



Rumi Teaches Blog Posts:
2013 - 2014
by nashid fareed-ma'at

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INTRODUCTION

In 2013, I started the *Rumi Teaches* blog. As much as there is some mainstream interest in Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi, much of it tends to reduce him to just a mystic poet. The majority of mainstream portrayals of him take him out of the context of Islam, and even less acknowledge the deeper purpose of his work to arrive at the station of realizing the Beloved, the Absolute. To address this poignant gap in how Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi is presented, I was moved to utilize this blog. Sharing guidance and lessons I received, the blog posts seek to inspire a more wholistic approach to reading and applying what Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi taught through his poetry, stories, and words. As the blog continued for over a year, a question arose of what to do with the growing collection of posts, especially since at times the blog focused on specific themes that might be useful in a collected format.

To this end, I present the original posts as they were posted in a book form. I chose not to re-edit any of the posts, partly because of time constraints as well as to retain the original “flavor” of the posts. Reflecting on the first two years of the blog, I can certainly notice a growth in my ability to utilize the blog format to reflect on Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi’s words.

Although the posts have gone through an extensive edit and rewrite process prior to being posted, I am sure my imperfect eyes have missed some errors. For that I apologize. But I pray the intention of capturing a more wholistic presentation of Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi’s work is served despite any shortcomings on my part.

At the time of posting this collection, the *Rumi Teaches* blog continues on. To read the present posts, you can go to the blog webpage at:

< http://www.blueantelopeproductions.com/rumi_teaches_blog.html >

In Surrender and Peace,

nashid

November 2016



Come, Come - Part 1 of 2

September 28, 2013

Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving -- it doesn't matter,
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,
a thousand times, a million times.
Come, come again. Come.

* * *

The above is an adaption of one of the more well-known poems attributed to Jalaal-ud-Diin Rumi. A poem of invitation. But an invitation to what? To who? And why is such an invitation offered? Let's explore...

*Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving -- it doesn't matter,*

Clearly, this is a very open invitation, to perhaps all of creation. But three parties are specifically noted in the second line.

The "wanderer" is stated first. This term can have a layer of meanings for traditional Sufis. Some traditions speak to how the some of first Sufis were mystics who wandered throughout in search of Truth (the Beloved). One of the Arabic roots of the word *sufi* is *ṣuuf*, which means "wool." These ascetics, not formally organized as a group, left the "home life." Many carried wool as they traveled through the desert regions of Arabia. Wool was a wise practical choice: it wasn't a heavy

cloth and could be rolled up when traveling through the hot desert days; but it was also very good for keeping the body warm in the cold desert nights. Wool became a marker for these traveling mystics who would venture from place to place to sit with learned ones and spiritual teachers.

These wanderers' hunger for the realization of Truth was so intense that after learning all they could from one teacher, they would set out in quest of another who would hopefully further expand their awareness and learning. But, as the traditions I have heard tell, when some of these mystics came to sit with the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), they found "a home." They found a teacher who could do more than share portions of teaching that still fell short of the full realization of Truth; instead they found a humble master whose surrender was so poignant and immersed in Love, that to live in his presence opened the heart to the realization of Truth. When the purpose of their wandering was fulfilled, there was no longer a need to continue to wander; but instead to make a home where they could immerse into the opening of the heart and the song of Truth that fills it.

There are messages for wanderers of today within the above account. Mystic, or less formalized forms of religious / spiritual, traditions tend to attract many "wanderers." If you are such a person have you ever stopped to ask why you are wandering? Why are you *really* wandering? Often such persons cite dissatisfaction with elements of more formal / mainstream religions (too strict, imposing dogma, no genuine experience of Truth, etc.). These may be valid reasons. But if the root of wandering is just to get away from something, is this a truly sufficient purpose? The early Sufis were wandering in search of

something; and once they found a means to realize that, they made a home. Not just a home of physical location, but also a home within a set of spiritual teachings and practices that served as a foundation for the realization of that which they sought.

