (of the spiritual sense that was) distributed (amongst them all)./ Since Thou givest to each sense the means of access to the Unseen, that (spiritual) sense is not subject to the frailty of death and hoary eld./ Thou art the Lord of the kingdom: Thou givest to the (spiritual) sense something (peculiar to itself), so that that sense exercises sovereignty over (all) the senses." VI: 2812-2815, trans. by Nicholson], shows that the spiritual sense par excellence, which transcends every other sense and faculty, is immediate vision and recognition of the Divine." (Nicholson, Commentary)

2. (2817) man of good faith: literally, "Father of Faithfulness (to a promise)." Nicholson translated, "honest man."

3. (2821) two cents out of a hundred bucks: literally, "two dâng out of a dînâr." The latter was a small gold coin. Refers to "...the small value Súfís attach to hearing in comparison with sight..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

4. (2823) the caravan (of the world): "Persian poets use qayrawán (the Arabicised form of kárwán) in the sense of aTráf-i ma`múrah [= the bounds of human habitation]" (Nicholson, Commentary)

5. (2824) tunnels (through walls): "referring to intellectual speculation (baHth), which picks holes in the Sacred Law (sharí`ah)" (Nicholson, Commentary)

6. (2826) Men are mines: refers to a traditional saying of the Prophet Muhammad, "'Men are mines like mines of gold and silver', i.e. they have different natures and capacities." (Nicholson, Commentary)

7. (2829) Majnoon: a legendary lover, whose passionate yearning for his beloved, a woman named Laylà ("Laylî" in Persian), drove him crazy.

8. (2830) a Joseph: refers to a story in the Qur'an. After the Prophet Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers, he sent his shirt back with them to his father Jacob, who instantly recovered his sight (Qur'an 12:96).

9. (2831) the scent from Yemen: refers to a traditional saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "'Lo I feel the breath of the Merciful (God) from the direction of Yemen', is said to refer to Uways al-Qaraní, an ascetic who fell in the battle of Siffín, fighting for `Alí against Mu`âwiyah. Although Uways lived in Yemen, his saintly influence was mysteriously communicated to the Prophet in the Hijáz" [= the part of Arabia where the Prophet lived]. (Nicholson, Commentary)

10. (2834) up to the Heavens: refers to the Ascension [Mi`râj] of the Prophet, during which he was taken up into different levels of the heavens.

11. (2835 the (Heavenly) Temple: the Baytu 'l Ma`m¸r, around which the angels circumambulate in eternal worship of God. In Islamic belief, this is the Heavenly prototype of the cube-shaped Temple in Mecca.

12. (2835) you did not throw when you threw: refers to the verse, "You did not throw when you threw (a handful of dust), but God threw" (Qur'an 8:17). "At the battle of Badr the Prophet threw a handful of gravel in the faces of the Quraysh, who immediately

fled before the Moslem onset. The Qur'án declares that the gravel was really thrown by God, 'that He might give the true believers a good proof of His favour'. Here the text... refers to the mystical union of the prophet or saint 'whose hand is the Hand of God'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

13. (2839) in mercy: In the three lines ending with this verse, "...Mahmûd signifies God, without whose mercy no sinner is saved." (Nicholson, Commentary)

14. (2840) Pole (star): Nicholson translated, "supreme chief." A technical sufi term referring to the chief saint of the age, by whom the other living saints (and thus sufis in general) are oriented and guided.

15. (2841) they went out together: the editor of the oldest manuscript of the Mathnawi states (in Persian), "This verse has been overlooked in the text, and has been added in the margin, indicating its place." Nicholson originally said, "There can be little doubt that it is spurious" because it was not in the two oldest manuscripts (footnote). Later, he added, "This verse... helps to elucidate the following passage and seems to have been put in for that purpose" (Nicholson, Commentary)

16. (2847) The gang: "The 'night thieves' who break into 'the King's Treasury' are types of the carnal soul and reason. Such knowledge of the Truth as they acquire is merely superficial: e.g. the asháb-i sam` [= "the people of (the sense of) hearing"] recite 'God is with you' (Qur. LVII 4), but actually they do not realise His presence at all. Vv. 2843 [= "Another one smelled the ground..."] and 2845 [= "When he smelled the earth in another place..."] illustrate the firásah [= "perception"] of the worldly wise, contrasted with 'seeing by the Light of God' (I 32, note). Ustád-i kamand [= "the master of the lasso"] (v. 2844) describes any leader of those who 'for their bellies' sake Creep and intrude and climb into the fold.'" (Nicholson, Commentary)

17. (2856) the knower of the king: "The thief who recognised Mahmúd when they met by night is now identified with the mystic (`árif) [= "(mystic) knower"] who knows and loves God in the dark world of illusion." (Nicholson, Commentary)

18. (2857) And He is with you: "And He is with you wherever you may be. And God sees (everything) that you do" (Qur'an 57:4, slightly contracted to fit the meter).

