

RUMI THE PERSIAN, THE SUFI

A. Reza Arasteh

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By

A. REZA ARASTEH

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RUMI THE PERSIAN, THE SUFI

by

A. Reza Arasteh

*Department of Psychiatry
School of Medicine
George Washington University
Washington D.C.*

with Preface by

Erich Fromm

*Director, Institute of Psychoanalysis
National University of Mexico*



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To
My Mother
Whose Devotion Nurtured
This Study

PREFACE

We are living in a period when the human race is threatened by physical destruction through nuclear war, and by spiritual decay through an ever-increasing alienation of man from himself, his fellow man, from nature and from the products of his own work. Is it surprising that many men in all countries have reacted to these two dangers by a new affirmation of the principles of humanism? Indeed, we can observe a Renaissance of Humanism in many countries, in many ideological camps. This new humanism is to be found among men of science and philosophers, among Marxist socialists, and among Protestant and Catholic theologians. Men like Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer and Karl Rahner, Georg Lukacs and Ernst Bloch are only a few of the outstanding representatives of contemporary humanism. In one form or another this new humanism re-emphasizes the ideas of the great humanists of the Renaissance. Both in religious and non-religious forms they express faith in man, in his possibility to develop to ever higher stages, in the unity of the human race, in tolerance and peace, in reason and love, as the forces which enable man to realize himself, to become what he potentially is.

Aside from this general interest in humanism there is an increasing interest in one specific aspect of humanist thought—that of mysticism. Modern

man in his search for a meaning of life, for an aim to pursue which transcends that of material goods, power and fame, has turned to those religious ideas which do not deal with theology and intellectual speculations about God but with the inner experience of oneness with the world, liberation from irrational passions, from the delusion of an indestructible, separate ego, and from the prison that this very delusion creates. This mysticism, which according to Schweitzer is the last consequence of rationalism, has found its two most outstanding expressions in the work of Meister Eckhart and in Zen Buddhism. While Zen Buddhism is clearly non-theistic, Eckhart holds on to the Christian concept of God, although actually transcending it by his concept of the "God-head". But in spite of some differences, Eckhart and Zen Buddhism, as D.T. Suzuki has shown, express essentially the same ideas.

Humanism and humanist, rational mysticism have met with an ever-increasing interest in the Western world. Yet mainly only in their Western and Far Eastern manifestations. Moslem humanism and mysticism have remained the exclusive domain of scholars.

It is a real service to contemporary man that the author of this book presents the ideas of one of the greatest Moslem humanists and mystics, Muhammad Jalal al-Din Rumi, to the English-speaking world. A contemporary of Eckhart, this man from Persia expressed ideas which in their essence are hardly

different from those of the great Catholic German mystic, even though sometimes even more boldly expressed and less fettered by traditionalism. (As for instance by saying that man must transcend the union with God by achieving union with life.) Anticipating the thoughts of Renaissance Humanism by 200 years, Rumi expressed the ideas of religious tolerance that are found in Erasmus and Nicholas de Cusa, and the idea of love as the fundamental creative force as expressed by Ficino. Rumi the mystic, poet, the ecstatic dancer, was one of the great lovers of life, and this love of life pervades every line he wrote, every poem he made, every one of his actions.

Rumi was not only a poet and a mystic and the founder of a religious order; he was also a man of profound insight into the nature of man. He discussed the nature of the instincts, the power of reason over the instincts, the nature of the self, of consciousness, the unconscious, and cosmic consciousness; he discussed the problems of freedom, of certainty, of authority. In all these areas, Rumi has a great deal to say which is important to those concerned with the nature of man.

The author of this book, being himself a student of human nature and of various methods that try to cure man from mental disturbances and to help him to attain independence and authenticity, has succeeded splendidly in this volume in portraying the whole system of Rumi's thought, and at the same time in

showing the connection between Rumi's thought and the problems with which psychoanalysis is concerned. The author has enriched the cultural life of the English-speaking world by presenting the ideas and personality of one of the greatest humanists in such a vivid and scholarly fashion, and to emphasize at the same time those ideas which are germane to modern thought.

ERICH FROMM

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INTRODUCTION

Psychology and psychoanalysis have penetrated every field of human endeavour. Yet their recent developments have been dominated by two major trends: the study of childhood and the cure of mental illness. As a result few systematic attempts have been made to study the other side of the coin, that is, the characteristics of maturity, the qualities of final integration in identity, health, happiness, and creativity. Erikson admits the inadequacy of research on identity and states: "... in psychoanalysis this theme has so far not been carried beyond childhood..."^{1, 2} Yet Erikson, like Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan, and others, hardly touches on the relationship of identity to its universal phase. He limits himself to Western-culture and uses the term *ego identity* "... to denote certain comprehensive gains which the individual, at the end of adolescence, must have derived from all of his pre-adult experience in order to be ready for the tasks of adulthood."³ Earlier Sullivan had used the concept of identity to refer only to the synthesis of previous developmental stages and to the individual's interpersonal relationship with his

1. He refers here to the works of Rank, Mahler, Kries, and others.

2. Erikson, E., Identity and the life cycle, *Psychological Issues*, 1 (1), 1959.

3. Erikson, E., The problem of ego identity, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 41, 56-121, 1955.

significant others (those who most intimately supply the rewards and punishments in his life).¹

Psychological literature makes some reference to such related aspects of identity as ego, self, individuation, personality, character, and empathy; but no systematization of their historical development has been published. David Rapaport has stated: "So far no such study of ego psychology has been published."² Rapaport himself discusses only four phases of ego psychology: "The first phase of the history of psychoanalytic ego psychology coincides with Freud's pre-psychoanalytic theory; it ends with 1897, the approximate beginning of psychoanalysis proper (Freud, 1887-1902). The second phase, which ends in 1923, is the development of psychoanalysis proper. The third phase begins with the publication of *The Ego and the Id* (1923), and encompasses the development of Freud's ego psychology, which extends to 1937. The fourth phase begins with the crucial writings of Anna Freud (1936), Hartman (1939), Erikson (1937), Horney (1937), Kardiner (1939), Sullivan (1938, 1940), and extends to the present day."³

Furthermore, no attempt has been made to relate the studies concerned with the psychological influence of isolation, deprivation, and accultura-

1. Sullivan, H. S., *An Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*, (N.Y.: Norton, 1953). Also see Mullahy, P., *Oedipus Myth and Complex*, (N.Y.: Hermitage Press, 1948).

2. Rapaport, D., Ego development and historical change, *Psychological Issues*, I, 1959.

3. *Ibid.*

tion¹ to the growth of identity. Nor have the studies on anxiety,² love, work, the family, and the teacher's role³ been discussed in terms of identity. In addition, all these authors have related themselves solely to Western sources and have thus overlooked the fact that the process of final integration occurs as a universal phenomena in various cultures. This is particularly true if we measure identity in terms of creativity in its most sublime form.

These introductory statements thus indicate the need for a systematic study of final integration. My understanding of Eastern wisdom and Western psychoanalytic thought has led me to believe that final integration in the succession of identities and the growth of personality is a universal state regardless of time, place, and the degree of culture. It is characterized by satisfaction and the search for truth and certainty, which are the ultimate manifestations of the drives of sex, activity, and preservation, respectively.

In Zen Buddhism final integration is the state of deciphering *koan* (the state of enlightenment), where *koan* refers to what everyone brings into this world at his birth and tries to decipher before he dies.⁴ In Near Eastern thought, Sufism (the art of

1. See the works of Bettelheim, Erikson, Jacobson, Kries, Mead, and others.

2. Stein, M. R., et al (eds.), *Identity and Anxiety*, 1960, (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960). Also see the studies of Fromm-Reichman, Schneiderman, Witaker, Malone, Sullivan, May, and others.

3. See Stein, Fromm, Willard, Waller, Barrington More, and others.

4. Fromm, E., Suzuki, D.T., and Martino, R., *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*. (N.Y.: Harper, 1960), 40.

rebirth) can be stated as "individuality in non-individuality," that is, becoming a creative truth by passing from "I-ness" to "he-ness" to "one-ness" (universality).¹ In Khayyam's description it is an overflowing of the state of being without attributes.

In Western thought such a concept appears as insight in its dynamic sense² or in terms of the fully-born individual.³ It has also found expression in literature and art. Shakespeare portrays this quest for identity in Hamlet, who can no longer take collective reality as valid and searches for personal identity. However, final integration, at its best, is revealed in Shakespeare himself, who as an individual had solved the contradictions between day-to-day roles and the single role of life. In our age Tagore's universal man, related to humanity, is characterized by benevolence and grace. In my own thinking, final integration refers to a state in which man has become subjectively objective, that is, where id, ego, and super-ego all merge into one force, directing itself toward unification with an object of desire, which externally accompanies creation, discovery, and invention, and internally results in happiness and total awareness. Creative acts become overflowing and can be interpreted as a

1. Al-Gillani, "The Perfect man" (Al-ensan el Kamel). In R. Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 1922. (Cambridge : Cambridge Univ. Press), 84.

2. Fromm-Reichman, F., *Principles of Intensive Psychotherapy*. (Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 1950.)

3. Fromm, E., *Escape from Freedom*. (N.Y. : Rinehart and Co., 1941.) Also see by the same author : *Man for Himself*, *The Sane Society*, and *The Art of Loving*.

function of insight :

$$\text{Creative act} = f(\text{insight})$$

Superficially, insight shares some of the same characteristics as drives, but only its vitality comes from drives, while its pattern of activity results from integration—the existential state of fully-born man. In other words, the level of life is structured on the socio-cultural and natural state of man. In the cultural state the acts of every single experience and drive become related internally to the organs and externally to the perception of values of an object. The perception of value can develop interest in the individual, that is, interest is the function of the perception of value; and a great interest in an object offers sufficient evidence for a thorough perception of value of that object. The mathematical function of this universal law can be represented as :

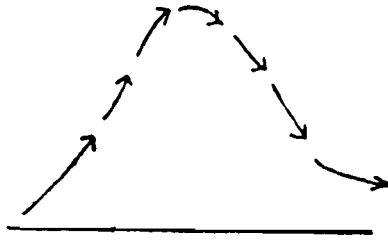
$$y = f(x)$$

perception of value = f (natural drive)

interest = f (perception of value)

voluntary (conscious) act = f (interest)

On the basis of rational behaviour, personality structure acquires certain limitations. By its nature it is finite and does not suit the infinite nature of man. Therefore, having achieved its peak the intellectual self declines :



Self-intellectual life

The second state is structured on the natural state which man shares with other animals. In the natural state the actions occur immediately and happen without the intermediary of the perception of value, and without the development of interest. There is no distance between the act and the actor, as in the cultural state, and mathematically it may be represented as :

$$\text{Immediate action} = f(\text{drive})$$

In this state drives are directly related to the immediate act of valuing a certain object, and often the individual in this state mechanically tries to actualize what has immediate value for him ; if such a trend continues without the proper cultural directives it becomes regressive.

Although these three stages are interwoven, a contradiction exists in that we cannot apply the psychological principles which give meaning to one state to that of the other. For instance, in the strictly natural state socio-cultural laws of growth play a very insignificant role. It is only when the natural

state is passed through a "cultural filter" that the ego becomes dominant in one's social life. In the same way, only a vigorous inquiry into the nature of the ego will help the socio-intellectual self perceive the value of final integration in terms of his existence. The individual then adopts numerous techniques such as intentional alienation, liberation from social reality, solitude, and living in a new cultural milieu in order to devalue his social self for a new universal integration.¹

* * *

The present work is a pilot study designed to : (1) investigate the process of rebirth in creativity in the life of the great Persian mystic of the twelfth century, Muhammad Jalal al-Din Rumi, known as "Mowlana" (Our Master), and (2) relate his contribution to the theory of personality and the social and individual state of well-being. It is also my contention that similar factors have led to the final integration of every great human being who has tried to decipher himself.²

This study is entirely based on the primary sources of Rumi's works and those of his son, Sultan Walad. The following sources were thoroughly studied : (1) the *Mathnawi* (6 vols.), a work in which

1. International Association of Applied Psychology, *Proceedings of the 14th International Congress*, Volume IV (Clinical Psychology) : "Visionary Experiences" by Aldous Huxley. (Copenhagen : Munsgaard, 1962), 11-36.

2. For further information on this theory refer to Arasteh, A.R., *Final Integration in The Adult Personality: A Measure of Health, Social Change and Leadership*. (Leiden : E. J. Brill 1965.)

Rumi discusses the human situation and the art of man's rebirth, (2) *Diwan-e-Shams* (2500 odes), in which Rumi gradually liberated himself from his historical social self, (3) *Maqalat-e-Shams*, the discourses between Rumi and his master, (4) *Fihi Ma Fihi*, Rumi's informal discourses to his associates, (5) *Maktubat* (Correspondence), and (6) *Mathnawi-e-Sultan Walad*, the work of Rumi's son and successor. Of more recent sources, I have benefited from the writings of R. Nicholson, a life-long student of Islamic mysticism who single-handedly and admirably translated Rumi's *Mathnawi*. I also consulted the writings of Professor Ritter of Germany and Professor Fruzan-far of Iran. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the encouragement of Professor Erich Fromm, whose sustained correspondence and personal discussion with me, greatly contributed to the completion of this work.

REZA ARASTEH

Chapter I: An Analysis of Persian Culture

Persian culture, like any other culture, can be interpreted as having developed out of the "human situation" and as giving one answer to man's existential problem. The persistence of alarming social conditions have, however, prompted people to seek their own security in such protective mechanisms as: dominance through external authority, submission to magical power, covert religious power, speculative thinking, artistic creation and the discovery of self.¹

In traditional Iran those who found security through external dominance, whether rural, tribal or urban valued power above all else. They directed their behaviour toward this end, because they believed that its possession brought happiness and security. A common Persian aphorism says: "The one who desires comfort and security must become strong." Dominance existed at many levels of the society: it was most powerfully expressed and symbolized by the king and to lesser degrees by the tribal khans, viziers, landlords and village chiefs; the man who was only a family head occupied a lower position in this hierarchy. Their exploitative

1. In this analysis of submissive authoritative relations, I have greatly benefited from Erich Fromm's theory of social character as expressed in *Man for Himself* and *Escape from Freedom*.

behaviour manifested itself in hostility, manipulation and demand for obedience from their potential supporters. Because they came from dominant families, they relied on force and sought immediate rewards. They were artful in the name of patriotism and social order but utilized the sources for their own security.

Varying degrees of submission similarly appeared in the general population. The vizier had to acknowledge the superior rank of the king, the village chief bowed to the landlord, and at the bottom, the peasants and tribes-people were compelled to show loyalty and obedience to all those above them. The general apathy and marked servitude of these groups resulted from a way of life that offered no other alternative. Their socio-economic dependency on the dominant group brought about submission to all forms of authority. Physical deprivation bred in the peasants a state of helplessness and obedience to the power above them ; and as nothing in the real world gave them encouragement, they appealed to the magical supernatural forces for help. When that failed they resignedly accepted fate's verdict.

The submissive individual needed the dominant person to tell him how to act, just as the other needed him to acquire and exercise his power. While each benefited, neither gained. Both needed to be part of a group in order to have an image of security. While the dominant one put himself above others in order to exercise his power, the submissive one

could not separate himself from the group. Each was dependent on the other. In Persia the dominant figures gradually alienated themselves from their subordinates in order to strengthen their own image, but as a result they became suspicious to such a degree that the extremists disposed of their closest confidants, sometimes even their own sons. With few exceptions, the most powerful Persian leaders in history developed sadistic tendencies as their power grew.

Like the dominant individual, the submissive one had to depend on authority or relate himself to a group in order to gain immediate security. In the case of the villager who had little direct contact with the landlord, the submission to authority took on a fatalistic attitude. The peasant accepted many of the practices of the landlord and others, because he believed that fate had intervened. Subservience to authority and to the group strongly appeared in the relationship of the tribes-people to their leaders, especially when compared with the gypsy barbers and blacksmiths who came to the tribal grounds every spring to do the menial work. The gypsies could leave the camp when they wanted, whereas a tribesman seldom felt secure enough to separate from the group; if he did his only alternative was to join another tribe.

Unlike the other mechanisms thus far discussed, artistic creativity and Sufism, as a way of life leading to self-realization, elevated Persian culture to a high

degree. The creative group included craftsmen, artisans, artists, some writers and Sufis. In a physical sense an analysis of Persian art offers ample evidence of their creative attempts to achieve relatedness. Artists and artisans whether they worked with hammer, brush, pen or just with their hands, displayed sincerity in whatever they did. By continuous endeavour they identified themselves with the object at hand, and in such a way as to ultimately achieve their goal and eternalize their design.

It did not matter to the craftsman whether this design was reproduced on pottery, glass, metal, wood or the like, for in his work he set aside all other matters. The degree to which he could subordinate other goals, whatever their source, contributed to the artistic perfection of the final product. No matter what media he worked in, the artist painstakingly strove to achieve the aim he had set for himself. In his desire to express his deepest feelings he transformed simple materials into works of art. His mind, heart and hands worked harmoniously together. Ultimately the ideal became fused with the object at hand to form one lasting design. This unified motive explains the presence of such symbols of Nature as the sun, moon, stars and heavens, which are so majestically recreated in carpet designs and other art media. In the process of giving permanence to his idea, the artist internalized it; this in turn, gave him a sense of security, which helped ward off the anxiety resulting from man's alienation from Nature.

As in other cultures, the creative Persian group was moved by their past experiences to express their feelings of supreme sorrow and happiness in artistic form. Moreover, when some of them sought to recapture the glories of past epochs they succeeded in immortalizing both history and themselves. In those periods when the past was impressive and the present insignificant, the artist who was familiar with the grandeur of the past was often able to identify himself with it and then produce a monumental work. Persian history offers two notable examples, one from the medieval era, another from the twentieth century. The glories of pre-Islamic Iran so attracted Ferdowsi that he devoted thirty years of his life to familiarizing himself with every aspect of life of that period. In his efforts to unite with the past he recreated and immortalized the legendary pre-historic period. More recently, the modern poet, Ishqi, drew upon the same period for his drama, *Zardusht*. The period after the Mongol invasion might also have motivated the Persians to create great works, but they had experienced such intense suffering that no artist wished to identify himself with that age. In the same light the passion plays (*ta'zieh*s) have given them an opportunity to identify with religious martyrs.

Even more significant in the production of Persian culture has been the spiritual motive arising out of an enduring self-identity, as seen in the identification with religious values, in speculative thinking, and above all, in relation to Persian mysticism. Spiritual

devotion has provided an answer to the helplessness and insecurity of man, irrespective of time and place. Indeed, religious doctrine has gained in clarity with the growth of man's awareness and wakefulness, although belief has played the same role in every religion, whether monotheistic or polytheistic. So important has spiritual devotion been in Iran that most of the social movements have had to appear in religious guise in order to gain the support of the submissive groups. The Persians' intense religious attitude has often been tapped as a source of invisible power. Traditionally, while the submissive group was bound to the dominant by force, its ties to religious authority were psychological in nature and appeared in various forms from Zoroaster to the Bab.

Although the major religions created by the Persians arose out of human need and offered an answer to problems for man's existence, each maintaining its own distinctive tendencies. In Zoroastrianism belief in the final victory of Spentomaiyu (the progressive force) over Angramainyu (the destructive force) developed a positive attitude in attaining identification with Ahura-Mazda (the force of good-ness). Thus in a practical sense good deeds, truth and justice were put above love.

Manicheanism, a godless religion of the third century A.D., emphasized ascetic tendencies due to the influence of Buddhism and Christianity. Still another religion, Mazdikism, regarded social welfare and the alleviation of social class as the basis of

man's eternal security. Through individual action it advocated the elimination of envy, greed, wrath, and even marriage ties.

While Islam emphasized internal security in terms of reward and punishment, hope and fear, leading to eternal life in Paradise or eternal damnation in Hell, Shi'a stressed mainly sainthood, piety and relating oneself to the image of God through the saint. Among the Isma'elites the latter tendency found even more acceptance in terms of their whole pattern of life, where political and educational practices fused with religion. The novice underwent a long training consisting of: taking a vow, studying and accepting the doctrines, getting acquainted with the Imams and practising the rituals until he became a convert; he then became a summoner and finally a teacher. The nineteenth-century Persian religion, Bahaism, has stressed in a simple way the universal aspects of various religions.

Each of these attempts to give a certain meaning to life remained effective as long as man's reason was limited in scope and the followers acted according to their teachings, performed their rituals in a social context and followed the laws. However, man's nature, society and other circumstances often led the believers to adopt a double standard of thought and behaviour while retaining the outward form of their religion. The ensuing loss of effectiveness left the way open for new elements to appear.

From the ninth to eleventh centuries Islamic

culture, from its assimilation of other systems, especially Greek philosophy, developed rational answers to the meaning of life. One movement, that of Mu'tazela, established by a Persian, Wasil ibn al-'Ala al-Ghazzal, protested against orthodox doctrine, used the dialectic method in discussion, advocated man's freedom of action and taught that the truth leads to man's salvation. To them truth belonged to the domain of reason, which encompassed theology. Knowledge of truth existed in every place and at all times. Some even believed that the Quran could have been humanly produced. The outstanding members of this movement, Al-Kindi (d. 864 A.D.), Al-Farabi (d. 950 A.D.), Ibn Sina (d. 1037 A.D.) and Ibn Rushd (d. 1198 A.D.) contributed to the advancement of Greek thought in every field—science, religion and philosophy. After the death of Al-Ghazzali (d. 1111 A.D.), the great Persian theologian, this movement declined in importance. In later centuries only Sufism offered a truly universal answer to man's existential problem.

Although its origin is obscure, Sufism probably arose as a more satisfactory answer to the "human situation" in the insecure society of Persia. Initially Sufism was closely related to religious virtues, but gradually it became an instrument of criticism of religion and human conduct in order to transcend it. In the eighth century A.D. the Sufis chose their object of identification from among the attributes of saints, prophets and God. As respected community

members, they participated in the social life and lived simply ; some practised asceticism. At the end of that century social conditions fostered the spread of asceticism ; its most outstanding advocate was Ibrahim b. Adham (d. 777 A.D.), a prince from Balkh, who experienced a situation similar to that of Buddha. Upon hearing an inner voice one day, Adham forsook his accustomed way of life to search for the discovery of self and earn his living by gardening. In Iraq and north-east Persia, Adham's followers perfected the process of Sufism. Some of the most influential advocates of this school withdrew from society.

In the ninth century A.D. the Sufis made Baghdad their centre. They gradually came to believe that God himself was the manifestation of truth and their object of desire. Not only did the process of Sufism become a form of personality change but it also grew as a social institution, whose large following sought universal themes in religion. The theory of Sufism greatly developed ; at its height Al-Hallaj, the son of Mansur, claimed, "I am the Truth (God)." He was accused of heresy and in 922 A.D. was crucified. By the tenth century A.D. Sufi theory had become more refined. Among the several prominent Sufis of that era was the notable Arab, Ibn al-Arabi (d. 952 A.D.). From the eleventh through thirteenth centuries A.D. a number of great Persians further developed the Sufi theory. Among them were : Farid al-Din 'Attār, and finally the greatest of all mystics, Jalal al-Dīn

M. Rumi (1207-1273), who even transcended the concept of union with God. He advocated union with all and declared love to be the creative force in nature.

In essence, Sufism develops in the individual a process of repeated rebirth until he attains self-realization (the state of final integration).

According to Sufism the real self is not what the environment and culture develop in us, but it is basically the product of the universe in evolution. I shall refer to it henceforth as *cosmic self* or *universal self* in contrast to *phenomenal self*, the product of culture and environment. Cosmic self can be thought of as the image of the universe which must be unveiled. It is wrapped in our unconscious, if it is not the unconscious itself, whereas the phenomenal self encompasses consciousness. In Sufism unconsciousness receives more importance than consciousness; it possesses infinite potentialities, while consciousness is limited; and only the unconscious provides the means of attaining the real self. The cosmic self embraces all our being while the phenomenal self designates only a part of our existence. The phenomenal self has separated us from our origin, that of union with life. Having now become aware of this separation, we can only live fully by emptying consciousness, bringing to light the unconscious, achieving insight into our whole existence and living in a state of complete awareness. I shall call this state *cosmic existence* or *transcendental consciousness*. The real self can be thought of as the crown of un-

consciousness, which is potentially conscious existence, the Sufi's goal.¹ To identify this psyche state is ordinarily not easy, for its very nature is one of becoming, and when attained that is it. Persian Sufis believe that it is self-explanatory and self-evident. Just as the sun is proof of itself so too is the real self. Each of us has at some time experienced it. At least once we have heard its voice, its call, and its invitation,² often without our realization. Perhaps the words "me", "he" or "it" can better identify the real self than "I" or "we." In this sense Sufism consists of two steps : (1) the passing away of "I", and (2) becoming wholly aware of "me." The real self exists in no place, its very nature is intensive rather than extensive, and it can be both near us and far removed, depending on the individual's experience. Ordinarily a flash of knowledge enlightens the consciousness, a small circle of our psyche, but when we attain the real self a strong flash constantly illuminates the whole structure of our psyche. Some Sufis give the heart³ as its site, but one may ask, "How can the heart, meaning really an ability for intuitive experience, have a definite locus ?" In the following poem Rumi designates its source, if not its location :

Cross and Christians, from end to end,
I surveyed ; He was not on the cross.

1. At this point the Sufi is called *Safi*, the pure one.

2. Ordinary speech tends to obscure the meaning of Sufism. In their writings Sufis have resorted to an allegorical style to express their thoughts. I have followed this practice frequently in this book.

3. The heart, as the source of understanding acquires awareness by insight or a sudden psychical leap.

I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient pagoda ;
No trace was visible there.

I went to the mountains of Herat and Candahor
[sic];¹

I looked, He was not in that hill and dale.

With set purpose I fared to the summit of
Mount Qaf²

In that place was only Anqa's habitation.

I bent the reins of search to the Ka'ba ;³

He was not in that resort of Old and Young.

I questioned Ibn Sina of His state ;

He was not within Ibn Sina's range,⁴

I fared towards the scene of two bow-lengths'
distance,

He was not in that exalted court

I gazed into my heart ;

There I saw Him ; He was nowhere else.⁵

The above poem describes the Sufi's search for the site of the real self. Not finding it in various religions, reason or other sources, he at last discovers it within himself.

Can one achieve the state of cosmic self by being taught its principles ? No, not at all in the sense of conventional instruction. Does knowledge of it help ? Here too, conventional knowledge cannot transform the inner self. Thus experience offers the

1. In Afghanistan.

2. Qaf, the residence of Simurgh, who is identical with God and is the object of search of unification in 'Attār's *Mantiq-al-tayr*, a mystical text.

3. Exemplifies religion.

4. Exemplifies the range of intellect.

The Mathnawi, translation by R.A. Nicholson.

only way. The Sufis undoubtedly rely heavily on inner experience to direct their behaviour and little on academic learning and accepted religious practices.

The one who seeks to transform his social self must experience at least once that which he is seeking. He must become aware of the problems of human existence : What are we ? What is our destination and why ? He must perceive his origin and become aware of the fact that with all our strivings we don't know why we, like fish, have been cast into a net allowing us endless views of the world. At this point the individual perceives that he once lived in closer harmony with nature. This awareness or insight¹ may occur suddenly, sometimes the result of a simple experience. Sufi literature abounds with examples of individuals who suddenly perceived the path they must follow.²

Sufism maintains that this sudden experience of awareness can help anyone analyse himself in the

1. Insight is compared to a sword which cuts the root of the past and future thereby illuminating the moment. It is a light which appears after sudden thunder.

