



DARU'L-MASNAVI OF THE MEVLEVI ORDER

Rumi Prophecies

by Ibrahim Gamar (4/07)

As a result of the amazing popularity of Mawlānā Rumi's name in the West—and especially in America where translations and versions of his verses in English have made him the best-selling poet, after nearly 800 years—there has been an increased tendency to believe that the popularity of his name must have been prophesied.

This article reviews a number of versions of such prophecies in comparison to the earliest Persian sources in which prophecies were attributed to Mawlānā. The conclusion is that, if Mawlānā made any prophecies, none involved a prediction that his name would become famous. The strongest case is that he predicted that his words of deep spiritual meaning, insights, and secrets—and those words in his Masnavi, in particular—would become established in all nations and that these words of his would be recited in every clime, or region, of the world.

PROPHETCY #1: In a book published in Turkey (translated into English) in the 1970's, the Director of the Mevlana Museum in Konya, Turkey, quoted Mawlānā as saying about Konya: "Don't be afraid, this city will be saved from the sword until the Day of Judgment."

PROPHETCY #2: The same Director quoted Mawlānā as saying: "A time will come when my home will be in the centre of the city and it will flourish. Then wave upon wave of people will come to visit my tomb..."

PROPHETCY #3: The same Director quoted Mawlānā as saying: "A time will come when... wave upon wave of people will come to visit my Tomb and my words will be forever on their lips..."

PROPHETCY #4: In a book published in America, an author quoted the Persian mystical poet Attār as telling Mawlānā when he was a little boy, "Someday your words will be heard around the world."

PROPHETCY #5: In a published book, a contemporary Mevlevi leader quoted Mawlānā as saying, "My name and my words will be told among the lovers, centuries after my death."

PROPHETCY #6: In a publication, another contemporary Mevlevi leader was quoted as saying of Mawlānā: "He says, 'I am the Sun, I will rise the West. And I will become a household word.' The earliest Persian sources are (a) the works of Mawlānā's son, Sūltān Walād, a biography by Mawlānā's disciple, Sepahsālār, and a biography by Mawlānā's grandson's disciple, Aflāki. It is the latter work (written between 1318-1360—45 years after Mawlānā's death) that attributes prophecies to Mawlānā.

Prophecies About The Protection Of Konya

"Mawlānā said: 'Bāhā' al-Dīn, as long as the blessed sepulchral shrine and the bones of the Great Master Bāhā' al-Dīn Valād and our offspring and descendants and friends and disciples' remain in this city, this country [Konya] will not suffer the indignity [Hetta] of decimation and the hoof of a horse will not enter its gates and the city's gates will not be broken down in this place. Blood will not be shed and this city will not be entirely destroyed and devastated and it will not remain empty. The inhabitants of the city will always be secure and flourishing" in the sanctuary of the blessed sepulchral shrine, "and they will be safe and sound from Time's calamities and the vicissitudes of night and day—if God Most High is willing!"

—Shams al-Dīn Ahmad-e Aflāki, *The Feats of the Knowers of God* (Mānāqib al-Ārefīn), translated from the Persian by John O'Kane, Boston: Brill, 2002, p. 559

—from the Persian text of Aflāki, Chapter 7, section 15 (p. 801, of Tahsin Yazıcı's edition, 1981).

"our... friends and disciples" [ahbāb wa aShāb-e mā]

"secure and flourishing" [mānāb wa khurāk]

"the blessed sepulchral shrine" [torba-ye mubrāk]

"Likewise, Mawlānā would frequently say: 'After this give Konya the title "City of the Friends of God"; for every born person who comes into existence in this city will be a Friend of God. And as long as the blessed body of Bāhā' al-Dīn and his family remain in this city, the sword will not be applied in this city and the enemy of the city will not succeed, but perish in the end. And Konya will be protected from the afflictions of the end of time. For even if some of the city falls into ruin, is obliterated and decreases, it will not be completely destroyed. Indeed, if it does fall into ruin, our treasure will still be buried there. As the poet has said: 'Even if the Tatars destroyed the world through war, / The ruins would contain your treasure. Why be sad?' In the end, spiritual people from the whole world will turn their faces in this direction and such joys will occur that the dead will yearn to rise, and our higher meanings and divine insights will take hold of the world. And he also said: 'As long as there is a group who denies our family,' the people of this city will not find peace."

