

JALAL AL-DIN RUMI AND THE NATIONAL ALBANIAN POET 'NAIM FRASHERI'

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Abstract

Naim Frashëri (1846-1900) is the most famous poet of the Albanian renaissance of the nineteenth century. He is nowadays widely considered to be the national poet of Albania. His role as a socio-political thinker in the liberation of Albania from the Ottoman conquest is of special significance. He was influenced by Rumi's poems and influenced Albanian writers at the beginning of the twentieth century enormously. Many of his poems were set to music during his lifetime and were sung as folk songs in national celebrations in the religious ceremonies. In this article focus on Rumi's influence on Naim Frasherri in the formation of Islamic Mystical literature in Albania.

Key words: Rumi, Sufism, Naim Frasherri, Ottoman Empire.

1. Introduction

Islam, as a religion and culture, reached the Balkans Peninsula during the Ottoman conquests. Since then, the culture spread its roots, and continues to grow until present day. The Sufi brotherhoods and lodges, which included men and women, played a central role in Ottoman social life and were another important place of socialization outside the home. (Quataert 2005: 162) At the same time, among the local population, members of the various Sufi orders, such as the Rifa'i,¹ Qadiri,² Halveti,³ Sadi,⁴ Bektashi,⁵ Naqshbandi,⁶ Sinani,⁷ Mevlevi,⁸ and Shadhili⁹ began to propagate their teachings. This found manifestation in the emergence of

innumerable *tekkes* and *zawiyas*. These Sufi Orders formed around loyalty to the teachings of a male or female individual, the founding sheikh, usually revered as a saint. These holy persons, by their example and teachings, had formed a distinctive path to religious truth and to the mystical experience. The teachings of each Order varied but shared in a common effort to have an intimate encounter with God and find personal peace. Members gathered in a lodge (*tekke*), for communal prayer (*zikr*) and to perform a set of specific devotional practice. (Quataert 2005 : 163)

With the banning of religion by the Communist regime in Albania, all the religious practices, including those of the Sufi orders, slowed down; the spiritual culture began to fade away, and in the process many of the *tekkes* were literally destroyed. (Ziaee 2006)

As for number of followers or members or even sympathizers of the other Sufi Orders in Albania, there are many assumptions, but it is very difficult to estimate or to establish even close, not to say, precise data. However, bearing in mind their influence in this region, it is possible to say, rather correctly and truly, that at least half of whole Muslim population in this part of Europe and Balkans is, in some way, connected or affiliated with a certain Sufi order.

The largest of the Muslim ethnic groups present in the Balkans are the Albanians. They are concentrated in the central and southern areas of the Peninsula. Islam and Christianity flourish along each other without any significant religious or any other intolerance. It is important to mention that the spreading of Islam in Albania, so called *Islamization*, was exclusively on a voluntary basis, without any sign of compulsion, and its acceptance among the masses was also voluntary. The Sufi Orders have long been recognized for their tolerant and broadminded interpretation of Islam. Naim Frasheri followed Rumi's philosophy for considering the religious tolerance as a model for the cooperation of Albanians who in a census conducted early in this century were 70 percent Muslim, 20 percent Eastern Orthodox, and 10 percent Roman Catholic. (Trix : 166)

2. A Brief Background of Naim Frasheri

Naim Frashëri (1846-1900) is nowadays widely considered to be the national poet of Albania. He set the foundations of the Albanian

national literature, and is well-known as a *bilbili i gjuhës shqipe* (nightingale of Albanian language). He spent his childhood in the village of Frasher where he no doubt began learning Turkish, Persian and Arabic. In Janina (Ioannina in Greece),¹⁰ Naim Frasheri attended a secondary school in that city and affiliated with Ancient and Modern Greek, French, Italian and oriental languages such as Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. As he was growing in knowledge, his affinity for Maulana Rumi and the classic Persian poets increased. His education in Janina made of him a prime example of a late nineteenth-century Ottoman intellectual, and an important personality in the Albanian Enlightenment movement. He participated in the fight for freedom of the Albanian people, and often had to sign his work using only his initials, because his works were prohibited by Turkish officials. He had a desire to serve his country and its people, and therefore took a pledge to free the country from the shackles of foreign rule. He reflected all his desires and hopes in his poems. He loved his motherland deeply, and indicated this holy love in his poems:

Oh mountains of Albania

Oh mountains of Albania and you, oh trees so lofty,

Broad plains with all your flowers, day and night I contemplate you,

You highlands so exquisite, and you streams and rivers sparkling,

Oh peaks and promontories, and you slopes, cliffs, verdant forests,

Of the herds and flocks I'll sing out which you hold and which you nourish.

