



DÂRU 'L- MASNAVÎ
OF THE MEVLEVI ORDER

Shaykh Ghâlib's Praise of Hazrat-i Mawlânâ and Masnavi

Shaykh Ghâlib As'ad Dede (1758-99) was the Mevlevi shaykh of the Mevlevi center in the area of İstanbul presently called Galata from 1790 until his death. His tomb is there, in a small building, in which is also the tomb of the great Ottoman Turkish commentator of the Masnavi, Isma'il Anqaravî (died, 1631). This poetic praise occur early (verses 137- 154) in Ghâlib's famous epic poem in rhyming couplets, "Beauty and Love" [Hüs'n ü Ashk], completed in 1783. An American university scholar, Victoria Holbrook has made a complete translation into English entitled, "Beauty and Love"(New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005). In her introduction, Dr. Holbrook called Ghâlib's poem "widely considered the greatest work of Ottoman literature." Dr. Holbrook also edited a companion volume, "Hüs'n ü Ashk," in which the original Arabicized Ottoman Turkish has been transliterated into modern Turkish letters (same publisher, 2005).

In Description of Praise<sup>1</sup> of the Holy Master<sup>2</sup>

Ever since God sealed the (line of) Prophets (with Muhammad),<sup>3</sup>  
saints<sup>4</sup> of (lofty) awareness have come to us.

The king of that group is the sovereign Mawlâ<sup>5</sup>;  
one world-ruler is sufficient for this world.<sup>6</sup>

(He is) king of the throne of the dominion of mystic knowledge,<sup>7</sup>  
sitter on the prayer carpet of ('Alî) the Lion of God.<sup>8</sup>

His (deep) thought (is) the guide to verifying Truth,  
(and) his resemblance is as the vice-regent of (Abu Bakr) Siddîq.<sup>9</sup>

(He is) the sun of the heavens for the descendants of ('Alî) the Lion,<sup>10</sup>  
(and) he is the wayfarer on the Golden Chain<sup>11</sup> of ('Alî) the Brave.

He caused a piece of reed, a pen, to attest  
so we knew that David's melodies<sup>12</sup> (were) said to be (from) the reed (flute).

He became superior to the religious scholars,  
(so that) if he is called (God's) Envoy<sup>13</sup> to Anatolia,<sup>14</sup> it is suitable.

The spiritual meaning<sup>15</sup> of (his) words (is like) the spirit of Jesus;  
it revives the religious law,<sup>16</sup> like the (future) Messiah.<sup>17</sup>

Even now, no single book (other than his Masnavi) has been named  
"Kernel of the Qur'ân"<sup>18</sup>...see its (continued) honor!

The (original) kingdom of (his) words (was) the great city (of Balkh)  
(where), in one of its districts, was the throne of Ibn Adham.<sup>19</sup>

A man like Ibrahim Gülshenî<sup>20</sup>  
was said to be (wailing like) an isolated nightingale in (its) orchard.

The transformed saints<sup>21</sup> of the heavens are perishing from (yearning for) his love,  
(while) the sun and the moon are grieving<sup>22</sup> from (longing for) his love.

His noble couplets, verse after verse  
(contain) secrets of the religious law<sup>23</sup> and the verified truth.<sup>24</sup>

His verse illuminates the lamp of spiritual meaning;  
each of its subtle points (is) an evening lamp<sup>25</sup> of spiritual meaning.

It is the royal turban of the group of saints,<sup>26</sup>  
(and) the king and nobleman<sup>27</sup> of the pure and holy ones.

It is said to surround the east and the west<sup>28</sup>  
(with) encompassing waves of submersion and (fine) distinction.

His authority passes through the regions of the world  
(and) his favor and grace flow through the sections of time.

The world is full from the bountiful grace of his help and influence.<sup>29</sup>  
(but) don't discuss his miracles, (for that is) useless!<sup>30</sup>

--translated from Ottoman Turkish by Ibrahim Gamard (8/08), with gratitude to Dr. Victoria Holbrook for her translation and for her transliteration of the Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish letters

NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Praise: After praising God Most High and then the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), Ghâlib praises Mawlânâ, the "patron saint" of his sufi lineage (the Mevlevi order). And praises him in 18 rhyming couplets (also a reference to Mawlânâ's famous 18 rhyming couplets at the beginning of the Masnavi, which led to the Mevlevi custom of revering the number 18). Of course, Ghâlib's entire epic poem ("Beauty and Love") is in rhyming couplets, as is Mawlânâ's entire Masnavi.

