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**SHAMS OF TABRİZ'S TONGUE:
MAWLÂNÂ JALÂL AL-DÎN RÛMÎ**

Şems-i Tebrizî'nin Dili: Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî

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Abstract

Shams of Tabrîz's intimate and mystical relationship with Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî is all known by all the researchers interested in the matter. But the point that many researchers are missing is that Shams was incapable of expressing his mystical visions, and it was narrated some sources that Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî was *divinely invested to express them*, and the love displayed by Shams, more than any particular ideas that he expressed, assured his elevated status in the eyes of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî as a king of spirituality. The result of this extraordinary mystical encounter was an intellectually sophisticated literary legacy most of which is displayed in his *Kullîyyât-î Shams yâ Dîvân-î Kabîr* and partly in the *Mathnawî*.

Keywords: Shams of Tabrîz, Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, mystical relationship, Kullîyyât-î Shams yâ Dîvân-î Kabîr, The Mathnawî.

Özet

Şems-i Tebrîzî'nin Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî'yle yakın ilişkisi, konuyla ilgilenen bütün araştırmacıların bildiği bir husustur. Ama araştırmacıların vurgulamadığı bir nokta vardır ki o da Şems'in tasavvufî tecrübesini ifade etmede güçlük çektiği ve Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî'nin, onun bu duygularını aktarmada "İlâhî bir takdirle görevlendirildiğinin" bazı kaynaklarda zikredildiği hususudur. Şems'in Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî'ye karşı sergilediği sevgi, onun Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî gözünde "maneviyatın sultanı" olmasına sebep olmuştur. Bu olağanüstü ilişkinin sonucu, edebî bir üslupta, Külliyyât-ı Şems veya Divân-ı Kebîr ve kısmen de Mesnevî'de karşımıza çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şems-i Tebrîzî, Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî, Mistik ilişki, Külliyyât-ı Şems veya Divân-ı Kebîr, Mesnevî'.

This article will reconsider a number of questions that are central to the relationship between Shams of Tabriz (d. 645/1247), whose full name was Shams al-Dîn Muhammad ibn 'Alî,¹ and Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî (d. 672/1273). Shams's intimate and mystical relationship with Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî is all known by all the researchers interested in the matter; therefore, I will not go further into explaining this relationship. I will simply say that they first met in Aleppo or in Damasqus and the effective meeting occurred in Konya in 642/1244. The exact date can be found in *Maqālāt* of Shams.² At the time of meeting, Shams was an old man, probably in his sixties, and Rûmî was thirty-eight. Some passages in these books say that they retired into seclusion for six months, while some say it was three months. During this meeting, Shams asked question after question as though he were examining Rûmî.³ After this meeting and seclusion, Shams illuminated and influenced Rûmî so much that he turned into an ecstatic Sufi, changed his lifestyle and became enraptured with love, entrusting his disciples' education to his close friends.

What I shall argue here is that as Shams was incapable of expressing his mystical visions, Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî was believed to be *divinely invested to express them*, and the love displayed by Shams, more than any particular ideas that he expressed, assured his elevated status in the eyes of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî as a king of spirituality. The result of this extraordinary mystical encounter was an intellectually sophisticated literary legacy that emerged from experiences in which intellect seems to have played only a secondary role.

Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî: The Tongue of Shams

Rûmî was an heir to the mystical culture of Imâm al-Ghazâlî's (d.

¹ Ahmad Sipahsâlâr, *Risâla-i Faridûn b. Ahmad Sipahsâlâr dar ahwâl-i Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Mawlawî*, ed. Sa'îd Nafîsî, Tehran: Kitâbkhâna-i va Châpkhâna-i Iqbâl 1325 A.Hsh./1946, 149.

² Shams-i Tabrizî, *Maqālāt*, nd, np, Mawlânâ Museum Archive, no. 2145, 33b-34a.

³ See Sipahsâlâr, *Risâla*, 124-34; Shams al-Dîn Ahmad al-Aflākî, *Manâqib al-'arifîn*, ed. Tahsin Yazıcı, 2 vols., Ankara: TTK, (v. I) 1976-(v. II) 1980, II, 618-621 (4/6-9); For an adequate evaluation of Shams-Rûmî encounter and relation, see Semih Ceyhan, "The Sun of Muhammedan Light", *Şems. Güneşle Aydınlananlar/Enlightened by the Sun*, Istanbul: Nefes, 2010, 25-48: 30.

505/1111) brother Ahmad al-Ghazālī (d. 520/1125), Hakīm Sanā'ī (d. 526/1131),⁴ Farīd al-Dīn 'Attār (d. 618/1221) and Shams of Tabrīz (d. 645/1247). According to Sultān Walad, all these Sufis are from the same "light". Whoever wants to understand Rūmī should read the works of these Sufis, that is, Sanā'ī, 'Attār and Shams.⁵ Here it must first be kept in mind these Sufis, especially Ahmad al-Ghazālī, were known as the Sufis who established the rules of the *Tarīq-i Shuttār*. According to them, everything, even the devil, is a devout lover of God. The devil did not want to bow to man because he felt himself incapable of bowing to another "being" other than God. In fact, to the devil, God was the only being in the whole universe. In order not to bow to man, he/the devil even ventured to be in hell forever, i.e., he did not care about being in hell as long as he did not have to bow to man.⁶ Thus, as a close follower of Ahmad Ghazālī, Rūmī's way of Sufism was definitely *Tarīq-i Shuttār*, the way of love.⁷

As is already known, Hakīm Sanā'ī's *Īlāhīnāma* (or *Hadīqa*⁸) and Farīd al-Dīn 'Attār's *Mantiq al-Tayr* and *Musibatnāma* were books that appealed to Rūmī's disciples. It is even known that one of the reasons that led Rūmī to compose the *Mathnawī* was the request of Chalabi Husām al-Dīn's (d. 683/1284)⁹ to write a poem in the meter of the poems written by these Sufi-poets as a present for his close friends. Upon this request, Rūmī said: "Yes, I too received a revelation from God to do so" and took the first 18 couplets from his headgear and gave them to Chalabi Husām al-Dīn.¹⁰

Sultan Walad defines the way of Shams and Rūmī as the way of love: "Shams of Tabrīz and my father Mawlānā (may God bless their deeper souls) are of the *Khawāss al-khwāss*/elite of elite lovers of al-

⁴ He is known as the forerunner of Persian literature and founder of the Persian *Mathnawī*. For his biography, see J.T.P. de Bruijn, "Sanā'ī," *EP*, IX, 3-5.

⁵ Sultān Walad, *Intihā-nāma*, ed. Muhammed Ali Hazānādārlu, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Rawzāna, Chāpkhāna-i Laylā, 1376, 10-13.

⁶ See S. Uludağ, "Ahmed el-Gazzālī," *DİA*, II (İstanbul, 1989), 70.

⁷ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddîn*, İstanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka, 1999, 130-34; idem., *Mevlânâ'dan sonra Mevlevîlik*, İstanbul: İnkılâp ve Aka, 1953, 186.

⁸ Idem, *Mevlânâ Celâleddîn*, 118.

⁹ Sipahsālār, *Risāla*, 142.

¹⁰ See A. A. Konuk, *Mesnevi-i Şerif Şerhi*, vols. 1-2. eds. S. Eraydın - M. Tahralı, İstanbul: Gelenek, 2004, I, 89; II, 67-68.

Haqq /the Real. They were one united person and light. Although they were two separate people physically, they were united as one person spiritually.” Sultan Walad goes on citing a couplet of his father and says that they must be considered as the same person:

بروز وصل اگر مارا ازان دلدار بشناسی
پس ان دلبر دگر باشد، من بی دل دگر باشم

(On the day of meeting, If you see someone other than the beloved, know that he is someone else and I, the lover, am someone else)¹¹ That is, the one you see, is someone other than my beloved. Since you should see us being united.

