

## THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION IN SHEYKH FARIDUDDIN

### ATTAR'S AND MEVLANA CELALEDDIN RUMI'S WORKS

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#### ABSTRACT

In Attar's and Mevlana's work, the reflected are the points and the moments of spiritual trip of a God lover-salik. The obstacles and difficulties of those, who step on this path, the ways of overcoming those obstacles and difficulties, are explained in the finest details. The main purpose in this trip for a human being is to recognise himself and own passion. Mevlana referred frequently to his spiritual guide and genius Sufi poet Sheikh Fariduddin Attar's poems and the symbols and figurative expressions he had used. Mevlana was also influenced by Attar's works in Divan-i Kebir, and benefited from his "Tezkiretul-Evliya", "Ilahiname", Esrarname" and mainly "Mantik-at-Teyr".

In "Mantiquit-Teyr" the character of "Hudhud" is symbol of sheikh in the religion.

"The birds tripped under the command of Hudhud. The difficulties on the way wore out the birds. The doubts and questions arose again. But Hudhud answered the questions of the birds patiently, and tried to explain that they were in the right direction. Tired and exhausted birds gathered strength again and kept going. Some of the birds became exhausted and couldn't move on. Some lost their ways while looking for food. And the others died of starvation and thirst. Only thirty birds of hundreds of birds endured the troubles. At this moment the messenger brought a piece of paper from Simurg. When they read the paper and saw that all their lives had been written there, they became shocked. At that moment Simurg appeared. Divine light spread everywhere. When the birds looked at the reflection of Simurg in the mirror they saw themselves. It turned out that the meaning of "Simurg" was "thirty birds". Then the birds got rid of their physical features as a result of pains and grief. All differences and contradictions disappeared. They met with One (*God*). This case showed that the person who loved God was far from all differences and contradictions. They saw the face of inner beauty only after getting rid of physical appearance features. While the birds were shocked and confused the voice of Simurg was heard: "When you came here, you were thirty birds. Therefore you saw thirty birds in the mirror. If you were more or less than thirty, this would change nothing ! You would see yourselves again. This is a mirror". The Birds melted in Simurg and lived in him. Meantime the differences like way, traveler and guide disappeared".

**KEYWORDS:** Attar, Mevlana, Love, Evolution, God, Divine Light

#### INTRODUCTION

Mevlana referred frequently to his spiritual guide and genius Sufi poet Sheikh Fariduddin Attar's poems and the symbols and figurative expressions he had used. Mevlana was also influenced by Attar's works in Divani-Kebir, and benefited from his "Tezkiretul-Evliya", "Ilahiname", Esrarname" and mainly "Mantik-at-Teyr".

According to both poets the major factor which brings human to spiritual perfection is love.

If a person loves, he can lay down his life for his sweetheart. Love causes the disappearance of contradictions and differences. Love is the main thing which brings a person to spiritual perfection. But the basis of love is grief. Without grief love can't exalt a person to spiritually high stage. Human is only creature that experiences grief. The angels can love, too. But they don't have feeling of grief. Grief is the most valuable gift by God. Through grief human conceives truth and achieves spiritually higher stage than angels do. Love eliminates all barriers.

### **Divine Love Is Main Factor of Spiritual Evolution in Attar's and Mevlana's Works**

Love needs grief which sets fire to obstacles. Even a particle of love is more valuable than whole world. When you overcome your material wishes, you can also defeat your fears. Make an attempt like a strong lion! Don't be afraid!

After this kind of introduction Attar wrote "Sheikh Sanan" story. "Sheikh Sanan" is the biggest story of the "Mantik-at-Teyr". In this story salik (*a person who engages in Islamic spiritual path or sufizm*) who is on the spiritual path to God is tested by difficult barriers of nafs (*desire*), and he overcomes these difficulties and reaches spiritually higher stage. The main content of the story is here: "There was a sheikh in Sanan city. He was the old wise man of his time. He had made nearly fifty pilgrimages to Mecca. In his dream he saw himself moving to Rum country and worshipping idols. He realized the meaning of his dream and went to Rum country. There he saw a Christian girl who had divine light in her face.