19. (2906) the one who was owned by the Full-Moon: "i.e. 'he (the gnostic) who attained to perfect union with God'." (Nicholson,

Commentary)

20. (2906) on the Night of Power: "see the notes on II 2935 [= "The so-called Night of Power (Laylatu 'l-qadr) is celebrated in Qur. XCVII [= Qur'an 97] as the night on which Mohammed received the first Revelation and on which the angels and the Holy Spirit descend from Heaven. Moslems believe it to be one of the last ten nights of Ramadán"], III 2533" [= "...'tis from the Night of Power that shone forth like a star"-- "Here 'the Night of Power' symbolises Universal Reason which reveals itself in the Perfect Man and rises, like a star amidst the darkness, to illumine the hearts of the elect. This is the source whence exoteric knowledge derives any value it may possess."] (Nicholson, Commentary)

21. (2907) owned by Him: here and in the preceding verse, king Mahmood becomes a symbol for God, the King of Creation, and his plea for mercy for him and his fellow thieves becomes a prayer to God.

22. (2908) the Sun of the soul: Nicholson translated, "Thou art the Sun (illuminator) of the spirit..."

23. (2908) the Day of Judgment (yawm-é dîn): a Persianized form of the Qur'anic Arabic words addressed to God, "maliki yawmi dîn"-- "King of the Day of Judgment" (Qur'an 1:4).

24. (2912) a rope... around our necks: altered for poetic purposes from the Qur'anic verse, "A rope of twisted strands around her neck" (Qur'an 111:5).

25. (2914) ghouls on the road: demons who were believed to lure travelers off the safety of roads, devouring them and their animals.

26. (2916) the King of Love: refers to God, who is al-Wadûd, the All-Loving (Qur'ân 85:14; 11:90).

27. (2916) Dog of the Cave: a reference to the dog who is mentioned as accompanying the Companions of the Cave (Qur'an 18:18), a number of pious youths who escaped religious persecution by taking refuge in a cave and who woke up over three hundred years later. "Here 'dog of the Cave' signifies a devoted follower of the saints... being constantly in touch with them, he knows God, though his knowledge is not yet pure and undefiled." (Nicholson, Commentary) Per Math. I:1022, "It is related that the dog of the Seven Sleepers... will be admitted to paradise in the form of a man..." (Nicholson, Commentary)

28. (2917) the Lion: another metaphor for a spiritual king.

29. (2918) is not unaware: "Spiritual knowledge conveyed through an imperfect medium, e.g. a relater of the sayings of the awliyá [= the sufi saints], is an excellent thing so far as it goes." (Nicholson, Commentary)

30. (2918) the night-risings of kings: refers to "spiritual kings" who rise from their beds after midnight for private prayers and devotions.

31. (2919) those of bad reputation: "I.e. those who have no regard for worldly reputation." (Nicholson, footnote) "...alludes to the malámatís, originally a school of Súfís who, in order to devote themselves to God alone, kept their asceticism secret, made a show of impiety, and behaved in such a way that they were regarded as 'black sheep' by all good Moslems." (Nicholson, Commentary)

32. (2919) their secrets: Nicholson translated, "their inward parts (spiritual qualities)." shouldn't seek a (better) name: "i.e. he must never again desire what the world calls 'a good name'." (Nicholson, Commentary)

33. (2920) shouldn't seek a (better) name: "i.e. he must never again desire what the world calls 'a good name'." (Nicholson, Commentary(

34. (2920) half-cooked: also means raw, immature, unripe. It is a technical term in sufism meaning "spiritually undeveloped."