A very important point researchers missing while examining Shams of Tabrīz's¹² life was that he was evidently incapable of speaking about “what he has witnessed in the *'ālam al-ghayb*/invisible realm”. He first mentioned this to Baba Kamāl of Tabrīz/Jandī (d. 672/1273),¹³ one of his early masters, at one of Baba Kamāl's¹⁴ sermons, which Shams and his close friend Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī (d. 688/1289)¹⁵ used to listen to. Contrary to Shams, 'Irāqī used to compose poems and recite them extensively to his master. The master inquired Shams about the matter and asked if he was having visions

¹¹ Sultān Walad, *Intihānāma*, 10-13.

¹² He was also called Kāmīl of Tabrīz. See al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 614-5.

¹³ He was one of the substitutes for Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221?). For information on his life, see Devin De Weese, “Baba Kamal Jandi and the Kubravī Tradition among the Turks of Central Asia,” *Der Islam*, 71-1 (1994), 58-94; Süleyman Gökbulut, *Necmeddin-i Kübrâ Hayatı, Eserleri, Görüşleri*, İstanbul: İnsan, 2010, 160-68.

¹⁴ His other masters were Abū Bakr Sallabāf and Khalwatī Rukn al-Dīn Sajāsī. See Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddin*, 50.

¹⁵ One of renowned representative of Theosophical Sufism, or rather Sufism of love, and a close friend of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī and Sadr al-Dīn Qūnawī (d. 673/1274). Best known for his *Lama'āt*, a work consisting of his lyrical poems. He became affiliated with Bahā' al-Dīn Zakariyya in Multan, and undertook many khalwats (seclusions) in which he preferred to say lyrics instead of worshipping and praying. But when his friends informed his case to the sheikh, he/ the sheikh did not forbid him to do so and, quite the contrary, he supported him by saying that he is exempt. Later on, he became famous for his lyrics and received the sympathy of his sheikh. He even married the sheikh's daughter and succeeded him after his death in 661/1262 or 666/1267. People became jealous of him and denounced him to the Sultān of the time by saying that he was saying lyrics and engaging himself with beautiful persons (an allusion to his school of Jamāliya/ Being enrapt with beautiful people, seeing God's beautiful names and attributes in them). Being made aware of the consequences of these accusations, 'Irāqī left Multan on pilgrimage first, and then for Anatolia. See Orhan Bilgin, “Fahreddin Irākī,” *DİA*, XII (Ankara 1995), 84-6.

like Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī and why he did not engage in poems as he did. He responded: "I do have visions but I am incapable of expressing them." Upon this response, his master offered the following prayer to Shams: "May God the Glorious assign a friend to you, a friend who can describe the realities and the gnosis on your behalf. Rivers of wisdom may flow from his heart to his tongue, his words may dress this wisdom in letters and sounds, and the adornment of the dress may belong to you."¹⁶ The friend who would possess these qualities was, of course, no-one other than the renowned Sufi-poet and thinker Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

Shams says: "I swear that God has not yet brought to the face of the earth someone who could speak as eloquently as Rūmī could. He is the second best in speaking eloquently after Prophet Muhammad."¹⁷ Shams regards himself as a *worm* on Rūmī's leather costume, clarifying the reason for this metaphor by saying: "I am not given a portion in speaking well and eloquently. May God endow Rūmī blessed rewards."¹⁸ There cannot be another statement that better clarifies the reason that Rūmī was created for him. This was acknowledged by Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī himself who once kissed Shams' head, saying to him: "I was I. But now I am you. God created me for you. I sold this world to you (meaning: I'm not interested in the world anymore. You are my only interest)."¹⁹ This reminds us of the renowned story in the *Mathnawī*: A certain man knocked at his friend's door. His friend asked, "Who is there?"

¹⁶ 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī, *Nafahāt al-uns min hadarāt al-quds*, transl. and commentary: Lāmī Chalabi, İstanbul: Ma'rifat nd, 520-1. Other sources relating this event say that Shams, during one of his travels from Dasht to Turkmenistan as a merchant, was attacked by thieves and had to take refuge in Baba Kamāl Jandī's dargāh, and he used this opportunity for his mystical training. See Kemāl al-Dīn Husayn Khārazmī, *Jawāhir al-asrār wa zawāhir al-amwār*, ed. M. J. Sharī'at (Tahrān: Asātir, 1384 HSh), I/ 103-104 (This is quoted in: Süleyman Gökbulut, *Necmeddīn-i Kübrā*, 162n-163; idem., *Harezmī'nin Mesnevī Şerhi*, [İzmir: Tıbyân, 2013], 81-82); M. Cemaleddin Hulvî, *Lemezât-i Hulviyye Ez Lemezât-i Ulviye (Yüce velilerin Tatlı Halleri)*, ed. M. S. Tayşî, İstanbul: Tercüman Gazetesi, 1993, 294.

¹⁷ Al-Aflākî, *Manāqib*, II, 636.

¹⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 119a; idem (Şems-i Tebrizî), *Makâlât*, transl. Mehmet Nuri Gencosmanoğlu, İstanbul: Ataç, 2006 (Hereafter: Turkish Translation), 295. It is likely that he compared himself to a worm since they were probably talking about worms at that time. See Shams-i Tabrizî, *Maqālāt*, 131a/ (Turkish translation), 323.

¹⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 75b/ (Turkish translation), 206.

and he answered, "Yes." His friend said, "Begone!" and did not open the door, until the time that he answered, "Thou, O charmer of all hearts!"²⁰

Shams utters frequently that he can not speak eloquently. He says: "One of the leading personalities stated something. But I feel sorrow that I am not able to quote it properly."²¹ He is of the idea that his words are waiting to be discovered by Rûmî: "Although my words are not so bright, they are under a black veil (they are waiting to be discovered by someone). This sun stayed behind the curtains. And this sun is towards Rûmî. Since his face is across it".²² Shams states that his words are hidden in his inner world, and whoever wants to listen should come near to him. However, there is a doorkeeper of this inner world,²³ who is none other than Rûmî. Shams compares Rûmî to a diver and himself to the pearl-merchant in the following famous story: "There was a merchant looking for a specific pearl that he saw once in a dream. Wherever he went, divers (of the region) used to show up to exhibit their pearls in front of him in the hope of having found the specific pearl he was looking for. However, the kind of pearl he was looking for was a secret between him and the divers. Now, Rûmî is the diver and I am the pearl merchant. And (the features of) the pearl is (a secret) between us."²⁴ He sees himself as *Mishkât al-anwâr*/the niche for light²⁵ to Rûmî in his following statement: "Rûmî is (like) the moon. Visions cannot reach the sun of my being, they can only reach to the moon. They cannot see the sun (in Arabic: shams) out of its utmost resplendence. The

²⁰ See Rûmî, Jalâl al-Dîn. *Mathnawî-yi ma'nawî*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (London & Leiden: Luzac, 1933), I: 3056. The translation is taken from R. A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Divanî Shams-i Tabriz*, Great Britain: Cambridge University, 1898, 93.

²¹ Shams, *Maqālât*, 77b/(Turkish translation), 211.

²² Shams, *Maqālât*, 48a/(Turkish translation), 142.

²³ Shams, *Maqālât*, 94b/(Turkish translation), 247.

²⁴ Shams, *Maqālât*, 16a/idem, *Maqālât -i Shams-i Tabrizî*, ed. A.M. Mowahhid, I-II, Tahrân: Khârizmi, 1990, I, 115/Shams-i Tabrizi, *Me and Rumi. The Autobiography of Shams-i Tabrizi*, transl. William W. Chittick, Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2004, 182-3.

