

Beauty Torn by a Prick of Thorn: Rumi's Philosophy of Human Love

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Abstract:

Human self-conception is often reflected in arts, sciences, human institutions etc. concerning the human existence, its nature, potencies, its place in the universe occupied the philosophical debates more frequently than the questions related to "human sentiments". Love as the most innate human sentiment was expressed frequently in traditional folklore, poetry, and other art forms. Rumi's literary expressions of human love deserve analysis in terms of "philosophy of love". More often than not, human love is explained in terms of self-love, egoism; sometimes reduced to self-preservation or sexual drives or simply praised as civic virtue contributing to a social unity. Love for Rumi seems to imply more than that consisting primarily of an ontological feature of human beings and as well as an aesthetic and ethical virtue. Against philosophical theories of his time, Rumi offers "love" as a way of knowing that brings epistemological and ethical integrity of human being to another dimension. In this paper, we will analyze how this unity of knowing and doing come together in human love. For Rumi, only the infinity of human love can overcome the difficult task of bridging the infinite distance between human beings, nature, and the divine.

Keywords: Rumi, Masnavi, Plato, human love, philosophy of love, egoism, self-preservation, ethical integrity, virtues, epistemological certainty.

Introduction

Mawlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (1207-1273) is no doubt one the most famous poets in Muslim Sufi tradition. Although love as a concept familiar to people of different cultures and interest, it is one of the central themes of his *Masnavi*.¹ Yet, it still remains to be a challenging task to study Rumi's understanding of love in its various implications. He remarks that had all the forests been pencils and the oceans ink, words of couplets or *Masnavi* would never have come to an end, alluding to the fact that human life is finite and words are insufficient to explain love itself. However, we will try to follow the traces of his 'words of wisdom' about love in its philosophical and moral implications.

Philosophies of love

Although the word 'philosophy' literally means 'love of wisdom', philosophers have occupied themselves more with questions about the nature of knowledge or wisdom than the concept of love. It is also true that Plato's *Symposium* is the first philosophical treatise discussing various aspects and forms of love. He presents love as the human desire for what he already does not possess which is beauty itself. Plato's first assumption is that at the beginning mankind was in a state

of union with himself and a double-faced creature in desire to unite with the other half that was supposed to be split at a later time. Despite Plato's fame as the first philosopher discussing "love", Rumi recognizes him as the physician of self-conceit and pride:

Hail to thee, then, O Love, sweet madness!
Thou who healest all our infirmities!
Who art the physician of our pride and self-conceit!
Who art our Plato and our Galen!
Love exalts our earthly bodies to heaven,
And makes the very hills to dance with joy. (*Masnavi*, I/20-25)

Just as Plato's philosophy teaches us that the path to true wisdom is laid open to those who leave world of senses and opinion behind by following the path to rational wisdom; Rumi advises us to go beyond reason through love. While Plato wanted to have us believe that love of wisdom is the sure ladder for human mind to raise itself up to the world of eternal forms or ideas; whereas Rumi, on the contrary, invites us to taste the sweet madness called love and to burn our reason in the blinding power of love in order to exalt our self to the world of the sublime over and beyond the world of desire, lust and pettiness and self-conceit. Therefore, it is possible to argue that one might find in Rumi not only a strong criticism of philosophical treatments of love but also of philosophers' claim to a privileged position to know the real nature of love. The real question has nothing to do with the fact that we all human beings have some form of experience about phenomena called of love, it rather has to do with the so-called prerogative of philosophers to explain love and with the philosophical methods followed in their approach to love.