<sup>2</sup>the Holy Master [Hazret-i Hudavengâr]: After his father died, Mawlânâ's disciples and their disciples referred to him using this Persian title [Khodâwandgâr]; it means "lord, a king, a master, a great man."

<sup>3</sup>Ever since God sealed the (line of) Prophets (with Muhammad): This refers to the Prophet Muhammad who is known as the final Prophet prior to the Day of Judgment. He is often called the "Seal of the Prophets" [khâtmu 'l-anbiyâ] based on a verse in the Qur'ân (33:40): "Muhammad is not the father of any one of you men, but he is the Messenger of God [rasûla 'lâh] and the Seal of the Prophets" [khâtama 'n-nabiyyîn].

<sup>4</sup>saints [evliya, Arabic: awliyâ]: Lit., "close friends (of) God," "protectors" (of those who ask for their intercession with God). This clearly refers to Mawlânâ as one of the Muslim saints who follow Muhammad as the final Prophet.

<sup>5</sup>Mawlâ: This means "lordly master" and is a reference to "Mawlânâ" ("our lordly master"), who was (later) called "Mawlâ-ye Rûm" [Turkish: Molla-yı Rum]. It was formerly common for important religious scholars to be referred as "Mawlânâ" [Turkish: Mevlana], but it soon came to refer primarily to Jalâluddîn Muhammad ("Rumi"). In this verse of Ghâlib's poem, the word is spelled "Mollâ" [= "Mullah"], a derivative of "Mawlâ," which commonly means a scholar or judge of Islamic law, as well as a preacher.

<sup>6</sup>one world-ruler is sufficient for this world: This means that Mawlânâ is worthy to be the "patron saint" for the entire world.

<sup>7</sup>mystic knowledge [irfan, Arabic: 'irfân]: Literally, "knowing," "knowledge." As a sufi term, it has the meaning of knowledge of God and knowledge gained through mystical contemplation. It is similar a more common sufi term [ ma'rifat].

<sup>8</sup>('Alî) the Lion of God [Shîr-i Yezdan, Persian: Shêr-i Yazdân]: A reference to the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law (and fourth successor as leader of the Muslims) who was famous for his courage and skill in battle.

<sup>9</sup>(Abu Bakr) Siddîq: A reference to a very close friend of the Prophet Muhammad (and first successor as leader of the Muslims) who was famous for his sincerity and truthfulness [Sidq].

<sup>10</sup>('Alî) the Lion [Arabic: Haydar]: See the note above on 'Alî, who was called "Lion of God" [Haydaru 'lâh].

<sup>11</sup>the Golden Chain of ('Alî) the Brave [Turkish: Gazanfer]: A reference to a sufi chain [silsilah] of transmission (from master to disciple) that descends from 'Alî (and, of course, from the Prophet Muhammad to 'Alî).

<sup>12</sup>David's melodies: In the Qur'an, David sings the praises of God (34:10), which became known as the Psalms [Arabic: Zabûr, Qur'ân 21:105].

<sup>13</sup>if he is called (God's) Envoy [peyghamber, Persian: "payghâmbar"]: Literally means "message-bearer" [payghâm-bar]. It originally had the meaning of "messenger," "envoy," and "ambassador." In Persian (and later in Turkish) it is commonly used as a translation of the Qur'anic terms "prophet" [nabî] and messenger [rasûl] and refers to the Prophet Muhammad as the Messenger of the revelation of the Qur'ân and the final prophet, as well as earlier prophets [payghâmbar-ân]. However, the term "payghâmbar" should not be translated as "prophet" in this verse (Professor Holbrook translated "peygamber-i rum" as "prophet of the west"). This is because Shaykh Ghâlib began his poem with the praise of God, then praised the Prophet Muhammad as the "king of the prophets" ["shah- i embiya," verse 19] and then described the Prophet's miraculous journey into the heavens. Only then did he begin his praise of Mawlânâ Rumi, starting (in verse 137) with a declaration that after "God sealed the (line of) Prophets (with Muhammad)," saints [evliya] arrived, and that Mawlânâ was the "king of the saints" [shah-î evliya]. Then he states that Mawlânâ was in the lineage of some of the Prophet's noble companions and successors ('Alî and Abu Bakr). Only then (in verse 143) does Ghâlib refer to Mawlânâ as "peygamber". He appears to have deliberately chosen this non-Arabic term, perhaps as a way to suggest that Mawlânâ was not a "prophet" [nabî] or a "messenger [rasûl] of God"--but that as the "king of the saints" (who are regarded as among the successors of the Prophet Muhammad), he had "inherited" some prophetic qualities.