Oh you blessed, sacred places, you inspire and delight me!

You, Albania, give me honor, and you name me as Albanian,

And my heart you have replenished both with ardor and desire.

Albania! Oh my mother! Though in exile I am longing,

My heart has ne'er forgotten all the love you've given to me.

When a lambkin from its flock strays and does hear its mother's bleating,

Once or twice it will give answer and will flee in her direction,

Were others, twenty-thirty fold, to block its path and scare it,

Despite its fright it would return, pass through them like an arrow,

Thus my wretched heart in exile, here in foreign land awaiting,
Hastens back unto that country, swift advancing and in longing.
Where cold spring water bubbles and cool breezes blow in
summer,
Where the foliage grows so fairly, where the flowers have such
fragrance,
Where the shepherd plays his reed pipe to the grazing of the
cattle,
Where the goats, their bells resounding, rest, yes 'tis the land I
long for. (Bucharest 1886a)

Naim discovered the Divine word “*He loves them and they love him*” (Sura 5: 59), and understood from it the truth that God’s love precedes human love. This feeling of mutual love, and the knowledge that love is indeed the only thing that matters in the whole life of creation, forms the cornerstone of Naim’s thought, and is echoed time and again in his verses in every possible tune.

These works had to be smuggled into Albania. He composed and published first in Persian which he learned in Albania. Naim used simple language in his poetry, so that uneducated people could grasp its meaning. His works were well understood by all Albanians.

3. Albanian Country Side

In the collection *Luletë e verësë* (*The flowers of spring*, Bucharest 1890), he concentrated on the beauties of the Albanian countryside in twenty-three poems. In this collection we can find the pantheistic philosophy, the doctrine that God is the supreme reality of which the material universe and human beings are only manifestations. This work indicates the nature of his poems foundations in, and the strong influence of, the Persian classics which are coupled harmoniously to serve the Islamic mysticism in general and the goal of national identity especially.

4. Naim Religious Songs

Fletore e Bektashinjet (*Bektashi notebook*, Bucharest 1896) is one the most important sources about religious songs. Frasheri thought that the liberal Sufi order could promote unity among his

religiously divided people. The *Notebook* contains an introductory profession of Sufi faith and ten spiritual poems which provide a rare view into the beliefs of the sect which in the nineteenth century played an important role in the survival of Albanian culture, in particular by the illegal distribution of Albanian books. The significance of Naim Frasheri as a national poet rests upon the sociopolitical, philosophical and religious messages for his people to serve the liberation, the tolerance, and national awareness among all Albanians in Albanian territories. His influence upon Albanian writers at the beginning of the twentieth century was enormous. (Elsie 2003) Many of his poems were set to music during his lifetime and were sung as folk songs in religious ceremonies. In according with a custom inherited from the Persians, New Year's Day has among the Albanians been considered the day on which Spring begins.¹¹

Through all of his writings, Frasheri exerted a strong influence on the later Albanian literature and society.

5. Naim's Philosophy & Sufism

Naim Frasheri composed a book of poetry entitled *Takhayulat* in Persian. This book includes a brief survey of the doctrines of Rumi's Persian classic literature, description of the pure beauties and attractiveness of nature such as moon, sun, rivers, blossoms, roses and birds such as nightingales.

زمره مرغان و آن آوازشان کائنات و حال و رمز و رازشان
ذکر و تسبیح می کند یزدان را خوش بخوان این دفتر ایمان را

Naim says: there is nothing that does not glorify Him in praise, “*but you do not understand their glorification*” (Sura 17:44). If their glorification went back to a single affair, no one would fail to understand the glorification of anyone else. But God has said that the glorification of the things is not understood, so this indicates that everyone glorifies his God in keeping with that of Him which he has in himself and others do not have. (Chittick 1989:340)

In Naim philosophy much importance is attached to *muhabbet*: verbal communion and chanting or reading *nefes*, the Bektashi spiritual poems.