Socrates – if he represents Plato's views – describes love as want, i.e. as the desire for something that human beings already do not have. Greeks, just like the most of other people admitted several forms of love such as sexual, parental, filial, conjugal affections, friendship, and love for country and love of wisdom. Some forms of love can be expressed by desire or attraction, *eros*; others by liking or fondness, *filia*. In all forms, be it filial or erotic love has a definite effect on morality and knowledge. Lover, not the beloved acquires or fails virtue through his or her love. Two kinds of love are distinguished by Plato, that of heavenly and earthly; love of soul or body. Attraction of a man to a virtuous soul is the former. Honorable love is also the source of harmony and good. Love is the love of beauty and beauty has nothing material; it is ideal. There is also a scale of beauty, from bodies to forms, thought to minds and institution to laws and sciences (Boas 1967, s. 90).

Therefore, love, as described by Plato, is primarily determined by the object of desire. In other words, love is a desire for something human beings lack. To sum up Plato's concept of love in his own words: "Love is always the love of something," and that which love desires is not that which love is or has; for no man desires that which he is or has. And "love is of the beautiful," and therefore has not the beautiful. (Plato, *Symposium*, 200e-204d) Therefore, the existence of a feeling or desire for something we call love for Plato is a clear proof for the lack of perfection in a human subject. Commenting on Plato's *Symposium*, Pico Della Mirandola said: "Hence it follows that the nature of the desired is in some manner in the desirer; otherwise, there would be no similitude between them: yet imperfectly; else it were vain for it to seek what it entirely possesses." (della Mirandola 1914, Book II, Sec. III, s. 24) Perfect love, says Pico, is for those who are "remembering a more perfect

Beauty that their souls saw of old, before they were fettered to the body, are kindled with an incredible desire of rebeholding that Beauty”².

This philosophical concept of love continued to be strongly affecting the later explanations of love in arts and literature. The case in point is Goethe. He always seeks love as an unrealizable ideal. In his works, he gives a quasi-religious tone to the sexual experience by idealizing love as perfection that seeks a goal that one can never reach (Boas 1967, 93). Idealist philosophy of love raises it to the level of a mysterious cosmic power that can cause the spiritual evolution of man. According to Teilhard “love is the most universal, the most tremendous and the most mysterious of the cosmic forces.” (Teilhard de Chardin 1966, 3) Again he defines love as “a sacred reserve of energy; it is like the blood of spiritual evolution.” (Teilhard de Chardin 1966, 6) However, the more love is idealized more it becomes meaningless. For this reason, Le Rochefoucauld compares love to a ghost everyone speaks of, but few people have ever seen.³ Precisely for this reason that most people take their fancies to be love. Human failure in finding the true love cannot be taken as an antagonistic statement about existence of real love, as Schopenhauer claims (Schopenhauer 1990, 69).

On the other extreme case of philosophical accounts of love is the empirical approach. Believing only in concrete and observable facts, empiricist finds no essence of love except in our fancies. Thus, from an empirical point of view, love has only an “essence beyond our sight, or hearing, or touch, which uplifts us.” As such, for instance, Glyn defines love as conscious or “unconscious desire to create love’s likeness.” In other words, it is simply a natural animal instinct for the preservation. In art and cultural life this natural instinct is adorned with the “beauties of imagination.” (Glyn 1923, 13) Thus, like many of his contemporaries Singleton too adopts this empiricist approach by selecting following instances of love found in art and literature: “Love at first sight, ferocious and tenacious pursuit of the unloving, quarrels, reconciliations, misunderstandings, pardons, concealed love that fears to speak, timid appeals, stratagems to trick hated guardians, woman’s wiles and man’s contrivances, ...old love that re-awakens, love that lingers even behind cloister bars, love that faces death unflinchingly, and the despair of love forsaken.” (Singleton 1901, v-vi)

There is also ordinary common usage of love in all cultures and societies. The simple question, ‘what is love’ might seem nonsensical for an ordinary man. Common sense meaning of love seems so obvious that it defies any answer. Some even went further to define it as self-love in disguise. It can manifest itself as a desire for something beautiful, appealing, satisfactory, fulfilling etc. but self-gratification lies at the bottom of all of these. However, in ordinary usage, the word “love” means liking or physical or sensual attraction to something or somebody. One can describe his feelings of fondness or liking of a food, a piece of music, a friend a landscape etc. “I love this pie or that person.”