2. On perceiving the ultimate state of human existence, Al-Ghazzali, the theologian, forsook his high university post to seek Sufi perfection. For the same reason 'Attar, the noted pharmacist, gave up his position after experiencing awareness through the guidance of another Sufi. Rumi, undoubtedly the greatest of all Sufis, also underwent a transformation when the 'perfect man' (namely, Shams of Tabriz) informed him that knowledge results when the knower, the known and the knowing become one. As a prominent scholar, Rumi occupied an enviable position in society, but he left it in order to devote himself to Sufism. He succeeded in demonstrating the superiority of Sufism to the theological and intellectual approaches of his day by giving an answer to the meaning of life. His mystic order greatly influenced Middle Eastern thought.

perspective of evolution and change, that is, in the sense that man was once united with Nature in the animal state, and progressively more so in plant and mineral forms, going back ultimately to the basic composition of Nature.

Once awakened the individual realizes that the same evolutionary process which led him to his present state is continuously at work. This process may further develop his mind, make him realize his helplessness and turn him into a religious or an intellectual man. At the next stage he becomes familiar with the idols in his mind and attempts to break them all in order to achieve his goal. At this point the Sufi advances to a level of being as far above the ordinary man as that of man in relation to his earlier existence. The fully awakened one attains union with all and helps his cosmic self come to light. He becomes a universal man remembering the entire past in the sense of evolution and seeing the whole of life in even a small particle.

Having had an image of such a better life, the awakened person becomes a seeker and values this image above all else. Motivated by it, he longs for it, becomes concerned with it and directs his efforts toward attaining it so as to become one with it. He becomes competitive, but only with himself, for competition with one's self constitutes perfection.

Man's nature, however, does not easily bend toward perfection. While his insight may make him aware of a better life, his instincts, drives and selfish

motives, or *nafs*, as the Sufis refer to them, may pull him down. Caught by contradictory forces in his nature, he becomes anxious. If he is lucky he stands at the threshold of two worlds: his ego stands up against his potential or real self; the universal man against the social. In modern times people generally do not recognize this disharmony within themselves. When uneasy, they take a pill, a drink or escape to an illusionary way of life. They achieve tranquility only as long as they can ignore their situation. However, if an individual, like the Sufi novice, analyses his situation and becomes critical of it he cannot exchange his ultimate certainty for temporary satisfaction. He becomes even more concerned with his existential problem. As a searcher of the truth he recognizes that he has only one heart and is potentially one entity; he cannot split it into several parts. Recognizing that only the truth can save him, he concentrates solely on union, where union means identification with the desired object and disunion the heart's attachment to several objects. The object of this search consists in the realization of the real self, the state of perfect (universal) man, unity with all, becoming God-like or being only the truth. To become like God means the assimilation of what God represents, that is, a beautiful creation rather than submission to the image of God; loving to save, not loving to be saved.

The removal of the self in reality means the annihilation of those experiences which bar the

revealing of the real self. Sufis call the experience of removal of "I" *fana*, which ends in a state of ecstasy, the feeling of union; it is the beginning of *baqa*, the state of conscious existence.

The Sufi's goal is now clear, but how can he achieve it? First of all he must understand the limitations of his consciousness, specifically that it contains unnecessary material and that in its development numerous veils have formed around the real self preventing it from manifesting its true nature. Once he recognizes this fact the Sufi can remove the "I" from consciousness: a state which is identical with changing and expanding consciousness to function in harmony with the unconscious.

As a first step in this direction the Sufi must inactivate *nafs* (the source of impulses) or more precisely, use his reason to control passion. Sufism recognizes, as does modern psychology, that this part of our being cannot be eliminated or suppressed entirely. *Nafs* also possesses a great negative power, a kind of force like anger or passionate love which blinds the intellect. Therefore, the Sufi seeks to satisfy *nafs* before bringing it under the control of intellect. Even then it will persist, just as embers glow under the ashes; nor must the seeker then ignore it, for at any time when the embers flare up, they must be quenched again. Some Sufis believe that ordinarily after the individual has satisfied *nafs*, in terms of both sex impulses and those relating to success and greed, he must then gradually restrict it and bring it

under the control of reason.

Because of this natural factor in human nature, Sufism attracts mature individuals rather than youth. The forceful nature of *nafs* also explains why Sufis believe that ordinary men need religious experience, even if it is only partially understood. In a positive sense the Sufis control *nafs* by virtuous behaviour and righteous deeds. For instance, when a seeker presents himself to a guide for the purpose of becoming a Sufi, he is put on probation for three years: the first year to serve people, the second to serve God and the third to observe the rise and fall of his own desires. The seeker disengages *nafs* from its qualities thereby directing its downward tendency upward, exercises patience (considered as the key to joy), and develops trust in the pursuit of his goal. In this process he becomes indifferent to material possessions and eliminates passion-arousing desires. Now united in thought, action and feeling, he prepares to rid his mind of all the content of consciousness.

The Sufi purposely adopts a period of isolation in order to remove illusionary consciousness, that is, he adopts a method opposite to that of its development. For the Sufi this temporary period of isolation is the most effective method of self-analysis. He believes that society and culture are a bridge for attaining the real self. Even the lives of such great prophets as Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha or notable Sufis like Prince Ibrahim Adham and Abi Sa'id Alkhayr reveal the adoption of a similar state

in order to achieve the true self. Through the method of intentional isolation the Sufi tries to eliminate illusionary material in consciousness by analyzing every single experience in his mind, understanding its imperfections, and at the same time developing a new and more thorough insight into the origin of that experience in order to see his relatedness to it.

In this analysis the Sufi detaches himself from society, but he also develops a receptivity and appreciation of every element in the world and relates it to its original existence. He devaluates what once seemed valuable to him, but concurrently his immediate experiences enrich his being by activating his insight, fostering love and developing discernment in him. Love becomes the vehicle which carries him forward. Love is the "drug of all drugs": it strengthens his faith, removes his anxiety and encourages him to pass through numerous states of mind (*hal*).

In the process of experiencing *hal* he undergoes a series of internal changes, or in a sense, he lives a multitude of lives. Continually on guard and in love, he guards against falling into an illusion and attaching himself to its object of search. According to Sufism, those who are on guard and in love find no rest. This restlessness produces energy for further contemplation and a searching of every corner of the mind in order to prepare the psyche for the appearance of the real self. In this state he receives help in encouraging the real self to make its appearance. When awake he concentrates on his object of search; when

asleep he begs his real self to appear before him. The Sufi's object of love reveals itself in dreams, and he must be ready to receive its call. In traditional Iran the Sufi orders strongly believed that many mysteries would be unfolded in their dreams.

In essence, the Sufi's task is to break the idol of the phenomenal self, which is the mother idol; having achieved this aim his search ends. Empty-handed, empty-minded and desire-less, he is and he is not. He has and he has not the feeling of existence. He knows nothing, he understands nothing. He is in love, but with whom he is not aware of. His heart is at the same time both full and empty of love. In the process of search he removes "I" but he still remains aware of being unconscious of consciousness.

In the next step he loses this awareness (the awareness of the absence of consciousness) in order to eliminate the subject-object relation and achieve union. In a positive sense he assimilates all the particles of love and insight that he has experienced through the process of emptying his consciousness. He transcends time and place. This state of union, the climax of the annihilation of the partial self, is identical with ecstasy and gives the impression of a natural intoxication. Among the Persian Sufis this painless ecstatic trance sometimes lasted for days or weeks. It is a state of mind resembling sleep in which one does things perfectly.

The individual has now experienced life first

hand. He feels no distance between himself and his object of love. Sufis who have ended their search usually develop this state of union through certain recollections, dances, music and autohypnosis. Having tasted it, they may again lose it. The mystery of deep love, which flows in their lyrics like the current of the sea, stems from union and disunion. In the following lines Abi Sa'id describes this state of union :

I am love ; I am the beloved ; no less am I the lover.

I am the mirror and I am the beauty.

Therefore behold me in myself.¹

A Sufi may stop at the stage of *fana*, which can be defined as passing from consciousness to the world of unconsciousness, where reason is inactive. He may also pass beyond this stage and find himself in the state of *baqa* (continuance) where he gains individuality in non-individuality, that is, infusion takes place but the individual enters a state of conscious existence. Whosoever achieves this state becomes a "perfect man", who relies on consciousness and is ruled by reason. Aided by intuition the perfect man functions as a totality with spontaneity and, expressiveness. Instead of studying life from afar, he is life itself. In this state, indescribable and characterized by silence, the individual is now everything or nothing : everything in the sense that he is

1. Nicholson, R.A., *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1921).

united with all, nothing in the sense that there is nothing whose detachment or loss may become a source of grief to him. He embraces all of life ; he is beyond good and bad. In a practical way he has experienced qualities embracing all of life, ordinary human existence and intellectual life ; he has felt himself variously as a famous man, an ambitious man, and a religious man, and he has passed beyond all of them, finally giving rebirth to a more comprehensive self. He feels related to all mankind, experiences a concern for all beings and tries to utilize his earlier experiences for their benefit. One can sense the same feeling in the following poem by Rumi :

If there be any lover in the world, O Muslim,
—'tis I.

If there be any believer, infidel, or Christian
hermit—'tis I.

The wine-dregs, the cup-bearer, the minstrel,
the harp, and the music

The beloved, the candle, the drink and the joy
of the drunken—'tis I.

The two and seventy creeds and sects in the
world

Do not really exist : I swear by God that every
creed and sect—'tis I.

Earth and air and water and fire, knowest thou
what they are ?

Earth and air and water and fire, nay, body and
soul too—'tis I.

Truth and falsehood, good and evil, ease and
difficulty from first to last,

Knowledge and learning and asceticism and
piety and faith—'tis I.

The fire of Hell, be assured, with its flaming
limbs,

Yes, and paradise and Eden and the Houris—
'tis I.

This Earth and heaven with all that they hold,
Angels, Peris, Genies and Mankind—'tis I.¹

The Sufis generally had to pass through several behavioural stages (*moqams*) and a parallel set of reflective internal modes (*hals*). The *moqam* is a gradually acquired station which has consistency, whereas the *hal* is a subjective state of mind, dependent on sensations and not under the control of volition. It is revealed to the novice (*salek*) and is understood in a different way. Like James' "stream of consciousness" the *hal* is not static or rigid. It is analogous to the flash of lightning which appears and disappears, or like snow flakes which fall on the water and vanish in a moment becoming a part of the current.

In traditional Sufism the behavioural stages begin with "awareness", that is, a spiritual rebirth or the beginning of a new design of living. Such a feeling may come to a person suddenly, or it may develop

1. Rumi, M.J.M.B., *The Mathnawi*, translation by R.A. Nicholson, (London: Luzac and Co., 1960.)

within him as a result of some experience. Yet the awareness is not enough; the seeker must cease unsuited past behaviour through repentance (*tubeh*), then make a decision to reform and finally cleanse the self of enmity and cruelty. The neophyte is now in a position to select for himself a "pole" or a leader, who is sometimes called *dalil-e-rah* (the light of the path), for such individuals have attained their ultimate identity. After repentance there is the stage of avoiding doubtful and uncertain acts (*ver'a*). It is followed by piety (*zohd*), in which the novice concentrates on certain values and internal serenity. The next stage relates to patience (*sabr*) and is considered half the task and the key to joy. At every turn and at every level the novice is faced with a situation, either favourable or unfavourable; but in either case patience is demanded. The stage of trust (*tawakkul*) is difficult to attain, for the individual must have trust without recourse to prayer or a request from God. Satisfaction (*reza*) is the final stage, a culmination of all the past stages; it is characterized as all positive and tranquil.

Accompanying these stages are somewhat parallel modes (*hals*) relating to the state of mind. One of these conditions (*hal e moraqebe*) implies that one should measure his behaviour according to the object of his search. The Sufis also believed that God observed their behaviour at every moment. The other *hals* include: the state of nearness (*hal e qurb*), which implies that one is making progress toward his goal;

the state of love (that is, the condition in which man changes his nature to that of a God-like being); the state of fear and hope; the state of intimacy; the state of certainty (*etminan*), where no doubt remains; and finally the state of unification and assurance.

In classical Sufism the *salek* undertook this gradual transformation by participating in an organization called *khaneqa*. Originally, *khaneqa* meant a place where the local inhabitants spread out a tablecloth and provided food for passers-by and do-gooders; later the term referred to a boarding house in which the *saleks* lived under the guidance of a leader. Here they prayed together, meditated, helped the poor, worked at a trade and also presented themselves at certain public gatherings. In order to experience life more fully, the *salek* was also expected to travel and visit other *khaneqas*. These spiritual and behavioural experiences in traditional Sufism gradually led the *salek* to identify with God or his religious ideal.

Chapter II: Rebirth in Love and Creativity: An Analysis of Rumi

To become a fully integrated personality means to complete the circle of existence. From conception the individual passes through birth, socialization, enculturation, specialization, an awareness of his ego, objectivization of the ego, realization of the role of culture, perception of creation, perception of man in cosmic evolution, the unfolding of unconsciousness and finally the attainment of a state of conscious existence. One who desires to become a mature man must be born again and again and experience numerous spiritual rebirths.

At one stage of his growth the individual becomes aware of his conventional self, a process which requires years of preparation, experience and interaction with others and with the environment. His ego then develops, but he must still gain insight into the growth of his ego. In turn, he must assimilate culture so completely that he becomes its representative, for one can only objectify culture after he has first absorbed it. The individual is born again when he realizes that history and a conventional life constitute only a short span of man's evolution. Man was evolving a million years before Adam. By gaining insight into the utilitarian role of culture and the

ego, the individual perceives the cosmic self, perhaps through his conscience, specifically his inner voice. At this point he perceives the distance between his conventional and real self.

Perception alone is inadequate. Indeed, it indicates the initial conflict with the conventional self. So complicated is the nature of this conflict and so closely is its thread interwoven with the individual's personality that it requires great courage to face it, and even more to deal with it and conquer it. To become mature, the individual must strive to develop sufficient strength to stand up against the conventional self, to acquire the mental fortitude to resist undesirable social forces, and to set a new standard free of all that which is usually held dear. He must strengthen the source of his interest, direct it toward this new object of desire, concentrate on it, love it and continually act to expand it, until he becomes aware of it and unveils his own psychic capacity. Then, having achieved a state of conscious existence, he is fully born and completely aware. Thus, from his original awareness the individual has finally attained conscious existence and closed the circle of existence.

In psychoanalytic terms both Erich Fromm and C.G. Jung have explained how conventional life and conformity may bar man from realizing his cosmic self or fully developing his personality.¹

1. Fromm, E., *Man for Himself* (New York : Rinehart and Company, 1947); Jung, C.G., *The Development of Personality*, translation by R.F.C. Hull (New York : Bollingen, 1954.).

The unconscious strivings of ordinary life often hinder a person at a time when he ought to show improvement. Undesirable social forces may lead him to perceive false values, in turn cultivating false interests. He is turned away from his real self and deprived of growth (the process of rebirth). Such a "half-born" man usually strives for and grasps what is close to him even though it impedes his development. Dominated by immediate needs and the voice of his super ego he fails to listen to his humanistic conscience¹ or to his inner voice.

In such a situation fiction becomes real and falsity appears as truth. What the individual calls personality is really that which shadows his potential personality and deprives him of maturing. That which he calls self is really that which veils his self, and what to him is "I" is only a barrier to his becoming "I."

In every age the mass of people betray themselves and remain blind imitators; only a handful of men follow their humanistic conscience² at the right time and develop their selves to the fullest potentiality. These people often courageously begin this process with the step of isolation, which requires detachment from that most comforting means—the sense of belonging to a group of people, or more precisely, having a group reference. To take such a step necessitates considerable sacrifice; it means

1. Fromm, E., *Man for Himself*.

2. *Ibid.*

cutting off all ties of position, rank and name, at a time when an individual still needs them ; instead he strives only in the hope of finding his universal self.

The Quest for Final Integration

In the history of mankind one of the men who resolved his existential conflict by attaining the state of universality and transcending a synthesis of Islamic, Greek and Indian cultures was Muhammad Jalal al-Din, better known as Mowlana of Rume [Our Master of Asia Minor]. Born in Balkh in 1207 A.D. he came from a prominent family of scholars and Sufis ; he died in Konia in 1273 A.D.

At the age of thirty-three Rumi held a responsible seat in Konia (in the northern part of present-day Turkey), where he gained prominence as an Islamic scholar. Various authorities relate that about four hundred persons, some of them famous personages, appeared at his lectures ; kings, princes and viziers attended. One of his sons, who became his successor, mentions that Rumi had some 10,000 followers at that time.¹ At the age of thirty-eight he forsook his renown and conventional values in order to decipher his real self.

Apparently during his teaching career (1238-42), Rumi gradually became aware of the various meanings of life in his day, such as : conforming to popular traditional standards, dogmatically follow-

1. Sultan Walad, *Diwan*. Also quoted in *Sharh e Hal e M. J. M. B. Rumi*, edited by Fruzanfar. (Tehran : Ibn Sina Press, 1950.)

ing a certain religion, pursuing intellect, or practising Sufi truth and love in place of formal religion.

In assimilating all these ways of life, Rumi became an authoritative representative of them. He fully developed his conventional self in the tradition of his culture. Although people greatly respected his views, he himself became dissatisfied with their limited view. During the last years of his teaching, he became internally dissatisfied and perplexed.

Rumi gradually perceived the limitations of ritual and realized that knowledge of conventional life does not in itself bring rebirth in totality. The life history of men like Al-Ghazzali reinforced Rumi's interest in action and experience in preference to preaching and teaching. Rumi's state of mind and his attitude toward his followers are reflected in the following passage from *Fihi Ma Fihi* :

People wanted me to teach, to write books and preach . . . but Amir Parvane [the Amir of Konia] said, "What is essential is action?" to what I replied, "Where are the believers of action that I may teach them [literally: show them]? Now you demand words and turn your ears to hear something. If I don't speak you will become upset. In the world we seek a man of action to accompany him. As we can find no purchaser of action, only customers of words, we engage ourselves with words. How do you know action when you are not a man

of action? We know action only by action. We can understand science only by science, form by form, meaning by meaning. There is no traveller on this road of action; if we act how can people perceive it and see us on the road? Indeed, this action is not fasting and prayer. These are the forms of action. Action is inward and deals with meaning. Certainly from Adam to Muhammad prayer and fasting were not in these forms and happened in terms of deeds . . . Therefore action is not what people think of. They believe that action is an outward form of religion and if they act against that form they will gain no reward . . .¹

At this critical point in his life Rumi underwent a profound emotional change, which was, in part, a consequence of his revolt against his family background and training. Rumi was educated in the profession of his father, Baha Walad Sultan al Ulema (King of the Learned), a notable scholar of theology with an appreciation of classical Sufism. His early ancestors were jurists and religious leaders.

Thus, early in life Rumi came under the authoritarian image of his ancestral family, especially his father. Rumi's father adhered strongly to traditional Islamic values, even when they conflicted with the powerful Court of 'Ala al-Din Kharazmshah. Ordinary people respected him as a spiritual leader but he

1. Rumi, M. J. M. B., *Fihl Ma Fihl* [Discourses]. Edited by Frunzarfar. (Tehran : Tehran University Press, 1959.)

gained the dislike of many intellectuals who acquiesced to the central authority (a phenomenon common throughout Persian history). Because of his influence on the people and also perhaps because he predicted the Mongol invasion, the father and his family had to emigrate from Balkh in 1219.

After visiting many of the important centres in the Middle East, the exiled family settled in Konia, the capital of 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad, western Saljuq. Here Baha Walad regained his fame and position before his death in 1228.

Jalal-al-Din undoubtedly perceived his father as a man of great integrity and his mother a woman of great warmth and self-sacrifice. From him Rumi acquired a knowledge of the times, and from observing him in action and speech he developed outstanding character traits. Moreover, the public expected such a distinguished family to set an exemplary life and impart social values. Thus, from the beginning people respected him and the respect increased as Rumi became an important spiritual leader.

The family's extended travels, which lasted several years, contributed immensely to Rumi's enlightenment. Being an adolescent at that time he was in a very receptive period of life, in fact, entering a new spiritual rebirth. Moreover, in the company of his father he had the privilege of meeting the most prominent spiritual leaders of the time, including

many Sufis, among them 'Attar, who presented him with his mystical text *Asrar-nameh* [Treatise on Secrets], and Al-Suhrewardi, the great illuminist. Rumi thus gained from his contact with both his father and the Sufis.

In his personal life, Rumi married at twenty-one and fathered two sons. Later, a widower, he remarried and had another son and a daughter. Professionally, he gained some recognition in jurisprudence, Islamic law and theology by the time he was twenty-four, and upon his father's death succeeded him at the request of the public and the authorities. Rumi occupied this post for a year. About that time one of his father's students, Burhan al-Din of Tirmidi, by then a well-known Sufi in Khorasan, visited Rumi and offered himself as a guide in understanding classical Sufism. Rumi accepted the offer and associated with Burhan al-Din for nine years. In the first three years he increased his knowledge and changed his own mental and behavioural states. He spent the next four years in travelling alone and with his guide to other well-known Sufi centres. Lastly, he became further acquainted with the behavioural and contemplative steps of Sufism.

Upon his return from Damascus he taught theology and gave spiritual guidance for five years. His association with various groups (Turks, Greeks, Persians and Arabs) gave him an insight into the source of man's weaknesses and strength. He noticed that man can follow many different ways, as a result of his

natural divergencies, for he wrote in *Fihi Ma Fihi*:

Salvation came to the angels by true knowledge, to animals by true ignorance. Man remains between these two contradictions. Some (beings) follow universal reason and have become entirely angelic (pure as light) and safe from hope and fear. Some are dominated by instincts and have become entirely bestial; some remain in conflict. The latter group possesses an internal pain, sorrow and anxiety; they are not satisfied with their state. Their virtuousness attracts the saints, who want to guide them and make them like themselves. Demons also wait to direct them toward the lowest possible state.¹

At the same time he realized that knowledge alone does not change man, nor does instruction greatly develop an individual's personality. Man's behaviour changes in relation to a change in his attitude. His mind becomes clear when he possesses positive feeling. Though people's beliefs vary, they are basically similar, and Rumi believed that insight into the problem of faith would remove the source of divergency. Fully conscious of unity he became concerned about the sources of conflict between Muslim sects and those of Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and others. Observing these natural divergencies in the social order, he then complained that every one of the seventy-two

1. Rumi, M.J.M.B., *Fihi Ma Fihi* [Discourses]. Edited by Fruzanfar, (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1959), p. 78.

religious sects was unaware of the other's state : " . . . the Sunni is unaware of Jabri (determinists), the latter is unaffected by the Sunni ; they have opposite ways. The Jabri says that the Sunni is lost, the latter asks, 'What awareness does the Jabri have ? ' " ¹

Rumi compared their answers to innumerable locks put on the door of the treasury of the self or to winding mountain passes which make it difficult for man to find his way. He became convinced that law, reason and jurisprudence were merely tools from which either good or evil could come. Theologians no longer interested him, for they concerned themselves with the formalism which had been developing for four centuries. They disregarded meaning and attacked the body of theology merely to satisfy the layman and control him. For a while Rumi concerned himself with these reflections. Because he could internalize the feelings and thoughts of these groups, his real self gained in strength at the expense of his conventional self. He may also have realized that he had failed himself by practising the rituals and rules of being a respected authority in society. As long as he remained active in conventional life the conflict between selves remained dormant. Perhaps the honour of being known as "the pole of Islamic Shari'a", given to him while still in his thirties, quieted his critical voice. Yet fame could not blind his true conscience or dominate him. It would seem

1. Rumi, M.J.M.B., *Mathnawi*, 6 vols., edited and translated by R.A. Nicholson, (London : Luzac & Co., 1925, 1926, 1929, 1930, 1933, 1934, 1937, and 1940.)

that during his last years as a spiritual leader he grew critical of the traditional ways of life. Perhaps he raised such questions as: If one's reason is so creative, why then is another's so artful and enmity-producing? Why are the believers narrow-minded and so diverse? What were the actual characteristics of the founders of the great religions? What is the relationship of their words to their acts? What is the value of their books to the believers? Why does the believer who knows often fail to act? When love comes why do attitudes change, understanding occur and differences disappear?

Although Rumi had found new answers to these questions (later he called himself the "Seller of New Ideas"), his social position and conservative environment deterred him from publicizing them. Yet his ideas concerned the destiny of man, his purpose in life, his origin, his evolution (even prior to man's rise to his present status), God and the future. Within man Rumi had found the force responsible for his restiveness; a force possessing a secret energy, which, if used in the right way, would move toward infinity; with increased use it would become more dynamic. Rumi viewed this invisible force as the cause of all forms which man shares with the rest of the universe. He seemed to perceive beneath the spiritual and materialistic world. Out of this invisible force, attraction, love, growth and evolution arise, culminating in the rise of man. Thus, in the sphere of unconscious evolution the cosmic self has

developed in man, the essence of which is his source of unrest :

Man experiences pain, urges and demands. Even if he possessed a hundred thousand worlds he would find no rest. Meticulously, man ceaselessly engages in every kind of trade and craft ; he busies himself in numerous types of office. He studies such fields as astronomy and medicine because he has not attained his object or desire. Ordinarily man calls the beloved "heart's ease." How then can he find ease and rest in any other thing ?

All these pleasures and pursuits are like a ladder. Because the rungs of the ladder are not a place in which to dwell but are transitory ; happy is the one who awakens soon enough to become aware of this fact. For him the long road becomes short and he does not waste his life on the rungs of the ladder.¹

Under these circumstances he probably met Shams of Tabriz (a master Sufi) for the second time ; through his image Rumi learned to trust what he had found, and tried to actualize it.

Further Insight into the Trans-Cultural State

Who was this Shams who influenced the renowned Rumi so much that he gained further trust in himself to pursue his search for self ?

1. Rumi : *Fihl Ma Fihl*.

Shams of Tabriz, son of Ali, the son of Malakdad, and twenty-two years Rumi's senior, came from a family whose forebearers were Isma'ilis. Though information about his early life is not readily available, it is known that he received his training in Sufism under the master, Abu Baker Zanbil Baf, a basketweaver in his native city. (It should be noted that almost all great Sufis earned their living through productivity available in their simple culture.) Apparently, Shams attained a state of being in which his guide could no longer help him unfold the mysteries of life. Then, like Socrates, Shams heard his perfected voice—that of a fully integrated man. He began to travel and question the most learned scholars to discover if his voice was genuine. The evidence suggests that he became aware of the limitations of conventional life and even revolted against classical Sufism, which offered the individual knowledge of its principles and identification with either God or the saints. He freed himself from all kinds of authority, internal and external, and frequently criticized traditional scholars and theologians who merely repeated other's opinions. Rather than take others as his example, he turned inward to discover his real self. Out of his travelling and self-imposed exile he finally attained perfection. After years of unsuccessfully seeking a congenial soul he at last met Rumi, whom he found to be his own potential soul.

But what characterizes a perfect man? Shams

himself left nothing behind except a short discourse between himself and Rumi known as *Maqalat* (Dialogues). However, in the *Mathnawi* Rumi describes this state of perfection as "individuality in non-individuality"; that is, infusion occurs with all that has taken place; the individual has entered the state of conscious existence. In this state the individual is no longer a social man, a limited "I" who lives only by his intellectual life, but rather a universal man, aided by intuition and functioning as a totality with spontaneity and expressiveness.

Shams' qualities could only be described by a person who had undergone an identical experience and had the ability to objectify that experience. Such a man was Rumi himself who dedicated to Shams one of his major works, *Divan-e-Shams*, the expression of a total personality. Its 2500 odes occurred spontaneously, and even its metre seems to match the human heart beat.