دختر ترسای روحانی صفت

در ره روح الله اش صد معرفت<sup>1</sup>

(This christian girl has divine light in her face. She has a lot of skills in the spiritual path of Ruhullah (*here Prophet Jesus is mentioned*)).

Attar wrote from the very the beginning that the girl who Sheikh loved was religious and polite. The thing which attracted Sheikh was not the girl's beautiful appearance, but her inner divine light.

Sheikh fell in love with the girl. He belted zunnar (*it was a distinctive belt that christians wore in the past*) and adopted christianity.

This case made the dervishes (*sufi aspirant*) who had murids (*followers*) confused. They gave advice to him. But Sheikh abandoned everything and watched the girl's window. His love was in a state that he quited everything. Attar described the grief of Sheikh's love to the readers. One night his love reached the final point. He melted like a flaming candle. That night was described as the culmination of his love. He has spent all his life for that night as if he was created for that night in which spiritual pains became stronger, and for reaching spiritual perfection by experiencing these pains:

کار من روزی که می پرداختند

از برای امشبم می ساختند

یارب این چندین علامت امشبست

یا مگر روز قیامت امشبست<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Attar Sheykh Farudid-din, Mantik-at Tayr, according to Paris Manuscript, edited by Kazem Dezfoliyan, Tahran, 1381, page 95

(That day my life is judged; I was created specially for that day. Oh God, the aim of all the signs is tonight; Or the Day of Judgement is tonight?!)

Sheikh Sanan grieved and said: "Oh God, isn't there any way out for my situation?" His friends said: "Oh poor old man, if you have any guilt, forswear not to do it again". All his friends took offense at him. But he said: "If the christian girl is glad, then I don't care about other's thoughts".

Eventually the girl understood that Sheikh was fallen in love with her. She wanted him to drink wine in order to test him. Sheikh took the goblet of wine from his sweetheart's hand and drank it. "There are some people who abandon their religion because of wine. The wine which is main cause of evil deeds makes people abandon their religion".

According to Attar understanding love thoroughly is equal to read and to know verses of holy Koran. The person who is fallen in love can find out and conceive mysteries of spiritual world.

Sheikh drank wine, went to church and adopted christianity. But the girl laid herding swine down as a condition for him again. Sheikh obeyed.

Attar said to the people who blamed Sheikh: "There are hundreds of swine inside everyone. Hey inhuman person, you think that only old Sheikh has fallen into this danger. Don't you know anything about the swine inside you? Kill the swine which are inside you, set fire to idols. If you can't do these things, fall in love like Sheikh and be disgraced". As Sheikh fell in love and was disgraced, his murids left him. However, each of them had nafs. The nafs was like swine and inhuman. And this nafs controlled them. At least Sheikh herded the swine. But they obeyed their nafs which was like swine".

Attar tried to explain Sanan's story to the readers: "None of the non-muslims in the world can turn the blind eye to the tragedy that happened to this old wise muslim". Attar said these words in Sheikh's character: "If there is someone who blames me, say to him that nobody has been insured against the danger in this case".

To struggle against nafs, to describe it as wild animals such as snake and dragon are wide-spread subjects in islamic culture. In sufi literature we can see many allegorical stories in which nafs doesn't die with prayers and religion, it freezes, sleeps, and then finds opportunity to rise again. In Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's "Masnavi" snake catcher's story is very edifying in this theme. "A snake catcher saw a big motionless snake in the mountain and thought it was dead. He caught and brought it to the city. He said everybody that he had killed the snake and began to vaunt. He wrapped the snake around his neck and waist in order to entertain people and to gain money". The snake which had slept in the cold snows of mountains woke in the warm weather of city. The people's noise made the snake angry and it killed the snake catcher. When horrified people saw the dead snake moving they begin to flee. In fact the snake was not dead! Human's nafs curls and sleeps like that snake. We need bring it into flames of love and devastate it by setting fire.