This common usage of the term complicates the issue rather than giving a clue to comprehend the nature of this feeling we call love. So instead of taking our lead from the feeling, one might better consider the object of love in order to explicate the matter. We may come close to a better understanding of love if the term at use in such contexts such as a fondness for a person or a family member. Feeling a desire for something with the expectation of pleasure of the body is called lust. We know that Hegel, in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, describes family life as the first form of communal life where an individual acquires moral virtues. He believes that feelings between spouses and same-sex siblings are either directed towards mutual benefit or they feel mutual denial of it to the other self in rivalry or jealousy. However, recognition of other self in itself is possible in mutual

love between brothers and sisters, since there is no expectation of benefit or conflict of interest. Therefore, love as moral virtue can be described as recognition of the other person in his or her own self-unmixed with any desire for benefit. Thus, Hegel exclaims that “the brother, however, is for sister a passive, similar being in general; recognition of herself in him is pure and unmixed with any natural desire.” (Hegel 1977, 275)

This division of love into categories of natural and supernatural; human and celestial, sensual and intellectual, spiritual and carnal etc. could be found in the contemporary literature on love. However, instead of giving priority to intellectual or celestial love, modern approach to love is determined by naturalistic and positive scientific tendencies. A holistic approach is another perspective on love. For instance, Elinor Glyn claims that all three forms of love may be united in the same person. “The spiritual and the mental alone would be friendship; the physical and the mental would be merely of earth, and the spiritual and the physical would be without balance; there must be the trinity in perfect love.” (Glyn 1923, 14) Again in his *Essay on Love*, Hull divides love according to the faculties of the human soul: senses, reason, and spirit. Hull claims that “sense of love is agitated, passionate, unreasoned, a pure instinct.” While rational love is always “calm, passionless, reasoned and a pure volition”, spiritual love goes “with sympathetic vibration of sense, resulting in emotion, feeling or affection.” (Hull 1912, 55)

All this analysis presents nothing that is already not familiar to us, but it enables one to draw certain philosophical conclusions. Love is defined here in term of imperfection, to be fulfilled either through epistemological faculties or as ontological human desires for a higher order or perfection. Therefore, love as a desire for perfection is, in essence, a form of human yearning for something that the subject already does not possess. Again, it is also defined as a desire for something of unequal nature, i.e., something that the subject is attracted to because it is from another order of being. However, these definitions are all based on the Platonic assumption that love is feeling that issues from a being that lacks something that the object of desire possesses more perfectly. In other words, love is considered to be feeling for something to be received or acquired. Thus, love is thought to be a passive or receptive feeling or virtue. Furthermore, love is regarded to be an inclination towards an object that may be totally unaware of the fact that it is the object of a certain desire. That means that the loved object or person may be totally unconscious and indifferent to the plight of the lover.

Love as a human capacity for intuitive knowledge of reality

As we implied at the outset, Rumi is critical of the rational account of love. He takes into consideration all of the aspects of love as a natural desire. However, since Rumi does not present his own understanding of love in a systematic philosophical style, we can only make a summary of his critique of philosophical accounts of love we have so far mentioned. He is not the first among the Sufi sages to question the ordinary and philosophical definitions of love. Many other poets, artists and man of literature in the East or West seem to have inquired, speculated and reflected about this particular state of mind we call love. But Rumi seems to believe that love cannot be subjected to rational or cognitive analysis. For any attempt to understand or explain something in terms of ‘what it is’, we must face the real difficulty of finding the right way to approach it. Love is no exception to this if one tries to conceive what the true nature of human love is. Rumi warns us, for this we need a non-speculative science: “real science is seeing fire directly; not mere talk, inferring the fire from the smoke.” (*Masnavi*, VI/2505-6)