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2816 shab chô shah maHmûd bar mê-gasht fard
bâ gorôhê qawm-é dozd-ân bâz khward

pas be-goft-and-ash kiy-î ay bû 'l-wafâ?
goft shah, man ham-yakî-am az shomâ

ân yakê goft ay gorôh-é makr-kêsh
tâ be-gôy-ad har yakê farhang-é khwêsh

tâ be-gôy-ad bâ Harîf-ân dar samar
k-ô che dâr-ad dar jibillat az honar

2820 ân yakî goft ay gorôh-é fan-forôsh
hast khâSiyyat ma-râ andar dô gôsh

ke be-dân-am sag che mê-gôy-ad ba-bâng
qawm goft-and-ash ze-dînârê dô dâng
~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

ân degar goft ay gorôh-é zar-parast
jomla khâSiyyat ma-râ chashm andar-ast

har ke-râ shab bîn-am andar qayrawân
rôz be-sh'nâs-am man ô-râ bê-gomân

goft yak, khâSiyyat-am dar bâzow-ast
ke zan-am man naqb-hâ bâ zôr-é dast

goft yak, khâSiyyat-am dar bîniy-ast
kâr-é man dar khâk-hâ bô-bîniy-ast

sirri 'n-nâsu ma`âdin dâd dast
ke rasûl ân-râ pay-é che gofta-ast

man ze-khâk-é tan be-dân-am k-andar ân
chand naqd-ast-o che dâr-ad ô ze-kân

dar yakê kân zarr-é bê-andâza darj
w-ân degar dakhl-ash bow-ad kam-tar ze-kharj

ham-chô majnûn bô kon-am man khâk-râ
khâk-é laylî-râ be-yâb-am bê-khaTâ

bô kon-am, dân-am ze har pîrâhanê
gar bow-ad yûsuf-o gar âhermanê

ham-chô aHmad ke bar-ad bôy az yaman
z-ân naSîbê yâft în bînîy-é man

ke kodâmîn khâk ham-sâya-yé zar-ast
yâ kodâmîn khâk Sifr-o abtar-ast

goft yak, nak khâSiyat dar panja-am
ke kamandê afkan-am Tûl-é `alam

ham-chô aHmad ke kamand andâkht jân-'sh
tâ kamand-ash bord sôy-é âsmân-'sh

goft Haqq-ash ay kamand-andâz-é bayt
ân ze man dân mâ ramayt iZ ramayt

pas porsîd-and z-ân shah k-ay sanad
mar to-râ khâSiyyat andar che bow-ad?

goft dar rêsh-am bow-ad khâsSiyyat-am
ke rahân-am mujrim-ân-râ az niqam

mujrim-ân-râ chûn ba-jallâd-ân deh-and
chûn be-jonb-ad rêsh-é man, z-îshân rah-and

chûn be-jonbân-am ba-raHmat rêsh-râ
Tay kon-and ân qatl-o ân tashwîsh-râ

qawm goft-and-ash ke quTb-é mâ tow-î
ke khalâS-é rôz-é miHnat-mân shaw-î

ba`d az ân jomla ba-ham bêrûn shod-and
sôy-é qaSr-é ân shah-é maymûn shod-and

chûn sagê bângê be-zad az sôy-é râst
goft mê-goy-ad ke sulTân bâ shomâ-st

khâk bô kard ân degar az rabwa'yê
goft în hast az wiSâq-é bêwa'yê

pas kamand andâkht ostâd-é kamand
tâ shod-and ân sôy-é dêwâr-é boland

jây-é degar khâk-râ chûn bôy kard
goft khâk-é makhzan-é shâhê-st fard

naqb-zan zad naqb, dar mahkzan rasîd
har yakê az makhzan asbâbê kashîd

bas zar-o zar-baft-o gawhar-hây-é zaft
qawm bord-and-o nehân kard-and taft

shah mu`ayyan dîd manzil-gâh-eshân
Hilya-wo nâm-o panâh-o râh-eshân

khwêsh-râ dozdîd az êshân bâz gasht
rôz dar dîwân be-goft ân sar goZasht

pas rawân gasht-and sarhang-ân-é mast
tâ ke dozd-ân-râ gereft-and-o bo-bast

dast basta sôy-é dîwân âmad-and
w-az nahîb-é jân-é khwad larzân shod-and

chûn-ke îstâd-and pêsh-é takht-é shâh
yâr-é shab-shân bûd ân shâh-é chô mâh

ân-ke chashm-ash shab ba-har-ke andâkht-y
rôz dîd-y bê-shak-ash be-sh'nâkht-y

shâh-râ bar takht dîd-o goft în
bûd bâ mâ dôsh shab-gard-o qarîn

2855 ân-ke chand-în khâSiyat dar rêsh-é ô-st
în gereft-é mâ ham az taftîsh-é ô-st