²⁵ This is an allusion to the Qur'anic verse *al-Nûr* 24:35, wherein it is emphasized that God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. Renowned Abû Hâmid al-Ghazâlî (d. 505/1111) and Muhyî l-Dîn Ibn al-'Arabî (d. 638/1241) have works titled *Mishkât al-anwâr*, although their contents are quite different from each other: al-Ghazâlî's work is a kind of interpretation of the aforementioned verse, while Ibn Arabî's work is a special collection of hadîths.

moon cannot reach the sun; but the sun can reach the moon. God says in the Qur’ān: ‘Visions cannot comprehend Him. But He comprehends visions’.”²⁶ Shams sees Rūmī as God’s *walī* (saint or friend), and himself as *al-walī of al-walī* (friend of the friend); that is, he considers Rūmī closer to God.²⁷

Shams praises Rūmī with the following words, as someone who appreciates his inner qualities: “Rūmī has a beautiful face. I have both beautiful features and ugly ones. Rūmī saw the beautiful ones only.”²⁸ He sees Rūmī as manifestation of God’s attributes of *Luft*/goodness and himself as consisting of God’s attributes of goodness and *Qahr*/evil.²⁹ He does not even deem himself as a saint: “There are some people/saints who are known by people (not veiled, under the cuppolas of God). Rūmī thinks that I’m one of them. No. They are people sought by God. I’m still seeking. In fact, according to me, God is the one who is seeking, we are not seeking Him.”³⁰ But he strongly believes that Rūmī is God’s friend. Only beautiful words befit him/Rūmī.³¹ His knowledge is very high, and so is his speech.³² He speaks comprehensibly and when he talks, people listen to and accept his words.³³

We also see that there are some topics that Shams thinks that he should not speak about. He thinks that if he speaks, Rūmī may be offended, but out of his modesty, he/Rūmī does not do this.³⁴ So Shams needs Rūmī’s words. Shams says: “People say that I benefit from Rūmī’s words. [...] Rūmī’s words are to me. Yes, I benefit a lot from his words; since they act as signs for me. They help me to find the way. But they are for me, only for me. Not for someone else.”³⁵ “His words drive me away from this world of joy and desires to the

²⁶ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 16a/ (Turkish translation), 71–72. See also al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 636.

²⁷ See Shams, *Maqālāt*, 1b/ (Turkish translation), 34/*Me and Rumi*, 212.

²⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 2b/ (Turkish translation), 39/*Me and Rumi*, 189.

²⁹ Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 659.

³⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 19a/ (Turkish translation), 78/ *Me and Rumi*, 304.

³¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 20b/ (Turkish translation), 82.

³² Shams, *Maqālāt*, 124b/ (Turkish translation), 308/*Me and Rumi*, 209.

³³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 54b/ (Turkish translation), 159.

³⁴ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 74a/ (Turkish translation), 202–203.

³⁵ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 65b/ (Turkish translation), 185.

fire [of love]³⁶.”³⁷ “There is no sheikh towards whom man needs to walk to learn from him, even if this walk/journey took a hundred thousand years. Rûmî is an exception; he is worthy of showing this kind of esteem/being walked towards him for a long time.”³⁸

According to Rûmî, Shams was the manifestation of the *sirr*/secret of the absolute unity. And when these *sirrs* are expressed they should be told still in a veiling way. The following dialogue takes place between Rûmî and Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn (d. 683/1284) who requests Rûmî to tell the secret explicitly:

I said to him: “It is better that the secret of the Friend should be disguised: do thou hearken (to it as implied) in the contents of the tale. It is better that the lovers’ secret should be told in the talk of others.”

He said: “Tell it forth openly and nakedly and without unfaithfulness, do not put me off o trifler! Lift the veil and speak nakedly, for I do not wear a shirt when I sleep with the Adored One.”

I said: “If He should become naked in (thy) vision, neither thou remain, nor thy bosom, nor thy waist.”³⁹

Here, Avni Konuk (d. 1938, one of the commentators of the *Mathnawî*) says: “Shams is the manifestation of the *sirr* of the absolute unity; if this *sirr* is told nakedly without the clothing of tales and stories, and manifest in an explicit image, your You-ness does not stay in your view, and the manifest world which is your side and your environment disappear, and your intellect, which is a bond between your spirit and body, vanishes.”⁴⁰ Rûmî continues as follows:

Ask for meaning, but ask with a certain measure: a straw cannot support the mountain.

If the Sun (in Arabic: Shams), by whom this world is illuminated, should approach a little (nearer), all will be burned.

³⁶ Note, however, that it is not clear what kind of love he is talking about. Since he once said: “We spent our life in playing with women’s love. We set God’s book behind us. How will we render account of this behaviour? In this verse there are verses hidden. Even man is a verse in this book,” See *Maqālât*, 93a/(Turkish translation), 244. However, this can be the topic of another paper.

³⁷ Shams, *Maqālât*, 67b/(Turkish translation), 189.

³⁸ Shams, *Maqālât*, 80b/(Turkish translation), 218.

³⁹ Rûmî, *Mathnawî-yi ma’nawî*, I: 135-143.

⁴⁰ A. Avni Konuk, *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, I, 134-7.

Do not seek trouble and turmoil and bloodshed: say no more concerning Shams of Tabrīz!

This has no end: tell of the beginning. Go, tell all of this tale again!

Avni Konuk interprets this last verse as follows: “That is, there is no end to the words about the *sirr* of Shams, for the secret of unity is inexhaustable; therefore let us talk about the beginning and come back and tell the complete story.”⁴¹

Rūmī sees himself as being “aware of the *nūr* (light) of *al-Haqq*,” whereas he sees Shams as being “aware of the *sirr* of *al-Haqq*.”⁴² According to Shams, Rūmī is the one who is drunk because of the purity of his *sirr*.⁴³ Rūmī thinks of Shams in nearly the same way: Shams is the King of spirituality according to Rūmī. The other spirits with respect to him are like bodies; he can settle all difficult issues; meanings receive spiritual nourishment from him; other meanings with respect to his meaning are just like meaningless words. The meanings he utters can be comprehended by the ones who leave forms and look at meanings, for meaning is “the spirit of the spirit of the spirit.”⁴⁴

According to statements by Sultān Walad, Shams is Rūmī’s guide (*murshid*) and both are eternal beloveds of *al-Haqq*/the Real. The Real has accepted their prayers and made them secure of the fear of torment. The lessons they received from *al-Haqq* are totally different.⁴⁵ The door of *sirr* is opened by meeting with a different *wali* (saint), for it is only through this meeting that the real path will be found, the path will be completed and maturity attained. As a matter of fact, when Rūmī met Shams, “*sirrs* became disclosed to him in a way things becomes clearly manifested in daylight,” and by this meeting, he/Rūmī “saw what was impossible to be seen,” heard “what was impossible to be heard.”⁴⁶

Shams had no poems and works authored by himself. His only work *Maqālāt* contains his words and sermons compiled by Sultān Walad, as

⁴¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, I, 134–7.

⁴² al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 614.

⁴³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 40a/(Turkish translation), 123.

⁴⁴ Sultān Walad, *Intihānāma*, 214.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 215.

⁴⁶ Sultān Walad, *Mathnawī-i Waladī ba bahr-i khafīf ma’rūf be Waladnāma*, ed. Jalāl Humāī, Tahrān: Iqbāl, 1355 H./1936, 41/ Sultān Veled, *İbtidā-nāme*, transl. A. Gölpınarlı, Konya: Konya ve Mülhakatı Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği, 2001, 40.

mentioned earlier. There are some other works like *Marghûb al-qulûb*, a *Mathnawî* of 138 couplets, attributed to him. Nevertheless they are forgeries.⁴⁷ He himself says: “I never had the custom of writing. Since I never write anything down, the words stay with me. At every instant they show me another face.”⁴⁸ And He feels it a pity that he has no poems and works that make him feel the joy or excitement of saying/uttering words. He says: “Unfortunately, no such a poet is born yet. Who am I then?” This is so sad. Nevertheless he does not perceive this case a shame. Since, first of all, although the plain of words is so all spacious, meaning is narrow in its spaciousness. And still, there are meanings beyond the plain of meaning, such the spaciousness of expression becomes narrow. It pulls it down, it pulls it under, both its words and sounds, so no expression remains.”⁴⁹ Secondly, Jesus spoke immediately after he was born, but the Prophet Muhammad did not speak until his 40th year. “So what?” he asks and adds: “This was not a lack for him. Quite the contrary, it was of his being a perfect man.”⁵⁰ He says that whomever feels joy from his own poems, feels joy from other people’s poems.⁵¹ Does this mean that he does not feel excitement from other people’s poems? Probably “Yes,” as he expressed that he had no poems of his own to be excited about by reading them.