One can find that the concept of love described here is completely opposite of what we have already outlined above. For Rumi, love is, first of all, a feeling of giving, not taking; it is relinquishing something that a human subject already possesses, not acquiring something that he or she already lacks. Love, for Rumi, is an essential virtue or power we already and always have from the very beginning. It is not a longing for the 'paradise lost', or remembrance of a lost perfection. Rather love is the perfection granted to the human beings at the creation. For this reason, only Rumi could say: "I deny humanity to those who are incapable of love, to those who do not have experienced love." (*Divan-ı Kebir*, 420)

As Rumi points out, the feelings we call love is no secret to anyone. But life distractions may cause us to forget all about it. Two kinds of love are described here: the first kind of love is a human state of pure need; the other is of pure annihilation. Those who feel love as means of satisfying a desire or providing certain needs may find the real love burdensome and can't stand the annihilating fire of love. True and real love is recognized by everyone except those who are occupied only with the errands of life. Those who are not fishes cannot sustain themselves in water longer and they would soon be bored, hence unaware of the reality of love cannot bear its ups and downs. The best example is the case of an ordinary run of men who only seek to earn their daily bread feel the day longer. The life spent in search of basic necessities would be felt quite long. All beings, including humans, are actually mirrors to reflect the divine light.

Certainty is acquired in three stages: The knowledge of certainty, the vision of certainty and the intuitive actuality of certainty. "In the ear's hearing there is the transformation of equalities; in the eye's seeing, there is the transformation of essences. If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words (alone), seek to be cooked (by the fire itself) and do not abide in the certainty of (knowledge derived from) others. There is no intuitive (actual) certainty until you burn; (if) you desire this certainly sit down in the fire." (*Masnavi*, II. 859-61)

This is not the certainty of reason, but of the heart. One seeks no proof in the presence of something that stands proved in front of one's eyes. Every proof that is not spiritual results in vain, for he is considering the final end of men. (*Masnavi*, V. 568-72) Intelligence is also of two kinds: acquisitive and intuitive. Acquisitive is acquired from "books, teachers, reflection, memory and from concepts, from the study of sciences." The other intelligence is a "fountain in the midst of the soul." (*Masnavi*, IV. 1960-67) "That which is the object of love is not the form." (*Masnavi*, II. 703)

Thus for Rumi, love signifies (a) the divine trust or the perfection reflected on human beings who are supposed to manifest this gift in all their relations with existence, including the Divine Beings themselves, whose attraction draws all creatures back to reunion with their Creator.

b) Love is not a desire for taking in, receiving or acquiring something; rather it is giving away the gift already received, reaching out to others as a mirror to the divine perfection, a conscious self-annihilation that leads to eternal life in God, the universal Noumenon, by whom all phenomena subsist.

Does this self-annihilation mean that one must live the life of an ascetic? On the contrary, it is not required of human beings to withdrawn from society, but from a life of self-deceit. Rumi declares that "we have no asceticism, all is by providence and mercy, this is exactly our way; complete love, journey through love, the experience of pleasantness, joy, and gaiety of peace. Love is the only provision for us. (*Divan-ı Kebir*, 420)

All phenomenal existences, except human being, are only "veils" obscuring the manifestations of the real existence, the Divine Noumenon. However, had the sustaining presence

of the Divine withdrawn from the phenomenal world even a moment, they would at once relapse into their original nothingness. In other words, “nature conceals God, but the supernatural in man reveals Him.” (*Masnavi*, IV/1309) The human being is the only existence with the capacity to realize and to respond by transforming his ego as a mirror reflecting the infinite manifestations of Divine Love that originates and sustains the creation. Since knowledge and reason are not suitable for grasping the realities of the unseen world, these faculties may lead man to the knowledge of the phenomenal and the sensible world, but cannot go beyond. Love is a virtue or capacity of the human being to penetrate into the moral, spiritual, inner life world of man. If we compare the three capacities for knowing opinion, knowledge and certainty, rational knowledge is above opinion but inferior to certainty. “Knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision. Knowledge leads to vision which is immediately born of certainty, just as fancy is born of opinion.” (*Masnavi*, III. 3061-81)