In a group of odes in which Rumi tries to identify himself with Shams' image there is further evidence of Shams' character, although Rumi admits that words do not fully describe him. He presents Shams as a free man, a magnetic, universal man, and one who understands an ocean of symbols beneath the inward state. Shams is the secret of secrets, or the light of illumination. To Shams love, though it is the life-giver, is nothing, for a stream of love emerges from his own ocean of kindness. God-like, he is the creative truth united with all, and one who has solved

the subject-object relations. To Rumi Shams was one who knew unity behind plurality and how the unity turned to plurality. Shams was fully aware and experienced life in all existence and the essence of life. Being the same inside and outside, Shams was like a flower whose petals were identical on both sides ; Shams was an unfolding of mankind in the memory of the universe in evolution. He had achieved happiness, experienced joy and had ceased to search, for he had passed the state of search and now stood at the threshold of the world of Form. He was the illuminist who had withdrawn the veil of name and perceived matter. Tearing aside the veils of attributes and qualities he had finally found how they were formed in the evolution of the phenomenal world. He had passed from existence to non-existence and beyond it. He lived in such a state that he needed no laws, no religion ; he lacked any sense of guilt and justice ; truth and kindness marked his spontaneous acts. When he came in contact with his fellow human beings Shams was the remedy to all ills. He was peerless : no one had seen anyone like him, nor did anyone possess his magnetic personality. No one equalled his ability as a guide ; no one possessed his wisdom. Rumi describes Shams's influence thus :

When he stimulated my thought from the depth of my psychic sea, the phantom of light arose. Shams was the light of the eye, the clarity of reason, the brightness of the soul and

the enlightenment of the heart. Shams was a universal man who took away my reason and religion. He was the form of every happiness.¹

In *Maqalat* Rumi relates that Shams, in order to reinforce his quest, conveyed the secret of his attainment to him, and in the *Diwan* he presents Shams as a man who spoke very little. Indeed, his first advice to Rumi was to keep silent and to remain deaf externally so that insight could act. The *Maqalat*, which presumably reports the first few months of their meeting, presents Shams as a man of clarity, sincerity, simplicity and maturity. In this discourse the characters are God, Rumi and Shams. They discuss the realities behind the beliefs, the real and the unreal; they agree that man's ideas are behind both living and non-living things.

It is quite likely that Rumi's story of "Umar and the Ambassador" represents his own encounter with Shams. Rumi portrays Umar as the universal soul, the Ambassador as one willing to attain perfection. While searching for the Emperor Umar's palace, the Ambassador learned that it did not exist and that Umar's only palace was an illuminated spirit, for he was a spiritual man with a universal state. Upon hearing about Umar's spiritual qualities, the Ambassador yearned to see him. A guide conducted him to Umar, who was asleep under a palm tree.

At the sight of him, the Ambassador trembled,

1. Rumi, M J.M.B., *Diwan-e-Shams Tabriz*, Vol. I. (Tehran : Amir Kabir Press, 1957.)

because, in Rumi's words : "Love and awe are contrary to each other : he saw these two contraries united in his (Umar's) heart."¹

Umar awakened suddenly ; he first soothed the Ambassador's distraught mind. They then spoke about creation, the states of the saints (*hāl*) and *maqām* (the permanent but rare state). Umar reminded the Ambassador of the stages traversed by the soul, the spirit's journey, the time when there was no time and the atmosphere before the advent of this material life. Umar found the stranger congenial, responsive and receptive to learning the mysteries, and one who also sought guidance. Then the Ambassador questioned Umar about life on earth and the change from non-material states to material. Umar explained that reality (God) caused motion and at that very moment non-existence joyfully changed into existence and continued until man and his spiritual state appeared.

Thus, the spiritual sense gives rise to inspiration, that is, it is an expression hidden from sense perception, reason and opinion. Union with reality follows it, and it is not compulsion. When one brings it to light he becomes aware of unseen things in the future and the recollection of the past becomes naught. This is the power of the soul of souls, which differs from the soul. If the heart should unfold this mystery, the soul would fly toward the highest heavens.²

As a result of his conversation with Shams, Rumi

1. Rumi : *Mathnawī*, I.

2. *Ibid.*

became convinced that beneath the form is the sea of reality, which every saint, universal man and prophet discovered. Its formal state, as stated in *Maqalat*, is directed at ordinary men and serves only as a reminder for the elect.

This sea of reality, which has mysteriously accumulated within the unconscious source of man's growth, is the seat of the cosmic self. Rumi came to believe that his real self was not what his father or the environment had developed in him, but what the universe had created in him. Therefore, this real self can henceforth be called the cosmic self or universal self, in contrast to the phenomenal self, the product of culture.

The cosmic self can be thought of as the image of the universe which must be unveiled. It is wrapped in our unconscious, if it is not the unconscious itself, whereas the phenomenal self encompasses consciousness; it possesses infinite potentialities while consciousness is limited; and only the unconscious provides the means of attaining the real self. The cosmic self embraces all our being while the phenomenal self constitutes only a part of our existence. The phenomenal self has separated us from our origin, that of union with all of life. Having now become aware of this separation, we can only live fully by emptying consciousness, bringing to light the unconscious achieving insight into our whole existence, and living in a state of complete awareness. I shall call this state *cosmic existence* or *transcendental conscious-*

ness. The real self can be thought of as the crown of the unconscious, which is potentially conscious existence, the Sufi's goal.

To identify this psychic state is ordinarily not easy, for its very nature is one of becoming, and when attained that is it. Persian Sufis believe that it is self-explanatory and self-evident. Just as the sun is proof of itself so too is the real self. Each of us has at some time experienced it. At least once we have heard its voice, its call and its invitation, often without our realization. Perhaps the words "me," "he" or "it" can better identify the real self than "I" or "we." In this sense Sufism consists of two steps : (1) the passing away of "I", and (2) becoming wholly aware of "Not I". The real self exists in no place; its very nature is intensive rather than extensive, and it can be both near us and far removed, depending on the individual's experience. Ordinarily, a flash of knowledge enlightens the consciousness, a small circle of our psyche, but when we attain the real self a strong flash continually illuminates the whole structure of our psyche. Some Sufis give the heart as its site, but one may ask : How can the heart, meaning really an ability for intuitive experience, have a definite locus ? In the following poem Rumi designates the source of self, if not its location :

Cross and Christians, from end to end
I surveyed ; He was not on the cross.
I went to the idol-temple, to the ancient
pagoda ;

No trace was visible there.
 I went to the mountains of Herat and Candahor ;
 I looked, He was not in that hill and dale.
 With set purpose I fared to the summit of Mount Qāf¹
 In that place was only Anqa's habitation.
 I bent the reins of search to the Ka'ba ;²
 He was not in that resort of Old and Young.
 I questioned Ibn Sina of His state ;
 He was not within Ibn Sina's range,³
 I fared towards the scene of two bow-lengths' distance,
 He was not in that exalted court
 I gazed into my heart ;
 There I saw Him ; He was nowhere else.⁴

The above poem describes Rumi's search for the site of the real self. Not finding it in various religions, reason or other sources, he at last perceives it potentially within himself and actually within Shams. But to attain it he had to go through the process of experiencing existential moratoria in order to resolve his inner and outer conflicts, and then live in a trans-cultural state.

1. Qāf, the residence of Simurgh, who is identical with God and is the object of search of unification in Attār's mystical text, *Manṭiq al-tair*.

2. Exemplifies religion.

3. Exemplifies the range of intellect.

4. Nicholson, R.A., *Selected Poems from the Diwan-e-Shams Tabriz*, Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1952.)

*The Outward Conflict of Selves :
Conventional versus Universal Self*

The meeting of Shams and Rumi reinforced Rumi's trust in the direction of a new object of desire, that is, the experience of becoming a universal self instead of being a prominent Muslim theologian.

The awareness of a higher order of life generally constitutes a psychic leap, corresponding to the unfolding of the unconscious and the acquiring of a new vision. If a receptive self experiences such a happening, that is, if the content of consciousness results from a healthy experience and virtuous action, the "I" will offer little resistance to a change in a better direction. However, if such an event happens to a rejective self, intense conflict results. In such a case this psychical leap, which makes us aware of a new ideal, cannot transfer itself into action and thus retreats back into the dark well of unconsciousness. In any event, however, great pressure is exerted on the individual. Perception of a new state of being is not enough for the receptive mind, for the individual must also inactivize the previous self. He must devote himself to the new object of desire, love it and by constant vigorous action become one with it.

Rumi himself gained insight into the universal self and observed it through Shams's state of being. He now "cast himself like a shadow in the presence of Shams" in order to receive his guidance. But to remove the "I", the conventional self had to undergo

change. Rumi faced two kinds of conflicts. Inwardly, he experienced a conflict between what he was and what he envisioned he would become, that is, between the limited "self" given by his training in culture, and that self which would be the outcome of his relatedness to the universe, to the whole of humanity.

The outward conflict appeared between that which was related to his new orientation and that which the public demanded, that is, between his new path toward change and that of traditional ways. In other words, the removal of "I" required a transmutation, which, in turn, depended upon tearing aside the veil and overcoming mental blocks. These veils were : (1) Rumi's social self, specifically his relationship to the community, (2) his traditional self ; the product of an ancestry known for generations as Divines, (3) his concern for customs, especially his religious self, which on the basis of Islam gave meaning to his life, (4) his intellectual self, although his belief in the value of philosophy and logic was weak, and finally (5) the language barrier, although once he reached the silent state he could use other symbols.

To reflect on himself, solve these contradictions and remove the veils, Rumi had to relinquish his public leadership and temporarily isolate himself from friends and the public. Only in such a situation could he challenge the ordinary approved way of life, re-evaluate the social values and publicly denounce the ideas held sacred. Similarly, Shams realized that

Rumi had to break away from his previous ties so as to find himself, even if the community belittled him. As long as he looked back and measured his behaviour in terms of others' standards he could not hope to elevate himself.

Intent on gaining the cosmic self through the path of rebirth in totality, Rumi stopped preaching, cut himself off from other social groups and strengthened his ties with Shams. Subsequently, he created *sam'a*, the expressive dancing, singing and music which transferred his spontaneous feelings into artistic media, and he associated only with Shams.

The establishment of *sam'a* by an esteemed Muslim leader greatly shocked the orthodox Muslim community and upset social standards. It is surprising that his life was spared, for such a dissension was generally unforgivable in those days. No doubt his early importance plus the intensity of his love for all humanity offset the opposition. Moreover, thousands of loyal followers still demanded his "Lordship" but he had already discovered that "lordship is a headache and slavery a chain." As difficult as it was, he had to become no one's master, nobody's slave. Thus he began his new life, or as his son states, "the great professor became a beginner in self-perfection."¹ Instead of prayers and religious rituals, *sam'a* became his religion. For fifteen months after entering the path of rebirth he spent most of his time in Shams's company, for according to Sufi practices, discussion

1. Sultan Walad, *op cit.*

facilitates learning but only association with the great masters produces personality change.

This association comforted Rumi, for he had already isolated himself from the community. However, the public condemned the association, declaring that Rumi had become mad, the devil had conquered his soul and he had become a child again ; but to all their accusations he displayed only gentleness and patience. Turning away from his high social position and worldly possessions, he continued his path to perfection. Undoubtedly, Rumi's devoted followers and relatives, who had benefited from his religious counsel, now felt betrayed. Rumi's son described their attitude at this time as : "Why has our leader turned his back on us ? We are all devoted followers who know that he has no equal in intelligence and understanding. He is the king of all learned men. His teachings have made us lose interest in others. We made him famous. His friends are happy, his enemies defeated. Who is this man [Shams] who diverts our master ? " ¹

However, Rumi continued to ignore public opinion and devoted himself even more to Shams's cause. When the public failed to rouse Rumi, their wrath turned on Shams. In their eyes Shams was a magician, for one who could so easily change a noted scholar and public leader surely possessed some magical power. The tension mounted and Shams, perhaps to test Rumi's perseverance to the task,

1. Sultan Walad, *op. cit.*

indicated he would leave. To Rumi, now isolated from the public, Shams was his only psychological security. Shams was his bosom friend, the light of his body ; they were of one soul in two bodies. With Shams' departure, the intensity of his search heightened and his anxiety increased. People expected Rumi to return to his previous position in society, but instead he continued his *sam'a* and life in isolation. Shams did depart, and it possibly provided another test of mental strength for Rumi to relinquish his social self. Though the internal conflict was very great, Rumi, on Shams' order, remained silent. Finally, a spokesman for the community apologized, promising to accept Shams if he returned from Damascus. After some correspondence Rumi sent his son and a group of followers to bring back the master. Yet when Rumi's pattern of behaviour did not change, the old jealousies flared up. A riot followed in which one of Rumi's son, Ala al-Din, was killed and Shams himself disappeared (1248 A.D.).¹

This incident increased Rumi's anxiety, but he continued his search for self-perfection, even though the community leaders again tried to entice him back to his old position. According to his son, Sultan Walad, Rumi expressed himself in whirling dances for days and nights ; he gave away what he possessed,

1. Shams' grave has never been identified.

This conflict of selves also appeared in the destiny of Rumi's sons. Ala al-Din, representative of his conventional self and the pride of Rumi's clan and ancestors, joined the plot against Shams and was killed. His other son, Sultan Walad, personifying his cosmic self, followed Rumi's mystic order, an order which persisted for thirty generations.

mostly to the musicians, but he still appeared restless. The onlookers were surprised that such a Mufti of Islam should dance like a mad man! ¹

Yet Rumi's longing for Shams persisted, and upon receiving news of him being in Damascus, he journeyed there to find him. No doubt, he also desired a friendlier environment, for Konia had developed a marked hostility to him after the riot against Shams. In Damascus Rumi continued to search for Shams the person, while mentally he sought his universal soul within his own self. A few years later the citizens of Konia once more begged Rumi to return and promised him complete security. Returning to Konia in 1251, he again prepared the setting for *sam'a* in order to remove the veils and harmonize his inner conflicts.

The Inward Conflict of Selves

Through kindness and patience Rumi finally succeeded in calming the antagonistic attitude of his fellow citizens—a necessary prerequisite for attaining the stages of further identification and rebirth in love and creativity. Thus, having overcome the social ego, he turned inwardly in order to remove the "I" and empty from consciousness the theological formalism which had been so interwoven in his personality from childhood onward. He was then prepared to inactivize reason and logic so that his insight would become active and his whole being could turn toward his

1. Sultan Walad, *op cit.*

enlightenment. After ridding himself of these veils he was able to reach the depth of his psyche. In this period until he reached unity, language in terms of lyric poetry (though he never thought of becoming a poet) became the vehicle of his unconscious stream. Often at a loss for words he resorted to metaphors and the language of ideation. Instead of following the theological premise that a Muslim must submit himself to the image of God, follow the defined practices in fasting, prayer and pilgrimage to Mecca, Rumi himself was the centre of religious experience.

Rumi further explains that two forces compel man to deviate in a formalistic sense : one is the fear of justice, hell and resurrection, another is the hope of paradise. Yet Rumi considers both as veils. He advises man to change himself so that he can reach certainty without hope and fear. Rumi's call to man to be himself began as a personal effort to transform himself. In order to dissociate himself from the superficiality of the form and the dogma which governed the theological thinking of his day, he changed his religious attitude but began to analyze logical and philosophical experiences for their limitations, while concurrently developing a thorough affection for the atom.

Although the intellect had lost its role in directing Rumi to self-realization its previous influence still had to be eliminated. It required a state which understood the finiteness of logic's veil, the duplicity of philosophy and the self-conceit arising from academic learning. According to Rumi these three sources

do not give man certainty, nor do they bring him to the source of truth. In fact, he believes that with the appearance of truth, intellectualization disappears and remains companionless. To illustrate the point that intellect provides only a limited answer to man's life Rumi relates the story of a grammarian who once embarked on a boat and haughtily asked the boatman if he had studied grammar, to which the boatman shook his head. "Then half of your life has been wasted," declared the scholar.

The man pondered unhappily over this verdict for some time. By chance a storm brought the boat to the edge of a whirlpool. Turning to the scholar the boatman inquired, "Do you know how to swim?"

"No," he replied, to which the boatman retorted, "Now your whole life is wasted."¹

According to Rumi, when one is in the endless stormy sea of life, intellect alone does not lead to safety. In another passage Rumi states the syllogism: "The legs of intellectuals and logicians are wooden; wooden legs are untrustworthy."² Similarly, Rumi recognizes the limitations of laws, which are instituted for self-sufficient persons in conventional life. He declares that reason and intellect seek that which benefits itself. To Rumi, intellect and thinking do not guide man—they help him know only a part of himself, not his whole self. Thus, Rumi

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi* I.

2. *Ibid.*

advises his audience to limit the worldly "I" and be themselves. The law brandishes its authority over "I" and it is this "I" which restricts man. It is in the field of intellect and "I" that plurality exists. Therefore, one must eliminate the "I" in order to become "not-I" which is in the area of the unitary world. Added to these veils is man's love of possession. This veil obstructs one's eye from seeing the path of rebirth in totality.

Having removed these various veils, inactivizing the social "I", and emptied the conscious, Rumi had reached a point where the social self was dead, formalistic religious ties were broken, reason was temporarily inactive, Shams had disappeared and a son had been sacrificed. Rumi himself had given up social prestige and material possessions. Thus, isolated from all ties, Rumi, remained alone, bewildered. Lost in himself, he had yet to pass through the most dangerous period of his transition, though it was the beginning of his emancipation.

At the beginning, however, Rumi suffered greatly from the shock of isolation—almost to the point of insanity. In a number of odes he reveals his ambivalence between his new-found freedom and his bewilderment in the new situation. Some of the other verses describe his sense of liberation. Unlike the conventional Sufis, he had no *khaneqah* where he might visit and receive guidance, nor was he in the service of the nobility or bound by impulses. He lacked ambition for wealth and position. Unafraid

of slanderous remarks or the grief of resurrection day, he expected neither hope nor fear from anyone. Although melancholic, he felt independent of the entire man-made world. Having given up fame he was not afraid of infamy. Existing in a state of neither peace nor strife, neither king nor beggar, neither servant nor master, he wanted only to find himself. His unrest arose solely from his search for serenity. Without a master he sought the true master.

In other verses Rumi tries to describe his bewilderment, as when he says :

How do I know what I say,
 How do I know ?
 I am not, then I am ;
 Don't judge on what I say
 For I am bewildered.
 How can I say what I think
 For I am unaware of myself.
 Sometimes I am higher than a wave
 At other times, beneath the waves.
 I am as bewildered as thought,
 And as thought I rise up.
 In whatever state I am in hopefully, I can say :
 I have become old and I am as a child ;
 I have become aware, and I am also drunk.¹

A synthesis of some of his verses composed in

1. Rumi, M.J.M.B., *Diwan-e-Shams* (Selected Verses), edited by Anjawi. (Tehran : Taban Press, 1950.)

this state indicates that Rumi experienced two kinds of images seeking release. The old images of his social life, now suppressed and dormant, strove to reach consciousness. Then Rumi recalled that he had been a pillar of the community ; from this the image of Shams appeared, and in this perplexed state Rumi repeatedly, in numerous odes, raised the question of his being. In this condition Rumi expresses his ambivalence in terms of either repentance or inconsistency :

What can I do that I am so full of ambivalence ?

One time I am driven this way, another that way.

.

In one breath I am like fire, in another, such a roaring torrent

What is my origin ; what is my race ; in what market am I the goods ?

In one breath I move along the moon ; in another I am drunk with God.

In one breath, I am like Joseph in a well ; in another all harm.

In one breath I betray the giant ; in another I am angry and depressed,

In another I am free of these moods

For I am in that elevated place.¹

1. Rumi, M.J.M.B.. *Diwan-e-Shams* (Selected Verses), edited by Anjawi. (Tehran : Taban Press, 1950.)

In such a state, Rumi, in order to actualize his reintegration, took Shams' image as a transfer. Rumi portrays himself as an artist who paints disturbing images appearing in his mind. Yet when Shams' image appears, he is released from all of them :

I am a painter, a maker of pictures, every
moment I shape a beauteous form,
And then in thy presence I melt them all away.
I call upon a hundred phantoms and indue
them with a spirit ;
When I behold thy phantom, I cast them in the
fire. ¹

The Union of Souls :

Identification with Shams (the Master)

To identify oneself with another image generally means to assimilate that person's qualities and exhibit his character. If he becomes aware of the object of identification and its qualities, he may even go beyond it, absorbing that image and undergoing rebirth in relation to a new image of a higher degree. But what happens when one develops the urge of identification? The individual generally perceives the value of the object of identification. He places it in his hierarchy of values and develops a great interest in it. This desire, interest or feeling of becoming like that which is one's ideal forms the source of motivation, the strength of which corresponds to the intensity of one's feeling. Moreover, interest creates

1. Nicholson, *op. cit.*

internal effort and directs one toward his goal. Consequently, as the desire for its possession arises, one tries to become one with it. Specifically, the process of identification requires : (1) an object of desire which creates a motive, and (2) a receptive and persistent seeker who will have a strong urge to identify himself with that object, and who tries to actively strengthen his ties with the object, perhaps compelling him to break away from his previous attachments.

Man's true identification, therefore, emerges from his love for his selected object of desire, and its quality can be as good as the nature of the desired object. Partial identification occurs frequently in every-day life : a son tries to identify himself with his father's manner and behaviour, a daughter with that of her mother. Adolescents often identify with athletic figures, movie stars and professional leaders ; identification with a favourite teacher can substantially contribute to personality development.

Traditionally, in the Middle East identification was most strikingly apparent in the relationship of the master to the apprentice, both in professional and religious life. The apprentice not only learned a trade while being associated with the master, but in his continued association with him, he formed an image of the master which he retained for a long time. In this process he became accustomed to a pattern of life which gave him a limited but integrated personality.

In the classical period of Sufism, prior to Rumi (eighth to eleventh centuries), the identification with a master Sufi or God occurred gradually and required both the behavioural and mental states (as indicated in the section on quest). In order to attain the qualities necessary for identification the Sufis generally had to pass through : (1) a perplexing state of mind, (2) decision-making and devotion to the object of desire, (3) the attainment of emptiness (poverty in both its outward and inward sense), and (4) the development of trust in the object of desire with the hope of attaining it. Love and contemplation strengthened him, and by guidance he became one with the object of desire and attained certainty. Persistent recollection on a particular idea provided the chief media of identification. This unity has been most aptly expressed in *Mantiq al-tair* (*Assembly of Birds*), where the seekers become one with the object of search :

And if they looked at both together, both were
the Simurgh, neither more nor less.

This one was that, and that one this ; the like
of this hath no one heard in the world.¹

Rumi's identification with Shams al-Din (that is, Rumi's attainment of Shams' psychic state) was a highly complex identification process. How did it come about? Through what process? With the process of detachment from public acclaim, religious

1. Browne, E. G. , *A Literary History of Persia*. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1956.)

authorities, faith and even Aristotelian logic, Rumi became very anxious, for his only security was the state of mind of Shams.

In his concept of the identification process Rumi followed a short-cut. Instead of taking a number of years to pass through various stages, Rumi, because of his unique personality and the depth of his awareness and sincerity, developed an intense feeling for his goal. Specifically, he tried to become Shams' soul, then the cosmic self and finally that which exists behind the self—creative love. His first object of desire was Shams, who in his spiritual and psychical qualities represented this universal soul. In *Diwan-e-Shams* Rumi constantly reiterates that he is concerned with his image and that which is named Shams. Therefore, he did not seek a partial identification with just certain characteristics of Shams, but a union with a soul, a process demanding change in his whole personality. So elusive was this image that at every turn it tended to escape from Rumi's mind, but his strong love helped him pursue it in every thought which came to his mind.

He expresses his love of becoming one with Shams in soul in order to achieve union with the creative forces in various ways :

O Shams, O Shams, watch over me, watch
over me.

Will it happen that one day, in soul and heart
I shall become one, I shall become one.¹

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

The intensity of this urge left no room for gradual preparation or recollection. On the other hand, Rumi again let his lyrics carry his deep emotion, and *sam'a* became a vehicle for expressing his love for this image and clearing his mind so that he might continually seek union. He often begins an ode with his search for the cosmic self but ends it with a recollection of Shams' image as a measure of comfort and relief. It is possible to characterize some of these in terms of the intensity and mildness of Rumi's feelings toward his identification with his master. The more intense verses were composed when Rumi was less confident, marking the initial phase of his identification. It is interesting that this union occurred periodically, beginning with a tense situation, eliminating all except that image and finally attaining an elevated state of union.

At the beginning of union Rumi feels a distance between his own soul and that of the image of Shams. The same ode also indicates Shams' high regard for Rumi:

O heart don't complain, so that my beloved
may not hear ;

O heart, aren't you afraid of my constant
longing ?

Don't you remember that one day when talking
he said :

"Don't seek my garden (state) anymore."

O heart don't mingle with my blood or in my

riverine tears ;
Haven't you heard from dawn to dusk these
bitter complaints ?
Know your own capacity, don't mention that
garden of union.
Isn't it enough that you have become aware of
its thorns ?
I said, "Save my soul. I need you to keep me
company.
You are the deliverer. I am heavy in head, oh
my intoxicated Saqi !"
He laughed and replied, "O son, it's true but
don't go to excess."
Then he began : "O you, awakened by me ;
O you, drunk by me :
When I found your way sincere, I fell at your
feet."
I said, "I am naught in the world, if you do
not become my companion."
He replied, "Be naught in this world so that
you clearly see my face.
Lose the self so—if you want that ; in selflessness
know my state."
I said, "So in your trap, how can I lose the self
without your cup (help).
Sell me one cup as the price of life, then see
my market."
I repeated, "O my beloved, I am sad. Your
features leave me bewildered.

I am without heart, without life. Now remain
as my heart's desire."

He answered, "From many beloveds I have
snatched their prayer carpets.

Especially you, simple-hearted one, have tossed
my actions to the wind.

Yet I bestow upon you a soul and the world.

You will become one like the soul of souls.

Become the commander of Paradise in the
palace of angels ;

Now become a king in the heart of my secrets.

In joyous dance enter the garden of my mys-
teries."

My king, Shams al-Din, commander of Gabriel,

How happy is my soul and life, from you, the
brightness of my garden.¹

Rumi's strong love for union with Shams eli-
minated this distance. On the other hand it also
blinded him to everything except that meaning which
he sought. He saw Shams in every natural object,
in heaven and earth. Examining the ins and outs of
that particle, he made it his own through his love
for it and through the Sufi understanding that the
essence of creation is one. In each atom he per-
ceived its essence intuitively :

Out of your kindly love, Shams, we have
understood the atom,

We extended the boundary (meaning) of each

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

drop to your universal circumference.¹

Thus indirectly, Rumi united himself with the cosmos and came to explore the non-human environment. The same kind of identification occurred in every one of his efforts, in every act and feeling.

When I talk of chiefs, he is the Master ; when
I search the heart he is the beloved.

When I seek peace he is the mediator ; when
I come to the battlefield, he is the dagger ;
When I attend a party, he is the wine and
comfit ; when

I go into the rose garden he is elegant.
When I go into the mine he is the carnelian and
ruby ; when

I go into the sea he is the pearl.
When I am on the plains he is the garden rose ;
when

I come to the Heaven he is the star.
When I come to the upper ranks he is the
pinnacle ; when

I burn out of sorrow he is the censer.
When I prepare to fight in time of battle, he is
both the officer on duty and the general ;
when

I come to a feast in time of joy he is the cup-
bearer, the minstrel and the cup.