نفس ازدهاست او کی مرده است

از غم بی آلتی افسرده است<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Attar Sheikh Farudid-din, Mantik-at Tayr, according to Paris Manuscript, edited by Kazem Dezfolyian, Tahran, 1381, page 98

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana, Mesneviye-Manevi, III, beesas-e nosxeeye Nikolson, 1385, page 368

(Nafs is a dragon. Don't think that it is dead!

Grief and passivity have caused it to weaken).

According to Mevlana it is impossible to bring nafs up with only prayers and religion. It should be brought under "The Sun of Irak" of human desires and then it should be fired up with flames of divine love.

Worship can't bring a human to spiritual perfection without love. If a human worships to God as a result of his fear and his wish of heaven, it means he obeys his nafs.

Only the person, who loves deeply, understands the concept of true grief. Everything, the world and all material luxuries become meaningless for him except his sweetheart. Except his sweetheart everything becomes needless. These pains of love reach a stage in which the person doesn't want to come together with the sweetheart. The sweetheart's grief becomes dearer than coming together with her. Actually, the aim of love is this grief. The grief makes the soul pure and directs it to the way which begins in his inner world and takes him to God. The person who understands himself through this grief and pains can also conceive God. Therefore the sufi people also appreciate the metaphoric love for human being. They say that "Metaphor is the bridge of Truth".

Sheikh Sanan's love for a Christian girl causes everything, world, afterlife, reputation, respect, worship and its miracles, murids and people's abuses to fall from his grace. His sentence "If the Christian girl is glad, nothing else makes sense for me" describes allegorically spiritual situation of the person who loves God.

Sheikh had a faithful friend in Mecca. When he heard Sheikh's story he scolded murids: "Why did you leave your sheikh? Why did you leave him alone in that difficult situation? When he drank wine, you had to drink with him. When he went to church, you had to go with him. When he herded swine, you had to help him. If you would do all of these, Sheikh would not be in danger. Your assistance and prayers would help him to get rid of this danger".

Sheikh's murids understood their mistakes and became embarrassed. They shed tears, regretted, prayed and begged God 40 nights and days for helping their sheikh in this situation. God accepted their prayers. One of the murids saw Prophet Mohammed in his dream. He smiled. Murid begged him and said: "Our sheikh has abandoned his religion, put him right". Mohammed-Mostafa said to him: "There was a serious obstacle between your sheikh and God. We overcame that barrier. We will not leave him alone in the darkness. We will help him with our intercession. That serious obstacle was removed from his way. His sin was replaced by his repentance. Obviously, that repentance overshadows countless sins. The waves of mercy ocean wash men's and women's sins off".

This story concerns very subtle concepts of Islam such as sin and repentance. Repentance is very excellent point. The people who repents after his sin is more pre-eminent than the one who has no sin. Because he would not commit that sin any more. He hates the sins and takes refuge in God's mercy. To say more clearly, let us give two people an example. One of them doesn't eat a delicious fruit as he doesn't know its taste. Another one has eaten that fruit. But then he knows that the fruit has been forbidden, and he rejects it for the sake of God. Only God's loveable slaves are gifted with pure and hearty repentance by Him. Sheikh Sanan had this distinct honour. When murid heard the Prophet's good news he wept for joy. His joy was heard in the sky. He went back to Sheikh with other murids. Attar described skillfully the pitiable situation of Sheikh who was herding the swine. Sheikh saw the divine light in his murids' faces and understood that he didn't have divine light like them. He shed tears, threw the zunnar away and began to rend his clothes. He blushed and became

embarrassed.

His murids approached him and gave him good news about Prophet's intercession. The divine light of repentance lightened him up and fired all sinful things.