`ârif-é shah bûd chashm-ash lâ jaram
bar goshâd az ma`rifat lab bâ Hasham

goft wa h'wa ma`-kumu în shâh bûd
fa`l-é mâ mê-dîd-o sir-mân mê-shenûd

chashm-é man rah bord shab shah-râ shenâkht
jomla shab bâ rôy-é mâh-ash `ishq bâkht

2859 ummat-é khwad-râ be-khwâh-am man az-ô
k-ô na-gardân-ad ze-`ârif hêch rô

. . . . . .

2906 rô ba-shah âward chûn teshna ba-abr
ân-ke bûd andar shab-é qadr ân-é badr

chûn lisân-o jân-é ô bûd ân-é ô
ân-é ô bâ ô bow-ad gostâkh-gô

goft mâ gasht-êm chûn jân band-é Tîn
âftâb-é jân tô-î dar yawm-é dîn

waqt-é ân shod, ay shah-é maktûm-sayr
k-az karam rêshê be-jonbân-î ba-khayr

2910 har yakê khâsiyyat-é khwad-râ namûd
ân honar-hâ jomla bad-bakhtî fozûd

ân honar-hâ gardan-é mâ-râ bo-bast
z-ân manâSib sar negô-sâr-êm-o past

ân honar fî jîdi-nâ Habl-un masad
rôz-é mordan nêst z-ân fan-hâ madad

joz ham-ân khâSiyyat-é ân khwash-Hawâs
ke ba-shab bod chashm-é ô sulTân-shenâs

ân honar-hâ jomla ghûl-é râh bûd
ghayr-é chashmê k-ô ze-shah âgâh bûd

2915 shâh-râ sharm az way âm-ad rôz-é bâr
ke ba-shab bar rôy-é shah bûd-ash naZâr

w-ân sag-é âgâh az shâh-é wadâd
khwad sag-é kahf-ash laqab bây-ad nehâd

khâSiyat dar gôsh ham nêkô bow-ad
k-ô ba-bâng-é sag ze-shêr âgah shaw-ad

sag chô bêdâr-ast shab, chûn pâsbân
bê-khabar na-b'w-ad ze-shab-khêz-é shah-ân

hîn ze-bad-nâm-ân na-bây-ad nang dâsht
hôsh bar âsrâr-shân bây-ad gomâsht

2920 har ke ô yak-bâr khwad bad-nâm shod
khwad na-bây-ad nâm jost-o khâm shod

ay basâ zar ke seyah-tâb-ash kon-and
tâ shaw-ad âmin z-e târâj-o goz-and

(mathnawi meter: XoXX XoXX XoX)

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If God Wills It

Mathnawi VI: 3659-3662, 3666-3671, 3680-3698

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3659 Who is (there) who can restrain (himself) from something forbidden?-- since man is greedy for what is forbidden.[1]

3660 What is prohibited is despised by the people of piety,[2] (but) it is stirring excitement for the people of craving.

So as a result of this, "He leads many people astray by it (and) He guides [many people] rightly by it"[3] (who have) an aware heart as well.

3662 The friendly dove won't fly in terror from the (sound of the bird catcher's) pipe. But the (wild) doves of the air are (certainly) afraid of that pipe (sound)!

. . . . . .

3666 The mentioning of the "phrase of exception"[4] [by saying, "If God Wills"] and (of having) the strength of mind to hold back[5] was made in the beginning of the Mathnawi.[6]

If there are a hundred (religious) books, they are (essentially) nothing except a single chapter [about this].[7] A hundred directions have no aim except the prayer-niche[8] [showing the direction toward Mecca].

The (goal of) deliverance and safety of these roads is one House,[9] (and) these thousands of ears of corn are from one Seed.[10]

The hundred thousand kinds of different food and drink are all one thing in comparison,

3670 (For) when you have become completely satisfied by one, fifty (other) foods become cold (and unappealing) to your heart.