Here, Rûmî is someone who reads Shams’ letter/writing. According to Shams, men, sometimes should read other people’s letters: Shams says, “Only ignorant person reads his own letters all the time. He does not read his friend’s letters”⁵² and, “The wise is someone who does not read his own letters all the time.”⁵³ He explains the reason therefore as follows: “Do not see your own words as superior to other peoples’ words. This would be something that would make you gain progress.”⁵⁴ In all these phrases, he implies that although he himself cannot write a

⁴⁷ See Gölpinarlı, *Mevlânâ Müzesi Yazmalar Kataloğu*, II, 257; Önder et al., *Mevlâna Bibliyografyası*, II, 261.

⁴⁸ Shams, *Me and Rumi*, 192.

⁴⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 10b, 82b/(Turkish translation), 59, 222/ *Me and Rumi*, 193.

⁵⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 10b/(Turkish translation), 59/ *Me and Rumi*, 70.

⁵¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 82a/(Turkish translation), 221.

⁵² Shams, *Maqālāt*, 10b/(Turkish translation), 59.

⁵³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 66a/(Turkish translation), 186.

⁵⁴ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 164a/(Turkish translation), 401.

letter, there is another person writing on his behalf, that is “reading his letters embedded in his inner self,” and this is again Rūmī, as Shams explicitly utters in another passage of his *Maqālāt*: “If I have a strong desire, Rūmī suffices me. Do not forget that you read your own letters all the time, not the dearest one’s letters. Let us read your friends’ letters (as Rūmī did). If you can do this, it will be more beneficial. All your problems originate from your reading your own letters. The vision comes out of knowledge and Gnosis. There is another way of knowledge and Gnosis after this vision. After this vision there are many long visions. And there is another which is more short but its name became tainted.⁵⁵ There should be another name for it.”⁵⁶

Ten Reasons for Shams to need a tongue other than his own

In contradiction to what has been said above, Shams also says that he can speak many languages: He can translate any language into Persian. He can talk in accordance with anyone’s nature.⁵⁷ He says that there are people only on the one quarter of the world (the rest is empty in his view) and whatever they ask, he can respond in ten different ways and can make interpretations in interpretations, responses in responses. Rūmī said that he no longer enjoyed reading books after he met Shams, since there is no book that contains the beauty of his words. As stated by Shams: “I need material knowledge and fast comprehension so that with the help of these I can say ‘It is a pity if I tell my knowhow to them [...] No matter how hard a question they ask me, they get the answer in advance. There have been commentaries upon commentaries written for these questions that seem difficult. There are ten different answers to these questions in my words and none of these are written in the books.’” This is why Mawlānā said: “Books became unappealing to me after I met you.”⁵⁸ Furthermore, he believes in the positive influence of nice words when he narrates how a certain

⁵⁵ He probably means *kashf*/divine revelation here.

⁵⁶ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 54a/(Turkish translation), 158/ *Me and Rumi*, 270.

⁵⁷ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 132a/(Turkish translation), 326.

⁵⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 144b-145a/(Turkish translation), 354/*Maqālāt -i Shams-i Tabrīzī*, I, 186/*Me and Rumi*, 193.

man became a close friend to a king: The king loved his words dearly, since he used to tell very flattering words. The king's work eased and fell in order because of these nice words.⁵⁹ If so, then, why doesn't he speak? Let us analyse this misunderstood case before we indulge in its impact upon Rûmî. We have enough evidence from Shams' testimony in his *Maqālāt* concerning his poor speaking abilities.

a) The first point that appears to us is that he became afflicted with losing his speaking ability during a mystical experience when he was still a child. He says: "Something happened to me while I was a child. Even my father could not solve the problem. He asked me what is wrong with me, and said "I know you are not mad."⁶⁰ He also says that he was always a sad child.⁶¹ Furthermore, in his *Maqālāt*, we understand that the case of his losing speaking ability happened during a very powerful mystic experience: "I was a child. He asked me⁶² and I responded 'yes' by (shaking) my head. He also shook His head. I could not tell anything, I was stunned. After this event, I could not open my mouth again, although my inner-world was full of words, idioms and meanings. This was rare case to happen to a child."⁶³ He was a strange child, experiencing extraordinary spiritual events from his childhood. al-Aflākī also states that he used to see God and angels, and considered this an ordinary event, since he thought that everybody could see them. According to his father, he was of the ones "having visions when still a child".⁶⁴ He says that even his father could not understand him at all and asked: "What is wrong with you (Are you crazy)? You were not *diwāna*/crazy previously! You did not get the training nor the mystical austerity into this way." Shams responded his father by saying that "We are cut from different cloth, and I feel myself like a goose egg under a hen."⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 2a/(Turkish translation), 36.

⁶⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 3b/(Turkish translation), 42 / *Me and Rumi*, 4.

⁶¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 161b/(Turkish translation), 394-5/ *Me and Rumi*, 5. For Shams the child, see *Maqālāt -i Shams-i Tabrizi*, I, 77; II, 79, 162.

⁶² It is not uttered what He/God asked. This is likely because he did not want to utter everything as Hallāj did. He said once: "He announced it. I saw Him, I saw Him all the time. No, not all the time. I should say things in a roundabout way, and not be like Hallāj, " See Shams, *Maqālāt*, 127a/(Turkish translation), 314.

⁶³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 111b-112a/(Turkish translation), 277.

⁶⁴ al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 680.

⁶⁵ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 3b-4a/(Turkish translation), 42.

b) His being skeptical about some religious matters: There are many passages in Shams' *Maqālāt* that imply that he cannot or does not want to talk to people since he is a little skeptical of the principles of Islam. He says, for instance: "People like Rūmī even though he does not speak eloquently. But after a while, he began to speak in an admirable way and people, old and young, loved him. As for me, there is something wrong with me. I have lots of things that I did not tell yet. I have some doubts. Therefore, I tell things concisely. I even implore my words by saying "Please don't leave me in doubt!"⁶⁶ He is of the idea that Rūmī speaks to people explicitly in the matter of *al-Haqq*/the Real. But still, it is Shams who made Rūmī speak this way: "Since I talked to him profoundly, and told everything plainly. When he tells something, people accept it and accept his words."⁶⁷ Note that he thinks of being skeptic as being at the beginning of the way (*mubtadi*),⁶⁸ and he also depicts Hallāj as a skeptic.⁶⁹

c) He believes that although his words were good enough when compared with the words of people who did not possess Gnosis, they are not good enough when compared with the things he would like to say.⁷⁰ He was full of meanings but felt that his words were beyond the shores. He does not feel himself willing or strong enough to talk. He prefers being in seclusion to speaking to people. He says: "Why should I (sit together with people and) have to talk anyway?! I would like to be alone."⁷¹ He claims that he has no energy to talk, and even feels sorry that he could not listen. If one wants to talk, he has to listen.⁷² He does not like to deliver sermons either, finding it a difficult task to fulfill. He claims that people don't understand his words: "They grasp neither the outward meaning of the words, nor the point. If they don't understand the words, how they are going to put them into practice? Works without knowledge are misguidance".⁷³

⁶⁶ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 50a-b/(Turkish translation), 148.

⁶⁷ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 54b/(Turkish translation), 159.

⁶⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 83b/(Turkish translation), 225.

⁶⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 4a, 69b, 83b/(Turkish translation), 42, 193, 224.

⁷⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 145a/(Turkish translation), 355.

⁷¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 73b/(Turkish translation), 202.

⁷² Shams, *Maqālāt*, 160b/(Turkish translation), 392.