When I write a letter to the beloved, he is the
ink, the ink-well and the paper ;

When I awaken he is my intelligence.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

When I go to sleep, he is my dream ; when
I search for a rhyme in a lyric, he is the rhyme-
giver in my memory.

Whatever image that you think of
He, like a painter, is the brush in the hand.

If you still look for a superior

He is better than "better."

Go, leave speech and book, for

It is far better that he be the book.

Be silent, for all six sides are his light

And when you pass these six sides, there he
is—the judge.¹

When Rumi turns to God as a deliverer, Shams
becomes his God :

My master and my sheikh, my pain and my
remedy ;

I declare these words openly, my Shams and
my God.

I have reached truth because of you, O my soul
of truth.

I have accepted your prayer, my Shams and my
God.

I am check-mated by your love, for you are the
king of two worlds.

So that you stare at me, my Shams and my God

I submerge myself in your presence so that
there remains no impression.

Politeness dictates thus, my Shams and my God

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

Airleron of Gabriel will not be able
To carry your signs, my Shams and my God.
Where is the benevolent Hatem to kiss your
stirrup;
It is time to make gifts and be merciful, my
Shams and my God.
Christ gave life to dead; he saw his own
selflessness.
You art everlasting life, my Shams and my God.
Cloud, come and moisten East and West of the
world;
Blow the trumpet as he is coming, my Shams
and my God.
Ask the houris¹ to vacate the palaces of Paradise,
Set up the throne for he is coming, my Shams
and my God.
My Ka'ba is synagogue, my hell is my paradise
My destiny's companion, my Shams and my
God.
If light for a thousand years illuminates the
East and West,
Who will carry your sign, my Shams and my
God?
The sound of crying from Rome to Balkh
How can the source be faulty, my Shams and
my God.²
When Rumi turned to history he projected Shams'

1. A nymph in Islamic paradise,

2. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

character into such virtuous personages as Joseph, the symbol of piety, Jacob that of patience, Moses of one who talked to God and out of love made the mountain dance, Christ representing love, and similarly Muhammad and Mansur who personified creative truth. He also related Shams to Noah, the angels and numerous other saints who represented the non-phenomenal world and followed the path of truth. Rumi reaffirms one of Sufism's major tenets when he states again and again that "only the truth can save us." He classified people as either those who follow the path of truth or those who fail in life and pursue the course of falsity. Rumi referred to Shams as a manifestation of truth, a representative of certainty, a reservoir of mercy and one who came from spacelessness.

Rumi further perceived, in place of the image of parents and kin, only the creative essence of Shams. Later this image became the precursor of the creation of forms. In this state Rumi often presents his odes in the form of a discourse between his image and that of Shams', and he indicates that he is approaching his master's soul. In a position now to question, he feels certain of attaining his goal :

I cried out at midnight, 'Who is in this house
of the heart ?'

He said, 'Tis I, by whose countenance moon
and sun are shamed.'

He said, 'Why is this house of the heart filled
with diverse images ?'

Said I, 'They are the reflection of thee, O thou
whose face is a candle of Chigil.'

He said, 'What is this other image, bedabbed
with heart's blood ?'

Said I, 'This is the image of me, heart sore and
with feet in the mire.'

I bound the neck of my soul and brought it to
me as a token :

'It is the confidant of love ; do not sacrifice
thine own confidant.'

He gave me the end of a thread—a thread full
of mischief and guile.

'Pull,' he said, 'that I may pull, and break it
not in the pulling.'

From the tent of the soul flashed out the form
of my beloved, fairer than before :

I stretched my hands to him ; he struck my
hand, saying 'Let go.'

I said, 'Thou art harsh, like such a one.'
'Know', he replied,

'That I am harsh for good, not from rancour
and spite.

Whoever enters saying, "Tis I," I smite him on
the brow ;

For this is the shrine of Love, O fool ! it is
not a sheep cote !

Assuredly Salahu'ddin is the image of that fair
one ;

Rub thine eyes, and behold the image of the heart, the image of the heart.¹

In order to eliminate the argumentative state between his own image and that of Shams', Rumi repeatedly indicates that he feels weary. To him there is nothing more wondrous than Shams' image; in the presence of it he feels the most pious devotee, in its absence an infidel.

In the third state of mind, Rumi portrays himself as an artist who paints various images appearing in his mind. Yet Shams' image melts them all. Again, other images come to mind, but that of Shams turns them all to ashes. In this state he reveals his spontaneous desire to create universal images :

I am a painter, a maker of pictures; every
moment I shape a beauteous form,
And then in thy presence I melt them all away.
I call upon a hundred phantoms and indue
them with a spirit;
When I behold thy phantom, I cast them in the
fire.
Art thou the vintner's cup-bearer or the enemy
of him who is sober,
Or is it thou who mak'st a ruin of every house
I build?
In thee the soul is dissolved, with thee it is
mingled;
Lo! I will cherish the soul, because it has a
perfume of thee.

1. Rumi: *Diwan e-Shams*.

Every drop of blood which proceeds from me
is saying to thy dust ;

I am one colour with thy love, I am the partner
of thy affection :

In the house of water and clay this heart is
desolate with thee ;

O Beloved, enter the house, or I will leave it. ¹

Rumi mingled with Shams' image in feelings of still another kind. Rumi cherished such a state because it carried his perfume ; every drop of blood which ran through Rumi's body became a partner of Shams' affection. He loved this image and its associations increased his love. In this state of overlapping image, he was close to becoming one with Shams' image. Their images resembled two lights : when they came together no one could differentiate them.

When Rumi turned to his "self" he continually caught the scent of Shams in the heart of his self. In this context he claimed, "Why shouldn't I stay up every night and talk to his image ?" Finally, he expressed another set of feelings he dissolved himself in Shams ; he felt that his greatest moment in life occurred when he and Shams resided together in two bodies but as one soul :

Happy the moment when we are seated in the
palace, thou and I,

1. Nicholson : *op. cit.*

With two forms and with two figures but with
one soul, thou and I.

The colours of the grove and the voice of the
birds will bestow immortality.

At the time when we come into the garden,
thou and I

The stars of heaven will come to gaze upon us :
We shall show them the moon itself, shall
be mingled in ecstasy,

Joyful and secure from foolish babble, thou
and I.

All the bright-plumed birds of heaven will
devour their hearts with envy

In the place where we shall laugh in such a
fashion, thou and I.

This is the greatest wonder, that thou and I,
sitting here in the same nook,

Are at this moment both in Iraq and Korasan,
thou and I.¹

Having gained this union, Rumi felt that Shams' image sparkled in his eye. He had made Shams' image his own. In this state of union he declared that Shams' soul was so close to his own that he knew whatever Shams might think of. In a similar vein he said, "In every breath the colour of my heart takes the colour of his thought."²

This identification of what went on in Shams' mind as reflected in Rumi's heart constitutes the main

1. Nicholson : *op. cit.*

2. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams.*

element in communication without words. Whatever people may call it—miracle, extra-sensory perception, that is, the prediction of future events—has been the result of this mysterious achievement. This all-pervasive union, as represented in Shams, appeared in Rumi's period of ecstasy. Certain of Rumi's verses indicate that he stayed in this period for three days, which occurred regularly every month :

I at each month three days, O my beloved
Undoubtedly, I must get mad
Each person longs for a king
Every moment he will have monthly longing.¹

This union of selflessness is magnificently expressed in the lines :

It happened that we made a trip without "we"
There our heart bloomed without "we."
That moon which was hiding from us
Put a face on our face without "we".
Not having died in the grief of the beloved,
We were reborn in his grief, without "we."
We are always intoxicated without wine
We are always happy without "we."
Don't remember us ever,
We are our own remembrance without "we."
We are happy without "we," saying
"Oh we shall always be without "we."
All doors were closed to us
When the road of justice

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

Opened without "we."

With the existence of "we," the heart of
King Kai Qubad becomes a slave.

If the slave is without "we" he
Becomes King Kai Qubad.

We have passed beyond right and wrong
From the prayer and sins of existence without
"we."

We are intoxicated from the cup of Shams al-
Din;

His cup of wine will never be without "we."¹

Although Shams represented the universal man and was perhaps the image of God, Rumi did not limit himself to the borrowed image. He rested on it, became one with it, reached the shore of unity and attained cosmic self. As he says:

We were anxious once before,

Now in your image we are warmly comforted.²

Yet Rumi still had the urge to find what was behind the creation which produced Shams. To attain this aim he first had to become aware of what created Shams. Then he had to unveil it and discover that the essence of creative love is the inward force of evolution culminating in the rise of man. This step—rebirth in love—is the topic of the next section.

VI

Rebirth in Love and Creativity

For almost a decade Rumi underwent a trans-

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid*.

mutation in his personality by removing his previous experiences and becoming united with Shams' image. Loving that image he developed it in every deed and action and made it alive by practising universal love. In this period he also became aware of the enormous power of love, which gave him strength, helped him solve his separateness from his previous orientations and finally made him believe that "when one gains an infinitesimal amount of love, he forgets about being a Gabir, a Magi, a Christian or an unbeliever."¹ In this attitude he became increasingly interested in the nature of "love," its power and scope; he found that true love is the activity of the innermost part of the soul, a function which man engages in completely.

Thus, Rumi delved deeply into the soul of creation and discovered that all parts share a positive energy. This positive energy is responsible for the interaction between particles; it is the factor which has caused evolution to proceed from one degree of life to another: from mineral to plant, to animal, then to human beings. In passing from one state to the next man has forgotten the previous ones, except that he has a feeling of relatedness toward them. It is this active force of love which interrelates the whole universe. It would readily manifest itself if we were to remove the veil of the phenomenal world and go to the depth of creation, for it created form culminating in man, and it created the interrelationships of forms and the creation of the human world.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

Consequently, instead of putting evolution on the basis of conflict, Rumi presents the idea that this power of intense love (which he calls *ishq*) produces change and evolution. His first finding was, therefore, that lover (man), and the beloved (God, image of the perfect man, cosmic self) both emerged from love.¹ Rumi also declared that man produces love, but in actuality and in a creative sense love produced him :

Though outwardly it appears that love is born
from me ;

Yet you know that in reality, love gave birth to
me.²

On this principle Rumi sought to attain rebirth for a second time and to become one with the inner essence of all, by relating himself to the universal force of love, activating it in his total personality and becoming this creative force, itself the source of the cosmic self.

Having been born in the image of Shams and then having become aware of it, Rumi came to feel what was infinite had become finite ; this ceased to motivate him as it had, but it taught him the existence of the world of love, in which he had to gain rebirth :

Ceasing to being born in him,

I am born in love now.

I am more than myself, for

I have been born twice.³

[Once in Shams, once in love]

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid*.

3. *Ibid*.

This growth in love, the topic of this chapter, poses several questions : (1) According to Rumi what is the nature of this force and what are its characteristics ? (2) What is it as a dynamic force ? (3) How did Rumi become one with it ? and finally, (4) What contribution does it make to mankind ?

We have already introduced the phenomenon "love" and have, in general, described its role in the union of the souls of Shams and Rumi, but what is needed now is a definition and description of its nature and scope. According to Rumi love is the most difficult concept to define : yet for a sincere and sensitive soul it is the easiest one to experience. Rumi's own words best explain this :

Love is as obvious as the sun and moon in the world,

With such clarity and obviousness why search for proof.¹

To become familiar with love, Rumi advises us to observe the lovers' acts or keep silent :

If you can't feel love

Look at the lovers'

Like Mansur who went happily to the gallows.²

The tale of love must be heard from love itself

For like a mirror it is both mute and expressive.³

Despite his modesty, Rumi gives us an excellent definition of love :

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

One night I asked love, say truly who are you ?
 She replied : I am everlasting life ; the succession
 of happy life.¹

However, to verify this claim of love, he
 searched every state of mind ; as a traveller he searched
 every city for it and found nothing better. Then he
 carefully listened to every creative beat and found
 that all voices, except the melody of love, were like
 the noise of a drum :

Save the melody of love,
 Whatever melody I heard in the world
 Was the noise of drum.²

In another verse he declared that he had tasted
 everything in life and had found that nothing com-
 pared to love :

I tasted everything,
 I found nothing better than you.
 When I dove into the sea,
 I found no pearl like you.
 I opened all the casks,
 I tasted from a thousand jars,
 Yet none but that rebellious wine of yours
 Touched my lips and inspired my heart.³

Subsequently, Rumi defined love in terms of its
 function :

Hail O love, that bringest us good gain
 Thou that art the physician of all ills,
 The remedy of our pride and vain glory.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

Our Plato and our Galen !

Through love the earthly body soared to the sky.
The mountain began to dance and became nimble

Love inspired Mt. Sinai, O lover, (so that)
Sinai (was made) drunken and *Moses fell in a swoon.*¹

Yet with all these and numerous other definitions, Rumi was still dissatisfied with what he verbally described as compared to what he felt :

Whatever I say in exposition and explanation of love, when

I come to love I am ashamed of that explanation.

Although the commentary of the tongue makes clear

Yet tongueless love is clearer.

While the pen was making haste in writing, it split up itself as soon as it came to love.

For expounding love, the intellect lay down helplessly, like an ass in the mire : it was love alone that uttered the explanation of love and lovehood,

The proof of the sun is the sun himself : if thou require proof, do not avert thy face from him.

Those loves which are for the colour are not

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*.

love : in the end they are a disgrace ; phenomenal love must be eliminated,
 Its place must be given to real love. Whatever
 is other than "I" must be slain.¹

When Rumi tries to explain the scope of love, he can only describe it in terms of the limit of creation—an endless ocean or a plain of bounty :

There you are, here you are, you are obvious,
 you are hidden,

You are the wide sea, that plain of bounty.²

In this endless sphere love is, therefore, the dynamic force behind all natural development and creativeness in human beings. It lies behind the invisible, progressive change which occurs in the universe and in us : though it may work in innumerable forms it arises from one source. In the following poem Rumi fully describes its power to change ordinary phenomena to good or better :

Through love thorns become roses, and
 Through love vinegar becomes sweet wine
 Through love the stake becomes a throne,
 Through love the reverse of fortune seems good
 fortune,

Through love a prison seems a rose bower,
 Through love a grate full of ashes seems a
 garden

Through love a burning fire is a pleasing light.
 Through love the Devil becomes a Houri.

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*.

2. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

Through love the hard stone becomes soft as butter.

Through love grief is a joy.
Through love ghouls turn into angels,
Through love stings are as honey,
Through love lions are harmless as mice,
Through love sickness is health,
Through love wrath is as mercy.¹

Again in the course of human life, love is the essence of action and creation. Love is that which protects a child's life and makes him grow.

Rumi also declared that love of passion and money is full of thorns and the objects of passion bar discernment. But the removal of the conventional self permits love to rise to power ; it burns the desires of the senses and as a result arouses every sense, increases the power of intuition and leads to insight. Thus, in human life love is superior to intellect :

Intellect does not know and is bewildered in the religion of love ;

Though it might be aware of all sects of religion.²

In man's social life love solves all disputes, and in contrast to intellect which fails hopelessly love helps those in sorrow. Love eliminates selfishness and egotism and draws aside the veils which have come

1. Whinfield, E. H. *Translations of Some Selected Pieces of the Mathnawi*. (London : Trubner Oriental Series, 1881).

2. Rumi, *Diwan-e-Shams*.

to the mind through numerous states of being.

In this respect love becomes the solution of all that which is insoluble. Where reason fails, love conquers, and where thought is powerless love proves all-prevailing. It is through love, not intellect, that life continues. In separation love creates union in its formless fashion saying :

I am the ultimate origin of sobriety and
intoxication,

The beauty of form is reflected from me.¹

Love turns wrath into mercy and brings the dead to life, puts slaves on thrones and makes kings slaves. Finally, in a way of maturing, love puts the self on fire and transforms it into love. Love always shows a progressive tendency toward certainty and betterment. In the face of love, fear becomes nothing, and as love works it produces more energy. In a religious sense love is stronger than the seventy-two existing creeds :

I found love above idolatry and religion ;

I found love beyond doubt and reality.²

Love is a religion beyond all creeds ; it reduces division and brings about unity between men, because religion basically arises from an attribute springing from love. Love is colourless and a motion behind forms and numbers. When Rumi at last finds that love is the real guide, he expresses his boundless love for all :

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid.*

I gave up all means of ambition and fortune,
I purchased love of humanity. How can I
remain without gifts.¹

Thus, Rumi gives us a better understanding of the nature of love. There still remains the question of the way in which Rumi united with love. In this context Rumi assumes a species memory, that is, whatever occurred in the process of evolution left a trace of its occurrence hidden in man's unconscious :

There have been many deals between love and
my heart ;

Which little by little come to my memory.²

Thus, to get at this material means unfolding the deepest vault of the unconscious. Where did this unfolding begin ? Rumi states it clearly in many odes and retraces its path backward into time. He declares that he originated in history before history, before the creation of Adam, before the creation of earth and the universe :

The universe wasn't there, I was
Adam wasn't there and I was
That light of unity was I, I am Khadir [symbol
of everlastingness] and Elias.
The universe got light from me,
Adam took his form from me,
I am the learned, the knower, the judge of all
judges.³

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid*.

3. *Ibid*.

Rumi's love for union guided him to search each element in every stage of creation until he arrived at the human state. He searched the essence of every conceivable phenomenon, every image, belief and creed, every soul and every experience. He found the little spark of life which is in everything. It is this force which has designed every change in nature, and every evolutionary motion transcends from it. Thus, Rumi apprehended all changes and through this search came closer to the source of love. He poetically describes the way in which the seeker develops an insight into the inward change of natural phenomena :

The dame says to it [chickpea], "Formerly I, like thee, was a part of the earth.

After I had drunk a (cup of) fiery self-mortification, then I became an acceptable and worthy one.

For a long while, I boiled in (the world of) Time ; for another long while, in the pot of the body.

By reason of these two boilings I became (a source of) strength to the senses : I became (animal) spirit : then I became thy teacher.

(Whilst I was) in the inanimate state I used to say (to myself), 'Thou art running (to and fro in agitation) to the end that thou mayst become (endued with) knowledge and spiritual qualities.'

Since I have become (animal) spirit, now (let me)
boil once more and pass beyond animality.¹

In this way love became Rumi's only task, his
work, joy and practice in life :

Except for intense love, except for love, I have
no other work ;

Save kindly love, save kindly love, no other
seed do I sow.²

Like an artist he created nothing except various
shades of love. He practised the "art of loving."
He increased his feelings of love by more love and
by increasing his demand. Thus he plainly stated :
"Does a fish get satiated from the sea water ? How
does a lover become satisfied with love ?"

Fused in love during this period of rebirth, Rumi
felt free of all superficial attachments, experienced
perfection and became totally emancipated :

In the time of *sam'a* love's minstrel tunes up
thus :

Servitude is a chain and lordship a headache.³
In other verses Rumi gives a complete picture of
the gradual approach of union with love :

O love, you art my beauty ; I am you and you
are me ;

You are in full bloom ; happiness, joy and the
pain of sorrow.⁴

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*.

3. *Ibid.*

2. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

In such a state Rumi found himself above heart, reason and soul. He entered a state of conscious existence where no signs remained :

Once more I rose above the heart, reason and soul ;

The beloved appeared in my midst ; we rose above the midst.

We turned from *fana* [the removal of "I"—a state of partial integration] and quickly entered *baqa* [a state of total integration].

We searched the signless and rose above the symbol.¹

The succession of these periodical unions with all increased, and with their increase the previous states of mind lapsed into dormancy, until finally Rumi's whole system absorbed love. Some odes almost make one feel that his veins carry love's essence rather than blood :

I am drunk ; I am desolate ; I am selfless ; don't deprive me, don't blame me ;

I go on rising and fall. See and don't tell anyone.

O selfless gnostic ! Don't find fault in lovers ; I go mad-like, house to house, state to state, district to district.

Take the cup, take the cup ; retract that I am an accepted Saqi [cup-bearer] of love

Here, listen to my boast : every moment I say that I am the water not the jar.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

I am not the sea, neither am I empty of the sea.
I am the leaf of the tree in every breeze.
I am wet from the water of the stream.
Don't laugh like children, since you are not
aware of my state ;
Read a chapter from me, unfold a secret from
her (force of creation).
I am drunk of that wine that *Mohtasib* [police]
forbade me ;
I am drunk of the wine of oneness, I am free
from colour and smell
I am so unaware here ; I have another place in
mind ;
I don't know vinegar from sugar, I don't know
a vat from a jar.¹

At last Rumi proclaimed that he had been raised from "love's collar" and as a result had put fire into mankind. To him love was a fire whose flame burned steadily and engulfed everything. Now, being all love, united with all, knowing the states of mind in growth and prior to its evolution, Rumi knew intuitively man's beginning. He was unafraid of the next step, whatever it might be ; but he was certain that it would be an even better state. He was all love, all joy, all happiness. He had no grief, no anxiety. He was totally born, totally spontaneous ; he calls life a state in which man is born in love :

In love one needs to be alive,
Since the dead cannot perform.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

Do you know who is alive ?
That one who is born in love.¹

In the same state of being he expresses himself as being all love :

I am not the moon, or the universe, or thunder
or clouds

I am all love, all love, I am all soul by your
soul.²

In another passage he says :

I am full of love, flaming as a burning tree ;
A stranger to everyone except love, like oil and
water.³

Finally, Rumi describes his change in the following odes, which indicate that he had even passed beyond Shams' state of being :

This time I as a whole am wrapped in love,
This time I as a whole am cut off from consequence.

I have broken every idol derived from the four
different natures,

Once more I have become a Muslim, I have torn
aside the Christian girdle.

For a time I circled around the nine heavens,
I rotated with the stars in their orbits.

For a time I was invisible, I was in the same
place with him,

I was close in his land, I saw what I have seen.

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

I came to the prison of the world as a result of
a good intention ;

Where is the prison, where ? Whose property
have I stolen ?

I came because it's better to be in a cage with
friends than in an empty rose garden.

For the sight of Joseph's likeness I have rested
in prison,

Like a babe in utero I was brought into the
world by blood,

A human being is born once, I was born
several times.

You are happy and drunk with wine, I am
joyful and drunk without wine.

You are smiling with lips, I have smiled with-
out lips.

In the cloak of a torn body I have been engaged
in various tasks ;

I have torn this cloak innumerable times with
my own hand.

With ascetics in a monastery I have turned
night into day ;

With unbelievers in idol-temples I have slept
at the foot of idols.

I am both the thief of impostures and the pain
of the sick.

I am both cloud and rain, I have come down in
gardens.

Never did the dust of *fana* gather in my robe,
O [spiritual] beggar.

In the rose garden of *baqa* I have plucked many
flowers.

I am not from water or fire, or from stormy
winds.

Nor am I painted dust ; I have laughed at all.

I am not Shams of Tabriz, I am pure light.

Beware if you see me ; don't tell anyone that
you have seen me. ¹

Having attained this rebirth he set up an order to enrich his own state and also guide others through creativity. This order continued for thirty generations up to the nineteenth century, and still remains to be re-evaluated.

Two types of individuals attended Rumi's order : the lay public and the eminent scholars of his day. The non-professional followers (members of guilds) regularly attended his sessions. They developed a positive feeling in inter-personal relations, and in practising the truth in their daily lives they strengthened the inter-relatedness of the community. Thus, through a process of changing human relationships Rumi effected a moral transformation of the soul in terms of guarding inwardly against undesirable passions and outwardly conducting service to humanity. In addition to his regular followers, Rumi attracted the prominent scholars of the day who

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

were cornered by the inadequacy of the rational and religious approach to the meaning of life.

In their nightly sessions Rumi and his followers experienced *sem'a* and performed whirling dances. While participating in these acts Rumi spontaneously composed the *Mathnawi*, a six volume work.

In actuality, the singing of the *Mathnawi* comprises a composition of patterns, illustrating the Sufis' progressive path, that is, revealing man's ordinary situation, his contradictory nature, followed by an awareness of and an examination of these forces, refutation of regressive tendencies and the application of reason to the control of external authority and submissive tendencies. The *Mathnawi* then explains why intellect and conceptualization fail to give an answer to the meaning of life, and it suggests the removal of the conventional self in order to gain a fuller personality and live a better life by achieving unity with all, love and positive action. These ideas, clothed in story form and sung in chorus, undoubtedly exerted a tremendous force on the psyche of the participants. It certainly helped them remove their conventional selves and become related to the source of unity. In essence, the *Mathnawi* illustrates Rumi's insight into the human situation.

However, it should be noted that Rumi found it exceedingly difficult to put into words the mysteries of his psyche. For this reason he used allegories, stories, ideation and exemplification as a media of expression. To explain his view on human

nature I have found it helpful to briefly present a few of these tales. In commenting on the understanding of Rumi, Nicholson, the translator of the six volumes of *Mathnawi* said :

It is important, for our comprehension of him, to know that he could tell ribald stories in the easy tone of a man of the world, and that the contrast often drawn between him and Sa'di takes no account of some marked features which the authors of the *Mathnawi* and the *Gulistan* possess in common.

This is a translation for students of the text, but I venture to hope that it may attract others neither acquainted with Persian nor especially concerned with Sufism. To those interested in the history of religion, morals, and cultures, in fables and folklore, in divinity, philosophy, medicine, astrology and other branches of medieval learning, in Eastern poetry and life and manners and human nature, the *Mathnawi* should not be a sealed book, even if it cannot always be an open one.¹

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*.

CHAPTER III: The Human Situation and Self-realization

By 1261, the year he began the *Mathnawi*, Rumi had already integrated his personality. Having resolved the conflicts in his heart, he now experienced oneness with all. He had undergone rebirth numerous times and easily related himself to humanity, for whom he felt a great concern and desire to guide. At the request of a new bosom friend, Husam al-Din (generally known as Ibn Akhi),¹ Rumi interpreted the human situation and the seeker's path to perfection during his nightly dances. To the accompaniment of the reed,² Rumi related to Husam al-Din the essence of man's inward state. This practice continued for about ten years.

In the six volumes of the *Mathnawi*, Rumi reveals the innermost activities of man's soul in quest of certainty. He calls the *Mathnawi*: "the root of the root of the root of religion in respect to its

1. Rumi dedicated the *Mathnawi* to Akhi, whom he referred to as: "My master, stay and support (who holds) the place of spirit in my body and (who is) the treasure of my today and my tomorrow . . ." (Translation: Nicholson, *op. cit.*)

2. In the Mowlavi order the reed became the primary musical instrument, as it both symbolized man's previous unity when he was united with Nature (or even before the creation of the universe in the form of creative force), and the instrument which when joined to the lover's lips would disclose the way to the beloved: "It is the comrade of whosoever has lost his union."

unveiling of the mysteries of attaining truth and certainty . . . it is as a station and most excellent as a resting place.”¹ He now speaks as a guide with none of the emotional instability he revealed in *Diwan-e-Shams*. In a continuous way he tries to awaken the seekers and bring them out of their present state of disharmony so that they may realize the human situation and regain their harmony. Not only does the *Mathnawi* explain the human situation in terms of the existing cultural media (forms of communication), but it demonstrates the way of becoming a fully-born man. It thus raises certain questions: What is the human situation as Rumi sees it? What are its forces and tendencies? What is the true way and why?