Rumi compares the certainty as an intellectual virtue born out of love with four other incapacities of human self: animal self, desires, ego, and reason. The life is sustained by the vital spirit in all living beings. In this level vitality is the spiritual essence in plant life that continues in apparent conflict and harmony. Desire is the other power of spirit that sustains life in the animal world. Ego is the spiritual essence in the human form of life that partly shares all characteristics of lower levels of life. Reason is the faculty of soul distinguishing human being in his own form of existence. However, reason is still suitable only for knowledge, necessary to administer the needs of body. By virtue of being in charge of the body, reason can fall prey to egoistic instincts and may yield to degraded situation where it has no share in love, but only strife, conflict, rivalry, struggle for dominance.

In modern political philosophy, these levels of life forms correspond to Hobbes’s state of nature and even to the state of state, where right is regarded as might. Rousseau’s image of an individual that is happy and in harmony with nature prior to the social contract corresponds to this level of ego as human essence. Rumi believes that the highest form of human essence is a divinely inspired spirit that is called universal Reason. Man is able to become the mirror of this universal reason that will be attained through love as a moral and aesthetic virtue. In other words, if human being acquires the wings of love, he will reach the heights where ego and reason cannot be imagined to attain.

The essence of all beings is the love and the divine love has the greatest value which is the finality of all yearning. For his reason, Rumi always recites the Divine love, guiding man to his journey in life. He compares the reason and love, the futility of the love for finite things and the misery of those who are unaware of the reality of love. According to Rumi, reason and senses are unable to grasp the realities of the invisible world. These faculties can lead man to a certain point beyond which they are not capable to pass. However, if man donned the wings of love he can ascend beyond the points where reason and sense cannot go. Just as in the night of ascension when the angel Gabriel has told the Prophet Muhammad that if he goes a fingertip further, he would be burned’, but the prophet has reached beyond the threshold of infinitude (*sidratu'l-muntaha*). This is the point where both angels and human beings cannot go beyond. In other words, it is the end point of all existence and the threshold of the Divine realm. For his reason, the angel Gabriel is the symbol of human perception, reason, and knowledge; the Prophet is the symbol of soul and love.

The Sufi is the “son of the time present” because he is in love with all existence as mirror or instrument moved by the divine impulse of the moment. “The time present is a sharp sword”

because the divine impulse of the moment dominates lover and executes its decrees sharply. The essence of love cannot be expressed with words, but those who experience know it. Someone has asked Rumi, 'what is being a lover?' He said to him "if you become like me you will learn." (*Mecâlis-i Sab'a*, 82)

Seeking to know, discovering and becoming are the three stages of spiritual development towards the recognition of the divine light of love that guides us. Reason or cognitive knowledge is only the beginning of this discernment:

"Love; however I will explain or describe;
we humans will be speechless in defining love;
Although pen writes everything, it turns paralyzed when it comes to love.
Reason in explaining love is like a donkey meddled into mud.
Love and being lover could only be explained only by love.
The evidence for sun is sun itself; if you search for evidence do not turn away from sun. (*Masnavi*, I/ 117-121)

There are two forms of discernment: moral and esthetic. Through moral judgments, human beings are able to discern the significance or the universal value of entities. Through esthetics judgments, we discover their place in the total harmony we call universal beauty. Love as moral virtue is a cure for arrogance and vanity; the earthly body becomes sublime through love; those who tear their clothes in the search of love will be relieved of the burden of passion and sin. (*Masnavi*, I/22-25). He emphasizes that the passion, greed, arrogance, envy, and vengeance can only be purged by divine love. If people who recognize the spiritual worth of every existence are in majority in a society, tranquility and peace will prevail. Just like all men need to learn a profession in order to earn a living, everybody needs to learn the art of religion which is rewarded by love. (*Masnavi*, II/2618-27). For this reason, Rumi tells us that "my mother is love, father is love, my prophet is love, and my God is Love. I am a love child and I have come to tell about love to world."