⁷³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 108b/(Turkish translation), 269/ *Me and Rumi*, 245

Also, because one needs to purify himself before performing it.⁷⁴ He thinks the purification is born of all the wisdom, as it was said in a *hadith*.⁷⁵ He delivered sermons only because he had to, “otherwise people begin complaining,” he says. Otherwise, everything is said before; there is no need to repeat them.⁷⁶

In fact, he does not want to talk because he is looking for specific people to admonish. He does not perceive everybody in need of listening to his words: “To whom can words be said? To blind people. Even half-blind people do not need to be admonished.”⁷⁷ He also says: “I will speak if he is worth of that.”⁷⁸ However, he prefers to talk to Rûmî: “I don’t want to talk to anybody. I would like to talk only to Rûmî,”⁷⁹ “It is nice to be here with you. If I go to Tabriz, people would give me property, money and high stations. But if I cannot find anyone who listens to me, what would I do there?”⁸⁰ “There are many words hidden in people of words. Nevertheless what would be the benefit of it if there is none to listen to him?”⁸¹ We know that even before they met, Shams asked God if He has very special people who can endure to his friendship, and God said to him: “Go to the land of Rûm/Anatolia (there you will find certain person). He headed to Anatolia and met Rûmî.”⁸²

d) He thinks that sometimes signs or actions can be a substitute for words when he says: “Someone listened to the summary of my words, and said: ‘I cannot say something about me.’ So, if I pluck out his beard and mustache one-by-one by the root, would that be enough of a statement about my views, would that be enough words?”⁸³ To him, sometimes, the whole body can become a tongue.⁸⁴

⁷⁴ Shams, *Maqālât*, 164a (Turkish translation), 401.

⁷⁵ Shams, *Maqālât*, 145a (Turkish translation), 355.

⁷⁶ Shams, *Maqālât*, 108b (Turkish translation), 269/ *Me and Rumi*, 245.

⁷⁷ Shams, *Maqālât*, 150a (Turkish translation), 367.

⁷⁸ Shams, *Me and Rumi*, 239.

⁷⁹ Shams, *Maqālât*, 67a (Turkish translation), 188.

⁸⁰ Shams, *Maqālât*, 78a (Turkish translation), 212/ *Me and Rumi*, 209.

⁸¹ Shams, *Maqālât*, 110a (Turkish translation), 273.

⁸² See Sipahsālār, *Risāla*, 125–6. See also Shams, *Maqālât -i Shams-i Tabrizi*, II, 162/ *Me and Rumi*, 179.

⁸³ Shams, *Maqālât*, 74a (Turkish translation), 203.

⁸⁴ Shams, *Maqālât*, 112b (Turkish translation), 280.

e) He does not want to talk since he is being a *Malāmī* like his master, Abū Bakr Sallabāf. We can take his attitude of wearing or investing a *khirqā*/dervish's cloak as a sign of his being *Malāmī*, since we know that *Malāmīs* do not wear *khirqā*/Sufi vest and do not invest *khirqā*. Shams says: "Abū Bakr Sallabāf has no tradition of investing a *khirqā*. In fact, I saw neither him, nor his sheikh to find out if he had this tradition or not. I went out of Tabrīz with this specific desire but I could not find anyone. Maybe there is such a sheik. I did not see my sheik, but I heard that he becomes offended to anyone that narrates his words."⁸⁵ Sallabāf did not like his words to be quoted. This is *Malāmat*, and like him, Shams does not want to be known by people. Therefore, he travels a lot, but does not speak much. Here it should be noted that paradoxically, Shams, being a *Malāmī*-way of Sufi, was uninterested in bestowing ceremonial cloaks or mantels upon disciples as other Sufis do. Instead, Shams pointed to his words and their effects upon disciples as his mantel of investiture.⁸⁶ This is why his collected sermons were called *Khirqā-yi Shams*.

f) He regards "kalām/words, speaking" as belonging to God: *Kalām*/Speaking is God's attribute. He is the Outward with his attribute of talking, and the Inward with his Essence/*Dhāt*.⁸⁷ But no, God does not talk, He makes everything talk by His might. Lifeless beings are not an exception.⁸⁸

g) In fact, he thinks that all the words carrying wisdom have already been uttered earlier by earlier Sufis, and Sufis of later times are simply repeating or imitating them in other ways. There cannot be any original words said by the people of the time. All the rhetoric, symbols and metaphors spoken by people today are no more than imitations of the former people's words with wisdom. Shams does not like repeating words and enjoins people not to do it either.⁸⁹ He also says that many people tell many things but they are only words of other people, *hadīths*, stories, poems, etc. There is no single word of them-

⁸⁵ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 80b/(Turkish translation), 218/*Me and Rumi*, 302-303.

⁸⁶ See Shams, *Maqālāt -i Shams-i Tabrizi*, I, 224.

⁸⁷ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 73b/(Turkish translation), 202.

⁸⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 163b/(Turkish translation), 399.

⁸⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 68b/(Turkish translation), 191-2.

selves that can be deemed as their own.⁹⁰ For this reason he does not want to talk; there is nothing left to say.⁹¹ He says that although people criticize him for repeating the same words all the time, and claiming that it originates from his being intellectually poor. He defends himself saying: My words are quite well, but you do not understand them. It is difficult to make you understand them. Had I tell them a hundred times, they are full of a different meaning each times.⁹²

Rûmî had to be a Tongue for Shams

Rûmî was definitely of the group of “people with words”. He is said to have inherited this ability/quality from his sheikh, Burhân al-Dîn Muhaqqiq Tirmidhî, as the latter says: “There are two qualities invested in me: eloquency in speaking and having mystical states. I bestowed my eloquency to the service of Rûmî and my mystical states to the service of Salâh al-Dîn.”⁹³

On the contrary, Shams was of the group of “khāmushân/people of silence.” His couplet “I would talk to you without a tongue” is directed to Shams.⁹⁴ In his *Dîwân*, one of the *makhlas*es/nicknames Rûmî used for Shams is *Khāmush*/one who keeps silence, and recommended people to be like him.⁹⁵ However, at the same time, Shams spoke many words to Rûmî. This is why Rûmî lamented when he disappeared, saying: “What happened to those words with wisdom? What happened to that intellect that was acquainted with the divine secrets?”⁹⁶

Shams himself thought that he was born to inspire Rûmî. First of all, he considered Rûmî a vulnerable person: “You are a gentle man.

⁹⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 70a/(Turkish translation), 195.

⁹¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 108b/(Turkish translation), 269.

⁹² Shams, *Maqālāt*, 32a/(Turkish translation), 107.

⁹³ See al-Aflākî, *Manāqib*, II, 705.

⁹⁴ Mawlânâ Djalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, *Dîwân-i kabîr* (Facsimile of an early MS at the Mawlânâ Museum in Konya), Ankara: General Directory of the PTT, 2012, II, 12b.

⁹⁵ See Tahsin Yazıcı, “Dîvân-ı Kebîr,” *DİA*, IX (İstanbul 1994), 432. Here, it is also claimed that *Khāmush* may have been Rûmî's nickname before he met Shams of Tabriz.

⁹⁶ Şefik Can (ed.), *Dîvân-ı Kebîr. Seçmeler*, İstanbul: Ötüken, 2000, III:1305 (Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, *Kulliyât-i Shams yâ Dîwân-i kabîr* (hereafter *Kulliyât-i Shams*), ed. B. Furûzanfar, 7 vols, Tahrân: Dânişgâh-ı Tahrân 1336-1345 H.Sh /1957-1966, VI: 2648. (Numbers after the volumes, refers to the odes, not to the pages, in both Can and Furûzanfar).

You cannot take my words. You are weak. I am so strong that I can take being hurt a thousand times. I can go everywhere: I can go to the market, as well as to hell. I can go anywhere!”⁹⁷

Secondly, he is the one who makes Rūmī speak in beneficial way. He says that Rūmī speaks what his *al-ilm al-ladun* (Divine knowledge) drives in him. He speaks them without being concerned with whether or not anyone will benefit. But Shams himself speaks in state of *ilhām*/divine revelation. His words are gifts from God (and beneficial for people). He says: “If I train someone by words, he bewares himself of his ‘lower self’. God’s people are either ‘people of work’ or ‘people of words’. I will create from among you ‘people of words’. In fact, if someone from among ‘people of work’ can manage to be ‘a man of words’, it/his words would have more effect on people.”⁹⁸ But still, Rūmī should go to people, because they don’t understand Shams’s words: “You talk to them. God hasn’t told me to speak in these lowly smiles.”⁹⁹

He said that there is a fiery temperament within him that none can resist. His words became a remedy for the listener.¹⁰⁰ He has such a staunch impact on people that he who listens to him became mad. He says: “It is well known that none, not even a lifeless being, can take me for more than seven months. Who listens to me in the *Ma-drasa* turns into a madman. But why should I turn people with intellect into mad people?”¹⁰¹ And Rūmī completely agrees with him on this point when he says: “If a conscious man wants to join us, the lovers of God, we would not allow him to do this. We allow only lovers of God to join us.”¹⁰²

We can claim that all of Rūmī’s books are composed out of the love and inspiration he took from Shams. al-Aflākī says that Rūmī became irresolute/undetermined and inconstant for many days and nights after he was separated from Shams, and kept saying many divinely se-

⁹⁷ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 132a/(Turkish translation), 326.

