

# Rumi, A Poet of Love and Divinity: Critical Analysis

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## **ABSTRACT:**

Sufism has a deep history and is considered one of the finest forms of expressing the heart. It has given the world some unforgettable poets who contributed to the genre and preached to the world to follow their hearts and connect themselves to eternal power. It has given one of the most soothing voices of all time and can be considered a sacred devotion to poetry. Sufism has given various shades of poetry to the world and among those shades, one very prominent one can be seen in the poetry of Rumi, one of the greatest of this genre. Rumi's poetry is like a balm to the wounds of those who have been the victims of the cruelty of this materialistic world. His words are like a guiding light in the dark. This paper deeply analyzes Rumi's take on love and its connection with the divine. Rumi is different in his approach towards love and life and how his poetry guides men to surrender themselves to God completely. This paper is based on a deep study of Rumi's personal life as a poet and tries to justly describe him. .

**KEYWORDS:** Divine, Sufism, Love, Hatred, Extremists, Spiritualism, Sacred, God, Devotion, Surrender, Power, Rebellion, Mathnawi.

Muhammad Jallaluddin Rumi, one of the greatest names in the category of Sufi poets has transcended the boundaries of religion and nations to reach the hearts of people. Rumi's universal approach to love and finding the divine solace in it makes him be read by readers of all categories. Many scholars still get confused while relating Rumi's views of love to each other, they portray him simply as a love poet but he is more than that. Rumi's take on love leads him to the divine, to God. He writes about how love is such a pure and gentle force that it can transform any heart into the service of God. He says in one of his poems translated as "Love is surrender",

"O youth in love, fall at her feet

Without your beloved, you are incomplete God's fabric comes from Adam and Eve As intertwined as threads of the weave." 1.

Even his analogues are from God's actions. His understanding of love is very different from many writers of his genre. Ghalib for example declared life as his true love, living it unregretful and to the fullest was his love language but for Rumi love is surrender, it is devotion to the almighty.

One question that comes to mind is what kind of life Rumi lived that he was so gentle and soothing in his writings. There is a very interesting fact to notice that Rumi didn't live in the times of peace, his personal life was a big chaos but that external chaos was not able to shatter his inner peace and devotion.

Rumi was born in 1207 A.D. in Balkh (present-day

Afghanistan). Unfortunately, due to increasing Mongol attacks his family had to move to different places as his father Baha-ud-din was uncompromising with the atrocities of the power. He chose to live life

without any power pressure and only to surrender in front of God and no one else. Though, Rumi was not as rebellious as his father but that urge to speak truth and devote and surrender oneself to God only, really left an impact on Rumi's heart and soul. Rumi was a preacher and a teacher who with the magic of his words taught people to live life from their own experiences and not based on some preconceived notion of a scholar or someone else. He wanted them to explore life themselves as it would open some new horizons for them.

Rumi never really wrote his Shayari but recited it and his students were the ones who gifted them to the world in written form. One may think that a devout servant of God, Rumi must be an extremist of his religion but not to forget that he was dealing with love, and as we know love can never prosper extremism or hatred towards any other belief or religion. He was living in a time when Sufism and Islam had some problems as Sufism was against extremism. Sufis believed God to be one, the force that drives us all irrespective of any differences we have. Rumi's poetry welcomes Islamic, Christian, and many more thoughts as his focus was not on dividing but on uniting. One who truly loves God can never hate or condemn a fellow being. Rumi's love is therefore different as it takes people on a journey where they begin on the materialistic side and end up on the spiritual one. He says,

“Lovers and love live for eternity

All else is borrowed, brother, leave it be Don't be in thrall to passing shows that fade Embrace the thing that is of spirit made.” 2.

He was a man of intellect and spirit. His concept of love travels from physical to metaphysical and it is one of the most beautiful interpretations of love ever made by a Sufi poet. Love is pure and so is Rumi's poetry as it beautifully captures the essence of love and life in general and its connection with God in particular.

Having said that Rumi was not an extremist it is equally important to mention that he believed in Islam and its saying but not in the hatred spread by some humans in the name of God. His famous 12th-century work “Mathnawi” is known as one of the finest interpretations of the “Koran”. In Book III of this work, “Rumi retells a story of the men of Hind, who are led to an elephant in a darkened environment with only their sense of touch with which to feel and define it.” 3.

Before Rumi, this story had been retold by many but they made the characters blind whereas Rumi opined that they were in a place of darkness. This clearly shows the difference in approach between Rumi and other poets.