Love as a moral virtue

For Rumi, love is first and, foremost, an essential human virtue. The absence of love as moral virtue is responsible for the degradation of human situation. One reason for this degradation is the confusion between desire and love. There are two kinds of desires: One is directed to opposite nature, to plants for the purpose of satisfying the need for food; the other is directed towards beings of same nature with opposite accidentals, to human beings of opposite sex for preserving the species or procreation and satisfaction of desires. Desire for objects of opposite nature can be called, in the ordinary parlance, 'love' for the finite things. But desire for beings of the same nature should not be directed solely to the satisfaction of lust or desire. Rumi once warns that "if love is attached to color, odor, it is not love, it is shame on the person" (*Mesnevi*, I/224)

Therefore true love between human beings and between man and God cannot be sustained on the level of satisfaction of needs. Love is and should be considered as a moral virtue in our dealings with fellow man. Rumi speaks of three basic moral virtues of humility, openness, and care. The care is a virtue of man who makes his bodily desires submitted to will or heart's desire, i.e. desire to actualize man's true selfhood. If man cares about his "being-in-world" – borrowing one of

Heidegger's terms – or basic necessities of his existence, it means he is turning a blind eye to 'being-towards-beyond'.

When the body bows in worship, the heart is a temple,
And where there is a temple, there bad friends are weeds
When a liking for bad friends grows up in you,
Flee from them, and avoid converse with them.
Root up those weeds, for, if they attain full growth,
They will subvert you and your temple together.
O beloved, this weed is deviation from the "right way",
You crawl crookedly, like infants unable to walk.
Fear not to acknowledge your ignorance and guilt,
That the Heavenly Master may not withhold instruction.
When you say, "I am ignorant; O teach me",
Such open confession is better than false pride. (*Masnavi*, IV, 1380-90)

As Rumi points out, moral virtues of humility, openness, and care for the character development let the human actions reflect the primordial perfection of human soul in the mirror of fellow human beings. We, human beings, all are mirrors for each other. Human life is part of a dynamic process in which not only moral virtues are realized, but also possibilities of infinite happiness are achieved. Moral life which requires man make free choices is the mark of humanity. Choosing to love others is also a decision that can be made by free agents who achieved his freedom from petty desires. For Rumi, man's burden is to become free and freely share the perfection bestowed on human at the moment of his primordial creation by God.

God created the angels with reason and the brutes with lust, but man he created with both reason and lust; the man who follows reason is higher than the angels, and the man who follows lust is lower than the brutes" (*Masnavi*, IV. 1500-15); Rumi, like many other Sufis, considered that human soul has a divine origin, that is to say, it is 'breathed into him by the Creator'. This may either mean that human soul had a pre-natal existence, or human soul as a substance is received from the Divine. Moreover, the perception of the beauty of objective world is not always a form of remembrance of that supreme beauty in the spiritual world. It comes as a result of recognition of love as the reason and wisdom behind the Divine creation that is reflected by all beings in the world. The body is the veil; but in ecstasy born out of the experience of love, human soul could behold the Divine Majesty manifested in all creatures.

Although Rumi has no favorable view of neo-Platonist philosophers, we can quote one of Avicenna's poem on the soul where he expresses a similar view⁴:

Lo, it was hurled Midst the sign-posts and ruined abodes of this desolate world.
It weeps when it thinks of its home and the peace it possessed,
With tears welling forth from its eyes without pausing or rest,
And with plaintive mourning it broods like one bereft
Over such trace of its home as the fourfold wind have left.
Creation was regarded as the output of the All-Beautiful.
The visible world and all therein was a reflection of the Divine,
An ever-changing scene full of the *Spirit of God*.