⁹⁸ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 87a/Me and Rumi, 192.

⁹⁹ Shams, *Maqālāt -i Shams-i Tabrizi*, II, 134/Me and Rumi, 192.

¹⁰⁰ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 87a/(Turkish translation), 232.

¹⁰¹ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 66a/(Turkish translation), 185.

¹⁰² See Can (ed.) *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:884 (Rūmī, *Kulliyât-i Shams*, IV:1955).

crets and wisdoms.¹⁰³ This is especially the case with his *Dīwān*, which is also named *Dīwān-ı kabīr* or *Dīwān-ı Shams*, a voluminous poetry book dedicated to Shams. It consists of some 40,000 verses about his love, longing and loneliness in this strange world. It is full of couplets reiterating his love to Shams and his unity with him as representative of divine love in which he appended Shams' name as the author, since he deemed himself as speaking on behalf of him. Rumi often used the traditional form of love lyric, the *Ghazāl*, which generally consists of five to 12 lines and employs a single rhyme throughout the poem. Rūmī created his poems in a state of ecstasy, born of Shams, the *Insān-ı Ma'shūq*/beloved man. After Shams' final disappearance in 645/1247, Rūmī started in his grief to circle a pole in his garden and to speak poetry, which was written down by scribes.¹⁰⁴ Sultān Walad describes the passionate and uncontrollable emotion that overwhelmed his father after Shams disappeared, saying that he turned into a *majnūn* due to his separation. He never rested, day or night. He was a *Muftī* (legal counsel of Islamic law) but then became a poet. He had been an ascetic, but turned into a man intoxicated; not intoxicated by wine, but by the wine of light, since he belonged to the Light.¹⁰⁵

The above words of Sultān Walad, as translated by Reynold A. Nicholson, are not quite the same as those that occur in Sultān Walad's *Ibtidānāma*, which says: "Here Sultān Walad alludes to the *Dīwān-ı Shams-ı Tabrīz* (*Lyrics of Shams of Tabrīz*), an immense collection of mystical odes composed by Jalālu'l-Dīn in the name of Shamsu'l-Dīn, and dedicated to his *alter ego*."¹⁰⁶ Rūmī declared that he and Shams-ı Tabrīz were "two bodies in one soul". In this union of loving souls, nothing remains but the essential Unity of Love, in which the "lover"

¹⁰³ al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, II, 630.

¹⁰⁴ They are published as: *Kulliyāt-ı Shams yā Dīwān-ı kabīr*, ed. B. Furūzānfar, 7 vols, Tahrān 1336-1345h.H.Sh/1957-1966. Its translation into English is by Nevit Oğuz Ergin, (12 vols, California/USA: 1995-2000) and 7 vols, Konya: 2007. An earlier translation includes only some poems from the *Dīwān*: R. A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, Great Britain: Cambridge University, 1898.

¹⁰⁵ Sultān Walad, *Ibtidānāma*, 52-3.

¹⁰⁶ See R. A. Nicholson, *Rūmī. Poet and Mystic (1207-1273)*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1973, 20.

and “beloved” have merged their separate identities. This is an allusion to Hallāj’s renowned couplet of

*I am who desires, and who desired is I,
We are two souls united into one body.*¹⁰⁷

In calling his lyrics the *Dīwān* (poems) of Shams of Tabrīz, Rūmī uses the name of Shams as though they had become one and the same person. Though to us, Shams’ figure may appear substantial, we need not accept the view put forward by some modern scholars that he is merely a personification of Rūmī’s poetic and mystical genius—an Eastern equivalent of the “Muse”.¹⁰⁸ To me, it is not Rūmī who is speaking there, but rather Shams. Rūmī is only Shams’ tongue speaking on behalf of his beloved Shams. This case acquaints us with a striking literary phenomenon: Note that the case of Socrates and Plato is similar in kind but not in degree. Socrates had no work, but Plato made him speak his works on his behalf. In the case of Rūmī and Shams, there is no question of forgery or composition holding up the imagined author. The *Dīwān* is never attributed to Shams of Tabrīz, who died before it was complete. Note that there is no question of *Takhal-lus* (pen-name) but, in a mystical sense, it might be since Rūmī asserts the identity of subject and object. To him, Shams represents the divine beloved, the only being in whom all individual names are manifested and ultimately merged.¹⁰⁹ In it, he used mostly the *makhlas* of Shams/ Shams of Tabrīz or Shams al-Haqq wa-l-Dīn or *Khāmush*/one who keeps silence. His other renowned companions’ names, i.e., Salāh al-Dīn Zarkūb and Chalabi Husām al-Dīn, occur approximately many times in the *Dīwān*. He sometimes used to call Husām al-Dīn as “my religion, o my faith, a my life, o my real sultan.”¹¹⁰ Obviously, he was the tongue for his beloved. In the *Dīwān*, Rūmī resembles himself to the Prophet Solomon in love. He was a friend of birds, and the one who understood their language. “In me, there is the love of a fairy; I can call it whenever I want. I can catch the fairy of those who possess

¹⁰⁷ See Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Kitāb al-Bā’*, MS, Yusufāğa (Konya), no. 4868/2, 4b.

¹⁰⁸ See Nicholson, Rūmī. *Poet and Mystic (1207–1273)*, 21.

¹⁰⁹ See Nicholson, “Introduction,” in: R.A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems From the Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, Great Britain: Cambridge University, 1898, xv.

¹¹⁰ Al-Aflākī, *Manāqib*, I, 100.

it and put it in the bottle. I read an enchantment, make it sacred. I am horrified of this case. I tell sayings and I am silent and a script board for those who speak with no mouth or tongue.”¹¹¹ He also says:

You say to me: “How are you?” How would I know that how I am!

You ask: “Where do you come from, of which family are you?” How would I know where I come from, and of which family I am!

You ask me: “Why are you so intoxicated, why are you in ecstasy? Of which wine glass did you drink to fall into this state?” How would I know that!

You say: “What is it with that lip that you have such pleasant way of speaking?” How would I know that!

You ask me: “Is there anything much better than living in health and being young?” How would I know that!

I saw a fire as bright as the water of life [âb-ı hayât] in both his cheeks. However, how was it, how would I know that!

If I am you, who are you then? You are this or that? How would I know!

*Who am I that to think such things? Are you a soul filled with mercy and love? How would I know that!*¹¹²

He says: “I am the bow of a wool fluffer (*Hallāj*) for Shams. As Shams’ fire has fallen into this shop, Hallāj tasted that love and became hanged at the gallow.”¹¹³ “It is you who brought me to lament like Nay. Do accord me like a harp, make me sound!”¹¹⁴ He says that Shams bestowed upon him a crow, a throne and sovereignty and I became the commander of his army.”¹¹⁵ Since, according to him, it is love that makes man a man: “Someone whose pulse is not pulsating with love, is like a donkey, even if he claims to be Platon.”¹¹⁶

Note that all these statements are only metaphors indicating his love of and unity with God: “There is no Shams but *al-Haqq*, the genuine beloved.”¹¹⁷ Only his love has a meaning. All other loves are

¹¹¹ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II: 689 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, III: 1466).

¹¹² Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:771 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, III: 1544).

¹¹³ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:629 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, III: 1306).

¹¹⁴ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:880 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, IV:1914).

¹¹⁵ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:790 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, III: 1590).

¹¹⁶ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:552 (Rûmî, *Kullîyyât-ı Shams*, III: 1161).