There is one person whose influence changed a lot in Rumi's life and his ultimate devotion to love and God is somewhat inspired by one friend of his (and a traveling Sufi) named Shamsud-din of Tabriz or Shams Tabrizi. Rumi's close association with him changed a lot in the former. Shams was one of the closest persons Rumi had in his life and many of his students and family members were jealous of Tabriz but when one day he suddenly disappeared, Rumi

was a changed man. He searched for him for years and years but couldn't find him. One thing that Rumi eventually gained was his spiritual enlightenment and his knowledge of love. Whoever reads Rumi's magic of love surely feels a divine connection, it is inevitable in his poetry.

Sufism has always been about either love or divinity but Rumi mingled them together and created something more beautiful than what previously was there. For him finding life in the philosophies of some philosophers is not as good as finding it in the hearts of people, in creating one's own experiences. Rumi left a remarkable impact on the upcoming generations of Sufi lovers as his tomb also has an epitaph which says,

“When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, But find it in the hearts of men!” 4.

The kind of poet Rumi made a place in our hearts because a poet becomes eternal with his poetry, when he is read from generation to generation, in different languages and different parts of the world he becomes eternal. This is what Rumi has achieved.

The beauty of his poetry doesn't only lie in the fact that it is connected to God but also that it connects God to us. God is made as someone approachable, with whom we can love and share our hearts. Majorly, God is seen as someone who is a figure to be worshipped but not the one with whom we can be open about ourselves. Rumi made God sit next to us listening to our hearts just like a lover does and soothe us with His kindness. He made reaching out to God so easy and effortless that an aching heart could get a lot of relief while reading him. For him God is universal, he can't be divided based on our petty politics and shallow beliefs.

He believed in Kinship and the universality of the language of divine love as he says in one of his poems,

“To speak the same language is one form of kin Yet that which unites is the language within

One Turk and the other may share the same tongue

Do they hear the same music when the heart's song is sung?” 5.

Because music has no language barriers similarly love and God have no barriers of any distinction and discrimination, it is there for all to dive deep into its magic.

Sufism when studied deeply is versatile, Rumi is its one part representing a whole new and fresh side of logic and thinking and at the same time the most poetical and relaxing song. His poetry is like a Hymn written in the language of love. For him, love is not only the said romance of two partners but it can be of any form. A child's love for his mother, two brothers loving each other, or any other kind but the ultimate motive of love is to take us to God's paradise of blessings and kindness.

This deep analysis of Rumi's poetry has opened a new outlook to his poetry as he can be considered not only a love poet but a poet of Divine Love.

There is a difference between Rumi and many other great Sufi Poets, the major one being their approach to life in general. When we read Ghalib we come across an altogether different carefree attitude in his writings which again makes him unique in his sense. One of his Shers defines him perfectly, “Ye masaail-e tasawwuf ye tera bayaan, Ghalib Tujhe hum wali samjhate jo na baada-khwar hota.”

which translates as,

“These Sufi-like discussions, and your speech Ghalib,

We'd have considered you a saint, had you not been a drinker.” 6.

But one thing common that connected these two Sufis was their rebellion against the wrong. Whether it be power or shallow claims of extremists they shunned them openly with their poetry and preached to people to follow the path of love that eventually takes them to their destination which is God.

Summing the ideas of Rumi or any Sufi is not an easy task as discussions on them can go on and on but if one tries to do the same, one can say that Sufism is a boon to the poetical world as it is one of the most open and clear approach to the music of life It feels like a soothing song to the aching heart who can finally find its shelter in God and return to where it belongs. It is the whole system of light in the otherwise dark life and Rumi is one of its leading stars. No one has so far defined love so beautifully and innocently as Rumi did. There is a lot to learn from his life and his sayings and its deep analysis gives an altogether different insight towards life and can change any stone heart person into the innocent child of God with love being his central element.

It is rightly being said about Rumi,

“The ‘love’ that Rumi speaks of is not the romantic yearning of a Keats, or the ingredient of some American pop lyric. It is the transcendence of earthly relationships. The ‘ecstasy’ is not orgasm, the ‘madness’ not the dementia of the psychotic, and ‘intoxication’ is not that brought about by ethanol or marijuana. The beloved is not the man or woman who obsesses you, but the spirit of the eternal manifest in your guide to God.” 7.

Thus, from this in-depth study, it is very clear that his idea of love is completely different from many other poets. Born in an age of political turmoil and religious ups and downs, Rumi truly played his part with utmost grace in uplifting humans from their petty concerns and seeking something more valuable. As any human being who can’t make everyone happy and satisfy them at the same, Rumi was also criticized by many literary critics but that makes him more worthy as a writer. People can certainly have different views and a healthy criticism always provides more viewpoints to the poetry or any writing. But we can’t deny the fact that Rumi remains one of the finest preachers of Sufism by taking man closer to God and establishing a bond of love between them. Love is Rumi’s way and God is his strength and with a blend of both, he can be called one of the greatest poets of ‘Divine Love’ with utmost sincerity and purity.

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