3671 Therefore, you have been squint-eyed [and seeing multiple objects] when feeling hungry because you have seen something single as a hundred thousand.[11]

. . . . . .

3680 If you tie an ox in a stable, (and on) returning, you find a donkey in the ox's place,

It would be the negligence of donkeyish stupidity, as (if) being asleep, if you don't find out who is the hidden doer.

But you wouldn't have said, "Who is the switcher?-- (since) he is not visible, perhaps he is a heavenly being."

You've shot an arrow to the right, (and then) seen your arrow go to the left.

(And) you've galloped (your horse) toward a deer to (hunt) a prey, (and then) made yourself the prey of a wild boar.

3685 You've run in pursuit of some gain for the sake of heaping up (profits), (and then) the gain failed to arrive (and) you ended up in prison.

(And) you've dug wells for the sake of others, (and then) found yourself fallen into one.

Since the Lord acted against your wish in regard to the means[12], then why don't you become suspicious toward the means?

Many a person has become an emperor by striving to acquire (wealth); another has become (poor and) naked by efforts to gain (riches).

Many a person has become (rich like) Qaroon[13] from marriage to [wealthy] women. (And) many a person has (also) become a debtor from marrying women.

3690 Therefore, the means is turning around like a donkey's tail--(so) it's better not to depend on it.

And if you choose a means, don't hold on (to it) too bravely, since there are many misfortunes hidden underneath it.

The secret of the "phrase of exception"[14] is this strength of mind (to hold back) and caution, because the (Divine) Decree[15] may make the donkey to appear (as) a goat--

(For) even though the one whose eyes it bound (with a blindfold) is sly and clever, in both of his eyes the donkey is a goat because of blurred vision.

Since God is the Transformer of the eyes,[16] who (else) can change the heart and thoughts?

3695 (Otherwise), you will see a well (as) a pleasant house (and) a trap (as) an attractive (piece of) bait.

This is not sophistry.[17] It is the transformation (caused) by God;[18] it is showing where the realities are.

The one who is acting in denial of the realities[19] is completely involved in something imaginary.

(3698) (For) he is not saying (to himself), "Thinking about imagination[20] is also something imaginary to you, (so) rub an eye (in order to see)!"

--From "The Mathnawî-yé Ma`nawî" [Rhymed Couplets of Deep Spiritual Meaning] of Jalaluddin Rumi.
Translated from the Persian by Ibrahim Gamard (with gratitude for R. A. Nicholson's 1934 British translation)
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Notes on the text, with line number:

1. (3659) greedy (for) the forbidden: a proverb, as pointed out by Nicholson-- "The proverb is: al-insánu haris-un `alá má muni`a." (Commentary) He also noted that Rumi mentions this saying in Mathnawi III: 854, which he translated: "Man is greedy for that which has been forbidden." Just prior to this verse, Rumi was telling the story of the Three Princes (a story he died before completing), whose father told them to go anywhere except to a certain fortress, named "The Robber of Reason," because they should avoid the danger and difficult trials they would fall into there. Rumi then said (as translated by Nicholson): "If their father had not spoken these words and had not warned them against that fortress,/ Their party would never have approached the fortress, their desire would never have inclined towards it.... And, because of this prohibition, a craving arose in their hearts to investigate the secret of that (fortress)." (3654-55, 3658)

2. (3660) the people of piety [ahl-é tuqî]: means the people who have "taqwâ": a Qur'anic term often translated as "fear of God," but which is better understood as an attitude of reverential awe that is a kind of conscious love-- because the devout person (seeking ever-nearer closeness to God) does not wish to do anything which could lead to further distance from the Beloved. Nicholson translated this line: "The veto causes the devout to hate (that which is vetoed); the veto incites the sensual to covet it."

3. (3661) He guides [many people] rightly by it: a paraphrase of the verse, "By it He causes many to stray, and by it He guides many rightly." (Qur'an 2:26)

4. (3666) the phrase of exception: means the importance of saying "If God wills" in speaking about one's future actions and plans: "And do not say about anything, 'I will certainly do it tomorrow,' without (adding), 'If God wills!'" (Qur'an 18:23-24) Just prior to this, Rumi told how the princes said to their father, "'We will perform the services (required of us) we will be intent on hearing and obeying (thy commands)./ We will not turn aside from thy commands; 'twould be ingratitude to forget thy kindness';/ But, because of their reliance upon themselves, 'twas far from them to pronounce the saving clause and glorify God." (3663-65, translated by Nicholson)

5. (3666) to hold back: means to delay asserting that one will do such and such-- long enough to be aware that God is the Originating Cause of all that will happen in the future.