This also applies to Jalaal-ud-Diin Rumi, whose spiritual home is Islam. Within the house of Islam, and his uncompromising application of its five pillars, he embraced a path that immersed him in the heart. The importance of a home doesn't apply to only Islam: even when he took on disciples of other religious and spiritual traditions, he nurtured aspirants to find a home in their paths. An invitation extended to wanderers to not wander forever, to sincerely search until they find that which can be home: a stable "place" to unfold into the beauty of the heart. *Come.*

The second party is the "worshiper." This can be understood to be those who adhere to formal mainstream religious and spiritual teachings, upholding the tenets and rites. Yet for some of these persons, there is still something lacking. The pillars and walls of a building don't make it a home. Rather, it is something more subtle (sometimes untouchable) that infuses the space with a presence that makes that space a home. To such persons, the invitation is extended so that they may make the space of their lives, defined by religion / spirituality, a sacred space open to the presence of (let's call it) Love. This invitation doesn't mean leaving the house of living religious and spiritual decrees: no, there is a protection in living such morality and piety that we need never depart from. Rather, it is an invitation to "come" deeper within that space, to not be so fixated with the walls and pillars that we lose sight of the fragrance and presence that will

outpour from the heart if we allow the heart to fill the space of this house.

Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi came to his own realization of this upon meeting his master, Shams al-Tabriz. Jalaal ud-Diin was already a prominent spiritual teacher and scholar with a great reputation; but so much of his spiritual living was in the realm of books, the realm of the mind. One tradition tells how Shams, who was a traveling bum, approached Jalaal ud-Diin, took his books, and threw them in a fountain. Books in those days were written by hand with an ink that could smear beyond distortion if wetted by water. This act of Shams was seen as an attempt to destroy the books. Jalaal ud-Diin and his disciples quickly rushed to retrieve the books and then set upon Shams, ready to beat him severely. But when Jalaal ud-Diin opened the books, he saw that not a single dot of ink was smeared although the books were dripping water in his hands. Jalaal ud-Diin looked into the eyes of Shams and heard the message of *Come*: come beyond the realm of the mind and its limitations into the endless ocean of Love within the heart.

Oh you, who are admirable upholders of the tenets of religion and spirituality, will you receive this invitation to come beyond the mental and conceptual reaches, into the heart that fills presence of our lives with Love. *Come*.

The third party is the “lover of leaving.” There are some searchers who constantly leave things. They may join a group, stay for a while, and then leave, then join another group, stay for a while, and then leave. Although they may have justified reasons for leaving, they fall into this pattern of constantly departing. Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi extends this invitation even to them, even if they will only come to leave this

invitation too. Perhaps it is with great faith that Jalaal ud-Diin offers this invitation trusting that even if someone who has fallen in love with leaving comes and experiences just a fragrance of the unveiled heart, that such a person will come home to one's own heart. In the end, that is more important than if a person comes to stay and remain part of a particular group or not.

Encountering that fragrance of the heart can be challenging for someone who is constantly leaving things. For most, the biggest barrier to the realization of the heart is one's own mind. And for most, it is agitation in the mind (encountering something displeasing to the mind) that motivates people to leave. Yet, if by grace, we cross paths with one who rests in the openness of the heart, just such an occurrence can convey to us what we need to turn to our own heart. Words may not be able to convey how this works, yet the array of spiritual traditions are filled with examples of such transformative encounters. So even to such persons who have fallen in love with leaving, Jalaal ud-Diin says to them: Come, just experience the presence of my open heart, nothing else matters. Just for the sake of this, *Come*.

This entry has become long enough, so I'll address the rest of the poem in the next entry.



Come, Come - Part 2 of 2

September 30, 2013

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JALAAL UD-DIIN RUMI!!!

Come, come, whoever you are.
Wanderer, worshiper, lover of leaving -- it doesn't matter,
Ours is not a caravan of despair.
Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,
a thousand times, a million times.
Come, come again. Come.

* * *

In the last post we examined a contextual examination of the first two lines, particularly in regards to specific parties mentioned in this poem of invitation. Let's continue with the rest of the poem.

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

As much as the first two lines are a broad invitation, this line begins to specify what this broad audience is being invited to. It is not uncommon that "despair" (in its broadest sense) often brings people to the door of religion and spirituality. Events and occurrences that fracture, if not completely undercut, our hope in life can challenge us to question how serious we are about the door we're standing before. And how often underlying this diminished hope is a misplaced hope: placing trust in worldly things that are not reliable; or having more faith in worldly things than the Beloved, despite proclamations of placing the Beloved first. As much as despair may bring one within

the reach of this invitation, it is exactly that -- despair -- which must be left behind before crossing the threshold to join this caravan.