Muhabbet is a sort of praise or remembrance of God to soften the heart and cleanse the conscience. In beautiful *muhabbet* the beautiful recitation of *nefes* work for the spiritual enlightenment. In listening, listeners become cleansed in their hearts and consciences. (Trix : 146)

Naim's Sufism may be labeled nature mysticism. (Nakosteen 1975: xvii) In this experience nature becomes a vehicle of unification, a bridge, so to speak, connecting the soul to the infinite essence of all things. Instead of explaining away the realms of nature the individual finds himself in feeling and enjoying all the events in nature to the point of harmonizing and identifying with them. He sings with the birds, blooms, with the flowers, shines with the sun, is wrapped in the firmaments. He feels all things in himself and himself in all things, inseparable.

Naim Frasheri disagreed with the imitation of monasticism¹² and strongly encouraged his people to involve themselves with socio-political activities. A political activist and national icon of the 19th Century, the independent Albanian state went so far as to create an Order of Merit that bears his name. Yet his book, *Takhayulat*, is one of the most significant literary sanctuaries of Islam's literary heritage; a work that moreover safeguards an element of world culture belonging to the verdant 'land of eagles,' Albania. In it, he describes the magnificence of mankind as *microcosm* and the world at large as *macrocosm*. And although his poetry focused on mankind as Allah's vicegerent, he did not in the least neglect the role of Allah in his philosophy. His verse reflects profound impacts on his soul from 'Quran as well as classical Persian poets such as Rumi. Naim proved indeed a faithful companion through the years. His poems yielded new results at every new reading. What, then, can be said about Naim from the view point of a modern Persian interpreter? The response of Persian readers to his Persian verses is absolutely positive, although his poetry seems to offer difficulties to those who have not lived long enough with him. It seems that a purely descriptive approach might yield the most unbiased results. Since Naim is primarily a mystical poet, it seems logical to interpret this works from different angles, the first being that of poetical language, the second one that of mystical thought. Both faces taken together can reveal at least part of his inexhaustible poetical works.

From the pages of *Takhayulat*, inanimate elements such as sand, sea, rivers, mountains and stars all sing praises that glorify the Names of Allah, and they do so in harmony with a symphony of flora and fauna: blossoms, trees, and nightingales.

This ever-present glorification of Allah is also described by Rumi in his great book of poems, *Mathnawi*, where he writes: “all parts of creation—whether still or in motion—say, “We refer to Allah.”

جمله اجزا در تحرک در سکون ناطقان کائناً إليه راجعون

Rumi makes it clear in his work that everything in nature speaks to us secretly day and night saying: ‘we are listeners, sages, and smarts, we don’t speak to intimates’.

جمله ی اجزای عالم در نهران با تو می گویند روزان و شبان
ما سمیعیم و بصیریم و هُشیم با شما نامحرمان ما خامشیم

Some philosophers believe that all creatures have a kind of intelligence that in truth glorifies God with actual not virtual sounds and that if men do not purify their souls they cannot attend to the wonder. Still others believe this naturally inherent glorification is nothing more than an existential sign of creation’s own attitude towards the Creator.

Sadi Shirazi expressed similar thoughts in his poetry: ‘Mountain, sea and every tree glorify and praise, but not every listener comprehends these secrets.’

کوه و دریا و درختان همه در تسبیح اند نه همه مستمعان فهم کنند این اسرار

Naim believed that all creatures are realities written by God on a Guarded Table, and that this world is the book of faith. On reading ‘this book,’ you can find Divine Majesty and Divine Beauty where, on each page is recorded a day of history with all its realities. He further believed that the human heart is a mirror in which man may witness the signs of Allah’s Divine Attributes. If then the heart is a micro-cosmos, man’s journey in this little world is far more important than his travels through the material world, as the external journey increases knowledge, but the spiritual journey increases faith. He says that the immanence of God to the world is only perceived by the purified eye. The one who is not in love with God sees only his own image in the water. Only the opened eye sees that the universe is the book of the highest truth. Only the heart polished by ascetic practice can become that spotless mirror which will reflect the Divine. Naim in the *Takhayyat* emphasizes this need for the

purification of the soul. Rumi described this need for the purification in a parable in the *Mathnawi*:

The Story of the discussion between the Byzantines and the Chinese in the art of painting and portraiture:

Those who have polished their hearts have escaped from the performs and the colors, they contemplate Beauty ceaselessly. (*Mathnawi* 1:3467)

پاك از آز و حرص و بخل و كينه‌ها	ليك صيقل كرده‌اند آن سينه‌ها
صورت بي منتها را قابليست	آن صفاي آينه وصف دلست
ز آينهء دل تاقت بر موسي ز جيب	صورت بي صورت بي حد غيب

The first quality required of a mirror is its faithfulness. For the image to be reflected exactly, its surface must be very clear. Naim said that the divine reality ('*asrār*') can be manifest itself in a clear and indubitable manner if the mirror of the heart is cleansed of all the impurities of the world.