I

As the previous section indicated, Rumi believed that man, as a copy of the universe, originated from the non-phenomenal world, and passed through various stages (primarily plant and animal) to his present life, in which he now possesses infinite potentialities. Arising out of the essence which produced the state of oneness, man passed through the state of “he-ness” to become “I-ness.”² Beneath these veils man’s essence has remained the same, but he must now unveil it to gain a better union with all. He

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

2. A century after Rumi, Abdul Karim Ibn Ibrahim al-Jili (Gilani), (d. 1406?) systematized these ideas in a book, *Al-Insan al-Kamil Fi Ma'rifati-l-awakhir wa'l-awail* (the Perfect Man in Knowledge of First and Last Things).

can only attain this end by allowing himself to be born and reborn.

To Rumi man possesses every kind of being in his unconscious. Rumi compares man's unconscious to the sea, where every kind of animal, plant, and mineral exists. Like a calm sea, the human soul in its depth carries a sample of the whole creation, which we are unaware of and cannot see. Yet a wave may bring some of the sea's contents to the surface. Though the source of the wave (motivation) may be the same, the natural forces in man can presumably bring to the surface any creature—a sea dragon, snake, plant, or animal, useful or dangerous, or even a precious pearl. Thus, man has potentially inherited a force which can direct him to a bestial state or elevate him. In an evolutionary sense this force has progressed until it has manifested itself in man's reason. At this state reason has found itself challenged by man's animal tendencies; out of its contradictions man must either go beyond reason to attain the state of certainty (*Nafs-e-Mutma'inna*),¹ or fall downward into *Nafs-e-Ammara*.² Intuition and the power of spontaneous living comprise the former; evil belongs to the latter. An integrated man possesses *Nafs* (the natural instinctive force), reason (in the scholastic and Aristotelian sense), intuition, and love.

Indeed, so contradictory is man's nature that he

1, 2. In modern psychology *Nafs-e-Ammara* can be compared to impulses and *Nafs-e-Mutma'inna* to "dynamic insight" as expressed in the writings of Freda Fromm-Reichman.

can rarely harmonize these discordant elements. Disharmony appears most often between the tendencies of *Nafs-e-Ammara* and reason, reason and *Nafs-e-Mutma'inna*, intuition and reason. Yet ultimately one tendency may come to dominate the others. One might well ask at this point : What kind of character does a man develop when *Nafs-e-Ammara* becomes dominant, or when reason rules supreme ? What happens when the voice of reason fails to give man a satisfactory answer to his existential problem ? What happens when the inner voice challenges reason ? Rumi takes up all these questions in the *Mathnawi*, in addition to discussing the corresponding character types which appear in man. He also cites historical examples to arouse man so that he may realize himself.

When the forces of *Nafs-e-Ammara* dominate, man reacts in a specific way ; he pays no heed to God at all, but worships such things as women, other men, and wealth, while neglecting God entirely. At the next stage he worships only God, but if he progresses still further he attains silence, regardless of whether he serves God or not.¹

The dominance of *Nafs-e-Ammara* in man's situation increases his rational insecurity. Relating one's self to immediate pleasures encourages regressive tendencies. *Nafs-e-Ammara* gains its dominance by opposing reason, for in the ontogenetic development of the individual and the history of mankind, reason

1. Rumi, *Fihl Ma Fihl*.

has appeared when impulses have held the controlling power. Therefore, the path of *Nafs-e-Ammara* is initially the one of least resistance.

Before proceeding with this discussion, it might be helpful to discuss the character of *Nafs-e-Ammara*.¹ Rumi compares it to a snare, very attractive on the outside but under which lurks a trap. He illustrates this situation by relating how a hunter captured a Hoopoe, even though the bird had watched him prepare the trap. In due time the Hoopoe, forgetting the trap, snapped at the grain and was caught.² Rumi gives many similes for *Nafs*. It may appear as a poppy seed which produces nostalgia ; or fire, which if activated in man's soul, becomes a source of unrest, never permitting him to achieve a state of security. In the animal form, *Nafs* becomes man's companion, eventually poisoning him. Rumi relates the story of a snake-catcher, who having found a frozen dragon, boasted that he had hunted it. However, the warm Baghdad sun revived the animal, whose loud cry paralyzed the man into a state of fear.³ In other stories *Nafs* appears as a bear, camel, or mouse. In one story a man courageously saved a bear from the mouth of a dragon. In gratitude, the bear followed the man about like a dog. Despite the advice of a friend (guide) to forsake the bear's company, the man continued the relationship. Then one day while on a trip through the jungle the man fell asleep. Sitting

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, III.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

near him, the bear brushed away the flies that buzzed about the man, but when they did not stop the bear angrily picked up a millstone and flung it at the man's face.¹

To describe *Nafs* even more explicitly, Rumi presents Satan in a scene denouncing a Muslim Caliph :

Why do you complain to God of me, O simpleton ? Complain of the wickedness of that vile fleshy soul [*Nafs*].

You eat *halwa* (sweetmeat), (then) boils break out in you, fever lays hold of you, your health is disordered.

You curse Iblis, guiltless (though he is). How do you not see (that) that deception (proceeds) from yourself ?

It is not the fault of Iblis, it is (the fault) of yourself. O misguided one, that you are running like a fox towards the sheep's fat tail.

. . .

Your love of (sensual) things makes you blind and deaf ; your black fleshy soul is the culprit : do not quarrel (with others).²

From all these stories Rumi builds up a picture of *Nafs-e-Ammara* as being artful, cunning, motivated by evil, and possessing a passion-producing nature. In the form of lust it robs the mind of intelligence, the heart of reverence. It is the mother-idol, which

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, II.

2. *Ibid.*

compels man to seek material aims in life and deprives him of growth, or it may even create in the mind such idols as greed, lust, and love of power *per se*.

In a social sense *Nafs* manifests itself as the search for power; those who exchange their genuine human character for power, seek immediate pleasure, become servile, or slaves of wealth. The power of *Nafs* develops in the mind such a craving that a ruler willingly commits inhumane actions to satisfy it. The evil in man's nature, like a voracious crab, consumes all his humane qualities. Thus, to gain security the power-seekers strive to possess and use power at the expense of their fellow-men. They become a tool of power, wealth, and their carnal desires. Those who want to succeed must fully develop the art of guile and treachery, and act in such a way as to secure more power.

Rumi maintains that *Nafs* in its regressive tendencies makes its followers slaves of their own life situation. With increased use, *Nafs* (like love) gains in strength until it governs the individual's whole life. Never satisfied, it is like the tasting of salty fish: the more one eats the more he craves water. A man in such a situation finds relief and nullifies his insecurity and suspiciousness by creating fear in others. Out of his own base needs and state of mind he compels everyone to obey him without question. He expects others to worship him as a leader and

god. In the spiritual sense such a figure creates idols, which he worships and desires so that even indirectly people will relate themselves to him, particularly if his own image is somewhat tainted. He also requires others to relate themselves to him by sacrificing and working for his glory.

In brief, he alienates himself by becoming a means to power, lust, and wealth ; in turn, others, in becoming his property, suffer the same fate. Rumi also emphasizes that these vain individuals in their conceit and indulgence in passion become slaves of pleasure without knowing that this thirst derives from self-conceit. Such people permit their self-conceit for an object to increase, with the result that their illness grows. Either power enslaves them, or they humiliate themselves in order to satisfy their pleasure-seeking goals. Habituation to certain pleasures leads to undesirable habits. By pursuing only that which secures their unhealthy situation, these people will gradually alienate themselves from others. To maintain the *status quo* they become prejudiced, and their prejudice eliminates opposing individuals and their ideas. Here Rumi compares the interpersonal relationship of powerful individuals to those whom they ruled, or the divergencies of power between different sects as Jews versus Christians, Muslims versus Zoroastrians, and within each of these. The one who is power-driven destroys his opposition by using fear and other means. For example, he may psychologically relate himself to a dominant

leader of the simple people and at the price of blind loyalty may manipulate people so as to attain his selfish goal. Such a man, if in that position, pretends to devote himself to their spiritual aims and convinces them that he can arbitrate and guide their actions. The people, ignorant of his true aims, judge him only outwardly and impart their secrets to him. Their trust in him creates conformity and strengthens his cause. In time he designs plots to divide those of the same faith and creates rivalries among leaders so that they may, in turn, eliminate themselves.

Rumi illustrates this point with the story of a strong-willed vizier who, in the service of a powerful Jewish king, persuaded him to carry out a plan to destroy the Christians. As part of this scheme, the vizier planned to develop an image of himself among the Christians so that he could entirely misguide them. At his own insistence the vizier requested that the King cut off his ears on the pretence that he was a Christian and exile him. In this way the vizier readily gained the confidence of the Christians. In due time he presented to each of the twelve leaders contradictory scrolls, and to each he confided that he was his apostle. One scroll advocated asceticism, another denied it; one stressed truth in God, another declared that it increased doubt; one advocated power, another submission, and so on. After the vizier's death the other Christian leaders fought so vehemently among themselves that they ultimately

destroyed each other and their followers.¹

In the character of the vizier Rumi presents the kind of person who, because of the dominance of *Nafs-e-Ammara*, gradually forsakes the values of a good life gained through honest intellectual endeavour. In this and other stories Rumi portrays the conformist—one who adheres to the superficialities of religion and becomes a tool of others.

In the *Mathnawi* and in his *Discourses* Rumi declares that the genuine scholar therefore must not attach himself to authority, because the gain in material wealth deprives him of independence. Moreover, accepting such gifts from a despot forces the scholar to obey his orders. In such a situation the scholar soon abandons his good qualities for those held by the opposition.² Rumi further asserts that in the eyes of God man is the culmination of beings. He must not sell himself to anyone; he is an end in himself, and his purpose in life is to decipher himself.

To illustrate his point Rumi presents the story of a man who owned a cock, a dog, a mule, and a horse. With some effort he persuaded Moses to teach him the language of domestic animals. Then one day he overheard the cock tell the dog that the horse would die on the following day. In haste the master sold the horse that evening. Next day when

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I. (According to Nicholson, the Turkish Commentators identify this vizier as the apostle Paul; however, Rumi's main intent is to show the misuse of religion and man.)

2. Rumi : *Fih Ma Fih*.

he heard the cock assure the dog that the mule would die, he sold that animal too. Again, the cock convinced the dog that the slave was doomed to die, but the master heard the conversation and sold the slave immediately. Happy in the knowledge that he had averted misfortune, the man again eavesdropped on the cock and dog only to hear the cock foretell his own death. Running to Moses he beseeched the Prophet to save him ; to which Moses replied, "Now, go sell yourself and save yourself." ¹

Rumi uses this story to make the point that one who overlooks his own qualities will one day lose everything and discover that his self is gone and he has become another's means. The story also reveals the character of the self-centered man, who learns nothing from signs and becomes more entangled in his problems. From these examples Rumi generalizes that man, because of his basic nature, helplessness, and insecurity is often compelled to cling to such external security means as wealth, power, and the manipulation of belief in his interpersonal relations. Once in power he acts falsely.

According to Rumi man's greed initially arises out of his basic needs, and he then seizes property by various means. Rarely does he become independent of his basic needs ; but if so, he falls in love with fame and praise from others ; this gradually changes his nature. He then pretends to be what he is not, like

the jackal who fell into the dyer's vat and pretended to be a peacock,¹ or like the Pharaoh who imagined he was God.² This illusionary sense intoxicates the pretender so that he cannot look into his real self. Also living a narrow life are those people who hold strictly provincial views and latch on to certain ideas or religions without considering whether they will benefit from them or not. In a similar vein, Rumi repeatedly expresses amazement that people hold such dogmatic religious attitudes. He points to the seventy-two sects, each of which denies all the others and says in effect: "We are genuine and revelation belongs only to us." Yet they all agree that only one possesses revelation, but it takes a wise believer to discover which one!³

Rumi, however, believed that greed and oppression by the powerful will not win in the end. He further asserted that in society and in the individual's case there will come a time when reason and intellect will challenge such authority. Among the many illustrative stories that Rumi uses here is one concerning the king who presented his egotism in the form of an idol and compelled his subjects to bow to it or be thrown into the fire. Yet the people resisted and their love of truth saved them, whereas the fire

1. After coming out of the dyer's vat, the brightly coloured jackal claimed that none of the other jackals looked like him; he asked them to call him a peacock, but as he could not exhibit the qualities of the peacock he was put to shame (*Mathnawi*, II).

2. The Pharaoh fell heir to power and wealth. Those who sought his favour flattered him and increased his illusion of grandeur, until he felt certain he was God.

3. Rumi : *Fih Ma Fihl*.

engulfed the king and his corrupt courtiers.¹

To re-emphasize this point Rumi adopted a story from *Kalila and Demna*, in which the beasts of the jungle agree to furnish food to the lion (symbol of authority) if he will not attack them. When the hare (symbol of reason) is told that it is his turn, he cleverly leads the lion to the edge of a well, where the hare's reflection tempts him to jump into the well.² In other words, hunger (*Nafs*) and a distorted vision created by the hare made the lion lose both his authority and his own being. Rumi also cites numerous case histories of individuals who lost their power in similar situations.

II

After presenting the tendencies of *Nafs-e-Ammara*, Rumi takes up reason and intellectual effort as one remedy for eliminating these external authorities and hypocrisy. Although reason helps us in a practical sense and aids us in correcting our mistakes, it becomes helpless when confronted by internal contradictions and man's existential problem. Indeed, this limitation in philosophy turned Rumi from conventional life to Sufism.³ However, before dis-

1. Rumi: *Mahnavi*, I.

2. *Ibid.*

3. The life span of Al-Ghazzali (d. 1111 A. D.) also beautifully illustrates the trend of that era in understanding the limitations of reason. Al-Ghazzali lived two centuries before Rumi and exerted considerable influence on Rumi's father. At 25 Al-Ghazzali, already a professor of philosophy at Baghdad University, wrote "Purpose of Philosophy," followed by "The Fall of Philosophy," in which he presented the failure of reason alone in life. He became a skeptic and denounced philosophy,

cussing Rumi's concepts of self-realization we need to know what happens when reason becomes dominant in life.

In the contest between reason and *Nafs* reason may triumph by satisfying *Nafs*, by preoccupation in various fields, or by gaining the power derived from virtuous life and the suppression of passion by certain strong religious beliefs. Free of *Nafs*' trap reason becomes solely concerned with the human situation, the result of which is a partial man who busies himself in only one area of life while believing that he possesses the truth. Yet he ignores his own real self ; as Rumi explains in one of his discourses :

Scholars argue heatedly about their specialties while ignoring their own selves—that which affects them the most. The scholar judges on the legality of this and that, but in relation to his own self he knows nothing about its legality or purity.¹

The individual tries to use logic in every human situation and relates himself to something which will bring harmony to the situation, but because this object of relationship is not genuine the solution is temporary. Rumi describes this situation in *Fihi Ma Fihi* :

left his seat, and sought actual experience in mysticism. At 41 he returned to normal life and expressed his views in "Revivification of Religious Knowledge" and "Deliverance from Error." These two works greatly impressed the people and negated the arguments of the philosophers. He rose above scholastic logic and the religious and philosophical limitations of his time, thus paving the way for the growth of mysticism.

1. Rumi : *Fihi Ma Fihi*.

Everyone in this world has his own interests, whether women, wealth, knowledge or something else. Each believes that his comfort and joy rests in that one pursuit. Yet when he goes in search of that object he does not find satisfaction in it and returns. After a while he declares that he was really seeking joy and mercy; he seeks anew but is disappointed again; so he continues on and on.¹

If religious, he tries to prove the existence of God by reason and logic. Rumi emphasizes the uselessness of disputation, which usually arises out of philosophical arguments in matters relating to self-certainty, especially in the relationship of man to God. Here Rumi symbolizes Satan as the first who tried to solve the problem of existence by dispute :

The first person who produced these analogies in the presence of the light of God was Iblis.²

Then Rumi discusses Satan's behaviour on the basis of intellect in human relations; in another passage he presents him as one who measures everything in terms of profit-making, that is, one whose nature is dominated by hoarding :

Iblis said to him [Caliphate]: "Unravel this knot (and apprehend the matter): I am the touchstone for the false coin and the true."

. . .

1. Rumi : *Fihī Ma Fihī*.

2. Rumi : *Mathnawī*, I.

When have I blackened the false coin's face ? I
am the money-changer : I have (only) valued
it.

. . .

How should I make the good man bad ? I am
not God. I am only a promoter, I am not
their creator.

(How) should I make the fair foul ? I am not
the Lord. I am only a mirror for the foul
and fair.

The Hindoo burnt a mirror in vexation, saying,
'This (mirror) causes a man to look black-
faced.'

He (God) hath made me an informer and truth-
teller, that I may tell where the ugly one is
and where the beautiful ?

I am a witness : how is prison (the right place)
for a witness ? I do not deserve (to go to)
prison, God is the witness (to my innocence).¹

Rumi further declares that the intellectual self,
proud of its knowledge, tends to become self-con-
ceited and thus deviates from the real self. In this
condition the "intellectual self" again appears in the
voice of Satan, who is envious and then plots to
deceive the people ; out of egoism he misguides
others :

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

'I am envious : from envy I acted thus. I am the enemy : My work is deceit and malice.'¹

Nevertheless, Rumi appreciated man's great potentialities ; he declared that man is a mighty volume within whom all things are recorded. If the individual lets reason grow it makes him aware of his potentialities and helps him see the basic purpose of life, that is, union with all—a state of trust. Yet at this point he may realize that reason is insufficient for handling his existential problem. He may even perceive that a better integrated state exists while recognizing that reason cannot achieve it.

In this state of perplexity, a diversity arises between intellect and the integrity of self, reason and intuition, "I" and "not-I." Although the "not-I" exists in a very real sense, it first appears veiled to man. Some people find it self-evident, others obscure ; some find it intimately a part of them, to others it is unobtainable. When the mind is receptive it may appear suddenly without the individual's realization, only to disappear a moment later. To one who has gained a state of awareness where even reason and the intellectual self may be veils, the perception of "not-I" is unclear, and its very nature is intensive, rather than extensive. Even if one hears its voice, reason, which suffered so much at the hands of *Nafs* initially, blames "I" for still seeking a new purpose and advancing its own aims. Rumi explains this point in a brilliant passage of *Fihi Ma Fihi* :

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, II.

In replying to the voice of the real self, the intellectual voice gives its excuses : "I am preoccupied with things of a higher nature, such as jurisprudence, philosophy, logic, astronomy and medicine."

In answer, Rumi's voice, representing the real self, replies, "If you are concerned with astronomy and all matters involving the earth, then you should realize that they are all related to your life. Actually you, yourself are the root and all the other things are offshoots. To know yourself is the greatest of all accomplishments."¹

At this point the perfect soul may challenge the intellect declaring that man possesses another source of knowledge inherent within him, that is, it is activated by the real self ("not-I") through intuition and insight. Nevertheless, the veils of other desires and concerns prevent the real self from perceiving this knowledge, except in moments of insight. The question then arises : If all the veils are removed, what kinds of knowledge will the self discover within itself?

How much reason resists this voice will vary from one individual to another. Some may become ambivalent and retreat to self-intellect again ; others may hear the voice but ignore it. Among the Sufis who preceded and followed Rumi were many who

1. Rumi : *Fihl Ma Fihl*.

overcame the dominance of their intellect and began to discover their real self. The following story from the *Mathnawi* highlights the inner conflict between reason and the real self. Of the main characters, the king symbolizes "I"; the beautiful girl, *Nafs*; the goldsmith, false desires; the physician, the role of intellect; and the spiritual physician, the real self.

While hunting one day the king (that is, the "I," which is potentially the possessor of all temporal and spiritual powers) saw a beautiful maiden, and his carnal soul fell in love with her. He bought her and took her to his palace (that is, he gave himself to *Nafs*), but she became ill (*Nafs* dominated the self). The king then summoned all the physicians and told them that his life and that of the handmaiden were in danger. The physicians (representing reason) boasted that they had drugs which would cure any malady; to which the king replied that whosoever would heal her would receive as a reward the king's treasury (implying the sacrifice of wealth and power for *Nafs*). Yet in spite of all the physicians' attempts, the maiden grew more ill and the king's grief mounted. With the failure of the physicians (intellect), the king ("I") became increasingly powerless. In his deepest sorrow he cried out from the depth of his soul (became aware) and fell asleep (the state of unconsciousness). In this state he heard a voice tell him that a spiritual physician (representing the Sufi guide) would effect a cure. On awakening the king sought the spiritual physician and warmly

embraced him. He led him to the bedside of the sick girl (that is, "I" revealed *Nafs* to the real self). In the guise of the spiritual physician, Rumi gives a remarkable description of the symptoms, makes an accurate diagnosis of the girl, and suggests an effective treatment ; in his own words :

The [spiritual] physician observed the colour of her face, (felt) her pulse, and (inspected) her urine ; he heard both the symptoms and the (secondary) causes of her malady.

He said, "None of the remedies which they have applied builds up (health) : they (the false physicians) have wrought destruction.

They were ignorant of the inward state. I seek refuge with God from that which they invent."

He saw the pain, and the secret became open to him, but he concealed it and did not tell the king.

Her pain was not from black or yellow bile : the smell of every firewood appears from the smoke.

From her sore grief he perceived that she was heart-sore ; well in body, but stricken in heart.

Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart ; there is no sickness like heart-sickness.

The lover's ailment is separate from all other ailments : love is the astrolabe of the mysteries of God.¹

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, 1.

Then in the diagnosis Rumi explains :

Very gently he [the spiritual physician] said (to her), "Where is thy native town ? for the treatment suitable to the people of each town is separate.

And in that town who is related to thee ? With what hast thou kinship and affinity ? "

He laid his hand on her pulse and put questions, one by one, about the injustice of Heaven.

. . . .

He inquired of the girl concerning her friends, by way of narrative.

And she disclosed to the physician (many) circumstances touching her home and (former) masters and fellow-townsmen.

He listened to her story (while) he continued to observe her pulse and its beating.

So that at whosoever's name her pulse should begin to throb, (he might know that) that person is the object of her soul's desire in the world.

He counted up the friends in her native town ; then he mentioned another town by name.

He said, "When you went forth from your own town, in which town did you live mostly ? "

She mentioned the name of a certain town and from that too she passed on (to speak of

another, and meanwhile) there was no change in the colour of her face or her pulse.

Masters and towns, one by one, she told of, and about dwelling-place and bread and salt.

She told stories of many a town and many a house (and still) no vein of her quivered nor did her cheek grow pale.

Her pulse remained in its normal state, unimpaired, till he asked about Samarqand, the (city) sweet as candy.

(Thereat) her pulse jumped and her face went red and pale (by turns), for she had been parted from a man of Samarqand, a goldsmith.

When the physician found out this secret from the sick (girl), he discerned the source of that grief and woe.

He said: "Which is his quarter in passing (through the town)?"

"*Sar-i-Pul* (Bridge-head)", she replied, "and Ghatafar street."

Said he: "I know what your illness is and I will at once display the arts of magic in delivering you [that is, "I will perform miracles on your behalf."]

Be glad and care-free and have no fear, for I will do to you that which rain does to the meadow.

I will be anxious for you, be not you anxious:
I am kinder to you than a hundred fathers.

Beware! tell not this secret to any one, not though the king should make much inquiry from you.

When your heart becomes the grave of your secret, that desire of yours will be gained more quickly.¹

After finding the cause of the illness, the king sent for the goldsmith and wed him to the maiden, who was cured in six months. In other words, the spiritual physician found that *Nafs*, dissatisfied with conventional life, had made the "I" ill. Thereupon the real self soothed *Nafs* by giving it what it desired. When weakened, *Nafs*' object of desire (wealth and material possession, as represented in the goldsmith) was not everlasting and its desire not genuine. It pursued an inadequate object of relatedness: "Those loves which are for the sake of colour (outward beauty) are not love; in the end they are a disgrace."²

In comparison to this ideal case, man has not been so fortunate in eliminating the false object of love and finding a new orientation. In a crisis man helplessly follows other courses. He often flees from himself, withdraws from conventional life, submerges himself in ascetic life, or hides himself under another's umbrella for safety and imitates others. If courageous he will begin to discover his real self. Or, because of his helplessness in an unjust social situation, he may become pessimistic, suppress his

1. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, 1.

2. *Ibid.*

basic needs, and live a conventional life, perhaps as a monk, who finds security in abstinence and the hope of the world to come.

In his discourses Rumi refutes this group by asserting that to live as God and become God-like is far different than declaring in the traditional manner, "I know God." Knowing the latter phrase is a science which does not help one's character, but becoming like him means practising good and reforming one's self.¹ In the *Mathnawi* Rumi attacks those who deny life, referring to it as a kind of castration :

There can be no self-restraint when thou hast
no desire ;

When there is no adversary, what need for thy
strength ?

Hark, do not castrate thyself, do not become a
monk, for chastity is in pawn to lust.

Without sensuality 'tis impossible to forbid
sensuality :

Heroism cannot be displayed against the dead.²

Rumi not only opposed this narrow ascetic approach to life, but he also denounced those who, under pressure in life, imitated Sufism rather than taking it as a way of attaining perfection. He referred to those who without understanding recreate the saints' lives from their own life image while

1. Rumi : *Fihī Ma Fihī*.

2. Rumi : *Mathnawī*, V.

binding themselves to those necessities which men struggle for. He illustrates this point in many stories. One concerns a grocer whose parrot tended both the shop and exchanged pleasantries with the customers ; that is, she excelled in the art of parrot-talk (imitation). One day when the proprietor was out she spilled a bottle of oil on the bench. On his return the owner saw the damage and became angry : he struck the parrot on the head. Thereupon she became bald and speechless. The owner, now sorry for his hasty action, tried everything to make the parrot speak again, but to no avail. Then one day a bald man entered the shop, and the parrot suddenly screeched at him, "How did you become bald, O bald plate ? Did you too spill a bottle of oil ?" Everyone laughed at the parrot's ignorance, because she had judged another's actions by her own.¹ It is interesting that Rumi selects the parrot as his character, for traditionally in Persian culture it represents superficiality and imitation.

In a later passage Rumi again refers to this superficial judgment by using as an illustration the honey bee and the bumble-bee. Though both are called bees, only one gives honey ; the other stings. Similarly with the species of deer who eat the same grain : one produces only dung ; the other, pure musk. Two kinds of reeds may thrive in the same pond, but one contains sugar, the other nothing.² Rumi concludes that this kind of superficiality

Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I

2. *Ibid.*

exists among human beings too. He notes that when genuinely perfect men are scarce, people ordinarily think that those who have travelled the path of self-realization are really no different from themselves. They say in effect: "We are men, they are men; we are both in bondage to sleep and food." Their blindness handicaps them from seeing the infinite difference between them.¹

Rumi also narrates the story of a Sufi imitator, who on arriving at a *khanqah*, left his animal at the stable. The other Sufi imitators, poor and in need, decided to sell the ass. Afterwards they prepared a feast and invited the newcomer to join them. In sheer imitation he chanted with the others: "The ass is gone; the ass is gone." When it was all over, he discovered his loss and blamed his blind imitation and greed, which had clouded his mind.²

In studying Sufism in the Near East and particularly such liberated men as Rumi, one should remember that in those times when the practice of Sufism brought respect and influence, there were many who attached themselves to this social group without really practising its tenets: a phenomenon common in much of human history. In fact, the decline of Sufism grew out of this tendency, which Rumi indirectly anticipated. Nevertheless, the main question still remains unanswered: What happens when the inner voice convinces reason of its limitations and the individual begins the course of self-

1. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, I.

2. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, II.

realization ? The next section discusses this question.