Some points of Islam may be helpful in further clarifying this point. In *Al-Faatihah*, The Opening surah (chapter) of the Qur'aan, there is a verse that states (transliteration): *Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyaaka nasta'in*. This verse can be translated as: "You (the Beloved) alone do we worship, You alone do we ask for help." This verse is repeated many times in each of the five daily prayers Muslims make yet is not always genuinely realized. It is one thing to conceptually embrace what this verse conveys, another thing to come to a genuine realization of this. When faced with challenges, especially those which make us despair, is our first inclination to turn to the Beloved in reverent praise and ask the Beloved for help? Or do we instead look primarily to other means, whether our own devices or assistance from others, to address such situations?

Jalaal ud-Diin Rumi, adhering to the tenets of Islam, realized the wisdom of turning first and only to the Beloved when encountering challenges. A translation of the *Masnavi*, composed by Jalaal ud-Diin, presents the following:

Then what remedy but the aid of the Remedier?
Despair is copper and sight [or: realization] its elixir.
Lay your despair before The Beloved,
That you may escape from pain without medicine.

(adapted from a translation of the *Masnavi*
by E.H. Whinfield, M.A., p. 153)

To be explicit, there is no remedy to any situation in life but the remedy (help) of the Beloved. And if despair becomes the means to realize this, then it becomes something of value -- perhaps not as valuable as gold but copper is still something a caravan can trade. Truth be told, it is often our neglect of this essential principle that precipitates the need for situations to manifest that bring challenges and despair into our lives as opportunities to wake up and remember the Beloved. The fullness of what such remembrance can become is beyond comprehensive description, but such remembrance is the choice treasure of this caravan.

And even the word "caravan" is rich in meaning: that those who accept this invitation are joining a party that is moving somewhere. One doesn't become part this caravan to remain where you joined it. Instead, drop the despair and be prepared to journey in search of... (I'll let you fill in the blank.)

*Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,
a thousand times, a million times.
Come, come again. Come.*

What are the vows we have broken? The purpose of our creation. To translate a section of the Qur'aan:

{56} I [Allaah] created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me. {57} I seek no livelihood from them, nor do I ask that they should feed [or provide for] Me. {58} Lo! Allaah! The Beloved it is Who giveth livelihood, the Lord of Unbreakable Might.
-- Surah 51 *Al-Thaariyaat* (The Winnowing Winds), Verses 56 - 58

Islam holds that we are given divine laws, moral codes, and cognizance of nature's order to fulfill the purpose of worshiping the Beloved. The cause of so much trouble in the world lays with violating these vows. Yet the mercy of the Beloved endures that even when we violate these, so often are we afforded invitations to come back to fulfillment of these vows. This is an explicit context for these words, things Jalaal ud-Diin openly addressed in his poetry, stories, teachings; it is also reflected in how he lived.

So merciful is the Beloved's patience is that we may find ourselves being offered this invitation after breaking these vows a hundred times, a thousand times, a million times. Despite repeated and sometimes entrenched violation of these vows the invitation to *Come* is still offered. Even if we come and break the vows again, still we are invited to *Come Again*, to keep coming as long as mercy affords us the chance to come back to the purpose of our creation. Even if we are foolishly stubborn in breaking these vows, just to realize the abounding mercy afforded to us can be transformative. Including the mercy of having saints come to remind of this invitation from the Beloved to *Come, Come Again. [Just] Come.*

Not all the blog entries will be as didactic as this one was, but hopefully you realize the importance of this invitation. This poem invitation informs the tone of this blog.



Distinguish well true dawn

October 10, 2013

Whatsoever is perceived by sense the Beloved annuls,
But the Beloved establishes that which is hidden from the senses.
The lover's love is visible, one's Beloved hidden.
The Friend is absent, the distraction one causes present.
Renounce these affections for outward forms,
Love depends not on outward form or face.

...

Why give your heart to mere stones, O simpleton?
Go! seek the source of light which shineth always!

Distinguish well true dawn from false dawn,
Distinguish the color of the nectar from that of the cup;
So that, instead of many eyes of caprice,
One eye may be opened through patience and constancy.
Then you will behold true colors instead of false,
And precious jewels in lieu of stones.
But what is a jewel? Nay, you will be an ocean of pearls;
Yea, a sun that measures the heavens!
The real Worker is hidden in Its workshop,
Go you into that workshop and see The Worker face to face.
Inasmuch as over that Worker Its work spreads a curtain,
You cannot see the Worker outside Its work.
Since Its workshop is the abode of the Wise One,
Whoso seeks the Worker without is ignorant of It.

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