Sheikh performed ritual ablution of the whole body. He wore again his dervish's coat and moved forward Hejaz.

At this time in her dream the christian girl saw a divine light like the Sun in her lap. She experienced grief in her heart. She felt in a strange world.

The girl understood her mistake. She realised that Sheikh Sanan was a loveable slave of God and she was an obstacle on his way to Truth. She prayed God to forgive her and adopted Islam.

At this time Sheikh received news about her state. He went back with his murids. They saw that the girl was barefooted, her hair was on the soil and she had lain down on the ground. When she saw Sheikh she fainted. Sheikh sprinkled his teardrops to her face. She said to Sheikh that she had adopted Islam. She apologised him and died.

In this point Attar stressed once more that the christian girl was a drop of the truth ocean.

قطره ای بود او در این بهر مجاز

سوی دریا ی حقیقت رفت باز<sup>1</sup>

He said: "She went back where she had come from. We all will return". Sheikh's heart-wrenching story is actually an expression of stages in spiritual evolution. "İnnə lilləhi vaa innə ileyhi raciun" ("Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return")

"Sheikh Sanan" explains human's spiritual evolution in the love story in Attar's literary legacy.

In his "Divan" Attar used frequently the characters such as "Christian girl" and "tersabecha". As sufi term "tersabecha" means "the divine light of God". In a ghazal the poet describes himself in Sheikh Sanan's situation.

ترسا بپه ای ناگه قصد دل و جانم کرد

سودای سر زلفش رسوای جهانم کرد

زو هر که نشان دارد دل بر سرو جان دارد

ترسا بچه ان دارد دیوانه از آنم کرد

دوش آن بت شنگانه می داد به پیمانہ

وز کعبه به بت خانه زنجیر کشانم کرد

کردم زپیشانی در بتکده دربانى

چون رفت مسلمانی بس نوحه که جانم کرد<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Attar Sheykh Farudid-din, Mantik-at Tayr, according to Paris Manuscript, edited by Kazem Dezfoliyan, Tahrān, 1381, page 112

<sup>2</sup> Attar Sheykh Farudid-din, Mantik-at Tayr, according to Paris Manuscript, edited by Kazem Dezfoliyan, Tahrān, 1381, page 225

- (A divine light of God took control of my heart and my soul suddenly,
- My love for her made me embarrassed in the life,
- My heart is stuck on everything that reminds me of her,
- Therefore I have been a Christian, she has blown my mind.
- Yesterday that shining idol gave me wine in a goblet,
- And he took me in chains from Kabah to the place of idols.
- My sadness caused me to work as doorkeeper in the place of idols.
- As I abandoned Islam, my soul and my spirit shed tears and cried).

“Sheikh Sanan” story is considered a commentary on this ghazal. Following “Sheikh Sanan” the poet wrote that the birds gathered and went to look for Simurg.

After this scene the poet pictured the excuses, questions, doubts and hesitations of the birds. In fact, all of these reflected difficulties and suspicions that the people confronted on the way to God. In “Mantiqut-Teyr” the character of “Hudhud” showed that the poet was a sheikh in the religion.

Eventually the birds passed through the stages such as *taleb*, *aşk*, *marifet*, *istigna*, *toiuhid*, *hayret*, *fakr u fena* (wish, love, decency, amazement, self-sufficiency, belief of oneness of God, disappearance, and immortality). These conceptions reflected the stages of sufi way. Attar characterized the stages in this way: “The stage of wish is the beginning. The second is immense stage of love. The third one is the stage of decency. The fourth is the stage of self-sufficiency. The fifth is the stage of pure belief of oneness of God. The sixth is the stage of amazement. The seventh is the stage of disappearance. But you can not keep going towards the next stage”.

Most of the birds died on this troublesome way. Some of them were trapped while looking for food, others died while seeking water and etc.