III

According to Rumi the attainment of self-perfection involves first the purification and control of *Nafs* by reason, reduction of the conventional self, the transcendence of one's state, and the full realization of the cosmic self. In other words, Rumi perceives Sufism as a way of making man a universal man instead of a social being. Rumi's way of life emphasizes liberation from instinctive acts, the utilization of reason for practical purposes, and its usefulness for transcendental man to follow his real self. Reason can only help him reach the door of wakefulness. Rumi reiterates that this stage is not attained from knowledge gained in books or from listening to others. One must be his own awakener, that is, no one can awaken another by the mere instruction of Sufism. He must himself receive the idea of self-seeking, experience it, and hear it within himself. A voice may tell him : "If you are a man come forth and pass on. Whatever else hinders you (name, fame, or desire) bypass it. Seek the truth."

This state of awareness comes to people in different ways. Rumi accepted every person on his own level of understanding and praised him for his own effort in seeking understanding. Similarly Rumi communicated with them. At a time when legal security and protection did not exist, Rumi advocated that real mystical understanding must be communi-

cated between intimate souls. Thus, this awareness appears to those who have reached a state of critical mind, who are perplexed, and yet who courageously face life. This group is dissatisfied with conventional life, not in terms of its materialistic aspects, but because it offers little in understanding one's own self.

A man who has reached such a stage realizes that with all mankind's strivings we still don't know why man, like a fish, has been cast into a net allowing him endless views of the world. At this point an awakened man may intuitively perceive that once he was more harmoniously related to nature. He may ask: Where was man when the sun shone on existent things? Or: Where were Adam and Eve when nature did not yet exist? Such an inquiry leaves man perplexed, but it also encourages him to view himself in the perspective of evolution, that is, in the sense that man was once united with nature in the animal state, and progressively more so in plant and mineral forms, going back ultimately to the basic composition of Nature. In Rumi's own words:

First he came into the clime (world) of inorganic things, and from the state of inorganic things he passed into the vegetable state.

(Many) years he lived in the vegetable state and did not remember the inorganic state because of the opposition (between them);

And when he passed from the vegetable into the

animal state, the vegetable state was not remembered by him at all,

Save only for the inclination which he has toward that (state), especially in the season of spring and sweet herbs—

Like the inclination of babes towards their mothers : it (the babe) does not know the secret of its desire for being suckled ;

(Or) like the excessive inclination of every novice toward the noble spiritual Elder, whose fortune is young (and flourishing).

The particular intelligence of this (disciple) is derived from the Universal Intelligence : the motion of this shadow is derived from that Rose-bough.

His (the disciple's) shadow disappears at last in him (the Master) ; then he knows the secret of his inclination and search and seeking.

How should the shadow of the other's (the disciple's) bough move, O fortunate one, if this Tree move not ?

Again, the Creator, whom thou knowest, was leading him (Man) from the animal (state) towards humanity.

Thus did he advance from clime to clime (from one world of being to another), till he has now become intelligent and wise and mighty.

He hath no remembrance of his former intel-

ligences (souls); from this (human) intelligence also there is migration to be made by him,

That he may escape from this intelligence full of greed and self-seeking and may behold a hundred thousand intelligences most marvelous.

Though he fell asleep and became oblivious of the past, how should they leave him in that self-forgetfulness?

From that sleep they will bring him back again to wakefulness, that he may mock at his (present) state.

Saying, "What was that sorrow I was suffering in my sleep? How did I forget the states of truth (the real experiences)?"

How did I know that that sorrow and disease is the effect of sleep and is illusion and phantasy?"¹

Once awakened the individual realizes that the same evolutionary process which led him to his present state is continually at work. This process further develops his mind, makes him realize his helplessness and turns him into a religious or an intellectual man.

Having attained such a state, the individual knows intuitively that self-security is a better state,

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, IV,

but the conventional veils deprive him of its advantages. While in this state he may become full of tension and this anxiety situation, because it lacks an existential basis, compels him to retreat. People frequently fall into such a state momentarily and are satisfied with just knowing about it, for at this stage a dominant ego stands against a dim inner voice. A social self nurtured by every-day society can easily inhibit the rise of a universal self.

Because the conventional self arises out of the interaction of man with a limited environment, the dim inner voice is easily extinguished. The same thing occurs if an individual is under the pressure of social forces contradictory to the universal self, or if the seeker still associates with a group far removed from universality. But if lucky, he falls into a more favourable situation thereby increasing his psychological disharmony. The voice of his conscience can now challenge his social self. His real personality (that is, that which he ought to become) stands against his "I," questions it and criticizes it.

Yet the nature of this conflict increases, as Rumi knew, for he strongly advised man in such a situation to become a self-discoverer and reflect more on his own situation. If so, he begins to analyze himself, and he becomes more interested in ultimate certainty than in such temporary satisfactions as possessing wealth, fame, and social prestige. He realizes that his existential problem is of even greater importance. As a seeker of truth he recognizes that he possesses

one heart and is potentially one entity and unable to split it into several parts. Now aware that only truth can save him, he concentrates solely on union, where union means identification with the desired object and growth of the cosmic self, as compared to disunion—the heart's attachment to several objects. The object of this search consists of becoming a real self, a thoroughly born man, a perfect and universal man. It means union with all, becoming God-like, or being only the truth. To become like God represents a beautiful creation more than submission to the authoritarian image of God ; it means becoming love and loving to save, not loving God to be saved.

Initially, the individual cannot perceive this state, because throughout his life, from childhood to the point of awareness, mental blocks have hindered this perception. An analysis of history in terms of human relatedness would undoubtedly reveal a similar state of circumstances. Rumi pictures man's grave task in removing these barriers and becoming a mirror of the universe. The seeker encounters a difficult mental path, and in every act of search and reflection he also faces the possibility of falling into an illusion ; he then makes new beliefs and loses the proper mind-set.

So perilous is the task that Rumi emphatically advises a seeker to first acquire a guide ('light of the path'), specifically, a *pir*, who has undergone the experiences and knows the road perfectly, because

he is "the essence of the path." According to Rumi this guide is necessary because no one possesses the real touchstone to measure his own behaviour, action, and feelings. On the other hand, every person reacts to passion and in some way admires his own actions. The difficulty arises because he cannot objectively measure his own vices and undesirable habits. Thus, for both behavioural and mental changes one must have a constant associate who makes one aware of his status and guides him to transcend himself. The seeker must be grateful and rejoice when his vices are brought to light so that he realizes and corrects his state.

Such a guide can appreciate and understand the novice's waves of thought and guide him symbolically. At this point the seeker infers the essential principle of experiencing mystical secrets. Rumi believes that while discussion is necessary, association with the guide (one whose mystical experience is superior to that of the seeker) is essential for the seeker's progress. He advises the seeker not to turn away from the guide and never to travel alone: "Take refuge in the shadow of the guide that you may escape from the enemy (*Nafs*) that opposes in secret."¹ To emphasize this point he reminds us that even prophets did not travel alone (spiritually); for instance, Moses associated with his brother, Muhammad with Ali (his son-in-law and cousin). In selecting the guide the seeker should insist on evaluating the companion according

1. Rumi *Mathnawi*. III.

to his purpose and objective, not on the basis of race or nationality :

Do not look at his figure and colour ; look at his purpose and intention.

If he is black, (yet) he is in accord with you : call him white, for his complexion is the same as yours.¹

Regarding the master-novice relationship, Rumi declares that the selfless leader is his own light, while the Sufi sees the light through the guide. Out of this situation another mystical principle arises, that is, that the master should not teach through instruction, but instead he must set up a situation in which the inspired novice experiences what he should :

Soul receives from soul that knowledge, therefore not by book nor from tongue.

If knowledge of mysteries come after emptiness of mind, that is illumination of heart.²

The third principle is again derived from the second, that is, the seeker is only able to experience those situations which come close to his level of understanding. Moreover, the scope of his understanding varies in relation to others, and the master thus treats each novice individually.

Traditionally, the Sufi seekers travelled extensively on foot and visited various *khanqahs* in order to find their guide. It was also believed that at the sight of a master a heart to heart communication

1. Rumi : *Mashnawi*, I.

2. *Ibid.*

took place :

When Umar (*pir*) found the stranger in appearance a friend ;

He found his soul seeking (to learn the divine) mysteries.

The Shaykh (Umar) was adept and the disciple eager : the man was quick and beast [steed] belonged to the royal court.

That spiritual guide (Umar) perceived that he (the seeker) possessed the capacity for receiving guidance : he sowed the good seed in the good soil.¹

Authorities also relate how Bayazid Bastami, a great Persian Sufi of the ninth century, met his master. His father, after giving him a basic education, wished him to study further in *fiqh* (jurisprudence). While still a young boy, he was taken to every notable theologian, but Bayazid did not approve of any until the father and son visited Junaid (a famous Sufi of that era), whom Bayazid immediately perceived as the master who could teach him.

Although this master-novice relationship outwardly suggests formality and authoritarianism in its behavioural aspects, in mystical reality it is not so at all. Two souls are constantly communicating : one gives and directs, the other receives and makes progress. It is not that the novice is obedient to an

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

order but that he is receptive to evolutionary changes. The more the seeker transcends the less guidance he needs from the guide. This guidance promotes a rebirth, and the guide serves only as a transfer in this path. Out of gratitude the seeker feels that the guide is responsible for his new personality ; from this arises a kind of intimacy and relatedness which is beyond description. For comparison, let the reader imagine that someone saves your physical life ; you will be so grateful that if the rescuer himself falls in danger you are ready to sacrifice the life that he granted you. How then can one value his life in the presence of a master who not only has saved it but has perfected it and given it rebirth ?

The nature of mystical experience also explains the receptive relationship between the master's soul and that of the seeker. The water flows from a spring to a dry source as a one-way current. Among Sufis of similar rank the mystical experience may become two-way traffic. In such a situation the master can perceive the invisible current of events, comparable to a receptive radio with strong antenna ; whereas the novice, like a small radio with a limited range of receptivity, must keep his perception within narrow bounds and never concentrate on what is beyond his actual capacity. When a guide accepts a seeker, the latter must surrender himself and never question his leader. He must not criticize or by mistake infer the guide's action from his own deeds. He must not be weak-hearted or enraged by every

blow (discernment), which in actuality, helps polish the mirror of his heart.

To illustrate the resistance of the seeker to the initial harsh treatment by the guide, Rumi relates how a man from Qazvin desired to be tattooed so that he might be secure. He asked the barber to tattoo him on the shoulder with the figure of a lion. As soon as the barber began, the man moaned in anguish and inquired which limb of the lion the barber had begun with. "With the tail," replied the barber. "Then omit the tail," cried the man. When the barber tried to apply the needle again, the man complained of the pain; and after learning that the barber had started on the ears, he told him to delete that part. Again, when the barber tried to etch the belly of the lion, he was told to omit that too, at which point he turned away in disgust refusing to tattoo the man at all.¹

So too a novice (as a man who seeks security) must not behave impatiently or the guide may ask him to leave. Rumi advises the novice to develop patience in receiving the blows of the guide so that he will be liberated from *Nafs* and the intellect.

The practice of truth underlies the relationship between the guide and the seeker. Thus, frankness, sincerity, and openness characterize both parties. The seeker must genuinely unfold himself, if not by words, then by spontaneous actions. The master is

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, II.

by his status genuine. Rumi also notes here that it may sometimes happen that a sincere seeker falls into the hands of a pseudo-guide. Frequently, however, the sincerity of the seeker, in spite of the guide's falsity, helps him attain perfection and gain knowledge of the secret while his master remains ignorant of it. Similarly, an insincere seeker may label himself as a self-seeker. In either case Rumi assures us that in the path of perfection one receives what he deserves.

To describe the inter-relationship of the guide and the novice Rumi presents various other illustrations to show that there is no place for "I" and "you," for the "I" hinders the growth of the aspirant and the "you" prevents the guide from being spontaneous.¹

Thus, this discussion presents the basic aspects of the master-novice relationship, but little has been said about Rumi himself as a guide. He exemplified Sufi guidance in action, and when individual novice came to him he referred them to his congenial soul for guidance. Every member of his order gained in accord with the level of their understanding. Who were these members? They came from a variety of backgrounds; many of them were guild members, but there were also clergymen, administrators, princes poets and philosophers.

Now, however, the question arises: What happens after one is accepted by a guide, that is when one has decided to achieve perfection? In

1. Rumi: *Fihl Ma Fihl*.

brief, Rumi says that a seeker faces two major tasks : to dissolve his present status (*fana*), then reintegrate again : "Unless you are first disintegrated, how can I reintegrate you again ?"¹ Disintegration here refers to the passing away of the conventional self, reintegration means rebirth in the cosmic self. *Fana* is the removal of the "i"; *baqa* the process of becoming "I." Instead of being related to the conscious, reintegration means bringing to light the secrets of the unconscious. In a practical sense it means cleansing one's own consciousness of what Rumi calls fictions, idols, and untruths, and purifying the heart of greed, envy, jealousy, grief, and anger so that it regains its original quality of becoming mirror-like to reflect the reality within it. *Fana* means, in fact, a liberation from the conventional self in order for one to live in his real self—unity with all :

Oh, happy is the man who was freed from himself and united with the existence of a living one.²

Fana is beautifully illustrated in the following story of the merchant and the parrot ; the parrot symbolizes the soul of the merchant encaged in the realm of conventional life. When the merchant decided to go to India on business he asked the parrot what she wanted as a gift, to which she replied, "I only request that when you see other parrots in India tell them, 'A parrot who longs for you [your

1. Rumi : *Diwan-e-Shams*.

2. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I..

state of freedom] is in my prison by the destiny of Heaven.' ”

In India the merchant relayed the message to a group of parrots, one of whom, on hearing the news, trembled and fell dead. The merchant felt sorry thinking it had undoubtedly been related to his own bird. When he returned home he reluctantly told his parrot what had happened. As soon as she heard the news she trembled and fell down in a corner of the cage. After lamenting the loss of his bird, the merchant opened the cage door and threw the bird out. The parrot immediately flew to a bough, and the surprised merchant inquired what sort of communication existed between the two birds; to which she replied, “The other parrot by her act said in effect ‘Die yourself and stop singing so that you may be released and gain freedom.’ ”¹ This story not only explains half of the path (*fana*) but it illustrates the importance of mystical communication.

The seeker now undergoes a gradual self-analysis. He has made his decision, accepted a guide, and is eager to experience the mystical experience of emptying his consciousness of conventional and unnecessary experiences. But before this occurs he must go through a moral transference and develop his ethical self. This was necessary for all kinds of people who sought self-improvement under Rumi. In the process of developing a moral self, Rumi emphasizes the performance of righteous acts instead

1. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, 1.

of the reflection of wrong deeds in the past, and he asserts that if one unwaveringly follows a straight path distortion disappears. Yet, this is only a general aid, for one must consider the individual differences of the seekers. Their situations differ as do their previous experiences. A man who has been a pious, religious man has less difficulty in going through the process of developing a moral self than one who lacks concern for purity in action. According to Rumi the former individual has a touchstone against which to measure his behaviour while the latter does not have such a measure and will follow his *Nafs*. A man who has been engaged in disputation will experience more strain than one who has lived a pure life. Purity in action means living genuinely and depends on values which underlie the nature of consciousness.

It is therefore obvious that the guide must begin at the point where the seeker is. He thus suggests to the individual seeker certain behavioural changes such as serving his fellowmen, with its accompanying emotional changes, in order that he may achieve an active moral self, which is essential in *fana*. In this sense moral means *straightforwardness in action*. Initially, every individual may have to detach himself from the most precious belonging of all—the loss of his fondest values and ideas. It involves the re-examination of interests, feelings, values, and ideas, and achieving contentment without the desire of worldly possessions. It signifies the beginning of “to

be" and the end of "to have."

After discarding material good the seeker then becomes oblivious of social position and rank—the finest expression of which was Rumi's own life. Although Rumi was not opposed to the usefulness of worldly goods, he believed that wealth must not become a veil and fame a hindrance to progress. It would seem that Rumi eliminated the role of wealth when it had become an end in life, instead of a means of transcending the self.

In this path distracting thoughts will plague the seeker but he must try to abstain from them and continually preserve his state. Rumi believes that abstinence is better than medicine; he advocates patience in the hour of perplexity. These basic behavioural steps affect the seeker's daily activity and change it to the form of service which becomes the media of expression rather than a task. In this sense action carries more weight than material possessions, for it involves the entire personality of the seeker.

Rumi probes beneath possession *per se* to uncover the passion which drives man to seek added wealth and power, that is, he is more concerned with the motive of action than with the action itself. Thus, he emphasizes removing undesirable thoughts in consciousness and controlling the passions arising out of *Nafs*. As a first step in this direction Rumi tells the seeker to concentrate more and more on every single act and his internal motive for that

action. In contrast to those who see only the goal, the seeker of the path of self-realization must look into the origin of action : "Behold the image of the end in the mirror of the beginning."¹

This origin of action requires meditation, which in turn produces a more transcendental state of mind. To actualize this state Rumi instituted his own order in Konia so as to provide a kind of group guidance. Thus, he adopted social interaction and the pattern of fellowship as a means of experiencing purity in action. Rumi utilized *sam'a* and the whirling dances as a means of attaining physical readiness and concentration, along with music and the recitation of the *Mathnawi*, composed spontaneously as a reinforcement for elevating the seeker's spiritual state.

In actuality, the singing of the *Mathnawi* comprises a composition of patterns, illustrating the Sufis' progressive path, that is, revealing man's ordinary situation, his contradictory nature, followed by an awareness of and an examination of these forces, refutation of regressive tendencies, and the application of reason to the control of external authority and submissive tendencies. The *Mathnawi* then explains why reason (particularly deductive reasoning) fails to give an answer to the meaning of life and suggests the removal of the conventional self in order to gain a fuller personality and live a better life by achieving unity with all, love, and positive action. These

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, IV.

ideas, clothed in story form and sung in a group fashion, undoubtedly exerted a tremendous influence on the psyche of the participants. It certainly helped them remove unsuitable thoughts, eliminate ordinary practices, and relate themselves to the source of unity. The more advanced seekers guided the novices. Here again individuals benefited according to their state :

What I am saying is according to the measure of your understanding : I die in grief for the absence of a sound understanding.

Speech bears away understanding ; other avenues of sense perception are drawing off the hidden water of your understanding.¹

The non-professional followers who usually attended Rumi's sessions developed a positive feeling in interpersonal relations, and in practising the truth in their daily life they strengthened the interpersonal relations of the people. They produced but were not enslaved by production. They worked in the community to serve life, rather than using life as a means of production. Even in the process of work they identified with life, as one can still see occasionally in Persian arts and crafts. Socially, in the spirit of fellowship, they attended *sam'a* and contributed to the happiness of people in the community. People from every walk of life attended the sessions. Those in Rumi's order also associated with one another in

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

work, thereby creating a positive feeling among all.¹

Guided by Rumi's ethical ideas, the lay members of the community acquired discernment and concomitantly replaced good qualities for evil. Undoubtedly, Rumi's ethical teachings profoundly affected all strata of the social structure. Princes, scholars, religious groups, and professional people, as well as the common people, all sought his counsel, and he responded with loving kindness toward all. On one occasion when the famous Amir Parvana had waited in vain to see him, he sent him the following message: "Please don't bother to visit me. I am continually undergoing various states: I may speak or be silent: I may interest myself in others' affairs or choose solitude. So it is better for the Amir to wait until I am free, when I can converse with him properly."²

Thus, through a process of changing human relationships Rumi caused a moral transformation of the soul in terms of guiding inwardly against undesirable passions and outwardly conducting service to humanity. In his *Discourses* Rumi also related how Amir Parvana once complained that his many duties prevented him from personally attending Rumi's services. The Master replied that a man's service,

1. For further aspects on the process of fellowship see R. Arasteh, "The Social Role of the *Zurkhana* (House of Strength) in Nineteenth Century Urban Communities in Iran," in *Der Islam*, V. 61, 256-59 (October 1961); "The Character, Organization and Social Role of the *Lutis* (*Javanmardan*) in the Traditional Iranian Society of the Nineteenth Century," in *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, V. 4, Part I, 47-52 (February 1961).

2. Rumi: *Fihri Ma Fihri*.

if based on good thoughts and deeds, is itself a great prayer.

In addition to his regular followers, the eminent scholars of the day, such as Sa'di, the great poet and moralist, Qut-al-Din Muhammad Shirazi,¹ a contemporary philosopher, and others visited Rumi's centre. This spirit of fellowship extended to various sects. In his *Discourses* Rumi also advocates positive fellowship :

I spoke one day to a group of people, among whom were some non-Muslims. In the midst of my speech they wept and experienced ecstasy. Only one out of a thousand Muslims understood why they wept. The master then declared : "Although they do not understand the inner spirit of these words they comprehend the underlying feeling—the real root of the matter."

Everyone recognizes the oneness of God by various means. Yet everyone is united in the one goal (*ka'aba*). Hearts form an intense love of the *ka'aba* and everyone experiences this.²

1. It is reported that Qut-al-Din, after recognizing the significance of "dying of the self in order to live better," declared : "Oh, what should I do ?" to which Rumi answered : "This is it : what should I do ?" Then the philosopher joined the *sam'a* reciting :

I asked, "What can I do ?" He said, "This is it : what can I do?"

I asked, "What is a better remedy than this : What can I do ?"

He turned and said, "O seeker of religion, always be thus—in this state of 'what can I do' [state of search]."

(Fruzanfar, *op. cit.*, 121-22 (translation mine).

2. Rumi : *Fihl Ma Fihl*,

Thus, the group's mystical activities, conducted in the peaceful setting of Konia, facilitated social interaction under Rumi's creative leadership and inspired other communities to follow the same pattern. Apparently, Rumi influenced the whole community; the practice of *sam'a* extended even to the market-place. It is said that one day when Rumi was still searching for his real self, he passed through the goldsmith's bazaar and heard the hammering of the famous goldsmith, Salah al-Din Zarkub, who later became his congenial soul. The rhythmical sounds stimulated him to commence *sam'a* in front of his shop. Zarkub joined him and he composed a lyric which begins :

A treasure appeared in the goldsmith's shop
Praise be to this form ! [meaning goodness,
benevolence].¹

The social aspect of Rumi's order, in particular, fellowship, persisted long after the theoretical aspects of his ideas had been forgotten. The Mowlavi order not only existed in Persia, Turkey and Egypt but influenced certain groups in India. Lane, a traveller in Egypt in the early nineteenth century, made these keen observations :

Most of the *durweeshes* [sic] were Egyptians, but there were among them many Turks and Persians. I had not waited many minutes before they began their exercises Forty

1. Fruzanfar, *op. cit.*, 49.

of them, with extended arms and joined hands had formed a large ring The durweeshes who formed the large ring (which enclosed four of the marble columns of the portico) now commenced their *zīkr*, exclaiming over and over again, "Allah" and at each exclamation, bowing the head and body and taking a step to the right ; so that the whole ring moved rapidly around. As soon as they commenced this exercise, another durweesh, a Turk, of the order of Mowlawees [refers to Rumi's order], in the middle of a circle, began to whirl ; using both his feet to effect his motion and extending his arms : the motion increased in velocity until his dress spread out like an umbrella. He continued whirling thus for about ten minutes, after which he bowed to his superior, who stood within the great ring ; and then without showing any signs of fatigue or giddiness, joined the durweeshes in the great ring ; who had now begun to ejaculate the name of God with great vehemence, and to jump to the right, instead of stepping. After whirling, six other durweeshes, within the great ring, formed another ring ; but a very small one ; each one placing his arms upon the shoulders of those next him ; and thus disposed, they performed a revolution similar to that of the larger ring, except in being much more rapid ; repeating, also, the same exclamation of 'Allah' ; but with a rapidity proportion-

ately greater. This motion they maintained for about the same length of time that the whirling of the single *durweesh* before had occupied ; after which the whole party set down to rest. They rose again after the lapse of about a quarter of an hour ; and performed the same exercise a second time.¹

It should be noted here that the rules of *sam'a* required that it be practised only when the seeker's state of mind demanded it ; nor was it available to every ordinary man. A guide had to be present, and the seeker had to be one of the guides, that is, one whose heart had become empty of passionate desires. The seeker had to continue *sam'a* as long as his state of rapture remained high and to stop it when its power ceased within him. At all times the Sufi had to differentiate between the natural impulsive force within him and spiritual ecstasy. To do so required the kind of perception he had already achieved from his ethical disposition. While in ecstasy he could not accept others' help or interfere with them.

To reiterate, the seeker first sought to attain social health and individual satisfaction by removing passions and unhealthy impressions. He did this by abstinence, patience, renunciation, reintegration of the moral self and the use of those practices which reinforce a healthy character—in essence the application of truth to all conduct. In this

1. Lane, E.W., *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. (London: J.M. Dent and Co., 1876), pp. 437-38.

stage, *sam'a* promoted social interactions, which in turn facilitated the physical and mental conditions for transcending and improving one's self.

Rumi's more serious followers, under the close supervision of their guides (mostly Rumi's congenial souls) then sought to remove the objects of perception from their mind by applying various methods for emptying their consciousness of unreal materials. Secluding himself the seeker resorted to introspection in order to observe the contents of his psyche ; watch over every mental state, analyze each experience and perceive its imperfection.¹ In this phase his guide was regularly available to communicate with him. This intense concentration usually produced psychic tension (contraction), or more specifically, rapture. *Sam'a* and the nightly dances served as a means of relaxation and actualized the Sufi's state of mind. The more able Sufis adopted intentional alienation, that is, their method was entirely opposite to that of developing "I." They customarily left social life and travelled alone, visiting prominent Sufis. This detachment from society provided the seeker with an excellent opportunity for making himself aware of what he had once thought perfect and of knowledge based on sense perception. At the same time his immediate experiences enriched his being by activating his insight, fostering love, and developing in

1. Whereas companionship was emphasized for the novices, seclusion was advocated for those who were nearing their goal and who could remain in seclusion without regard to the past and future.

him discernment in his approach to the state of emptiness.

To illustrate this phase Rumi relates the story of a thirsty man (resembling the seeker of the self) who stood on the bank of a stream but was unable to reach it because of a high wall. Climbing to the top of a wall he impulsively threw a brick into the stream and heard a pleasant sound "Like words spoken by a sweet and delicious friend : the sound of the water made him drunken as wine."¹ Brick after brick he threw into the stream. When the water demanded, "What pleasure does this give you, O man?" the thirsty man replied that the pleasure was twofold : he heard the sound of the water, a melody to the ear of a thirsty man, and secondly every brick torn from the wall brought him closer to the running water. Metaphorically, the destruction of the wall removes separateness and brings about unity. Rumi further emphasizes that the greater the seeker's thirst, the faster he destroys the wall which separates him from the water. Every sound like a mystical sign, brings joy to the seeker and tells him that blessed is the one whose thirst soon compels him to tear off the veil.²

In actuality, the professional Sufi gradually tore off the veils of consciousness one by one, and ultimately attained his final state—that of nothingness, a state which is explained in the following oft-told Persian story : At one of the great Court banquets

1. Rumi : *Mashnawi*, 11.

2. *Ibid*

where everyone sat according to his rank while awaiting the appearance of the king, a plain, shabbily dressed man entered the hall and took a seat above everyone else. His boldness angered the Prime Minister who demanded that he identify himself and acknowledge if he were a vizier. The stranger replied that he ranked above a vizier. The astonished Prime Minister then asked if he were a prime minister. Again the man replied that he was above that position. When asked if he were the King himself he answered that he was above that too. "Then you must be a prophet," declared the Prime Minister ; to which the man again asserted that he ranked above that position. Angrily, the Prime Minister shouted, "Are you then God ?" to which the man calmly replied, "I am above that too." Contemptuously, the Prime Minister declared, "There is nothing above God." In reply the man said, "Now you know my identity. That nothing is me."¹

In one sense this story reveals what a Sufi can achieve : a state of happiness without envy for intellect and society-made values. In another sense this approach to nothingness means the removal of "I," emptying consciousness and relating one's self to infinity, thereby enabling one to enter the next stage.

