

## **A brief outline of life and work of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi**

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Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi was one of the great spiritual masters, poetic geniuses and the founder of Mevlevi Sufi order. Rumi has been called the greatest mystical poet of any age, and his teachings are universal in nature. His writings cover every aspect of life. He writes with humor, humanity and inspired passion. He speaks with the voice of our own deepest longings.

He was born in Balkh, present-day Afghanistan in the year 1207 CE. His father, Bahauddin Balad, was a well-known jurist, Islamic scholar and mystic. Rumi's childhood was a period of social and political turbulence due to the crusades and the constant threat of Mongol invasion. The great disturbance Rumi faced during his early life influenced much of his poetry. Rumi traveled extensively with his family from Balkh to Baghdad, Mecca, Damascus and other parts of the Muslim world. In 1228, at the invitation of the Sultan of the Seljuk's, Alaeddin Keykubad, they settled in Konya, Anatolia, in the present day Turkey. He became known as 'Rumi' because he moved to Anatolia, once the base of the eastern Roman Empire. Rumi studied under his father and later under a great scholar and Sufi Burhaneddin al-Tirmithi and devoted himself to his service for nine years. He learned the merit of serving people and knew that serving people are ultimately serving God. Rumi also completed his scholarly education in Damascus, mastering in the classical Islamic sciences, including Quran and its Tafseer, knowledge of Hadith (traditions of Prophet (pbuh)) and jurisprudence (fiqh).

While Rumi was in Damascus, he met Darvesh Shams Tabrizi, which completely changed his life. He became more interested in Tasawuf and Sufi traditions. After meeting "Shams" he composed poetry for 10 years in his honor and named it Diwan Shams Tabrizi. This was a collection of 40,000 verses of poems, which is considered one of the finest works in Persian literature. His greatest contribution was Tasawuf and philosophy, and he wrote an inspiring devotional poem which expresses the union of man with the divine and the relationship between man and man.

Rumi's major work is the Masnavi, a six-volume poetry book containing some fifty thousand verses. This was considered the greatest spiritual masterpiece ever written by any human being. He covered a variety of subjects, including religious, political and cultural activities and focused on removing the cultural and religious barriers and bringing humanity close to God. He is regarded as the greatest mystical poet of Islam. He communicated the inspirational messages through his writing that attracted the spiritual seekers from almost every religion of the world. This is the reason why his writing became popular in East as well as West.

Although Rumi was a sufi and a great scholar of the Quran, his appeal for tolerance and close relationship with the God reaches across religious and social divisions.

Rumi's life and works shows us that it is not faith, belief and religion, which cause hatred, conflict and violence, but the anger, hatred, greed and the unrestrained ego contribute to these human weaknesses. He showed us how the true practice of religion and the purification of the heart, is the remedy for these.

“The world of Rumi is neither exclusively the world of a Sufi Muslim, nor the world of a Hindu, nor a Jew, nor a Christian; it is the highest state of a human being; a fully evolved human. A complete human is not bound by cultural limitations; he touches every one of us. Today, Rumi's poems can be heard in churches, synagogues, Zen monasteries, as well as in the downtown New York.”(Shahram Shiva)

Rumi's teachings were liberal and appealed to Muslims and non Muslims. He focused on reaching God through art, poetry and music. He encouraged SAMA”reaching enlightenment through listening to the music and doing sacred Dance(Whirling Dervishes)

Rumi's poetry has made a deep impact on the philosophy, literature and culture throughout central Asia and to some extent, the Islamic world. His message seems to have inspired a lot of intellectuals, including Dr. Allama Iqbal, who considered him to be his spiritual leader. Many other great scholars and Sufis were affected by his inspirational message.

In the year 2007 UNESCO celebrated the eight hundredth anniversary of Rumi's birth, and issued a medal in his name to engage people in the dissemination of Rumi's ideas and ideals. **Mawlana says -**

If the sky is not in love, then it will not be so clear.

If the sun is not in love, then it will not be giving any light.

If the river is not in love, then it will be in silence, it will not be moving.

If the mountains, the earth are not in love, then there will be nothing growing."

May you have a loving, clear and growing day

When I am with you, we stay up all night,  
when you're not here, I can't go to sleep  
Praise God for those two insomnias!  
And the difference between them.

In your light I learn how to love.  
In your beauty, how to make poems.  
You dance inside my chest where no-one sees you,  
but sometimes I do, and that sight becomes this art.

Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.  
They're in each other all along.

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.  
Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

Raise your words, not voice.  
It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder.

Let yourself be drawn by the stronger pull of that which you truly love.

I want to sing like the birds sing, not worrying about who hears or what they think.

**RUMI.**