We find matching expressions in Aziz Nasafi's book, *Insan Kamil*, who wrote: "When Allah created this world he named it 'World' because it is a sign from Allah and reveals His attributes, such as Divine knowledge, volition and power. All creations are 'God-Signs' and at the same time letters of a great book." (Nasafi : 185-187)

However, Naim ventures further to teach that reality cannot be known by rational means; God must be approached through love and the purification of one's soul. As long as 'you' remain 'yourself', you cannot know God and the greatest veil between you and reality is 'yourself'. (Nurbakhsh 1993: xvii) Love plays an indelibly important role in Naim books and reflects Sufism's belief that God created the world through love and that this Divine love produced the plurality that fills the universe. And furthermore, as God never ceases to love His creatures He therefore never ceases His creation of them. It is this Divine love that keeps the universe in a temporary state of transformation and continual change. (Chittick 2001 : 65)

Naim as other Sufis (Chittick 2006: 65) believes that God can be seen everywhere, and sometimes he referred to the 'light of God', His messages, His signs, His traces etc.

Na'im Frasheri used the concept of annihilation, known as *fanā*, in his poems.

خود ندانم بعد از این من چیستم بعد از این من نیستم من نیستم

After which, I forget who I am: I cease to exist: I cease to exist.
(Naim, *Takhayyulat*)

Simple dictionary definitions of this complex term from a single dictionary range from ‘passing away, cessation of being; perdition, ruin, destruction, annihilation, evanescence, vanishing, termination, extinction, exhaustion’ to ‘non-being, nonexistence, nonentity, extinction of individual consciousness, precedence of the ego, obliteration of the self’. (Wehr 1961:729 Netton 2000: 176-178) It should be viewed as an ethical notion whereby man annihilates his self in order to clothe himself in the divine attributes of God and ultimately to find, and immerse himself, in the very existence of the Divine. It is even better, however, to go back to the original Persian and Arabic sources for our definitions if we are truly to appreciate the real senses of *fanā*. Al-Hujwīrī (died c. 1075) had this to say in his *Kashf al-Mahjūb* (The Disclosure of the Concealed), which Reynold A. Nicholson characterized as ‘the oldest Persian treatise on Sufism’:

Seeing is of two kinds: he who looks at anything sees it either with the eye of subsistence (*baqā*) or with the eye of annihilation (*fanā*). If with the eye of subsistence, he perceives that the whole universe is imperfect in comparison with his own subsistence, for he does not regard phenomena as self-subsistent; and if he looks with the eye of annihilation, he perceives that all created things are non-existence beside the subsistence. (Al-Hujwiri 1976:243; Netton 2000:177)

نزد گل بنشین و پر برهم مزن	بلبلا خاموش باش و دم مزن
تا کند در راز عشق او فنا	تا کند هوشم سفر سوی سما
تا بیابد چشمم آن درگاه را	تا بخواند ثم وجه الله را

Hush nightingales: be silent
stay close to the flowers, do not rustle your feathers
for my mind migrates to the heavens
to be consumed in the secret of Divine Love
to read “*there is the face of God*” (Sura 2: 115)
to find my eyes that esteem

6. Rose and Nightingale

The adventure of rose and nightingale, so often recalled by Persian poets such as Sadi, Hafiz, Rumi, and Naim (even by non-mystical poets) is, together with that of moth and candle, a particularly fitting symbol of the eternal story of love. (Schimmel 1978:114-115) In Naim's poem, the rose is the most perfect manifestation of Divine Beauty in the garden. The vision of Rumi, who saw God's glory radiating like a majestic rose, may have been known to him. Thus, he admonishes himself to become silent:

Hush nightingales: be silent

stay close to *Gul* (the red flower), do not rustle your feathers

The nightingale is migratory (*mohājer*), returning to its Iranian habitat, mating, and nesting between late April and June, which coincides with the blooming of roses. It is only during the mating season that male nightingales sing; then they become silent, though roses may continue to bloom for some time, which provides an answer to a question posed by Hafiz: "*O Hafiz, who can be told about this strange circumstance that we are nightingales silent at the time of roses?*" (Clinton u.d ; Diba u.d)