6. (3666) in the beginning of the Mathnawi: refers to Rumi's lines near the beginning of Book One (about the physicians in the story of the King and the Handmaiden): "In their arrogance they did not say, 'If God will'; therefore God showed unto them the weakness of

Man./ I mean (a case in which) omission of the saving clause is (due to) a hardness of heart; not the mere saying of these words, for that is a superficial circumstance./ How many a one has not pronounced the saving clause, and yet his soul is in harmony with the soul of it!" (Mathnawi I: 48-50, trans. by Nicholson)

7. (3667) a single chapter: Nicholson translated, "If there are a hundred (religious) books, (yet) they are but one chapter: a hundred (different) regions seek but one place of worship." He explained "one chapter" as meaning, "I.e. the gist of them is all is contained in one chapter." (Footnote) Since the previous line mentioned the "phrase of exception," this line presumably means that hundreds of religious books (and most books written during Rumi's time had to do with religious subjects), can be summarized as affirming the Omnipotence of the Divine Will and the need for submission [islam] to it.

8. (3667) the prayer-niche [miHrâb]: this is an indentation in the wall of a mosque indicating the direction to face (toward the Ka`ba in Mecca) when praying, which unifies the focus of worshippers all over the world. Nicholson's translation ["a hundred (different) regions seek but one place of worship"] is mistaken here, because the main meaning of the word "jehat" is "direction" (and not "region") and because of the well-known meaning of the word for "prayer-niche." Although this word does means a "private chamber" in the Qur'an (but not specifically a place of worship), the universal meaning has to do with the direction toward Mecca. Perhaps the meaning here is that all directions seek to point toward the essential direction, which is toward God ["Which ever way you turn, there is the Face of God" (Qur'an 2:115)] and that every direction "seeks" to pray to God and submit to His Will.

9. (3668) one House: may refer to "House of God," meaning the temple called the Ka`ba in Mecca. It means the Presence of God. Nicholson says: "Cf. the saying: al turuqu ilá 'lláhi bi-`adadi anfási 'l-khalá'iq..." ["The roads to God are as numerous as the souls of creatures."] (Commentary)

10. (3668) one Seed: all nourishment comes from God, who is the Source of Provision, the Provider of all needs.

11. (3671) as a hundred thousand: means that a very hungry person imagines that a single food is as wonderful as thousands of different foods. Nicholson explained about this line and the preceding four lines (3667-71): "According to WM [= the Indian commentator, Wali Muhammad], the point which these analogies illustrate is that further explanations of the istithnà [= the phrase of exception: "if God wills"] would be futile because their purpose is

essentially one, so that they all come to the same thing in the end..." Nicholson then added, "... evidently the passage has a much wider application" and referred to another note: "The action of God is absolutely unconditioned. He does what he pleases (Qur. I 109). He is the Causer of causes (musabbib-i asbáb) and the Transmuter of essences (mubaddil-i a`yán)." (Commentary) In other words, the essence of all knowledge, goals, desires, etc. is that God wills whatever He wills. And the saints and mystics have been graced with the full acceptance of this in their profound degree of submission [islâm] to the Divine Will.

12. (3682) regard to the means: Nicholson translated, "Since the Lord has disappointed you in regard to the means (of obtaining your desire)..."

13. (3689) (rich like) Qaroon: the name of a wealthy man (the same as Korah in the Torah, Numbers chapter 16) who led a rebellion against Moses: "Qaroon was certainly of the people of Moses, but he was arrogant toward them-- for We gave him such treasures... (So) do not exult (in your riches), for God does not love those who exult (in vain things)." (Qur'an 28:76)

14. (3692) the "phrase of exception": see note above.

15. (3692) (Divine) Decree [qadar]: the Destiny commanded by the Will of God.

16. (3694) the Transformer of the eyes: refers to the verse, "... a Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed." (24:37)

17. (3696) sophistry [tasafsuT]: an Arabic word derived from Greek-- a subtle and clever manner of reasoning which leads to a wrong conclusion.