¹¹⁷ Can (ed.), *Divân-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, “Önsöz,” I, 9.

meaningless. Therefore, he asks: “Why do you love His creature instead of Him?”¹¹⁸ He says:

I saw love as a fortress protecting man from all the calamities. Therefore, I take refuge in love, I take it as my shelter.

I have abandoned all prosperity and all joys of the world for you. And I have chosen your love only.

*You are the soul of the world. All the beings in nature, all the property are your creatures. I saw them in their multiplicity. Now I realize that they all are the one thing, they are your work.*¹¹⁹

In his *Dīvān*, Rūmī emphasized that his innermost soul was Shams of Tabrīz, as well as his prayer and *Qibla*/prayer direction.¹²⁰ Rūmī fostered an endless love towards him, and out of this love, he said *ghazals* full of Shams’s name.¹²¹ It is true that Shams had a spiritual impact on Rūmī. He also had great intellectual influence on Rūmī. Rūmī said that he no longer enjoyed books after he met Shams.

There are certain stories in the *Mathnawī* lent from his *Maqālāt*. The tale of three sons of the king (incomplete story in the *Mathnawī*), and the story of king and his beloved slave Ayāz¹²² are only some of the instances. The man in the women’s bathhouse,¹²³ and the camel seeing far away¹²⁴ are the other stories we see in both. In some stories, Shams’ reference is Rūmī. For instance, he says: “Mawlāna said it before than me,”¹²⁵ or: “I keep something in my memory for sixteen years ever since I heard it from Rūmī.”¹²⁶ Rūmī says that after he met Shams, the fire of love began to shine in his heart, and he/Shams enjoined him to leave his father’s, Sultān al-’ulamā’, book *Ma’ārif* and al-Mutanabbī’s (d. 303/915)¹²⁷ *Dīvān* aside. We “can even say that he

¹¹⁸ Can (ed.), *Dīvān-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:481 (Rūmī, *Kulliyât-i Shams*, II: 1036).

¹¹⁹ Can (ed.), *Dīvān-ı Kebîr (Seçmeler)*, II:772 (Rūmī, *Kulliyât-i Shams*, III: 1548).

¹²⁰ Mevlâna, *Dīvān-ı Kebîr*, I, 355.

¹²¹ al-Aflākī, *Manâqib*, II, 646.

¹²² Shams, *Maqālāt*, 6b-7b/(Turkish translation), 49-51.

¹²³ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 46b/(Turkish translation), 140.

¹²⁴ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 14a/(Turkish translation), 67.

¹²⁵ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 11b/(Turkish translation), 61.

¹²⁶ Shams, *Maqālāt*, 42a/(Turkish translation), 128-9.

¹²⁷ A renowned Arab poet who, according to some researchers, claimed to be a prophet in some of his couplets. For his biography, see İsmail Durmuş, “Mütenebbî, ” *DİA*, XXXII (İstanbul 2006), 195-9.

strictly forbade him to read/study these books.¹²⁸ Rûmî used to read especially *Mâ'arîf* by standing all night long, from the early evening until the dawn (*fajr*).¹²⁹

After the second disappearance of Shams in 645/1247, Rûmî chose an illiterate goldsmith, Salâh al-dîn Zarkûb as company, and accompanied him for some ten years, which caused whisperings like the ones in his relationship with Shams. When Salâh al-dîn Zarkûb died in 656/1258, Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn, one of Rûmî's students, took his place as a new mirror of Love in the world, the mirror of God. "The wine is one; only the vessel is changed," as Rûmî said in a poem. In his *Dîwân*, Rûmî sometimes used *mahklases* of Salâh al-Dîn Zarqûb and Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn, as noted above.¹³⁰ During his company with Chalabi Husâm al-Dîn, he composed nearly 26,000 couplets of the *Mathnawî-yi Ma'nawî* in six volumes, which he wrote for Husâm al-Dîn. This is why *Husâmnâma* was another name given to the *Mathnawî*. In it, Husâm al-Dîn was praised with words like *Shâh*/Great and exalted person, *ustâd*/master, the light of God, etc. However, according to him, it would be wrong to praise him to the prisoners (of sensuality), i.e., people who can understand only the outward meaning of words, and it would be wrong to speak of him to worldly people. He should speak (Husâm al-Dîn's praise) in the assembly of the spiritual, and should keep it hidden like the secret of the love. He further added: "The praise consists of describing (excellent qualities) and in rendering the veil of ignorance: the Sun is independent of exposition and description."¹³¹ Here, we observe that he was compared to the Sun, that is, "Shams" in Arabic. Obviously, Husâm al-Dîn was his new Sun/Shams. *Mathnawî* was written definitely for Husâm al-Dîn.¹³² Not only the *Mathnawî* was written for him, but also his copy was deemed as the most reliable copy; since he read it to Rûmî (in a sense, collated it with the original source) seven times letter by letter.¹³³

¹²⁸ See al-Aflākî, *Manâqib*, II, 622-4, 651-2.

¹²⁹ See idem, I, 92-3.

¹³⁰ See B. Fîrûzanfer, *Mevlana Celaleddin*, transl. F.N. Uzluk, Konya: İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2005, 179-80.

¹³¹ See, for instance, Rûmî, *Mathnawî-yi ma'nawî*, V: 1-30.

¹³² Sîpâhsâlâr, *Risâla*, 142-3.

¹³³ See al-Aflākî, I, 496-7.

As is already known, Sanā'ī's (d. 526/1131) *Ilāhīnāma* (or *Hadiqa*)¹³⁴ and 'Attār's *Mantiq al-Tayr* and his *Musibatnāma* were the most read works by Rūmī's disciples, in so far that Husām al-Dīn offered Rūmī to write a *Mathnawī* in the same rhyme as these works.¹³⁵ He emphasized that the *Mathnawī* was spoken on the request of Chalabi Husām al-Dīn.¹³⁶ We can even claim that it was written on his level of understanding, as it is stated in the following verse:

*Let us speak Persian! Come, abandon Arabic! Be the Hindu (slave) of that Turcoman (the divine Beloved), O (man of) water and clay!*¹³⁷

Avni Konuk says that, here, Husām al-Dīn is meant,¹³⁸ however, we can also see in it some references to Shams. In it, Rūmī referred the simple *nay*/reed flute as the metaphor for himself: "Listen to the reed, how it tells a tale, complaining of separation." His separation from Shams was only an allusion to his separation from God. And the *sama'*, the mystical dance, was a metaphor for the manifestation of the secret power of God, more than a technique for meditation: "The sun/Shams dances in the sky, God is the axis, and the entire universe is dancing and whirling around Him as his subservient creatures waiting for his orders."

Rūmī used his poems as a tool to reach the people around him and attract their attention to the divine secrets. The outcome was *populist Sufism*. It might be useful to remind the readers that in Sufism there are three main streams in the conveying of Sufi teachings: The austere style of narration, the populist-icstatic style of narration, and, last but not least, the elitist-philosophical style of narration. Qushayrī (d. 465/1072) is an example for the first style, Rūmī is an example for the second, and İbn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) is an example for the third. As is the case in many Sufi orders, Rūmī's face is not turned to the elite, but to all and sundry.¹³⁹ Some people around him even used to ask why he was accepting all those *mean people* as novices, and he used to say: "If they were excellent people, I would

¹³⁴ Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ Celâleddin*, 118.

¹³⁵ Konuk, *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, I, 89.

¹³⁶ Rūmī, *Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī*, V: 1.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, III: 2839.

¹³⁸ A. A. Konuk, *Mesnevî-i Şerîf Şerhi*, VI, eds. S. Eraydın *et al.*, İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2006, 122.