In the new state every experience is an act of

1. Erik Erikson has recently referred to this state of nothingness as the beginning of reintegration. In my own thinking the discovery of this state is like the mathematical zero, which makes every number meaningful.

illumination, but also every act of illumination is itself only a means of illuminating the psyche and the heart in order to gain knowledge. Rumi refers to it as "polishing one's heart": the more one polishes the more he sees and the more visible becomes that which underlies the forms. One gains in relation to his spiritual enlightenment. To enter this state one must restrict the external senses, because sensory deprivation allows the inner, intuitive sense to come to the fore. As man, in the process of his development, has inherited past evolutionary events, his task then becomes one of unfolding these mysteries by repeated occurrences of insight. In this state Rumi compares the human situation to one who is asleep and gradually unfolds his dreams.

Sam'a enriched this state by elevating the Sufi's insight and power of intuition while depriving him of his external senses. With practice and under the close guidance of a superior, such a seeker could easily identify himself with a guide, the latter perhaps with a more perfect guide. If such a Sufi possessed strong religious tendencies, he was encouraged to identify with the essence of religion, particularly Islam, with its concern for man's well-being (love). Those who desired further enlightenment were guided to identify with the image of God, a beautiful creation of man. Rumi recommended that the Sufi seek God within himself, not in heaven. He believed that each of these states could guide the seeker to elevate himself. To show how a religious

man becomes a Sufi and is united with God, Rumi related the story of Moses and the shepherd. Moses once heard a shepherd praying to God, "O God, tell me where you are so that I may become your servant, stitch your shoes, rub your feet, wash your clothes, make your bed and kill your lice . . . O, you, to whom I sacrifice my goats!"

Moses denounced the man as an infidel for talking to his Creator in this way and said to him, "Shoes and socks are for you ; how can they be for God? Speaking like this destroys the spirit and blackens the record."

The shepherd replied, "O, Moses, you have closed my mouth and burned me with repentance." He went to the desert to repent, but God sent a revelation to Moses in which he reproached him for his action : "O, Moses you have separated my creatures. Did you come to unite or part them? Everyone has his own way of expression ; for him it is praise, for you blame. I am concerned with the inward state of feeling, not with tongue and speech. Heart is the substance, speech the accident."

Moses sought the shepherd and told him that God now permitted him to pray as he liked ; to which the man rejoined, "O, Moses, I have passed beyond that, and I am now bathed in my heart's blood. You only awakened me. Now my state is beyond description. That which I describe is not my state.¹

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, II.

In this story Rumi asserted that prophets are merely a sign in the direction of self-perfection ; the individual alone must discover himself. In this process the seeker must concentrate solely on his object of desire ; he must love it. He must promote and strengthen his position and avoid all that which is incompatible with it, nor must he attach himself to any specific creed, for all religions are alike ; true religion accompanies a pure heart. Truth, not book learning, makes men of God, who seek only oneness with God :

I am complaining of the Soul of the soul, (but in truth), I am not complaining : I am (only) relating.

My heart is saying, "I am tormented by Him," and I have (long) been laughing at its poor pretence.

Do (me) right, O glory of the righteous, O Thou who art the dais, and I the threshold of Thy door!

Where are threshold and dais in reality ? In the quarter where our Beloved is, where are "we" and "I" ?

O Thou whose soul is free from "we" and "I,"
O Thou who art the subtle essence of the spirit in man and woman,

When man and woman become one, Thou art that One ; when the units are wiped out, lo, Thou art that (Unity).

Thou didst contrive this "I" and "we" in order
that Thou mightest play the game of worship
with Thyself,

That all "I's" and "thou's" should become one
soul and at last should be submerged in the
Beloved.¹

Al-Hallaj was the first to symbolize this unity,² and Rumi often referred to his claim, "I am God," and then gave these words his own interpretation. Although people tend to ridicule such claims as "I am God," or "I am the creative truth," Rumi believed that these phrases actually express humility in the sense that they mean, "I am pure," "I hold nothing within me except Him." Rumi contrasted this interpretation with the orthodox believers who claimed, "I am a servant of God," thus asserting the dualism of existence.

In the next stage the inquisitive Sufi tries to identify with the world of reality. Rumi defines reality as the world of "not-I," the non-phenomenal world. It is the colourless world, the invisible world, the world of unity. He illustrates this point with the story of a Persian, a Turk, an Arab, and a Greek,

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.
2. Al-Hallaj is quoted as having said :
 O essence of my being,
 O good of my desire ;
 O my speech and my hints and my gestures
 O all of my all, O my hearing and my sight,
 O my whole, my element and my particles.

(*Vide*, Al-Hujwiri, A.B. Uthman : *Kashf al-Mahjub*. Translated by R.A. Nicholson. (London : Luzac, 1936.)

all of whom wanted to buy grapes. The Persian said that he wanted "angūr"; the Turk, "uzum"; the Arab, "inab"; and the Greek, "istafil." A quarrel ensued as a result of their ignorance. But when one understands the artificiality of names and attributes he can attain the essence and become one with all: "pass on from the name and look at the attributes in order that the attributes may show you the way to the essence."¹ In a social sense the seeker applies the same principle: the disagreement of mankind is caused by name: peace ensues when they advance to the reality (denoted by the name)."² Again, Rumi declares that reality is not what blinds and deafens a man causing him to be more in love with form; rather it is that which seizes him and makes him independent of it.³

To reiterate, the Sufism of Rumi advocates a progression through various stages, whereby the seeker's whole being evolves and attains new character, vision, and state. He seeks infinite unity with all by first taking an object of desire and becoming united with it, then making a transfer out of it and transcending it. Having removed the undesirable experiences in his consciousness, he then unites himself with a superior guide, one who is the very marrow of religious values. Having erased his conventional knowledge from his mind and devaluated his ego, he identifies himself with God, reality, and truth to become ultimately united with all. To achieve any

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, II. 2. *Ibid.* 3. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, IV.

degree of unity in any state means to concentrate wholly, to love the object of desire and to gradually become close to it through a series of psychical experiences. As an illustration Rumi relates the story of a man (seeker) who visited a friend (guide). When the man knocked at the door and was asked to identify himself he replied, "It is I." The friend then told him to depart as he was too immature and moreover, the anxiety of separation might mature him. The separation from his beloved for a year compelled him to search within himself and weed out undesirable qualities. When he returned, knocked again at the friend's door, and was asked, "Who is it?" he replied, "It is you, O king of hearts." The friend in turn responded, "Since you are I, enter, O myself; there is no room in this house for two I's."¹

Having unfolded his unconsciousness, the seeker now receives direct knowledge. With ever-increasing insight he furthers his knowledge of the life process. Every moment the world comes anew, like the swift current of the sea. Like flashes of lightning, a succession of insights illuminate his mind and increase his vision. In such a state universal trust appears; imagination, perplexity, phantasy, and suspicion disappear entirely. He becomes the mirror of all.

Rumi explains the process of becoming mirror-like in the story of Joseph (representing the perfect

1. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, I.

man) and his visiting friend. When Joseph inquired what his friend had brought him for a gift, the visitor gave him a mirror saying, "Of all the gifts I thought of bringing you this seemed the most worthy, for to bring anything else would be like bringing a grain of gold to a gold mine :

I deemed it fitting that I should bring to thee a mirror like the (inward) light of a (pure) breast, that thou mayst behold thy beauteous face therein, O thou who, like the sun art the candle of heaven.¹

In interpreting this state Rumi declares that "not-being" is the mirror of "being"; "being" can only be seen in "not-being." In another story in the same volume of *Mathnawi*, Rumi explains the meaning of becoming a mirror. At one time when Greek and Chinese artists claimed superiority, the King put them to a test. He housed them in separate rooms with door facing door, and told them to create their finest work of art. The Chinese requested all kinds of paints while the Greeks asked for nothing except tools with which to remove the rust and discolour from the walls. After some time the King visited the artists. When the Chinese drew aside the curtain, the King saw a picture, so beautiful that it robbed him of his wits. When he entered the room of the Greeks they drew aside their curtain; the reflection of the Chinese paintings on their

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

highly polished wall was so overwhelmingly beautiful that it robbed him of his sight. Rumi compares the polished wall to the heart of the Sufi which illuminates the being. The Greeks' work represents the Sufi who purifies himself from greed, selfishness, avarice, and hatred, and the purity of the mirror represents the heart which receives innumerable images.¹ For the Sufi who has gained such illumination all that remains is to become "all truth." He grasps truth intuitively and so quickly that interpretation cannot occur, thus giving the individual a direct relationship with evolutionary events. The illuminist has brushed aside the words, then the thoughts which covered the surface of this intuitive current.

There comes a time when the illuminist feels that the current has become too rapid; no care of any kind then lingers in his mind and words have no use for him. He is unconscious, although he has a dream-like awareness :

Even so a hundred thousand "states" came
and went back to the Unseen, O trusted one.

Every day's "state" is not like (that of) the
day before : (They are passing) as a river that
has no obstacle in its course.

Each day's joy is a different kind, each day's
thought makes a different impression.²

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

2. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, V.

Then as an illuminist he is in the state of happiness and joy, and his action takes place only for the sake of truth. In this regard Rumi presents the story of Ali (the representative of men of God) who faced the infidel. When in combat, Ali knocked him down and prepared to slay him, the infidel spat in his face. Although angered by this, Ali released the man, who in surprise asked Ali why he had done so. The latter replied, "When you spat in my face, *Nafs* overtook me and I became angry. Had I killed you I would have done so out of anger. I could then not have acted with entire sincerity in regard to God. So I released you that I might regain my true spirit and slay you for the sake of God.¹ Here the infidel symbolizes the anger of *Nafs*. Rumi also implies in this story that in his mystical order all action must be measured from the standpoint of the goal of perfection (e.g., attributes of the saints).

Dreams play an important role in the process of unification. Traditional Persian Sufis have always been interested in sleep and dreams. Indeed, a number of well-known Sufis entered this path after repeatedly hearing a voice in their dreams. The inquiring nature of their psyche spurred them on to rebirth. Rumi views reality as a dream-like world and it is in a dream that one leaves one's self and enters another self, or in his words: "In sleep you go from yourself to yourself." The unconscious becomes active in dreams; the cosmic self fully

1. Rumi: *Mathnawi*, I.

awakens. Contrary to common thinking, Rumi views conventional life as a state of sleeping :

Your life in this world is like a sleeper who
dreams that he has gone to sleep.

He thinks "Now I am asleep," unaware that
he is already in a second sleep.

Like a blind man afraid of falling into a pit
his self in sleep moves into the state of uncon-
sciousness and thus reveals itself in dreams.¹

Rumi, however, distinguishes between men of truth and slaves of passion, in terms of both their conscious and dream states. In this respect true sleep becomes wakefulness when accompanied by wisdom. The dream of true sleep reveals the signs of the path and the selection of the guide. Due to this vision the heart awakens and telepathic knowledge first appears between two hearts. Then every expression symbolizes a state.

Having thus passed through various stages and become an illuminist, the Sufi is an individual in the world of non-individuality, that is, infusion has taken place, but he has entered a state of conscious existence : "I found (true) individuality in non-individuality ; therefore I wove (my) individuality into non-individuality."² He has removed the state in which he acted as a social self, aided by ordinary consciousness, and he has gained the state of universal man : "Our emotion is not caused by grief

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, III.

2. *Ibid*, I.

and joy, our consciousness is not related to fancy and imagination.”¹ The universal man, aided by intuition, functions as a totality with spontaneity and expressiveness :

When Fārūq (‘Umar) became a reflector of mysteries, the old man’s heart was awakened from within.

He became without weeping or laughter, like the soul : his (animal) soul departed and the other soul came to life.

In that hour such a bewilderment arose within him that he went forth from earth and heaven—

A seeking and searching beyond (all) seeking and search : I know not (how to describe it) ; (if) you know, tell !

Words and feelings beyond (all) feelings and words—he has become drowned in the beauty of the Lord of majesty,

Drowned, not in such wise that there should be for him any deliverance, or that any one should know him except the (Divine) Ocean.

Partial reason would not be telling of (the mysteries of) the Universal (Reason), if there were not demand after demand (perpetual Divine impulses necessitating the manifestation of these mysteries).

Since demand after demand is arriving, the

waves of that Sea (Universal Reason) reach this place (the world of partial reason).¹

The perfect man now receives the configuration of a total situation and through silence he reflects on it. United with all he then travels backward into time and reproduces his previous states whenever he encounters a similar situation. He has embraced all of life beyond good and bad. In a practical way he has experienced qualities of every type of life, ordinary human existence and intellectual life; he has felt himself variously as a famous man, an ambitious man, and a religious man, and has passed beyond all of them, finally giving birth to a fully comprehensive self. He has become an image of his community, mankind and then the rest of the world. He accepts them all, feeling related to them. In essence he is all of them. He receives them, and as he has experienced their state of being, his associated state can appear in his perceptive mirror-like being. Thus, he can predict and possibly read as telepathy the desires and thoughts of others as well as exhibit certain powers which to the ordinary man seem extraordinary. Ultimately, as a humble universal man who is creative and emancipated, he tries to free others. He is in the state of happiness and brings joy to others. In such a state the universal man believes that nothing is bad: everything benefits a state of mind, but man must elevate himself from what he is so that he can attain unity.

According to Rumi, the earth's inhabitants have come from a harmonious state and through his teachings they can relate to one another through the heart and by taking a new state of harmony as their aim. Thus, separation, polytheism, duality, and divisionism disappear :

Simple were we and all one substance ; we were
all without head and without foot yonder.

We were one substance, like the Sun ; we were
knotless and pure, like water.

When that goodly Light took form, it became
(many in) number like the shadows of a
battlement.

Rase ye the battlement with the *manjaniq*
(mangonel), that difference may vanish from
amidst this company (of shadows).

I would have explained this (matter) with (eager)
contention, but I fear lest some (weak) mind
may stumble.

The points (involved in it) are sharp as a sword
of steel ; if you have not the shield (of
capacity to understand), turn back and flee !

Do not come without shield against this
adamant (keen blade), for the sword is not
ashamed of cutting.

For this cause I have put the sword in sheath,
that none who misreads may read contrariwise
(in a sense contrary to the true meaning of
my words).¹

1. Rumi : *Mathnawi*, I.

Chapter IV : The Contribution of Rumi to the Situation of Modern Man.

In the previous chapters I reinterpreted the meaning of Persian culture and the role which creative individuals, especially the great Sufis, played in its continuance. Using psychotherapy as a basis, I then analyzed Rumi's personality and the process of his final rebirth, integration, and the way he transcended the culture of his age. Finally, in the last chapter I explained that the *Mathnawi* is not, as is generally believed, an unrelated set of ideas and stories but a progression of stages for the guidance of seekers in the language of ideation. The *Mathnawi* first takes the novice in his present state and directs his entire attention toward an object of desire—generally the attributes of the guide or of God, or the creative force in the universe. Such an object gives the seeker hope and builds up patience in him during his anxious search ; it strengthens and encourages his effort, enriches his love for union with his object of desire and unfolds "love" as the dynamic force of life.

What now remains is to analyze Rumi's contribution to present-day life, to the well-being of modern man in both the East and West, and to social and

international peace. Several basic questions are involved here: What does Rumi's achievement mean in terms of modern psychological findings? What contribution can it make to the solution of "Western man in search of a soul?" What contribution can it make to the healthy development of the modern man of the East in his search for a new way of life? And finally, what can it contribute to the Communist states, who are seeking an historical man? I shall deal with each of these issues, in turn.

A cursory examination of Rumi's life would seem to indicate that it is far removed from current psychological thinking. As the product of a different place, time, and culture, how can it have any relation to modern concepts of man? On the surface one appears to be purely objective, the other subjective. Yet a deeper analysis raises the question: Which one is objective, which subjective? Both apply the term "objectivity" to two different phenomena. Further reflection on human nature may convince us that the differences between modern psychological findings and those of the great men of the past are due to the explorations of "half-born" men who are concerned with man's present state and his social relatedness, in contrast to the great thinkers of the past who were concerned with man's potentialities and his existential situation. A penetrating analysis of great men (those who re-examined themselves) from Socrates to Schweitzer, regardless of time, place, and the degree of culture, clearly demon-

strates that they have shared much in common, for all of them rose above the social standards and cultural views of their time. They developed their potentialities and resolved the contradictions existing between the many day-to-day rules and the unique single role of living. In their search for self-realization they discovered that man has always had the same illness, and he has rarely faced it; for he has found it easier to live partially than to develop his fullest potentialities. Despite his ever-expanding scope of reason and increased area of awareness, the situation remains the same. Total cure can only be attained when all men are "born" or when every individual fully develops his capacities, that is, when he can identify himself with mankind.

These remarks will facilitate an understanding of Rumi's situation. He, like many other great students of human nature, discovered that man's central existential problem arose from his separation from nature and from his contradictory character. This urge requires both a satisfactory relatedness to one's fellow men and to the universe; satisfactory in the sense that the mechanism which one adopts should possess: (a) flexibility and openness in terms of allowing further progress, (b) dynamism to suit the level of awareness of the individual, and (c) a positive direction of growth. In his effort to find a sense of orientation and a way of relatedness Rumi observed various ways that men have tried to give meaning to their life. His environment assisted him

in identifying such religious mechanisms as Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Sufism, in addition to their various sects. Among the urban and intellectual groups he observed how jurisprudence and religious laws operate in solving conflicts. Furthermore, he was affected by the mechanisms of obedience and power. In his personal life he also experienced a sense of relatedness through intimacy and love. He observed at first hand new depths of man's destructive forces in the fear and insecurity generated by the Mongol hordes and the Crusaders, as well as the personal selfishness among Muslim and Christian believers. He lost faith in tradition, social systems, philosophy, and scholastic knowledge. Rumi's awareness of these facts led him to reverse the position of man toward God and to make it clear that the monotheistic concept of God (which resembles man's unfolding potentialities) is for man a measure of unity to direct his actions toward, not that man is created to submit to God and thereby bar himself from further growth. On this basis Rumi denounced traditional theology. Putting man in the centre, he placed religious and spiritual experience above the formalism of religious authorities. Rumi not only protested the performance of rituals as an instrument of relatedness and a barrier to growth, but he went further in denouncing the concept of life based on fear and hope, hell and paradise, and love for the sake of salvation. On the other hand, he viewed these practices and traditional

forms of life as veils to be lifted in the unfolding of human potentialities.

In philosophy too his only doctrine was derived from his actual life experiences. He considered philosophical doctrine finite, closed, and unsuited to man's infinite nature. In philosophy and intellectualism one keeps a distance between object and subject in order to find their relationship; one dissects and classifies in order to learn. While man benefits from this instrumentalism, his life condition requires him to become one with the object. Philosophy and science, as a result of its emphasis on this analysis of parts, relies on the ego, that is, the representative of consciousness; whereas man's safety is based on the expansion of this consciousness through the analysis of his acquired unconsciousness (that which he has gained through repression) and of his natural unconsciousness (that which he has gained through the process of evolution). It is in this effort that man finds insight into his fellowmen, nature, and the life process. If in his struggle for a greater awareness he comes out successfully, he finds that man's only security comes in relating himself to his fellowmen through love and creativity.

Love as a mechanism of interpersonal relationships was not a sufficient explanation for Rumi. He also found it the creative result of real conflicting forces in nature and man. According to Rumi love is an elixir which transforms all negative feelings, emotional handicaps, and differences into a healthy

attitude. To him thinking and reasoning are definite, while life and expression possess indefinite qualities, the characteristics of love alone. However, Rumi does not refer to love in its narrow sense, that is, the outcome of the sexual experience and pleasure. To him love relates more to care, concern, intimacy, and total expression. According to Rumi, to become an artist in the art of loving is not an easy task. One must endure hardship and strive for it. He must fall in love with his goal and devote himself to it for at least several years. This act is a very difficult task for an adult who has lived in a society for years or for a man who has been deprived of love in childhood; to attain a state of a loving being appears impossible, but it can be attained if the individual really seeks it. Through contemplation on his goal he can become sensitive and critical of his own behaviour, desires, and wishes; through concentration, mediation, patience, resistance and wakefulness he can outgrow his utilitarian self and live by love. Only by practising it can he become an artist in it. In other words, through self-analysis, constant awareness, and genuine loving one can attain this goal. However, rebirth in love is not everlasting unless man also brings his mode of thinking and mentality in accord with his affection.

Contrary to Aristotelian logic, the prevailing mode of thinking at his time, Rumi advised dialectical support and emphasized that truth is the outcome of opposing forces. He suggested that the mind be

freed of Aristotelian thinking in order to come close to its true nature, which is dialectical. This denunciation of Aristotelian logic (that is, that truth comes out of the laws of identity, diversity and exclusion of the middle) leads to the harmony of affective and mental activities such that man emerges as a totality. This union takes place through action and practice ; the emergence of this unity strengthens man's insight. Through the growth of this insight into human and non-human environment, in history and in evolution, man penetrates the surface of this world of diversity and enters a unitary world. According to Rumi a person in this state can act on the basis of love, which is in accord with the law of polarity, which in turn causes evolution and creativity in man. Identification with the unitary world and realization of its dialectical rules eliminates all diversity of form, illustrates the similarity of the core of mankind, and defines subject-object relatedness ; as Rumi describes in the following poem :

Never, in sooth, does the lover seek without
being sought by his beloved,
When the lightening of love has shot into *this*
heart, know that there is love in *that* heart.
When love of God waxes in thy heart, beyond
any doubt God hath love for thee.
No sound of clapping comes from one hand
without the other hand.
Divine Wisdom is destiny and decree made us
lovers of one another.

Because of that fore-ordainment every part of
the world is paired with its mate.

In the view of the wise, Heaven is man and
Earth is woman: Earth fosters what Heaven
lets fall.

When Earth lacks heat, Heaven sends it; when
she has lost her freshness and moisture,
Heaven restores it.

Heaven goes on his rounds, like a husband
foraging for the wife's sake;

And Earth is busy with housewiferies: she
attends to births and suckling that which she
bears.

Regard Earth and Heaven as endowed with
intelligence, since they do the work of intelli-
gent beings.

Unless these twain taste pleasure from one
another, why are they creeping together like
sweethearts?

Without the Earth, how should flower and tree
blossom?

What then, would Heaven's water and heat
produce?

As God put desire in man and woman to the
end that the world should be preserved by
their union,

So hath He implanted in every part of existence
the desire for another part.

Day and Night are enemies outwardly; yet both
serve one purpose,

Each in love with the other for the sake of
perfecting their mutual work,
Without Night, the nature of Man would
receive no income, so there would be nothing
for Day to spend.¹

Rumi asserts that merely to become aware of the "power of love" and to relate oneself to others is not enough; man must translate his state of being, kindness, benevolence, and love into human conduct and creativity. Rumi makes the power of love supreme and in this way makes man's production a means of attaining fellowship and well-being. To Rumi man in his passive state of knowing merely solves the relations with the universe and saves his own soul. However, he must take a further step and discover the joy of being in an active state of well-being in order to relate himself to his fellowmen. This is where classical Buddhism differs from the teachings of Rumi. To become active in society man must perceive that knowledge gives him insight into the nature of society, history and nature, but to practise love in the human situation enriches his insight, strengthens his ties with the present, and unfolds his potentialities. In the human situation love is a therapeutic means which prevents neurosis, greed, rivalry, and eliminates jealousy. In fact, true love does not stand in opposition to hate, as is generally thought, but absorbs it.

1. Nicholson, R.A., *Rumi*. (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1950) 122-23.

Rumi realized the need for certain measures such as rules, orders, laws, and rituals in conventional life, but he insisted that these measures not obstruct the rebirth of man and society. In fact, he considered them necessary only because of man's immaturity. He recommended that social institutions, the family, school, and other life experiences be directed toward the final rebirth of man and his attainment of the "art of loving." This attitude of loving, according to Rumi, as well as man's insight into his human and non-human environment, stimulates man to create outwardly while experiencing happiness inwardly. What he creates is not of great value, but more important is the process which he applies to it. Does he apply himself wholly or is he only partially involved in the act? Do his heart, mind, and hand all act as one or does each pursue one object? All men have an equal opportunity in this task; the form it takes is of relative importance. If one is totally born, then he possesses an abundance of creativity, and in such a state productivity, happiness, esthetics, action, inner peace, and joy all meet.

In their personal life those individuals who possess love may go one step further and discover that the most sublime act is not that man transfers his state of being to physical objects but to sublime conduct. Perhaps this essential course of action accounts for the non-materialistic progress of traditional Eastern thought. The same principle provides a new definition of culture, for culture becomes

a collection of virtuous qualities : one is cultured "if . . . his speech is sincere and if he acts his action will be true."¹

These basic states of love appear in the form of kindness toward the younger, generosity toward the poor, gratitude toward teachers, intimacy and trust toward friends and age-mates, and, at its best, it is evident in companionship with a congenial and well-suited wife. It also manifests itself in the form of humility in walk, moderation in eating, restful sleep (which is better than wakefulness), and in communicative, expressive looks, which convey more eloquence than any speech.

Rumi finally concludes that happy are those who will live under a universal creative state which operates under these norms and through a creative mechanism. They do not waste energy in preparing the road to creativity, but attain it unconsciously through love in the family, care in society, and discernment in interpersonal relations. In that state no one bothers anyone: everyone creates; peace and paradise reign.

Having therefore introduced the concept of a fully-developed man, I can now ask the second question which I raised at the beginning of this chapter: What can this measure contribute to the well-being of modern Western man? To deal with this question requires an evaluation of the West today and some

1. Al-Hujwiri, *Kashf al-Mahjub*, p. 341. (London: Luzac and Company, 1936.)

familiarity with its historical development.

Technology and science have developed two types of societies in the West; some are based on individual conflict and the creation of conflict, whereas others have arisen from social conflict. To resolve these conflicts both Communist and non-Communist societies in the West have relied heavily on reason and its application to social conduct in terms of laws, while disregarding the fact that reason is utilitarian in nature and can serve either health and creativity or drives and man's animal tendencies. At present the West is nearing the end of the application of reason to social conduct and is beginning to realize that reason alone does not provide security and inner peace. An outdated intellect and secularism in Western history have helped the West move from a narrower degree of consciousness to a greater one, as reflected in the West's discovery of history. Except for the Dark Ages, the course of Western history since Greek times has given increasing importance to reason, gradually deviating from the magical world with a widening separation of man from nature. The Western cultural tendency has always leaned toward an ever-expanding consciousness, the mastery of scientific techniques as an instrument of controlling nature, studying man and society, and interpreting man's increasing individuation. The age of Renaissance and enlightenment gave great hope to Western man and manifested itself as a great effort toward the development of a total

man. However, this ray of sunshine was soon overcome by the concept of economic man in search of a greater profit and natural man in search of a national ego, out of which arose the great wars and in turn made the humanistic tendencies of the age of enlightenment a secondary social phenomenon. The dominant forces of rationalism and a technology based on a conflict-producing system have finally resulted in a generation of fragmented self-intellectuals in a well-organized society.

A few critics whose works are still rooted in the humanistic tradition of the West, such as Max Scheller, Ernst Cassirer, Erich Fromm, Julian Huxley, and others have recently realized the inadequacy of self-intellect in solving the total life situation and in producing an answer to certainty and happiness. The earlier intellectual maturity of youth and their search for a more comprehensive answer to life suggests that the West evidences a more traditional separation of affect and intellect than the East. This separation is more and more leading to a search for an answer to the existential dilemma. Thus the growth of reason, as well as the great reliance on it, has brought Western man to the gate of the trans-cultural state.