The rose and the nightingale are important motifs in Persian literature, and in the imagery of Persian poetry in particular. Alone, the rose served as a literary metaphor for perfection and beauty, and might figure the beloved (either worldly or spiritual), the sweet-singing nightingale might represent the lover, or the poet. Together, rose and nightingale are the types of beloved and lover par excellence; the rose is beautiful, proud, and often cruel (roses do, after all, have thorns), while the nightingale sings endlessly of his longing and devotion. In panegyric, the poet-nightingale sang the praises of the prince-rose; in mystical poetry, the nightingale's yearning for the rose served as a metaphor for the soul's yearning for union with God. The use of this theme as a metaphor for spiritual and earthly love by Persian poets in epic and romance, lyrical and mystical works for nearly one thousand years attests to its deep significance in Persian culture.

Wherever we look,
We see his face,
He is everything in this life,

He is the true God! (Bucharest 1898/1995)

7. God's Presence and the Concepts of *Wujud* and *Fana*

God is present in the world such that, in the last analysis, the world is God's presence. Among the many Quranic proof texts that Naim Frasherri cites to support this idea is the verse: *He is with you wherever you are* (57:4). More important are the several Quranic mentions of God's face (*wajh*), (Morris 1995,1987) in particular *wherever you turn, there is the face of God* (2: 115) and *Each thing is perishing except His face* (28: 88). Closely connected to the face is the veil (*hijāb*), which keeps the face hidden. The Arabic-English dictionaries provide several meanings for the word *wajh*. Besides face, it can mean, among others, front, facade, surface, exterior, look(s), guise, side, direction, intention, purpose, goal, objective, course, method, means, sense, significance, purport, outset, aspect, viewpoint. The basic meaning - face- is relatively concrete, while the other meanings indicate the various relatively abstract senses in which the term may be used. Sufism understands it as a synonym for *dhāt* (essence) and *haqiqah* (reality), both of which can be equivalents for the word *nafs* or self. On human level, identifying a person's "face" with the person's self, essence, or reality follows upon the face that for the observer, human identity lies primarily in the face. The face of a person, on the concrete level, expresses most clearly the person's self and reality. If the face of a thing is its reality, God's face cannot be known, since God's reality is His Essence, and God's Essence lies beyond human knowledge. It follows that, although *Wherever you turn, there is the face of God* (2: 115), the divine face that we find and recognize is not the reality that is the Essence, but the reality that is God's self - disclosure. (Chittick 1998: 90-91) In the context of the discussion of *wujud* and the fixed entities, the most important Quranic verse concerning the face is 28:88, which the Ibn 'Arabī reads in two basic ways, depending on the lesson he wishes to draw. If he understands the word face to mean God's face, then he reads it as *Each thing is perishing except His face*, which is to say that God alone has *wujud*, and all things dwell in nonexistence, or that that *wujud's* self-

disclosure never ceases, only to be given *wujud* in the next instant through the next self-disclosure. More commonly, Ibn 'Arabi reads the verse as *Each thing is perishing except its face*. Grammatically, this reading is more appropriate than the first, given that a pronoun should refer back to the nearest noun. Hence the pronoun translated as *its*, which is third person masculine noun, which is *thing*. Then the verse can mean that all things in the manifest universe perish, but their faces, which are their realities-that is, their fixed entities known to God - never perish. (Chittick 1998:92-93)

The Words of the Candle

Here among you have I risen,
And aflame am I now blazing,
Just a bit of light to give you,
That I change your night to daytime,
I'll combust and I will wither,
Be consumed and be extinguished,
Just to give you brightness, vision,
That you notice one another,
For you will I fade and tarnish,
Of me there will be no remnant,
I will burn, in tears lamenting,
My desire I cannot suffer.
Of the fire I am not fearful,
I will never be extinguished
If I burn of my desire,
Try to shine as best I'm able.
When you see that I have vanished,
Do not think that I have perished,
I'm alive, among the living,
In the rays of truth I'm standing,
In your souls do I take refuge,
Do not think I'm stranger to you,
Patience was bestowed upon me,
Thus I glow with steadfast courage,
Doing good is all I long for,
That you not remain in darkness.
Forward now and gather 'round me
Talk, smile, eat, drink and make merry,