Mawlânâ himself has hinted at this where he referred to his Masnavi (4:1852) as "the inspiration of God" [waHy-i Haqq]. He then added, "As an explanation, the sufis call it the inspiration of the heart [waHy-i del]-- as a way of concealing it from the common people" (1853). The term "waHy" is normally used to mean the "revelation" of the prophets, whereas the term "ilhâm" is used to mean the (lesser) "inspiration" of the saints. However, in the Qur'ân "waHy" is also used for non-prophets such the mother of Moses (20:38, 28:7) and the honey bee (16:68).

In sum, Mawlânâ was one of the greatest followers of the Prophet Muhammad, and who was also the recipient of a kind of inspiration. As Mawlânâ has said in the Preface to Book I of the Masnavi: "This is the book of the Masnavi, and it is the roots of the roots of the roots of the (Islamic) Religion (hâdhâ kitâbu 'l- mathnawîy wa huwa uSûlu uSûli uSûli 'd-dîn); soon after this he added, "...and it is the Explainer of the Qur'ân" (wa kashshâfu 'l-qur'ân).

<sup>14</sup>Anatolia [Rûm]: This word (which literally means "Rome") refers to the lands ruled by the Christian Byzantine Empire, centered in Constantinople, the capital former Eastern Roman Empire. The rulers in Constantinople called themselves "Romans," not "Byzantines". "Rûm" is also mentioned in the Qur'ân and is the name Muslims have called it since then. This word should not be translated as "west" for a number of reasons: For Western readers, it is likely to be misunderstood as a kind of prophecy referring to Europe and America. And although Anatolia is the westernmost region of the migration of Turkish peoples, for most Middle Easterners, "west" has always meant the Muslim areas of North Africa [maghrib], especially the westernmost areas near the Atlantic ocean. In present-day Turkey the word "Rumi" is used to mean Turkish citizens who are Christians of Greek descent.

<sup>15</sup>spiritual meaning [mana, Arabic: ma'nâ]: This word is also part of the title of Rumi's masterpiece, Masnavi-yi Ma'navî, "Rhymed Couplets of Spiritual Meaning."

<sup>16</sup>religious law: [sher'i, Arabic: sharf'at]: Means the Islamic religious law.

<sup>17</sup>the (future) Messiah [Medhi, Arabic: Madhîh]: Lit., "rightly guided one." This refers to prophecies in Ahadîth collections about a great Muslim leader who will restore for Muslims the original purity of Islamic law and righteousness for a brief period before the Day of Judgment. Some Muslim scholars have held that the Madhî will be the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him), who is prophesied to return from Heaven and defeat the Antichrist. According to a Hadîth, "There is no Madhî except Jesus the son of Mary." A similar word, "cradle" [mahd] also occurs in the Qur'ân several times in relation to Jesus only: "He will speak to men in the cradle [mahd] and as a mature man..." (3:46; see also 5:113, 19:29). However, a majority of Muslim scholars hold that the Mahdî will be a descendent of Muhammad (peace be upon him) with the same, or a similar, name who will precede the coming of Jesus and will be his helper.

<sup>18</sup>"Kernel of the Qur'ân" [maghz-i Kuran]: Rumi himself called his Masnavi "the roots of the roots of the roots of the (Islamic) Religion... and the explainer of the Qur'an" (Book I, Preface).

<sup>19</sup>Ibn Adham [Ibn-i Ethem]: Ibrâhîm ibn-i Ad/ham was a famous early sufi (died 678) who, according to legend, renounced his sovereignty and wealth as king of Balkh in order to become a dervish. Balkh, in present-day Afghanistan, is the city near where Mawlânâ Rumi was born.

<sup>20</sup>Ibrahim Gulsheni: A Turkish poet (died 1534), who was influenced by the Masnavi. The name "gûlshan" means in Persian, "rosebush," "rose bower." In classical poetry, the nightingale sings passionate love songs to its beloved, the rose.