Only thirty birds survived at the end of this difficult way. Attar described this part in “Se morğ dər pişgahe-Simurg” (“The thirty birds in front of Simurg”) section.

The birds saw that the divine lights were scattering over them.

In this meeting which expressed closeness to God the birds looked at Simurg as if they saw a shining mirror in front of them. It was themselves who were looking at them through mirror. Suddenly they heard a voice:

بی زبان آید از آن حضرت خطاب

کاینه است این حضرت چون آفتاب

هر که آید خویشتن ببیند در او

تن و جان هم جان و تن ببند در او 1

("His Excellency is a mirror like the Sun. Who comes here he will see himself, his soul and his figure. You are thirty birds, therefore you also seem as thirty birds in this mirror. If you were forty or fifty birds, you would also have got rid of your physical features").

Actually this material world is like the cover of dust and dirt over the mirror of Truth. The person who overcomes his physical desires can uncover it and clean the material dusts from his spiritual mirror.

Everyone's way to God begins in his inner world. Therefore the mystics called the spiritual way as "səfər əz suye-xod be suye-Xoda" ("the path to God from yourself").

Human's body which was brought into being out of water and earth, binds him to the material world and material luxuries. But graceful soul calls him for spiritual beauties, excellency and pre-eminence.

When we read Attar's "Mantiqu-tayr" we want to spread wings in the endless sky like a bird and to take ourselves off from temporal problems which hurt our soul.

Attar's "Mantiqu-tayr" earned fame from day one. It has been translated into different languages of the world and a lot of naziras (*imitative poems*) have been written to it. There are many works which explain the stages of sufis' spiritual way, its difficulties and conditions. These include Abulkheyr's "40 stages", Seyid Yahya Bakuvi's "Heft meqam ve chehel menazil", Yusif Muskuru's "beyan el-esrar-et-talibin fir-tasavvof" and etc. In these works simple and clear style was paid special attention rather than poetic expressions. But as a result of the unusual inspiration was given to him by God, Attar touched the hearts with his marvellous and unique poems, verses and words. He said: "If you don't want to grove and to drown in the sea of sins, raise your head, look at the sky and watch the birds. A believer's faith and affection to God are his wings. Spread your wings in the sky of truth".

In Attar's poems, specially in "Mantik-at-tayr" the birds are the symbol of salik who is on the way to God. But in Mevlana's works salik's symbol is a fish. This fish keeps silent although it swims in the depth of truth sea and knows everything about the world of meanings.

The fisherman who uses fishnet and fishing rod to catch fish is the symbol of nafs and negative factors which throw the person off the way to God:

گشتی شما ماند بر این آب شکسته

ماهی صفتان! یکدم از این آب بر آید 2

(Hey fish-faced people, your ship got broken in the water. Take your heads out of the water for a moment).

Salik is like a fish. Fish can't live without water. And the salik can't live without love for God. Mevlana advised salik to behave like a fish and to plunge into the ocean of meanings:

چو ماهی باش در دریای معنی

<sup>1</sup> Attar Sheykh Farudid-din, Mantik-at Tayr, according to Paris Manuscript, edited by Kazem Dezfoliyan, Tahran, 1381, page 243

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Celaledin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahran, 1383, page 281

که جز با آب خوش همدم نگردد  
 ملالی نیست ماهی را ز دریا  
 که بی دریا خود او خرم نگردد  
 یکی دریاست در عالم نهانی  
 که در وی جز بنی آدم نگردد<sup>1</sup>

(Be like a fish in the ocean of meanings, because it has no friend but fresh water. The fish isn't afraid of water. It can't live and be happy without water. This world is also a mysterious ocean. It has no other diver except human).

The poet wrote:

چو در کشتی نوحی مست خفته  
 چه غم داری اگر طوفان در آمد<sup>2</sup>

(If you sleep in Noah's ark, why are you afraid of storm?)