Love within my soul is harbored,
Yes, for mankind am I burning,
Let me melt and let me smolder,
To grow cold I do not wish for.
Let my wretched corpse be consumed
For our true God the Almighty,
May my lungs scorch, charred to ashes,
For mankind I'll melt and vanish,
With me all man's joys I'll carry,
Bear them to the Lord Almighty.
Humanity is what I long for,
Goodness, gentleness and wisdom,
If you'll with me be companions?
If you'll love me as I love you,
If you all love one another,
Work not for the Prince of Darkness.
Venture towards me, fleeting heart, do
Come, approach this fire a little!
Though the flame may singe your wings, it's
Sure to sanctify your spirit.
With the torch that here consumes me
I the eyes of men have opened,
Been of them a true companion.
I do know them, they do know me,
I've observed them all in passing,
Mothers, kith and kin, and fathers,
All of them are my concern still,
All who lived here on this planet,
Even now I see them amongst you,
For I recognize their spirits.
I, like you, have changed, transfigured,
Changed and altered my companions,
Many times have I turned into
Earth and wind and fire and water.
I'm a spark come from the heavens,
From the sun I'm glowing embers,
Through the skies I fly, a-soaring,
And live deep within the ocean,
Often in the soil I sleep or

Take my rest in fruits and honey,
I'm a suckling lamb or kid goat,
Flower, grass or leaves a-sprouting,
So much do I have to tell you,
Yet I fear my speech will fail me.
What's the point to put to paper

Words this flickering tongue's inspired? (Bucharest 1886b)

Naim tried to explain the experience of *fanā*, annihilation, with the symbol of the candle. Candle has two aspects: the light and the melting, but not perishing. When candle melts, it becomes useful in the world. Naim remind us Rumi's well-known story of a group of men in India who had never seen an elephant. One day they came to a place where an elephant was. In complete darkness they approached the animal, each man feeling it. Afterwards, they described what they thought they had perceived. Of course their descriptions were different. The one who felt a leg, imagined the elephant to be a pillar. The one who felt the animal's ear, described the elephant as a fan, and so on. Each one of their descriptions with respect to the various parts they had experienced was true. However, as far as accurately describing the whole, their conceptions had all fallen short. If they had had a candle, the difference of opinions would not have come about. The candle's light would have revealed the elephant as a whole.

8. Naim on *Mathnawi*

In these poems, Naim translated the verses of the *Mathnawi*, commonly known as *She'r-e ney*, 'The song of the reed.'

The Flute

Listen to the flute a-speaking,
Tell the tale of wretched exile,
Weeping for this world of sorrow
Using words of truth to spin it.

Since the day they seized and took me
From my friends and my companions,
Men and women have been weeping
At the echo of my sobbing. (Naim)

Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separation

Saying: Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament has caused man and woman to moan (Rumi)

I have rent my breast from beating,
Gaping holes have made within it,
How I've wept and have lamented,
Thousand sighs my heart has rendered. (Naim)

I want a bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold the pain of love-desire (Rumi)

I'm a friend and blithe companion
Both of this world's happy people
And of all folk sad, embittered,
With them do I make alliance. (Naim)

**At any gathering I am there,
mingling in the laughing and grieving (Rumi)**

What're be the situation,
I can weep and mourn in longing,
At any time and any place will
My heart sigh and be a-moaning.

All the world does listen to me,
Sees though only my appearance,
Of my wishes they know nothing,
Nor the fire that burns within me.

People come and gather 'round me
When I weep and tell of longing,
Yet they do not know my secret,
Thus I find no consolation. (Naim)

**a friend to each, but few
will hear the secrets hidden**

within the notes. No ears for that. (Rumi)

Those abandoned, hearts forsaken,
Of the flute become companions,
Some, its mellow scales a-hearing,
Lose their minds, their wits completely.

Human falsehood and illusion!
The flute's voice is not mere wind, it
Has the fire of love within it
When that lowly reed is fingered. (Naim) (Bucharest1890a)

This noise of the reed is fire, it is not wind: whose hath not this fire, may he be naught! (Rumi) (Schimmel : 210)

The reed flute of Naim has two meanings, the first is his love for his motherland, Albania, and the second is the spiritual and symbolic meanings which provide Naim with an ideal symbol of the separated soul from the eternal ground of his existence, like the flute from the reed-bed. Man, cut off from his origin, becomes resonant in separation and tells the secrets of love and longing.