A second major factor which accounts for the West's increasing awareness is technology, a manifestation of the combined rise of reason and scientific technique, which has transformed natural resources into consumer goods. Consequently, the mechanism

of commercialization has not only produced and marketed, but has also utilized the results of scientific psychology to create false values, false interests, and even false drives such that man has become worthless but strives for worthy things; he ignores his own perfection but uses himself to perfect things. Although a few decades ago this phenomenon lay dormant, the public was unaware of it, and certain intellectuals overlooked it; it has gradually become a common belief. Again the reaction of the younger generation to traditional measures of success and physical comfort implies that material goods are necessary but not sufficient for happiness.

In short, social security for a pleasant life and the opportunity to move about freely, does not necessarily bring with it happiness. Even though the individual is still a product of science in terms of consumer goods and is driven by immediate values, impulses, and false interests, he is, in some cases, bored and tries to inquire into the meaning of life. Some, by attaining a state of possession of things as well as taking it as the end, have arrived at a meaningless life; thus they seek meaning through boredom—the result of over-possession.

Fear and anxiety may be considered as the third factor which has contributed to Western man's awareness of the existential state, as the result of the last two wars and also because "power" is losing its traditional importance. At present the world seems somewhat more insecure for the powerful nations

than for the weaker ones. The unbelievable destructive power of a thermonuclear war has created enough fear and anxiety to require new insight into life. Consequently, some individuals now see that man has only one enemy—himself. The task is to change man in order to make him genuinely interested in himself. A reorientation of attitude is necessary.

Fourthly, on the positive side the physical sciences are producing further space exploration and a new cosmology whose impact on men's minds is ever increasing. At the same time man's new situation in the universe has been extended. In a sense, man is a being who is nourished within the pot of the universe rather than drinking from it. Separation between man and his environment will decrease as man becomes more and more a part of the expanding universe. This scientific discovery gradually imposes on man a new cosmologic perspective which will bring us closer to the trans-cultural state.

The fifth factor is social and individual conflict. The modern industrial society has developed from the principle of social and individual conflict in terms of competition and is related to the one-sided discoveries of Marx, Freud, and Darwin. Gradually, Western critics are becoming aware that despite the presence of conflict, man in order to progress must resolve these conflicts, not increase them. Furthermore, some individuals are exploring the role of creativity and love as mechanisms of human inter-

personal relationships to resolve social contradictions. These factors put Western man in a unique position ; he must assume leadership again, for the West not only possesses the fundamental means for the natural state of man but has basically achieved it, and with better justice can bestow it on all. Furthermore, the West has developed social institutions and human organizations to such a high degree that out of it can come greater automation, mental illness, and a robot-like existence ; or, conversely, these means may be used to create an existential moratorium for rebirth in creativity and happiness.

However, to direct Western sources toward the rebirth of healthier, happier, and more peaceful societies means the emergence of a greater and intense conflict. The major conflict arises from the emerging existential state and its stand against the traditional and contemporary social man, in addition to a variety of political, economical and provincial conflicts which exist. To resolve this basic conflict Toynbee and others who have considered Western culture a Christian culture stress a retreat to Christian ethical values. Undoubtedly, this idea would gain some validity if people's awareness would unquestionably be in harmony with the Bible and if economical, political, recreational, and social institutions could perform according to the measures given by the Book. From what we now know we can be certain that this is a daydream, a failure, a way of retreat,

and a door open only to the defeated. Furthermore, the nature of man tells us that when he becomes aware of his previous state he can no longer return to its situation unless he becomes mentally ill. As soon as an infant begins to walk he cannot return to a motionless state. When he is a child he is no more a dependent infant, when a youth he is no more a helpless child ; when an adult he is no longer a bold youth ; although in a sense he is all three.

On the other hand, there are those economists and industrialists who emphasize the material comforts, even if they will ultimately lead to a community of robots, to the growth of an automated, mechanical man, rekindling the beast in man. According to these authorities, man's reliance on automation has compelled him to adopt still further mechanization ; yet they fail to realize the converse, that is, automation is also a means which requires a redefinition of the role of society and industrialization. If we take automation as a product, as an instrument which man has created, it means that man has no other way than to become aware of its scientific principles of operation and to recognize that knowledge of its control becomes a necessary educational task for all. This situation also requires insight into its growth so that man may put himself above its mechanism. The leisure time created by this process of automation should leave man enough time for his rebirth in creativity and maturity. There are those intellectuals who, in the light of true Western culture, have

reacted against mechanistic trends, and who have made significant contributions to Western thought. Among them is Erich Fromm, who in his *Sane Society*, suggests that the choice is not one of communism versus Western democracy but that of becoming a robot versus a mature man. He offers a keen insight into the growth of Western man's character from medieval times to the twentieth century and discusses how his diversity of interests can help develop creative communities.

In the resolution of cultural and existential conflicts, there exists still a third group, that is, those with genuine scientific interest in Eastern wisdom who have come to believe that in the last several thousand years the East has attained some noteworthy accomplishments. The East has preserved a great heritage for the maturing Western man such that he sees himself in the cosmos rather than in society and in history. These few perceptive men have furthered the understanding of the East more than all the writings of early travellers, missionaries, or even orientalists in the last few centuries. Rather than pursue treasure, amusement, or economic advancement in the East, they have sought in Eastern life meaning, wisdom, and an approach to life for man in his remaking. To this group belong Jung, Watts, and such men of the East as Suzuki, Tagore, and others. These men, however, have introduced and interpreted Eastern philosophy to an eager Western audience without first presenting a general theoretic-

cal basis to define the place of Eastern wisdom in the West, and vice versa, even though their work has clarified many Eastern concepts. A few are now trying to fill this gap; one of the foremost ones is Harold Kelman, Dean of the American Institute of Psycho-analysis. Dr. Kelman's insight into Western man's search for the mastery of life, as well as his receptivity to the Eastern mind, have made it possible for him to analyze, compare, and utilize the two modes of thought in terms of modern man's needs. He states :

For the purpose of moulding and mastering life, the West has put high value on reason, will power, competitiveness, denial of feelings and materialism. To a limited extent, some philosophies and religions in the West, but many more in the East emphasize values that are not only antithetical to Appollonian tendencies [Appollonian modes emphasize the moulding and mastering of life], but Dionysian ones as well [Dionysian tendencies stress extreme stimulation of all feelings, the creating of ecstatic states and the losing and abandoning of self to the greater all]. Oriental metaphysics, not speculative philosophy as we understand it in the West, defines what it is in negative terms. i.e. by saying what it is not. It is non-rationalistic, non-teleologic, non-proselytizing, non-time and non-space bound and non-materialistic. It is also non-conforming and non-conventional to Western

value systems. But it is also non-rebelling against them. Neither conforming nor rebelling, it is accepting of what is, which has nothing to do with approving or disapproving. This attitude might be exemplified by that of Zen Buddhism which does not emphasize the Dionysian tendencies as so many in the West tend to believe all Eastern philosophies do; nor does it look down on the Appollonian ones. It does not counsel asceticism, resignation or mortification of the flesh which is the viewpoint so many Westerners have of Eastern philosophies. Zen is a practical, everyday lived philosophy. When asked what Zen was, one master answered, "Eat when hungry, sleep when tired."¹

Huxley, in *Knowledge, Morality and Destiny*, beautifully summarizes his underlying concern for humanity under the concept of *evolutionary humanism*. He discusses history and cultural growth as the continuation of natural evolution. He then explains the reality of the polarity of Western thinking and the attainment of the reality of a state of unity :

The basic postulate of evolutionary humanism is that mental and spiritual forces—using the term *force* in a loose and general sense—do have operative effect, and are indeed of decisive importance in the highly practical business of working out human destiny ; and that they are

1. Kelman, H., Self-realization and Masochism. In *Science and Psychoanalysis*, edited by J.H. Masserman. (New York : Grune and Stratton, Inc., 1959.)

not supernatural, not outside man but within him. Regarded as an evolutionary agency, the human species is a psycho-social mechanism which must operate by utilizing these forces. We have to understand the nature of these forces ; where, within the psycho-social mechanism, they reside ; and where their points of application are.

In the first place, there is evil in man as well as good. This obvious ethical fact has found theological expression in elaborate doctrines like that of original sin, and has been projected into hypotheses of supernatural powers of good and evil, like God and the Devil, Ormuzd and Ahriman. But the crude distinction in terms of ethical absolutes like "good" and "evil" requires reformulation in the light of psychology and history. We then see that the important distinction to make is between positive and negative, between constructive and destructive or restrictive. On the negative side we have such forces as hate, envy, despair, fear, destructive rage and aggressiveness, restrictive selfishness in all its forms, from greed to lust for power, and negations of effectiveness such as internal disharmony, frustration and unresolved conflict; on the positive side we have comprehension, love in the broadest sense, including love of beauty and desire for truth, the urge to creation and fuller expression, the desire to participate

and to feel useful in contributing to some larger enterprise or purpose, pure enjoyment and the cultivation of intrinsic talents and capacities, and that constructive disposition of forces that we call inner harmony.¹

It is to this trend of thought that Western philosophy can benefit from Rumi's contribution to life. The work of Erich Fromm, however, appears to me to be more closely related to Rumi's concepts.² It thus seems appropriate to relate Rumi's insight into human nature to the systematic study of Fromm and to re-emphasize the contributions of these humanists to the dilemma of our age. Furthermore, it is desirable to relate this study to Fromm's writings, for among the leading thinkers of today, "Fromm does not suffer from the illusion that all psychological knowledge began with Freud or with Fromm."³ He, in fact, believes that creative thinking has been the healthy function of man and has a long tradition. "If one thinks of the great works of literature and art of all ages, there seems to be a chance of creating a vision of good human functioning, and hence of sensitivity to malfunctioning."⁴

Furthermore, Fromm does not believe that well-

1. Huxley, J., *Knowledge, Morality and Destiny*. (New York : New American Library, 1957.)

2. It was in fact the reading of Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis which stimulated me to begin this study.

3. Mullaby, P., *Oedipus, Myth and Complex*. (N.Y. : Hermitage Press, 1948) 331.

4. Fromm, E., *The Art of Loving*. (N. Y. : Harper and Brothers, 1956,) 117.

being is the absence of illness, nor does he limit the purpose of psychoanalysis to "the liberation of the human being from his neurotic symptoms, inhibitions and abnormalities of character,"¹ as did Freud. Rather Fromm deduces his concept of well-being from the state of a mature and healthy man, that is, the presence of joy.

Both Fromm and Rumi have perceived themselves in the evolutionary process of life. They differ from Freud, who saw man as an isolated being, then studied the human ills of his own culture, and generalized on man *per se*. The philosophy of both Rumi and Fromm does not concern itself with man in a particular era but man in terms of his ultimate goal, in relation to his existence, his potential growth, and in the belief that "man is mankind." Both these humanists, in their belief that man is his own end, would join Shabistari (a Persian Sufi of the thirteenth century) who said :

There is no other final cause beyond man ;
It is disclosed in man's own self.²

Another reason for comparing the two humanists is that both men, despite the separation of seven centuries, have lived in similar ages, if not in identical epochs. Rumi's age (1207-73) was characterized by fear, insecurity, and turmoil. The threat of future

1. Freud, S., "Analysis Terminable and Unterminalable," *Collected Papers*. (N. Y. : Hograth Press) Vol. 5, 316.

2. Shabistari, Sa'ud din Mahmud, *The Mystic Rose Garden*. Translated into English by E. H. Whinfield. (London : Trubner and Co. 1880.)

Mongol raids brought fear, in much the same way as modern man dreads the possibility of any atomic war. Moreover, in both eras religious doctrines decayed. Islam did not play as effective a role as it had in previous centuries, nor did Christianity possess any certainty of its status in Europe. Yet such proselytizers of religion as the Crusaders sought to save the sanctity of religion. In more recent times definite attempts have been made to revitalize formalistic religion, even to the extent of setting up Christian-Muslim fellowships—anything as a defence against Communism. Indeed, there are striking parallels between the motives of the Mongols and the Crusaders to those of pressure groups operating on modern man. Both eras have witnessed people on the go—but to what destination? We hardly know. Everywhere people have been used. But to what purpose? We hardly care. Everywhere man has become a means of production, of political games, and a means of fanaticism. In every corner one individual finds a chip from a diamond of truth and shouts that he possesses the whole truth. Thus, in Rumi's age the Pope, the Caliphate, and the Mongol leaders all enslaved or slew millions of men, but for no real reason. Man fought against man, just as now he struggles against his own soul. In such a social setting both Rumi and Fromm have responded to the reverberations of their age—to rescue man and transcend him beyond the clouds of politics so that he may again see the newly rising sun and the dawn of a

new era. Both have seen the positive side of the coin of man's destiny ; both have lived in crucial times, and it must be remembered that in any crucial period it takes a highly perceptive individual to understand man's problem.

In Rumi's era external security, even wealth and power, had lost their effectiveness. In Fromm's age even those who possess considerable knowledge, material gain, and power still struggle for security. In the earlier period Muslim thinking had lost its dynamic impact and intellectuals turned to scholasticism, a trend which weakened the adaptability of theology and knowledge. Today, specialization in the physical and social sciences has made man merely a classifier of facts and unable to utilize this knowledge to improve his life situation. The intellectual life has given, in Knight's words, the rise of "... semi-literate masses who have advanced one step further toward alienation in the sense that they have been equipped with an additional means of self-identification, an additional means of shielding from themselves the knowledge that they are only in so far as they do."¹

In such ages as that of Fromm and Rumi, characterized by the ineffectivity of ethics, religious principles, and even knowledge ; values and the value system have also become ineffective as a measure of man's conduct. Thus, the main task confronting the

1. Knight, Everett, *The Objective Society*. (N.Y. : George Brazitter, 1960), 130.

great thinkers is the discovery of a new norm and the creation of a new value system in accord with man's total rebirth. Both Rumi and Fromm have attempted this by elevating the factors of love, intimacy, and humanity above laws and regulations.

In their personal life too Rumi and Fromm show considerable resemblance. One had to emigrate from the barbaric forces of the Mongols, the other from the Nazis. Although such a loss of close ties may make the weak despair, it enhances the vision of stronger men. Such a separation, as in the case of Rumi and Fromm, brought about increased contact with various groups and different ways of life, and as a result it provided an opportunity for them to deduce the common problems of man's existence. It strengthened their faith in the reality of universal man and in man's ability to create symbols. These two great men recognized that in every age and in every place man has suffered from the same ill—that is, a lack of proper relatedness to other men and to the universe; and in every age and place man has found it easier to live with his illness and to use substitute objects of relatedness.

Fromm and Rumi also agree that social conditions must become instrumental in changing the characteristics of social man to universal man. Thus, their ideas are compatible with their objectives and in accord with their principles, that is, liberation from the limitations of social institutions, although they differ in the way they advocate changing social

man to universal man.

Fromm supplements his cultural insight with available scientific knowledge of the twentieth century in order to evaluate man's situation and discover a norm for his rebirth in terms of his humanistic psychoanalytic technique. He firmly believes in man's potentiality and stresses the point that a partial answer is inadequate. In fact, the pathological symptoms and psychological crises will be eliminated from the psyche if the individual finds himself, becomes subject to his own acts, and lives in loving harmony with his fellow men.

Fromm's technique therefore combines cultural wisdom with scientific technique. In the sense that Kant claimed that the senses without reason are inadequate and reason with senses is blind; Fromm can claim that cultural wisdom without scientific knowledge is impractical and scientific technique without cultural wisdom dubious. His cultural and scientific insight have led him to assert that man's reason was born at the time when he separated from nature and lost his unconscious happiness.

Fromm emphasizes that this separation produced man's original awareness, anxiety, and the initial step in becoming a fully developed man and finding a new harmony. It is here that Fromm perceives in man the traits of a small beast as well as a universal man, whereas Freud overlooked the relationship between the two.

In the process of securing a new relatedness, however, man encounters various incompatible social situations from birth to maturity, which direct his capacities to turn in various ways, such as in masochism, sadism, automation (conformity), and destruction, or in productive pursuits. Fromm equates productivity, creativity, health, joy, and being fully born; he acknowledges that sex, power, social relationships, authority, and various other means must be used to further the growth of man. In this process social man must definitely direct himself toward the concept of universal man—the norm.

Those individuals who have not achieved self-realization develop their character and consciousness through the process of assimilation, socialization, and enculturation. They form a pattern, which subsequently, however, becomes a burden. Fromm has remarked :

Taking into account what has been said . . . about the stultifying influence of society, and furthermore considering our wider concept of what constitutes unconsciousness, we arrive at a new concept of unconsciousness—consciousness. We may begin by saying that the average person, while he thinks he is awake, actually is half-asleep. By “half-asleep” I mean that his contact with reality is a very partial one; most of what he believes to be reality (outside or inside of himself) is a set of fictions which his mind constructs. He is aware of reality only to

the degree to which his social functioning makes it necessary. He is unaware of his fellowmen inasmuch as he needs to cooperate with them; he is aware of material and social reality inasmuch as he needs to be aware of it in order to manipulate it (*He is aware of reality to the extent to which the goal of survival makes such awareness necessary*).¹

Thus, unlike other social scientists, Fromm goes beyond the reality of society and relates himself to the reality of humanity, which is potentially inherent within him: "Making the unconsciousness conscious transforms the mere idea of universality of man into the living experience of this universality; it is the experimental realization of humanism."² Such a transformation can only occur if the individual undergoes a rebirth in serious adulthood, that is, if his growth has not stopped at adolescence, marriage, or social integration.

It is in the realization of humanism that we can deduce a universal norm for measuring social progress, and social character, reduce man's misery, and illuminate conditions which are conducive to insanity. In such a way we gain insight into life, truth, love, and affection as mechanisms of relatedness to others. Ultimately, we come to realize the role of thought, reason, and knowledge as they relate to man's sane

1. Fromm, E., Suzuki, D.T. and Martino, R. *Psychoanalysis and Zen Buddhism*. (N. Y. : Harper, 1960.)

2. *Ibid*, 107.

inner intentions, and externally to the control of nature.

However, when dealing with the resolution of interpersonal conflict, Fromm, like Rumi, finds that love is the drug of all drugs; he says: "The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety."¹

To remove this shame and guilt, and overcome separateness, Fromm advocates that man avoid such illusionary ideas about love as considering it a pleasant sensation and that he stop seeing the problem of love as that of "being love, rather than that of loving, of one's capacity to love."² In analytically studying what Rumi practised, Fromm asserts that love is the answer to the problem of human existence; it is an art and should be learned. It is everyone's duty to master this art, then practise it. Although the source is one, the shades and forms are numerous. Basically, one can learn its principle by feeling as a responsible human being; by caring, giving, and by having respect for others. Moreover, one must experience that "love is an activity not a passive affect; it is a "standing in," not a "falling for." In the most general way, the active character of love can be described by stating that love is primarily giving, not receiving.³

One must realize that "love is labour" and labour

1. Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 1.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*

must become love. This is only possible by the unconditional giving of a mother; by the act of totally being a father, by self-love, that is, concern for one's own well-being and a growing concern for humanity as represented in brotherly love; and by developing insight into the nature of the polarity of love between male and female, where "in love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two."¹

Finally, Fromm interprets the love of God, which in its mature form is evidenced by man identifying himself with God's attributes; he can practise love and become an all-embracing personality; when he attains this over-all image he then acts according to God's will.

The principles that Rumi practised, are viewed by Fromm as a necessary requirement for the development of a healthy and mature character. The mastery of this art, like that of any other, demands practice and involves discipline, concentration, patience, and sensitivity. One must become sensitive to his own humanistic conscience in order to find the reason for his anxiety and depression. He must concentrate on the moment and patiently remain on guard so that his capacity for creativity and love blooms.

However, it should be recognized that the relative simplicity of society in the Near East of the thirteenth century was more favourable to humanistic

1. Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 1.

interpersonal relationships than is modern Western society, where social forces clash with those of love and kindness. Therefore, we face a much greater human problem today than in the past, due in part to the technological impact on man, and in part to man's impersonal political and social life. Thus, this problem requires that all socio-economic and political efforts be directed toward transcending man's character above his present state so as to bring about a situation where people can work together, share experiences, and express genuine affection, or as Fromm states: "Society must be organized in such a way that man's social, loving nature is not separated from his social existence, but becomes one with it."¹

*The Contribution of Rumi to the Communist
Image of Man*

Contrary to popular belief, my understanding of Russian social, cultural, and economic progress in recent decades has led me to believe that the Soviets, unconscious of the trend of man's process of maturity, are headed toward the existential, trans-cultural state, but they are arriving at the station by a different route. Unlike the West which has arrived at the threshold of the existential state through ego-expansion, through unveiling tradition, through excessive material possession, and through socio-religious conflict; the Soviets are at the threshold of existential

1. Fromm, *The Art-of Loving*, 1.

rebirth via the emerging contradictions arising from both cosmological awareness versus historical awareness, and the individual's awareness of his existential needs versus social demands. Also such similar factors as automation of the means of production, fear of total annihilation, the ineffectivity of over nationalism, and the like are greatly directing and influencing the Soviets toward a deeper awareness and a greater anxiety, which requires an existential moratorium for rebirth.

On the positive side the Soviets, as is true of Western and even some Asian groups, are finding that by winning a conflict, a war, or even a territory, one also loses. It is in the long range more profitable to direct man toward creativity and productivity, though they are achieving this by external means rather than by the resolution of inner conflicts. This trend, I believe, will increase, furthered by the demands of the people. This demand also advocates that the resolution of existential conflict as a means toward rebirth of a new type of man—a peaceful and creative man—will not be possible by fighting capitalism or even by spreading Communism, for Communism is a social pattern which acts both as a means and a barrier to rebirth in creativity, as is the Western or Asian cultural pattern. Therefore, the means of resolution of existential conflict which the Soviets and other Communist societies should seek is internal, that is, transcending Marxism to humanism and thus finding a more comprehensive measure of

social change in the characteristics of universal, fully-integrated men. It is within the state of fully-born man that individuals attain equality with one another, regardless of whether they are American, Russian, or Chinese. And it is in the application of the qualities of men like Rumi that any nation can transcend the individual and social characteristics of its present society toward a transcendental state. The result will be a state of inter-cultural culture, which can develop a common language, directing man's heart toward one aim and relating individuals to one another through fellowship and a positive attitude. Moreover, it is in terms of the measure of man's character which Rumi's ideas can contribute to the character of the Communist societies.

*The Contribution of Rumi to the Image of
Man in the Modern East*

In contrast to the West, which can no longer find security in practical reason, the man of the East stands at the threshold of the birth of enlightenment, whereas Western man has become a fragmented individual in a large organization. The Eastern man has only recently sought to change his fragmented society; for in the East, man's totality, in its simplest form, remains yet unbroken by large organizations. A rational approach to social conduct is a recent and still not prevailing means. It is at this point that the question arises: how can the ideas of such men as Rumi contribute to the health and happiness of

Eastern man ? Similarly, to develop a keener insight into the present Afro-Asian communities requires some familiarity with recent historical developments in that area.

Traditional oriental societies, despite their fragmented nature, helped orient and comfort the individual, and in addition established the limits of his individuality. A person maintained his individuality to the extent allowed by his family, the mores, customs, and especially the values of the society. The economic conditions of the group also fostered certain co-operative efforts as long as they benefited the immediate group reference. The group's primary task was to protect the individual. The elders held positions of respect : their words were listened to, and they themselves were taken care of during sickness and unproductivity. Children grew up within the extended family circle and seldom experienced loneliness and insecurity. Men were sympathetic to women. Simple creativity was encouraged. With all its inadequacies, this system fostered close interpersonal ties between individuals, often without their being aware of it. They shared their joys and comforted one another in times of misfortune.

This irrational law of interpersonal relationships also grew as a reaction to the dominating forces in society. In an effort to protect themselves in times of danger, people drew closer to one another. When this effort failed, that is, at those times when natural and social authoritarian forces became destructive,

the people experienced an utter helplessness, which in turn reinforced the longing for an internal relatedness. The search then began for a hidden authority in religion, or within man himself, as in mystical orientation. This mechanism of interpersonal relatedness became a mechanism of supernatural or internal safety.

With the rise of socio-political rights of individuals in the West, reason in the form of law became the instrument of conflict resolution, but at the same time this process bred colonialism, which added a still further restriction on Asian and African peoples. In the beginning there was not much contact between the Eastern people and Western authorities, for the latter were more interested in the land and natural resources, and the people themselves were ignorant of Western intentions. Indeed, the Western authorities left the peasants as they had found them, but because of their desire to control the country's economy they deliberately changed the social, economic, and political structure of the urban people. Studies of colonialism in India, Egypt, and Persia will bear this out.

In the second phase of colonialism the urban communities in the East finally became Westernized to the extent that they built a facade culture. Under this new social control everyone was mutually dependent upon the other. The merchants were no longer free to choose and control the laws of the market ; the younger generation (those brought up under

Westernization) were trained to feel the need for administration and to become the technical elite, that is, a liaison between the colonial authorities and the people. In a sense they were the shareholders of the "caravan" (the people) and a friend of the "thieves" (the colonial authorities). In the process, however, they lost their autonomy and became mere figureheads. Even art and science were filtered through colonial powers. There was no opportunity for people to start from the basic principles in introducing Western industry. In its misrepresentation and ridicule of native customs, the colonial powers deprived the leaders of their self-confidence and created an ambivalent state in which the individual's feelings were rooted in tradition and whose mind remained under the pressure of colonial authority. This system fostered servility and dependency.

The third phase of colonialism (post-World War II) has been characterized by the presence of an awakened group of leaders who share a common outlook, whether they come from Egypt, Iran, Turkey, India, or Indonesia; they have become a synthesis of their own culture and that of the West. In this new state they are much stronger in character than before. They have become the measure of life and society, and they have succeeded in ending colonialism. They have socially awakened their people and made them aware of the value of political liberation and autonomy in decision making. Accompanying this urge of group identity has come a desire for improving living con-

ditions and a great desire for economic improvement. Although the Near East has accepted the concept of the individual's undeniable rights and the protection of them by law, it is still insecure in that it feels the conflict which has arisen from its social and cultural contacts with the West.

In this effort the Near East can pursue either of two courses. It may adopt the rational and contractual method of conflict resolution of the West and gradually separate emotion from thought and reason, thereby creating numerous other problems in human relations. On the other hand, it may examine the sources of social contradictions in both the East and West and resolve these basic conflicts in terms of man's ultimate destiny, that is, the development of a healthy character and the establishment of peace.

It is in terms of the latter course that Rumi and his related oriental heritage can be of great benefit to present-day leaders. A new insight into the unique contribution of men like Jalal al-Din Rumi to life, happiness, and peace can give such leaders a new norm to be used to evaluate Western societies and to arrive at the conclusion that the over-rational society of the West is a reaction to the previously dominant-submissive relationship of centuries ago. They can discover that Locke's theories of politics and the nature of man came as a reaction to the extreme views of Hobbes, who believed that men act like wolves in relation to one another.

This view must be taken if the East is to develop

a healthy society which will contribute to the gradual but total well-being of the individual, that is, to facilitate the evolution of man's rebirth without moulding him first to a social self, an intellectual self, or a robot. The East can then perceive the inadequacy of such fragmented persons and try to find the image of the fully-integrated person, just as the West is currently seeking. Such a process of group rebirth requires visionary leaders who utilize creativity, health, and peace as measures of social change. Under these conditions, the East can gradually utilize modern science and technology, and industrialize without becoming fragmented and the victim of its own creation.

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