Prophet Noah and his ark have many gnostic meanings in Divani-Kebir:

دشمن خویشیم و یار آنکه ما را می کشد  
 غرق دریاییم و ما را موج دریا می کشد<sup>3</sup>

(We are ourselves' enemies. And we are the friend of everything which kill us; We are overwhelmed with tides and they kill us).

According to Mevlana the true salik struggles against only himself<sup>4</sup>. The things which he likes are his enemies, and the things which hurt him are his friends. Mevlana was influenced by Prophet Mohammed's hadith in which it was said: "The Paradise was founded on displeasing things". Therefore Mevlana thought that a human had to go straight to decency in order not to drown in the sea of material wishes.

اینک آن نوحی که لوح معرفت کشتی اوست  
 هر که در کشتیش ناید غرقه طوفان کند<sup>5</sup>

(Noah is the person whose ark is the place of wisdom. If someone doesn't go on board his ark, the flood will cause him to die)".

In Mevlana's "Masnavi" it was said by Prophet Mohammed's character: "I'm like the Noah's ark in the flood of my time". When you are together with sheikh, the evil can't hurt you and you can keep going day and night".

In sufi literature Prophet Noah characterises a wise spiritual guide, and the ark characterises his lessons.

<sup>1</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 281

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 286

<sup>3</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyat-e-Divan-e-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 312

<sup>4</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Fih-I Mafih, Tahrán, 1381, page 32

<sup>5</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyat-e Divan-e Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 313

Prophet Mohammed said: "My Ahlul-Bayt is like Noah's ark. Who goes on board this ark, he will survive. Who behaves arrogantly he will drown".

A human's desires characterise the water which covers the ship. If the amount of water rises it will cause the ship to sink.

But the water which is under the ship carry it on its head. Therefore Mevlana said: "Emerge the surface of water like a dead fish. Then the water will carry you on its head".

One of the symbols used frequently in Divani-Kebir is *a camel*. In "Masnavi" Mevlana wrote the story about Majnun's camel while describing the struggle between mind and nafs inside of human. The camel was pulling its reins back, because it had left its baby alone. But Majnun hurried up to meet with his Layla. Therefore he was pulling its reins forward. In sufi literature the camel is the symbol of nafs, passion, human's material wishes and human body. But as a symbol the camel was given in a different way in "Divani-Kebir:

در کف عشقت مهيار همه

اشتر مستيم در اين زير بار<sup>1</sup>

(Love has held everybody's reins in its hand,

Under this burden we are like the camels).

"Oshyor-i maast" term which was frequently used in Mevlana's poems is the symbol of ashik (*the person who loves*) who is under the divine affection and his mind can't control him:

يار مرا چو اشتران باز مهيار مي كشد

اشتر مست خويش را درچه قنار مي كشد

جان و تنم بخست او شيبش من شكست او

گردن من ببست او تا به چه كار مي كشد

شست ويم چو ماهيان، جانب خشك مي برد

دام دلم بجانب مير شكار مي كشد

آنكه قنار ابر را زير فلک چو اشتران

ساقی دشت می کند، بر کوه و غار می کشد<sup>2</sup>

(The sweetheart pulls my reins like the camels. What is our destination? My soul and my body are attached to my lover. I'm heart-broken by my sweetheart. I'm soaked in the ocean of my love but, my beloved one drags me towards the dry ground. The trap of my heart takes me to hunter's feet. I'm under the burden of clouds in the world and my lover makes me water deserts and drags me to mountains and caves).

The camels, being arranged in ranks, starting a journey and passing by different stations, resemble salik who takes

<sup>1</sup> Mevlana Celaledin Rumi, Kolleyat-e-Divan-e Shems, Tahran, 1383, page 503

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Celaledin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divan-e Shems, Tahran, 1383, page 243

a step on the way to God. “Desert” term is the symbol of divine love and spiritual journey. The mountain and cave are the symbols of spiritual evolution.