Writes Rumi:

هر کسی کو دور ماند از اصل خویش بازجوید روزگار وصل خویش

Every one who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it. The source of all existence is God and to Him shall we all return, as Qur'an puts it: انا لله و انا اليه راجعون

In other words, the basis of all existence is spiritual. The entity called man is the most beautiful creation of God how has created him in His own image and has breathed in him part of His own spirit. The spirit, the soul, is something which is not veiled from the body, the link between the two is intimate and the integrated personality, the self, which emerges out of the Cosmic self, has no difficulty in recognizing it. (Iqbal 1991 : 177)

Naim saw himself, in the pangs of separation, passionately complaining like the reed, and felt the inspiration through his master enter into his empty heart like the breath of a flute player. The reed flute (the poet) has suffered its head has been cut, exactly like that of the reed pen-hence both instruments are

media to convey information about the beloved, one by singing,
the other by writing. (Schimmel : 211)

Hope

I have great hope
In God
That he will not abandon
Albania thus,
But that she will shine forth
And break into blossom.

May the day dawn
That will bestow upon us
A great light,
Giving birth to:
Civilization,
Prosperity.

Fraternity
And unity
And compassion
Are our salvation.
Happy is he who will be present
When this day comes.

When Albania
Will be radiant
And misfortune
Will be banished
Forever
From her sight.

For Albania,
Joyous days
Are at hand.
The darkness is receding.
Happy is he who will live
To see her reign!

For the Albanian
And his language
Are at one
With Albania.
Happy is he who will
Behold her soon!

Knowledge
And progress,
Goodness
And humanity
Will arise,
Never to stray. (Verese 1890/1995)

GLOSSARY:

abjad-i huroof: Arabic alphabet.

'asrar: Arabic اسرار *asrār* (plural of *sirr*): secrets, mysteries, something concealed; secret thoughts, innermost thoughts.

bābā: the man who heads the tekke, like a prior.

baqā: in Sufism designates the spiritual state of subsistence beyond all form, i.e. the state of reintegration in the Spirit, or even in pure Being; also means the Divine Eternity. Its opposite is *fanā*'.

dhāt: essence.

dervish- Farsi darvish: poor, indigent, beggar, religious mendicant.

fanā: annihilation, the complete denial of self and the realization of God that is one of the steps taken by the Muslim Sufi (mystic) toward the achievement of union with God. *fanā* may be attained by constant meditation and by contemplation on the attributes of God, coupled with the denunciation of human attributes. When the Sufi succeeds in purifying himself entirely of the earthly world and loses himself in the love of God, it is said that he has "annihilated" his individual will and "passed away" from his own existence to live only in God and with God.

halīfe: comes from the Arabic *khalīfa*, signifying "successor" as in "successor to the leadership of the Islamic community." The equivalent Western term is "caliph." In Bektashi hierarchy (*muhib*, *dervish*, *bābā*, *halīfe*, *dede*), *halīfe* is the next-to-highest

position. The most important power of a *halīfe* is that he can perform the ritual to make a *dervish a bābā*.

haqiqah : reality

hijab : *hijab al-sitr*: the "veil" (*sitr*) in this case seems to refer not to a further particular obstacle, but rather to all the forms of attachment and implicit idolatry (*shirk*) "dissolved" in the course of the traveler's ascension, which together blocked him from the realizing his inner relation to God (the "divine Mystery," *sirr*, mentioned in the preceding note).

ijāzah: is a certificate used primarily by Muslims to indicate that one has been authorized by a higher authority to transmit a certain subject or text of Islamic knowledge. This usually implies that the student has learned this knowledge through face-to-face interactions "at the feet" of the teacher.

muhabbet or muhabbat: love and affection.

mureed: Arabic *murīd*: aspirant, disciple, follower, seeker, adherent. From the Arabic root *r-w-d* meaning to walk about, look for, search for.

nafs: self.

tariqat: manner, means, way; system, creed, faith, religion.

tekke or *tekye* or *teqe*: a building designed specifically for gatherings of a Sufi brotherhood, or *tariqa*.

self-disclosure of God: *tajjalÊ* often translated as "theophany", this term plays such a central role in Ibn al-‘ArabÊ’s teachings that, before he was known as the great spokesman for *wahdat al-wujËd*, he had been called one of the Companions of Self-Disclosure (*ashāb al-tajallī*). He employs the term to mean that God shows Himself to the universe inasmuch as *wujūd* is present in all things, or inasmuch as His names and attributes display traces (*āthār*) and properties (*ahkām*) in the cosmos; the configuration and forms left by these traces and properties are then known as "the creatures." (Chittick : 52)

sheikh: *shaikh*: venerable, elderly; chief, elder; title of honor, title of religious dignitaries; master; saint; master of a Sufi order.