On this higher form of love that results in the experience of unity of all beings, Iqbal comments that “in the higher Sufism of Islam unitive experience” is not something in which ego effaces “its own identity by some sort of absorption into the infinite Ego; it is rather the Infinite passing into the loving embrace of the finite.” (Iqbal 1986, 110)

The intellect is helpless in expounding love; it is love alone that can offer the explanation of love. Although love is the motive behind all creation, it defies all definition, all description. The love is an end to itself, and the price of love is life itself. For the lover values the love above everything else, since he has not come by it easily and cheap, he cannot give his consent to throw it away. Through the power of love, he frees himself from the bondage of life and attains a treasure, the value of which cannot be set in terms of gold, power or possessions. (*Masnavi*, I. 1468) Since in each heart there is a window to other hearts, They are not, separated and shut off like two bodies (*Masnavi*, III. 4395-96).

Unlike the bodies which are closed to each other, or each enclosed within itself, hearts can join together without losing the individuality of the self. Rumi makes a parallel between heart-body and the chandelier glass and light. “Thus, even though two lamp-dishes remain to be not joined, yet their light is united in a single ray.” (*Masnavi*, III/4397-98)

Rumi’s word of love is a moral call for humanity to find unity in diversity, inviting all to a peaceful life on earth (*Divan-i Kebir*, 423).

Come; come over, more over, how long this brigandage?
As you are me and I am you. How long this discrimination of you and I?
We are light of God! Why this separation among us?
Why light escapes from light?
We are all from the same yeast, our brains and heads too.
But under this bowed sky we see double...

From these five senses, six directions
Carry all what you possess to the country of Unity.
Till when you will continue only to speak of Unity.
Come on, deny your Ego. Get united with everybody.
So long as you remain in yourself, you are a particle.
But if you get united with everybody, you are a mine, an ocean.
Believe that all spirits are one! And all bodies are one!
Just like almonds in quantity hundreds of thousands;
But there is the same oil in all of them.
There are many languages in the world, in meaning all are the same.
If you break the cups, water will be unified and will flow together...

In conclusion, what Rumi believes in, then, is the religion of love. In his inimitable way, he tells us that love is a Divine gift entrusted into him over and over again. The highest end that the human love must lead is not only an individual morality of self-realization but also social moral order that reflects the peace within and without. For him, life is so short it should not be wasted away by meaningless hatreds or blood feuds. We should all live a good life here because nobody will live on indefinitely. Thus Rumi echoes the call of his contemporary, the 13th-century Sufi poet, Yunus Emre: “I am not here on earth for strife. Love is the mission of my life.”⁵

Endnotes:

1. *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*. Edited and translated with commentary by Reynold A. Nicholson. VIII Vols. London: Luzac & Co., 1925-1940. First complete English translation of the *Mathnawi* or *Masnavi*. An abridged translation was made by E. H. Whinfield, *Masnavi-i Ma'navi, the Spiritual Couplets of Maulana Jalalu'd-din Muhammad Rumi*. London: 1887; Also a new translation published recently: *The Masnavi: Book One*, translated by Jawid Mojaddedi. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; Book Two, 2007. Henceforth references to *Masnavi* are to book and line numbers, (such as I/18 or V/1250).
2. Mirandola, *A Platonick Discourse upon Love* Book. II, quoted in the “Introduction” by E.G. Gardner, p. 23.
3. François La Rochefoucauld, *Moral Maxims and Reflections*. (Ed.) George H. Well. London: Methuen, 1912, p. 45, Maxim 76: “There is real love just as there are real ghosts; every person speaks of it, few persons have seen it.”
4. Quoted by Hadland Davis, *Wisdom Of The East The Persian Mystics: Jalalu'd-din Rumi*. London: John Murray, 1912, p. 21.
5. *Yunus Emre and His Mystical Poetry*. Edited by Talat Halman, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981, “Editor’s Forword.”

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