According to Mevlana the souls have known each other from the very beginning. All the souls who knew each other in Alem-i-ervah (*the world of souls*) also become friends in this world. And the souls who didn't get along well with each other there become enemies in this world, too.

When saliks see each other they become happy as if they see a compatriot in the foreign country.

ای که تو از عالم ما می روی

خوش ز زمین سوی سما می روی

ای قفس اشکسته و جسته ز بند

پر بگشادی به کجا می روی؟<sup>1</sup>

(Oh, you are leaving our world,

You fly from the ground to the sky.

You have broken the cage and have become free,

Where do you fly?

“We all are together since the very beginning; Thank God! We have again come together in the end. Our hearts and ways are same. The same wine has affected us. A Sun rose in the gardens and raised us. We are jewelry, but it is your light that makes us bright. We live, but you are the cause of our existence”.

The poet meant Shams Tabrizi while saying “afetab”. Murshid (*guide*) is like the Sun. The stone becomes jewelry under the sunshine. And salik becomes spiritually pure by influence of murshid's lessons.

According to Mevlana we choose our afterlife in this world. Our situation in everlasting life depends on our deeds in the world. This mortal world is a chance to gain our eternal life. Therefore human being must not be tempted by the luxuries and beauties of the world. These material things shouldn't cause us to doze off. We must always be vigilant and think of our afterlife:

بیدار شو، بیدار شو هین رفت شب بیدار شو

بیزار شو، بیزار شو، وز خویش هم بیزار شو<sup>2</sup>

(Wake up! Wake up! The night is over, wake up! Be fed up with everything! Be fed up with even yourself!)

“Bidari” is the case in which a person is vigilant in the face of evil things which put him off the way to God. That's why passions and desires of the material world can't tempt him.

Although “bidari” and “maasti” (*being out of you're the control of your mind*) have opposite meanings, these conceptions are very close to each other in Mevlana's poems. According to the poet “bidarlik” is to forget yourself, to

<sup>1</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divan-e Shems, Tahran, 1383, page 1375

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divan-e Shems, Tahran, 1383, page 915

close your eyes to yourself and to doze off inside you. By saying “ez xiş xab kerdim, hemrenge-ab kerdim” (“We dozed off inside us and got the features of water”) the poet hinted at “Movt qabl-ez movt” stage which the Prophet Mohammed had mentioned.

In “Masnavi” the poet explained more broadly the meaning of “Xod ra ço morde binim, ber gure-xod neşinim” (“We consider ourselves dead and we are sleeping inside our tombs”). While writing the story about the fish which had been caught and fried by fisherman the poet tried to describe also a clever fish that had pretended to die and got rid of fishing rod. This clever fish was the symbol of “To die before death” stage in sufi ideology. He said: “Stay in the surface of water like a dead fish. Then the water will carry you on the top”.

In a Divan-i-Kebir he and his murids characterized the fish which hurried up to emerge in the surface of water: “Ma ceme-mahiyanim, ber ruye-ab ranim” (We are the school of fish and we swim towards the surface of water”).

The term “Maastlik” used by the poet meant to forget oneself and to be indifferent to material things and desires. Salik's states of mind in some stages of spiritual journey were expressed with terms like *indifference, madness and craziness*:

حیلت رها کن، عاشیقاً دیوانه شو، دیوانه شو  
 وندر دل آتش در آ، پروانه شو، پروانه شو  
 هم خویش را بیگانه کن، هم خانه را ویرانه کن  
 وانگه بیا، با عاشیقان همخانه شو، همخانه شو  
 تو لیلة القبری، برو تا لیلة قدری شوی  
 چون «قدر» مر ارواح را کاشانه شو، کاشانه شو<sup>1</sup>

(Oh ashik, give up the pretences. Be crazy, be crazy; and then come and be friend with other ashiks. If you want to deserve your sweetheart you should be a soul completely; if you go forward the crazy ones, be crazy, be mad; you are the night of grave, go and be home like the night of Al-Qadr for the souls).