Aflāki, trans. by O'Kane, p. 181

—Persian text of Aflāki, Chapter 3, section 171 (section 169, p. 261, of Yazıcı's edition)

"in the name of God... for every born person who comes into existence in this city will not be applied in this city and the enemy of the city will not succeed, but perish in the end. And Konya will be protected from the afflictions of the end of time. For even if some of the city falls into ruin, is obliterated and decreases, it will not be completely destroyed. Indeed, if it does fall into ruin, our treasure will still be buried there. As the poet has said: 'Even if the Tatars destroyed the world through war, / The ruins would contain your treasure. Why be sad?' In the end, spiritual people from the whole world will turn their faces in this direction and such joys will occur that the dead will yearn to rise, and our higher meanings and divine insights will take hold of the world. And he also said: 'As long as there is a group who denies our family,' the people of this city will not find peace."

—Aflāki, trans. by O'Kane, p. 503

—Persian text of Aflāki, Chapter 5, section 24

"Shaykh Salāh al-Dīn: Mawlānā's first "chief disciple" [khalifa], who was assigned to train the disciples to become derivatives

"the Great Master" refers to Mawlānā's father

Not surprisingly, there were legends that the spirit of Mawlānā miraculously protected the city of Konya from the Mongols. Aflāki tells a story of how the Mongols first encircled Konya, whose inhabitants became hopeless and begged for Mawlānā's help. He supported them and their hoof of a horse did not enter the city's gates. The Mongols decided to attack him with arrows, but were miraculously unable to draw their bows. They mounted their horses, but the horses would not move forward. The inhabitants of Konya watched this and shouted, "God is Great!" The Mongol commander, Bājū tried to use his bow and his horse with the same result, and then he declared: "That man in truth belongs to the Yatrahphān." His anger must be avoided. In whatever city or province there is a man like this, those people will not be conquered by us." The Mongol commander spared the people of Konya (and other cities that submitted and offered large sums of money and other tribute) and ordered that the battlements (fortified walls) of Konya be torn down. When the people of Konya complained about this, Mawlānā said: "Let them destroy the battlements because it is assured for Konya's people that the city of Konya will be guarded and protected by another tower and curtain, not by this tower and battlement of stone which can be destroyed by a small cause and devastated by the least earthquake."

—Translated by O'Kane, p. 180 from Chapter 3, sections 169-70 of Aflāki's work "Yatrahphān: means 'the gods.'"

Aflāki tells a story of how, after Mawlānā's death, the Mongol ruler of the Seljuk state in Anatolia, Keyghāz Khan became angry over the killing of his ambassador and decided to kill all the inhabitants of Konya. He approached with a huge army. One night he had a dream in which Mawlānā came and began to strangle him and warned him to back off. He was extremely frightened and was weeping and shaking. He declared: "This city in this clime belongs to Mawlānā, and whoever sets out to attack this region, no member of his lineage remains and he is destroyed."

—Translated by O'Kane, p. 230 from Chapter 3, section 257 of Aflāki's work

In another place Aflāki tells the same story differently. The Mongol ruler declared, "I also see him in a dream last night. He was strangling me and saying: 'This city belongs to us! Now, oh Akhī! I have adopted you as my father and I have renounced the bad intention I had. I have resolved not to cause trouble to the people of Konya and not to inflict harm on them.' —Translated by O'Kane, p. 420 from Chapter 3, section 601 of Aflāki's work

"Akhī: means "brother" in Arabic. This speech was supposedly directed to Mawlānā's son, Sūltān Walād

PROPHETCY #1: The following modern summary of this prophecy is clearly based on Aflāki's stories:

"The people of Konya were greatly afraid. The Mongols had razed and burned every place they had passed through.... The elders of the city were in despair and appealed to Mevlana for advice. Mevlana replied, 'Don't be afraid. This city will be saved from the sword until the Day of Judgment. He who attempts to subject the city cannot be protected against our spiritual power. As long as the sacred body of Sultan 'A-Jâlîma is buried here this land will be protected....' Mevlana was the spiritual support of Konya. Through him Konya was counted among the number of holy cities, and won honour throughout the world. On one occasion he said to his son Sultan Veled, 'As long as my holy tomb, my father, ancestors, descendants, and those who love and befriend me remain in this city no enemy foot will tread upon this soil....'

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