¹³⁹ al-Aflakī, *Manāqib*, I, 207-208.

be their disciple.”¹⁴⁰ On the contrary, according to him, a dervish that did not reach perfection yet is like a bird. Even if he cannot reach the sky, he can escape earthly traps.¹⁴¹ Therefore, it is necessary that a guide be engaged in their teachings. Thus, Rûmî's face was turned towards all and sundry, while their faces were turned towards Venus: Rûmî aimed to express his ecstasy in the form of mystical poems and *samâ'*, which was only a tool serving to attract the Anatolian people's attention to divine secrets. The Anatolian people of his time were described as “people of entertainment and people with a brow like Venus.”¹⁴² Venus was regarded as the star of entertainment and joy. It is a contradiction that in some miniatures dating from the Seljuqs, Rûmî himself was depicted as someone under the influence of this star, although it may not reflect the full truth,¹⁴³ since it was actually the people around him who were under the influence of Venus. He was a man of mission, a mission of calling people to God with his ebullient and exuberant ritual of the *samâ'* and *Mathnawî*, together with Shams of Tabrîz as his source of inspiration. Rûmî was performing the *samâ'* even before he met Shams; Sultân Walad says that his father, Rûmî, was encouraged to perform it by Kirâ-yi Buzurg, Sultân Walad's grandmother. He/Rûmî used to release his hands during the *samâ'*, and Shams taught him to whirl.¹⁴⁴

We see some passages in Rûmî's work entitled *Fihî mâ fih* and in the *Risâla-i Sipahsâlâr* abstracted from this work emphasizing that Rûmî was using poems to meet people's requests of saying poems from him. His words are sufficient to prove the argument that he was not busy with poems because he loved them, but because people around him love them.

“It is a custom of mine that I want no heart to become distressed through me. During our meetings, sometimes a great multitude

¹⁴⁰For general features of Rûmî's disciples, see idem I, 151, 416, etc.

¹⁴¹See idem, I, 312.

¹⁴²See idem, I, 207–208.

¹⁴³For details, see Recep Uslu, *Selçuklu Topraklarında Müzik*, Konya: İl Kültür Müdürlüğü, 2011, 36, 320.

¹⁴⁴al-Aflakî, *Manâqib*, II, 680–1.

thrust themselves upon me and some of my friends try to fend them off. That disturbs me. I have said a hundred times, “Say nothing on my account. I am content with that.” I care to such a degree that when such friends come to me, I dread the thought of boring them, so I speak poetry for their enjoyment. Otherwise, what do I care about poetry? By God, I care nothing for poetry. There is nothing worse in my eyes. To me, it is like the cook who plunges his hand into tripe, cleaning it out for the sake of a guest’s appetite.

“A merchant searches to see what products are needed in their city, and what the people want to buy. Then they buy and sell those goods and services, even if they are the lowest of things in their eyes. I have studied many sciences and taken pains to offer fine, rare and precious things to the scholars and researchers, the clever ones and the deep thinkers who come to me. God has willed this. He gathered to me all those sciences, and assembled here all those pains, so I would become occupied with this work. What can I do? In my own country, and amongst my own people, there is nothing more shameful than poetry. If I had remained there, I would have lived in harmony with their temperament. I would have practiced what they love, such as giving lectures, composing books and preaching.”¹⁴⁵

Rūmī even complains that people hear his *outer words* but his *inner cries* reach no-one.¹⁴⁶ This way, he implies that he has some spiritual stories and problems that he cannot share with anyone in the world. Whatever the case, he does not see writing poems as useless. He says: “I say and leave words for the people who will come to the world after us. Since our lives will not go on after us/it will cease.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, writing things is a way of talking to people after one’s death and it is therefore important.

He tells stories concerning various things/*Kathra*, not only the oneness of God, since he wants to attract people’s attention to his *Mathnawī*. Nevertheless, his main aim is the Oneness of God, and

¹⁴⁵ See M.J. Rūmī, *Fīhi Mā Fīh*, ed. B. Furūzanfar, Tahrān: Amīr Kabīr, 1342 sh. and 1358 sh./1979, 74; *Discourses of Rumi*, 132–3; Sipahsālār, *Risāla*, 68–9.

¹⁴⁶ See Sipahsālār, *Risāla*, 5.

¹⁴⁷ See *idem*, 7.

his *Mathnawî* is a shop/place of *faqr*/feeling needy of God and His Oneness.¹⁴⁸ He says: “Our *Mathnawî* becomes sheikh/guides people after us.”¹⁴⁹

It is said that one of his famous companions, Hajî Bektash Walî (d.669/1270–1[?]), to whom the Bektāshi order is attributed, was very jealous of his fame, which was an outcome of his poems and *samāʿ*. So he wished that Rûmî stop performing *samāʿ*. So he sent one of his disciples to Rûmî forwarding his negative criticisms with the words: “Ask him why he is crying out so much? Tell him: ‘If you found God, that’s fine. If not, then why are you crying out and not searching for him?’” When the disciple entered Rûmî’s home, even before delivering his words, Rûmî said: “ (Tell him:) If you did not yet find the Friend, why do you not search for him? If you found him, then why do you not show your happiness (by crying out)?”¹⁵⁰ In this way, Rûmî was implying that he cries out with *samāʿ* since he found God in his inner life.

Note that Rûmî was effective not only in teaching the Muslim population of Anatolia, but also people from other religions. Therefore he likens himself to a pair of compasses with one leg in Islam and the other travelling around the world. He says:

*We are like a pair of compasses: One foot on the Religion of Islam,
The other is wandering around the seventy-two nations.*¹⁵¹

However, his tolerance to other religions did not diminish his allegiance to Islam. Quite the contrary, he probably used his tolerance of other religions as a tool for serving his missionary purposes in a very polite way. Stories ending with the conversion of the addressee to Islam may be evidence proving the authenticity of this idea.¹⁵² Even the renowned poem of

¹⁴⁸ See Rûmî, *Mathnawî*, 287 b/ *Mathnawî-yi maʿnawî*, VI:1528.

¹⁴⁹ al-Aflākî, *Manāqib*, I, 409.

¹⁵⁰ Idem, I, 381–2.

¹⁵¹ See F.N. Uzluğ, “Çevrenin Önsözü,” in: B. Fűrüzanfer, *Mevlana Celaleddin*, transl. F.N. Uzluğ, Konya: İl Kültür ve Turizm Müdürlüğü, 2005, 13–23: 14.

¹⁵² For details on this subject, see Hülya Küçük, “Batı’da Gözardı Edilmek İstenen ‘Müslüman’ Mevlânâ,” International Symposium on the Traces of Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî in the World / Dünyada Mevlânâ İzleri Uluslararası Sempozyumu, 13–15 December/ Aralık 2007, Proceedings/Bildiriler, Konya 2010, 122–136.

“Come! Come again! Whoever, whatever you may be, come!
 Heathen, idolatrous or fire worshipper, come!
 Even if you deny your oaths a hundred times, come!
 Our door is the door of hope, come! Come as you are!”

is not attributed to him; it is proven now that it is a poem of Abū Saī’d Abū –l– Khayr.(d. 440/1049).¹⁵³

Conclusion

To sum up, we can say that the relationship between Shams and Rūmī was an extraordinary divine phenomenon. Both of them believed that Rūmī was created for Shams: They were sometimes two different poles completing each other when they came together. For instance one could not speak eloquently, while the other could speak and write poems that come down to us through the centuries. Shams says: “I am not given a portion in speaking well and eloquently. May God endow Rūmī with blessed rewards,” meaning that Rūmī was invested to talk on behalf of him. This is especially the case in Rūmī’s *Dīwān*. Rūmī declared that he and Shams-i Tabrīz were “two bodies in one soul”. In this union of loving souls, the only existing thing is the essential Unity of Love, in which the “lover” and “beloved,” that is, Rūmī and Shams, have merged their separate identities. In my thinking, it is not Rūmī who is speaking there, rather, it is Shams. Rūmī is Shams’ tongue only speaking on behalf of his beloved, that is, Shams. The *Dīwān* is never attributed to Shams of Tabrīz, who died before it was complete, as some claim. Neither is there a question of *Takhal-lus* (pen-name). That said, we may consider such a thing in a mystical sense since Rūmī claims as being identical to Shams, who represents the Divine Beloved. In addition, in the *Dīwān*, Rūmī used mostly the *makhlas* of Shams/Shams of Tabrīz or Shams al-Haqq wa-l-Dīn or *Khāmush*/one who keeps silence.

¹⁵³ For details see Yakup Şafak, “Mevlana’ya atfedilen “Yine Gel” Rubâisine Dâir” *Tasavvuf*, 24 (2009), 75–80.

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