18. (3696) It is the transformation (caused) by God: Nicholson explains Rumi's view here as, "The doctrine that God is Muqallibu 'l-qulúb wa-'l-absár wa-'l--ahwál wa-'l-afkár [= the Changer of the hearts and eyes and the states and thoughts] , although it implies that things have no real existence in themselves, must not be confused with absolute scepticism; on the contrary, it shows that the real existence of all things is in God." (Commentary)

19. (3697) in denial of the realities: Nicholson refers here to a school of Sceptics known as the Hisbániyyah, who taught that there is essentially no real existence and so-called realities are mirages thought up by those who are like people thirsty for water. (Commentary)

20. (3698) Thinking about imagination: Nicholson translated, "'Thy thinking (that all is) phantasy (illusion) is also a phantasy: rub an eye (and see)!'"

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kî-st k-az mamnû` gard-ad mumtani`
chûn-ke al-insân HarîS-un mâ muni`

nahî bar ahl-é tuqà tabghîZ shod
nahî bar ahl-é hawâ taHrîZ shod

pas az-în yughwî bi-hi qawm-an kaSîr
ham az-în yahdî bi-hi qalb-an khabîr

kay ram-ad az nay Hamâm-é âshnâ
bal ram-ad z-ân nay Hamâmât-é hawâ

. . . . . .

Zikr-é istiSnâ-wo Hazm-é multawî
gofta shod dar ibtidây-é maSnawî

Sad kitâb ar hast joz yak bâb nêst
Sad jehat-râ qaSd joz miHrâb nêst

în Turuq-râ makhlaSî yak khâna-ast
în hazâr-ân sunbul az yak dâna-ast

gûna gûna khwardanî-hâ Sad hazâr
jomla yak chêz-ast andar i`tibâr

az yakê chûn sêr gasht-î tô tamâm
sard shod andar del-at panjah Ta`âm

dar majâ`at pas tô aHwal bûda-î
ke yakê-râ Sad hazâr-ân dîda-î

. . . . . .

gar bo-band-î dar SiTablê gâw-é nar
bâz yâb-î dar maqâm-é gâw, khar

az kharî bâsh-ad taghâful khofta-war
ke na-jôy-î tâ key-ast ân kufya-kâr

khwad na-gofta în mabaddil tâ key-ast?
nêst paydâ ô magar aflâkey-ast
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têr sôy-é râst parrândîda-î
sôy-é chap raft-ast têr-at, dîda-î

sôy-é âhûyê ba-Saydê tâkht-î
khêsh-râ tô Sayd-é khûkê sâkht-î

dar pay-é sûdê dawîda bahr-é kabs
nâ-rasîda sûd, oftâda ba-Habs

châh-hâ kanda barây-é dêgar-ân
khêsh-râ dîda fotâda andar ân

dar sabab chûn bê-murâd-at kard rab
pas che-râ bad-Zan na-gard-î dar sabab?

bas kasê az maksabê khâqân shoda
dêgarê z-ân maksabah `uryân shoda

bas kas az `aqd-é zan-ân qârûn shoda
bas kas az `aqd-é zan-ân madyûn shoda

pas sabab, gardân chô domm-é khar bow-ad
takya bar way kam kon-î, behtar bow-ad

w-ar sabab gîr-î, na-gîr-î ham delîr
ke bas âfat-hâ-st penhân-ash ba-zêr

sirr-é istiSnâ-st în Hazm-o HaZar
z-ân-ke khar-râ boz nomây-ad în qadar

ân-ke chashm-ash bast gar-che gorboz-ast
z-ahwalî andar dô chashm-ash khar, boz-ast

chûn muqallib Haq bow-ad abSâr-râ
ke be-gardân-ad del-o afkâr-râ?

châh-râ tô khâna'yê bîn-î laTîf
dâm-râ tô dâna'yê bîn-î Zarîf

în tasafsuT nêst, taqlîb-é khodâ-st
mê-nomây-ad ke Haqîqat-hâ kojâ-st

ân-ke inkâr-é Haqâyiq mê-kon-ad
jomlagê ô bar khayâlê mê-tan-ad

ô na-mê-gôy-ad ke Hisbân-é khayâl
ham khayâlê bâsh-ad-at, chashmê be-mâl