Sultan Nevruz: (as Turks call it, Persian word) is the one major Bektashi holiday that occurs on the same day according to the solar calendar, namely March 21.

‘ulama or *Ulema*: a community of legal scholars of Islam and the Sharia.

vizier: (Persian: وزیر) (sometimes spelled Vazir, Vizir, Vasir, Wazir, Vesir, or Vezir), is a term for a high-ranking political (and sometimes religious) advisor or minister, often to a Muslim monarch such as a Caliph, or Sultan.

wajh: the "face" of something is its reality and its individual essence.

Footnotes

¹ Founded by Shykh Ahmad ar-Rifa'i (d. 1182) in Basra, the Rifa'i Order has spread to Egypt, Syria, Anatolia in Turkey, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and more recently to North America.

² The Qadiri Order was founded by Shaykh Abd al-Qadir al-Gilani (d. 1166) from Gilan in Persia, who eventually settled in Baghdad in Iraq. After his death, his Sufi Order was propagated by his sons. The Qadiri Order has spread to many places, including Syria, Turkey, some parts of Africa such as Cameroun, the Congo, Mauritania and Tanzania, and in the Caucasus, Chechen and Ferghana in the [former] Soviet Union, as well as elsewhere.

³ The Khalwati Sufi order (or Halveti, as it is known in Turkey) is an Islamic Sufi brotherhood (tariqa). It was founded by Pir Umar Khalwati in the city of Herat in medieval Khorasan (now located in western Afghanistan).

⁴ They broke from mainstream Rifa'i in the 14th century. They are noted for a special form of dhikr movement, in which ecstasy is achieved by whirling around on the right heel.

⁵ The Bektashi Order was founded by Hajji Bektash of Khurasan (d. 1338).

⁶ The Naqshbandi Order takes its name from Shaykh Baha ud-Din Naqshband of Bukhara (d. 1390). It is widely spread in central Asia, the Volga, the Caucasus, the north-west and south-west of China, Indonesia, the Indian sub-Continent, Turkey, Europe and North America. This is the only known Sufi Order which traces the genealogy of its lineage of transmission of knowledge back through the first Muslim ruler, Abu Bakr, unlike the rest of the known Sufi Orders which trace their origins back to one of the Shi'ite spiritual leaders, and therefore through Imam Ali, and so to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

⁷ Sinani order of dervishes was originally a branch of the Halveti sect and was founded by Ibrahim Ummi Sinani (d. ca. 1551-1552/958 A.H.). It spread from Istanbul, where there were three Sinani tekkes, to the Balkans (Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania). See: Elsie (2001, pp. 246).

⁸ The Mevlavi or Mawlawi Order centers around Mawlana Jalal ud-Din Rumi of Qonya in Turkey (d. 1273). Today it is mostly found in Anatolia in Turkey and more recently in North America. The followers of this order are also known as whirling dervishes.

- ⁹ The Shadhili Order crystallized around Shaykh Abu'l-Hasan ash-Shadhili or Morocco (d. 1258) and eventually became one of the greatest Sufi Orders, having an extraordinarily large following. Today it is found in North Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Tanzania, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and elsewhere, including the West and North America.
- ¹⁰ City and capital, nomos (department) of Ioannina, in the Epirus (Ipiros) region of northwestern Greece.
- ¹¹ Birge, P. 219, they say: “God is most great, God is most great, there is no God but Allah, God is most great, God is most great, and praise belongs to God. (9 times) In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Peace be upon thee, O apostle of God, peace be upon thee, O beloved of God, peace be upon thee, O prophet of God, peace be upon thee, O trusted one of God, peace be upon thee, O thou best of God’s creation; peace be upon thee, O Muhammad the son of Abdullah; peace be upon thee, O saint of God; peace be upon thee.
- ¹² Monasticism is a kind of negative or separation Sufism. The targets of negative Sufism are the experience of detachment from worldly desires and possessions, uprooting of the passions of sex and hunger, and preference for contentment and even poverty-in a word, denial of all things external and transitory. In this sense some elements of monasticism tend toward Buddhist, Yogist, Vedantist, and other forms of Indian mysticism. See: *ibid*.

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