In the last couplet the poet compared “leyletul-qabr” with “leyletul-qadr”. Ignorant person resembled pitch darkness and the darkness of grave. But the wise man resembled the night of Al-Qadr, the night in which Koran had been sent down, that holy night was full of divine mysteries.

According Mevlana to love God begins with loving His creatures and human who is the most supreme one among the creatures. There are many hadiths (*sayings of Prophet Mohammed*) about loving for the sake of God, hating for the sake of God, and believers' love for each other for the sake of God: “Who love each other for the sake of God stand under the shadow of the ninth heaven. Even the angels who are close to God admire them. They will enter the paradise without questioning. On the Day of Judgment they will be called the neighbors of God”; “The best of the deeds after faith to God is to love people”.

In Mevlana's opinion, human is the supreme creature. Human's spiritual evolution and his ability of raising from

<sup>11</sup> Mevlana Celaledin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 914

the ground to the highest spiritual stage raise him to the place of angels: “Sometimes the angels admire our purity; and sometimes the evil runs away when it sees our courage. Our body which was created from earth is the poor slave of God. Well down, our work and efforts are great”<sup>1</sup> (Divan-i Kebir, p.482)

Human heart is house of God. The house of God should be visited. To break human heart is the greatest sin. If you break a heart and then visit Kaaba for hundreds of times, your visits will not be accepted by God.

From the poet’s point of view a person who doesn’t love is not different from a dead one. If a human has not been gifted with the ability of loving by God from the very beginning, he can’t love and understand the divine grief.

ما عاشیق عشقیم عشق است نجات

جان چون خضر است عشق چون آب حیات<sup>2</sup>

(We are lovers of love. Love is salvation; the soul is like Prophet Khidr, but love is like water of life).

In another quatrain the poet said: “All the universe was given birth by love. Therefore love is our mother. And we are her children” (Divan-i Kebir, p.1472) Mevlana wrote that human being had passed through four stages of evolution. These included *deadness, plant, animal, and human*. In the end he called human for being wise than being a simple body. But this was possible with only grief and love. The person who didn’t experience the pains of love couldn’t perceive the essence of real grief. He thought that if human didn’t feel pains in his heart, he would not meet with God. In Mevlana’s opinion the pains of love were like pains of giving birth. By feeling the pains of love human gained wisdom and got rid of the cares of material world. The poet described this case as “Mary’s body gave a birth to the soul of Jesus”.

Pains and grief seem intolerable and unbearable to human. But actually, these are main conditions in gaining wisdom. Therefore the people who hurt and give trouble us are in fact remedies for us. It is possible that they can inhere our body, but consequently they strengthen our souls and make our hearts pure. Mevlana referred to Prophet Mohammed’s hadith “The Paradise was founded on displeasing things” and meant the same meaning while writing: “We are ourselves’ enemies. And we are the friend of everything which kill us; We are overwhelmed with tides and they kill us”.

Mevlana’s “Divan” is very impressive in terms of poetry. Traditional metaphors and symbols have unique roles in his works. Mevlana said that he had connected to God without words, speaking and hearing. His words touch the souls like a divine light coming from heaven of God and take people to the world of spiritual beauties.

## RESULTS

The process of salik’s spiritual evolution and its most graceful points were explained comprehensively in both Sheikh Faridaddin Attar’s and Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi’s works. The main purpose in this trip for a human being is to recognise himself and own passion. Although we see the expression of great divine emotions in Attar’s literary legacy, a wise man’s theoretical ideas referring to logic and experience predominate. But in Mevlana’s works different feelings and experiences of the spiritual evolution are expounded with marvellous emotions, ecstasy and pathos.

<sup>1</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 482

<sup>2</sup> Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Kolleyate-Divane-Shems, Tahrán, 1383, page 1492

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