<sup>21</sup>transformed saints [abdal]: lit., "changed ones." A high rank of sainthood in the sufi hierarchy. It is believed that there must be a steady number of this rank of saints in order for the world to be maintained; thus, if one of them dies, a worthy successor is immediately transformed and elevated by God to this higher degree of service to God and the world.

<sup>22</sup>grieving [sineçak, Persian: sîna-châk]: lit., "breast-torn." This is an idiom meaning the sorrow of longing love. It is also a pun on the name of Yusuf Sineçak (died 1546), a Turkish sufi and compiler of a well-known book of selections from the Masnavi.

<sup>23</sup>the religious law: See note above.

<sup>24</sup>the verified truth [hakikat, Arabic: Haqîqat]: This means the direct perception of Divine realities via mystic realization beyond the limitations of the intellect and its concepts and beliefs.

<sup>25</sup>eviling lamp [shebgiragh, Persian: shab-cherâgh]: Lit., "night-lamp," an idiom for a brilliant gemstone, which (poetically) produces its own (God-given) light.

<sup>26</sup>the group of saints [gûruh-i evliya]: See note above for "saints".

<sup>27</sup>nobleman [celebi]: This word means a refined and highly educated gentleman. Here, it is probably also an allusion to the hereditary leader of the Mevlevi Order of Islamic sufism, always a direct male descendent of Mawlânâ Rumi belonging to the Çelebi family (descendants of Mawlânâ's grandson, Ulu' ârif Chalabi).

<sup>28</sup>It is said to surround the east and the west: This may be a reference to a prophecy of awlânâ's (as related by Afîakî) about his Masnavi: "So these words of mine came for this purpose, to fall into obscurity? By God, by God, from the place where the sun rises to the place where it sets, this meaning will establish itself, and it will go forth to the different climes."

<sup>29</sup>the bountiful grace of his help and influence: See the note above for "saints".

<sup>30</sup>don't discuss his miracles, (for that is) useless: This probably refers to his continuing (God-given ) miracles following his death centuries ago--not simply the miracles attributed to him during his lifetime in Afîakî's hagiography.

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Der vasf-ı Hazret-i Hudavengâr

J137 Hatm etti çü enbiyayı Allah  
Geldi bize evliya-yı âgâh

Shehtir o gûruha Molla hunkâr  
Bestir bu cihana bir cihan-dar

Sultan-ı serir-i mülk-i irfan  
Endicede-nishîn-i Shîr-i Yezdan

Manendesir reh-nûma-yı tahkik  
Manendesidir vekil-i Şâhidk

140 Hurshid-i siphr-i sulbi Haydar  
Zer silsile kherrev-i Gazanfer

Ney-pare-i rehik kıldı meshhud  
Bildik neyimish neva-yı Davud

Oldu ulema-yı dine faik  
Peygamber-i Rum dense layik

Mana-yı kelâm ruh-ı İsa  
Mehdi gibi sher'î eyler ihya

145 İsm olmadı bir kitaba el'ân  
Seyret sherefîn ki maGz-ı Kuran

Milk-i suhanı sevâd-ı azam  
Bir bıkası taht-ı İbn-i Ethem

Ibrahim-i Gülsheni gibi merd  
Olmuştur o baGa bûlbûl-i ferd

Abdal-ı felek helak-ı ashkı  
Mîhr ü mehi sîneçak-ı ashkı

Ebyat-ı sherîfî ayet ayet  
Esrar-ı sheriat ü hakikat

150 Rushen suhanı çeraG-ı mana  
Her noktasa shebgiraG-ı mana

Ser-tacı gûruh-ı evliyanın  
Shah u çelebisi asfiyanın

Etmishir ihata garb u sharkı  
Emvâr-ı ihuhit-i gark u farkı

Aktâr-ı cihana hükmü cârî  
Eczâ-yı zamâna feyzî sâfî

154 alem dolu feyz-i himmetinden  
Bahsetme abes kerametinden

[Meter: XXo oXoX oXX]

--from "Hüs'n ü Ashk" by Sheyh Galip, transliterated from the Ottoman Turkish by Victoria Rowe Holbrook, New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2005, pp. 15- 17 [Transliteration of the Turkish letters: S=sh and G=gh were necessary alterations of Professor Holbrook's Turkish text per HTML limitations on this website.]